# Más allá del fin Nº 3.5


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## Editorial


Helen Hughes, Carla Macchiavello and Camila Marambio


Dear friends, lovers, collaborators,
my dearest Camila and Helen,

As I spread my virtual fingers to try to reach you, miles and oceans apart, as neurons and airwaves, synapses, electrical currents and clanking keyboards pressed by worn-out, washed out, working hands, enmesh, I think about what it means to engage in this editorial endeavor. To republish a fraction of the third issue of *Más allá del fin*, that grew out of so much love, that grew as mould into *Discipline* between 2018 and 2019, now, at this *coyuntura*. Why and why not make *Más allá del fin* unfurl as 3.5? Who cares, why care?

*Cariño, es que es la coyuntura.*
*¿La calentura?*
*No, sí, bue-no, la coyuntura.*
*La calentura* you mean.

*Calentura*: While we were launching *Más allá del fin* 3, there were fires ravaging the Amazon.

Soon after some of us left Australia, fires raged on that island too.

Only two months or so later, a social revolt that erupted in Chile caught fire. Here and elsewhere, more continue to ignite.

Now a viral fire rages around the world.

I remember that when we were walking on Minjerribah, you said they said the Elders said that fires were used to burn the bush to grow new plants from seeds that needed heat. Not monocultures, but new cultures.

Is this such a moment?

While *coyuntura* in Spanish is 'to join in this moment', right now, according to these specific factors, at what feels like a turning point to some and increased hardship for many more, *yunta* is slang for the closeness one feels with a friend. The *calorcito* of the *aglomeración*, even if virtual, especially when viral. It also refers to animals coming together, working together (while under human pressure to do so, using a specific tool, as all sorts of institutions pressure us to do, to go back to normal, bow your heads and necks, structural violence oppressing some to the point of asphyxia). Doesn't seem as altruistic as we'd hope, this language I'm using for the editorial? Well, *la coyuntura está peluda*, it's so hard right now, for so many, it is deadly, for so many too.

What is coming together for each right now? What comes apart? What do we become a-part of, tear apart, now?

Is this an end, a hiatus, a start or a spark?

Why does "beyond the end" speak so presciently to the present moment?

To something we are beginning to glimpse, a spark catching fire just there, *más allá*, beyond?

Carla

Carla, Helen, ensayistas, readers, lovers, haters, collaborators, colonisers,

Many summers ago, on the steep slopes of the Andes Mountains, I came across a *yunta de bueyes*, a yoke of oxen. These two magnificent animals were bound together by a wooden crosspiece fastened over their necks and attached to a plough, but that's not all, they were not only restricted in their movements, they were also agonizing because they had mysteriously caught on fire and their side bodies had been scorched open. I observed the fleshy wounds and sensed the pain these animals were in. I vomited. Don Nito, the animal's carer was as disturbed as I was, if not more. He was preparing a salve to place on their skin. I joined him by collecting the herbs he signalled as healing (*mático* and *llantén*) and tossed them into the cauldron where he was macerating them. For hours we sat in silence as if only our lack of words could compensate for the lack of compassion that we humans have had for the other creatures who belong to this planet.

Fire, death, scars; fever, illness, regenerative tissue; sensuality; aliveness; fascia. Triads that morph in my mind and in time as I sink into Carla's words, into the world, into the wording worlds that are conjured by *más allá del fin*. When Carla and I began to edit the Ensayos journal we called it a periodical because we intuited it brought news from beyond the end.

Some of the authors—wild women, wise elders, learned historians, poets, activists and artisans—who shed their word-tears into *Más allá del fin* #3 are now joined by new voices to comingle past, present and future; and, much like Don Nito's salve, #3.5 was conceived and prepared as a healing infusion, to strengthen the vitality of the wording that reanimates a world after the fires have burnt the bush.

Abundant poetry,
Camila

Dear Carla and Camila,

The months since we launched *Discipline, Más allá del fin* have been breathless. Fires, like those in the Amazon that raged against the backdrop of your visit to Australia last August, Carla, devastated huge tracts of the continent in Australia over our summer—arriving earlier, and hitting harder and faster than before. Millions of animals, insects and plants perished, some near to the point of extinction. Humans died too. And if city dwellers wanted to ignore the perils that rural communities face each bushfire season, ever worsening in step with climate catastrophe, this time they couldn't. Thick smoke suffused the nation's major metropolitan cities: Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne. We were warned not to go outside, as the air was toxic. There were rushes on air purifiers.

I remember writing to Camila and Cecilia on the day big rain finally broke. I was reading in the State Library of Victoria. The atmosphere darkened, and the skies opened up. Along with almost everyone else in the reading room, I rushed outside to experience what felt like relief; a man lay down on his back on the stone stairs leading up to the Library entrance, arms wide open, in perfect silence, and absorbed every drop.

Our summer, so often characterised by heat-induced lethargy, was spent in a state of hyperactive communication—checking in with loved ones in danger, refreshing news feeds, obsessively monitoring the weather forecast. We began the year 2020 already emotionally, physically and economically exhausted. Then, of course, the virus. The focus of which has left those most affected by the bushfires doubly traumatised, and now largely forgotten by the addiction to, and amnesia of, contemporary news cycles.

It's hard to imagine a symbolic event for coronavirus like the big rain that hinted towards an end to the carnage of the bushfires. But many of the means for preparing for that moment—Indigenous knowledge, obligations to Country, the words of wise women, of mothers, of artists, activists and poets, solidarity with animals, plants and fungi, climate justice, justice for workers, racial justice, a conception of time that does not greedily hedge its bets against a toxic future, a bit of magic—can be discovered across the pages of *Más allá del fin* #3.5.

In solidarity,
Helen

# Juan Dávila interviewed by Carla Macchiavello and Camila Marambio


Juan Dávila, *Ralco*, 2016, oil on canvas, 200 × 250 cm. Courtesy of Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 4, 2018, 4:35 AM
subject: Preguntas

HI, I will try to begin, in disorder, x J

Sent from my iPad

> 3.2. How did you approach the translation of Nelly Richard's text (originally in Spanish) to a different cultural context? What kinds of decisions were made regarding its translation, the images that were to be used, the public the text was meant to address? For example, In the introduction to the reprint of the book, made by Metales Pesados in Chile, Nelly Richard mentions that while there was a need for the bilingual at the moment as a way of contesting the repression and closure in Chile during the dictatorship, at present the notion of publishing an edition in Spanish only is an act of resistance (to the contemporary call to be global). But the original text was quite hermetic, as if it disavowed the public it was trying to reach.

Nelly Richard's Spanish text *Márgenes e Instituciones* (Margins and Institutions), was published in English in Australia in 1986 by the journal *Art and Text*, founded by Paul Taylor. Richard had written texts for my work since 1979, some of which were translated in Australia. Taylor was thus familiar with Richard's work and in a trip that she made to Australia, it was proposed to Taylor that he publish *Márgenes e Instituciones* as the sole content for an issue of *Art and Text*, therefore creating something similar to a book. The idea of analysing intellectually an avant-garde art scene under the military dictatorship (which became known through Richard's writings as '*escena de avanzada*') was unheard of, both in Australia and Chile. When compared to the book of Gaspar Galáz and Milan Ivelic, *La pintura en Chile (Painting in Chile)*, 1981, which was a story of bookkeepers, Richard's text was powerful.

Paul Foss, the subsequent editor of *Art and Text* after Taylor, and I, translated it. This took us half a year, without pay. The Spanish text never matches the precision and clearness it has in English. It's like translating poetry, the text is re-written in another language, maintaining its faithfulness to the significance and under different limitations. Besides, Richard's text was written in a Spanish that clearly had French as a first language. The European intellectual debates that arrived in Chile via books in the '70s produced a certain style and they were difficult to read. The majority of artists and writers in Chile never had a literary, philosophical, psychoanalytic, and structural education to absorb all the cultural scenes in Europe. The biggest criticism of sociologists was that these texts were elitist. Richard's playfulness with language opposed "official language", and did so all the more for its being a woman's writing. That cannot be translated. Richard's reaction while she read the translation was one of disgust; we did not receive a thank you. Paul Foss and I wrote an introduction as a presentation of the text in Australia. It was Australia who paid for our "book" to be published and distributed internationally, although it wasn't widely read. In the Chilean edition our translation was eliminated. It was an aggressive move, meant to discredit the project, as if it had no international support. They erased us.

I think that the re-publishing of the text in Spanish in Chile in 2014 had to do with presenting it to a new generation, but also with consolidating "power" in the cultural scene, where the '*escena de avanzada*' (as the advanced art scene of the late 1970s and early '80s became known) was already bought by the status quo. They had international ambitions; they loved to show in museums and commercial galleries; their dictum—'art and politics'—became part of the tyranny. A Spanish text at that time was not an example of global resistance like it was in the first edition, it's something that is called intellectualising and lying. It is like running under with the military coup d'état headline again as a presentation card for those who resisted and opposed the dictatorship. It's the traditional Chilean left-wing model.

Francisco Zegers in Chile made the images and design.

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 4, 2018, 8:08 AM
subject: Questions

> 3.3. How was the text received in Australia? It had such an impact in Chilean art and art history, even as it circulated at first through photocopied versions or was found in a few libraries, and yet has received almost no context (Lucia Vodanovic noted that Paul Foss mentioned in 2014 many copies of the text were not sold in Australia and were thus discarded). Australian art history and art scenes remain as vague as they were for most Chileans. You have spoken of your own marginalisation with regards to a scene of which you were part. For example, the relation to a set of thinkers, like Francesca Lombardo or Patricio Marchant, upon which the 'scene' was so dependent, yet whose presence has also been, with rare exceptions, obliterated. Likewise, little is known in Chile about Paul Foss, Paul Taylor, Eric Michaels, or your own commitment to the book.

*Margins and Institutions* did not create an impact or a strong discussion. Australians are insular and provincial in culture. Their tradition has been to copy British art and later North American and some European trends. Chile has a similarity with Australia in this trait.

It is hard to recall that the multicultural Australian politics had a mainstream effect in culture. I recall a lecturer in the University of New South Wales remarking that the publication of Richard's book made exaggerated claims for rather mediocre art. Charles Merewether brought an exhibition of Frida Kahlo and was ignored. The same with the Latin American photography exhibition he organised. Eugenio Dittborn, Paz Errázuriz, Cuban artists, received the same disinterest. Overseas, the Nelly Richard publication had a more serious reading in North American universities, and a great impact on the critical scene in Latin America, but several years later. A fate similar to the one of many cultures that were 'done' or discovered by the international museum circuit—think of *The Bride of the Sun*, *Treasures of Mexico*—and quickly forgotten. Ironically, now the great European museums want to have a worldwide brand. They are open to collecting the far-away places, but they have to pay themselves for the art and send it in exchange for prestige. This is the paradise of social-climber collectors and donors.

Chile's marginalisation is nothing new. Chileans themselves have no interest in culture, just populism. The State began the National Museum of Fine Arts in the nineteenth century as a copy of the French model in order to promote patriotic values. Today in the digital world nothing has location, meaning, difference. Culture is a computer net that drags everything I type into Google 'Chilean Art' and what comes up is kitsch, commerce art, and a couple of serious artworks. Chile does not think of others.

The avant-garde Chilean art scene marginalised a great number of creators. It even destroyed people with malignant hysteria and paranoia. Other or different voices were intolerable. The main example of this was Ronald Kay, and the others you mention. Just think of the memorable book of Kay, *Del espacio de acá* (1980). The Communist Party acted in the same manner.

I have written about this '*Pago de Chile*', this denial of contributions. With *Margins and Institutions*, it was no different, my voice didn't count. I also financed the *Revista de Crítica Cultural* for many years, but my name was erased from the credits. But my interest has been mainly in making visible art and texts from my place. The migrant's life includes the place of birth and resettlement, and not belonging to either but to both. I was rarely visible with the Chilean group that began in the '70s, with magical exceptions. To be a painter was a crime, to refer to gender unthinkable. Some probably prayed to the Virgin of Misogyny or to *La Virgen del Puño* for advancement in the status quo.

In Chile there has been little interest in Australia, even if Australia has hosted Chilean artists and sent Australian ones there. There is no point in complaining, but the historical record, fought inch by inch there, might open to parallel narratives, one day.

Sent from my iPad

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 4, 2018, 9:02 AM
subject: Ps.

> How could an artist suggest an interpretation of Chilean culture since the '70s? He is not an historian, academic, or intellectual but has intuition, the Greek *nous*. The emergence of the dictatorship in Chile was a crucial moment. The artists reacted intensely, some exiled, many had to remain. The horror created a bonding amongst some artists, writers, and intellectuals that was urgent. The works that appeared had an extreme element, not rational, that became irresistible. Today I would call it a 'psychotic contagion', not the *escena de avanzada*.

The use of metaphor was lost, no emotion was possible, only the act of screaming at the dictator and art institutions. The margins, the marginals, and dispossessed became the bullets. Imagine if someone said that the *avanzada* and the dictatorship had an unnameable pact. The art gave an illusion of liberty to the dictatorship to use and the dictator gave the *avanzada* a *raison d'être*. This would incite a ferocious reaction, the speaker would be labelled 'fascist' forever. But there has been no thinking about the true psychological nature of the master/slave relation here. Why is morality the darkest of conspiracies? No colour or feeling, the personal fragmentation, obscurantism in the use of the poor as tools was brutal, an objective certainty.

Then one could consider the battle of knowledge: a woman creator could have a superior knowledge, but that power presupposed the destruction of man. And man's cunning of reason—his traditional, manipulative, totalitarian power—erases woman and all others. The liberal spectre of eugenics as lived in Chile and Australia.

Regards,
Juan

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 6, 2018, 8:56 AM
subject: Preguntas

I have mentioned negative aspects of the *avanzada* in Chile. But they made a major contribution to the arts there. One must think of visual culture before 1970, which can be considered a retrograde and conservative desert. Chile had a very weak modernity. The *avanzada* was one of the early attempts to create an intellectual debate and to propose a visual language that presumed complexity. They challenged the tradition by including other meanings, against the lineal voice, and used deconstructive analysis. Parallel to that they challenged the Communist party's perfunctory art of communication.

Similarly, regarding Nelly Richard, I am critical in retrospect of her idea, not of her, who is a notable person. This is a comment for the record forty-five years after the fact.


Nelly Richard, *La cita amorosa, sobre la pintura de Juan Dávila*, 1985, Rústica, published in English as *Hysterical tears* (Melbourne: Greenhouse Publications, 1985).

> 3.4 When thinking of revisiting *Margins and Institutions* by looking into the acts of linking, translation, editing, connecting, misapprehending, and learning that the collaboration motivated and triggered, we were thinking about what is left in the margins today, even as we revisit its (the text's) history. Is the notion of the margin still useful? How do we translate it to this supposedly interconnected present?
>
> Bridging remote spaces… how do we build relational spaces/platforms to forge and deepen connections, even in the face of unsurmountable difference (as can be between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Chileans, Mapuche, Aymara, and Yamana, for example)?

3.4 The *Margins and Institutions* text must be seen as part of a socio-cultural milieu. The election of the left in the '70s to govern Chile and the later dictatorship, with the emergence of corporate digital globalism and their demise, run the chronological


Juan Dávila, *9-02*, 2018, oil on canvas, 255 × 200 cm. Photograph: Mark Ashkanasy. Courtesy of Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne.


Juan Dávila, *Tratado de Tordesillas*, 2018, oil on canvas, 250 × 200 cm. Photograph: Mark Ashkanasy. Courtesy of Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

span of the *escena de avanzada*. From the grand possibility of the left in Chile in the '70s to their failure today, an exhausted left without discourse, not connected to any constituency, without challenges or utopias; this is the background. Once poets, later businessmen in a mirroring of left and right politics. Silence, apathy, indifference, and corruption are the markers of a diminished democracy.

The margins are what the left and the *escena de avanzada* spoke of. One thing is to live their experience, another to use it. Today in the arts there is an official list of acceptable political themes. This is created by museums, curators, and art institutions. The margins, the migrants, the indigenous peoples, women's issues, war business, people of colour, etc., are part of the corporate charter of contemporary art exhibitions. They are 'political'. But the margins are thus silenced by exposure to a massive indifferent gaze. They become one more issue amongst trillions of images that invade us relentlessly. The tools available to connect with others today are not working. What words and images can move us? Could we search for cracks in the system? Could we think of the creation of intimate communities?

We can refuse to work in the art corporations that use margins and controversy as a publicity tool. This era of unthinkable technological advance has created massive depression and anxiety. Artists, as marginal serfs, are to create products, images of the margin. Those pictures are a sort of aspirin; they make us feel that there are others worse than us. The eighteenth-century powerful decorated their homes with paintings of the have nots. Today we continue unthinkingly a similar path or worse, with the liberal ideology of eugenics and punishing the poor in full swing. Charity thrown to beggars to keep all the difference at bay.

We can go beyond melancholia, accepting the other as Other. It is not a matter of remote spaces, difference, connectivity. Our soul is not on strike or sale, I still hope.

Sent from my iPad

> 3.5. You recently said in an interview: 'My contention is that both the *avanzada* and the traditional left are still stuck in re-writing the local Chilean art history with a nostalgia for the 1970s when they had a vibrant moment. What are their proposals for art in the twenty-first century? They are just bureaucrat talk.'[1] What can art do for us, for the world, today? What is your proposal for art in the twenty-first century?

I must say that I have no grandiose manifesto, mainly doubts on the what-to-do-in-the-twenty-first-century dilemma. Uncertainty and unpredictability are positive in my view. Why account for every thought? Politics still belongs to the order of totalitarianism, subjective cognitive capital is denied. No aesthetic, psychoanalytic, or emotional experiences are considered in the twenty-first-century late capitalism. And art today turns into a business.

The traditional left in Chile in the '70s had utopias like 'The Latin American Man', but not Woman. Painters like Guayasamín expressed this with images of the oppressed, big hands raised up. The *avanzada* in Chile proposed a language strategy, defiance to the lineal meaning, using subtexts of what could not be expressed under the military regime and created a sort of play of hidden meaning. The art was obscure, fragmented, no colour as in traditional painting, but charged with a socio-political outlook. The use of the city as the field for art was advocated along with abandoning the art institutions as the space for art. A utopia of 'Art and Politics'.

At present, the State art funding institutions create an artist that must have a written proposal. If successful, the artist must do as a school girl or boy, do exactly as written in the proposal. Become an illustrator and a producer. Funding bodies want art to create money. In my view art is what an artist does in the moment. Repressed knowledge, meaning, chaos, ambiguity, lived experience, and an inner passion are dismissed by the Art Industry that tells us what to do.

The primacy of the workers' struggles in capitalism could menace the surplus value of capitalism. The social war can also have complexity, in theory. But this was denied by the art produced by the left. It was based on slogans, communication, and at best a collage of real materials with informal ones. A sort of art in an ideological straight jacket. Where is the notion of a psychic potentiality, as Mari Ruti argues? There is a potential in reading the signifiers of our desire, that can help to engage in a creative way with the current culture. Why can't we imagine outside the hegemonic system of power?

Sent from my iPad

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 12, 2018, 1:37 AM
subject: Preguntas

> 2.2 With regards to your own painting, you have recently spoken of 'an oceanic gaze'.[2] This seems radically different from what might be thought of as a 'marginal gaze', as the former is characterised by a radical openness, an incommensurability, rather than a specifically localised gaze. Could you develop further the notion of the 'oceanic gaze' for us? How does it relate, for instance, to something like belonging/not-belonging in today's world?

2.2. The oceanic gaze or feeling and the Stendhal syndrome in the past were used to express being at one with the world, or as a sublime and intolerable feeling provoked by beauty. I have also expressed that it would be better to call it a 'wild gaze', open to what has never been seen before. My feeling is that 'the marginal gaze' has already a constraint and a program. I speak of the ineffable or the incommensurable as something related to the first gaze of a person, object, or artworks. It relates to the ancient Greek *nous*. Today we call it intuition without words. The rationalising and intellectualising of critical theory and university discourse must put the marginal, for example, into words.

I have proposed to use the concept of 'after image', the trace in the inner eye of something seen or dreamt. It is probably the manner in which prehistoric cave art was done, not into calling for good luck in the hunt, as some archaeologists have proposed in the past.

Regarding belonging, there is no certainty, just a deep wish but we ourselves do not know what we desire. In post-capitalism, the only belonging proposed is to be a consumer in debt. That can have a price and explanation attached to it. In that frame of mind, marginal people must be destroyed as the old eugenicists wanted. Resilience and optimism are not part of the lexicon, even less beauty. They are something long ago erased from the notion of work.

What do we want in the Others? That they remain an other?

Sent from my iPad

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 12, 2018, 7:43 AM
subject: Preguntas

> 2.1. The practice of cultural appropriation coming from the art field is a subject that has not received enough attention in Chile. You were part of the discussions that took place in 1989 about cultural appropriation in Australia, specifically regarding Aboriginal cultures (Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane). Back then you referred to the practice of certain Australian artists as 'fake marginality'. This idea makes us think of how to find meeting places amongst cultures without over-determining or flattening out the concept of the margin or marginality. What would 'real marginality' look like?
>
> How do you position yourself in relation to this marginality, for example, back in the 70s leaving Chile a year or so after the coup, then in the 80s in Australia, and today?

2.1. Art is an age-old practice and copying was always part of tradition. Today, as institutions insist that artists be 'original', copying or quoting is deemed improper. Indigenous cultures do not change styles constantly, as happens in fashion. In Australia, there is no debate about how the art made here was always derivate, imitations of the British and then of the international scene. The results were mediocre, flea market-like. During the nineties, the notion of 'provincialism' came under discussion and the artists copied the European trans avant-garde. It was a gesture, like a slap in the face that was returned when these works were exhibited in an international context.

To quote Aboriginal culture is problematic. I wrote about it saying that it is a lugubrious game. My main concern is that is mainly a gesture, with no attempt to understand and no follow through. In my experience, as I have quoted Aboriginal and Mapuche culture in my paintings, one can only ponder if a conversation is possible.

Sent from my iPad

from: **Juan Dávila**
date: Nov 12, 2018, 8:06 AM
subject: Pinturas

I will be travelling tomorrow, so I cannot concentrate. I will try to continue in a week. Here are some paintings about Chile, *mestizaje*, *Wallmapu*, and *Ralco*, where there is a conversation.

Best regards,
Juan

Sent from my iPad

1.1. For the guest-edited issue of *Discipline*, we (Carla Macchiavello and Camila Marambio) have been thinking about the power of revisiting, or perhaps refloating, specific texts, images, and practices that seem to have resisted historicisation (they resist being tucked away, contextualised by the historical moment they were made in, some resound loudly or louder today, while others resisted by going completely underground), or perhaps the particular character of these texts, images, and practices is precisely one of resistance.

In a recent interview, you said that modernity in Latin America is not to be found in what was imposed on us, as such, but in the indigenous resistance to destruction, usurpation, colonisation: 'Our first modernity in Latin America is indigenous, not a discovery in Paris in the 1870s, something happens there that resists academic, scientific and rational thought.'[3]

Numerous discourses and movements are being articulated today around this very notion of resistance and alterity. Could you elaborate on it for us? What do you consider it is important to resist today or what are we still resisting? How does painting (and art) work for you in this sense?

Juan Dávila, *Untitled*, 2011, oil on canvas, 297.8 × 347 cm. Courtesy of Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

1.2 I find Gerald Vizenor's words very fine.[4] Art, though, is not a written narrative, it is a silent language since the beginning of time. The questions asked about resistance, control of time in actuality versus memory, appropriations of space, and voices of others—these are topics that University discourse is currently intellectualising. Repetition of art is an ancient practice, particularly in Asia. I refuse to define my political enjoyment or the voice that speaks through me.

To quote from Eduardo Arroyo's text, 'Political Painting':

> Everyone considers me a political painter, but I have never known how to construct political painting. Everyone claims that I am a specialist

in diatribes, a master of invectives, and not just during a particular period, but throughout my whole life. With the ball and chain of political commitment around my feet and the handcuffs of the message around my wrist.

Juan Dávila, *Sudaca*, 2017, oil on canvas, 255 × 200 cm. Photograph: Mark Ashkanasy. Courtesy of Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

So let me repeat again for the hundredth time: despite the fact that my work is described as political painting, I have never believed myself to be a political painter. I believe more in the behaviour of the artist as example, or his work as such. I have never believed that I could change the conscience or the destiny of a country through painting. What is the case is that my painting has always been the result of my obsession with the situation in Spain that anti-Fascist struggle which I carried out in exile. I was obsessed with it in the way that others are obsessed with flowers or with mathematical proportion, and if I have painted it, it is because I could not paint anything else. The subversion was to be found within the painting. The true problem lies in how to place the brush on the canvas to make the painted object as eloquent as possible.

It is clear that one cannot paint a wooden shoe, a sole, a hat and a cat in the same way. It doesn't seem to me that hard to understand.[5]

–'Sardine in Oil', 1977

1 Paco Barragán, 'Interview with Juan Dávila', *Art Pulse*, 2018, http://artpulsemagazine.com/interview-with-juan-davila.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Editors' Note: In the first version of this interview, we sent another question to Juan that referenced the Anishinaabe scholar, Gerald Vizenor and the term "survivance": "Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry." Vizenor, in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999). Juan referred to Vizenor's quote here.
5 Eduardo Arroyo, quoted in Agustín Sánchez Vidal, *Eduardo Arroyo* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores-SEACEX, 2002).



# *Verso l'infinito*

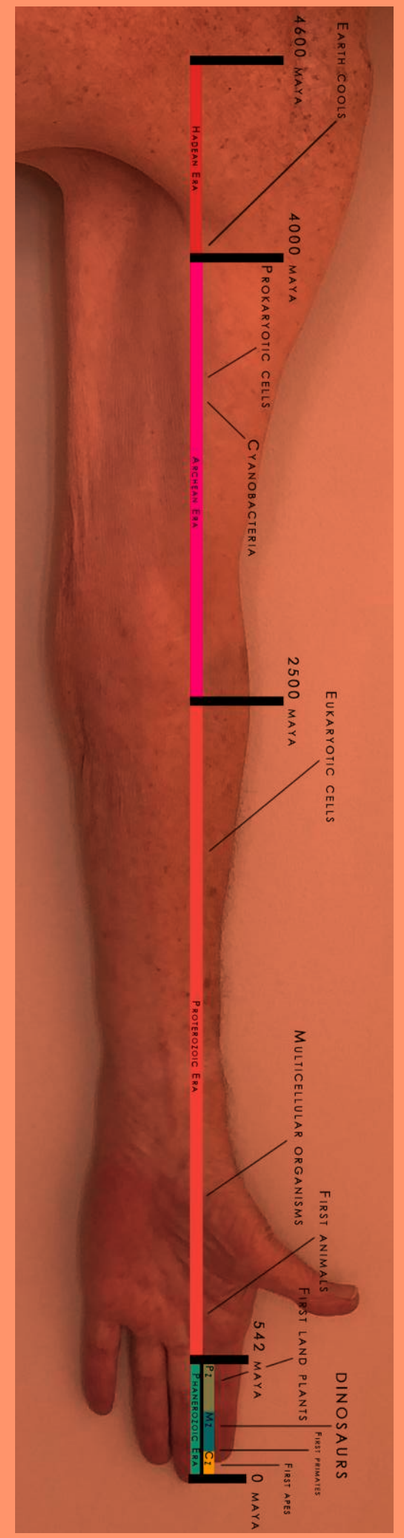
Lucy Bleach

Arm time scale

I ask my father to hold up his left arm, perpendicular to his body, as if he has his left indicator on. He is shirtless and is standing against a beige-coloured wall, so that the marbled palette of his skin seems to hover above space. My father is 90 years old, and there is a tender surrendering of his skin and muscle tone to gravity. I take a photo that crops the arm from his body at the shoulder, so that you can see where the arm would be joined to the body, with just the curve of his scapula, the edge of his torso, and his wispy underarm hairs connected to the outstretched arm.

I send the photo to my son and ask him to overlay a colour-coded line of the geologic time scale onto the image of my father's arm (referencing an online geological time-scale teaching tool). The Hadeon eon, the formation of the earth 4.6 billion years ago, starts the time scale below the clavicle and just before the crease of my father's underarm. The generation of prokarvotic cells (unicellular organisms) and cyanobacteria (the only photosynthetic prokaryotes able to produce oxygen) occurs between his underarm and elbow (the Archean eon). Eukaryotic cells form below the elbow joint, multicellular organisms evolve at the base of his thumb and the first mammals appear in the palm of his hand (Proterozoic Eon). The first land plants appear at the metacarpal knuckle (Paleozoic Era), the dinosaurs appear on the first finger joint (Mesozoic Era), and the first primates and first apes occur on the digital phalange at the base of the fingernail (Cenozoic Era). Contemporary humanity and the Anthropocene epoch are located just at the outer edge of the finger nail of my father's rude finger.

The final image presents an intimate interpretation of deep time, geologic history of the earth and human precarity, digitally tattooed onto my father's aging body by my emerging adult son.

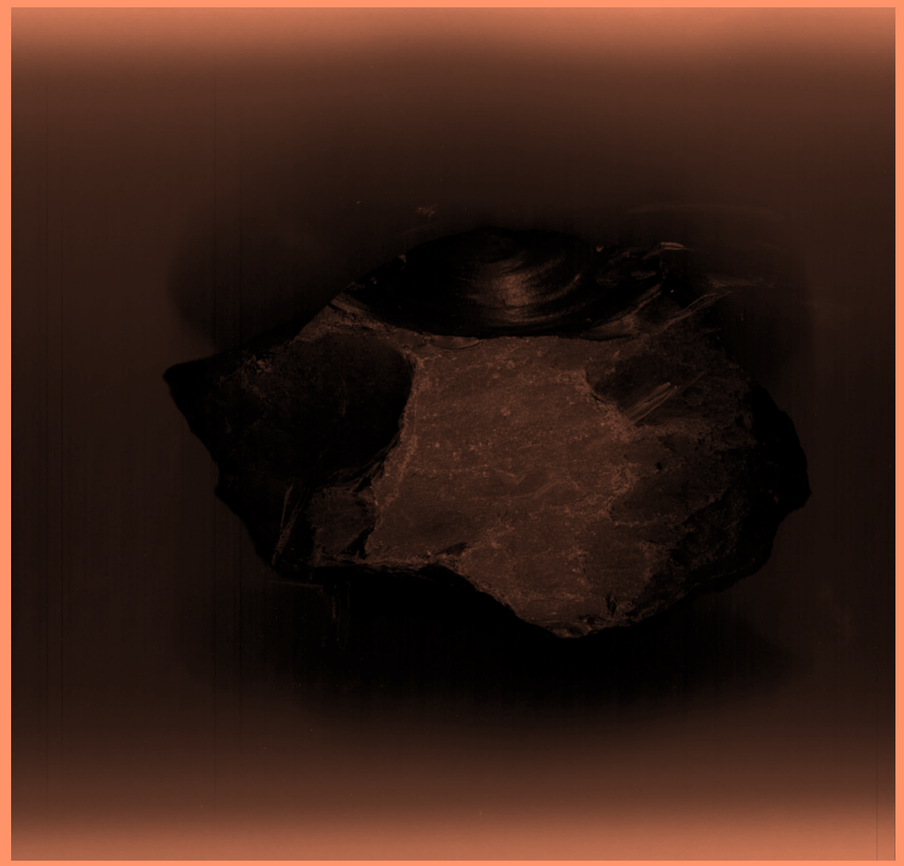



Deep time arm. Photograph: John Bleach, Will Joseph, Lucy Bleach.

Haulage Unconformity. Photograph: Ilona Schneider.

Unconformity

The Haulage Unconformity is a rock face in Queenstown, Tasmania that evidences geological complexity and mis-alignment of rock layers. An *unconformity* represents a 'non-conforming' break in a rock sequence, representing a gap in the geologic record, where rock bodies of significantly different times make unlikely contact, simultaneously indicating an absence of time and a unidirectional flow of time. The significance of the unconformity was recognised in the eighteenth century by scientist James Hutton, who proposed that the spatial relations between rock strata translated into temporal relations and implied a long earth history that supported a notion of deep time.



Obsidian on photocopier. Photograph: Lucy Bleach.

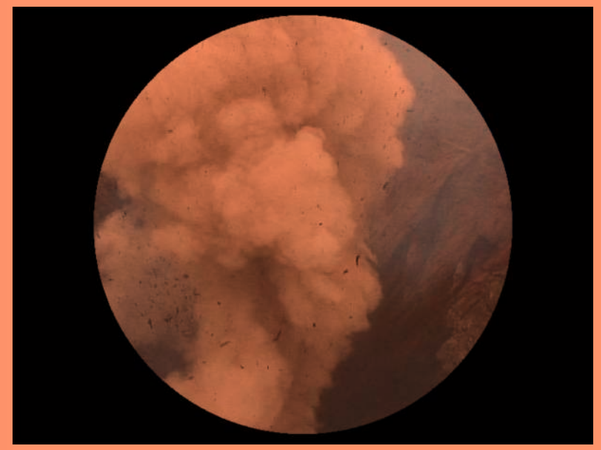
Metastability

Obsidian is a natural glass or vitrophyre, a dark coloured volcanic glass that lacks a crystalline structure due to its fast formation. Obsidian can be shaped by its expulsion from the earth, its propulsion through the air, and its rapid cooling during its aerial trajectory. The force of this projection remains as a vibrational echo within the glassy material.

