The Caterpillar Dreaming Trail
Towards an Understanding of Conciliatory Landscapes

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Declaration

I, Ailsa Blackwood, certify that:

This thesis has been substantially accomplished during enrolment in the degree.

This thesis does not contain material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution.

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Written participant consent has been received and archived for the participant research reported in this thesis.

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Abstract

The ethical possibilities of sharing of Aboriginal knowledge is arguably one of Australia's greatest challenges in the future educational and professional fields and disciplines of Landscape Architecture. This study provides a protocolled landscape knowing and practice of cultural conciliation focusing on the Nyungar knowledge landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming in Western Australia. The culmination of which develops a paradigm of understanding of emergent components of co-cultural, and conciliatory, shared-space between Nyungar and non-Nyungar peoples.

Primarily, this study identifies the importance of following Aboriginal guidance, story and protocol towards allowing Aboriginal in-place custodial wisdom — in this study particularly focusing on Nyungar ontologies of place. Additionally, this study addresses the importance of non-Nyungar engagement with de-colonising settler-dependent ideas of landscape and knowledge. The central research questions are as follows:

1. What are the emergent potentials of an experiential Nyungar/non-Nyungar shared-space with conciliatory landscape aspirations?
2. What insights emerge through following protocolled Nyungar country, story and Eldership, as was done through the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes, with particular reference to de-colonising landscape?
3. How are the instrumentalities of walking, silence, and ceremony facilitative of de-colonising landscape?

This study saw one hundred and fifty participants walk four staged sections of five hundred kilometres of the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes, capturing emergent experiential data through a collaborative auto-ethnographic journaling project, and walking audio-monologues. The Caterpillar Dreaming’s conciliatory findings of new-shared knowledge offer a future potential toward understanding the in-between nature of Australian place.
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Political Distinctions

This study sits in a vulnerable position within hegemonic discourse critique, and as such it is important to make some introductory clarifications:

1. Aboriginal/Nyungar: The Aboriginal people of [Australia] do not belong to a single political unit. There are estimates of 700 different political groups existing in [Australia] prior to colonisation, and at least 250 different languages spoken. The focus of this study is on the landscapes and shared-space knowledge's of Nyungar custodians. Nyungar refers to an Aboriginal language group situated in the southwest corner of [Western Australia]; this language group consists of 14 different dialects. While colonisation can be seen to affect Aboriginal communities in similar ways — genocide, displacement — this study focuses on how Nyungar ontologies meet, and potentially unwrap hegemony within Nyungar landscapes. Thus, I often use the term ‘Nyungar’ throughout the thesis to make this distinction, except where the general concept of Aboriginality in contradistinction to hegemony applies. For instance, I define myself as non-Aboriginal, rather than non-Nyungar, as I do not identify with any of the traditional custodian groups of [Australia].

2. Complicity: I use this the term complicity following postcolonial writers Fiona Probyn, Gillian Whitlock and Sara Ahmed. It pertains to a state of acknowledging involvement with hegemony; particularly the understanding of non-Nyungar privilege with regards to benefitting (however reluctantly) from colonialism, and colonialism’s violent history of Nyungar displacement in the southwest landscapes of [Western Australia]. While much of this study focuses on colonial violence at the onset of colonisation, it is clear that colonial violence continues, and complicity implies non-Nyungar participation with the insidious violence inherent in continuing colonial power structures. See the note on ‘subaltern’ at number 4 below, for further discussion on complicity as it relates to this study.

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3. **Eldership**: I follow Nyungar Elder Noel Nannup in this study, which includes following Nannup’s associate Elders, and advisers. The knowledge contained in this thesis is therefore situated within the following of Nyungar ontology as presented by Nannup who is a principal and respected Nyungar Elder.\(^2\)

4. **Subaltern-isms**: In postcolonial literature, the subaltern refers to a group of people who are ‘other’, existing outside of dominant power structures within particular places.\(^3\) In this study the main subaltern distinction is between Nyungar people and place in relation to hegemony.\(^4\) Other subaltern positions coexisting here include Nyungar subjectivities that exist in contradistinction to what is presented in this work; women; immigrants (including those born in Australia); and refugees who identify with and experience inequalities, non-acceptance, and racism within dominant power structures. Some of these other subaltern groups in [Australia] possibly identify strongly with Nyungar ontologies insofar as they also experience being subject to other, equally violent, colonial power structures. While it is important to note that there are important other subaltern positions within the subjectivities of Nyungar and non-Nyungar distinctions, they are not the focus of this study.

How the multiple subjectivities of subalterns in [Australia] meet with Nyungar ontologies, and experience complicity in distinct ways, is an area that requires further research.

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\(^3\) I follow Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in the literature review to continue discussion around the subaltern. See section 2.8, “Constructions of Other,” 69.

\(^4\) Hegemony, hegemonic is used following the dictionary definition “the domination of one state, country, or class within a group of others;” toward revealing in this thesis domination of Aboriginality by colonial power. *Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus Concise Edition*, 4th ed., s.v. “hegemony.”
Language Usage

1. **Caterpillar Dreaming Trail, Caterpillar Dreaming Walk**: Refers to the particular Trail, and Walk that was undertaken for the purpose of this study. It does not refer to historic or future realisations of the Caterpillar Dreaming.

2. **Conciliation, conciliatory**: The word carries similar meaning to reconciliation, with important dissimilarities. The “re” is omitted to acknowledge that within the Australian context, Nyungar/non-Nyungar relationships did not begin as conciliatory, and therefore conciliation does not imply a return to a past condition.

3. **Country**: Refers to an entirely Aboriginal conception of place and attendant kinship responsibilities.

4. **Eldership**: Is used in this thesis to denote Nyungar or Aboriginal Elders.

5. **Emergent, emergence**: Used to describe a coming-into-being of a certain idea, event, or other that has seemingly arisen from nothing. The term is used both as a verb to describe this coming-into-being, and a noun, to describe the condition that has arisen. The words apply to both the lived experience of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk and the continuous and dynamic engagement with theory in response to what arose from the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

6. **Liminal space**: The ideas of liminal space, liminal experience, liminal landscape, and liminal passage are used to describe an in-between experience pertaining to self, culture, place or otherness. In later chapters it is particularly signifying a state described in ritual studies as a rite of passage.

7. **Nyungar women**: Is used to denote the historical figures of ‘Nyungar women’ that the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were following. As the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail is a women’s trail, this may comprise a collective of thousands of generations of Nyungar
women’s movement along the Trail. In certain journal entries, the Nyungar women have been called “girls.” This discrepancy is based in personal interpretation, as the Nyungar women were young, fifteen years of age, although had other attributes of womanhood that will be later discussed.

8. Ontological, ontologies: The term classically depicts the study of the nature of existence, or the nature of being. Herein, I follow Sandie Suchet-Pearson’s, Sarah Wright’s, Kate Lloyd’s, and Laklak Burarrwanga’s work in “Caring as Country: Towards an Ontology of Co-Becoming in Natural Resource Management” to ascribe ontology to a process of knowing and becoming place.¹

9. Right-way/Wrong-way: Is a contemporary Nyungar term, used to express when things follow the right protocol; for example there can be right-way actions, decisions, and marriages. Wrong-way is in contradistinction to right-way.

10. Scouting: A term I use for finding a safe-enough passage to walk the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes. Includes meeting property owners, and farmers, and the seeking of permissions and approvals to pass and camp.

11. Shared-space: Used to describe an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal collaborative space, or space where the spectrum of cultures exist.² I use shared-space here from Homi Bhabha’s writing on “third-space;” an emergent in-between state of culture that he shares co-construct beyond historical narratives.³ In the Australian context however, Bhabha’s construct can appear profane due to legacies of colonial genocide that exist in this space. In

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² F. Nicoll, “Reconciliation In and Out of Perspective: White Knowing, Seeing, Curating and Being at Home in and Against Indigenous Sovereignty,” ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Canberra, Australia: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004);
the last decade, iterations of Bhabha's third-space; such as shared-space have appeared to further speak to the [Australian] experience.⁴

12. Sovereignty: I follow Fiona Nicoll's use of the term sovereignty, in the context of Nyungar sovereignty, or Aboriginal sovereignty; to indicate that Aboriginal law and protocol exists strongly in the [Australian] place, unwitnessed by colonial law.⁵

13. Yarn/yarn-up: Is a contemporary Nyungar term for having a chat, discussion, or going to speak to someone.

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⁴ Kimberley says Bhabha's third-space is "derived from a politics of migration that discounts the Indigenous." New ideas of shared-space as pertaining to the [Australian] place will be discussed in this thesis. Jonathan Kimberley, "Country Unwrapping Landscape: Kuluntjara World Map (the Nine Collaborations)" (Masters diss., University of Western Australia, 2010), 30-31.

⁵ Nicoll, "Reconciliation in and Out of Perspective", 28.
Orthography

1. *Australian*: Place names are written in square brackets to acknowledge the reality of the land that was present before hegemonic/colonial place naming.

2. *Capitalisation*: In addition to common usage capitalisation is reserved for the terms Aboriginal, the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail, the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, and Nyungar—as well as when referring to Aboriginal conceptions of the terms Country, Ceremony, Story and Protocol. The capitalisation of Nyungar/Aboriginal is to show respect toward Nyungarity/Aboriginality. The lowercase orthography of non-Nyungar/non-Aboriginal, and distinction of non-Nyungarity/non-Aboriginality in context to Nyungarity/Aboriginality, is a political stance aimed at subverting hegemonic power within academic discourse that has historically prioritised the non-Aboriginal. The terms listed above—country, ceremony, story and protocol—are used in lowercase when referring to a shared-space usage of the term.

3. *Nyungar Language*: Prior to colonisation there were no written forms of Nyungar language and the disparate undertakings to document it by early settlers, linguists, anthropologists have led to various different spellings of Nyungar words. This thesis uses the spelling ‘Nyungar’, however in some quotes and journal entries the spelling is also given as ‘Noongar’, ‘Nyoongar’ and ‘Noongah’. Other words in the Nyungar language cited in journal entries have been quoted verbatim.