This is an image of a piece of obsidian scanned on a photocopier. The black glassy rock was placed on the photocopier glass, which transmitted ultraviolet rays from the copier's light source through the copier's glass onto, into, and around the rock. The obsidian floats in a space of light, captured by the carbon black of the copier's toner.

Obsidian is metastable at the earth's surface, over time its glassy form becomes fine-grained mineral crystals which are absorbed into surface material.





Mt Yasur Eruption, 1–3. Photographs: Lucy Bleach.

Charge

Sometime in December 2011, I am on Mt Yasur Volcano, Vanuatu. I move down onto a rock shelf to get closer to the crater and set up my tripod. Every three or four minutes the volcano sends up sulphur clouds before releasing an unbelievable crack, like the inside of a thunderhead cloud. Then a great plume of smoke shoots up sending masses of glowing red rocks that shift shape in the upward draft. The air is so charged that at times my finger receives an electric shock at the point where it makes contact with the metal record button on the camera. As I watch the slow-motion aerial tumbling of molten material expelled from deep within the earth, I can't recall ever feeling so simultaneously terrified and alive.

# Archipelagic Wanderings in Trowunna

Denise Milstein

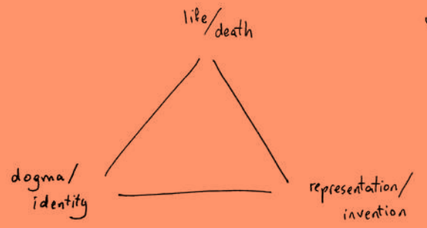
> I thought of an alienness
> greater than horizons, and I revealed
> the lie of history. Because every call
> reveals a premonition of infinite
> distances. Without leaving my body
> I learned from all the nights I wandered
> in the forests.
> —Jure Detela[1]

Camila Marambio invited Bruno Latour and me to Tasmania, back in 2016. That July all three of us were presenting at a performance conference in Melbourne, which made it possible to embark on some archipelagic explorations together. I was familiar with Bruno's work as a philosopher and social scientist. His ideas had re-connected me to my own work in sociology at a time when I was sceptical of the discipline's epistemological foundations. And we had both collaborated with Ensayos, the nomadic research program Camila created in 2010. At the heart of Ensayos is Tierra del Fuego, the archipelago that extends south from the tip of South America. That Subantarctic network offers us a home of sorts, more floating than grounded—inciting of movement and relation, as archipelagos are wont to do. While the Ensayos web has evolved in this Fueguian realm, it has also expanded beyond it, to New York, to Paris, to Arctic Tromsø, and, with that trip, to Tasmania. As scientists, artists, and local agents, we, *Ensayistas*, bring to our collaborations an openness to letting our disciplines and practices unravel. Our projects often evolve into undisciplined collaborative experiments where process takes precedence over outcome.

Our brief sojourn in Tasmania was planned to bring us into contact with other artists and scientists concerned with human geography, ecology, and the legacy of colonialism on human and more-than-human social worlds.[2] Our itinerary carried us along pre-drawn paths from destination to destination, but the connections between the places and the people we met were ours to draw. The zigzag road up Mount Wellington determined our views of Hobart below. The Channel Highway out of the city sped us to the ferry at Kettering, which took its sweet time across the placid d'Entrecasteaux channel to Bruny Island. The skinny, solitary road over Bruny's isthmus shot us straight south to Adventure Bay, where we lingered at Two Tree Point before continuing to the lighthouse at the southern tip. There we stood at the edge of a cliff, our archipelagic gaze skipping over the water to the next island, expecting another one beyond it. Two years later, I can still reach back to those places in my mind, and find them interwoven with lingering thoughts from that time.

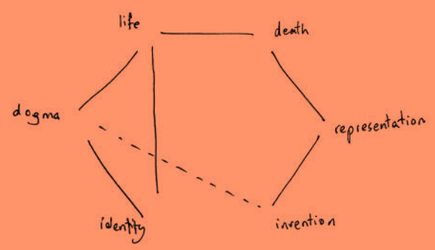
When, in my first draft of this essay, I try to draw the map of our travels, the distance from Tasmania, both in time and space, it produces a series of disconnected abstractions. It consists of three binaries: life and death, which, in Tasmania, seemed to split and overlap in ways I had not witnessed before; dogma and identity, which threatened to engulf each other in the lingering trauma of genocide and colonialism experienced by some of the people

we met there; and representation and invention, which defined the continuum along which Camila, Bruno, and I connected art and science in our conversations. Each one of the binaries forms the vertex of a triangle.

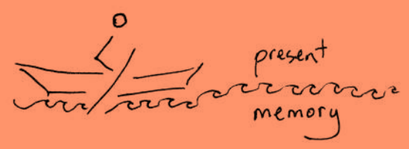



Immediately, the schema seems too tidy, and I resist. What do the lines connecting the vertices signify? And what does the triangle represent? I decide the triangle encloses the memory of my sensory experience in Tasmania. The vertices are the extremities to which my mind wanders from there, three extensions into abstraction from my memory of those days, an island with boundaries that shift as it is shaped and re-shaped through recollection.

As soon as I begin layering the events of those few days onto the triangle, the three vertices stop making sense. I can envision multiple lines connecting all six notions into varied configurations, and the triangle settles into a hexagon with indefinite edges. In it, death connects to representation as much as to life. I can see the relation between identity and life on one side, identity and dogma on the other. Invention builds on representation and plays a role in breaking dogma. Dogma ensures survival in resistance, and therefore is connected to life. I realise that none of this will make sense to a reader without some grounding in our experiences.




Soon I become frustrated with my mind and its lazy acquiescence to binaries and triads. Discipline structures my thoughts as though the inside of my mind were a honeycomb. If my thinking could come closer to the geographic shape of our journey, then perhaps my ideas would better connect to the experience I would like to recount. And so, I decide to embark on an archipelagic, narrative account of our time in Tasmania, in the hope that it will admit a less disciplined structure of thinking, one that is shaped by the time and space we traversed. This essay is an experiment in connecting my internal map of abstractions to the shape of our trajectory. I begin by paddling away from my island of abstraction, along the interweaving boundary between present and memory.




Mount Wellington,
June 30, 2016

Soon after Camila, Bruno, and I land in Hobart, Martin Moroni, forest manager and soil scientist, picks us up at the School of the Arts and drives us up Mount Wellington, promising a spectacular view of the city and its surroundings. But the summit is enveloped in fog, so we wind to an overlook a third of the way down the mountain, where we start a fire to grill the salmon Martin brought for lunch. We share our meal perched on a steep cliff overlooking the Tasmanian southeast. From this vantage point we can trace the creeping outlines of the Derwent estuary, metallic grey under heavy clouds, surrounded by blue-tinged hills and mountains. Mount Wellington reaches up into the fog behind us while Martin talks about Tasmania, its environmental challenges, and his work in forest management. He describes what he considers to be the overpopulation of trees on the island—a matchbox waiting for a spark and, in the case of the forest on Mount Wellington, an imminent threat to Hobart. Just a few months before our trip, Tasmania had seen its most intense season of fires in history, with over 100,000 hectares burned, a sixth of which was located in Tasmania's World Heritage Wilderness Area. This accounts for the urgency in Martin's tone as he outlines the conflict between the priorities of environmentalists and the interests of the timber industry.

All in all, about half of Tasmania is forested, including the fifth of the main island protected by World Heritage status. This woodland, which includes wet and dry eucalypt, blackwood, and cool, temperate rainforest, is the terrain of contestation among groups whose approaches to the forest mix conservation, preservation, and extraction in different measures. Fuel reduction, that is, the deliberate burning of forested areas to diminish the chance of wildfires, addresses a shared concern among environmental, industry, political, and citizen advocacy groups. It seems essential both to the health of the forests and to preserving human settlements. But there is little agreement on methods of fuel reduction, and approaches vary in their compatibility with the timber industry and their threat or potential contribution to biodiversity.

Environmental conflict pervades Tasmanian politics. The first green party in history emerged in Tasmania in 1972 during protests against a hydroelectric damming project that, ultimately, overflowed Lake Pedder. The struggle over forest management exhibits the dynamics of splits between environmental movements and industrial enterprise worldwide. Contending notions of environment—whether as a collection of resources for extraction, as wildlife refuge, or as a liability—often share an assumption of supremacy of humans over nature and, especially in post-colonial contexts, a denial of the interwovenness of human life, even more so marginalised human life, with the environment.[3] Rational approaches, affective stances, or ethical commitments mediate the recognition of this supremacy, the blind spots it produces, and whether and how individuals or groups take action on behalf of the ecology that sustains them. Because grasping the environmental situation in all its dimensions is impossible from a purely human political perspective, collectivities act based on partial views. Euro-centred paradigms allow individuals to oscillate between believing they can solve ecological problems by controlling nature and apathy in the face of a crisis the scale of which is impossible to grasp with the available analytical tools.[4] Notions of the Anthropocene root the origin of the epoch in the first traces of human industry found in the geological record. But decolonial, feminist, and Marxist thinkers question both the boundaries and the defining features of this age, in some cases proposing alternative ones including the Capitalocene, centred on economically-driven environmental transformations; notions that incorporate human extraction to other forms of resource extraction in light of colonialism and the slave trade; and the Chthulucene, an epoch of interspecies adaptation and transformation toward building a sustainable, shared life. As Donna Haraway, describes it, the Chthulucene 'must collect up the trash of the Anthropocene, the exterminism of the Capitalocene, and chipping and shredding and layering like a mad gardener, make a much hotter compost pile for still possible pasts, presents, and futures.'[5]

Over lunch, Martin recounts his observations over years of working in the forest. He tells us of the many times he has encountered evidence of fuel reduction by Palawa inhabitants pre-dating the colonisation of Australia, including patch burning, clear cutting, and the construction of fire barriers. It appears that the practice of forest management has always accompanied human settlement in Tasmania, a hypothesis Martin deploys against the argument that taking a hand to nature is unique to Western civilisation. Martin also tells us about his plan to organise an exhibition that will bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures with soil scientists. His E[art]h project, developed in collaboration with Richard Doyle, another soil scientist based at the University of Tasmania, aims to create a meeting space for scientific, indigenous, and artistic cultures engaged with or using soil as their primary material.

Bruno's recent work centres on soil science, and he and Martin discuss the challenges of soil remediation while Camila and I decide to take a brief hike up the mountain. A few steps beyond the shelter, we find a steep trail parallel to the brook we've been hearing pour down the cliff side. As we climb, the view of the city, which has insisted on our attention all this time, is at our backs for the first time. The path is rough with plants I have never seen before, and I marvel at the new shapes and colours, at the unfamiliar smells. When, trying to catch my breath, I lean against the mountain for balance, I feel its staunch solidity. Standing alone, beyond the reach of the conversation that has carried us through the day, I wonder about the Palawa and what more-than-historical presence may linger here beyond the archaeological evidence of their forest-management techniques. Their population was decimated by the violence and disease of British colonisers. Raphael Lemkin, the Jewish Polish lawyer who coined the term genocide and brought the Genocide Convention to recognition in the United Nations in 1948, included the British decimation of the Palawa as one of the cases that defined genocide as intentional action to massacre a group of people.[6] The term draws a stark line between present and past, especially in post-colonial settings where genocide as part and parcel of a colonising mission may be perceived as a *fait accompli*. This makes it possible to deny the ongoing violence triggered by colonial genocide, even after the end of colonial rule, and opens the way for the descendants of perpetrators to experience remorse with less weight of responsibility to existing communities of survivors. As such, genocide may be processed in isolation from previous generations—with only a remote relation to victims and perpetrators, if any at all.[7] In this case, dominant communities view the descendants of the victims of genocide as lacking a common ground with a nation-state built on a history of genocide and the denial of these very survivors. The continuing legitimacy of the nation-state relies on an abstraction of its foundation myth, one that denies the existence of historical continuity between genocide and the present.[8]

Still leaning against the mountain, I wonder how Martin's view holds up without the knowledge of the social and cultural context in which the forest practices that left those traces he observed were carried out. Is this culling of practical knowledge from the past through archaeological evidence not another form of extraction, the resource being, in this case, a practice that is framed, in the present, as forest management expertise? One can wrest knowledge from an unknown past only by assuming the parts lose nothing in their separation from their historical context. This selective drawing on pieces of the past to inform our presents and futures unsettles me as I lean against the side of the mountain and again now, as I write. Memory is itself a form of extraction through a filter I seldom perceive. What would that filter, were I to perceive it, tell about what I register and don't register? How would that filter reflect my relationships to the world and the ways in which I wield my privilege or lack thereof, depending on context and circumstance?

Greg Lehman, an art historian and Aboriginal activist whom we are to meet the next day, writes about forest management from a different perspective: 'Images of Aborigines as an "unchanging people in an unchanging environment" fail to adequately acknowledge the changes in climate that have occurred during the period of human occupation of Tasmania and their influence on cultural change.'[9] He cites the dynamism and innovation of Aboriginal fire management to enhance species diversity and to influence ecological succession in favour of a communal livelihood, reminding us that 'the relationship between culture and vegetation was dynamic and interactive.'[10] This perspective poses a challenge to the peculiar mix of entrepreneurship and environmentalism that underlies industry-driven calls for fuel reduction in Tasmania. These refer to production and profit as much as to conservation of the forest, set in a modernist framework where nature and culture remain separate, and where the environment is to be controlled, modified, and reined in. In an evidence-based, scientific vision of the ecological future, the apocalyptic outlook is not far-fetched. On the other hand, conservationist anthropological views advocate for the protection, saving, or revival of Aboriginal culture. The two together bring a partial history to bear on the contemporary ecological crisis, reifying culture and enshrining authenticity in ways that fail to transcend colonial forms of relating to subjugated, native populations.

As we wind down the road back to Hobart, Martin indicates the path of the fire he expects will one day blaze down from Wellington's wooded heights. He points to his neighbourhood on the lap of the mountain, bound to be one of the first to be engulfed. As I listen to him detail his family's evacuation plan, the sense of a more-than-human, more-than-historical world I felt on the hike overwhelms me.

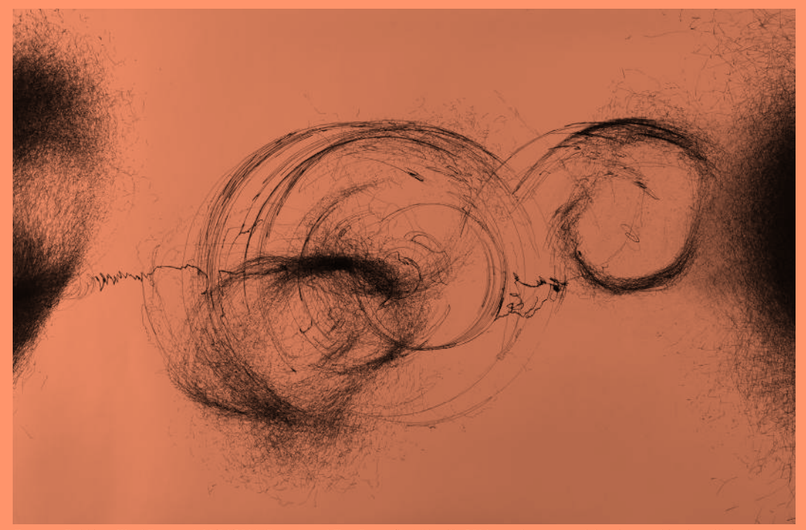
Hobart,
evening of June 30, 2016

In his talk at the Tasmanian School of the Arts, Bruno elaborates on ideas to be published in a forthcoming book on the climate crisis.[11] Bruno's focus on the critical zone—the thin skin that covers our planet and sustains life as we know it—offers an alternative both to the exteriority of the global view and to the solipsism of a localism delimited by political boundaries. Lovelock's Gaia is perhaps the closest model to the network of interrelations that comprise the critical zone Bruno describes.[12] This lateral view of life on earth offers an alternative to the endlessly transited scale from local to global and back. Bruno draws a line that veers off this continuum between *terroir*, or the grounding for nationalist sentiment, and the illusion and unattainable promise of globalism. This opens the way for the recognition of more-than-human relations, a central element of Australian and so many other indigenous cultures and traditions. In this perspective, we are not merely *on* the earth but *in* it, integral yet not essential to the critical zone we inhabit. We ply the thin layer of the critical zone and interweave in ways that could sustain or destroy us. Bruno outlines how the current climate regime is a result of this dynamic: our production, reproduction, and consumption in the critical zone—our dysfunctional relation to other beings and entities of the critical zone. Our transformation of the zone itself—its air, soil, and water—leaves the indelible trace that defines the Anthropocene.

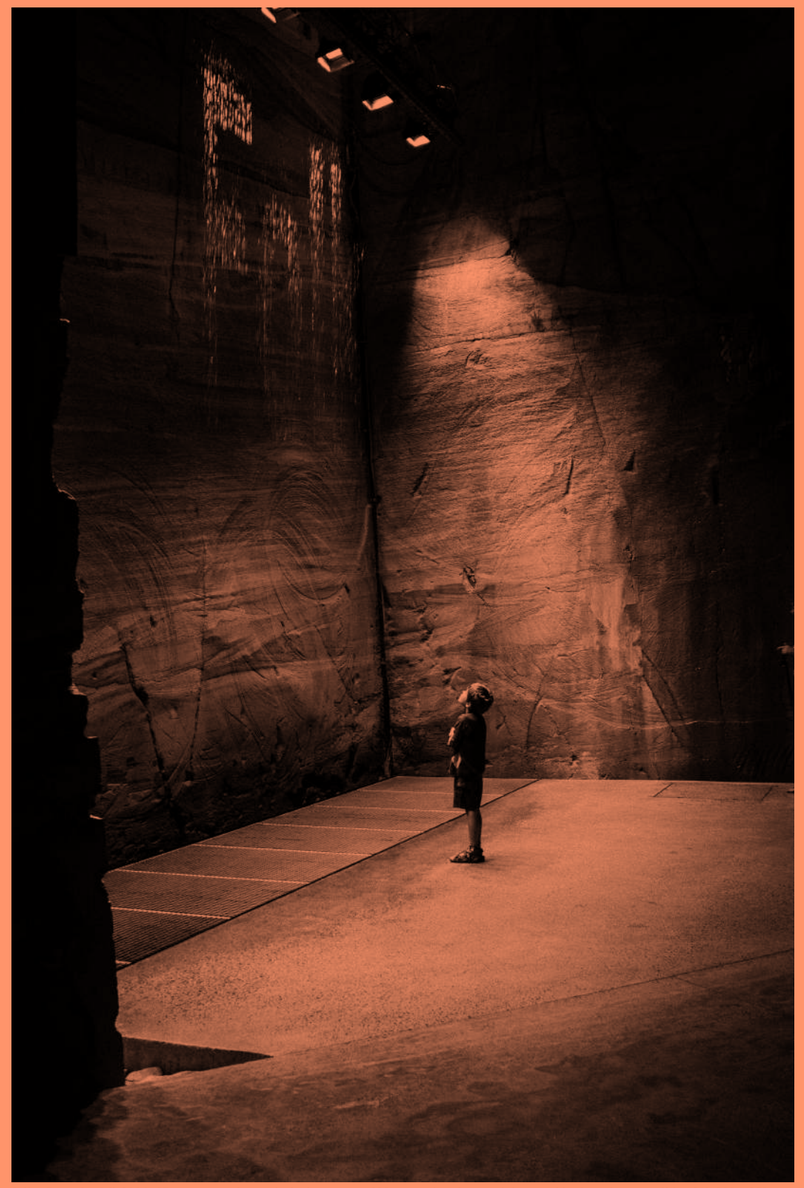
My tendency is to question the centrality of humans in the notion of Anthropocene. Its definition seems barely to transcend the human-centred, modernist framework in which it is forged. I am in part drawn to Bruno's work because of his relentless intent to break down the modernist paradigm. He returns again and again to our incapacity to see the processes and mechanisms underlying representations of reality produced by scientific tools. Those tools, as well as the institutions required to forge them, are constructed by us and used to extract knowledge which, having been expressed, renders the tools invisible. Once extracted, the facts are called upon to stand for themselves as truths, independent of the processes that forged them. We take away the structure that holds up knowledge and use this processed data to inform our work and our lives, individual and collective, while remaining objective (adhering to apolitical standards) as scientists. But like children who return to the beach to find their sandcastle devoured by the tide, we return again and again to debates with climate sceptics, reproducing a standoff between science and politics that hinders the transformations necessary to ensure our survival in the critical zone. For Bruno, the climate regime is a Hobbesian nightmare, one we can only leave behind by forging of a new social contract that recognises the link between nature and culture. The new sovereign will be this Gaia-esque critical zone: not just an aggregate of constituents, but a network of human and more-than-human relations essential to survival. Perhaps this represents, finally, Haraway's Chthulucene, a place where *khthôn* (from chthonic ones, beings of the earth) and *kainos* (the now, the ongoing present that continually combines past and future) come together in a dynamic of 'living-with and dying-with each other.'[13]

Museum of Old and New Art,
July 1, 2016

The next morning, we let ourselves be carried by catamaran into the narrowing Derwent estuary, to the outcropping of land that holds the Museum of Old and New Art. Built on David Walsh's amassed fortune as a professional gambler, the museum is designed to facilitate popular access to art. The galleries include works by Anselm Kiefer, James Turrell, and Marina Abramoviç, as well as an ancient Egyptian mummy and several Neolithic artefacts. Walsh's philosophy rejects elitist boundaries, advocating for engagement with art as integral to human life and activity.[14] Visitors carry around a device called 'the O', which allows them to rate the art displayed, as well as to read and listen to information, interviews, and other commentary from Walsh, the artists, and critics. The MONA collection is curated by a professional staff closely supervised by Walsh. Kirsha Kaechele, who is married to Walsh, coordinates community initiatives such as the River Derwent Heavy Metals Project. As one of the highest



Cameron Robbins, *Wind Section 4-16/04/2014 (Seismic and Two Butterflies)* (detail), 2014, weather-powered drawing machine installation; materials include painted wood, stainless steel, aluminium, ball bearings, shock cord, wire, paper, ink. Courtesy Fluoro Digital.[15]



Julius Popp, *bit.fall*, 2006–07, computer, electronic devices, pump, 320 magnetic valves, stainless steel basin and water, edition 2/4, 800 × 350 cm. Photograph: Paul Large.[16]

mercury polluted rivers on the planet, the Derwent, which runs through Hobart, poses an insurmountable challenge to restoration efforts. The artists and scientists in the Heavy Metals network collaborate to create responses to this contamination.

We arrive early enough to walk around the museum before our meeting with the Heavy Metals people. Perhaps because Bruno's presentation from last night is still on my mind, I am especially drawn to works that use scientific tools to convey what is invisible to the senses. Cameron Robbins, for example, captures the movement of the wind with machines that translate wind energy into ink drawings. An account of the wind drawing machines he built describes them as musical instruments:

> More like clarinets and pianos than compasses or setsquares, they must be maintained, practiced, and performed to produce work that communicates.
>
> The machines respond to wind speed and wind direction, and allow rain and sun to also play on the drawings. The principle employed here is that the wind direction orients a swivelling drawing board connected to a wind vane, while the wind speed drives a pen on a wire arm around in a cyclical motion.[17]

The wind drawings border on decipherable, like almost legible handwriting on patterns made by spirographs.

In Julius Popp's *bit.fall* (2006–07), words drawn from internet news cascade over a raw wood wall in coordinated droplets of water, each drop a 'bit' of a letter. The speed at which the water words drop almost outpaces our capacity to read them.

In this case, the decoder is not an external machine but ourselves, and we encounter the limits of our memory and interpretive ability as the words fall away from comprehension. The work points to the ungraspable flow of information we have produced through technology that outpaces our minds. The piece seems to me an apt encapsulation of the crisis of modernity. According to Bruno, we are not modern, have never been so. The sophistication and understanding we attribute to ourselves relies on distinctions and specialisations resulting from the division of labour. Instead of illuminating the whole, these divisions ensure a semblance of social order and perpetuate institutions that sustain imaginary boundaries while obscuring the imbrication of cultural, scientific, political, and natural realms. We moderns cling to the notion that our particular form of sociality sets boundaries between us and other life-forms and objects.[18] The institutions we build to produce a constructed order and sustain systems of domination reify those boundaries, even when our experiences of reality challenge them. As such, we are imprisoned behind the grids we have created.

The artworks that called my attention at MONA employ scientific tools to render visible the invisible, or to reveal the illegibility of the legible. They play at the limits of perception, reinforcing Bruno's perspective that if we have any sense of a whole, it is produced by technology, like the image of the globe from space. Yet, the representations of reality produced by scientific tools and theoretical constructs sometimes open the way to innovation. Such representations—say of a virus by a microscope, or the geography of a city by GIS technology—open the way for scientists and other agents to transform the world. How does art fit into this dynamic? In the works I saw at MONA, art practice takes a scientific approach to produce innovative representations which remain, for the most part, in the art world. Art and science meet in transdisciplinary spaces of collaboration such as Ensayos or the Heavy Metals project, which is why we have come here in the first place.

Which brings me to the conference room where we are to meet the members of the Heavy Metals project. We mingle for a few minutes until Kirsha Kaechele calls the meeting to order. First, Camila and I give a brief talk about our work with Ensayos, then Kirsha launches into an account of her youthful exploits and misadventures while traveling in southern Argentina. It is hard to tell how this will lead to a discussion with the Heavy Metals folk, whose ideas and projects we are avid to hear. But the meeting continues rather informally until David Walsh walks in with the baby, Sunday, and deposits her in Kirsha's arms. He leaves with a curt wave, and Kirsha pulls one breast out of her haute couture dress and plugs it into the baby's mouth. This, to me, seems a brave and laudable action to take in a conference room, albeit one requiring a certain level of privilege. The artworld, its patronage networks and hierarchies, is contained in this simple gesture which blurs the boundary of private and public space and sets empowered motherhood centre stage before a captive audience of artists and academics here to seek financial support and the dissemination of their work. As Sunday nurses, Kirsha changes the subject to the mercury mausoleum in which she plans to bury her husband.

Finally! Mercury! The scientists and artists around the table liven up and begin to speak. They explain that the mausoleum is made of 'bioremediator' oysters that died while absorbing mercury from the river. The conversation lingers on one of the projects the group carried out, an installation inside a van that took urine samples of Hobart residents to evaluate the impact of the river on public health. For the future, they plan to build a heavy metals lab on a pier next to the museum, which would stretch into the Derwent. As I listen, I realise that what we are witnessing here is the counter-direction of the relationship between art and science I witnessed in the halls of the museum. Whereas in the galleries science extended the possibilities of art by producing innovative representations, in this space, art unconventionally yet effectively extends the possibilities of science, both by opening new venues for exploration, and by harnessing the power of art patrons such as David Walsh and Kirsha Kaechele. Facing the conundrum of rendering the mercury dump site on which the museum sits safe for some forms of human use, the Heavy Metals scientists are open to the perspectives of artists who keep asking 'why not?'[19] One member of the Heavy Metals group explains, 'We are resetting relations through an attempt at remediation', and I understand how, in their work, just like in ours, process, not outcome, is the focus. Learning to cohabitate with heavy metals, the scientists explain, involves trial and error, a trajectory whose endpoint, if one exists, is elusive. Our discussion of mercury traces the thin line between life and death. How much mercury can a child or an adult consume and still survive? How much will organs absorb and incorporate while continuing to function? In different ways, the artists seem to be saying, 'Let it reveal itself when the time comes, don't force it.'

Lucy Bleach, who met us at the airport and is hosting us at the School of the Arts, is one of the artists present. She explains how her art engages the very geologic slowness our minds struggle to grasp. As I listen to her, time, which had been flowing swiftly for me all day, slows to walking pace. Lucy's sculptures transform almost unperceived—for example, in *Superslow* (2015), an enormous ice block inside a structure reminiscent of a nineteenth century ice house gives way, over the course of weeks, to a circular plot of grass; in *Underground* (2015), inner tubes inside a concrete wall expand as they receive seismic data registering local and global vibrations, gradually destroying the wall.[20] I am not surprised to see that she invokes Édouard Glissant in relation to her work. His writing taught me the notion of trembling thinking, which, as he writes,

> erupts everywhere, with the music and the forms suggested by the people. It saves us from thinking in systems and systems of thoughts. It does not assume fear or that which is unresolved. It extends infinitely like a countless bird, its wings sown with the black salt of the earth.[21]

Immersed in Lucy's geologic time, I envision the evolution of the river Derwent and its possible futures. I feel a tremor and once again the unsettling of my sense of self as my projections come unstuck from linear time. I recognise the temporal scope of the damage we humans have done, but the tremor also unsettles pre-set ideas. It weakens false roots, reveals arbitrary boundaries, and facilitates their crossing—the tracing of new geographies. This critical zone, this earth that, as Bruno insists, can be defined neither by nationalist dogma nor utopian globalism, is a place of trembling where only the openness to interrelation might lead to complex, sustainable systems of cohabitation. Haraway calls this effort to build community through relations of care and empathy among living beings 'making kin'.[22] The path that trembling opens up calls on me to recognise kinship beyond members of my species: to the soil, to the animals I use or consume, or whose companionship I seek, to insects, and to the water, pure and impure, which keeps me alive.

Hobart to Kettering to Bruny,
July 1–2, 2016

By the time we leave MONA, I am already headed to Bruny Island in my mind. The drawings the wind made have left an impression, but more than anything they draw me outside to experience the wind without mediation. I feel relief when we leave the museum, and as we take distance on our drive to Kettering. There we will catch the ferry to Bruny in time to watch the sunset.

And now I arrive at a fragment of memory where I would rather just be present as I was present in Pete Hay's pick-up truck, his little white dog resting between us as we hurtle down the route to his cottage on the island. The memory first presents itself as sensory, unmediated by language—I remember the darkness, and keeping my eyes peeled for wallabies along the side of the road. But as the visual sense settles, bits and pieces of our conversation return to me.

Pete Hay is a poet and geographer. He has published books on environmental theory and history, has written on islands and islanders, and on the psychology of archipelagic living. His poetry immerses the reader in the Tasmanian landscape with a gaze that enters into relation with plants and animals—the echidna, a flower floating in with the tide—and bridges distances between human perception and something as infinitesimal as the light released with the death of a leaf cell. Like Lucy's work, Pete's poetry engages with a speculative spatiality and temporality. His essay, 'The Breath of Vast Time', combines his perspectives as poet and geographer. He writes that

> [t]he past has always held more fascination for me than the future. The future reeks with dire portent. The past, at least, is inscribed with our evolutionary success, we who are *specifically* still here, all we swimmers, fliers, crawlers, wrigglers, striders, lopers and scurriers.[23]

As I remember it now, the first few kilometres riding in Pete's truck were quiet. I feel again the trepidation and the discomfort that always comes with my shyness. My mind ruminates over the environmental conflict that Martin laid out for us the day before. I want to engage Pete in this polemic, and so ask: What role does burning play in the conservation of the forest? Or is the primary concern preserving human settlements? I ask him about the role of the Green Party in all this.

Pete takes his time to respond. While the conversation with Martin drew on the distant past as a source of knowledge to orient the future, Pete offers a response that builds on more recent history. He is unwilling to settle on one side or the other of the debate between industry and environmentalists. Forest management, conservation, and the timber economy need not exclude one another. 'What is the local concern? The history of the place and the community's relationship to the forest?' Pete asks. And it makes sense, the work of a geographer begins with place, not just conceptualised as space, but as a hub of relations.

Slowly, Pete moves from a historical explanation into evocations of the future Martin dreads. His words reflect another section of his essay on 'The Breath of Vast Time', where he changes his tack on the future: 'I have gone too far. Who could not find the unpredictable mystery of the future as fascinating as the riddle-me incomprehensibility of the past? So I'll recast my position thus: the seamless transition of past into future is the most pressing responsibility of the body politic.'[24] This call to ensure the continuity of time through social, climatic, biological transformation, must build on historical knowledge. '[T]o have a point of moral vantage that even makes such determinations possible,' he writes, 'we need the inheritance of the past.'[25] I wonder about the difference between this kind of historical sensibility and the archaeological evidence that Martin would apply to forest management. The silences lengthen between us as we continue south, and in that space, perhaps the first quiet of our time in Tasmania, I start to understand that this land does not mean the same to Pete as it does to Martin, and that this relates to their different senses of time in space: a notion of time as continuous for Pete versus a compartmentalisation of past, present, and future for Martin. In an archipelagic sense, it might be that Pete travels over water, while Martin skips from island to island.

I feel the pull of the road, to keep following the route to where the sidewalk ends, then to ponder crossing the water and the next landing on *terra firma*. What new translations will it call forth? And I feel the trembling of a boat drifting on water—water that connects the fragments of reality I perceive. My eyes adjust to the dark as I turn over the boundary between past and future, life and death, artifice and invention, then leave them behind to be simply present in this moment, barrelling down the spine of Bruny Island.

'Do we bring life or death with us where we go?' Camila posed this question to Bruno and me before we took the plane from Melbourne to Hobart, and her question has threaded through the past two days. For tonight, we stop at Pete's cottage, and spend the night there with Lucy, Camila, and Greg Lehman, descendant of the Trauwulwuy people, art historian, and Aboriginal activist. As the fire in the wood stove begins to warm up the cottage, we search for words to address Camila's question but wind up drawing the objects around us into the conversation: a bottle of wine Greg brought, Pete's cap, from the same region of France where Bruno grew up. We define ourselves to each other via these artefacts, alternating between the identities we aspire to and the rejection of identities imposed on us. We seek stable ground, and yet the very air calls on us to stay in the trembling place, to remain open to new forms of identifying. Our intent is to collaborate, to transform one another, not to remain fixed.

The next morning, over breakfast, Greg reads from an essay he wrote some ten years ago:

> [I]t has been death that has characterised the island we call Trowuna […] Death for us is not the musket shot or the hangman's hand. It is not the high powered rifle of the mass murderer. Death is part of the spirit of our existence: an event which moves us and changes us.[26]

Bruny Island, he tells us, is *lunawanna-allonah*, the place of acknowledgement. Later, standing in the pale light of Tasmanian winter, Greg explains how the monuments the state erected to the Palawa have no meaning to descendants of the island's original inhabitants, yet for him and his people every tree is an ancestor. It's not in the blood, he says, though it was the tracing of bloodlines to a faded photograph of his

great-grandmother that revealed his Aboriginal lineage. Inheritance manifests as a relationship to ancestors more-than-human, and to a land which brings together all life forms past and present. I remember Bruno's focus on the critical zone, and wonder how this historical/anthropological layer may integrate to the lateral relations he described in his lecture.

The story of Greg's Aboriginal identity, from his days as a schoolboy onward, is a story of coming up against colonial dogma, then avoiding the kneejerk response to repression that reflects and replicates that dogma, almost like a mirror. Once he recognised the Aboriginal ancestry of his grandmother, Greg came to identify exclusively with the Trauwulwuy. As he explains in an interview, he was 'taking one strand of my identity, adopting it, and ignoring the rest.'[27] This in spite of his light skin, and the fact that his features primarily reflect his Irish, English, and German ancestry. '[W]hen people ask me, "Well then, why do you say you're Aboriginal?" I simply say that the line that makes sense to me, the line that explains why I was born in Tasmania, is the line that I can draw back to my Aboriginal ancestors.'[28] After all, he asks, why is it so difficult for people, both white and Aboriginal, to recognise that Aboriginal people may have as multilayered an ethnic identity as white Australians? If identity is relation, then it must shift continually, yet power, in its categorising obsession, does not admit this flux. When Greg openly embraced his Aboriginal identity at school, he was slapped by his teacher: 'Nothing to be proud of!' The face of colonialism is this dogma and intolerance, and the danger of resistance is falling into a symmetrical dogma. Following Glissant, it's in the mixing produced by colonialism that thinking begins to tremble such that identity cannot remain unitary or fixed. It trembles in its encounter with the other, and in the forging of relation, where impurity and newness prevail over essence. Yet for Greg, holding on to his Aboriginal identity is a rejection of erasure, a deliberate partiality against prevailing colonial attitudes.

After breakfast, we set out from Pete's cottage toward Adventure Bay, where we stop at Two Tree Point, a small cape that juts out into the ocean close to Resolution Creek. The place names secrete the odour of colonial hopes and fantasies cast on this land. The interpretive sign put in place by the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service reveals the origins of the names:

> Known as 'Watering Place' on the charts of Captain Tobias Furneaux (*Adventure*, 1773), this waterway, from which early explorers replenished their supplies of fresh water, was later named Resolution River by Captain William Bligh during his visit on *Bounty* in 1788. Bligh had been Sailing Master on Cook's ship in 1777.
>
> Accompanying Capt. Bligh on his next visit (*Providence*, 1972) was Lieutenant George Tobin, the expedition's Principal Artist. Of the seven paintings executed by Tobin in Adventure Bay, one depicted the area now known as Two Tree Point. It is thought that these trees depicted by Tobin (both of which are *Eucalyptus globulus*), are still standing today, making them at least 250 years of age.
>
> A further painting of an Aboriginal bark shelter was also sited in the area, and Tobin's journal provides information on the diet of the indigenous inhabitants and their shelter construction. Aboriginal artefacts have been found in this area.

Tobin's watercolour of Two Tree Point is reproduced on the sign. It shows the British ships arriving and, of course, the two trees standing sentry. The egocentrism of colonisation manifests in its tone-deaf optimism. Adventure, Resolution, Providence, Bounty: almost two and a half centuries have passed, yet the British names remain. Despite the fact that the crews had contact with the aboriginal inhabitants of the island, the sign reveals nothing more than Tobin's depiction of a bark shelter and a bare description of their diet.

Greg writes that the myth of Aboriginal extinction has been so important to the ruling whites of Tasmania that challenging it is 'felt [as] a personal affront [to them]'.[29] Standing at Two Tree Point I understand how, on this island full of unmarked graves, any monument would make a mockery of the genocide. Nothing could mean more than the land itself to those who recognise life as an interweaving of ancestors, human and more-than-human. In this consciousness, the critical zone calls forth something more than respect for the past. It demands a continuing of awareness, a trembling shift toward an alternative path barely discernible from the other side of colonisation. It calls on us to close our eyes long enough to lose our way of destruction. If only we could.

We stand by the two trees as Greg reads from Cook's account of his landing. It is 1777 and only the second time he and the crew of the *Resolution* have come upon Aboriginal inhabitants on this island. The encounter, as described, is a peaceful one. We look again at Tobin's watercolour, this time on the screen of Greg's laptop, and try to identify his precise vantage point on the landscape. From that angle, we have no doubt that these are the same two trees rising on the point. Greg sifts through other images until he finds a drawing by John Webber, who arrived with Captain Cook in 1777. This is the earliest European depiction available of the British encounter with native Tasmanians. Captain Cook stands at the centre, presenting a medal to one among a group of men. It appears that they are being treated as allies. The drawing's title is *An Interview between Captain Cook and the Natives*, and foreshadows the drawing and engraving Webber will make two years later, depicting Captain Cook's death at the hand of natives in Hawai'i. Greg notes how the faces of the Aboriginal men in the drawing are detailed but identical, likely reproduced from an earlier sketch. Here we see how the colonial encounter relies on a clear boundary between white settler and indigenous inhabitant. On one side of the line the figures are differentiated but less precisely drawn, it is assumed that the European onlooker would recognise individuality in minimal, subtle, strokes; on the other side, the faces and bodies are precisely drawn but uniform. The indigenous side admits no diversity. As we look at these images, we grasp the limitations of colonial imagination, its propensity to invention based on the perception of an 'other', the novelty of which prevents deeper knowledge of that other.[30] And what about us? What layers of experience, what imagined narratives, what identities do we bring to bear on this place?

As our small group disperses, I walk along the narrow beach that stretches south from Two Tree Point. Halfway down the beach, I settle on the uneven boundary between sand and trees to watch the water. Bruno steps across the sand before me, and I make a short film of it on my phone. As I watch it now—this effort to register our own landing, our own attempt at deciphering this place in all its times—I wonder where Bruno was in his mind at that moment. Present or elsewhere? Was that moment or its video rendition about the water in relation to Bruno, or Bruno in relation to the water, a registering of that long stretch of sand, or the feel of Tasmanian winter air? Was I trying to capture the particular light in Bruny, which that day produced sharper contrasts than I had seen before? Am I now watching those twenty-seven seconds of video while remembering, or projecting the moment forward as I write? Does it matter how I experienced it and with whom? Greg, Lucy, Camila, and Pete are not in the video, though I feel their presence in that moving image. But where were they in that moment? Each one losing and finding him or herself along the beach, or using it to travel elsewhere?

Travellers come and go, but strangers come and stay, remaining strangers all their lives. So Georg Simmel argues.[31] Perhaps trembling thinking makes strangers of us all, carrying the burden of alienness, but holding the privilege of remaining uncommitted to standard ways of thinking. In this place I am both traveller and stranger. Traveller because I will leave soon enough, but a stranger to the ways of thinking that surround me. I am neither teacher nor student, coloniser nor colonised. My gaze mystifies, brings another nostalgia to bear on this place, continually seeks comparison with something I have experienced before, yet delights in the alienness of the flora and fauna, sees newness in what, to locals, might be a banality. More than anything, I seek a way of understanding who I am in relation to this place, in this moment and its layering of memory.

Now, as I remember walking back to Two Tree Point over the beach, I think of the Slovenian poet, Jure Detela, whose work I had yet to read back then. Inspired by Ezra Pound, Detela committed much of his writing to literality. The forest is only the forest in his poems; a leaf is a leaf; the moon, only the moon. In those poems, I see the desire I experienced on Bruny for those two trees at Two Tree point to only be two trees, ancestors perhaps, but not the two trees painted by Tobin, carried into history as part of a picture that only tells one side of the story, and therefore tells a lie. And yet they are the Two Tree trees. The old watercolour remains on the interpretive sign and, indefatigable, Captain Cook, or Furneaux, or Bligh land over and over again to extract resources from the island—wood, fresh water, in memory, in history, forever observed by an Aboriginal community all but erased in the historical record.

I touch the trees, wanting to dissolve the separation between my mind and these living beings. Then I round Two Tree Point to see the north side, where the others are waiting. Greg shows us an eroded section of the point along a short, steep cliff. It reveals that we stand on a midden made of *werrena* shells and other detritus. Hundreds of years old, this human-made knoll, large enough to support the two trees, is evidence of Aboriginal presence on this beach long before the arrival of the British. We sit on the midden drawn by Webber and Tobin. It is solid and still enough to hold all of us and our trembling as we interweave past and present presence into relation. Later, we continue our journey south to the lighthouse at the tip of Bruny, but somehow I remain on that midden, both in my mind that day and in my writing now.

Hobart,
July 2–3, 2016

We make our way back to Hobart that afternoon because David and Kirsha have invited us to join the opening celebration for an exhibition at MONA, *Hound in the Hunt*. The show is organised around the work of inventor Tim Jenison, who devised a way to replicate Vermeer paintings with optical aids. Pursuing his suspicion that Vermeer and his predecessors used technology to make their paintings, he created a simple device—a small mounted mirror set at an angle—to produce what he calls 'handmade photographs',[32] or accurate representations of tableaus reconstructed on the basis of Vermeer paintings. Jenison uses his replicas to contend that artists of the Dutch Golden Age used optical aids to render their subjects. The party at MONA is to be a recreation of a seventeenth-century feast, and the invitation comes with a recommendation that we stop by MONA to choose historically appropriate costumes. The guests are expected to dress as nobility, but the title of the exhibition, *Hound in the Hunt*, grants us some latitude. Apparently, it is alright for us to dress as prey, and since we would all rather be wild non-humans than nobility, Lucy digs up a half dozen fur garments to lend us.

Bruno Latour en Bruny Island, Tasmania, 2016, imagen de video. Cortesía de Denise Milstein.

At MONA, we encounter a lavish display: brimming banquet tables featuring sumptuous flower arrangements and animals killed in the hours before the party by Walsh's hired hunter. Silver-haired rabbits and pheasants still in their plumage lie among dishes painstakingly replicating the gastronomical customs of the period. People mill about in broad collars, décolleté dresses, floppy hats, velvet robes, fitted doublets, lacy petticoats, billowing skirts, and puffed sleeves. On the tables, I see fur and feathers, the eyes of dead animals, blind to the human hands reaching for them as food. Here we are, celebrating the Dutch Golden Age, which saw the rise of the East India Company, a model for the multinational corporations that would follow and continue their paths of extraction, displacement, and colonisation. Abel Tasman, for whom the archipelago is named, was himself employed by the Dutch East India Company. He came to explore and trade 135 years before the British East India Company sent Captain Cook.

I graze my fingers along the fur of the vest Lucy lent me and imagine myself as prey. Then I reach back to a different seventeenth century, the time and place where Aboriginal life flourished, a world completely absent from the replica inside which I'm imprisoned at the moment. A woman dressed as the girl with the pearl earring rustles past me, setting me back in place. Of course, we are supposed to be in the Netherlands. How did I get here from Bruny Island? I sit at the banquet table and make small talk with the warm and welcoming artists and writers assigned to sit next to me. They remark on the extravagance of their benefactor and this party he has thrown. One of them tells me this museum is the crown jewel of Hobart. A couple of expatriates from the United States describe their lives in Tasmania. I try, but can hardly eat.

The morning after the party we are scheduled to participate in a workshop with Camila at the School of the Arts. She has assigned us to bring one object that relates to this question of life and death we have been mulling over since our arrival. Bruno is nowhere to be found and I set out to look for him in the vicinity of the school. Walking along the Hobart waterfront map-less, I realise I have no sense of the city layout. I lose my way in the circuit of streets, and keep coming upon the port, the docks, the farmer's market, a small bridge over a canal, then another, the school of the arts, then back to the docks. In the confusion all this produces I start to feel like a character in one of Renee Gladman's books. In a series of novellas set in Ravicka, an imaginary city, her characters try to work and subsist while grappling with a constantly shifting geography. In Ravicka, buildings move on their own, they appear and disappear. It may take days or just an instant to cross a bridge. Space and time get mixed up as the characters, both Ravickan and foreign, try to understand through science, philosophy, and poetry the mechanisms and relationships that account for shifting places and architectures. In Ravicka, the urban landscape no longer defines trajectory and relationships, but rather blurs and displaces them. Theoretical schemas and hierarchies break down, leaving only an unfamiliar, lateral view of the space. This is the kind of foreignness I experience while ambling lost through Hobart. First it reinforces my subjectivity (my identity, my memory, and every city I have walked, which I superimpose over this one), and then it unsettles my point of view, once I realise the object to be viewed objectively is not transforming independently but rather in relation to me. The relation transforms itself and everything around it simultaneously. I remain an entangled observer, ever the stranger and yet inextricable from the dynamic.

I don't remember if I find Bruno on the street or if he is already at the workshop with Camila when I finally arrive, late and feeling defeated by the city. The attendees sit around a rectangular table—a couple dozen of them—each holding the object they have brought to share with the others. My object is a necklace my son made for me: plastic, gold-flecked twine threaded through a shell, both found on a beach in Uruguay, where I was born and he was not, though he unquestionably identifies as Uruguayan. I have been wearing it throughout this trip to Australia, while he visits his father in Montevideo. I pass it around and handle the amulets and mementos of others. One woman brings a bag of walnuts. Each one represents the size of the hole a CT scan found in her heart. Lucy brings a piece of Darwin glass, an amalgam of earthly and extra-terrestrial materials produced by the impact of a meteorite. One man brings a leather belt made from his grandfather's saddle, the same grandfather who was thrown off a horse to his death. We talk about dying away from where you are born, about writing letters to people gone, about burning letters, and about lost and found cameras that once captured scenes and lives unknown. The longing for times unlived, the inevitability of death, memory in all its imperfection, and myth, all thread through our conversation.

Memorials are representations, and each one of these objects is a memorial of sorts. The objects are wrapped in their stories, which string them into relations. Had I found them on their own, strewn on a beach, they would come to embody different memories and imagined histories. As a watch, a photograph, a hand painted plate, maps of Martian landings from H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* pass through my hands, I wonder, are we ourselves anything more than memorials, things, objects, artefacts? Are we anything beyond these representations of ourselves to others, and is this conversation anything other than invention? Remembering Pete's essay, I wonder if this telling is our way of carrying the past into the future.

Maurice Halbwachs posits that memory is social and grounded in experience.[33] Collective memory builds on relations forged through shared experience. If consciousness of the past informs the future, perhaps it is possible to re-configure a collective memory different from the one received, one that recognises relations beyond circles restricted by modern, or colonial, or anthropocentric imaginations. We form an archipelago too, this group of us passing our object-memorials from hand to hand, defining life and death on our doomed Anthropocene, or on the as yet unrecognised Chthulucene. If we shift from thinking of ourselves as islands in water to considering the possibility that we may be the water itself, everything becomes interconnected. This is our shared life in the critical zone. Perhaps we already lap at a shore together, one where we can crawl onto the land once again, without the intent of conquest this time. Perhaps this time we will manage to keep the lateral view instead of aspiring to shoot ourselves into space.

New York,
October 27, 2018

Last night I saw Bruno give a performance-lecture at a theatre on 42nd Street. The event is the result of his collaboration with several artists to develop visualisations of a 'Gaiagraphic' as opposed to geographic view, one that allows us to view ourselves inside the critical zone, laterally instead of from the outside as in the projection of a globe, or a bird's eye view of the land.[34] The images, projected onto a scrim and over the audience in front of Bruno, immerse us all in the critical zone, which Bruno compares loosely to Plato's cave. In his view, the Anthropocene is a cave with no exit, but unlike Plato's allegory, in this cave we are free to move, relate to each other, seek to understand our surroundings and perhaps to transform them. Bruno appears in the background, fully visible yet inside. His words

take me back to Pete's writing, so present in the landscape, to Greg's interweaving of life and death, to Lucy's insistence on slowness, and Camila's drive to open spaces for collective reflection and creation. All of us refuse to abide by the accelerating rhythm of a culture and science hitched to the priority of accumulation and linear evolution into an unsustainable future. I sit here in the stillness of writing, remembering travel, in that moment of the breath when inhale and exhale are indistinguishable. In this blurry, trembling space where memory and present interweave, I try to imagine a conscientious, sustainable future.

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# Images of the Invisible

Catalina Valdés

Conrad Martens, *Portrait Cove, Beagle Channel, Tierra del Fuego*, 1834, acuarela con grafito sobre papel, 19.4 × 29.5 cm, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

## Third Shore

To think of a 250-year-old eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*) is a challenge to someone who only knows this tree as an invader. This is why, Denise, I am grateful for the description of an image by George Tobin, who imagined it amongst trees such as *peumo* (*Cryptocarya alba*), *boldo* (*Peumus boldus*), *quillay* (*Quillaja saponaria*), *molle* (*Schinus molle*), *espino* (*Acacia caven*), *keule* (*Gomortega keule*) and *pitao* (*Pitavia punctata*). These and other trees, as well as a great many associated species, gradually lost their habitats in order to give way to plantations of eucalyptus trees that, along with poplars (*Populus alba*) and pines (*Pinus radiata*), were implanted as monocultures in a large part of the regions of central and southern Chile.[1]

The first eucalyptus seeds arrived from Oceania to the South American Cone due to the impulse of José Faustino Sarmiento, one of the main players in the region's modernisation process. The author of *Facundo o civilización y barbarie en las pampas argentinas*, a book that was first published in 1845 in the Santiago newspaper *El progreso*, Sarmiento was an influential intellectual and public administrator who reached Argentina's presidency in 1868. Throughout his entire career, the author irradiated principles of the nationalisation of nature and of history, building traditions that survive to this day, many of them in evident state of ruin (both the title of the book as well as of the magazine where he published it should form part of the Anthropocene's fundamental library).

Sarmiento observed the immense expanse of Rio de la Plata's *pampa* and in it saw a woman who was aging unmarried. The eucalyptus presented itself as a prince from the East who brought fertility to the plains at last (this both romantic and aggressive metaphor comes, in quite similar words, from Sarmiento himself). His campaign for the *pampa*'s afforestation constitutes the initial gesture of a transformation that extended to immense expanses of land and did away with diverse biomes for the cultivation of this fast-growing and fast-adapting tree, which in terms of its exploitation, translates into a 'high yield species'. Today, with the support of public subsidies and weak environmental and commercial regulations, the forest industry has become the Chilean economy's second largest source of revenue after copper, based mainly on the exporting of pulp for paper.[2]

Tobin's watercolour, painted in 1777 during James Cook's expedition to Tasmania, brought another traveller's painting from a few years later to my remembrance.

It is also a watercolour painting of the extreme south, but in this case, of the American Pacific. Conrad Martens, the artist who accompanied Fitz Roy and Darwin on the *Beagle*'s second expedition, painted it in 1834 during his visit to Tierra del Fuego. I don't know whether today it is possible to prove, as the Tasmania Park's signage did, if the trees Martens painted on the edges of the cove are still standing. In fact, it is also a possibility that these species, probably *lengas* (*Nothofagus pumilio*), were perhaps never there, and that rather, their presence in the image responds to the artist's compositional needs. In his diary, Martens recognises the difficulties he experienced in trying to represent Fuegian landscapes.[3] Both the views from the coast as well as those he obtained from aboard the brigantine were presented to him as completely void of proportion or harmony. With immense extensions of plains and with no vegetation other than pastures and dark forests filled with dramatically shaped trees, forms that were sculpted by the wind; with a coastline that fails to reveal itself in a panoramic view, but rather, emerges and hides amongst coves and cliffs, the artist came across challenges in his pursuit of drawing.

> While here [Port Desire], as there was but little to be done in the way of sketching, I used generally to take my gun and was fortunate enough one day to bring home an ostrich […] It would be useless here to attempt a description of all the out of the way places, wild scenes, and still wilder inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia.
>
> […] I could not help purveying that we were forcing ourselves into a region which was in the course of preparation tho [*sic*] certainly not yet fitted for the abode of man.[4]

The scenes of 'extreme wildness solitude' that he came across in his path were dissonant to an artist who was trained in the tradition of picturesque landscapes, an aesthetic tradition that responded to the representation of a domesticated nature.[5] The scale of geological forms, the rough climate, the forces of water: all of these composed, in the painter's eyes, an inhospitable landscape that exceeded the order of what was representable. In the images and reflections written in his diary, as well as in Darwin and Fitz Roy's travel logs, it is this same wild condition that determined the nature of Tierra del Fuego's inhabitants. For all of these reasons, I believe that the watercolour that shows the canoe group disembarking at a small cove is an effort to domesticate the experience of this journey: the forest serves as a frame, the human bodies are scale reference, and the brigantine in the background as a breath of air…

Going from sketches to watercolours, and from these to etchings, the operation of mounting, superimposing, adding and subtracting visual elements was a very common gesture within the production of travel illustrations that took place from towards the end of the seventeenth-century until the mid-nineteenth-century.[6] Just as digital photographs are edited today, exploring artists selected frames and then increased, added, or eliminated fragments in order to compose an image that was legible to those *imperial eyes* that would come to read and regard the tales of journeys to faraway places, recognising in them a sense of belonging that did not seem to cease in its expansion.[7] The frame of trees that allowed Martens to lend proportion and order to the immensity of Tierra del Fuego also worked as a balance point for the dark figures that are disembarking—threateningly or curiously?—looking straight at the painter and at us, the spectators.

Faced with the agonising image of Captain Cook, 'or Furneaux, or Bligh landing over and over again'[7] on the coasts of Tasmania in order to relaunch the insatiable campaign for resource exploitation; faced with the equally agonising scene of a costume party at which you never managed to feel comfortable, I propose looking at this other image as an inverted mirror of sorts: the possibility of waiting for the Yagan indigenous people to disembark, of exploring a third shore. The Yagan have traditionally been canoe people; we may perhaps learn from them a way of being on land, circulating through waters that border more than two coasts, like the archipelago-communities and channel-communities that you imagine at the end of your essay.

> 'so that, with respect to human observation, this world has neither a beginning nor an end.'[8]
> —James Hutton, 1785

I would like to take you some day, Lucy, to meet the girls and boys of a public school in the Los Volcanes area of Chillan. From the classroom's windows, which are covered with coloured curtains, one can see the Nevados de Chillan chain of volcanoes, a gigantic igneous portion of the Southern Andes.[9] I travelled there a few months ago to present my studies on visual representations of volcanoes, and I decided to approach the girls who have lived with this view for their entire lives in order to find out what it is they see. After telling them, just as you do in your photographs and writings, about the traces that time leaves on the earth, I asked them to draw a volcano. The coloured curtains were drawn because the sun in Chillan is growing more and more relentless. After about fifteen minutes, the children happily lifted their drawings. All of the pages, without exception, showed triangles with more or less acute angles, with more or less smoke. We opened the curtains to take a look at the nearby chain of volcanoes… After a few seconds of recognition, we laughed at all of our drawings, which showed by contrast a geographic imagination delimited by geometry. How do we represent what we, from seeing so much, can no longer see?

To me, your photographs are precise answers to this question, which I have been thinking about for some time now. The succession of textures on the rock, just as Hutton saw them and just as you show them in the photograph of Haulage Unconformity in Queenstown, is the result of a vertical perspective that reverts the horizontal convention that is usually employed to represent a landscape. Widening our perception, which is determined by the horizon's line, this swooping and deep perspective expresses a break away from the fiction of space-time continuity. Just as there are very few volcanoes that look like perfect cones, time isn't inscribed in a timeline like the one we were taught in history class, but rather, as a superposition between different worlds.

This superposition is inscribed in the two other photographs, the photocopy of the obsidian rock and the sequence of images of the Bleach Mountain eruption. The obsidian, like all rocks, is a message: each rock tells the story of an eruption and brings news from the depths of the Earth. As part of a system with several states of equilibrium, the obsidian modifies its shape as it travels through time, which means that each rock's shape is the inscription of an instant of deep time. Exposing it to the almost obsolete technology of photocopy is a beautiful gesture that contrasts against temporal scales. The briefest is the flash of light that activates the dry ink. Then, the flash inscribes this rock in a portrait, in a mid-range time scale: the tradition of scientific illustration carried out through different drawing and printmaking techniques. This superposition of images is gradually decants in our visual memory, as do the countless fractions of rocks in the substrates drawn by John Clerck, the artist that used to accompany Hutton on his geological expeditions through Scotland.

The fourth image you propose is the one that moved me the most. It is a precise response for a paradox that is challenging to mediate. In it, I see a very clear expression of knowledge generated from experience; this being, perhaps, the only way of appreciating the dimensions of time without succumbing to anthropocentrism on one side, nor giving into vertigo, on the other.

I wish that your father's arm, a warm alternative to a timeline, were touched by the rod of naturalist scientist whom this image belongs to. The man in question is Eduard F. Poeppig, the first European scientist who around 1828 managed to reach the summit of the volcano Antuco, located in Mapuche territory within Chile.

With this rod as an instrument, Poeppig established measurements that allowed him to identify the volcano's height and the snowlines in this part of the Andes. His other instrument was drawing, through which he observed and registered rock formations in the young mountain range. You will observe that at a group of basaltic columns emerge at the walker's feet, volcanic rocks that, just as obsidian rock, reach the earth's surface coming from deeper times and strata, changing their state to a rhythm that is imperceptible to our eyes. As part of his concise equipment, the scientist also used his own body as an instrument. The human body's scale allows one to dimension elevations and distances, imprinting a perception of the place in the drawing.

John Clerk of Eldin, *Frederick Street, Edinburgh (east side)*, 29.4 × 69 cm. Published in James Hutton's *Theory of the Earth: The Lost Drawings*, ed. G. Y. Craig, with texts by G. Y. Craig, D. B. McIntyre, and W. D. Waterston (London: Scottish Academic Press in association with the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Geological Society of London, 1978). Copyright Sir Robert Clerk, Penicuik.
For information on John Clerk of Eldin, visit www.clerkofeldin.com.



*El Volcán Antuco*, a print by Johann Nepomuk Ott (1804–1860), based on a sketch by Eduard F. Poeppig (1797–1868). Published in *Reise in Chile, Peru auf dem Amazonen 1827–1832* (Leipzig: F. Fleischer, 1835–36) (2 vols; atlas with lithograph illustrations, 2 vols). Image: www.memoriachilena.cl.

Thus, the image assumes the condition of evidence, a testimony of a scientific experience that finds a guarantee of truth in this piece drawn outdoors. Its transformation into a print in a specialised context completes the method, bestowing it authority.[10]

But I also like it because it is a portrait of sorts, just like the photograph of your father. Both images register the experience of time in its multiple scales, geological in the era of diagrams and in drawn rocks, biological in your father's skin and in the explorer's body.

1 María Moreno-Chacón, Daniela Mardones, Nataly Viveros, Karina Madriaza, Fernando Carrasco-Urra, Alicia Marticorena, Carlos Baeza, Roberto Rodríguez and Alfredo Saldaña, 'Flora vascular de un remanente de bosque esclerófilo mediterráneo costero: Estación de Biología Terrestre de Hualpén, Región del Biobío, Chile', *Gayana: Botánica* 75, no. 1 (2018): 466–481, https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0717-66432018000100466

2 Sergio Donoso y René Reyes, 'La Industria de la celulosa en Chile, otra "anomalia de mercado"', *El Mostrador*, January 5 2016, https://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/opinion/2016/01/05/la-industria-de-la-celulosa-en-chile-otra-anomalia-de-mercado/. See also the very recent effects of eucalyptus monoculture as a *pyrophyte species*, or one that has adapted to undergo great fires: Laura Pitt, 'Eucaliptos y pinos: los bosques artificiales que contribuyen a la expansión de los incendios en Chile', BBC News Online, January 27 2017, https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-38771376.

3 To know more of Marten's work and his visit to southern America, see Marijke van Meurs Valderrama, *Conrad Martens en Chiloé, 1834* (Santiago: Ediciones Museo Regional de Ancud, 2014), and Marta Penhos, *Paisaje con figuras. La invención de Tierra del Fuego a bordo del Beagle (1826–1836)* (Buenos Aires: Ampersand, 2018). See also the blogpost, Rob Viens, 'The Art of the Beagle—Conrad Martens Part II', The Beagle Project (blog), December 7 2013, https://beagleproject.wordpress.com/2013/12/17/the-art-of-the-beagle-conrad-martens-part-ii/. It is very interesting to consider that this artist's journey led him to complete a life as a main painter of the British colony in Sydney. See, for example, Michael Organ, 'Conrad Martens & the Picturesque: Precursor to Australian Impressionism', University of Wollongong, 1993, available at https://www.academia.edu/2799058/Conrad_Martens_and_the_Picturesque_Precursor_to_Australian_Impressionism.

4 Conrad Martens, 'Journal of a Voyage From England to Australia Aboard HMS Beagle and HMS Hyacinth 1833–35', transcribed by Michael K. Organ, State Library of NSW, University of Wollongong, Sydney, 1994, 28–29; 32.

5 Ibid., 35.

6 This subject has been widely addressed by diverse investigators who have studied works of art by artists travelling in Latin America, addressing the multiplicity of media through which the images they produced circulated in different contexts. Another example for the case of Tierra del Fuego is the work of the aforementioned Marta Penhos. Another example is a book by Juan Ricardo Rey, Carolina Vanegas, Oscar Franklin, and Paula Jimena Matiz, *Noticias iluminadas. Arte e identidad en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2011).

7 Over twenty years ago, the essayist Mary Louise Pratt, a specialist in Hispano-American culture and literature, proposed the formula 'imperial eyes' in Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992). With this, she enriched the box of tools that allows us to analyze the visual, written, and material culture of the travelling scientists that navigated through America with a renewed thirst for discovery, following a foundational, civilising and developmental program. The analysis of this perspective is fundamental for post-colonial studies, a mentality that responds to the reflexivity of words and images, which allows one to understand them as an expression of geographical imagination. Other pillars in this field of references are, of course, the work of Edward Said regarding the exoticisation of the East on part of Central European writers and artists of the nineteenth century, Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), and, in the case of the United States, Albert Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting c. 1830–1865* (Washington, D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), amongst many others.

8 James Huton, 'Abstract of a Dissertation read in the Royal Society of Edinburgh upon the Seventh of March, and Fourth of April MDCCLXXXV, concerning the System of the Earth, its Duration and Stability. Scottish Academic Press, Edimburgo (facsimil 1987)', trans. Cándido Manuel García Cruz, *Enseñanza de las Ciencias de la Tierra* 12, no. 2 (2004): 156.

9 'Complejo Volcánico Nevados de Chillán', Servicio Nacional de Geología y Mineria, accessed July 3 2019, https://www.sernageomin.cl/complejo-volcanico-nevados-de-chillan/

10 A doctor and natural scientist trained in Leipzig, Eduard F. Poeppig travelled through the American continent from 1822 to 1832, first visiting Cuba and Pennsylvania, then Chile, Peru and Brazil. Upon his return to Leipzig University, he began organising the natural science collection he brought from America, which led to the publication of an immense work dedicated to describing over fifteen-thousand botanical species. He also dedicated himself to publishing an account of his journey through South America. Somewhere between a diary and naturalist reports, Poeppig published the text in two volumes, and an atlas of illustration in another two. The illustrations feature lithographs drawn by the landscape painter trained in Munich, Johann Nepomuk Ott, who worked based on sketches drawn by the traveler himself. At the moment these volumes were published, the natural scientist and painter shared the experience of having known the Vesuvius, which without a doubt determined the way in which each one of them faced—one directly, and the other through drawing—the volcano located in the south of Chile.