4. *Journal entries*: For the most part journal entries are verbatim; no changes have been made to content. Generally the opening letter and sentence starts have been changed to capitals and an occasional error of spelling has been corrected. The ellipsis [ . . . ] signifies a section of text that has not been included in a journal entry due to a reiteration of content or to condense a long quote.
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Notes to Reading

The following section orients the reader to some thesis pragmatics important to a first understanding of this study. These introductions are points of discussion and will be further elucidated within the main body of this PhD thesis.

It is first important to relay that the initial invitation to collaborate in this study could have produced a swathe of different research data collections and outcomes. The breadth of possible study directions illuminates the need to acknowledge both the limitations of this study and the resultant research directions both as my own and as a product of the relational nature of this study.

Dr Noel Nannup’s role in the study and editorial process was absolutely integral to the unravelling and direction of this thesis. Nannup checked and edited each chapter and the thesis at large as it emerged. The invitation and responsibility, however, was for me to write the thesis, and thus I acknowledge hegemonic ways and perspectives within the thesis that are not necessarily Nannup’s. As the focus of this study is how non-Aboriginality can be transformed by Aboriginal ontologies as facilitated through Nannup, the thesis at large has many hegemonic ties and starting points that are then unwrapped through the study to varying degrees.

Images appear as a gallery in the middle of the thesis, and referred to within the thesis text. Images were chosen to represent a feel of the Walks, rather than form a way of describing and detailing the Walks.

Lastly to note is that I personally acted as a participant on all the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks, I carried a journal, and my writing appears (not disproportionally) in the journal entry representations within this thesis.
Dedication

To ancestors past—Ernie & Polly Monger and Molly & Jack Duffield,

And to Bubu—-to ancestors coming.
Figure 1: Caterpillar Dreaming Map — Stages One to Five
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Prologue and Study Beginnings

I am, on my mother’s mother’s paternal side, a fourth generation, non-Aboriginal, settler-descendent, Western-Australian Wadjela.¹ My great-great-grandparents arrived in Western Australia in 1844 upon the ship named Unicorn to the then 15-year-old British Swan River Colony; they are now buried in Toodyay and York. My great-great-grandfather, was on-board the Unicorn at the age of one, and later became a policeman in the early-settler town of Toodyay.² He is buried in Northam. My great-great-grandmother married again after his death and is buried herself in the old part of the York Cemetery, underneath Mouth Brown. My great-grandfather was born at 9-mile Peg, just outside Toodyay, met my great-grandmother in Northam, and later ran the general store in Bencubbin together with her. They are now buried in Bencubbin. My grandmother grew-up in Bencubbin, gave birth to my mother in Wyalkatchem, and died at the age of 94, in the beginning year of this PhD. Both her and my grandfather are buried in Fremantle, where I now live. After my grandmother’s passing my mother gave me an unusually shaped, unidentified object that seemed to be made from sea-weathered papier-mâché.

During the journey of this PhD, a series of interrelated events have unpacked this family story, leading to the synchronous finding that each of the previously mentioned towns—Toodyay, Northam, York, Bencubbin, and Wyalkatchem— are places on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail. Further, the papier-mâché gift was revealed to be a bone plate from between the vertebrae of a whale. The whale, as Noel Nannup explains, is the caretaker totem of the Caterpillar Dreaming. What is the connection here between the Caterpillar Dreaming, an ancient Aboriginal pathway and my own family? It seems that there is a

¹ Wadjela means “whitefella,” the term for a “white person” in Nyungar language.
² There is little information to be found on my great-great-grandfather John Henry Monger’s role as a policeman. The following exert says that Monger, “[ . . . ] was a policeman in charge of convict parties working on Albany Road [ . . . ]” Rica Erikson, Old Toodyay and Newcastle (Toodyay: Toodyay Shire Council, 1974), 167.
shared history between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of [Australia] that binds us together in place. This thesis looks to unwrap this phenomenon, with particular reference to the Nyungar landscapes of southwest [Western Australia].

I first met Nannup on a disused air runway on Wadjemup — Rottnest Island. He is a Whadjuk, Wadandi, and Binjarra Nyungar man on his father’s side, and has Karriarra and Indjibarndi ties on his mother’s side. He is known as a respected Nyungar Elder, storyteller and Cultural Guide, and is simply an extraordinary human. He was telling stories of the night sky to landscape architect students, as we all lay on our backs on the still-warm tarmac. I was there assisting Grant Revell to run a studio in which the students would consider what would be involved in designing walk trails for Wadjemup. The island has a horrendous colonial history and Revell had invited Nannup to shine light on this, as well as to share with the students some larger place context. I had recently been conjuring a conciliatory walking project — to walk to Uluru in silence. And while we lay there, Nannup spoke to us of a trail that went that way — the Caterpillar Dreaming, he said. Walking back to camp that night, I mentioned the idea to Nannup. He replied simply, saying that many people would be walking.

Nannup, I found out later, had been waiting for this occasion, although neither he, nor I, expected his collaborator to be non-Aboriginal. It was Anzac day the morning after the tarmac story telling, and Nannup, Revell and I met under the shade of some small melaleucas. It was in this moment that Nannup invited me to work with him and Revell suggested a PhD as a container for this project, and that he could supervise. Later that morning Nannup and I were chatting near to an old train track, and a snake ran across his foot. He said this was important and three years later this study began. We became the shared-space of a deeply felt non-Aboriginal intention towards finding a conciliatory landscape practice, and a highly spiritual, deeply protocolled, Nyungar beckoning of the Caterpillar Dreaming.
1.2 Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming

The following paragraphs are Nannup's telling of the Caterpillar Dreaming's contemporary re-continuance. His words reveal the catalytic framework of cultural knowledge and holding that this study sits in continual relationship with. He says:

In 2005 an event occurred from the Solar System that put it [the Caterpillar Dreaming] in train, and that was a meteorite going across the sky at 9 o'clock at night. Lit everything up like daylight and that was on the 3rd of December 2005. I contacted Violet the day after the meteorite crossed the sky with the sonic boom at the end of it and I said to Djidja, as I called her then, what should I do? And she said 'just sit and wait. There'll be certain things we have to watch for now. And as they unfold we have to be able to piece them together.' And she said something really significant will happen on the next full moon or thereabouts. And so, I immediately looked for the next full moon, which was the 16th, thirteen days later, and all I had to do then was wait.

So I waited, and waited, and waited until the morning of the full moon, which was 9:30am on the morning of the 16th. And as that happened I was contacted from Rottnest by a person whose job it was to look after the Aboriginal heritage on the island. That person had sat on a plane with me 10 years earlier and remembered me telling the story about the whales beaching themselves and why they did that. She wanted me to remind her about that [as a whale had just beached itself on Wadjemup island], and said she told the rangers not to touch it and what should we do. Immediately I rang Violet and said that the whale was beached and she said, this is the one, this is the sign for the Caterpillar Dreaming because they come in as close as they can get to the sacred eggs which are under the lighthouse hill over there.

She said the whale would be female, and will have something to do with the colour blue. Once she had established that, arrangements were made, she went over and of course by this time it was about five hours after the full moon. And every hour after the moon the tide is dropping, dropping, dropping. And she wanted the whale taken back out to sea, cut up and fed

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3. Violet Newman (Djidja), a Ngudju-Nyungar woman, is one of Nannup's cultural advisors.
to the fish. Couldn’t move it, it was too big. At Strickland Bay. Ninety tons of it. So they took over a crane and a truck. Loaded it on and buried it at narrow neck on the island.

When that whale beached itself, that’s when the story really started to hurry up. So then I really got serious about doing the mapping.

Meanwhile we got onto where you came into the scene [. . .] you said to me, I like walking, and I remember it now, you said, I want to walk in silence to Uluru. And I thought wow, walking all that way and not saying anything, only a woman could think that way.\(^4\)

From here, Nannup and I met many times — sometimes discussing the Caterpillar Dreaming story, sometimes scouting the trail, but most often just catching up for a yarn. This was an important time in cultivating reciprocity of trust between Nannup and me across a cultural divide that has historically been steeped in colonial violence. It was through these initial years of meeting that I developed the capacity to follow Nannup, and the Caterpillar Dreaming, and un-follow colonial modes of knowing and doing research. The above words from Nannup reveal that right-way timing of the Caterpillar Dreaming — the sometimes-slow emergence of such events — is also pertinent to the right-way timing of the study at large. Essentially this thesis maps this process.

1.3 Entering Shared-Space

This study is situated in the in-between space of cultures. It is unique, for it is a co-emergent exploration of what comes, literally, from being within shared-space. Nannup said to me at one point: if colonial impact disrupted the continued walking of Aboriginal Trails, then it should be colonial deeds that undo this disruption. This became my intent, to follow this guidance toward the undoing of colonial impact. The study is therefore not about Aboriginality, past, present or future; it does not seek to represent Aboriginality or speak on behalf of Aboriginality.\(^5\) The context for the study is the tricky, slippery, liminal

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\(^4\) Noel Nannup, in discussion with the author, November 22, 2016.
\(^5\) Tuhiwai Smith comments that research in Aboriginal communities is insidiously linked with imperialism and colonialism; benefitting non-Aboriginal researchers. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and
space between cultures within which a new materiality is said to arise. This study therefore looks at the emergent potential of being in this liminal space of culture, through the relationships of the Caterpillar Dreaming, Nannup, hegemony and myself.⁶ Everything begins with acknowledgement of the dark past, and continuing legacy of genocide and colonial subjugation, to Aboriginality. The Caterpillar Dreaming Trail starting point at Wadjemup is a case in point. Wadjemup holds the grim record for the highest number of Aboriginal deaths in custody — during its existence as a prison from 1831 to 1931 — of any place in [Australia]. The dominant discourse of Wadjemup, however, celebrates the island as a tourist destination, unaware of (or ignoring) the number of Nyungar, Wongi, Yamatji and Mulba deaths, and the severity of conditions they were subjected to.⁷ The most popular campsite on Wadjemup was revealed as recently as 1970 to be the site of 400 unmarked and unrecorded Aboriginal burials from this time.⁸ This is typical of so many of the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes; and this gap — the unconscious, repressed aspects of historic hegemony — is the site of this study.