# Subantarctic Imagination Versus Southern Mindset

Joaquín Bascopé Julio

This text presents an approximation to the geography of Fuego-Patagonia, understood as a variety of subantarctic zones that exist in the Georgia, Falkland, and Tierra del Fuego archipelagos, as well as continental Patagonia.[1] First, I contrast this geography with north—south axis projections inherited from colonialism by our region's Santiago, Buenos Aires, and London-based administrations. I will then see how these projections are replicated in certain formats of tourism, as well as in scientific, missionary, and artistic images that collectively support geopolitics in southern South America. Lastly, I will demonstrate that by projecting itself against the grain of the subantarctic region, the southern project always implies, for whomever is carrying it out, a dose of torment or suffering, which is registered in southern, extreme, remote, apocalyptic or end-of-the-world images. In order to demonstrate this, I will employ an exemplary document of the southern imagination: the diaries *Voyaging Southward from the Strait of Magellan* (henceforth *Voyaging Southward*), written by New York artist Rockwell Kent and published in 1924.[2]

## Port of Entry

Rockwell Kent's journey takes place at a fantastic time for transit through the entryway into Antarctica. In addition to the steamship traffic flow that connects the Tierra del Fuego, Magellanic and Falklander archipelagos on a regular basis, one must also consider the telegraph line and the rise of the regional press, in order to get an overall picture of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia's political and cultural climate.

At the time, there is one printing shop for every one thousand inhabitants in Punta Arenas, the capital of the Magellan Colonisation Territory.[3] From 1893, the year the first Magellanic newspaper was published, to 1920, one hundred and nine publications are operating in the region, including newspapers, annuals, magazines, and newsletters (in addition to another fifteen handwritten newspapers). 'Out of the known total, ninety-five titles were published in Spanish, seven in English, six in Croatian and one in German.[4] A recent collective piece, the film *Fuego en la Federación Obrera de Magallanes* (2016), recreates the atmosphere of typography workshops and political organisation at the time.

The first regional workshop of this kind actually dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, when an Anglo-Yagan alphabetisation workshop directed by a southern political-religious collective (the Sociedad Misionera Sudamericana) operated on Keppel Island, one of the Falkland Islands. Although the collective's magazine was printed in Brighton, the work of producing vocabularies, proper nouns, place names, photographs, and prints takes place in different parts of the Yagashaga (Murray Channel) and the Onashaga (Beagle Channel). For fifty years, internships were carried out by Yagan interns, who officiated as translators and apprentices of the art of typography, between the Tierra del Fuego archipelago and the Keppel station.[5]

By the late nineteenth century, this cultural movement accompanies the development of industries such as whaling stations and sheep and cattle farming, in a domain that stretches from the Grytviken station (Georgia Islands archipelago) to the conurbations of Lapataia-Ushuaia, Río Seco-Punta Arenas, and Puerto Bories-Natales.[6]

The development of subantarctic film and photography deserves its own paragraph. Punta Arenas is then a station of the 'modern colonial'[7] world, where novel realistic images are produced, executed, and premiered. In fact, a series of extracts from Kent's *Voyaging Southward* were published on *The Magellan Times*, one of Punta Arena's weekly newspapers, between December 12th 1923 to January 13th 1924, shortly before the book's official release at New York.

In this sense, what I will call subantarctic imagination or iconic activity could be classified as a variant of the realistic images produced at the end of the nineteenth century.[8] In spite of this, the subantarcic imagination is singularised by the region's geographical, climacteric, and sociological characteristics. Furthermore, subantarctic iconic action is enhanced by the active transit characterising the region—until the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914—and the flourishing of communication technology in the area that is often associated to the war of 1914–18.

Below, I quote the diary of Frank Hurley, a documentary maker who travelled with the Mawson and Shackleton expeditions in Antarctica, and who premiered a preliminary version of the film *En la garra del hielo polar*, on Saturday September 9 of 1916, in Punta Arenas' municipal theatre:

> September 8 1916
> The splendid workshop and darkroom belonging to Mr. Vega [Cándido Veiga] have been put at my disposal without reservations, and I have made the most of them. The excellent shop has the latest in photography equipment, and the assortment of delicate mounts, albums, plaques, papers and other items exceeds that which can be bought in Sydney [Australia].
>
> September 12 1916
> […] In the afternoon, we went to [the Punta Arenas] electricity plant, where I was pleased to find that it is highly modern and currently flourishing—paying an annual dividend of 12%. The plant is steam-powered. […]
>
> Afterwards, [my travelling companion] Clark and I went to the telegraph station. This prodigious installation classifies as one of the world's largest. It is equipped with the most modern equipment. It has a long range, over the Andes and around 1500 kilometres to the north. The great antenna is supported by six tall columns, each one 75 metres high. It has a 50-ampere rating.[9]

At the end of 1922, Rockwell Kent spends two months in Punta Arenas, preparing his adventure *Viajando al sur desde el estrecho de Magallanes* (Voyaging Southward from the Strait of Magellan), but makes no observations in his diary about this electro-mechanical ambience. We find nothing about the printing presses that belong to the Federación Obrera de Magallanes (Magellanic Worker's Federation), founded in 1911. Nor about the abundance, diversity, and plurilingualism of the region's environment. Nor about the variety of craftspeople of the image who, like Kent, shared

Hanni Roehrs, *Basaltic Área de los morros basálticos, sector del río Penitente*, c. 1925, watercolour on paper, Centro de Estudios del Hombre Austral's archives, Universidad de Magallanes.



and disseminate the trades of the Fuegian-Patagonian cultural industry.

Placing Kent's journey in this context is significant, since the story behind *Voyaging Southward*, his quest for desolate landscapes, and the tourism of 'the dregs of humankind' that he proposes, all tend to erase Fuegian-Patagonian history and geography as known by its inhabitants.[10]

Kent's journey arises from a spiritual restlessness that seeks 'wildness in order to mentally impose civilisation on it.'[11] This restlessness characterises a type of tourism that we will call 'southern', which is distinguished by voluntary suffering and mental resistance during the journey. The southern mentality, however, best describes the ambience from whence the tourist comes, rather than the geography that he or she is visiting.

The desolate atmosphere Rockwell Kent projects *towards the south* has been historically and sociologically situated by Hannah Arendt:

> Older than the superfluous wealth was another by-product of capitalist production: the human debris that every crisis, following invariably upon each period of industrial growth, eliminated permanently from the producing society. Men who had become permanently idle were as superfluous to the community as the owners of superfluous wealth. That they were an actual menace to society had been recognised throughout the nineteenth century and their export had helped to populate the dominions of Canada and Australia as well as the United States. The new fact in the imperialist era is that these two superfluous forces, superfluous capital and superfluous working power, joined hands and left the country together.[12]

This is the desolate tourism that moves Kent, and which he narrates in *Voyaging Southward*.[13] It is worth adding that artistic, scientific, and missionary journeys, amongst others, over different periods of time, all converge in the identification of the south with inhospitableness and desolateness, at least since the quest for the mythical *Terra Australis*. And although, when facing its audience, southern tourism is narrated as a challenge of the self, this sort of journey is undertaken as a group or at least with one travelling companion.

Since Kent's journey, the format of tourism into the wild has become widespread in Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia. It is probable that this coincides with an expansion of the spiritual unrest or psychological desolation within the metropolises that supply our region with tourists. In another paper, I have identified this tourism as a new-age form of livestock farming, where herds of tourists are exploited in the framework of an industrial management of outdoors experiences.[14]

Lastly, just like guanaco or sheep-cattle farming, this exploitation takes place mainly during the summer (as in Kent's journey), which is the time when the southern mentality is intensified ('austral', 'remote', 'extreme', of 'the end of the world') with the increase in flow of northern tourists in the region.

## The Native-Ruin

A distinctive element of the southern landscape is the native who has vanished or is about to vanish, which Kent identifies in 'the mounds of shell that mark a thousand transient camps of vanished generations of the vanished Yahgans [sic]'.[15] However, it is known that then, like today, there is a Yagan population distributed amongst the region of the canals, which speaks and writes Yagan.[16]

In December of 1922, Kent is in Acatushun, an area also known as Harberton ranch, where he tries to convince Lundberg, the ranch's administrator, to guide him to Cape Horn. While waiting for his decision, Kent spends an endearing Christmas with the Lundberg family (the 'Arcadia' chapter of *Voyaging Southward*). Everything seems to be in harmony until, one day, the ranch receives a visit from a group of tourists, whom he describes as follows:

> For some weeks it had been rumoured that a great steamer laden with sightseers was on its way from Buenos Ayres to tour the channels of Tierra del Fuego. And one day, lo and behold! The ship appeared off Harberton itself and anchored in the channel. Wild excitement reigned among us. Mr. Nielsen and Lundberg being absent from the house I was requested to do the honours of host to the multitudes that landed. There were hundreds: ponderous dowagers and gouty Argentine aristocrats, pretty girls and gay young gallants, jolly boys and solemn duffers, manicurists and hairdressers off for a lark, courtesans touring for pleasure and profit, and one elderly American scientist who looked with haughty contempt upon his shipmates. And certainly they were a silly lot, these white-gowned, dainty-slippered ladies and toy dandies who now come to mince about that wilderness, and by the contrast of their alien grandeur turn its people's wealth into poverty and their contentment into hankering.[17]

A species of creatures from the underworld sneaks in within Kent's writings. The artist has just experimented Eden-like emotions with his hosts in Acatushun-Harberton (see image of 'The Garden, Harberton', in *Voyaging Southward*), which seems opposite to his quest for desolate nature and human waste.[18] But the encounter with the *absurd bunch* of tourists brings him back to the strangeness of his journey.

Responsible for guiding the tourists through the ranch, Kent prepares a surprise scene for them, dressing up and painting his travelling companion (Ole Yterrock, from Trondheim, Norway) for this purpose. Something encourages him to display his multifaceted artistic talents, and within fifteen minutes, he produces a wild spectacle.

He tells the visitors that they are in the presence of Okokko, the name of a talented Yagan reader and translator who participated in the Keppel alphabetisation workshops. In spite of this, Kent introduces him as follows:

> 'You are in luck,' I said as I too discovered him, 'for here, by the merest chance, you see the dreaded Yahgan Chief, Okokko, the most bloodthirsty of the race.' How I led the palpitating crowd nearer, nearer to that object of their curiosity and fear, how mothers called their daughters to beware, how gallant fellows quieted their trembling ladyloves, how at ten paces distant the boldest stopped while at their backs the others crowded close and formed a ring about the spectacle—all that is told. And there the savage sat, a fearsome object, naked to the waist but for the skins of wild animals that were rudely tied across his swarthy back and breast; while from the mass of coarse black hair that hung about his shoulders peered out a dusky face of such debased and sullen ferocity that nothing was left to be imagined of the abandoned brutality of that savage nature.[19]

Kent's Okokko, photograph, State University of New York at Plattsburgh (SUNY Plattsburgh). Courtesy of Fielding Dupuy.

## Hahshi and the Yieklon

As a scholar of Kent's work has observed, his journey develops a psychology of tension between that which is civilised and that which is wild.[20] This psychology, which I politically translate here as southern psychology, is not unique to the artist, but rather it can also be recognised in military, missionary, or scientific adventures. Starting with the propaganda of the mythical *Terra Australis*, the tension between civilisation and wildness generates expectations before the departure, and then disappointments during the journey:

> It would take centuries for European seafarers and globographers to reduce their Australian phantasms to a natural scale. The Britons acted on this when they turned the failing south realm into their penal colony […].[21]

With the creation of penal colonies in Punta Arenas (1848) and Ushuaia (1896), as well as the Border Treaty of 1881 between Chile and Argentina, austral phantoms acquire a geographical and anthropological jurisdiction.

This is where the concept of native-ruin appears, always on the verge of extinction and discovered as a relic of the austral past. In this way, an attempt is made to make geography and history fit in with the southern political project, just as when an ethnologist proposed the division between 'southern austral Tehuelches' and 'southern boreal Tehuelches'.[22] With this, he intended to resolve an old scientific debate that deliberately ignores the distinction between the people of the foothills, of the plains, and of the forests that is available in both native Fuegian-Patagonian languages and place names.

Furthermore, recent transpolar studies question the north-south image, introducing the idea of populations located 'at the end' or 'on top' of the world.[23]

Thus, southern geography, already announced in the title of Rockwell Kent's diary, has little to do with the subantarctic reality that the New York artist has travelled to.

It must be pointed out that in Kent's time, the tension between civilised and wild that precedes the journey or escape to the south reaches a climax of sorts. At the time, the metropolis's ecology is revolutionised and saturated with new forms of social communication:

> This period sees the development of the potential of new means of communication, such as the illustrated propaganda poster, sound recordings, or film; similarly, very old forms are reactivated, such as medals or patriotic relations; even alternative forms of expression are

invented, such as trench tracts and newspapers. In synthesis, during these four years, the conflict is insinuated everywhere, to the point where, after peace is reestablished, the world of communications has become as suspicious as the war itself, to which it ends up being associated with. But its presence is now too strong to think of taking a step backwards, and 'brainwashing', an expression born out of this conflict, is far from dying out with it […] The elicited 'paper storms' […] prelude, in several cases, other media storms where the recognised functions of mass media in contemporary society prevail (entertainment, information, advertising, propaganda, communication).[24]

In areas where war produces editorial trenches, such as Punta Arenas and its neighbouring subantarctic archipelagos, the media storm has a culminating moment with the Battle of the Falkland Islands and the escape of the cruiser Dresden towards the Strait of Magellan (December 8 1914).

In this context, a consciousness of brainwashing and a feeling of strangeness in relation to nature surfaces in the regional population, caused by the media storm. And so, during the colonial expansion process that culminates or collapses in the war from 1914 to 1918, the media storm not only sets the scene for escapes to the south, but also environmental coincidences that originate or are specific to our region emerge with it.

By these dates, the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia practice the routine of going on outings and contemplating the natural beauties of this great country (I am referring to the Tierra del Fuego, Magellanic, and Falklander archipelagos understood as phytogeographical units).

A beauty that is studied and expressed, for example, in the work of the multifaceted Fuegian painter, photographer, and craftswoman Hanni Roehrs (1903–1984).[25] More recently, the biologist and folklorist Natalie Goodall (1935–2015) collected and classified the remains of the region's fauna, creating the Acatushun Museum of Birds and Mammals at Harberton ranch.


'All Outdoor Invites: Your Kodak', *The Magellan Times*, Punta Arenas, May 3 1917.


Scope of communications considered in this paper. Source: Google Earth.

Another regional geographical consciousness that emerged in Kent's time was John Hamilton (1848–1945), 'a visionary of land administration through rational charge rates', a conservationist of the famous subantarctic grasslands (tussock) and responsible for introducing native Fuegian-Patagonian livestock farming (concretely, guanacos) to the Falkland Islands.[26] Hamilton arrives to the Falklands at the beginning of 1880 and, working as a sheep farmer, he gets to know notable grazing areas in Patagonia, such as the current Oazy Harbour and Pali-Aike ranches in the Magellanic region, and Punta Loyola ranch in Santa Cruz.

Instead, the southern tourist doesn't wander or explore, but rather travels dodging the metropolitan ecology. The media storm throws the tourist into the quest for wild environments. The southern tourist travels attached to register devices that temporarily isolate him and enable him to produce unsettling images. He travels in a capsule and peers out every once in a while, through his device's windows, where the sought landscape emerges.

Seen from the scene produced by Kent in Harberton, the southern journey seems like a phantasmagoric voyage or *ajchumiana*. In Patagonian Chon language,[27] ajchum and the yieklon (or yicelun) are creatures '*like ghost*[s], *but* [who] *speak like us*', associated with the calafate plant and its pigments for painting '*Ajchum and the yieklon are the ones who command the calafate*' and have been signalled as painters of cave images.[28]

Another one of the colour's spectres is hahshi, 'a noisy chocolate-coloured rascal […] who pops up from dead trees' and roams through the forests of Acatushun-Harberton.[29] During his performance at the kloketn festivals—an initiation rite for the Fuegian Tzoneka nations (Huash and Selk'nam), hahshi acts accompanied, just like ajchum and the yieklon, and claims red paint from women.[30]

Just as hahshi and the yieklon frighten and entertain, Kent's Okokko emerges as a disturbing spectacle for tourists from Buenos Aires.

Yieklon tourism therefore describes not a subject nor a register device, nor a special artistic style, but the situation of encapsulation, discomfort and suffering that is registered in the southern journey, in its maps, and in the southern iconography that precedes and comes about after the journey (austral, extreme, remote, etc.).

The yeiklon tourist coincides with 'the figure of the ghost who is neither present or absent, nor dead or alive'.[31] We recognise this figure in the passage in which Kent tours the beautiful mountain range of the Kami lake region (Fagnano) on horseback, and recalls 'an anxiety about the safety of the *Kathleen* [the name of his ship and registry cabin, at that moment anchored in the Almirantazgo Sound], that only my enforced powerlessness to act had kept in philosophical control.'[32]

In this sense, the suffering of the southern journey, the mental resistance during the voyage, send the missionary, the anthropologist, or the field thesis writer back to his cabin in the moment in which he isolates himself from the rest of the camp in order to write down his impressions about the Fuegian-Patagonian tribes. Aboard this transitory capsule, there is always a register of some deficiency, shortcoming, or discomfort in the indigenous habitat, which, for example, 'didn't provide appropriate moments for elaborating on theological concepts.'[33]

Seen in iconic perspective, on the other hand, the variety of body paintings, designs on ritual masks, dances, sports activities, cave art, telecommunication with smoke signals, anthropological-geographical distinctions ('people from the mountains', 'from the plains', or 'from the forests') and, in more general terms, the apprehension of the environment of each one of the native Fuegian-Patagonian tongues, offers a true repertoire of techniques and supports for subantarctic imagination. This repertoire is articulated with the recent transformation of geography through aerial images and, although beyond the limits of this paper, encourages questioning the southern or end-of-the-world political project in different ways.

### Subantarctic Environments versus End-of-the-World Environments

In 2005, a doctoral thesis entitled *A Year in Wilderness Solitude* was defended at the University of British Columbia.[34] This thesis was presented as a 'self-ethnography' that explored the questions of 'who am I and what does it mean to be alive', drawing from the thesis writer's retreat to an area located in the province of Ultima Esperanza, region of Magallanes.[35] Once again, we encounter here a register of wilderness, understood as a monastic suffering that gradually erases regional history and geography as desolateness and inhospitableness grow in the text.

Using a source of the subantarctic imagination—the calafate spectres—I have defined this style of pathetic journey as yeiklon tourism, and identified it with southern geography. We have seen that the escape to the south or to the end of the world emerges from a tension between civilisation and wilderness, mobilising the invasion into the region since the times of *Terra Australis*.

But, though end-of-the-world images are exploited by this tourism of encapsulation and alienation, in the long run, these images depend on subantarctic environments and Fuegian-Patagonian geography, which is written and rewritten in the history of transport and communications that have adapted effectively to the region.

This geography refers, for example, to Yagan colonial modernity, projected from the Okokko scene in Harberton towards the editorial workshop in Keppel, rather than towards the entertainment of the native in danger of extinction. It was in Keppel where the translator 'Roberto' Okokko or the pilot Yenowa (also called Yunovia, an official ship pilot in Ushuaia) are trained, and from which regional organisations, leaders, and political clashes emerge.

In this regard, it is worth pointing out the iconic activity of the Río Seco Natural History Museum's researchers' association, which works reconstructing the bones of the remains that have been found on the coasts of Magallanes, producing pieces with the bones of species from other areas in the region. Each trip to extract the bones of a beached whale, and the operations for their transportation to the ruins of the old refrigeration plant that houses the museum, enriches subantarctic knowledge, writing 'a disjointed history of sorts, in which a vast variety of materials can coexist, defining the development of the time period, of all time periods, formulating History's agglomeration in their distance.'[36]

The association's expeditions often show traces of southern projects, which are recycled in the history of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia as fragments or spectres of different time periods.

This history evolves according to a time and space that isn't southern, but subantarctic, through the entire archipelago from the current Grytviken Whale Museum (Georgia Islands) to the Río Seco Natural History Museum (Strait of Magellan), and making a stop at the Acatushun Museum of Birds and Mammals, which today operates from the Harberton ranch that Rockwell Kent once knew.

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1 Fuego-Patagonia designates an area of transport and communications based on the subantarctic phytogeographic province, which recognises a common environment in the Georgia, Falkland, and Tierra del Fuego archipelagos, as well as continental Patagonia. The term is also used in geology, and more recently, in archeology, anthropology, and history. An early record of this phytogeography corresponds to the 'Antarctic kingdom' of 'Patagonia, Fuegia, and the Falklands', made by Danish botanist Joakim Schouw in 1822 (*Grundtrack til en almindelig Plante-geographie*, København, quoted in S. Tukhanen, I. Kuokka et al., 'Tierra del Fuego as a Target for Biogeographical Research in the Past and Present', *Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia* 19–2 (1989–1990): 37. Also see Vaino Auer, *Historia de los bosques fuegopatagónicos* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Forestal Argentina, 1949).

2 Rockwell Kent (1882–1971) was a restless and talented person. Architect, draughtsman, carpenter, painter, illustrator, printmaker, commercial artist, designer, traveller, writer, lecturer, livestock farmer, and political activist, Kent is known for his illustrations for classic books (such as Moby Dick), and his prints and painting have been acquired by museums and private collectors. From 1918 to 1935, he wrote and illustrated several books about his experiences in Alaska, Tierra del Fuego, and Greenland. Rockwell Kent, *Voyaging Southward from the Strait of Magellan* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924).

3 Manuel Zorrilla, 'El periodismo en Magallanes', *Magallanes en 1925: Obra histórica, geográfica, estadística comercial e industrial, desde el descubrimiento del Estrecho hasta nuestros días* (Punta Arenas: S.E., 1925), 243–264.

4 Mateo Martinic, 'Sociedad y cultura en Magallanes (1890-1920)', *Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia* vol. 12 (1981): 63.

5 Cf. Robert Philpott, *Keppel: A South American Missionary Society Settlement in the Falkland Islands, 1855–1911. An Archeological and Historical Survey* (Stanley: Falkland Islands Museum & National Trust and Liverpool National Museum, 2009); Joaquín Bascopé, *El encantador de yaganes. Entrenamiento de nativos fueguinos en la isla Keppel, 1854–1869* (Buenos Aires: Clacso, 2016), available at http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar

6 Mateo Martinic, 'Relations and Trade Between the Magellan Region and the Falkland Islands (1845–1950)', *Falkland Islands Journal* 9 (2010): 126–141.

7 Robert Dixon, *Photography, Early Cinema and Colonial Modernity: Frank Hurley's Synchronized Lectures* (London: Anthem, 2012).

8 Here, I follow Bredekamp's thesis, according to which the iconic act has an impact on three fundamental fields: artificial life, the exchange between image and body, and the form's autonomous activity. Cf. Horst Bredekamp, *Teoría del acto icónico* (Madrid: Akal, 2017).

9 Papers of Frank Hurley, National Library of Australia, https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2247836. 'Through electric impulses transmitted wirelessly and coded in Morse code, a connection was established between Punta Arenas and Buenos Aires, without intermediaries, and later the same thing happened towards European cities. By 1907, this system had transmitted 69,806 telegrams with a total of 1,511,552 words, averaging 191 telegrams a day. This great telegraphic movement had an evident impact on everyday life.' Pedro Bascopé Julio, 'Trincheras de papel. Guerra y autonomía en la prensa magallánica (1914–1933)', History degree thesis, University of Chile, 2017, 22.

10 Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, vii.

11 Fielding Dupuy, 'En busca de un nuevo paraíso para la humanidad: Rockwell Kent en Tierra del Fuego' in Amarí Peliowski and Catalina Valdés (eds.), *Una geografía imaginaria. Ensayos de arte y naturaleza* (Santiago, Chile: Metales Pesados-Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2015), 146.

12 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1979), 211.

13 'Here is a story that treats of a great many bad characters—that is, of those blood-and-thunder fellows who, it is supposed, under pressure of misfortune at home, or natural lawlessness, have fled to the frontier and over, as to the only refuge that would tolerate them. And, as the scene of the story is the worst frontier of the world, its characters are, presumably, the very dregs of humankind, the froth of wickedness', Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, vii.

14 Joaquín Bascopé, *En un área de tránsito polar: desde el establecimiento de líneas regulares de vapores por el estrecho de Magallanes (1872) hasta la apertura del canal de Panamá (1914)* (Villa Tehuelches: CoLibris, 2018).

15 Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, 145.

16 Two years after Kent's journey, in the Acatushun area ('Harberton ranch') that the painter visited, a famous Yagan-speaking botanist writes: 'Here I saw the only indigenous man, already civilised, whom after I asked him, "Ánda sá yámana gúta cutána", (Do you perhaps speak Fuegian?) answered me, with amazement, "Awéi, awéi, darúa!"(Yes, yes, man!)'. Carlos Spegazzini, *'Relación de un paseo* hasta el Cabo de Hoorn', *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de Ciencias* 27 (1924), quoted in P. Viegas Barros and M. Malvestitti, 'Un manuscrito de Carlos Spegazzini con datos inéditos sobre la lengua haush', lecture presented at the *56 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*, Universidad de Salamanca, July 15–20, 2018.

17 Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, 150.

18 See image of 'The Garden, Harberton', in Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, 144.

19 Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, 151.

20 Fielding Dupuy, 'Rockwell Kent en Tierra del Fuego', 146.

21 Peter Sloterdijk, *En el mundo interior de capital* (Madrid: Siruela, 2010), 62.

22 Rodolfo Casamiquela, 'Bosquejo de una etnología de la Patagonia Austral', *Waxen* 3 (1991): 41–80.

23 J. Barceló et al., 'Where Does the South Begin? Social Variability at the Southern Top of the World', *Arctic Anthropology* 46, no. 1/2 (2009): 50–71.

24 Christophe Didier, 'Un feu rolante imprimé', *1914–1918 Orages de papier. Les collections de guerre des bibliothèques,* (Paris: Somogy-Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, 2008), 11. Author's translation.

25 Mateo Martinic, 'Noticias históricas sobre los inicios de la pintura realista en Magallanes (1834–1940)', *Magallania* 35, no. 1 (2007): 21–22.

26 William Franklin and Melissa Grigione, 'The Enigma of Guanacos in the Falkland Islands: The Legacy of John Hamilton', *Journal of Biogeography* 32, no. 4 (2006): 664.

27 On Chon languages, see José Pedro VIEGAS BARROS (2015) "Proto-chon: fonología, morfología y léxico". Tesis de doctorado. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras.

28 Kámserr, 'Ana Montenegro de Yebes', cited in Marcelo Bórmida and Alejandra Siffredi, 'Mitología de los tehuelches meridionales', *Runa* 12, no. 1–2 (1970): 236. Theophilus Schmid, 'Journal of Messrs, Schmid and Hunziker', *The Voice of Pity for South America* IX, (1862): 133–134.

29 Esteban Lucas Bridges, *Uttermost Part of the Earth* (New York: Hodder & Sotughton, 1949), 408.

30 Lola Kiepja, 'Forty-one Chants of the Hain ceremony. Recorded, Compiled and Annotated by Anne Chapman', in *Archivo Sonoro Digital de Patagonia y Tierra del Fuego*, trans. Carlos Vega Delgado and Laurent Salles (Punta Arenas: Biblioteca Municipal, 1966), CD no. 12, track 6.

31 Collin Davis, 'Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms', *French Studies* 59, no. 3 (2005): 373.

32 Kent, *Voyaging Southward*, 72.

33 Milciades Alejo Vignati, 'Prólogo', in T. Schmid, 'Journal', 16.

34 Frank Kull, 'A Year in Wilderness Solitude', Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, Interdisciplinary Studies Program, Vancouver, 2005.

35 Ibid., ii–iii.

36 Researchers' Association of Rio Seco Natural History Museum, 'Restos en movimiento: sobre transformaciones de cadáveres y ruinas', synchronised lecture and video presented during *Jornadas de Zoociología*, Puerto Madryn, July 25–28, 2018.

# Understanding Human Agency in Terms of Place: A Proposed Aboriginal Research Methodology

Mary Graham

### Introduction to Place— an Aboriginal Conceptual Framework

Over the past few decades, new community-based participatory research paradigms have evolved that include Aboriginal (Indigenous) research methods combined with Western research methods that offer benefits and equity to community members as well as Western researchers. These methods highlight the importance of community traditional knowledge processes, of the participation of community knowledge producers and of the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions regarding the centrality of land within social and political issues.

This paper, which came out of the work of an Aboriginal community organisation called Kummara, describes an Aboriginal understanding of the qualitative and subjective aspects of place, of meaning (Being), and of the nature of how knowledge and understanding of change is constructed, especially about human agency, in patterns of family relationships, community organisation, and relationship to land and the custodial ethic. Because Indigenous research methods stress the moral nature of physicality (especially land) and the need for relationality and interconnectedness with all life forces, the theoretical model that emerges or is identified from those methods will also have that ethical quality.[1]

### Approaches to Research (a) Western Methods of Inquiry

For most Westerners, Inquiry precedes Place. Knowledge acquisition both defines and supersedes place.

Supporters of the Western modern scientific method reject these claims of non-Western knowledges. They believe, first, that reality is what it is irrespective of what humans think or know about it; secondly, that reality is ordered, that it has a structure that is universal and invariant across time and place. They claim that the structure and forces of the natural world remain the same in different times and in different contexts. They also believe that this structure is knowable and that Western science has provided the ability to explain, predict, and control many natural phenomena and to invent technologies to solve human problems.

However, many other scientists do not believe we can truly detach ourselves from the reality we are observing to achieve objectivity; that we can never completely remove the observer from the interpretation; that the observer does not have total agency over passive matter as the world kicks back. 'Our knowledge of the world is not innocent; it doesn't just come out that way by itself'.[2] So there is always flux in the movement of matter even though it may manifest stable and discernible structures.

The present approach argues that the West needs to overcome the biases of 'universalism' in Western methods of Inquiry and in the action of Inquiry itself to promote multiple knowledge systems.

(b) Protocols

Protocols are the codes of social behaviour that members of all cultures and communities use to deal and interact with each other, and are also the basic rules of engagement that communities and countries use for national and international relations. When working in research with Indigenous communities, the protocols and perspectives to be aware of are based on trust, respect, equity and empowerment and include related issues like intellectual property, capacity building, and agreements.

Many Indigenous methodologies have protocols and cross-cultural awareness as the main theme of their approach to research programs and knowledge studies. While these are very valuable for furthering understanding of Indigenous values and perspectives, they don't provide a clear focus for and a guide to Indigenous analysis of phenomena and agency itself. If Indigenous people were to have an analytical theory, then what would that theory consist of? How would it be applied to examine a proposition or problem?

(c) Therapies

Narration is one method of both therapy and research that segues well with the notion of Place. The recounting of stories, personal and collective, is premised on the idea that the lives and the relationships of persons are shaped by the knowledges and stories that communities of persons negotiate and engage in to give meaning to their experiences.

A narrative therapy assists persons to resolve problems by:

- enabling them to separate their lives and relationships from those knowledges and stories that they judge to be impoverishing;
- assisting them to challenge the ways of life that they find subjugating; and,
- encouraging persons to re-author their own lives according to alternative and preferred stories of identity, and according to preferred ways of life.

Narrative therapy has particular links with family therapy and those therapies which have a common ethos of respect for the client, and an acknowledgement of the importance of context, interaction, and the social construction of meaning.[3]

By acknowledging the importance of context, interaction and social construction of meaning, it's assumed that Place has either a direct or indirect bearing on the stories of people, both in the sense of 'point of reference' and of impact or influence.

Every research project has several conventional features. There is a difficulty/dilemma to address/solve or further information to discover; a limit to resources; a work team of varying skills and abilities; a timeframe; a selected research method to follow. However, the core value is that it is placed, or begins, somewhere. Even though the same project may actually be in more than one site and/or have nothing to do with land/property at all but rather be involved with events in time, actual or metaphysical, still, agency has an origin.

Kummara

Kummara Association Inc. is an Aboriginal organisation in West End, Brisbane whose policy is Stronger Indigenous Families. The work and activities that are engaged in by staff, and offered as a service to the local Aboriginal community of Brisbane, involves working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, women and children in particular. Their underlying method of working takes as its premise the notion of the primacy of the family/community and local consensus-style decision making.

A Community Mapping research project was conducted that involved talking to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community people, organisations, and focus groups. At the same time within Kummara an informal program of discussions was taking place on the nature of action research methods, what its core parts are, and how it is formulated.[4]

As time and the discussions went on, both project and program merged with questions and issues being raised about:

- the efficacy and the ethics of acquiring knowledge from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples via research regardless of the method;
- the nature of Indigenous knowledge, the foundation, scope and validity; and
- the limits of protocols and notions of equity in ethical research codes and activities.

Although there was no strict adherence to the linear style classic stages of action research, it was during the Illumination phase (see Classic Action Research Methodology appendix item) that a change in the direction of both projects occurred. While discussions and data collecting/collating of both project and program were proceeding, Kummara became aware of the need to explore the possibilities of an Indigenous theoretical model alternative to those which currently underpin most research methodologies.