Rather than documenting the repressed counter-narrative to hegemony, this study looks at the emergent potential of being within these shared-spaces of contested histories. [Australian] shared-space writing commonly articulates a certain spatial anxiety that is present in place, and in culturally collaborative work. This is often connected to discussions around non-Aboriginal belonging, postcolonial guilt, and epistemic violence to, and in, place. This study connects this theme of anxiety to Homi Bhabha’s work on cultural shared-space, whereby he identifies anxiety as essential to the emergence of new modes of cultural expression.⁹ This study is open to the potential present in spaces of anxiety, and is

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⁶ Liminal is described herein as an in-between experience pertaining to self or place. In later chapters it is particularly signifying a state described in ritual studies as a rite of passage.


⁸ Glen Stasiuk, “Wadjemup: Rottnest Island as Black Prison White Playground” (Ph.D., Murdoch University, 2015), 168-194. The 400 ‘discovered’ graves remained relatively forgotten until 1987; see referenced pages for an in-depth account of this.

curious as to what the expression of journeying this anxiety, in corporeal ways, may contribute to discussions around conciliation.

Normative definitions around conciliation suggest, “ending strife,” “to make calm and amenable,” to “pacify,” and “to make compatible.” These definitions, however, seem counter-intuitive to facilitating spaces from which new modes of cultural expression may emerge. They seem, as do some of the writers working in this area, to desire a fixed understanding, and final end point to a complex, historic and ongoing assemblage of cultural relations. Additionally the definitions seem imbued with one-sided righteous idealism—assuming that the problem simply involves the eradication of disharmony, and does not require having to look at, or be with, the inherent structures of power that create disharmony.

This study is interested in how spatial anxiety may work upon fixed ideas of conciliation and inherent unconscious power dynamics. Shared-space concepts seem to allow space for this unfolding without moving toward a known outcome or fixed idea of what this coming together should look like, and produce. Theorists discuss that shared-space holds complexity, multiple perceptions of reality, difference, and what Chela Shanoval calls “oppositional consciousness.” The inference here, is that within this melting pot of holding difference, of spatial anxiety, that new knowledge and ways of being can emerge. Interestingly, transdisciplinary theorist Nicolescu Basarab comments that shared-space is never static, but is continually “reconciling.” This continually emergent “reconciling,” from a mutual coming together of cultures, explains the nuance of conciliation pertinent to the Caterpillar Dreaming study.

Maori performance academic Janinka Greenwood, in her work on shared-space in theatre, says of shared-space outcomes, that “whether displacement or continuance will be found,

and in what measure, is something to be discovered.” This study is inherently located at the edge of this statement, exploring the very sensitive border of Nyungar/non-Nyungar cultural emergence and walking the fine line between which acts displace, and which acts heal.

1.4 Relational Following

Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming facilitated a relational way of being in the landscapes of [Australia] in which the non-Aboriginal person is essentially a privileged stranger. My first remembered experience of being in shared-space in [Australia] was attending a rally at the age of seven held to demand the conservation the Swan Brewery, an iconic building that had been constructed on a very sacred Nyungar place. The nuances of what it was all about were above me at the time, however, at the rally my body froze, my legs became heavy, and a wave of nausea swept over me. I have since been very interested in the embodied knowing of people-to-place relationships, especially my own conscious and unconscious participations with hegemony. Central to The Caterpillar Dreaming study is an inquiry into how the following of Nyungar ontologies of place — in response to Nannup’s invitation — might reveal colonial deeds of mistreatment of place, and place custodians, as a first step toward the possibility of a right-way non-Nyungar coming into place.

Such work demands due acknowledgement of my non-Aboriginality. The importance of this shared-space collaboration, if any, for Aboriginality is not my story to speak. I can make no categorical statements about what the emergent Caterpillar Dreaming, through Nannup, essentially means. In this way, I am vulnerable to critiques of non-Aboriginal priority in research, and place. I acknowledge this wholeheartedly, and admit that there were many moments when I wished to drop the study for this reason. My decision to stay with the project was always in response to Nannup’s continued lead and invitation, and the

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33. Janinka Greenwood, “Journeys into a Third Space: A Study of how theatre enables us to interpret the emergent space between cultures” (Ph.D., Griffith University, Brisbane, 1999), 9.
realisation that the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk — its inherent contemporary duty, and potential reciprocity to Nyungar culture or Aboriginality — was well beyond my knowing.

Nonetheless, in the shared-space of the Caterpillar Dreaming, Nannup, hegemony and myself a non-Aboriginal person, was implicit with attendant responsibility. The shared-space seemed to be disrupted when unconscious wrong-way knowledge, direction, or intended outcome were brought in. The very requirement of being in a relational unfolding of an emergent shared-space, seemed endowed with the responsibility to be in unknowing, and in right-way relationship with all aspects of the shared-space. I found that if I bought an unconscious hegemonic tendency into the shared-space — for example desiring to know how it would unfold — the study would stall. This was announced in ways such as phone calls not being returned, and feeling blocked as to the next move. It was only through a process of letting go of the study completely, and stepping away from hegemonic thinking that the study would once again emerge. There was a necessary learning of right-way protocol inherent within the shared-space of the Caterpillar Dreaming. This potential discontinuance was a teaching tool that ensured a right-way emergence of this shared-space exploration.

Essentially this work is about following Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming toward the unwrapping of hegemonic tendencies toward place. Implicit in this following, and therefore central to this dissertation, were the enactment of Nyungar ontologies of place as facilitated through Nannup; and exploring how following this Eldership, and participating the ontologies of walking and ceremony, contribute to an unwrapping of hegemonic landscape. My own bringing of silence into the shared-space, endorsed by Nannup, was another place-practice that will be explored in this thesis.

1.5 Landscape Architecture

This study is situated within the discipline of landscape architecture though it pertains to the larger weave of how we find ourselves in place, and how we operate in place — especially in places of colonial diaspora, and contested histories. So far landscape
architecture exists in [Australia], as per Aboriginal Elder Jim Pura-lia Everitt’s insight of landscape within dominant discourses, within a “colonial dome of thinking.” Scholars remark that landscape architecture resists in-place knowledge. This study takes the position that landscape architecture needs localised re-envisioning within place, and that to do this, requires following in-place custodial knowledge. The study critiques the lineage of Euro-western design and research templates and questions their capacity to truly land in the [Australian] place.

On a scouting trip for the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail with Nannup, I took a shortcut through a bypass tunnel through Perth city. To this Nannup said in jest, “you know exactly where you are.” Nannup continued, telling me some significance of the swamps that we were passing by at high speed. Nannup’s interjection gave way to the realisation that I was lost within Nyungar ontologies of place and place relatedness, and how familiar it was to me to navigate place by means of hegemonic narratives and directives. Landscape architecture in [Australia] has yet to understand itself as lost within a greater system of place-based knowing. This study follows Aboriginal ontologies to explore what these knowledge’s can offer the discipline of landscape architecture.

Fanny Balbuk, a prominent Aboriginal figure in early-settler Perth was sent to jail many times for following “her own road” through the colonial hegemony of claimant property titles. She was following Country despite a superimposed aesthetic of hegemonic landscape. On scouting trips to determine the pass-ability, or lack thereof, of sections of the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail, I often found myself wading through a river or jumping fences to assess where private properties stopped passage. Not for the first time I found myself in a position of deeply resisting hegemonic landscape constructions and looking for alternate models and conceptions of landscape that realise connectedness.

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15. This thesis does not stand in the position that counteracting hegemony depends on a complete erasure of hegemonic knowing, only that to find oneself lost facilitates the process of offsetting inherent power inequalities.
The standpoint of this thesis is to recognise Aboriginality, and the Aboriginal notion of Country, as a sovereign Aboriginal matters. That said, Country also affects the non-Aboriginal. Jonathan Kimberley and Jim Pura-ilia Everitt coin a term — unlandscape — as an in-between state, or a worked upon state of landscape, by Country. This terminology enables landscape and Country to enter into a “reciprocal and meaningful” interplay with one another. With this notion in mind, this study is interested in exploring unlandscape architecture, and how the attributes of unlandscape architecture may differ — subtly or radically — from landscape architecture.

Essentially this study’s praxis is toward following Aboriginal ontological knowledge in place, and exploring what this following can offer the discipline of landscape architecture. Non-Aboriginal, senior-initiated Ngarinyin18 cultural woman Hannah Rachel Bell offers that the real gift from Aboriginal peoples to non-Aboriginal people is “the capacity to listen and respond to the land.”9 Through Nannup’s facilitation of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, and his bringing of Country into the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space, this study seeks to reveal new ways of being in place by listening beyond dominant landscape hegemony.

Further, as much as this study sits within the discipline of landscape architecture, the origins and orientations of the study, as well as the complexity of factors in the shared-space, give it a transdisciplinary resonance. I use a grounded theory methodology in order that literature searches could match, and support, emergent data. This has meant that theory has come from a number of disciplines — with sociology and cultural theory as examples. Consequently the study outcomes are also not restricted to landscape architecture. The study was essentially focused on the emergent potential of the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space, though this is not intended to abrogate the its significance to place and stewardship that is pertinent to landscape architecture.

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18. Ngarinyin is the Aboriginal language group situated in West Kimberley, Australia. Bell is most known through her work with Senior Ngarinyin Law Man Mowaljarlai.
The Caterpillar Dreaming is a story about the movement of Nyungar women across [Australia] for the principal purpose of maintaining genetic diversity in diverse Aboriginal language groups. Nannup explains that this movement would have occurred about every fifteen years. Selected Nyungar woman would walk the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes, from their home birthplaces to new places with different language, story, country, and community, and the fresh genetic material they carried would guarantee the health of these communities.

The Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes facilitate this movement of leaving old stories and arriving at new stories. The nuances of this will be further revealed through Nannup's telling which will be incrementally presented throughout the thesis. The following of the trail through the landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming is said to put one in contact with the teaching landscapes of the transformation from the caterpillar to the butterfly — from the caterpillar as a voracious eater, to the butterfly, that Nannup explains is the softest way to touch the earth.

The Caterpillar Dreaming is the largest and most alive component of the shared-space of this study. In many ways the study is a relational following of this movement of Nyungar women, as facilitated through Nannup. How this meets the other components of this study's shared-space — conciliation, landscape architecture and the walkers for example — is the emergent study. In the understanding of this emergent shared-space, there must be a trust of sorts that all the components of the shared-space were called to meet each other.

Nyungar Women

It is important to mention that Nyungar cultural relations are largely matrilineal. While contemporary Nyungar communities are potentially more subject to a hegemonic positioning of women in society than old-way Nyungar communities, it is important to realise that Nyungar women were not subalterns in their own ontologies. While to non-
Nyungar understandings, the journey of Nyungar women may appear to be a form of patriarchal brutality, it is important to understand that Nyungar women are important Law makers within Nyungar communities. It would have been Nyungar women who initiated such movements designed to maintain the health of Aboriginal communities across [Australia]. Therefore, the reader is requested to put aside judgement of this kind both because it is a false reading, and because it will prove to be a barrier to being with the narration of the Caterpillar Dreaming, and the effect of the Caterpillar Dreaming in relation to non-Nyungarity.20 This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7.21

1.7 The Caterpillar Dreaming Research Questions

Because of the study’s emergent beginning, steeped in shared-space possibilities, the research questions were shaped to be as open-ended as possible; the intention to decolonise shared-space and to be within an unknowing as to what conciliation is or looks like, meant that the research questions needed to be un-definitive, and without a directing hypothesis. Instead, the questions were shaped to capture the emergent possibilities of what being in this particular shared-space would herald. It felt important to be in unknowing around the emergent capacity of Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming. As such, the study’s central research questions are threefold:

1. What are the emergent potentials of an experiential Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal shared-space with conciliatory landscape aspirations?
2. What insights emerge through following protocelled Aboriginal country, story and Eldership, with particular reference toward land stewardship and unwrapping colonial landscapes?
3. How are the instrumentalities of walking, silence, and ceremony facilitative of de-colonising landscape?

20. There is future study potential in the intersection between feminist and gendered cross-cultural theoretical approaches with Nyungar ontologies. While this is briefly touched on from female writers perspectives within shared space collaborations in the literature review, the priority focus of this particular study was not to come from hegemonic depictions of gender within theory as these theories have their basis in hegemonic dynamics that are not applicable to perceptions of gendered Nyungar ways.
21. See section 7.4.7, "Day Seven", 212.
The emergent study saw one hundred and fifty participants walk four staged sections of five hundred kilometres of the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes under the cultural guidance of Nannup and other Elders. The walk started on Reabold Hill on the coastal flats of Perth City, overlooking the original trail origin at Wadjemup, on the 20th of June 2014. Wadjemup, now an island, was connected to mainland [Australia] some 9000 years ago. Nyungar cosmology tells that the spirits knew that the sea level would rise, inundating the lower flanks of the [Australian] continent, and trapping spirit children under the ocean. Now Wadjemup sits twenty kilometres from the Perth coast, and can be seen most days sitting low on the horizon, and most nights through the turning light of its lighthouses.

The initial walks were carried out in three planned stages. The first, stage one, from the 20th to the 26th of June 2014 left from Reabold Hill on the Swan Coastal Plain and followed a string of urban wetlands—Herdsman Lake, Lake Monger and Hyde Park—to arrive at the Derbyl Yerrigan [Swan River]. Stage one then followed the river through Perth suburbs to the first National park, Walyunga National Park, on the metropolitan outskirts. Stage two, from the 18th to the 26th of August, continued following the river through Walyunga National Park and the Avon Valley National Park to arrive in the first settled inland town of York. Stage three, from September 17th to 26th, continued from York, through the wheatbelt towns of Cunderdin, Wyalkatchem and Bencubbin, and Beacon to end at Yorkrakine Rock on the 22nd of September 2015.

Stage four was not initially to be walked as part of this study. As the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk progressed, however, this stage emerged, and felt important to the overall understanding of the Caterpillar Dreaming story and resultant thesis. Stage four took place from June 4th to June 14th, 2015, where walkers took the journey from Yorkrakine Rock, the end place of stage three, through the town of Bencubbin to just north of the town of Beacon.

The study was conducted through collaborative autoethnographic journaling, and walking audio recordings, whereby walking participants wrote and spoke their emergent thought
and feeling processes whilst following the Caterpillar Dreaming and Nannup. The written and oral recordings were positioned to be entirely open-ended, so as not to curtail research objectives in any specific way. Participants could write and speak as freely, briefly or lengthily as they chose. The resultant journals and recordings and their exploration comprise the material of this thesis.

The following figure shows a timeline of this study so as to show the emergent compilations of literature definition, scouting, walking and writing as particular to this study.
1.8 Study Nuances

1.8.1 Subjectivity

As this was a very specific and particular study, the resultant thesis mirrors this. It is not a study where an objectivity of experience has been necessarily mastered. In fact, subjectivity — and how shared-space components meet subjectively, or relationally — is central to this study. Subjectivity was encouraged by facilitating the capture of a collective subjective experience by the multiple walkers on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail and their journal entries. At the same time, this also allowed some rigor by curtailing my own subjectivity to prevent a descent into solipsism.

Inevitably though, this study has been structured and narrated by my telling. As with the unusual mix of shared-space components, this thesis has entered the realms of fictocriticism, in this case a meeting of academic material, and hypothetical questioning. This has been the only way that I have found to relate the emergent journal entries, with the Caterpillar Dreaming, and conciliation. As such, this thesis is much like a journey. I have sought to make the path as clear as possible for the reader. However, the emergent nature of this study presents unique challenges and demands a concomitant commitment by the reader to be willing to enter liminal space.

1.8.2 Privilege

It is also important to briefly discuss privilege on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, as Walk participation was largely non-Nyungar. Essentially the walk was made possible by nuances of privilege: for myself an education and a PhD scholarship that provided time and financial support to scout, organise and research the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk; for the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers to participate, also suggests spare time, money, and freedom.
from family obligations and responsibilities. To reiterate, the study is essentially exploring how the ontologies of Nannup’s Eldership and the Caterpillar Dreaming meet this privileged non-Nyungarity. To remain aware of this privilege, the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers often walked a variation of the actual Caterpillar Dreaming Trail. There were significant landscape features that were not visited, and sections that we walked in respectful distance from the traditional Trail. It is important that the reader understands that hegemonic privilege will likely be a part of all data representation within this study.

1.9 Thesis Map

To facilitate the readers orientation the thesis is ordered into nine chapters:

Chapter 2, LITERATURE REVIEW, presents the initial literature review. As will be discussed in the methodology, I use a grounded theory research methodology to enable the study to engage with emergent data. The initial literature search should not be read as being definitive as this would be too restrictive and prescriptive to capture emergent data. As such the initial literature review covers a very broad notion of what it means to be in contested shared-space — with anxiety, unknowing, and in holding of the potentiality of new cultural emergence. To do this I follow the overarching theme of belonging.

The literature review begins with two pivotal landscape architecture and architecture readings that position this study into qualitative and poetic realms of discussing place. This introduces the theme of belonging, which is explored as it plays out in many different transdisciplinary arms of this study including post-colonial studies, the notion of home, poetics of place, contested place, and shared-space collaborations. Specifically this chapter discusses the oversight of Aboriginal Eldership in establishing ideas pertaining to [Australian] belonging. The chapter further connects the drives toward [Australian] belonging to the concept of conciliation.

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22. Family obligation is often a contributing reason as to why Nyungar participation in collaborations can ebb and flow. There are attendant responsibilities through kinship ties, and social obligation that can preclude long periods of being away from family.
Chapter 3, METHODOLOGY, discusses the research methodology. Primarily this chapter looks at the non-academic methodology of following Nannup and relational ontologies toward the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk emergence. Firstly, I connect this relational following to landscape architecture research methodologies and decolonising ethics, to discuss the potential decolonising of landscape architecture. Further, I introduce how grounded theory and collaborative autoethnography were used in the study to explore research methodologies that allow for relational data emergence. In this chapter I also discuss the affective turn within critical theory, as to how it priorities the affective body in research; and how this has shaped the study toward a corporeality of experience, both in the research itself, and in the being with places of massacre on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail. This chapter discusses all the decisions made toward the final manifestation of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Lastly, I explain how the subsequent chapters of results will be structured and written.

Chapter 4, THEMATIC RESULTS, is the first results chapter for this thesis. It discusses the main emergent themes from the journal entries and audio monologues — Nannup, walking, silence, and ceremony. In this chapter I connect themes from the literature review, such as non-Aboriginal belonging, to the emergent themes in the journal entries. This chapter provides grounding for the study results of the subsequent chapters. It is broken into two parts to provide space and pause in the thesis reading.

Chapters 5 to 7, move more deeply into a subjective fictocritical narrative style to make sense of the emergent journal entries. Essentially I call this a writing that emerges from being with the journal entries from different walk stages (see 3.8 How To Read the Caterpillar Dreaming Thesis.) Chapters 5 to 7 also engage new literature to find academic structure and support for the emergent journal entries.

Chapter 5, STAGE ONE AND TWO — BAD DEATH, reveals the major theme of journal entries from stages one and two: passing places of massacre and unacknowledged

23. Refers to an undoing of colonial or hegemonic practices, knowledge, or ways of being, doing and relating. It does not refer to becoming Nyungar/Aboriginal, or in any way suggest knowledge of what Nyungarity or Aboriginality may be.
Aboriginal death. These stages on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk passed many places of early Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations and battle. This will firstly be situated historically, before exploring the relationship between subjective, and collective experiences revealed in the journal entries while passing these sites. I discuss the importance of acknowledging complicity within these shared histories, and use a pertinent story from Nannup, as well as my own family lineage from these areas to further discuss this massacre passing.\(^{24}\) The chapter reveals the shared-space relational significance of being with such places.