Kummara is of the firm belief that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are entities that have the penultimate responsibility to create/produce their own solutions starting with strategies for understanding their own situations outside of financial and skills needs. Community organisations have not the time, energy, nor appropriate framework to learn, or they're not being given enough support to develop, skills, strategies, or insights based on Indigenous perspectives especially in the area of gleaning method or theory from practice. Other concerns are:

- generally and historically, experts from outside the community provide the theoretical understanding to solving social problems, which can bring dissension between community, clients, practitioners, and experts;
- related to this notion, science looks at all phenomena objectively, thereby assesses the 'truth' of situations, which is often in contrast to how community, clients, and practitioners view the same situations; and
- historically and intellectually, there has been a gap between theory and practice, which is really a knowledge production problem, that is, the language of theory and the language of practice is all too often far apart.

Kummara proposes a system of engaged scholarship in which researchers and practitioners co-produce knowledge that can advance theory as well as practice in any given domain, but especially in the area of Stronger Indigenous Families (SIF).

Aboriginal Terms of Reference[5]

Further action research/learning meetings with Kummara staff, focus groups, and community groups took place, along with discussions on developing community-based Indigenous methodologies and the sharing of ideas with other Indigenous bodies and with University academics in appropriate theoretical areas. This resulted in identifying the following collective values or Aboriginal Terms of Reference:

- The Custodial Ethic—looking after Country, looking after kin
- Primacy of family—especially children and young people
- Formal age- and gender-structured balance, recognition, and respect
- Non-hierarchical structures with Men and Women equal and Elders an authority
- Positive group dynamics
- Consensus decision-making
- Positive conflict management
- Careful management of ego[6]
- Non-competitiveness and maintenance of harmonious relations
- Land as a moral entity
- Spiritual integrity
- Attending to the consensus
- Primacy of Place, identity and autonomy as an organising principle
- Sharp observational abilities (reading the signs and patterns)
- Aboriginal system of logic, time and space (different to Western systems)

These terms/qualities underpin the Aboriginal social praxis and ontological and epistemological basis of existence.

During this whole analytical process, the notion of Place was constantly raised, if not as subject then as qualifier or identity, determinant or even as a sub-conscious, vague influence on people's lives.

Outcome of Discussions

A general agreement that dislocation and its accompanying pathologies, whether the outcome of colonialism or the predations of capitalism on poor countries and poor peoples, is a worldwide problem especially so for the millions of Indigenous people with their loss of land, economies, and cultures plus the constant interventions into their social and cultural traditions. The importance of the loss of a sense of place to an individual or a people's sense of themselves cannot be over-estimated. The impact has a chain or domino effect—quite often with dislocation comes loss. It may not be physical—economy, goods, technologies, or people themselves. It may be that responsibility and obligation is removed from people so that their lives, surroundings, and environment are beyond their control. To regulate, manage, and organise matters, make decisions, and manage conflict all become increasingly difficult.

The addressing of social ills, the resolution of contradictions in assumptions and analyses, the search for causes, clarity and information—all become urgent and overwhelming, chaotic and attenuated.



What made sense to Kummara and focus group participants in discussions were themes and issues where Indigenous values were seen as a prism through which problematic first causes are made discernible and a method or range of methods selected to enable people to examine more thoroughly the scale, features, meaning of, and possible solutions to difficulties.

Indigenous stakeholders were presented with addressing, analysing, and solving this social and theoretical dilemma (although it was not presented in a theoretical way) that assumed that the Aboriginal approach was not only applicable and valid but that it was also authoritative, constructive, and compelling. In other words, the idea of an Aboriginal method was never presented or understood as needing assistance, too arcane, or not scientific or professional enough.

Hence the raising of the notion of developing a method (or a theory) by which research, from the Aboriginal point of view of Place, could be used:

- to explain social phenomena;
- to inform a variety of therapies, particularly narrative therapy;
- to provide a theoretical basis for understanding Indigenous knowledges; and
- to provide a strategy for arbitrage between competing therapies and competing methods and theories in the social sciences.

Kummara Concept of Place—Introduction to Place

Documentation highlighting outcomes of all of the discussion sessions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people included an outline of the developmental aspects of the Kummara methodology, its content, and its general themes, which are: the voice(s) emerging from Place (community/locality) is the authentic one, not the 'objective', scientific description; and that from the Indigenous point of view, local innovation is the implicit basis of scientific knowledge. True science has to include the metaphysical aspects of knowledges.[7]

The inclusion of Place in a story provides an authentic explanation of how and why something comes into the world that in turn provides a balance between agency (human and spiritual) and point of origin or Place. Balance and re-balance are achieved when Place is used like an ontological compass. The story of alcohol (in Europe) is one such instance.

Example: An Indigenous group of people undergoing detox therapies requested information about the story of alcohol, not the official health dangers, not the historical account of how it is made, but the Dreaming Story of alcohol—that is, the Place whence it originated, the Ancestral Beings who brought it into the world, and the meaning associated with it. The counselling staff were challenged by this request and had to research this aspect, which led them to stories of the gods Bacchus, Dionysius, Pan, and others and their role in bringing alcohol into being. This approach made a lot more sense to the Aboriginal clients and in turn impacted positively on their recovery.[8]

Western contemporary techno-sciences, rather than being taken as definitional of knowledge, rationality, or objectivity, should be treated as varieties of knowledge systems. But even though knowledge systems may differ in their epistemologies, methodologies, logics, cognitive structures, or socio-economic contexts, a characteristic they all share is localness.

Place and Change

For Aboriginal people, Place is epistemologically and ontologically central to notions and discussions regarding action or intent. Not only history but meaning arises out of place, whether place is geographically located or an event in time. The saying 'the past is another country' is, in Aboriginal logic, pertinent to multi-dimensional time, that is, all events that have occurred and are occurring within any of the range of senses of time occupy a place (in time).[9]

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

If change is the fundamental nature of reality or existence, as described by Heraclitus, then Place is the fundamental existential quantifier, that is to say, Place is a measuring device that informs us of 'where' we are at any time, therefore, at the same time, it's also informing us 'who' we are.[10]

Example:
A research project connected to development that was carried out in Manteo, North Carolina, United States, identified what the residents valued about their town. Initially the surveys and interviews found that qualities such as friendliness and informality, other people, certain events held regularly and certain areas—the waterfront and some shops—were important to their quality of life. The research team wanted to find more specific information so they tried 'behaviour mapping', which involved observation of activities of townspeople over a period of time. This showed that place-based activity was of the utmost importance. Daily ritual was place-specific and cultural dependence on places seemed more widespread than people had reported in interviews.

As researchers noted, 'these places are almost universally unappealing to the trained professional eyes of an architect, historian, real estate developer, or upper-middle-class tourist.' For example, the 'sacred structure' (this is actually how the townspeople referred to the prioritised list of places to keep intact regardless of re-development) included the marshes surrounding the town, a park, the Duchess restaurant, locally made (unreadable) street signs, and a gravel parking lot where people gathered to watch the sunset and where the town's Christmas tree was set up. Of the 'sacred' places, only two were protected by historic preservation legislation, and a few more by zoning laws; that is, the existing planning and legal mechanisms that were intended to help preserve the character of places missed most of what the residents of Manteo actually valued.[11]

Time and space are in us. If time, in at least one of its forms, is like an arrow, then Place is like the calibrating mechanism or device of that trajectory.

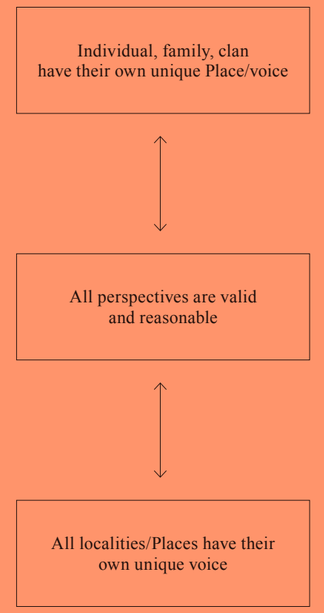
For human experience Place looms large, providing—sometimes dominating—the backdrop and sometimes the foreground as well. The backdrop of place informs and influences judgement and imagination.

People flee from and flee to Place both physically and psychologically. Place is a reference point to guide to and from. Place is a physical point in landscape, but also a point in time, an event, an imagining, or even a landscape itself. This is demonstrated in the modern sayings 'the past is another country' and 'we won't go there'.

Place and Transformation (Logic)

The notion of Place also determines the logic of Indigenous people.

Western Inquiry reduces the Custodial Ethic, indeed the Law, to cultural constructs—in the public sphere they become small, unimportant things. Place (Aboriginal logic) maintains that there is no division between the observing mind and anything else: there is no 'external world' to inhabit. There are distinctions between the physical and the spiritual, but these aspects of existence continually inter-penetrate each other. There is never a barrier between the mind and the Creative; the whole repertoire of what is possible continually presents or is expressed as an infinite range of Dreamings. What is possible is the *transformative dynamic of growth*.[12] This view is further explicated by the following equation:




The equation may also be proposed as:

Place = Dreaming

Multiple Places = Multiple Dreamings = Multiple Laws = Multiple Logics = Multiple Truths =

All Perspectives (truths) are
Valid and Reasonable

To the Aboriginal mindset, phenomena are received and if there is an observation it is to 'behold' or *regardez* The Law as creator, informer, and guide. The world reveals itself to us and to itself—we don't 'discover' anything.

The same mindset perceives the Western method of Inquiry to lead to and to be inextricably attached to discovery and therefore to ownership. That is why, to Indigenous people in many places, there is often a sense of something predatory about this process (Inquiry).

## Law of Place

Aboriginal Australia's perspective on the nature of existence is that the Sacred Dreaming is the system of creation that brings the whole of existence into being and ensures its continuance. The Dreaming, with the Ancestral Beings as intermediaries, brings into being Place, and, along with the emergence of Place, comes the Law for that Place. Law and Place come into the world at the same time. Identity, obligation, kinship, and marriage rules, or the Law of Relationships, now come into being, as has been said.[13]

What also comes into being is the notion of Place as a determinant of Being in the world, that is, Place as the informative quality or essence of the Mode of Being in the world—what could be called the Law of Place.

## Relationality


The notion of Place as a method of research, or as a possible theory, is a way of seeing and a form of knowing that employs historical knowledge, reflexive reasoning, and dialectic awareness to give people some tools to realise new potentials for the emancipation and understanding of dislocated individuals and collectives today. By refining people's thinking abilities and moral sensibilities, Place method hopes to equip individuals with a new consciousness of how to approach both a dilemma and/or a method of inquiry; to see what must be done about it and how to do it. But it could also help to restore the value and position of Place to the Indigenous mindset and ethical consideration. This consciousness might help them determine what their best interests should be and lessen the victimisation that people impose on themselves from within or that is forced upon them from outside.[14]

Place method does not claim critical knowledge as a privileged form of 'true science'. Instead, it accepts its potential fallibility, as well as awareness of its own precarious and contingent relation to social change and the inherent difficulties of a self-reflective mode of theorising (because self-reflection is itself historically situated and cannot make any claim to a transcendent quality). Second, although reflection may reveal an interest in liberation, it does not necessarily or automatically provide a linkage between this interest and actual emancipatory action. That is, even if one has developed consciousness-raising and unravelled ideological distortions, emancipation still requires active engagement (political), choice, and commitment.

## Conclusion

During the last few decades within the Indigenous communities there has been much talk of alliances, coalitions, and working together more than we ever have before. At the same time, we also spoke (and still speak) of building our alliances for change on authentic voices through which people make choices, shape action, and create social movements. We have much to gain by exploring and critically engaging with the method (or theory) and practice of Place research as we face the many challenges ahead.

Kummara is committed to research action that involves pursuing a critical reflection on the roles, actions, and content of all stakeholders in the research process and seeks to help create and maintain authentic, mutual, and ongoing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities towards this end.



## Appendix

### Classic Action Research Methodology

S. Kemmis and R. McTaggart, *The Action Research Planner* (Geelong: Deakin University, 1998).

Action Research methodology has clear, logical steps through which the research project proceeds such as:

### 1. Initial Engagement

The full and active participation of the community in the entire research process. All the various groups within the community (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) are encouraged to play their important roles—the Elders in particular, both men and women; the youth, male and female; women young and old; families. Participants are then cross-referenced by clan and tribal/language groups. Historical Indigenous people, that is, non-Traditional Owners, are also encouraged to become involved. Finally, Indigenous people who work in related areas other than the subject area in question are also engaged (for example, if child care is the base subject then legal service and health workers will be included besides the primary child care workers).

### 2. Immersion

The subject of the research originates in the community itself and the problem is defined and analysed in a collective, collaborative, self-reflective, and critical way. Solutions are selected carefully, then undertaken by the community. Examination and understanding of the research subject in a historical, cultural, social, and, if necessary, psychological way is carried out, documented, and discussed.

Immersion is the activity of seeking and understanding the true identity/story of the Place, its history and its atmosphere, together with understanding the subject of the research in the way just described. If the subject is, for example, a health issue, a community development aim, etc., then the people involved in the research have to have the opportunity to understand authentically the nature and origin of the subject/issue within its proper context and whether the selected method of addressing the need is the correct one.

### 3. Incubation

Appropriate terms of reference regarding the approach to the research are selected along with access to expertise and experience via advisory committees. The method of ongoing monitoring, testing, correcting and documenting of outcomes is arranged and undertaken. The pilot study approach is prepared for later modelling of the strategies, and appropriate coursework/study is carried out if required or requested by participants in order to fully understand the subject of research and related issues. A general impact study on place/environment is vital and should be a part of any incubation stage. The ultimate goal is the radical transformation of social reality and the improvement of the lives of the people themselves. The beneficiaries of the research are the members of the community.

### 4. Illumination

The process of Indigenous action research can create in the people a greater awareness of their own personal history, the history of colonisation, and of the country. People become aware of the path to the situation they find themselves in, and are then prepared with the tools to follow the path to a new beginning. This process leads participants into a journey towards decolonisation where they then are able to recognise their strengths and resources, and this awareness then mobilises them for genuine self-reliant development. Participants should be encouraged to document the growth in their own self-development and to discuss the process with other participants and have it documented. The importance of the illumination process and its own outcomes taking place in a particular area or site should be discussed and documented as the notion of land as witness to all change outside of time signifies the importance and sacredness of the social dimension.

### 5. Explication

Indigenous action research is a more scientific and more authentic method or research in that the participation of the community in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality, in particular the social reality of Place, including every aspect (past, present, and future) and nuance, peaceful or volatile. The participants are well aware of their area or region because of their direct experience, identity, interrelatedness, relationship, and of the holism, quality, and value bound up with that Place. The participants are also well aware of all aspects of the research study because they have been actively involved in every part of the process.

### 6. Culmination

The researcher is a committed participant and learner in the process of research rather than a detached observer. The experience of participating in Indigenous action research is a shared one that assists and encourages participants to establish positive relationships which will underpin future developments relating to the research outcomes. The path from research outcomes to future developments is direct in Indigenous action research, since the same actors are involved in both activities. Often in action research, what is investigated is not a theory to be applied but rather the ways of implementing a practical idea, such as leadership development, starting a community cooperative, developing policy initiatives for inner city youths, or starting a homeless persons' union.

## Acknowledgements

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The impetus and creative force for this paper came from the collaboration of Kummara staff through action research workshops and community group discussions that took place over many months. Discussion topics ranged from the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and child-rearing methods, the requirements of sustainable community development strategies and structures, what personal leadership qualities are necessary for strengthening communities, to the preferred action research methodologies for Indigenous people and the analytical observations arising from considerations of theory and practice.

I would like to acknowledge the sound help and advice of Kummara staff—Dulcie Bronsch, Theresa Mace, Sue Featherstone (CEO), and Gerald Featherstone.

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2 Nancy Brickhouse and William Stanley, 'Teaching Sciences: The Multicultural Question Revisited', *Science Education* 85, no. 1 (2001): 41–42.

3 M. White, 'Chapter 5', *Re-Authoring Lives: Interviews and Essays* (Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications, 1995), 121–122.

4 S. Kemmis and R. McTaggart, *The Action Research Planner* (Geelong: Deakin University, 1988), 5.

5 L. Watson, 'An Aboriginal Perspective: Developing an Indigenous Social Work', (paper, *Australian Association of Social Work Education National Conference*, July 1986), 10–15.

6 The ego is seen like a potentially volatile substance to be treated with something like a combination of caring stewardship, referee-like supervision, and watchful guardianship.

7 Gregory Cajete, *Native Science* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 69.

8 Craig San Roque, *Story of Alcohol-Sugarman Song Cycle*, documentary video, Alice Springs, c. mid-1990s.

9 L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Penguin, 2004), 7.

10 John Llewelyn, *The Hypocritical Imagination: Between Kant and Levinas* (London: Routledge, 2000), 115.

11 R. T. Hester, 'Sacred Structures and Everyday Life: A Return to Manteo', in *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward A Phenomenological Ecology* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 277–278.

12 Bob Willis, *A Tale of Three Logics*, unpublished paper, 1990.

13 Jutta Malnic and David Mowaljarlai, *Yorro Yorro* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1993), 143.

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# Resisting Genocide

Hema'ny Molina

Playing at being alive is a new concept that has been going round in my head, amidst absurd thoughts and various feelings, for some time now. In reality, the game consists of trying to remain alive amongst so many exterminators. We've been playing at being alive for about 130 years, amid the camouflage of colonisation, Chileanisation, homogenisation and other '-tions' of diverse kinds; staying alive has its price, and pretending not to exist was one.

Every era has its pursuits. In the past, it was to not exist in order to survive and keep one's ears in their place. Today, it is to raise one's voice and offer one's ears as a tribute to whoever wishes to listen to our story.

Being a Selk'nam descendant has more contras than pros. Being Selk'nam in the twenty-first century is to defy academia, the state, and the commercial interests vested in the area that our ancestors used to inhabit. Even so, the pride that flows through my veins becomes clogged from so much affluence; my veins are too thin to let the torrent of love for my people flow freely.

My name is of no importance; however, to many, my name seems to be more relevant than who I am.

Awakening from the lethargy of ignorance is very difficult when you have no one to illuminate you, when you not only feel alone, but are alone. From a young age, I went to school like all children do, I learned the same subjects as the rest, I played the same games and enjoyed the same mischief, yet something was always out of context. Understanding history is always complicated, the history of a country, of a situation, of an experience… Of a people. There's always more than one version.

From a young age, I learned that before forming an opinion on something, one must first get to know all the possible and existing versions. One should search, broaden, compare, analyse, and even so, be cautious about the conclusion, for the feeling of who is transmitting this story, from his or her perspective, is right, or preferably, has his or her reason to be.

Our history has been told many times by countless historians, anthropologists, and researchers, and they have always coincided on one word: 'Extinction'. Curiously, the official version is available to everyone who wishes to read it. The point is that it's only read from the influence installed by the purist anthropology perspective of the 1900s to the 1960s, where the first person to visit the area was Martín Gusinde, followed by Anne Chapman, both of whom left behind an extensive body of work that is considered to be the most important. Their great legacy is the concept of extinction: according to Chapman, the deaths of Angela Loij and Lola Kiep'ja (her sources) signified the death of the last pure Selk'nams, as well as the death of the language, and therefore, the Selk'nam people as a whole became extinct. This concept did not allow for a deep and objective analysis of the events that took place in Tierra del Fuego from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, which almost irreparably influenced all of the scholars who continued to investigate the history of Tierra del Fuego based on these first findings.

The Selk'nam people, also known as the Ona, inhabited Tierra del Fuego since over eight-thousand years ago.

In 1883, as decided by the Chilean state, the livestock farming colonisation of the area began with the granting of lands to the Werhahn Company. This would become the beginning of a genocide that lasts until this very day. Because of a policy of extermination endorsed by the states of Chile and Argentina in order to give way to a late process of colonisation in pursuit of progress and development, indigenous peoples were eliminated from people's sights. They were massacred, murdered, commercialised, and their children were given away through illegal adoption, all under the complicity of the state and the blind eye of spectators who, influenced by Darwinian thought, considered the Selk'nam to be practically non-human beings.

Only the attempts made by Salesian missions, namely the San Rafael mission on Isla Dawson (Chile) and the La Candelaria mission in Rio Grande (Argentina), tried to put an end to the abuse and massacre. However, the end results weren't very different, since the indigenous population was decimated by confinement and illnesses.

A small group survived the La Candelaria mission (Rio Grande, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina), a group that over the years became the Rafaela Ishton Selk'nam indigenous community. In Chile, the story was quite different: indigenous inhabitants were simply extracted from the Chilean side of Tierra del Fuego in a violent manner, and those who didn't make it out, died. Children were given away or sold, and teenagers were taken to the military, to saltpetre mines, or to work in the livestock ranches themselves. It was assumed that by not dressing like Selk'nam and not speaking Selk'nam chan (the Selk'nam language), they would stop being Selk'nam. The children of women who were raped by settlers were *mestizos* and therefore not considered to be indigenous, and this is how the population disappeared from plain sight, imitating the colonisers and surviving through anonymity in several cities throughout Chile. According to official history, the Selk'nam people conveniently ceased to exist.

The survivors, with my grandfather among them, simply listened to their instincts and remained quiet, obeyed, and lived. Their children learned how to remain quiet and continued to survive and relive their histories almost as fictional anecdotes within their homes. The awakening came about only in the 2000s, when thanks to technology and the Internet, as these families began to find each other, each one preserving their own memories from their respective corner and space. A new community gradually began to re-structure itself spurred by the need to fill these spaces void of history, by the mourning of unlamented deaths, and by the love for roots that still refused to die. It was the Covadonga Ona Selk'nam indigenous community in Chile, far from Tierra del Fuego, exiled, yet Fuegians at heart. Memories gained strength and revived the language, customs, and the will to return to the homeland.

How can one live when one is considered dead? Changing this paradigm has been a constant struggle. To reveal the history that lies hidden between the lines out of fear, to raise one's voice, and to find ears that are willing to listen and eyes that want to see has taken over 130 years.

The children grew up, they lived in silence, in anonymity—victims of terror—but even so, no one managed to take away their memories and identities. Their children learned and did not remain silent; though their voices didn't leave their homes, they did not remain silent. Today, we are the grandchildren and great-grandchildren who understood that remaining silent is no longer a defence. Remaining silent is to accept placing a tombstone over our history; remaining silent is to accept death while capable of being alive.

As the state continues to validate the official history, which was written from a position of ignorance and convenience, and now tries to make it a legal fact, the Selk'nam nation rises to reclaim its life.

Crying and mourning over those who are no longer with us, over those who were murdered, over those who died alone, sad and far away from Tierra del Fuego, is a human act that we, the Selk'nam descendants, have not been able to carry out. We want to make it to Karokynka, to our home, and to be able to mourn our dead, so as to cleanse our hearts of so much pain and begin to build a future that is full of life and hope.

In this precise moment, the Covadonga Ona community, through its legal organisation Corporación Selk'nam Chile, is working hard to stop a proposed legislation that recognises the genocide of the four nations that suffered the same history in Tierra del Fuego, 'the Kawéskar people, the Yagán people, the Aonikenk people, and the Selk'nam people'.

The state recognises the genocide, but it recognises it based on the belief that the Selk'nam and Aonikenk people are already extinct. We must stop this deed. Now more than ever, our voices are being raised and desperately shout that we are not dead, we are not extinct. The political efforts made towards recognition and possibly an opportunity of returning to Tierra del Fuego are also presented in a violent way. It seems that there is no other way of reclaiming life.

> *kowanak sawar t'haynèen yoin ya' tinisway yikwa' te selk'na nam, echen wan yikwa' ni yikwak sam, selk'nam warr haykoner moho' , tinishway hash yikwak warr te sawar wan chekriyen yikowak hoówen.*
>
> I want to tell you that, in spite of what is said by historians and authorities, we, the descendants of the Selk'nam people, exist, and that Selk'nam blood runs through our veins, and that through our blood, our ancestors shout that they have not died.

Hema'ny
Santiago, Chile 2019[1]

1 Editors' Note and Hema'ny: Thanks to the work of Corporación Selk'nam Chile [Selk-nam Chile Corporation], on June 24, 2020, the House of Representatives approved the draft law that requests the inclusion of the Selk'nam people in the Ley indígena chilena [Indigenous Law of Chile]; this first step is a great accomplishment. The Corporación Selk'nam Chile continues to work so that the same favorable vote may occur when the bill is discussed in the Senate, and the Selk'nam people can be included in the Ley indígena chilena.



# Knotting Together South-South Connections

Sonja Carmichael and Sarita Gálvez

Sarita holding one of her quipu/thesis, 2018. Photograph: Constanza Jara.

We began our conversation in times of COVID-19 isolation. Sonja and her partner are on her Country, up in Minjerribah, also known as North Stradbroke Island, surrounded by the ocean, they are enjoying witnessing nature taking a rest. Sarita is an uninvited guest living on the lands of the Merri Merri creek in Wurundjeri country, she spends time walking along the creek with her children and partner.

We exchanged one writing piece each. Sonja sent Sarita a presentation she recently gave in Minjerribah for the Australian Languages Workshop, and Sarita shared an article called "Los nudos vuelven a la mar" (knots return (us) to sea) published in *Más allá del fin* #3. We planned three online conversations via zoom to braid together our thinking/feeling. Together we wondered what makes a conversation medicine? How is this medicine enacted by talking or yarning, as we say here in Australia? We felt the textile force of the yarn, the spinning of tales and strands that awaken a relational multiverse where things are set into motion like threads, getting tangled and making reality a fibrous, porous, relational and complex fabric of what's seen and unseen.

Can the earth feel the energy of our hearts as we yarn?

In this article, we share the mysterious, erotic, embodied and spiritual force of matrilineal memory and the practice of weaving reeds, ideas and life by presenting three knots that are the intensities of our medicinal conversations. They are: Mitochondrial love, (K)not a technical matter and Pedagogies of the sea. None of our knots offer solutions, conclusions or truths. The tension of our knots vary as life does, sometimes they are strong and sometimes a bit loose and sustain each other in precarious balance. Their tension is deeply connected to how our bodies feel. Together we inhabit a space that is vulnerable, where we grieve and we feel our (in)capacities to be productive. We are in times of isolation, processing uncertainty and, simultaneously, deeply enjoying the slowness of life, a form of living spontaneously that is close to our hearts. But Sonja is deeply saddened by not being with close family, including her terminally-ill younger sister and other family members who have to stay on mainland Australia by law due to travel restrictions to and from the island… they cannot cross to Minjerribah to grieve together the recent loss of her mother. Sarita misses her family, especially her grandmother Meme, back in Chile.

Yet here we are, playing with ideas, propositions and images that come to our minds as we try to animate ancient and contemporary stories of South-South becomings. For us South-South is about the geographical but also about the First Nations communities that inhabited the South for millennia. Connections, routes of trade and knowledges that have woven the lands of the South prior to colonisation and have resisted on the margins of what is considered valuable by the colonial apparatus. Routes that are the expression of thousands of years of deep learning of ocean currents, winds and the sky, and creation of technologies that respond to cyclical time. For us, knots are a rich source of knowledge that is expressed in both our individual work: Sarita experiments with the Andean quipu (knot in Quechua, a language of the Andes), an ancient storytelling technology; Sonja's journey is one of "solving the knot" of the sacred gulayi (Quandamooka women's bag), her research and artistic practice are in the spirit of regenerating Quandamooka weaving as a communal and intergenerational process that was interrupted with colonisation.

Knot #1: Mitochondrial love

SARITA: I've been reading your presentation for the Australian Languages Workshop Sonja, and Chicana philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of the colonial epistemic wound came to mind as I read your description of the emotional experiences you had when reunited with Quandamooka traditional bags.

Sonja Carmichael, *Gulayi*, 2019, Ungaire and shells, 82 × 24 × 2 cm. Photograph: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace Gallery.

g a p s , h o l e—s , ~~w o u n d s~~
wh er e know_ledge is ~~not~~.
a n d i t h u r t s . a n d i t s p a i n f u l .

"Sitting together with our ancestral hands," you said (and I had goosebumps all over my body because that is exactly how I feel when I began exploring Andean textiles). In 2016, I wrote a short poem that said "*la memoria de mis manos despierta en contacto con el vellón camélido*" (the memory of my hands is awakened in the presence of alpaca's unspun wool). Even if we are not together physically, we are always together as spirit.

Have you heard Sonja about the mitochondria? The power house of our cells? That's a beautiful story of matrilineal memory.

SONJA: The wound is deep and painful. We might need time, do things slowly. But Sari, what's the story of the mitochondria? I would really like to hear more.

SARITA: Well I found it fascinating because when we were on Minjerribah over summer we did a cultural walk along the coastline with songman Joshua Walker, who shared traditional stories about the area and talked about mitochondrial memory in relation to matriarchal systems of governance. For me, it was the first time someone mentioned the mitochondria on a cultural talk and I was really intrigued. He talked about it in relation to Moreton Bay and how women sustain communities by collecting shellfish and food on the coast.

So the story is old, very old, harks back to the time when complex cells came into being; We know about this today thanks to the work of the microbiologist Lynn Margulis—a total rock star—who advanced the theory of symbiogenesis. The way I understand her theory is that complex cells (also called eukaryote)—like Sari's cells or Sonja's cells—are actually a community of cells that somehow decided to come together as one and created a membrane around themselves. They have been able to prove her theory because they've found that all those little functional units within the cell itself also live in separate form, some units evolved symbiogenetically but others remained as single cell bacteria for instance. So inside each of our cells there are multiple functional centres also called organelle. One of them is the mitochondria. The mitochondria is an organelle dedicated to metabolism, specifically it is where the sugars we eat are transformed into our energy. That's why they are the powerhouse of the cell, because the energy produced in the mitochondria is what makes possible that we swim, play with our children, collect seeds, walk along the coast, weave, live. But, because the mitochondria was a cell before symbiogenesis, she carries her own memory (mitochondrial DNA) and what's beautiful is that for us, humans who have lived on this planet for thousands of years, our mitochondrial memory is matrilineal. This means that inside the powerhouse is the memory of our mother, and the mother of our mother and the mother of the mother of our mother! For us *mestizas* in the Americas it is said that the mitochondria carries our Indigenous memory, so the energy of the body in a way carries forth that force.

Men also carry this matrilineal memory. And that's so important Sonja, when you asked about patriarchy and the effects on this memory that is dismissed and neglected. Because it's about other ways of knowing and living, not really the rational mind. So maybe that's what happens when we weave, knot and touch wool and reeds. Our memory is animated but not as a rational thought but as an intuition, an embodied feel.

I wonder how the call of the health of the waters—as an ancient call—resonates in our bodies. Is it being reanimated by contemporary pressures on coastal and marine ecosystems? *Los mares están muriendo,* the sea is dying, says Cecilia Vicuña[1].

SONJA: The waters are life-giving and awake, the wind is awake, the plants are awake. Just as in your story of the wind with Nawel, Sari, so lively. How are the boys? Those talented boys!

Sam and Nawel enter Sari's studio with big smiles saying hi to Auntie Sonja through the screen and join the yarn for a while to share memories of Minjerribah. They talk about the dolphins we met close to Pulan—Amity, and that moment when we saw a woman feeding them illegally. Do you remember auntie Sonja? The kids both laugh and get upset about the things the woman said to justify her actions while hiding her bag of fish. They repeat the story again and again until Bryan calls them out to go for a bike ride. It makes me wonder how young children learn the law of place as guests? How we all learn as guests. Where to go, where to swim, who not to feed, who to leave alone, where not to go, what place is not for swimming? The repetition of a story, again and again, to understand. Every time it is repeated a little bit more unfolding goes on, more learning of how to be present in a right, ethical way.

Knot #2: (K)not a technical matter

SARITA: I'm curious Sonja when in your talk you said that solving the knot is not a technical matter. I relate to that and the quipu because my practice doesn't attempt to solve knots technically as anthropologists have been doing for so long. Solving the knot for me, in the quipu process, was actually solving, and healing, my historical relation to the Andean matrix of relational thought and the land. A philosophical process of memory-making through the unmaking of painfully internalised forms of knowing based on truth and certainty that I learnt within an authoritarian and punitive context embedded in the catholic colonial apparatus and advanced capitalism. It's been deep healing!

SONJA: Yes, it's spiritually healing and ungaire[2] is the cultural heart of our weaving and solving the knot. It's been quite challenging at times though with some non-Indigenous weavers feeling excluded in the process; and it's not about that… Rather than understanding the importance of this process to our cultural identity and the importance of it as an activity shared among Quandamooka women, they have expressed offence at being excluded with no apparent appreciation of the emotional and cultural significance. We need to undertake this process ourselves: we need time alone to heal the wounds of our shared history. For *us*, weaving is about connecting with *our* elders and ancestors. But when we are using other fibres, engagement with other weavers and the broader community is welcomed.

For instance, a skilled western weaver working with remote First Nations communities contacted me and offered their help here to study our Quandamooka bags in museum collections and in his words "punch out the knot", can you believe it… he doesn't seem to get that it's also the cultural and spiritual, as well as the whole embodiment of what it is, embedded and rooted in regenerating our Quandamooka weaving. It's sacred, spiritually healing. It's about our relationship to saltwater



Ungaire, a freshwater swamp reed that grows on Minjerribah. Photograph: Sonia Carmichael.

Sonja Carmichael's first woven bunbi. Courtesy the artist.

country, the importance of continued links to our ancestors and elders as well as the healing aspects of weaving.

Forgetting can be remembering too in another sense. Because of the impact of colonisation and attempted cultural erasure and with the reclaiming of native title, that remembering, it's also part of that coming full circle for me and 'solving the knot'… (k)not knowing.

In preparation for the 2017 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, my daughter Leecee was busy creating work for her wearable woven collection in the 'Wandan'—future fashion show. She asked me to make a little bunbi to include with her collection. I was unsure where to start and remember her saying 'just do it Mum'! By then I had finished chemotherapy treatment and found it very healing to be back home weaving together again. I felt very connected to our ngugi ancestors. I made my first bunbi—little dillibag and held it to the sky on sunset. It was the 4 July 2017, which at the time unknowingly coincided with the anniversary of our successful Quandamooka Native Title claim in 2011… the now reclaimed-knot was milbul—alive again.

SARITA: It's amazing. The colonial violence, in our face, but also the resilience. I feel that the knot exists simultaneously in different dimensions. Tying reeds is a tangible physical form but also it occurs cosmically.

SONJA: And it happens, you know. Last week, I've been weaving a gulayi (Quandamooka women's bag) and suddenly the knot just came to me, it just came to me in a new way. It's about connecting with my mother, keeping us together. It's healing and helps in painful times. About stitching the wounds. A way of suddenly strengthening our connection. But it takes time, it's not immediate. It's the umbilical cord, both physical and spiritual.

SARITA: I remember when I first started thinking with threads I couldn't stop thinking of the umbilical cord, the fact that we have these living threads in the body that make life possible. Every time there's a baby mammal there's a thread that, simultaneously, makes space and links together. Pulsating and pumping sugars and oxygen and history and memory, but also creating difference.

Knot #3: Pedagogies of the Sea

SONJA: So can we talk more about South-South? How these lands, waters and peoples are woven? I loved that in your article "Los nudos" about the creekulum,[3] I loved it. How you bring practices and memories for Caring for Country. At the moment here it is heaven, everything is lively and walking gently on budjong jara (mother earth), because there are not many humans around. You can actually hear the wildlife and ocean songs again, sounds of Country. It feels so good.

SARITA: Yes, to me this is a conversation about sustenance in the South. How we sustain and are sustained as part of coastal and marine ecosystems and freshwater waterway systems, it's all about learning how to care for waters and land, understanding them from different perspectives, especially the local First Nations way. Education today in Australia continues to reinforce the colonial techno-scientific paradigm, and that's not only in Australia, in Chile it is very similar. So I wondered how do we learn with young people to imagine alternative ways of becoming more present and responsible of the local ecosystems we are part of. In that sense, your work with ghost nets is so important.

SONJA: Well, environmental sustainability and education. We have a very good program, it's called "Tangalooma EcoMarines"[4] in Brisbane, it's a program for schools. I was involved in the first version connecting arts with the health of the ocean. You mentioned that in your writing of the coastal curriculum section. It was amazing, and here we worked together with this diverse group of school children from a wide range of backgrounds. There was important social, cultural and environmental value in learning through looking after country and engaging in artistic cultural experiences. We met regularly and elders and artists shared stories with them. They then took part in beach clean-ups and learnt to weave turtles and make works of art from the things collected on the beach. Their younger family members and parents were also involved in weaving activities. This resulted in an art installation of their woven sea turtles incorporated into a group piece made from the rubbish collected and displayed at the closing ceremony during the Quandamooka Festival. A good project, they also set up social media videos to share with community. It's still on.

That makes me think of this concept of the embodied form of knowledge you described in your writing, the *conocimiento*. I resonated with that.

SARITA: Yes, *conocimiento*, that's Gloria Anzaldúa again. She talks about *conocimiento* as an alternative to rational ways of knowing. Specifically connecting it to the body as site of knowledge and the spirit, not only human spirit, but the spirit of rock, water, sea, fish… how things come together in the form of a bodily call, an intuition, a shiver, a gut-feeling.

SONJA: And how do we write from the body? How do we write that in a scholarly way? I love how you talk about that idea of spacetimemattering and how that connects with the work of Cecilia Vicuña and the death of the waters. It reminded me of the poetry of Oodgeroo Noonuccal,[5] I'll send you a video of her granddaughter reading her poetry. Oodgeroo is Joshua's grandmother. Her poetry is amazing… and clearly resonates for me.

Final threads

As our yarns expand into more curious and expansive universes, a mysterious story appeared in our path, a story that tells us about more-than-human memory and South-South connections in the form of a migrant turtle. The loggerhead sea turtle known in Chile as *tortuga cabezona* is also a migrant that makes home in more than one place. She is born in

Sarita holding her first quipu, 2016. Photograph: Cecilia Vicuña.

Sonja Carmichael, *Pulan Pools, Baskets of Culture*, 2016 (detail), natural raffia, nylon fishing net, synthetic fibre.
Photograph: David Williams, Gilimbaa. Courtesy of the artist.

the warm waters of North-East Australia close to Sonja's country and begins a marine odyssey crossing the Pacific Ocean to make home in the coasts of Chile and Peru. What deeply resonates with us is that researchers have found their migratory route by analysing their mitochondrial DNA, while migration expands into the non-human inhabitants of the planet (and other life forms such as virus Covid-19), wonderings about what other memories are sleeping in our mitochondria makes us wonder about the depths of life's mysteries and fate.

At the same time, we finish these, unfinished, knots, Sonja also finished weaving her gulayi bag while spending time with her daughters Freja and Leecee. Her knots are strong; mother and daughter tie together bloodlines, culture, sacred business and intergenerational healing. At the same time Sarita and her sons witness the rain moth season coming back to the lands of the Merri Merri, they are entering a cold and rainy season, and hundreds of moths are emerging from underground revealing some of the mysteries of their everyday life. Sarita has been remembering her grandmother as she crochets woolly slippers to keep her sons' feet warm, a practice her grandmother Meme used to religiously do for her as a child. Australia is said to be "flattening the curve", whatever that means it seems that we will collectively emerge from social isolation very soon. We wonder if we'll emerge as transformed as the rain moth who left her grub body behind.

Sonja Carmichael facilitating a weaving workshop
with school children. Courtesy the artist.

Meg Petrie and Sarita Gálvez facilitating a creekulum session with Moreland Primary School students along the Merri Merri, 2019.
Photograph: Briony Barr.

Sonja Carmichael's early weaving with ghost nets. Courtesy the artist.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Camila Marambio and Carla Macchiavello for their invitation to write together, and also for their thoughtful edits to our work. Also to Caitlin Franzmann for making possible this version of *Más allá del fin 3.5*.

1 Poet Cecilia Vicuña talks about this in her poetic film Kon Kon (2010).
2 Ungaire is a freshwater swamp reed that grows on Minjerribah. This is the same plant gathered in the 1800s by our ancestors to make Gulayi (Quandamooka women's bag). Ungaire survives on country today, uninterrupted by occupation.
3 The creekulum is a pedagogical program of more-than-human education along the Merri Merri creek in Wurundjeri country in Australia. A collaboration between Wurundjeri cultural leaders, artists, scientists and families at Moreland Primary School that continues the pedagogical force of coastal curriculum in Ensayo #4. More information, see here https://merri-creekulum.squarespace.com/
4 Tangalooma ecomarines Warriors is also an environmental education program based in Queensland Australia, see more https://www.tangaloomaecomarines.com/primary
5 Oodgeroo Noonuccal was an Aboriginal Australian poet, political activist, artist and educator, who campaigned for Aboriginal rights. See more about her work and life, https://iview.abc.net.au/collection/2390?fbclid=IwAR39ZyhN5356O6Sz5i_PDcp3IN_hLoPnVb-6Lx_LUb8TtUQwwbHmMEWmn7U

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# Diving into Oracular Politics

Dr. C.F. Black and Caitlin Franzmann

Caitlin Franzmann, *Fortunes of the Forest cover design*, 2017.

Christine's question:

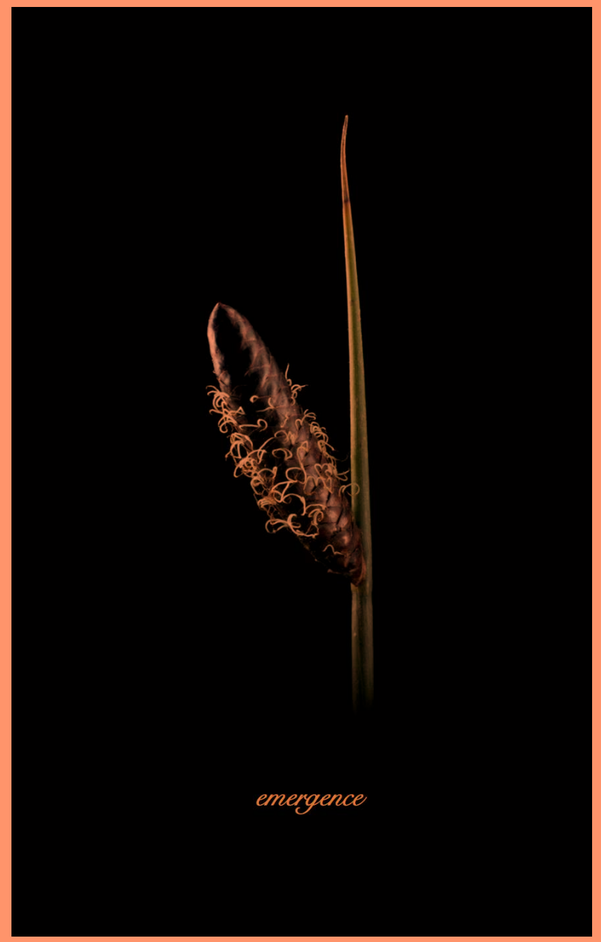
> *I would like you to ask if the cards see a rise in Fascist/Alt Right governments due to the Virus.*

In *Fortunes of the Forest* I use hand-crafted divination cards as the trigger for experimental one-on-one or group encounters. I created this plant-based deck during a six-month artist residency at Karawatha Forest in Brisbane, Australia. Each divination card depicts a plant, rock or insect found in Karawatha Forest. Photographed by Man Cheung, these portraits celebrate the beings with whom we share primeval genes. During the residency I walked in the forest, observed the plants around me and learned about the context within which they thrive or struggle. Their stories, and the relationships they form with other beings (including humans) are the key to interpreting the messages they offer. This relational and systematic way of interpreting messages from each card seems particularly relevant for the question at hand. Fortunes of the Forest is one of a number of decks that I've created, and is itself growing to include more plant encounters.

The day I first met Camila Marambio and Amaara Raheem, I gave them each a card reading on the quartz/sandstone outcrops overlooking Karawatha Forest. When I joined my first Ensayos collective residency in Tierra del Fuego in December 2018, I brought the cards with me as an offering to the group and to the land. On this trip we met *Maku* (the Chilean Firebush), who we continue to learn and feel with today, and most recently her Australian relative, the Tree Waratah is also revealing herself to us. Christine Black first encountered Ensayos and these cards in Brisbane, at a preview of the Ensayos exhibition, *Everything Is Possibly An Oracle.* All of these women and plants continue to enhance my understanding of, and connection with, *Fortunes of the Forest*. As I learn with others and grow, the interpretations also transform.

Whilst this reading is for Christine, her question is likely prevailing for many and it feels timely to share something personal to the collective. Scribing a card reading has been a strange exercise for me. My usual practice is to sit opposite the person I am reading for and allow for a dialogue to unfold. In this text, Christine and I aren't responding to each other's experiences or having a conversation about the question. I wasn't able to see how she was holding herself, or feel her voice. With these desires for physical presence aside, I hope that by sharing this reading it might trigger a variety of resonances, objections, inspirations and conversations.

EMERGENCE
*Lepironia articulata // grey sedge*




Man Cheung, photograph for *Fortunes of the Forest*, 2017.

Reading

Illaweena Lagoon in Karawatha Forest is framed by paperbark trees and clusters of grey sedge emerging from the water's edge. The 'emergent plant' grows from a spreading root system, piercing the water's surface and rising up to 2m in the air, creating a spectacular feature in the landscape. Beneath the surface, this plant: reduces turbidity by holding in sediments; removes excess nutrients and produces oxygen; and provides shelter and feeding sites for wildlife both above and in the water. The reproductive parts of the grey sedge are above water to encourage pollination by wind and flying insects. In this image, a spikelet sits near the tip of the stem with the flowers beginning to emerge from the bracts.

There are many creation stories in which life emerges from primordial waters. In these stories, water can be considered the source of life. This aquatic plant assists in the persistence and diversity of life forms both above and below the surface.

Are you currently experiencing confusing times? Like this plant, can you find ways to bring calm within rapidly moving events? Would you benefit from seeking a diversity of perspectives relating to your situation? How can you simultaneously remain grounded and fluid?

Commentary

Christine, your question relating to politics got me thinking about the shifty nature of the wetlands where the grey sedge grows. Throughout histories, these liminal landscapes have been considered a link to other worldly beings—deities, mischievous tricksters, shapeshifting spirits and even the dead—presenting obstacles to overcome and, if not respected, can lead one astray. In this sense, wetlands can also be seen as a space of reverence, bravery, potency, creativity, learning and interaction.

The wetland context in which this plant exists could relate to your own experiences, your will and the learnings that you bring to ponder a rise of the alt-right. Or perhaps this card relates to the borderless movement of the virus, spreading like the rhizomatic root system of the grey sedge, unseen, interconnected and enduring beneath the eternal flux of life above. When consuming information from media, government officials, social media, and even conspiracy theorists, take care to determine what is and what is not. Look to where the virus has thinned the veil on how governments, corporations and societies operate and revealing of systems that enable fascist and alt-right groups to rise. From where do fascist threads—authoritarianism, closing of borders, xenophobia, fear mongering, police control, media powers, corporatism—feed? What role do you play? Pay attention to the rules and regulations being changed right now, and whom they benefit.

The grey sedge plays a role in holding the banks of the wetland together, improving water quality and, in turn, assisting in the persistence and diversity of life forms. In recent Australian history, fascist ideology has manifested in one form as an ultranationalist intolerance of diversity represented in small, yet dangerous extreme right groups. In moments of public rising of these alt-right groups, there is often a flock of progressives presenting alternatives to counter such hateful ideologies. Where are you positioned? Do you have the will power to enter the bog, to lift the veil on the workings beneath the surface and to see the bigger picture? If you are imagining alternatives to what is revealed, share them.



ANDROGYNE
*Lomatia silaifolia // crinkle bush*

Reading

Pairs of flowers containing both male and female parts stem from a long spike on the Lomatia silaifolia. In this image we see two prominent pollen presenters surrounded by male anthers. The anthers release pollen prior to the flower being fully open, increasing chances of pollination.

This world is full of duality and constant shifting of opposing forces. Androgyne among humans—physical, psychological, cultural and mythological—is evidenced throughout history across world cultures. Beyond gender and appearances, the suggestion of androgyne in this flower can relate to equilibrium and fluidity of opposing elements within oneself or within the situation in question. Are you experiencing imbalance? Can you cultivate within yourself what you might be looking for in others?

The nectar of this flower contains cyanide, a possible defense against being eaten and to gain advantage over competing plants. What adaptations can you make to increase chances of new opportunities? Can you build strategies from within to find equilibrium of competing forces?


Man Cheung, photograph for *Fortunes of the Forest*, 2017.

Commentary

This card took me instantly to your book 'The Land is the Source of the Law: A Dialogic Encounter with Indigenous Jurisprudence' published in 2011, in which you refer to the Indigenous concept of the *Law of Relationship*. You describe this as a

> 'dyadic structure of two major moieties. These moieties do not form an oppositional binary, but complement each other to achieve the balance, which actualizes the rhythm of relationship. The shape and pattern of this Law of Relationship creates a body of law which, in Australia's case, 'vibrates in song' and is 'woven across' *Corpus Australis*.' (C.F. Black 2011, p. 15)

Your writing, particularly your urgent message that the *Djang* (primordial energy) is out of balance, encourages me to read this card through an expanded lens. In this flower I now see the whole universe and the responsibility of the individual within. I see the coming together of many two halves within which there exists a respect for difference and a striving for harmony. Two forces, not oppositional, but rather dialogical and complementary.

If we take this card in relation to the present moment, it asks where and how individuals, communities and governments are striving for balance. I don't think it can be taken as suggesting the planet is in balance, what with recent devastating bushfires in the Amazon, California and Australia, locust plagues in East Africa, floods in North India and China and now the pandemic—all shining a light on mass inequalities across the globe. Where does your responsibility lie in rebalancing the *Djang*?

The crinkle brush flowers from November to February, so at this present moment (April), it is likely to be fruiting or releasing its seeds for germination. What will emerge from this pandemic will depend on how individuals behave, how communities interact and how governments and corporations respond. Will government protections for tenants, income and childcare continue? Will prioritising health over profit gain momentum? Will alt-right/fascist ideologies rise as poorer nations and refugees need increased support? Will protesters return to the streets on even greater mass? The virus does not discriminate, but the conditions and systems of the environment it finds itself can mean it thrives or is hampered. So, ask yourself, who decides who sinks or swims?

The cyanide present in this plant suggests an underlying threat. Corporations have the ability to adapt to survive, as do social movements and individuals. I'm certain you are already taking note of where corporations are gaining social and institutional control in this pandemic. Perhaps your knowledge of *Djang* will guide your thoughts on how adaptations you are observing will impact planetary balance? Could you find a way to communicate the costs?

Reading

Casuarina is derived from the Malay word ‘kasuari’ (cassowary), referring to the similarity of the plants foliage to the bird’s feathers. ‘Littoralis’ is latin for ‘of the shore’ and whilst this tree is found along the coast, it also grows well in dry forests such as Karawatha Forest. ‘Karawatha’ is thought to be an Aboriginal word meaning ‘place of pines’ and it is believed that the pine-like appearance of the sheoak influenced this place naming.

The black sheoak is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers grow on separate plants. In the winter months the male trees turn gold when laden with pollen and female trees bear cone-like fruit after small red flowers. Wind, the vital force that we cannot see, plays a crucial role in pollination. Wind is related to air, breath, and spirit; that which moves, surrounds, and pervades. The whistling of the wind through the fronds are considered by some Aboriginal groups as voices of ancestors and spirits.

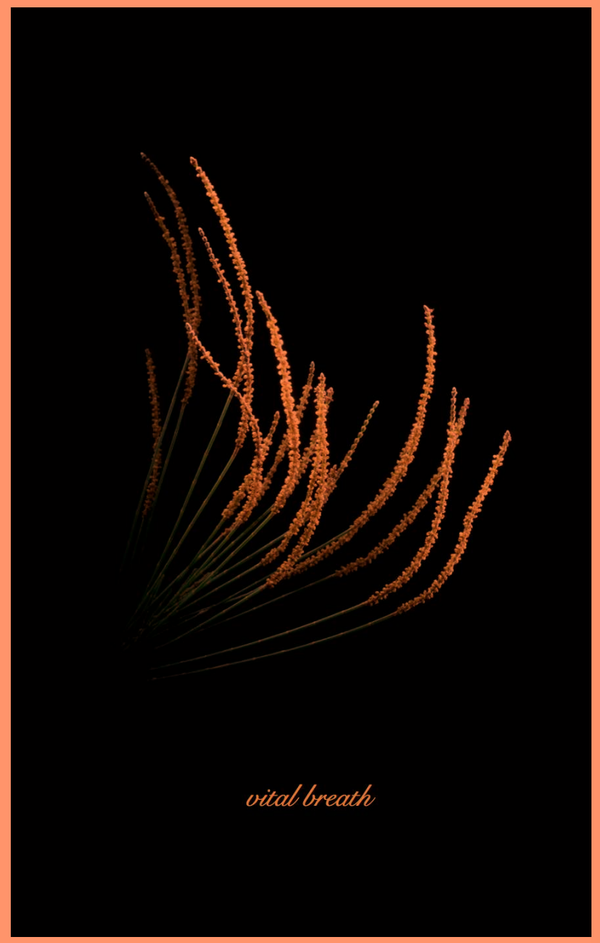
Fallen needle leaves produce a thick mulch which inhibits other plants growing underneath. They are soil stabilisers with extensive root systems and root nodules housing bacteria that converts atmospheric nitrogen to nitrate which acts as a fertiliser. Can you sense unseen influencing forces around you? How might you connect or disconnect with these forces to find stability or vitality in your life?

Commentary

This one is simple. Breathe. Be guided by the spirits and entities around you. Open portholes to other dimensions but remain aware that the wind can ‘bring blessings just as easily as destruction’ (C.F. Black 2017, p. 69).

Be wary of what oppresses diversity and investigate the roots of systems at play. Whilst the sheoak suppresses growth of other species, the mulch at its understory feeds a world of symbiotic fungal and bacterial life, which in turn fertilises not only the tree, but the plants that grow at its margins. Is it possible to surpass individual ownership and capitalist logics of growth? Mycelial thinking could be a future of politics! Find ways to elevate alternative perspectives through the powerful and vibrational alchemy of story, poetry, song and dance.

I feel compelled to also mention the Glossy Black Cockatoo, that almost exclusively feeds from the seeds of the Casuarina species. I’m not too familiar with this bird, but hear that they are friendly, they are the smallest of the Black Cockatoos in Australia and they mate for life. They are also threatened by loss of habitat caused by bushfires and land clearing—she-oaks are fire sensitive. So this card might also be reminding you to act for what you care for and be open to what comes from moments of feeling small.




Man Cheung, photograph for *Fortunes of the Forest*, 2017.

In summary

Be attentive to what is being revealed. Listen to the wind. Become fungi. Imagine and communicate alternatives. Sing your desires.

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Caitlin Franzmann’s question on behalf of the reading audience:

*What is the role of artificial intelligence in the pandemic and what do we need to be aware of, or resist, moving forward?*

C.F. Black’s reading and commentary:

Card Designer

For this reading I have used the *Whispers of the Ocean Oracle Cards*[1] by Angela Hartfield and illustrated by Ekaterina Golovanova.

Contact details for Angela: www.angelahartfield.com and Instagram contact @a_hartfield

Consultation Process

I have selected three cards. The three sea creatures are the manta ray, the giant clam and the Hawaiian monk seal. Angela has provided the personality traits of each species and a reading. I then follow with a commentary aimed directly at the readership.

Introduction

I begin this reading by first stating I am not an experienced card reader, such as Caitlin, but rather a storyteller and a scholar.[2] It was, therefore, much easier for me to imagine myself diving into the deep sea and sitting with each sea creature in consultation about ‘the goings-on up on the land.’

Therefore, my response is going to be more along the lines of a narrative which is undergirded by my knowledge of the world of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data. I address the way algorithms are used to influence our thoughts, consumer choices, values and unfortunately our moral decisions. Even artistic practise can be re-shaped by trolls aimed at changing the narrative around contemporary issues.[3]

We have all become citizens of the big tech companies, rather than nation states. Voting is no longer by free choice, but influenced subtly by the algorithms sent out by the giant tech companies, which in turn feed the information to advertisers, governments and other manipulating forces.[4] Once you begin to swim in the ocean of the all-consuming algorithms/bots, it is not hard to see the parallels in the way the spread of coronavirus mimics the spread of algorithms and the way they infect our immune system both physical and socially. Both viruses can end up controlling our lives if we are not mindful.

The goal of the bot is to encourage overdosing and addiction to information, entertainment, and even spiritual teachings. As Yuri Noah Harari warns, when data and biometrics are combined to profile a human, then we are well on the way to living in the world of GATTACA.[5]

So, make your mantra—Don’t feed the bots!

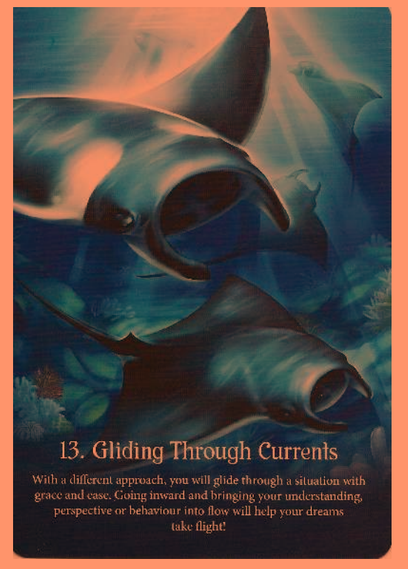
THE CARDS

Whispers of the Ocean Oracle Cards by Angela Hartfield, Blue Angel Publications, Australia.

FIRST CARD

Card No. 13 Gliding Through Currents

*With a different approach, you will glide through a situation with grace and ease. Going inward and bringing your understanding, perspective or behaviour into flow will help your dreams take flight!*




Personality of the Manta Ray

Manta rays keep their mouths open so they can gather plankton as they travel. Keep an open mind and heart as you move through life and gather more information and make your choices purposefully. If you do encounter resistance or blocks, considered diverting your flow to other matters until things improve.

Reading

With meditation and an increased awareness of your surroundings, you can move forward like a manta ray, gliding beautifully, yet energetically. Trust this guidance and move ahead to create an opportunity for new endeavours to come into your scope. Be discerning and tune in to other possibilities available to you. Be willing to make changes to bring the best possible outcomes.

This graceful giant encourages you to carefully observe the people and movement around you. Manta ray may be seen in groups or individually and are able to effortlessly coast through powerful currents of water. You are being asked to notice variations in the energies that are coming at you then choose how you would like to utilise your own energy in response.

Commentary

The manta ray are the smarties of the ocean populations. They are highly intelligent and good at problem solving and communicating. So, they welcomed my interview and were happy to give advice for us land-lovers. I particularly thought Beatrice, who was a monster with a wingspan of 8.8m, was quiet intimidating, so I sat quietly and listened carefully.

Beatrice made me aware that us land-lovers where not aware that we are swimming in an ocean full of a never-ending stream of algorithms vying

for our attention. They are constantly calling to us to pay attention to what they have on offer, be it a film, an ad, a holiday or tasty instant food. So first you have to acknowledge that you are in an information ocean, then you have to work out what sort of creature you are in this ocean. Are you, as an artist, a dazzling reef fish of pretty colours or are you the shark that gobbles up such little fish. Think of what sort of sea creature you would want to be and study its habits.

You may get a pack of Ocean Cards from Angela and sit with the descriptions of the personalities of the sea creatures, or seek your own. Then try and imbue that personality as you swim through the ocean of information. Be alert to the predators that fill that ocean.

SECOND CARD

Card No 24. Love where you are

*Use your sensitivity to know when to act. Connect your heart to your head when determining what you would like.*


Personality of the Clam

Clams live in the mud and have a strong connection to the earth. If you have disengaged from your feelings, tune back into them, as they can guide you, now. Clams can siphon water and extract what they need to feel rejuvenated. Use this time to get back on track. Circumstances may not be ideal, but a clam shows you to appreciate where you are, no matter how unappealing things may be at this moment.

Reading

Contemplate your direction and trust what you are feeling. Being present in the moments when life is not ideal is not the easiest thing to do. It may feel frustrating to patiently wait for answers or process what has transpired. You may find you are consumed by past circumstances. You may be nervous about planning your next step. Tune into observations, awareness and heightened sense so you may move with grace and style. You are invited to be in this moment. Allow your intuition to guide you while you will wait your next step.

You have faced challenging situations before. The urge to avoid what is happening is strong. You have the tools and the strength to face this head on. Use the depth of love that resides within you to face what is in front of you. Allow yourself to ground if you are feeling off balance. Be in space and know you can move through this challenge.

Commentary

Harold the giant clam was a solitary giant, who spoke little and tended to speak in short sentences. He weighed about 250 kg. Upon visiting the clam, I asked him what it is like staying in one spot all the time. He responded in short sharp answers but was basically saying that he went to a lot of trouble to pick just the right spot. Then he settled down and now enjoys watching the 'passing parade' of sea life. I then asked how does he catch his food if he can't move? He replied 'Easy! The world is full of fools. They don't pay attention to their surroundings. The sillier they are, the tastier they are!'

After that shock, I moved a bit back from him and asked for his final advice as I did not feel safe. He said, 'Calm down and clam up and don't feed the bots!'

This card is most timely—in a time of coronavirus. There is much to contemplate in Angela's reading if you want to take Harold's advice, otherwise you think you are being told to shut up, rather than don't run off at the mouth.

Learn from the clam and be strongly connected to the earth below your feet. Ask yourself—what does it mean to love where I am? Make sure your heart is not longing to be somewhere else. This is how the algorithms detect your weak spots and play it for all they can get out of you. Don't feed the bots! Love where you are. Connect with the Earth and thank it for giving you ground to stand on, and so, come into existence.

THIRD CARD

Card No 22. Take Note

*Your answers are being given to you. Quieting external voices and excessive noise will give you the chance to hear what is being offered.*


Personality of the Hawaiian monk seal

The Hawaiian monk seal is the only seal native to Hawaii. It is currently an endangered species. Monk seals are agile and sleek in the water. They do not have external ears, just small openings. This symbolises balance between outward hearing and paying attention to inner knowing. Monk seals are very curious. Curiosity and imagination can be the spark needed to create a new flow of energy. Listen to your inner voice or intuition and follow the guidance you are receiving.

Reading

Take a moment to really hear what is being said. Put aside any preconceptions and allow yourself to imagine a new approach to this situation. Stepping back and paying attention in this way will enhance your inner voice and bring you insights. You can honour stillness, while listening to others. By doing this, you will create better relationships and allow your inner light and love to shine out towards others as a means of communication.

You may find it is easier to feel this in your body. Imagine how it would feel to engage in what is being offered by another. For example, note how your body anticipates a dinner you are invited to. Does it feel relaxed and calm? Or do you feel tight and stressed? Your body's response to an opportunity or a conversation might signal whether something is a good fit for you. Your body acts as a barometer. Listen to your body to receive more clarity.



Commentary

The two seals depicted on this card have serene faces, but do not let that fool you. Sedna, the seal at the front of the card reminded me of the seal that visited me in my dreams when I was in Montreal writing my last book.[6] She was a fierce looking seal and told me to look closely at the disappearances of native women in Canada. I then found myself writing a narrative about the sea goddess Sedna and the abuse she suffered, which led her to transform into the giver and taker of sea life. Her story reflected the plight of the large number of disappearances of native women, which continues to this day.

So, when I asked our Sedna the seal what her advice is to the land-lovers, she said 'take note of what is happening on your social media feeds. Be agile and awake, or woke, to what is being fed to you on social media. Watch out for the predators.

The seals agility reminds us of the ebbs and flows of our emotional body. As artists, your body's response should be well known to you. Listen more to your body when you are watching social media. Ask your body, 'Whose truth is this? Does it align with my moral compass?'

In Summary

The three cards therefore ask us: to basically Glide Through the Currents of the ocean of global information rather than drowning in it. Love where you are. Don't be running around the world or the suburbs like a headless chook, making yourself feel important and busy which in turn feeds the bots. Lastly Take Note on what is going on around you and inside of you. Spot the predator bot!

1 Published by Blue Angel Publishing, 2019.
2 C.F. Black, *A Mosaic of Indigenous Legal Thought: Legendary tales and other writings* (NY: Routledge pubs, 2017).
3 C. Wylie, *Mindf*ck: Inside Cambridge Analytical Plot to Break the World* (UK: Profile Books Ltd., 2019), 123.
4 Ibid., 172.
5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gattaca
6 C.F. Black, *A Mosaic of Indigenous Legal Thought: Legendary tales and other writings* (NY: Routledge pubs, 2017).

# (un)becoming educated

Carla Macchiavello

*In homage to Eric Michaels*

I have to confess… until recently, about two years ago, I had never really paid attention to the magical. Maybe it was a stubborn rational-colonial-authoritarian upbringing, kept in place by a deeply rooted underlying faith in progress and science, but alignments of stars and planets only made sense to me in the context of a Planetarium. Magic was made up of tricks we performed as children, disappearing coins, cards that you could always recognize, or small frightened animals coming out of older men's hats. I didn't even read the Horoscope.

Perhaps that is why I came to Aesthetics and then Art History. To read signs, to learn how to read through the whole sensorium. I now realize any practice could have been as good as any other: to read the interactions of molecules and cells, electrons and spinning particles, to read rhythms, patterns, choreographies and coexisting movements in the skies, the oceans, the earth and its layers.

I have to confess… that perhaps due to a Catholic upbringing, I still find it somehow 'natural' to use the word confession.

Perhaps then, I would like to just share that I keep three stones in whatever surfaces I now call my working spaces-desks—stones that I look up to every single day, that I hold and rearrange, that tell me things. Two come from the shores of a volcanic lake in Southern Chile, another from the island of Chiloé. They are small but vary in shapes, some polished, some extremely porous, craggy, shifting shades of what I can identify as dark green and grey. Together they fit comfortably inside my hand. I picked them up in January 2020, after quietly requesting permission as they beckoned. Little did I know that I would be employing them as talismans, as anchors, as portals and mineral reminders of the earth, of islands, of water and movement, at a time when imposed restrictions of movement in different parts of Chile make it difficult to be outside.

Walking is something mentioned by Sarita Gálvez in her text. A cultural walk taken on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) with a songman, listening to stories, songlines, including one about mitochondrial lineages, as they moved along the coastline of the island.