Chapter 6, STAGE THREE — PERFORMING PLACE, reveals journal entries from stage three of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, to show subjective and collective emergent experience at particular landscapes. Stage three passed the significant Caterpillar Dreaming sites of Cunderdin Hill, Doongin Peak and Yorkrakine Rock that each heralded unique emergences. This chapter reveals how the walkers of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk met, and participated in, the agency of Caterpillar Dreaming place and story. This chapter brings in new theory, particularly Victor Turner’s work on liminality, and connects Turner’s exploration of liminal rites of passage to Caterpillar Dreaming themes of betrayal, grief and exile in place.

Chapter 7, STAGE FOUR — THE VOID, reveals journal entries from stage four of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, to show the void-like experience of stage four landscapes. This chapter further engages with Turner’s work, specifically in rites of passage through liminal void-like experiences. I meet Turner’s work by showing how these passages can transformationally educate the exiled non-Aboriginal, and the exiled landscape architect.

Chapter 8, CONCLUSION, wraps the thesis together by returning to the initial research questions and relating findings to conciliation and landscape architecture. In the conclusion, I also speak to the furthering opportunities of work such as this for bringing local place knowledge’s into academic discourse.

\(^{24}\) Complicity is used in this thesis, as defined in "Language Usage," as acknowledgement involvement with hegemony; particularly the acknowledgement of [Australian] non-Aboriginal privilege with regards to benefitting (however reluctantly) from colonialism, and colonialisms violent history of Aboriginal displacement in [Australia].
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

PART ONE: THE COMPLICIT CRISIS OF BELONGING

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical platform for understanding the Caterpillar Dreaming study while the chapters that follow expand the themes introduced here in the context of what actually happened on the Caterpillar Dreaming walks. The trope of 'belonging' will be followed through disciplines of cultural theory, critical race theory, literature studies, and architecture. While the Caterpillar Dreaming study could have been placed within very many theoretical lineages, the concept of belonging is capable of threading through the transdisciplinary complexity of the study and drawing it into a common theme. Essentially, non-Aboriginal desire for belonging in the [Australian] place, has been complicit in Aboriginal displacement and genocide and need to be revisited in order to find a new perspective toward conciliation.

One important component of the shared-space of the Caterpillar Dreaming, and hence the initial focus of the literature review on belonging, is Nannup’s invitation to non-Aboriginal people of [Australia] to be stewards of the [Australian] place. Nannup says that the spirit of a place recognises all those who are born into a particular place, or have lived in a particular place for seven or more years. His invitation to walk the Caterpillar Dreaming is instructive to non-Aboriginal [Australian’s] on the importance of stewardship. The concept of stewardship correlates strongly to belonging insofar as it epitomises non-Aboriginal relationship to place. Interrogating the academic discourse on belonging reveals which of the principles of belonging are in alignment to stewardship, and which are misaligned in relationship to the traditional custodians of place, and to place itself.
It is typical for research utilising a grounded theory research methodology, as is this study, to limit or even omit an initial literature review so that emergent data is not conditioned by any assumed ideas from literature searches. It was particularly important to this study to avoid holding any pre-conceived directives or anticipated outcomes as it is vital that shared-space studies minimise the risk of forming colonial projections around Nyungar ontologies. Furthermore, I was interested in exploring what would emerge freely within the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space outside of a pre-existing interpretive structure. For this reason, I did not critically examine the literature around the Nyungar ontologies of country, story, and ceremony, but rather, sought to explore how these instrumentalities emerged within the study and to what effect. This literature review therefore seeks to take ownership of, and acknowledge, all the shared-space concepts that I bring into the study.

To do this I align myself with literature that positions the arrival into shared-space from a perspective as close to unknowing as possible. I seek herein to find an apt shared-space understanding for the study, and literature that supports the emergent capacities of shared-space understandings, especially around conciliation. Further, I seek to find a shared-space position from which to enter the study by analysing non-Aboriginal privilege in shared-space, again, toward a position that can allow for the emergent capacities of the study. As the thesis process continues, new literature is found that supports the emergent Caterpillar Dreaming Walk data; this literature will emerge in later chapters.

Due to this, the theory in this study has its closest alignment to hegemonic literature, specifically hegemonic literature of shared-space collaborations. This study hopes to unwrap hegemonic belonging and literature, and not depend on hegemonic perceptions of Aboriginal literatures. The risk here is in perpetuating colonisation of Nyungar or Aboriginal ontologies within the literary realm. The relationship with Nannup within this thesis, as a continual embodied relationship, forms the priority Nyungar ontology. A relationship that cannot be mirrored through following Aboriginal ontology in the form of

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1. This will be discussed in Chapter 3, “Methodology.” See section, 3.5.1 “Grounded Theory,” 72.
theory, as one is not explicity implicated in relationship by perceiving text in a particular way. This study aims to take hegemonic responsibility, rather, in how hegemonic literatures, thus far, have depicted Aboriginal spaces, ideas, and ways.

The literature review begins by looking at an archetypal narrative written by Francesco Careri, that connects landscape architecture, conciliation, and the intention of this study to be with places of massacre. The literature review then turns to two important works for architecture and landscape architecture that cultivate a stance, within these disciplines, of subjective knowing of places. This helps to connect the study with the academic lineage of architecture and landscape architecture, and — of equal importance — the subjective realms of experiencing place. These works are: *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard, and the collection, *Halfway House: The Poetics of Australian Space*, edited by Barbara Holloway and Jennifer Rutherford. These works are then critiqued with respect to their application for the [Australian] place, and, especially the second work, critiqued to expose its oversight regarding following in-place custodial Eldership and knowledge toward understanding a poetics, or subjectivity of experience, in the [Australian] place – a trope highly pertinent to the discussion of belonging.

The literature review then moves to discourses around *the other*, desire, morality, and romanticism, discussing how these dimensions may impact shared-space collaborations. Importantly, this section reviews the seminal works of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, 1994, and Gayatri Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak*, 1988. The discussion will be linked to the discourse around conciliation, in order to carve out the precise context of conciliation that is applicable to the intentions of this study.

Lastly, as mentioned, this chapter looks at two works that are important to the Caterpillar Dreaming study that provide a context for the instrumentalities of walking and silence. These are Rachel Fensham's book chapter in *Halfway House* “Falling not Walking,” and Luisa Passerini's book chapter in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, “Memories between Silence and Oblivion.”
The literature review then draws together these findings to identify and discuss the gap in current literature that the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space study seeks to contribute to.

2.2 The Vagabond

I start with a piece from Francesco Careri’s work *Walkscapes* to carve a sense of the concept of belonging that is most pertinent to this study. Careri depicts an archetypal assemblage from a biblical narrative that somewhat captures an essence of political spatiality relevant to the contemporary world. He tells the story of the brothers Cain and Abel — the progeny of Adam and Eve — which is a narrative that ends in bloodshed and diaspora. Cain and Abel archetypically depict a difference in humanity’s relationship to place: Cain, the ideology of settlement, and Abel, the ideology of seasonal nomadism. He writes:

The two great families into which the human race is divided have two different spatial experiences: that of the cave and the plough, excavating space from the body of the earth, and that of a tent that moves across the earth’s surface without leaving any lasting traces.²

Careri suggests that Adam and Eve conjured equal legacies for their sons under the assumption that brotherly love would suffice to manage any discrepancy. Abel, however, ‘trespasses’ in Cain’s understanding, and Cain carries out the first biblical murder in punishment of his brother.³

To continue, Careri follows Bruce Chatwin’s etymological understandings of the brothers’ names toward the distilling of a “matched pair of opposites.” ‘Abel’ is the Hebrew word hebel — “‘breath’ [ . . . ] ‘vapour’ [ . . . ] anything that lives, moves and is transient.” ‘Cain’ is the Hebrew word kanah — “to ‘acquire,’ ‘get,’ ‘own property,’ [ . . . ] ‘rule’ or ‘subjugate.’”⁴ In the Biblical telling, God punishes Cain for the murder by sentencing him to serve life continually as an eternal wanderer. Careri quotes from Genesis 4:12, “When thou tillest the

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³ Ibid., 30.
⁴ Ibid., 33.
ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."\(^5\) Cain’s punishment is to never belong, to be, in Careri’s words: “eternally lost.”\(^6\) Careri continues that the first cities arose after the death of Abel and this represents a paradox that begins to play out in the person of Cain: the paradox of a now-estranged, or unrestrained, idea of movement, and the desire for home – belonging.

With little need for translation or adjustment, the Cain-Abel archetype aligns to current and historical spatial politics in [Australia]. It aptly portrays the colonial movement toward making a fixed ‘home’ at the expense of traditional custodians’ ability to remain with their home — through murder — and massacres, genocide, re-locations, societal fragmentation and unbridled new law. The concept of belonging in the [Australian] place is charged. Place is fraught with Aboriginal belonging that is not ‘allowed’ to belong within the colonial paradigm, and a search for misguided ideas of belonging by the colonial paradigm, that are in turn violent.

Len Collard and David Palmer, recalling an excerpt written by explorer George Grey in 1841 illustrating how unfathomable was the idea of leaving ‘home’ for Nyungar people, write, “[t]hey themselves never having an idea of quitting their own land cannot imagine others doing it.” They write that this led the Nyungar to believe the newcomers were attached to the [Australian] land in different “states of experience.”\(^7\) This belief led the Nyungar people to welcome the newcomers with benevolence and generosity, until it was seen that the benevolence and generosity was not, in the largest sense, reciprocated. This politics of belonging is the basis for the Literature Review chapter.