Sung stories that read the landscape as ancestral routes, laws, and spirits. Songs that trace a spiritual and resonant, embodied cartography, laying claim-belonging to territory.

Walking we came to know a bit of Sonja Carmichael's ancestral lands, almost a year ago ("we" were: Camila Marambio, Caitlin Franzmann, Sarita Gálvez, Christy Gast, me; we were engaged in Ensayos #4, asking questions about coastal curriculum and coastal stewardship). We took two walks, the first with Sonja, a Ngugi weaver, and one of her daughters, Freja, a curator; then with Sonja and her husband, Glynn. First, we went to pay our respects to sacred lake, Kaboora, looking at it from afar, as the law of the land requests; then we walked through the bush close to Sonja's home in Mooloomba (Point Lookout) until we came to a rocky lookout guided by Glynn. From there we could see part of the Island's coastline and its changing shape, transformed by decades of sand mining.

What is coastal curriculum? Where does the coast begin and end? Is the lake part of the coast? Are the carved out sandy craters in the center of the island altering maps? Is the influx of tourism altering songlines? And is curriculum a set of interlocking subjects, courses, categories, thoughts, or is it also paths as trajectories, the passing of songs?

Learning by walking, by moving in the territory, the landscape, guided by those who live in it: this has been part of Ensayos' methodology. Learning by moving, by doing: not quite in the way the Bauhaus would have it, as was taught in the Art School I attended in Chile for two and a half years. The Zapatistas say, *preguntando caminamos*, as we ask, we move along together.[11] Learning by listening, to others, to land, to water, to the shape of things, to the songs they tell, as we walk together. By walking/moving/being moved together, we entwine, we form a loose knot.

A method of research and a pedagogy, as Sarita reminds us in *creekulum*. She and the children and the elders and many others walk together along the Merri Merri creek, back in Naarm/Melbourne, in Wurundjeri country, and learn from each other. A curriculum of the creek, by the creek, with the creek and its custodians. One of many forms of education, perhaps another way to understand what "open education" might mean.[22] Because this is education at its most sophisticated, out in the open.

I am reminded not everyone can walk or move in the same way. This does not impede expression, thought, imagination; there is wisdom in each form of movement, as there is in each language. How has Ensayos thought about its own forms of access, its ability to reach certain spaces/bodies and who it leaves behind? It has engaged deeply with response/ability, communicating with different species and entities, migrations and translations, and with access in the shape of roads, ferries, planes, cars and vans, boats, scuba diving, dams, audiovisual and sound recordings, printed and virtual matter, scent mounds and samples, tracks, infusions and dyed concoctions, even the vantage of drones, that form of seemingly unrestricted ocular access. It has wondered too about the ecological impact of access and connectivity in multiple forms, how roads can be scars reminding of old colonial, and newer extractive, modernizing wounds. The desire to reach, to know, to categorize, so close to colonization may be why Ensayos has delved in mystery too, the thickness of uncertainty and the oracular, shaping its own defined and yet malleable space.

In her response to two texts published in *Más allá del fin* 3 and now reprinted in this 3.5 version, Catalina Valdés wondered if maybe we should listen to the Yaghans who have traditionally employed canoes to move in the canals of Patagonia and Karukinka. She was not thinking of access/ability, but rather, of colonial wounds (through the repeated history of disembarkment captured in landscape scenes) and creating a third space, a way of being in the earth that evokes the movement of canoes, in between shores. Her words resonate with me on multiple levels, as I translate them and transport this third space elsewhere, to cultural communication and of *mestizaje*, where our histories intertwine.[3] As I begin to think of other forms of contemporary and internal colonialism, and restrictions on movement, even on life itself.

Not everyone can hear. This does not mean one cannot listen, communicate, articulate sounds, speak in many languages, pay attention, read lips and tongues, or feel vibrations. Sometimes communication happens through the feet and the skin—listening, vibrating, and also decoding, translating. I recently heard, in one of the quarantine talks I've been able to attend, about a Colombian artist working with technology, Bárbara Santos. It referred to the work she has been involved in for over 15 years in the Amazon with different indigenous communities. Slow work, passionate and committed, of being together, accompanying, listening, attuning to other rhythms, codes, semiotics and technologies, those of the Amazon forest. Technologies preserved by *sabedores*, *kumus*. Healing as technology. Healing as activating memory embedded in sacred materials, enmeshed in sacred spaces. She spoke of not just listening and reproducing what one hears, but also sinking into that other time of working through difference, of not knowing. She speaks of opening up to the apparently imperceptible, like Sarita's reference to mitochondrial memories, those filaments connecting human and non-human bodies:

> "a nuestro alrededor, en las ciudades, miles de aparatos rastrean, graban y generan datos, tecnologías digitales y ondas, que cada día abren más preguntas sobre la vulnerabilidad de consignación de datos, de cómo delegamos nuestra memoria, como extendemos o amputamos nuestra capacidad de comprender aquello imperceptible, telepático e inasible que si lo entendemos desde el saber ancestral indígena abre un espectro de sentido material e inmaterial, sobre los minerales en las plantas y en nuestros cuerpos, como lo es el saber del tabaco, una planta que para la gente tukano oriental guarda un saber eterno que no muere, el conocimiento del tiempo eterno, el cual está grabado en sus semillas desde el origen del cosmos."[4]

During our first walk together in Minjerribah, Sonja spoke of *the knot*. The knot of the gulaiji, the Quandamooka women's bag. The knot she has studied carefully, caringly. A knot to be unraveled but not necessarily resolved. More like a knot to be threaded into, to speak to, to converse with, to learn from. I am reminded of the many *kipu* projects that now aim to 'crack the code' of these Andean textiles with the aid of artificial intelligence and a computational approach.[5] Colors, twists, shapes, numbers, yarns, animal origins, lengths, ways in which cords were spun or plied, and all sorts of structural factors and data are considered in these databases. It is a fascinating world, that of AI and deep learning, and so much knowledge of how the patterns and numbers in these strung, knotted Inca and Andean technologies is opening up with their aid, but is that the whole story? I wonder if this is a conversation, if we are listening to the *kipus* speak. Not just the *kipus* and their traceable grammar, but also the bodies—human, nonhuman, ethereal—that they spoke to and speak for.

Of course, those who activated the historical quipus are no longer here, so how can we know… or are they no longer here? What elements, what forms of being are we not seeing? Which ones may be imperceptible but are carried by bodies, and just need to be invoked, recognized?

If there is a reciprocity between the territories we inhabit and the thoughts we think, the technologies we create and encode—geographies shaping our imaginations, coloring, scenting and attuning our thinking and feelings— then perhaps the quipus are attuned to many forms of inhabiting a territory, of storytelling. To many memories, new and old, biological, geological, affective, oracular. To what territories is AI responding to and how does this affect its results, its particular forms of storytelling?

Curving, twisting movements, bodies: of water, of rock and minerals, of plants, of songs and stars. A voice that runs through the threads, connecting threads of water, of wind passages, of life and death.

> Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui reminds us of the relation to landscape, when she speaks of *kipus* as maps tracing watery, circulatory systems of exchange. For they "no solo eran registros numéricos sino también inscripciones propiciatorias de naturaleza ritual, que permitían ordenar el cosmos al enumerar las ofrendas a las *wak'as* o lugares sagrados de culto a los antepasados. La lectura académica sobre los *kipus* arqueológicos, obsesionada por establecer sus regularidades numéricas, ha terminado por convertirlo en un "código sin mensaje", en simetría con la fotografía, según la define Roland Barthes"[6]. She proposes that the *kipus* give voice to other bodies, other realities, signs from heaven and earth too.
>
> As we move, we feel. Feeling the landscape, as their caretakers and traditional custodians lead us: "es el sentir la presencia de las montañas, escuchar las voces del paisaje, los sustratos de memoria que nos hablan desde sus cumbres, lagos y ojos de agua o desde sus múltiples apachetas y caminos."[7]

That first walk was transformative. I have felt and thought about it since as a weaving: as we moved and talked and listened and stopped and recommenced, as we changed partners, sometimes being alone, in groups of three, four, two, we threaded our stories, our questions, our silences. We shared eyes, ears, tongues. Codes. To see with each other. Sometimes we did not understand each other, but we listened. We became a woven body, passing by.

> Listening to the energies of objects, of places, their materialities. Like woven bags. On that first walk taken together, Sonja spoke of her work with the Quandamooka women's bags. A process not just of understanding how something is made, or what it meant, but a complex process of weaving oneself back and into that historical, biological, territorial, cultural and communal memory, including its lived traumas, past and present. Weaving their selves into a continuum that changes because it continues and that continues because it regenerates to tell new stories too.

During our second walk, we helped Christy make a cyanotype. Whilst covering the prepared fabric with materials gathered from the path and placing it under the helping sun, Sonja asked what tribe each of us belonged to. I could not say. I felt shame for not having an answer (shame… my Catholic upbringing showing its glowing face).

It took me a while to recognize that this was not a question of single origins and that the apparent lack of a tribe meant that *mestizaje* is not a homogeneous blank background, but is composed of many threads and colors and twists, beyond imposed and internalized nationalist categories. That my tribe are many tribes, including rural and urban and watery ones, and that the threads making up my own family weaving are not just DNA lines, but stories of migrations, convergences, overlaps, and communities that we build too, that we become a part of. Ensayos is family too.

I now read a passage from Kimberley Moulton's essay, "I Can Still Hear Them Calling. Echoes of My Ancestors." She is referring to the approach she has taken to the subject of her essay, a personal storyline narrative "to ground my presentation in time, Ancestors and place. It is a teaching method that my cousin Dr Wayne Atkinson has developed for his On Country Learning (Indigenous Studies) for many years."[8] No wonder pedagogy haunts me. I come from a family of teachers and healers: animal healers, human healers, educators (as well as farmers, artisans and home makers, including eco-nomists). I recently learned that two of my matrilineal ancestors who were teachers lived in New York, where I currently live (even though I write these lines from the opposite side of the world). The apartment rented by my aunt, who taught art and hosted for a while my maternal grandmother, before the latter embarked on a journey to Chile, still exists. I am knotted to this city I have begun to make my home, in ways that were unimaginable and imperceptible to me. This is only a fragment of my mitochondrial legacy, that is also entwined in Chile, with other territories, other bodies. It is not insignificant that she travelled by sea.

> I remember now, we took three walks. The second one was an early rise, as we moved at dawn along the craggy edges of the Gorge Walk. This time we were accompanied by so many other presences: birds, kangaroos, turtles, whales, dolphins, fish, so-so many birds, insects, plants, breezes, the rising warming sun. And patterns, changing patterns of water, of waves, ripples, currents, sometimes broken by fins.
>
> We spoke of changing economies, like a cultural and whale-watching center and differences it has sparked among local communities.
>
> This would be my last walk with them. I did not get to meet Christine Black, back on the mainland, and hear her speak of custodianship and Indigenous law, and specially her storytelling. But now, her card readings plunge me deep into that other fluid fertile territory with so many layers, depths, grounds, beings, currents, and movements. Her words remind me to listen to those underground, underwater stories too—to imagine them, what they are saying. Could be plants growing in a lake, as Caitlin's card readings in *Fortunes of the Forest* also remind us. Stories too easily dismissed, that remain mostly invisible to many human eyes, no matter how much we may appreciate those waters. Eyes that barely skim the water's surface, while other technological eyes and hands go in deep to extract from it. Maybe we need to listen with more of our senses.

I am currently living in the neighborhood where my mother lived as an infant. About three blocks away from the apartment they lived in, a block away from the church where she was baptized, whose spire I can see from my window. I can also see the Andes far beyond.

I will confess… that at around 5am each Sunday, for the past four months or so, I wake up as I hear the rattling metallic sounds of carts being pushed with goods… sometimes I hear them during the rest of the week too. Carts carrying food and other basic necessities to sell them at makeshift markets and street stalls, not allowed by the government in quarantine. Breaking all sorts of imposed curfews and restrictions, but done nonetheless. They rattle, they push so as to gain a livelihood, really, just to live. Racialized bodies and subjectivities, precarized bodies and lives, that the Chilean State and elites keeps diminishing, through precarized labor, through migratory laws. Laws based on imagined national identities and borders that keep criminalizing and ignoring so many people, denying access to certain forms of care. Other manifestations of care have sprung up though, networks of territories within territories, of *vecinxs*, *comadres*, and many more that have felt affected, beyond localities too. But I have felt rage, indignation at the State and at the hatred (or is it just fear?) bred in the country.

I listen from my bed, my temporary home sufficiently fragile to allow me to hear clearly what happens in the street, yet sufficiently privileged to not be out there at 5am. I am not that body but I can listen to it, watch it from afar, reflect on it. How much privilege is there in that sentence? Seems to mirror the privilege of academia, even of being able to write these lines in English.

But the lines, the stories can be twisted to create a thread, to tell a story, a new one. In times of pain, I can still write, speak, reach, do, weave myself into caring networks, and move in unknown ways.

I am reminded of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's words again: "Aprender a sentir la indignación puede ser un camino fructífero para superar el enclaustramiento de la academia y sus devaneos teóricos."[9]

What do I do with my privilege? No matter how little, how precarious, how small, what do I do with the privilege I have? With the space I occupy? With my rage and pain? How do I contribute to undo these distinctions, this gradient, this injustice?

> When I met Sonja, she asked me what I did. I responded, I am a story teller. Even in my teaching, I spin stories into being.

I am working on it, learning by doing, learning by listening deeply. I resonate with that rattling sound. It moves me and pushes me. What mitochondrial chords and lines and memories is it touching? What colonial wounds?

Is it a sign?

It might not leave clear marks, as of now, on the pavement.

It might be whitewashed, as so many images, artworks, words, sounds, forms of expression have so far been apparently wiped "clean" off the surface of the city. As if the protests had not happened, as if their vibrant vivid memory was not scarred in people's lives, bodies, including that of the city and other landscapes.

But they persist. We persist. I hear you. I can see you, sense you and I see me too, different, but here too, passing by. We share this, we cross, we push, we can feel empathy, touch each other, resonate with each other, even if our syntax, our stories, are different.

> Back at our camp, we wove thoughts and reeds. We composed a birthday song. We prepared food and shared it back with Sonja, Freja, their family. One day, Freja joined us and after a swim we went to have a card reading with Caitlin at Adder Rock. One of the cards was "loose knot." Just as we were sharing our thoughts and listening to Caitlin's reading, I suddenly saw:

A Kookaburra bird
that plunged
and rapidly poked
at a young ocher snake.

A small snake that rolled itself around
a bird's bill.
An unhappy bird, forcing its bill open,
to unravel the knotted snake.

A semi happy bird that snapped
a ssssss-
nake in half.

A half snake bouncing and
becoming a pattern of
hopping curves
as it pushed
itself away
from a perplexed bird.

A bird that pecked once more
to make the half snake bounce
again
and swallow it complete.

A half snake that didn't want to die
twisting and biting
to get out
from within the bird's body.

A choking bird.
A little head sticking out
hissing
from a bird's beak.
A bird that finally swallowed
in a gulp
a little half serpent.
Or so it seemed.

I can still see the struggling animals. A dance of life and death. A flow of energies. Was it an oracle? I cannot say, but we were at Adder Rock, also known as Healing Rock because of the presence of serpents. If so, I still cannot make out exactly what it meant. Who is the serpent? The Kookaburra bird? Are we all struggling in different ways to survive? Was the bird just taking its medicine?

1 Alessandra Pomarico, "In the Cracks of Learning (Situating Us)", in *Pedagogy Otherwise. The Reader*, edited by Alessandra Pomarico (Udaipur, India: Ecoversities Alliance, 2018), 153.

2 Open educational practices, open education, open pedagogy, are terms employed to refer to pedagogical processes that are committed to learner-driven education, accessibility, and the creation of tools to empower learners as collaborators in the construction of knowledge. Robin DeRosa and Rajiv Jhangiani avoid defining the term "open education," but offer the following idea: "a site of praxis, a place where theories about learning, teaching, technology, and social justice enter into a conversation with each other and inform the development of educational practices and structures." http://openpedagogy.org/open-pedagogy/ (accessed June 4, 2020).

3 Sarah Corona Berkin, "Oralidad y visualidades del mundo indígena", in *Ver con los otros. Comunicación intercultural*, edited by Jesús Martín-Barbero and Sarah Corona Berkin (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2017), 75.

4 Bárbara Santos, "Dispositivos minerales. Conversación con el antropólogo Juan Álvaro Echeverri", in Curación como tecnología (Bogotá: Instituto Distrital de las Artes-Idartes, 2019), 81.

5 Some new approaches from US academia, varying noticeably, were presented at the Symposium "Khipus: Writing Histories In a and From Knots", Bard College, February 1, 2019. Gary Urton, who opened the symposium, emphasized the idea of thinking differently about the narratives and histories of the lives of Andean people told by the kipus through numbers, colors, and structures. Building on the work of Asmaron Legese, Urton proposes to think about history in particular in more complex, non-linear ways.

6 Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Un mundo ch'ixi es posible. Ensayos sobre un presente en crisis* (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2018), 53, originally in "Principio Potosí Reverso" (Museo Reina Sofía, 2010).

7 Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Principio Potosí: Another View of Totality," Decolonial Gesture vol.11, no.1, Hemispheric Institute, accessed July 6, 2020, https://hemi.nyu.edu/hemi/es/e-misferica-111-gesto-decolonial/e111-essay-the-potosi-principle-another-view-of-totality

8 Kimberley Moulton, "I Can Still Hear Them Calling. Echoes of My Ancestors," in *Sovereign Words. Indigenous Art, Curation and Criticism*, edited by Katya García-Antón (Amsterdam: Office for Contemporary Art Norway/Valiz, Amsterdam, 2018), 199.

9 Rivera Cusicanqui, "Palabras mágicas. Reflexiones sobre la naturaleza de la crisis presente," *Un mundo*, 120.



# *ÆS JÁLA-KAWÉSQAR KUTEKÉ ČE* = 'My Ancestor and Me'

Patricia Messier Loncuante

Jekstas-lájep = *Florhermosa Seudonimo*
[beautiful flower, pseudonym]

## Arts and Crafts

I was twenty-two years old when I learned about basketry: I became interested in Kawésqar culture after my father's sudden death. I did some research and asked my aunt to teach me how to weave. She corrected a few details, and I quickly learned how to apply this new skill.

Those were hard times. My father's death changed the whole structure of my family: my mother, my brother, and I took charge of the household expenses. My mother began to work, taking up the roles of mother and providing father.

I began by selling my handicraft door-to-door or at public events; we needed the extra income to get along. Over the years, I made myself known to the people working at these events and at other cultural spaces, and they began to place orders. Those were beautiful but also very hard times. We saved money to meet basic needs; I couldn't afford public transportation so I walked all the time.

My mother used to give us some money, but I chose instead to earn it for myself. I didn't like the idea of living at the expense of my parents. I see myself as someone who gets ahead by her own means. For me, it wasn't about money, even if the extra cash was of great help. At that time, I found out about technical degrees given at Universidad de Magallanes. I sent out an application and was accepted at one program, but unfortunately, I couldn't afford the tuition. My mother helped me out by talking to the school so I could become an executive assistant with computer skills. From then on I was exposed to university life and began developing my own cultural interests. I continued to build knowledge as an 'urban indigenous person', in other words, from the perspective of someone who was born at a different place from that where Kawésqar culture is found. I respect what I've learned through my aunts, uncles, and cousins, by coming into direct contact with my culture. However, I think it makes no difference where you are born if you want to know learn about culture; there is a certain value in becoming an ambassador for Kawésqar identity.

The process of creating a Kawésqar basket begins by collecting raw material, basket rush, from a town called San Juan in the outskirts of Punta Arenas. I bring along friends and family members to help me; it is hard work, mainly due to transportation, as not many of us own a car or know how to drive, which is one of our greatest shortcomings.

The task of collecting basket rush demands concentration, strength, and speed. We spend three hours a day in highland areas; this type of grass grows best in wetlands and can vary greatly in size. Full-grown rush can be bent and easily broken; otherwise it must be cut off at ground level. The rush stems that are too thick or thin are used to give shape to the basket. Rush harvest time is between December and April, but horses and cattle use it for food, so we must wait for them to clear the area. These issues cannot be anticipated in advance.

Preparation for basket weaving involves soaking the plant in water and allowing it to dry for a week, otherwise the strands might break. The weaving process begins by tying eight to ten knots, depending on the size of the basket. One must weave quickly since the rushes may dry up too much and lose flexibility. The process will depend on the size of the basket: jewellery, breadbaskets, and all kinds of decorative objects. Basket rush is easy to work with, which gives free rein to my own creativity.

Unfortunately, people don't appreciate local craftsmanship and ancestral traditions. This weaving technique dates back to 6000 BCE and we're adding value to it today. Fuel expenses, long workdays… if the baskets are sold for $1,000 or $3,000 pesos it detracts from the quality of the work accomplished.

Kawésqar craftsmanship involves basketry as well as wood-bark canoes, sealskin barges, and harpoons, to name a few examples. Once I'd learned basket weaving, I became interested in crafting canoes. I used bark for the first one I ever made and then turned to sealskin, which isn't easy to handle. First, the skin is tanned, then washed and allowed to dry; once it whitens on the inside it's ready for use. The leather is oily and gives off a strong smell, therefore a long process is required to obtain a quality product.

The skin is cut into small, medium, or large pieces, depending on availability. Some artisans sew them together by using leather strips; sealskin should be carefully trimmed, which is learned by doing. In short, any craftwork takes a lot of time and dedication.

## Traditions

People wonder why I take so much pleasure in revisiting Kawésqar handcrafts; I'm always on the lookout for new ancestral elements. I've been working as a 'Traditional Educator in Kawésqar Culture' for four years; first at Centro de Educación de Adultos y Escuela Croacia (2015, 2016), and currently at Fundación para el Desarrollo XII Región Magallanes Fide XII (2017, 2018). Most of all, I teach essential elements of the Kawésqar culture, e.g., grammar, vowels, numbers, colours, the alphabet, idioms, and expressions in Spanish and Kawésqar.

I also teach geography, in particular about regional divisions and other basic information, for example, why the Kawésqar people canoed, what they ate, or how they lived. Some classes also address traditional tools and utensils; my job here is to share what I know about handicraft techniques, so that students understand the role of each tool and how the Kawésqar used nature to their own advantage. This was done very simply, without sophisticated tools, which I try to explain in a simple yet instructive way. During practice workshop sessions, we go over many mediums, such as plasticine, paper, Eva foam, papier mâché, cardboard sheets, rice paper, tempera, oil paint, wool, clay, hemp fibres, alcohol markers, crayons, colour pencils… there are many techniques available.

The result is a series of unique works of art inspired by nature: plates and figures featuring birds and mammals, hunting and fishing utensils, geographical and nautical elements. The Traditional Educator's creativity is expressed in these works of indubitable beauty. The student gets to learn the culture from a different perspective. I teach what I learned as a beginner and my students truly enjoy it (both young and adult), as I encourage them to fully deploy their creative strengths.

Additionally, we use photographs and slides showing Kawésqar family portraits, games, geography, and the Kawésqar alphabet, in order to promote a better understanding of the customs and traditions. The workshop teaches how the Kawésqar made their hunting/fishing tools and built their homes by using alternative materials, and how they managed to survive, often in conditions of great hardship.

The workshop also includes songs, words in Kawésqar language, traditional oral tales, and other sound archives. We then repeat the words aloud, focusing on different aspects of pronunciation, and write them down, separating syllables and sentences. In grammar work texts, the students focus on their sentence-writing skills.

The students gain basic knowledge through the human body, familiar faces, birds, mammals; they're asked to use Kawésqar language to name them. The students always show interest in new names, for instance, bread is *kílita*, potatoe is *kuina*, both of which are foreign introduced species.

I believe that traditional tales are the true reflection of a culture. They come from the elders telling stories to children, so they can imagine themselves in the teller's story. This ancestral tradition narrates Kawésqar life through its flora and fauna, for example the 'monsters' stories are actually about threatening mammals that they hadn't seen before. Another type of storytelling is based on cultural taboos, which are ways of keeping children off sketchy places or circumstances, for them not to look at certain things, in order to avoid family misfortunes.

These stories have an educational meaning for Kawésqar children, which is why we learn about storytelling. The tales are narrated at midnight in order to create a special atmosphere. Unfortunately, there are only a few storytellers left. When I think and write about Kawésqar culture, I try to imagine where this ancestral storytelling took place. I envision the storyteller in a silent place, where you can feel the cool breeze. I imagine the storyteller around a campfire, surrounded by suspense and expectation, the young listeners wondering how the story will unfold, which awakens their imagination.

Every year on June 24, during the winter equinox, we commemorate the national indigenous peoples' day. In Chile there are nine peoples, and each celebrates the seasonal rebirth of nature by carrying out various activities over several days. On September 5, we celebrate the day of indigenous women, and students learn that women played a crucial role in ancestral culture: they were in charge of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next, keeping alive their culture, which is much harder to do today. The most rewarding and beautiful thing happens when the students show their work in the final classroom presentation, explaining the techniques they used.

Life is more expensive today. There's no bartering handicrafts or food. Flour, potatoes, noodles, and vegetable oils were often exchanged in the past, and later on clothing and tools reached far-off areas like Magallanes and Antarctica through migration.

Once I managed to assimilate Kawésqar culture and basketry, I understood the beauty in ancient crafts and in rush, a plant that's hard to find these days. White people, or *jemmá*, insist upon destroying the places where rush has always grown, which makes it almost impossible to keep ancient crafts alive. In addition to this, society isn't aware that basketry is a very difficult way to make a living.

I'm convinced that this knowledge is best transmitted by relatives, by being trained by them to apply these ancient crafts. However, I'd never thought about teaching them to students. It's both meaningful and rewarding to be able to teach and to make them proud of having learned about their roots from a representative of the Kawésqar people, and enable them to teach future generations what they've learned. As for the future, I wish for schools to value and respect Kawésqar intercultural education. There's great historical content in an ancestral culture that sailed the channels of Magallanes and Antarctica.

The first time I made a basket, guided by my aunt Yolanda, I couldn't stop thinking about my paternal grandmother, Margarita Canales. How exciting it would have been for me to learn from her! I deeply regret not having met my grandparents: I'd give anything for an hour with my grandmother and be able to hear about her life experience. I imagine her gaze, her hands, her smile… Tears fill my eyes when I think about her life. Was she happy? Did she suffer much? All of her children died except for her youngest, my father Carlos Messier Canales. It's a very sad and tragic story: my aunts and uncles died from disease. Moreover, the average life expectancy was thirty years; since then, tremendous strides have been made in all scientific fields as well as in technology.

I sometimes feel that my grandmother lives within me. I'm always surprised by my hand's natural ability for weaving; I feel as if she was protecting and guiding me back to my roots. I've experienced the most amazing paranormal occurrences that have left me stunned, but also quite happy and peaceful. My peers always say that my smile reminds them of my grandmother. I also wear my hair short, in the way women used to in the past. You can see in old Kawésqar pictures that the people have facial features similar to those you'll find three generations later.

## Radio Show

In the Magallanes region, great importance is attached to the study of Kawésqar identity, from scientific research on blood types to the field of oral heritage, among others. But I noticed early on that there were no mass communication resources available, and I felt I had to do something about it. I believe it is lacking in generosity to keep what you know to yourself, which is why I decided to apply for public funding to start my radio show in 2013.

Radio is the most widely used source of news in the Magallanes region because it's accessible to almost everyone. This allowed me to create a space where ideas on Kawésqar culture could be communicated among the community. Since I am not a journalist, and I was solely responsible for the project, I had to learn along the way. For instance, I did not know what a script was; when my project was chosen, the selection committee mentioned that I lacked experience in the field and that I needed a scriptwriter.

The first segment consisted of pre-recorded interviews. I hired a station manager and an announcer from Radio Magallanes who taught me everything that goes on at a radio station. For the second segment, I worked with María Felicia González Cárcamo (a woman of Kawésqar descent) in the creation of content and live music, along with a technician and a writer. One of the biggest challenges was live radio. Although I was very nervous at first, I learned that it is important to stay calm so as to generate the trusting atmosphere of a friendly meeting.

The show's first season was made up of interviews to public officials, bureau chiefs and people in the army. *DIFUSIÓN RADIAL DE LA CULTURA KAWÉSQAR* (Radio Diffusion of Kawésqar Culture) was aired on Saturdays from 2–3pm in the afternoon by Radio Magallanes. Over 4 months, we broadcasted 16 interviews, but the program was so successful that another 6 interviewees were added to the list. Topics involving the army were discussed due to the underlying connections of it to our culture, such as the building of Puerto Edén, a Kawésqar settlement. In 1939, President Pedro Aguirre Cerda's Indigenous Peoples Act had entrusted the Chilean Air Force (FACh) to supply food and housing in the archipelago.

Five years later, I hosted the show's second season called *AFSÉSKTA TÁWON KUČELÁKSO—CONVERSAR CON UN AMIGO* (Talking to a Friend), which included competitions and prizes awarded by women of Kawésqar descent. The program was split in two parts: the first consisted in disseminating information about Kawésqar culture through eight different segments that addressed geography, food, the social roles of women and men, housing, canoeing, ornamentation and utensils, camping and fishing skills. In seven additional segments, I interviewed academics and Kawésqar community members. We turned to the Department of Education's *Consulta Indígena* (Indigenous Consultation): what is the difference between *Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes* (National Council of Culture and Arts) and its change to *Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio* (Ministry of Cultures, Arts, and Patrimony)? A local writer greatly contributed to the program by sharing air force history, particularly data provided by Lautaro Edén Wellington (1925–1953), a Kawésqar recruited into the military.

We also interviewed a group of high-level academics (Nelson Cárcamo Barrera, Regional Secretary of the Ministry of Education; Walter Molina Chavez, Doctor in Education; Nelson Aguilera Águila, anthropologist; Paola Grendi Ilharreborde, anthropologist and director at Museo Regional de Magallanes; Salvatore Cirillo Dama, Professor of Philosophy, Doctor in Education and director at Museo Maggiorino Borgatello). These scholars worked directly with locals in order to learn about their customs, traditions, and worldview, just like Universidad de Magallanes collaborates with locals to restore Kawésqar culture and history.

Additionally, I shared my own experience with local arts and crafts as a way to revive and preserve Kawésqar culture. We also discussed our people's painful history: the Kawésqar were victims of persistent degrading treatment on the basis of their indigenous origin as narrated in a book by Paola Grendi Ilharreborde and a local journalist, Carlos Vega Delgado, the outcome of an extensive research project based upon records from the National Archives in Santiago. What's interesting is that they couldn't find any background information in local public records, so the experts had to turn to other law-related institutions.

In the last segment, a series of interviews summarised the process of Indigenous consultation conducted by the Department of Education. We also shared details on a documentary called *Kre-Chenen* that delves into the acts of aggression and humiliation affecting the people of Tierra del Fuego. Fortunately this unhappy episode is now behind us, but it is important for the Magellanic community to know the horrors that our ancestors were forced to endure.

I am always looking forward to doing different things, but, of course, it is hard work to find new points of view. In any case, the broadcasting timeframe was tight: indigenous issues open up a very broad subject so we tried to focus on particular topics. We discussed and explained concepts and vocabulary, for example, geographical (north/south/east/west) topics in both Kawésqar and Spanish. These segments were recorded with music. Probably the most entertaining moment was recording new music. First, we used the spoken word so as to breathe new meaning into the song: two female singers chanted high and low-pitched Kawésqar verses and words. One of the interesting facts I discovered in the process was that my grandmother Margarita Canales was a singer. Then I thought, 'that's why is so easy for me to write songs!' It was an emotional moment when I heard the songs and understood exactly what I wanted to accomplish: this initiative enabled us to discover new aspects.

In a second stage, the project proposed broadcasting the show in public schools. Activities took place in the school Escuela Hernando de Magallanes for girls and boys in second grade and a few students in eighth grade. In a twenty-minute session, we were able to educate students on the basics of Kawésqar culture. We subsequently carried out a series of interviews with the girls, boys, and a few teachers, and following the interviews, many told us they were grateful for our visit. The students were happy to discover traditional hunting and agricultural tools and utensils. We answered their questions clearly and playfully, so they could understand how these tools were used.

In an additional outreach activity, we visited a kindergarten called Bambi during national indigenous peoples' week and worked with the school staff to organise a three-day project. First, a puppeteer narrated the story of a Kawésqar child called *PETAYEM*. The second day was dedicated to face painting, so the children could learn why the Kawésqar followed this practice through *PETAYEM*'s voice. Lastly, the children glued pieces of paper and wool to hand-made animal figurines. These works were displayed while *PETAYEM* asked the children questions in order to summarise the activities of the previous days. The very last activity involved shadow puppetry as *PETAYEM* told the story of a Kawésqar family and how they taught children their customs and traditions. The final exhibition presented the students' works to their parents. One of the teachers said in an interview that it had been a very stimulating experience for the children to learn about the Kawésqar people, and suggested that we repeat the experience in the future.