The Caterpillar Dreaming study augments the narrative of belonging by recognising the necessity of the journey back to the first murder. There is a vital component in [Australian] conciliation that misses the necessity to be with the colonial complicity of massacre and

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5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
genocide of the Aboriginal people. In fact, the literature review makes a case for non-belonging, toward the cultivation of the vagabond becoming that exists in service to place. Next, I unpack Careri’s work a little more before moving to Bachelard and his conceptions of a poetic space of belonging, and what this contributes to the discussion presented here.

2.3 The Poetics of Space

Careri continues the Cain–Abel archetypal narrative, outlined above, by connecting the two great families of architecture. While his narrative sidesteps the issue of contested belongings, there is an important thread here to take up. Careri proposes that Cain architectures build “physical constructions of space and form,” while Abel architectures are concerned with the “symbolic construction of space.” This notion links to landscape theorist James Corner’s divide between two possible etymological origins of the term landscape: Landskip and Landschaft. Corner defines Landskip as the “impulse to shape large areas of land according to prior imaging.” For his definition of Landschaft, he follows John Brinckerhoff Jackson and John Stilgoe to discern a relational conception of landscape, one that concerns “inhabitants of the place and their obligation to one another and the land.”

This distinction connects strongly to the difference between colonial ideologies of landscape — of building place based on familiar fantasies of past homes — and Aboriginal ideologies of place — of relational ontologies and symbolic meaning. Nannup says that the transformation of the caterpillar to the butterfly as per the Caterpillar Dreaming is symbolically about learning how to touch the earth in the softest way. This connects to landschaft and Abel conceptions of landscapes — of moving across the earth’s surface without leaving any lasting traces. This study is concerned with reconnecting with Abel-Landschaft landscapes, through the visitation and acknowledgement of, and being with, the first

10. Ibid.
murder. Currently Landskip conceptions of landscape inform the dominant modes of practice within landscape architecture. This study explores what the practice of Landschaft landscapes, through following Aboriginal Eldership, can mean for a re-definition of dominant conceptions of the [Australian] place.

Landscape theorist Denis Cosgrove argues that Landskip is an “outsider’s” perception of landscape, and one that reinforces strong subject/object formulations. Landscape theorist Denis Cosgrove argues that Landskip is an “outsider’s” perception of landscape, and one that reinforces strong subject/object formulations. Landschaft, on the other hand, he links with an “insider” perspective, one that includes itself in the formulation of place. This speaks of the dialectic between objective and subjective ways of being in place. For this study, I link the importance of in-place custodial wisdom, through Aboriginal Eldership, with the practice of meeting landscapes subjectively.

Bachelard’s *Poetics of Space* is a significant literary work to architecture theory that explores poetic and intimate resonances of space. In it, Bachelard critiques positivist design, as exemplified by Cain-Landskip constructions, in favour of a receptivity to the image of place. Bachelard conceives that this poetic intimacy and receptivity is potent to the soul. He is interested in places where the soul may rest, where a soul has belonging – a psychological refuge. He writes that “this contemplation produces an attitude that is so special, an inner state that is so unlike any other, that the daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity.” Bachelard’s focus, however, was primarily toward uncontested places.

In Bachelard’s work, psychological refuge, and the mark of infinity, were found in images of crackling fires, a wooden draw in a chest, and contemplating the interior and exterior manifestations of a shell. He concludes that if place does not awaken poetic contemplation then it is “motionless,” fixed, and cannot inspire the soul toward refuge. I wonder, in the contested [Australian] place, if true refuge for the soul can be found. Bachelard speaks

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11. Denis Cosgrove in Ian Weir, “Transformative Mappings: Testing a Methodology for Making Site-specific Architecture in Remote Biodiverse Landscapes” (Ph.D., University of Western Australia, 2008), 68.
12. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 183.
about a “felicitation,” an infinite happiness that can be found through the subjective poetic contemplation of such forms as mentioned. Returning to conciliation, I wonder about the agency of individual poetic-subjectivity, and if it works toward displacement or healing within the [Australian] place. Further, I wonder, in the context of contested place, how the concepts of felicitation and refuge may be redefined.

This discussion will continue with an examination of the next work, *Halfway House: The Poetics of Australian Space*. Firstly, however, I deviate into a discussion of the contested nature of [Australian] place, using illustrative works to carve out a context for the continued discussion.

### 2.4 The Politics of [Australian] Space

The following two quotes are indicative of colonial belonging, and contested [Australian] place. Cultural theorist Aileen Moreton-Robinson writes: “In the Australian context, the sense of belonging, home and place enjoyed by the non-Indigenous subject — coloniser/migrant — is based on the dispossession of the original owners of the land and the denial of our [Aboriginal] rights;” and Patrick Olodoodi Tjungurrayi tells John Carty in the *Yiwarra Kuju* project: “This is their country and they all died, whole lot. They got matches and chained them. Made them sit down and put them in the fire. [. . .] They killed the people from this country. There’s nobody left from Jikarn [an Aboriginal language group in central Western Australia].”

Nannup says that there is not a square-inch of the [Australian] continent that is not impacted by colonial acts of Aboriginal displacement and genocide aimed at progressing the colonial project of securing land tenure.

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Many academics have written on the colonial legacy of seeing the [Australian] place as a blank canvas for colonial history to unfold. The assertion of [Australia] as ‘terra nullius’ by the early British explorers is the classic sentiment of the early colonial psyche — that [Australia] belonged to nobody. Moreton-Robinson calls this a “legal fiction” that positions Aboriginal people as “homeless and out of place […] and […] as trespassers.”18

More insidiously, there has been an aesthetic globalisation of [Australian] place. Landscape theorist Barbara Bender calls this a “western-elitist-notation” of landscape — an emphasis on the visual and a sense of “things being in place.”19 Meanwhile, she says, colonial landscapes are actually “conflicted, […] and uneasy.”20 Are these the sites where Bachelard’s felicitation could occur in the [Australian] place? The dominance of an aesthetic hegemony can be heard in Kauwanu Lewis Warritya O’Brien’s words:

As I walk the city of Adelaide […] I ask myself: Karuna people lived here, but where is the evidence of our histories? There are no memorials to the Karuna, our Karuna names for locations on the landscape are re-placed by English ones, so-called European ‘pioneers’ and ‘explorers’ are elevated through monuments while the great deeds of our people the Karuna are silenced.21

As colonial aesthetic narratives of place are strengthened they supress an Aboriginal aesthetic of belonging. Lisa Slater offers the insight: “Dominant narratives not only tell stories, they prevent stories being told.”22

Globally there are many significant writings on belonging and contested places in ‘postcolonial’ nation states. Homi Bhabha’s The Location of Culture, 1994, and Gayatri

20. Ibid.
Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern Speak*, 1988, were particularly formative for the Caterpillar thesis, and as such will be discussed in greater length in following sections.


The 2000’s saw many new contributions and criticisms of these works, and importantly, a plethora of Aboriginal writers writing their own sense of belonging into the academic sphere. David Mowaljarlai and Jutta Malnic’s *Yorro Yorro: Everything Standing up Alive*, 1993, gave rise to other academic works on Aboriginal Country by Aboriginal writers and many biographical and autobiographical accounts of country and belonging. Two works from Nyungar Country emerged during this period edited by Sally Morgan, Mia Tjalaminu, and Blaze Kwaymullina: the first, *Speaking from the Heart: Stories of Life, Family and Country*, 2007, and the second, *Heartsick for Country: Stories of Love, Spirit and Creation*, 2008; between them they contain the work of thirty-two different Aboriginal contributors. Additionally many contemporary Aboriginal academics such as Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Len Collard, Jill Milroy, and Christine Black have made numerous contributions to the trope of what Aboriginal belonging means for Aboriginality.

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23. Gelder’s earlier work: *Talking Out of Place: Authorizing the Aboriginal Sacred in Postcolonial Australia* (1995), will also be discussed in following sections.
24. Tacey’s earlier work: *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (1995), will also be discussed in following sections.
If we consider place to be the ultimate shared-space, as identified by [Australian] shared-space anthropologist Howard Morphy, then belonging — and how belonging is distinguished and established culturally — is vital to the discussion of conciliation. Furthermore, if we travel a lineage of subjectivity of place, as landmarked by Bachelard’s work, we can address the multitude of subjectivities that make up belonging in any one place.

In 2010, in direct response to Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, editors Barbara Holloway and Jennifer Rutherford compiled *Halfway House: The Poetics of Australian Space*. This compilation attempted to identify [Australian] poetics, while recognising the contested [Australian] landscape. Contributors were the editors themselves, the already-cited, Paul Carter and Steven Muecke, and Rachel Fensham, Ross Gibson, and Lisa Slater, who all offer important insights into [Australian] poetics.

These contributors to *Halfway House* are also prolific writers outside of the compilation, joining writers such as Martina Horacova, Fiona Probyn, Sara Ahmed, Heather Kerr, Gillian Whitlock, Kim Mahood, Margaret Somerville and Kate Grenville in writing about contested belonging and place. Additionally these writers implicitly touch on themes of reconciliation through their work on shared-spaces. Other such writers, working more specifically on reconciliation, are Tyson Yunkaporta, Kauwanu Lewis O’Brien, Gus Worby, Lester-Irabininna Rigney, Simone Ulalka, Jonathan Kimberley and Jim Everitt.

The chronologically listed works and writers discussed in this section provide the scaffolding for the ongoing exploration of shared-space, contested place, belonging and conciliation offered here. The purpose of this part of the discussion is to provide a rigorous scholarly grounding to the Caterpillar Dreaming study. Having surveyed all these works, it is my view that there is an insufficiency of meaningful collaborative research between

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27. These writers and their contributing works will be discussed and referenced within the ongoing discussion.
28. Ibid.
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on the crucial conversation of belonging, and thus, shared-space and conciliation. Many of these works, also seem to espouse the false belief that non-Aboriginal belonging could be found outside of collaboration with Aboriginal custodians.

The following sections will dissect the subtle nuances of this phenomenon to identify the research gap that is filled by this study.

2.5 **[Australian] Spatial Anxiety**

The biggest paradox to understand in this discussion is that colonial belonging displaces Aboriginal belonging. It is important to make clear that while this literature review seems to make non-Aboriginal belonging a priority, the intention behind this stance is to interrogate what constitutes non-Aboriginal belonging, and to then formulate revised ideas around belonging that need not displace. This section begins with the works mentioned in the previous section, drawing from them to explore the theme of spatial anxiety that arises in them, and discussing how the authors have interpreted and acted with this anxiety. I argue that being with and staying present to the anxiety is vital to the emergence of new modes of non-Aboriginal belonging—or being in place—that does not displace.

Gelder and Jacobs follows Freud’s exposition of the uncanny in their work *Uncanny Australia*. They say: “One is innocent (out of place) or guilty (in place) at the same time.”

The uncanny captures the *here* but *not here* experience; *home* but *not home*. Gelder and Jacobs contrast the German word for home, *heimlich*, with its opposite, *unheimlich*, meaning the “unfamiliar, strange, inaccessible” to mark the origins of spatial anxiety. They propose that it is not the unfamiliar that marks anxiety, but the relationship of the unfamiliar to the

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30. Ibid., 23.
familiar. In their view the uncanny should be an expected attribute of post-colonial experience.

The experience of this kind of anxiety is common to many of the above-mentioned writers and works. Kate Grenville, Martina Horáčová, Jennifer Rutherford, Fiona Probyn, Lisa Slater and Margaret Somerville, all reference this [postcolonial] anxiety within their writing.31 Kate Grenville writes: “Once the anxiety to prove how much ‘at one’ I was with the place was questioned, it was amazing how easy it was to accept that it had always felt somewhat eerie.”32 In Lisa Slater’s article “Anxious Settler Belonging” she uses language evocative of spatial anxiety such as “postcolonial/white guilt,” and “disturbed.”33 Jennifer Rutherford links the anxiety to the “limitless plasticity of subjectivity” belonging to white fantasy, and suggests that “behind it we find the same anxiety, the same incapacity to contend with the excesses of being, of jouissance, of difference that overflow and transgress the law that the fantasy sustains.”34 For each of these writers anxiety is important, as it pronounces a much-repressed in-between postcolonial experience that references the very uneasy aspects of colonial belonging.

Many works tend to alleviate this anxiety by seeking a postcolonial conclusion — or fixed position. Stephen Muecke’s review of Uncanny Australia speaks to this. He finds that Gelder and Jacobs’ positive bid to build the uncanny “goes against the current of the positivism of those who would like to solve problems (once and for all)”35 — that is, find a fixed resolution to postcolonial anxiety, a fixed realisation of conciliation, and a fixed position of the non-Aboriginal in place. Examples of this are Peter Read’s Belonging: Australian’s Place and Aboriginal Ownership and David Tacey’s ReEnchantment: the New Australian Spirituality.

31. Spatial anxieties of these writers will be referenced specifically within the next section.
Read’s *Belonging* is an attempt to move beyond the guilt-ridden feelings of being in the [Australian] place. His book’s focus is on *shared* senses of belonging between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and in it, he proposes several conceptualisations of non-Aboriginal belonging. For example he links a family situation of losing colonial grazing land to understanding Aboriginal loss of Country.36 In doing so, Read sidesteps the impossibility of understanding Aboriginal belonging as a non-Aboriginal person, and takes a privileged position of assuming similarities that is problematic.37

Similarly Tacey in *ReEnchantment* calls for a new spirituality of [Australia] that can encompass and respect difference. He writes that it is only by adopting a spiritual perception of things that the non-Aboriginal can “grasp the depth of the Aboriginal claim to traditional ownership of land.”38 While this is possibly true, he goes on to describe this spirituality as “a sense of connection to a world beyond the rational, or a moment of sheer peace in which one’s anguish and anxiety is overcome.”39 Tacey’s move here — the desire to be beyond anxiety — is essentially the same as Read’s (and equally problematic), though in this case he proposes a spiritual ‘out’.

It is important to point out that works such as these fixate on *commonality* to placate the anxiety that arises in the play between belonging and non-belonging. Where in them, however, do we find an ability to sit within the “epistemic violence” from which settler belonging is even a concept?40 In these works, colonial complicity with Aboriginal genocide is not removed as a point of cognitive reference, but it is removed as a visceral, corporeal and emotive process. The Caterpillar Dreaming study proposes that by *being with* complicity, in a corporeal way — not to purge or to intensify — but simply to be, may contribute to the discourse of conciliation, especially in relation to landscape.

39. Ibid., 260.
40. Fiona Probyn says: “The question of settler belonging must be situated within the epistemic violence that gives rise to it […]” Probyn, “How Does the Settler Belong,” 91.
It can be argued that the emotional qualities of anxiety are necessary for the emergence of new modes of cultural expression, as Homi Bhabha’s work on the cultural third-space attests. While his work figures mostly on post-war migrations and actual postcolonial sites, there are elements in his synthesis that can be usefully applied in the [Australian] context. He explains [postcolonial] anxiety as: “Living on the midst of the incomprehensible,” that is, being in complete cultural flux and interchange without clinging to historic or fixed concepts of culture.

His work transposes this mechanism in order to produce more flexible definitions of self and other, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Most importantly for this study, is firstly, to link this perception of anxiety with being in the incomprehensible, secondly, to link the belonging/non-belonging paradox to a pathway that is also incomprehensible, unknown, a mystery – and thirdly, to find anxiety as a procedural space within that mystery.

2.6 Limitless Subjectivities

We pick up the thread of spatial anxiety again in section 2.11, “The Wobble.” Firstly, however, a small detour into Halfway House: The Poetics of Australian Space and related articles, to expose the agency of subjectivity in the [Australian] place as it relates to belonging.

The Halfway House anthology emerged as an Australian contextual response to Gaston Bachelard’s Poetics of Space, and the Caterpillar Dreaming study can likewise be framed in relation to this anthology of responses. In the introduction, Jennifer Rutherford asks: how do we “create new places for habitation in the interstices of colonial discourse?” “How [can] we make space for seeing ourselves [non-Aboriginals] as intruders?” and “how can we re-unite the self back into place?” Rutherford aptly says that colonial imagination and

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42. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 8.
aesthetics “fail to narrate” the Australian landscape,⁴⁶ and "the production of space for white-settler culture occurs always in a space of pre-existing spatial memory, imagination and invention, in which every act of housing is conterminously an act of unhousing."⁴⁷ Further, she links Paddy Roe, Stephen Muecke and Kim Benterak’s Reading the Country: Introduction to Nomadology as a critical gateway to a hybrid poetics, of shared-space belonging.

Rutherford attests that hybrid poetic works are “capable of walking their readers into the interstitial spaces of culture.”⁴⁸ Recalling Reading the Country she defines these works as refusing “authorial unity,” encouraging “multiple perspectives,” and unafraid in presenting otherness in work that a “white Australian reader” [may] “struggle with.”⁴⁹ This otherness is mostly the voice of Roebuck Elder Paddy Roe. From here, Jennifer announces that a quarter of a century after Reading the Country’s release, the “collective need for new works” with these “imperatives” remains.⁵⁰

The anthology then breaks into the twenty different contributors who write into this hybrid poetics. Interestingly, Halfway House is not noted for its contribution to Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal poetic hybridity as is Reading the Country. There are no Aboriginal contributors to Halfway House and no collaborative works other than in referencing Aboriginal knowledge. How then does Halfway House ground itself in colonial complicity—within the paradox of belonging/non-belonging? How is a poetics suggested, a belonging suggested, at the interstices of colonial discourse if not in collaboration? The following two paragraphs will discuss this in relation to Gibson’s and Carter’s works in Halfway House.

Ross Gibson, in his article “Changescapes,” journeys to find a character Muller while working on creating a film with Eric Rolls. Rolls takes Gibson deep into the Piliga Scrub to

⁴⁶ Jennifer Rutherford, “Undwelling; or Reading Bachelard in Australia,” in Halfway House, 123.
⁴⁷ Ibid., 144.
⁴⁸ Rutherford and Holloway, eds., Halfway House, 9.
⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.
⁵⁰ Ibid., 9.
meet Muller, “a white man” who “had gone strange, shaping himself somehow to the country out there.” They arrived at the remains of an old commercial timber mill, now decades out of use. The mill, however, was now being fashioned by Muller in a way that was “aesthetically breathtaking” with “sculptural arrays [. . .].” Gibson remarks of Muller, “a devoted lifetime spent designing and laboriously maintaining.”

The whole area had been freshly raked in “one of the most beautiful aesthetic configurations,” that seemed to Gibson, to be a way to mark trespass. Gibson views Muller’s presence and practice with this place as akin to being on Country. He says, “to my mind, such dynamic, reactive systems often stage a poetics comparable to being on Country.” He calls these experiences Changescapes: “a live place,” that “exists because of some dynamic relationship within its parts and with factors that prevail all around its edges.” Herein rests an important non-Aboriginal assumption that is worthy of interrogation: non-Aboriginal assertions of non-Aboriginal in-place subjectivity, or poetics, as correlating to Aboriginal notions of Country.

Carter’s chapter, “The Forest in the Clearing,” focuses on the poet John Shaw Neilson, and following T.G.H. Strehlow’s work narrating Arrernte songs of central Australia, draws similar analogies. He finds that Neilson builds the “metrical principles” of landscape into his poems, as do the Arrente in a “mimetic” relationship between verse and the actions of their ancestors on land. Carter suggests a rhythm of landscape that shapes an [Australian] poetics—just as Bachelard’s houses are shaped. As well as being a poet, Neilson worked as a labourer in the early colonial agricultural fringes of the Mallee scrub around the Wimmera, Victoria. Carter writes: "By day Neilson worked to create the clearing that silenced the voices he heard. By night, recollecting scraps of rhythm and composing from them lines of verse, he worked to conserve what was being driven out.” He writes that a
“distinctly” [Australian] poetics “might aspire to be a rhythmic geography, a writing of the ground that notated its distinctive rhythm.” Carter’s message is that the poet can attune to this rhythm — to place — and work in both conscious and unconscious ways with the messages received.