The interviews were dealt with from different angles. As an example, there was a whole team of people behind the interviews with senior academics: a technician, an interviewer, and an assistant to coordinate the logistics (time, place, equipment, etc.). Mr Exequiel Arancibia Santander, a retired air force officer who worked in Puerto Eden between 1967 and 1968 (where he met our parents and grandparents), kindly accepted our invitation to be interviewed on site. He came all the way from the Chilean north to share the story of how he met my father, Carlos Messier Canales. My father was seven or eight years old, an orphan who was being raised by other Kawésqar families. At that time, Mr. Arancibia was eleven or twelve years old and he remembered my father as a lively, respectful, and collaborative child, an eager learner. Years later they met again in Punta Arenas (Plaza Muñoz Gamero), and my father had become a plumbing technician. It was very moving to hear his story.

The project also included an educational quiz on Kawésqar culture. The first question addressed geography. Kawésqar territory spans from Golfo de Penas to both sides of the Strait of Magellan; it includes the southern part of the Aysén region and a large part of the Magallanes region all the way down to the Strait. 'Western Patagonia' gives way to a maze of islands, inlets, fjords, and a rainforest that becomes less dense toward the Pacific Ocean. This unique setting enabled the Kawésqar people's nomadic lifestyle.

In the first program, we explained how the Kawésqar territory was organised. The YÁUTOK's channels, landscapes, and coasts are very different from the areas near the Pacific Ocean. Some stretches have steep coasts and cliffs that plunge right into the ocean, leaving no space to tie up boats, as is the case for the western side of the Messier channel, near the mouth of the Adalberto channel to the entrance of Angostura Inglesa. Generally, the *jáutok* beaches are stony and narrow. In MÁLTE, trees are sparse, there's peat moss, and vast plains inhabited by all kinds of birds. For the most part, there are large fine-sand beaches that go as far as the eye can see. There are many islets and islands surrounded by sandy beaches. There are strong, big waves going into the land facing the open sea.

Once this information becomes available to the audience, we begin by asking specific questions, such as 'where is *yáutok* located?' or 'what's the name of the show?', to which they could answer '*AFSÉSKTA TÁWON KUČELÁKSO*' or '*CONVERSAR CON UN AMIGO*', both of which are correct. At the end of the show, we announce each of the six winners' names and award them special prizes. It is an enormously satisfying way if promoting culture within the Magellanic community.

Above all, the interviewees' academic contribution is much appreciated and highly valued. There are always new ideas that can be further explored: it is only a one-hour show, which motivates us to continue performing this work. This project of intercultural dialogue is a living form of heritage by sharing activities of the different native groups in Magallanes and Antarctica, both nationally and internationally.

People are always willing to collaborate in a show on cultural topics, but there are very few people belonging to an indigenous group that actually benefit from the show. The fact that two women of Kawésqar descent are leading this initiative always attracts a great deal of attention, as well as the fact that we are using the radio to keep the Kawésqar culture alive. Radio is, today more than ever, a necessary space for culture.

Our contribution will intensify with ongoing dissemination of information, by using the Internet and other means of mass communication to reach

large audiences in both urban and rural areas. It is also important to reach the international community. Understanding other cultures comes from speaking the same cultural language in order to reflect on how the original peoples have spread throughout the world, how they survive these days, how they keep their traditions alive, how some cultures have been practically exterminated, how to preserve their legacy for future generations, how to recover ancestral sites, and how to focus on innovation in radio by sharing experiences lived by our elders, parents, children, grandchildren with the local, national and international community. For instance, internet radio can reach the whole world.

In general, little is known about the Kawésqar culture. We are aware that migrants from other cultures that live in the Magallanes region do not necessarily know how the Kawésqar lived in the past. They also may not know how the current generation wants to keep their traditions and customs alive, which is mostly taught in public and private schools, and therefore we attach great importance to Patricia Messier Loncuante's contribution to the Kawésqar culture.

In the future, I'd like to work on a permanent radio show, to address interesting topics from different perspectives and to promote the values our parents taught us, which is a major aspect of the Kawésqar culture, such as respect for elders and concern for the community and for nature.

## Reclaiming Cultural Identity

Often, young people don't realise the importance of the values inherited from our elders. With the death of a parent, we are forced to shape a vision of our own. I can still remember my father, his preference of certain food items, his complete and utter respect for nature. We often took long walks as a family; I was only three or four years old. When my father came home from work, I'd say, 'Father, I want to go to the country', and I remember holding my parents' hands as we walked through the fields late at night. We'd share a piece of meat and I was allowed to play freely. I was very lucky to live in the countryside surrounded by nature, without fear or any restrictions.

My dear father Carlos Messier Canales loved his culture and was very proud to be part of the last generation of expert canoers. He died back in the cold winter of 1994; his death changed me and my outlook on life. When he was alive, he used to tell me stories about his childhood, about sailing southern waters, about his brothers and sisters that he so lovingly remembered. The stories he told me about his life always made me think how nice it must have been to live like that, even as an orphan. I got a chance to hear about his hopes and dreams; he wanted me to carry on the Kawésqar canoeing tradition.

In 1995, when I joined Universidad de Magallanes, I could feel my father's presence. It may sound odd but sometimes, strange things do happen. It is hard to put my feelings into words, but I realised he was protecting me from somewhere, from a cosmic place. Perhaps it is part of the Kawésqar culture to have such a strong spiritual relationship with one's parents or those of others and community members that have passed away; it is a very powerful experience.

This memory makes me feel that I am not alone. After everything I have experienced, my commitment to culture and to rescuing our artistic heritage has only intensified. Also, my commitment to remembering how indigenous people struggled against injustice and abuse, disease, and death, which has deeply marked the Kawésqar culture.

At twenty-two years old, I became actively engaged with indigenous beliefs and worldview. I have learned many things along the way, which allows me to address very relevant issues for the future of the Kawésqar culture. Reclaiming Kawésqar identity is not an easy task. In the twenty-first-century, ancient traditions are restricted by laws that are foreign to us. In order to face this, we must look at viable projects, in cooperation with the Chilean state. Despite the limitations, some situations have improved over time.

Our main priority is to revive the Kawésqar language. To this end, training has been provided to people of Kawésqar descent so they can work at public and private schools in the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic region. This allows 'traditional educators' to teach students of the different educational levels about culture, geography, customs, traditions, and worldview.

Studying the language, customs, and traditions aims to achieve a better understanding of a culture. Although there are still many shortcomings, it is a work in process. For example, in 2018 there will be an indigenous consultation on education, an opportunity to implement good quality educational methods to support traditional students and educators in the future. This will also allow for stronger intercultural dialogue between the Kawésqar and other peoples, such as the Mapuche and the Yaghan. In this way, ancestral heritage will become more important within the educational community.

I was encouraged to research on my own origins when I learned about my grandparents. Then began an intense process of collecting family stories, names, and origins: they came from Puerto Edén, my grandmother's name was Margarita Canales and my grandfather's name was Pedro Messier. I first learned about my grandfather Pedro, a respected seal hunter. Through my father Carlos Messier Canales I learned about his many brothers, and that his sisters had blonde hair and big blue eyes.

My working methods have developed over the years. On my first research initiative I worked with Mercedes Tonko Paterito over four months to collect information on twelve direct families. The following year, I came up with the idea of a radio show. I believe that there is great value in recovering one's cultural identity; the knowledge gained from our parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents is the most precious source of ancestral wisdom and must be protected at all costs.

It is painful to witness how the understanding of indigenous issues has changed over time. In other words, we are always facing difficulties over laws created by colonisers to coerce ancestral traditions. Additionally, most of the natural habitat has already been destroyed, and it is getting harder and harder to abide by the customs of the Kawésqar people. At this time, we still have the chance to go back to our roots. We still have time to teach future generations and make them feel proud of their cultural identity.

Contemporary society must be taken into account in our efforts to recover Kawésqar cultural identity. The sense of respect and commitment has been lost over time. The way of drawing attention from the community is to get them involved in positive activities where they can learn about Kawésqar identity. Heritage is best learned from members of the Kawésqar community; no one is better qualified than a person of Kawésqar descent to share our history. My ancestors have shown me the right path, perhaps the longest, but certainly the most gratifying path.

Thus, we will continue leading a cultural resistance against the dominant culture. Our worldview remains quite different, and I believe it is because we are naturally bound to mother earth. It is painful to watch how the settlers have destroyed these mineral-rich lands and continue to deplete our forests with complete disregard for the Kawésqar people.

We can help to provide a solution: original cultures consumed food in much smaller quantities in order to preserve nature's cycle of life.

Raising public awareness involves difficult but not impossible tasks. We demand respect for Indigenous customs and traditions, otherwise we might lose our ancestral language completely, as there are very few heritage language learners left. If we go on like this, we might lose our ancestral handicrafts techniques, too.

The best way to preserve our ancestors' customs is to keep them alive through radio shows, interviews, and ongoing intercultural dialogue. I deeply wish to have my own radio show to discuss indigenous people's issues and cover other needs of Magellanic community. In other words, understanding other realities enables us to best serve our community.



There is no doubt that this beautiful mission requires a concerted effort to overcome certain political barriers. It will be great to see our efforts as 'Traditional Educators' recognised in the future. We aim at raising our culture to new heights, which will probably be a long and captivating process.

As I wrote these words from the bottom of my heart, I realised that there is still a long way to go in terms of human rights. I am hopeful that something will happen in the future that will reflect in our perception of other human beings. I wish for my values to transcend specific cultures and experiences, as I am proud of being a woman of Kawésqar descent.

# Retracing the History of Tasmanian Aboriginal Shell Necklaces

Lola Greeno

‘All of the work that we’ve done in the past thirty years has put a real value on our cultural practice and we have a real story to tell.’
—Lola Greeno

Tasmanian Aboriginal Women continue to maintain their place in history, through their traditional shell necklace cultural practice. Today women acknowledge the significance of their cultural knowledge and skills, knowledge that is embedded in their shell necklaces, in the making of stories, and through their traditional shell necklace cultural practice. Today women acknowledge the significance of their cultural knowledge and skills, knowledge which has been, and is being, handed down to future generations. During the past three decades, Tasmanian Aboriginal women have organised shell necklace-making workshops in country. Through these projects, families have strengthened their links with both families and communities. Also, through major projects such as *Lola Greeno: Cultural Jewels* (2018), at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (as part of *kanalaritja: An Unbroken String*), identity and connections to country have also been strengthened.[1]

In the past thirty years, Tasmanian Aboriginal shell stringing has grown from strength to strength. Since the early 1990s there has been a huge revival of Elders working with Elders and the next generation of interested makers. However, it was not until a decade later, in 2002, that Arts Tasmania developed a Shell Residency Program in the Furneaux Islands for three Elders to accompany mentors to collect shells and make new work.[2]

Although many of the contemporary shell necklace makers once lived on Cape Barren Island, the women who had first-hand knowledge to do with collecting and making had acquired it via a family member. Once these women left the island to gain better access to health services and education all that changed, as did their *‘island lifestyle’*. Most people found an opportunity to leave the Cape Barren Island once the ‘Cape Barren Island Reserve Act’ ceased to operate in 1951.[3] The social change that this brought about placed a great deal of stress on the few surviving makers on the islands and elsewhere. Nonetheless, they were still creating new work and they shared their knowledge of collecting places with *‘family’*.

Information on how to clean the interior of the shells, plus the removal of the outer coating of the shells to reveal the iridescent pearl lustre of the ‘maireener/marina’ shell, was closely held by *‘the Island women’*. This knowledge was, and still is, guarded information. The information is protected not only to protect a family’s access to shells but also to look after the environment.

My journey as a maker began for me as a young girl on Cape Barren Island. My mother and other Elders walked on the beach and collected shells in front of our house on the beach at Prickly Bottom. We also helped friends collect shells when we were on the ‘bird island’. When we later moved to Flinders Island, we walked the beaches there to swim or to collect limpets and periwinkles to eat.

I moved to Launceston to live in 1972 to gain access to wider education opportunities. In 1992, when my children attended college, I enrolled in a Diploma of Fine Arts. At the Art School we were encouraged to tell our stories, where we come from and why the women’s cultural practice meant so much to Aboriginal women in Tasmania. Most people had only seen the historical images of Truganini and Fanny Cochrane Smith. These images showed them wearing several strands of shell necklaces in one long necklace. My response to these old images prompted me to question my mother about how and why it was important that she carried on ‘the making’ from her grandmother. I also asked about what type of shells she collected, where she collected them, and what happened to those first necklaces she first made.

Lola Greeno gathering live maireener shells on Flinders Island, 2012. Photograph: Rex Greeno.

Lola Greeno, *Teunne (king maireener shell crown)*, 2013, king maireener shells on wire, 25 cm (round). Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.



A unique part of the Cape Barren Island shell necklace making was that the women gave the shells a common name—‘community names’.[4] This created a direct connection to the fauna and flora in the context of island life. There are approximately thirty different types of shells used to make Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces—*and they are still used today.* The makers retain the nine common names. For example, the black shell is called the ‘black-crow’, the white flat shell is a ‘cockle’, the cream shaped shell is a ‘penguin’, the tiny white shell is ‘toothy’, and the orange colour shell is an ‘oat shell’, with the smallest shell being a ‘rice shell’. A flat based shell is referred to as a ‘button’, a greyish shell is a ‘gull shell’, and the shell used in the traditional shell necklaces is the ‘marina/maireener’ shell—examples here of the shells used in necklaces are photographed and scanned by Kelly Slater.

*Truganini*, *Full-Face Portrait*, 1866, albumen silver print. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart (Q177.2). Photograph: C. A.Woolley.

Prior to colonisation, the ‘marina’ shell was the only shell threaded onto kangaroo sinew and cleaned by smoking in the fire, to remove the outer coating. They were pierced with a tool made from the eye tooth of a kangaroo jaw bone to enable the shells to be threaded.

My work in recent years has developed by using big shells related to food sources in order to create new sculptural pieces. One reason for this is that we need to consider the environment when collecting ‘marina’ shells. It has been seen that the seaweed beds have been reduced as a consequence of global warming and that other invasive species are having an impact on marine life. My new collection of natural cultural material, referring to the food source, is being made from wearable material like kangaroo fur redesigned as body adornment pieces.

In my search to learn more about reviving our *‘cultural knowledge’*, plus practical skills and processes, we have discovered many institutions that have developed Indigenous collections containing a number of contemporary shell necklaces. A large part of the research carried out by Ray Norman, looked into the series of shell necklaces by one group referred to as the ‘Hobart Necklaces’.[5] These necklaces were part of a production line, people—*non-Aboriginal people by-and-large*—who were commissioned to harvest and string large quantities of shells. Shell necklaces labelled as ‘Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces’ were sold by jewellery shops in Hobart and elsewhere, while other people ran an export trade selling in two countries overseas—*Hawaii in particular.*

A private collection known as the ‘Whinray Collection’, was purchased by The Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).[6] It was then housed in the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery because of the lack of suitable storage conditions for the Cape Barren Islander community, until the island secured a suitable Community Keeping Place.

Most national institutions, museums, and galleries have redeveloped their collections and are acquiring shell necklaces and Tasmanian Aboriginal art from the 1990s to early 2000s. Exhibitions and art programs in Tasmania at this time saw major research from Julie Gough and Zoe Rimmer that led to two significant shows, which in turn helped build the value of women’s work. The exhibitions *tayenebe* (2009–2011), *Cultural Jewels* (2014–19), and *kanlaritja* (2017) raised the profile of Tasmanian Aboriginal artists.[7]

Once the work is created and displayed, it is then sent out to influence new marketing requests reaching out from Launceston and Hobart to Canberra and beyond. The sale of Tasmanian Aboriginal art has become a source of income for commercial galleries that are interested in Tasmanian work due to development via overseas markets.

Since I made my first shell necklace, I have focused on the important family story about shell necklace making for me. I needed to know it came from my grandmother, to my mother. For me to be a part of sharing the knowledge and cultural experience is vitally important as it will influence the next two generations. It is also important for me to be telling my story to my daughter and grandchildren.

Initially I was keen to learn about how the traditional shell necklace was made, what our early women did to originally clean the shells, and how the shells were pierced and then threaded in kangaroo sinew. So, I also asked my mother how she cleaned her shells for her first necklaces. But today, we must also consider a future for our new generations, by caring for the environment of our marine life. Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural knowledge expands by ongoing research, gaining access to new information, and by being alert to the ways the world changes around us. I have recently undertaken a conversation with a science-based academic to find new ways of cleaning with latest solutions, less toxic solutions. I’m proud to be a part of many projects that change our evolving histories.

1 This solo exhibition of my work was organised by the Australian Design Centre as a touring segment of the larger exhibition *kanalaritja: An Unbroken String*, a Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery exhibition that opened in Hobart in December 2016. The exhibition was the eighth in the Australian Design Centre’s *Living Treasures: Masters of Australian Craft* series, a biennial recognition and national tour of an iconic artist whose body of work epitomises the best of various Australian craft fields. ‘The overarching theme of *Lola Greeno: Cultural Jewels* is storytelling: of the meticulous crafting of stories of cultural knowledge, natural beauty, ancient traditions and connectedness with her island home. It is also an exhibition of modern issues, featuring contemporary sculptural works that are part of Greeno’s response to her concerns for the environmental future of shell stringing in northern Tasmania. *Lola Greeno: Cultural Jewels* features breath-taking works using unusual and beautiful natural materials such as echidna quill, feathers, rare *Maireener* shell and bone, and also features interwoven digital and audio displays.’ ‘Lola Greeno: Cultural Jewels’, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, accessed September 12 2018, https://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/whats_on/newsselect/2018articles/lola_greeno_cultural_jewels.

2 Catherine Murphy, *Heartwork: Great Arts Stories from Regional Australia* (Port Adelaide: Regional Arts Australia, 2004), 58–59. *Purrelayde* was designed for Elders to work with other Elders, or younger women to teach the traditional methods of collecting, cleaning, and piercing shells prior to threading, and how to develop shell pattern for the necklaces with the first groups participating. In 2002 Arts Tasmania launched a new residency project devoted to assisting Senior craft women to work with shell-necklace makers to pass on the knowledge of shell stringing techniques and processes to younger women. New mentorship programs are being developed in Tasmania today.

3 ‘Today the residents of Cape Barren Island consist of an Aboriginal community of approximately seventy people. Most of the residents are descended from a community of mixed descent (European and Aboriginal people) who had originally settled on several smaller nearby islands but relocated to Cape Barren Island in the late 1870s. The Colonial Government of Tasmania established a formal reserve in 1881 and commenced providing basic social services to the community. By 1908 the population had grown to 250 people. More active government intervention began in 1912 with the passage of the *Cape Barren Act*. The stated purpose of this act was to encourage the community to become self-sufficient through both incentives and disincentives. Government visits throughout the 1920s and 1930s reported poor health and education and proposals were made to remove children from their parents, ostensibly for their own benefit. Under threat of losing their children many families relocated to mainland Tasmania. By 1944 the population had fallen to 106. From the 1950s the government did indeed remove children from their parents. This forced removal of children was part of a wider policy implemented in many parts of Australia and over a number of decades that resulted in the phenomenon known as the ‘stolen generations’. From the 1970s a series of changed government policies were implemented that provided increasingly greater recognition of the personal and social rights of individuals. On May 10 2005, the government released Crown lands on both Cape Barren and Clarke Island to be overseen by the local Aboriginal association. This marked the first official handover of Crown land to an Aboriginal community in Tasmania.’ ‘Cape Barren Island’, Wikipedia, accessed September 12 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Barren_Island.

4 The Furneaux Island Aboriginal Women of shell Stringers creative their own common names for their shells they used in their necklaces. These common names are the shell that resembles a bird or cereal by the colour or shape.

5 On my blog, Iposted a piece titled: *Induction to Tasmanianess*, from a paper by Ray Norman, presented at the Oceanic Passages Conference, Hobart, June 2010, CAIA—University of Tasmania: ‘Along with the Thylacine extinction story, apple symbolisms, convict narratives, Huon pine furniture and boats, Lake Pedder and wilderness photography, forest protests, “Jimmy Possum” chairs, stories about giant squid, enormous crabs, abalone, mutton birds and more, Tasmanians claim these shell necklaces—Hobart cum Truganini necklaces—as “theirs”. Unquestionably, shell necklaces figure large in Tasmania’s cultural imagination—and for the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, they are emblems of their cultural continuum.

“New Tasmanians” need to know about these things before they can begin to make sense of their new home. Inevitably these iconic shell necklaces along with the Truganini story will be quietly explained in the induction process. These are the kind of stories that one needs to have explained to you on an island with complex histories under almost every rock.

The story that is not told however is a century old one about the theft of an “industrial quantity” of shell necklaces; necklaces like Truganini’s; necklaces sometimes called “Hobart Necklaces”. There were 100 dozen shell necklaces stolen from onboard the “Westralian” berthed at the Hobart Wharf on April 2 1907. John Ward, a wharf labourer, was found guilty for having:

> “stolen, or otherwise [receiving], a large quantity of shell necklaces consigned to a wholesale firm in Sydney by Mr. Paget, fur dealer, Elizabeth Street. At [his] previous trial the prisoner pleaded not guilty, and the jury failed to agree as to a verdict, whereupon the accused was remanded on bail, to be retried. On this occasion John [Ward] again pleaded not guilty, and was defended by Mr. Harold Crisp, the Solicitor General (Mr. E. D. Dobbie) prosecuting for the Crown.”
> —*Hobart Mercury*, May 20 1908.

The robbery itself alerts us to the scale of the shell necklace trade going on out of Hobart. This robbery was no trivial affair. Ward’s trial alerts us to the fact that these necklaces had been produced commercially and in large numbers, indeed by the thousands, and for some time. The robbery also alerts us to the fact that John Paget was not alone as a trader in shell necklaces. Given the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands possibly, of maireener shell necklaces produced commercially as “Hobart cum Truganini Necklaces” it seems that it is now the case that any such necklace without strong circumstantial evidence to back up Aboriginal provenance needs to be regarded as having ambiguous Aboriginal authenticity. Indeed, this is the case for a great many of these necklaces in museum collections around the world—even the one from the Exeter Museum returned to Tasmania in 1997 and an unknown number in Tasmania’s museums. At the time these necklaces were collected different imperatives and sensibilities were in operation. In the end curators can only work with the best available information to hand. This shell necklace “industry” not only exploited the cultural knowledge of Tasmania’s Aboriginal people but also the shell resource they alerted them to. Below the waterline in southern Tasmania it seems that kelp forests were “clear felled” out of sight and out of mind. These shells were harvested by the bucketful over a long time. In many ways this harvest is analogous to the clear felling going on right now in Tasmania’s old growth forests on land.’

Ray Norman, ‘Inductions Into Tasmanianness’, *Truganini Necklaces* (blog), June 19 2010, http://truganininecklaces.blogspot.com/search?q=thylacine.

Ray Norman is an artist, metalsmith, networker, independent researcher, cultural theorist, cultural geographer, and a hunter of Deep Histories. Ray is Co-Director of zingHOUSEunlimited, a lifestyle design enterprise and network offering a range of services linked to contemporary cultural production and cultural research. Roles: Researcher, Designer and Maker, Graphic Design and Web Design Facilitator. Ray is also engaged with the

nudgelbah institute as a cultural geographer. That institute's vision is to be a network of research networks and to be a diverse vehicle through which place oriented scholarship and cultural endeavours can be acknowledged, honoured and promoted. For more on Ray please visit: http://raynorman7250.blogspot.com.au/. In 2013 with Professor Bill Boyd, Ray co-edited COOLABAH, an online journal emanating out of the Australian Studies Unit at Barcelona University.

6 John Whinray is a photographer, researcher, botanist, and environmentalist who lives on Flinders Island.

7 *tayenebe* opened at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery on July 4 2009 and toured nationally during 2010 and 2011, funded by Visions Australia. 'Tayenebe', Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, accessed June 19 2018, http://static.tmag.tas.gov.au/tayenebe/tayenebe.html. *kanlaritja: An Unbroken String* celebrated the unique practice of Tasmanian Aboriginal shell stringing. This national touring exhibition featured stunning shell necklaces created in the 1800s, alongside necklaces from acclaimed makers of today and a new wave of stringers who learnt the tradition at cultural renewal workshops. It was on show at the National Museum of Australia from August 10 to October 3 2017. 'Kanlaritja: An Unbroken String', Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, accessed June 19 2018, http://kanalaritja.tmag.tas.gov.au/.

# Shells and Fibers Across the Seas

Josefina de la Maza

Patricia Messier Loncuante and Lola Greeno's accounts are complex stories of colonial intervention and indigenous cultural and environmental loss. They are, also, beautiful and touching examples of how—through a delicate, attentive, and resourceful look to one's own past and history—it is possible to mend a social fabric that started to deteriorate time ago. Both women are part of a long collective chain woven through local migrations, displacements, and encounters of indigenous and settler stories. For Messier Loncuante and Greeno, looking back to their past, to the land, and particularly to the sea, is a spiritual and physical voyage that allows them to reconnect with the lives of their ancestors. Either in Tasmania or in Southern Chile, mothers, grandmothers, and aunts appear as strong presences: female bonds allow the passing of cultural and traditional knowledge. This knowledge condenses a long history that in its length is breathtaking. It goes beyond several generations' lifetimes and it allows us to remember that we all are part of a longer story. A story that connects us in our humanness.

In this case, the cultural knowledge that Messier Loncuante and Greeno refer to are basket weaving and the making of shell necklaces. Both techniques and cultural practices involve patient hands, curious eyes, and a deep connection between nature, heart, and mind. They also further the telling of stories. Through the manipulation of fibres and shells and thanks to the quiet rhythm that results from all the stages of artisanal work—and some of them include heavy and tiresome activities—tales that portray the elders and the nature surrounding them take shape. Making objects could be portrayed, considering how Messier Loncuante and Greeno have approached their practices as traditional artisans, as the opening of a portal that allows the rich and marvellous encounter of hand and tongue. These are hands that make learned gestures which, after many repetitions, produce in turn new movements within the language of tradition; they are also tongues that cry for losses and injustices, and at the same time celebrate the life that remains from the debris of colonialism and ecological devastation. The necklaces and baskets produced by both women are therefore containers of multiple stories. They keep safe ancient specters and beings from the land and the sea. Like precious handmade talismans, they also connect kinships—as such, they are reminders of the presence of their kind in-between worlds.

The stories of Patricia Messier Loncuante and Lola Greeno belong to the South: Tasmania and Southern Chile. Despite the vast distance between them, these regions share the existence of women that look at the present with wise eyes because they know that past histories of exploitation are always a threatening presence… but they also know—despite or because of the violence of the world—that "there are seeds to be gathered, and room in the bag of stars".[1]

1 Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction", 1986, The Anarchist Library, p. 4.



## Contributors

Joaquín Bascopé is assistant of practical works at the Natural Sciences Faculty, Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco, and associate researcher of the Museo Natural de Historia Río Seco (Punta Arenas) and the Instituto Patagónico de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas, CONICET-IPCSH (Puerto Madryn). Propagandist of the monthly publication El Fortín del Estrecho, and quadcopter video driver, https://www.youtube.com/user/duraznopeludo.

Dr. C.F. Black is an intellectual explorer and a writer (Gold Coast, Australia). Her intellectual training includes a PhD in Law, Griffith University, her Australian Aboriginal ancestry, and travels throughout Native America and other Indigenous worlds. Her academic writing includes A Mosaic of Indigenous Legal Thought: Legendary Tales and Other Writings (Routledge, 2017). Research and travel have shaped her understanding of how to interact with plant beings and other beings on the Earth in a lawful manner. Currently, Black is developing online courses to share this knowledge with the general public. She is also an artist and short story author and is currently developing her first play: "The Assassination of the Soul of a Nation."

Lucy Bleach is an artist whose practice focuses on humans' varied relationships to tenuous, contingent, and volatile environments, seeking engagement with communities that authentically experience such relationships. She has undertaken research projects in geologically unstable regions in Italy, Japan, Hawaii, and Vanuatu.

Sonja Carmichael is a Quandamooka woman and an artist from Moreton Island/Moorgumpin and Stradbroke Island/Minjerribah, Queensland. She is a descendant of the Ngugi people, one of three clans who are the traditional custodians Quandamooka, also known as Yoolooburrabee—people of the sand and sea. Sonja works specifically in the medium of fibre basketry and woven sculptures, reflecting her family's cultural connections with the land and seas of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).

Juan Dávila is an artist and publisher living in Australia since 1974. Publications include: *Hysterical Tears*, ed. Paul Taylor (London: GMP, 1985); and *Juan Dávila* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Publishing, 2006).

Josefina de la Maza is and art historian and Assistant Professor at the Arts and Humanities Research Center, Universidad Mayor, Santiago, Chile. Her projects include the curatorial work *Social Fabric: Textile Art and Political Commitment* at Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (MSSA) (2019) and the book *De obras maestras y mamarrachos. Notas para una historia del arte del siglo XIX chileno* (2014).

Caitlin Franzmann is an artist based in Brisbane, Australia, who creates installations, performances, and social practice works that focus on place-based knowledge and clairsentience. Her work has been featured in exhibitions globally, including the National Gallery of Victoria, Naarm/Melbourne; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and Kyoto Art Centre, among others. Originally trained as an urban planner, she completed her Bachelor of Fine Art at Queensland College of Art in 2012.

Sarita Gálvez is an educator, physiotherapist and PhD in Education at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. She is interested in exploring embodied learning from a post-anthropocentric perspective. Her current research methods have emerged from the intersection between Andean epistemologies and Feminist Materialisms. Mum of two boys, Samuel and Nawel. Member of the experimental band Las Chinas.

Mary Graham is a Kombumerri person (Gold Coast) through her father's heritage and affiliated with Wakka Wakka (South Burnett) through her mother's people. She is Associate Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland, Brisbane.

Lola Greeno is a Tasmanian Indigenous artist, specialising in creating contemporary cultural shell necklaces. Her necklaces tell stories of her island home, Cape Barren and Flinders Islands. Greeno strives to hand on her heritage to daughter Vanessa and granddaughters Charlyse and Sheryden to ensure this significant cultural practice continues into future generations.

Helen Hughes is Lecturer in Art History, Theory, and Curatorial Practice at MADA, Monash University, Melbourne, and a 2019–2020 Getty/ACLS Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Art. She is also a co-founder and co-editor of *Discipline.*

Carla Macchiavello is an art historian and educator. An eclectic art historian, she has published on contemporary Latin American art, performative poetics and video art, solidarity networks and their woven meshes of resistance, and artistic practices aimed at social change. She is Assistant Professor at Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY, NY, and received her PhD in Art History and Criticism from Stony Brook University. She also lovingly co-edits the Ensayos periodical *Más allá del fin/Beyond the End*.

Camila Marambio, curator, Founder/Director of Ensayos. PhD in Curatorial Practice, Monash University, Melbourne. M.A. in Modern Art: Curatorial Studies, Columbia University, NYC and Master of Experiments in Art and Politics, Science Po, Paris. She's a letter writing dancer who practices magic, delights in telling ancient circular stories and is concerned with human/non-human health.

Patricia Messier is a Kawéskar woman from Chile. She is a weaver, an indigenous educator, and radio producer.

Denise Milstein is a writer and sociologist based in New York whose work develops a relational, historically-grounded perspective at the intersection of art and politics, and culture and the environment. She has written on the articulation of urban imaginaries through music, the impact of repression on artistic careers, political engagement and counter-culture, and artistic innovation. Concerns with environmental sustainability, collaboration across disciplines, and participatory action research are central to her most recent work. Current projects examine urban dwellers' access to nature in New York City public spaces; the interactions of artists and archivists with near-obsolete technologies in marginal spaces of cultural production and reproduction; and co-directing the NYC COVID-19 Oral History, Narrative and Memory Archive. She directs the stand-alone MA Program in Sociology at Columbia University and edits *Dispatches from the Field*, a series dedicated to publishing collections of ethnographic data.

Hema'ny Molina is a Selk'nam writer, poet, craftswoman and grandmother based in Santiago, Chile. Molina is president of the Selk'nam Corporation Chile, formed in 2015, which aims to dislodge the indigenous community from the stigma of "extinction." The Covadonga Ona indigenous community gathers families of Selk'nam descendants who have maintained oral memory through the transmission of ancestral knowledge and connection over generations.

Catalina Valdés is an art historian, teaching and researching as an independent scholar in Santiago de Chile. Among her publications are the book *Una geografía imaginada. Diez ensayos sobre arte y naturaleza* (2015), co-edited with Amarí Peliowski.

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Editors
Helen Hughes, Camila Marambio,
and Carla Macchiavello

Managing Editor
Caitlin Franzmann

Copyediting
Jacqui Shelton (English)
Carla Macchiavello (Spanish)

Contributors
Joaquín Bascopé, Dr. C.F. Black, Lucy Bleach,
Sonja Carmichael, Juan Dávila, Sarita Gálvez,
Mary Graham, Lola Greeno, Helen Hughes,
Carla Macchiavello, Josefina de la Maza,
Patricia Messier Loncuante, Hema'ny Molina,
Denise Milstein, and Catalina Valdés

Translation
Gracia Baldovino, Manuela Baldovino,
Sarita Gálvez, Camila Jorquiera,
Carla Macchiavello, Camila Marambio
and Bryan Phillips

Design
Robert Milne

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