Gibson and Carter also write about [Australian] poetics in other works. Continuing to write about the Mallee region in his book *Ground Truthing*, Carter writes: as the “static, representable content of the place is stripped away, certain archetypal forms and relationships appear”. He proposes that beneath this static representation, is a “whole pulsating system of correspondences, reciprocities and hinted at mere coincidences,” that bestow “the original appearance of the place, its ecological coherence and spiritual power.” Is this the felicitation that Bachelard talks about? If so, what does it displace in the [Australian] context? In his book *Darkwriting*, Carter follows Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico to suggest that mythology and fable interpretation should be the first learnt science, so as to cultivate this ability of having “poetic wisdom” with place.

Carter, continuing with Vico, says that this faculty of poetic wisdom is engendered with the three mental faculties of: “memoir [memory], fantasia [imagination], and ingegno [ingenuity].” Whereby fantasia is the mind’s faculty to fantasise, imitate, and alter, and ingegno is the faculty to bring forth into the world this poetic wisdom, or a new arrangement, or proper relationship between things. Where this becomes slippery, is that this deduction of poetic wisdom in place, equally holds the potential to displace Aboriginal custodial mythology. It seems that there is a precedent to acquiring a poetic sense of place, an interpretation, over coming into relationship with places custodians. Although it may well be the case that this faculty can deduce the absolute meaning of place, how does this bypass Aboriginal custodianship of knowing place and does it entail, in terms of shared-
space, another form of displacement? Further, how do multiple subjectivities of poetic wisdom in place meet?

Gibson in his introduction to the work “Sharing Spaces,” writes similarly of the work of poetics, saying, “the idea that you might know something in the blood,” “a state of embodied, holistic knowledge,” and “evidence is offering your intuition an indistinct detail that connects you to some larger cohesion.”62 This human faculty is crucially important to the interpretive framework of the Caterpillar Dreaming study, however, in its unbridled expression, it can tend toward displacement of other knowledge’s in place. Carter says in his book Road to Botany Bay, “[e]veryone saw clouds. But the meaning of these events, the significance of their spatial appearance was another matter.”63 I might correlate Gibson’s writing on intuition to Carter’s clouds — many of the significant larger contexts are lost with individual and subjective poetics.

It seems that this poetics is not in conversation with complicity situated in non-Aboriginal belonging/non-belonging. Peter Read in Belonging says, “There are as many roads to belonging as there are non-Aboriginal Australian’s to find them.”64 This statement seems to prioritise personal sentiment, desire and poetics over a discourse of colonial genocide. It seems to reinforce colonial privilege and to cast its own definitions of belonging that tend toward conceptions of belonging as self-fulfilling, rather than as an enduring human truth. This discourse of poetic wisdom is not to be discounted, however, it is important to bring it into relationship with Aboriginal custodians.

2.7 Crisis of the Body or Lost-ness

In works that depict a coming into relationship with local custodians there is a wobble. In this section, I follow the next suite of writers who do find themselves in collaborative relationship with Aboriginal custodians, on the topic of belonging. By exploring the

64. Peter Read, Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 223.
nuances of this space, I aim to find an appropriate shared-space entry for the Caterpillar Dreaming study.

Jennifer Rutherford in the introduction to *Halfway House* speaks of a time where she spent several years in bed, overcome with dizziness from bouts of encephalitis. She links her “wounded body” to a body that had lost its ability to read itself into place. It was during this time that she first came across *Reading the Country* wherein the strange rhythms of Roe’s words “touched [her] wounded body in precisely the right way.” She writes: “If my very personal story of learning to read serves as a metaphor for a wounded culture encountering space as lived, peopled, and voiced for the first time, it is because we all invent stories to allow us to traverse the tightrope of being.” Margaret Somerville’s *Body Landscape Journals* and Stephen Muecke’s work *No Road* carry similar themes.

Somerville enters what she terms a “crisis of the body,” after her abandonment of a project where she was invited to write the stories of four Aboriginal women. Somerville was struck both by her insufficient skill in knowing how to write without displacing other stories, and by the insufficiency of her own belonging. The resultant work, *Body Landscape Journals*, sidesteps the stories of the four Aboriginal women, and instead tells her own story in a “hysteric” hybrid text that is an attempt to write her own belonging into place without displacing other—by using poems, journal entries and scholarly material.

In *Body Landscape Journals*, Somerville writes into the spaces that she passes daily, and ones that she had strong memories of from the past, to find her own sense of belonging to these places. Even so, in Lisa Slater’s words: “Other bodies conceive of this landscape differently from Somerville and the site generates alternative subjectivities that, like her, imagine themselves to belong to this place and need to speak and perform their belonging.”

65 Rutherford and Holloway eds., *Halfway House*, 2.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 9.
Somerville writes that during this process she becomes lost.\textsuperscript{70} She desires the belonging and connection that she perceived to be experienced by her Aboriginal collaborators. And yet, her desire to belong potentially took the place of any meaningful collaboration in belonging.

Gillian Whitlock, in her article “Consuming Passions: Reconciliation in Women’s Intellectual Memoir,” discusses autobiographies that undergo a “little death’ of the self toward finding a writing that does not displace other.\textsuperscript{71} She writes: “The autobiographical staging of guilt and apology becomes in and of itself a gesture of reconciliation.”\textsuperscript{72} In Somerville’s work Whitlock finds solace in the disruption of the mind/body dualism typically seen in Cartesian, masculine, academic works. Whitlock positively positions Somerville's narrative of “inscrib[ing] the body in space,” as a process of Somerville removing herself from colonial works that devalue corporeality.\textsuperscript{73} Whitlock describes similar processes operating in women’s memoirs, focusing on Inga Clendinnen and Helen Hoy. Whitlock writes:

Clendinnen’s profoundly pessimistic and troubled account of writing history includes an account of sickness and the gradual disintegration of both body and reason. This malaise triggers a different way of engaging with the past—like Hoy, the body is pierced, and there are corporeal reminders of the need to relocate.\textsuperscript{74}

Whitlock suggests that these small deaths, weakening’s, or body disorientations, within the women’s memoirs “address copresence,” although they deliberately avoid “any apocalyptic or utopian moment of transcendence or surrender of power.”\textsuperscript{75} Her thoughts here, it seems, are toward a being with complicity, without the need to transform it into either colonial narcissism, or unnecessary depreciation.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 152.
\textsuperscript{71} Whitlock is using the little death ‘le petite mort’ in a traditional sense; she claims that this little death is “an exhaustion of previous ways of working, thinking, and writing, and an exploration of loss, guilt, and shame.” Gillian Whitlock, “Consuming Passions: Reconciliation in Women's Intellectual Memoir,” \textit{Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature} 23, no. 1 (2004): 13-28.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 22.
Without having a real crisis of the body, Stephen Muecke in *No Road* writes from the space of a colonial disorientation — or lost-ness. His is a travel memoir marked by avoiding highways, that he defines as imperial histories, and "deferring to the local" as guide. He is inescapably aware of, and begins his work introducing, the paradox of belonging. He writes, “It seems that Aboriginal people […] are simultaneously at home and dispossessed […] but more ‘at home’ than any white Australian can ever quite be.” In deferring to the local, Muecke opens himself up and writes about the effect of other and otherness upon himself.

Rather than search for belonging away from Aboriginal collaboration, as per Somerville, he seeks “new cultural formations” within the shared-space encounters. Muecke, it seems, is engaging with Whitlock’s *surrender of power* in as much as he finds colonial knowledge unfit for the emergence of *new cultural formations*. Muecke does speak about transformation of self — Whitlock’s *transcendence* — though Muecke’s version occurs through relatability with otherness, and seeing what emerges from the in-between. Muecke literally follows in the footsteps of local Aboriginal guides to find new ways of being in *interstitial spaces of culture*.

This notion — and even more importantly practice — of *following* is central to the Caterpillar Dreaming study. Lisa Slater views Muecke’s *No Road* work as “becoming postcolonial.” Perhaps the crisis of the body, evidenced in Slater’s work as a turning in upon oneself, and deepening of one’s personal desire, would be better journeyed outside of oneself into further lost-ness. The colonial system of seeking itself needs interrogation. Muecke says: “If you want the opinion of the Aboriginal custodians of sites, then you have to observe the protocols. In the observation of the rules, that is, the footsteps, you can get new insights into places and their meanings.”

76. Stephen Muecke, *No Road: Bitumen All the Way* (South Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1997), 14.
77. Slater, “Becoming Postcolonial,” 365. Slater makes this connection.
79. Muecke, *No Road*, 197.
This observation of the protocols and following of the footsteps, is what the Caterpillar Dreaming study engages with. I wonder, however, if Muecke's own desire for place and place meaning is another colonial directive that gets in the way of emerging new cultural forms. What if the desire for belonging was replaced with a neutrality and openness? What if the very concept of belonging could be returned to the original custodians and following that, we could see what might emerge from there? An inquiry of this nature sits at the heart of the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space. In the space of acknowledging complicity, what might emerge out of the following of custodial wisdom to see where that acknowledgement leads? The inquiry begins with a desire to be in unknowing to what may emerge.

To further unpack colonial desire, as begun with Somerville and Muecke, we head to part two of the literature review to look more closely at depictions of the other in academia, and investigate how the nuances of romanticism and difference impact shared-space.
LITERATURE REVIEW – PART TWO: THE OTHER – DESIRE, ROMANTICISM, AND DIFFERENCE

2.8 Constructions of Other

An important finding from this conversation is the need to illuminate more fully a discussion of the other with relevance to the Caterpillar Dreaming study. There are various conceptions of the other within postcolonial literatures. Nominally, the very definition of the other makes it possible for one group — culture, race, gender, or class, for instance — to speak about another group. In the context of culture and race, these constructions are stacked, however, with subtle and not-so-subtle racisms. The racisms mainly stem from the fact that the construction of other becomes a playing field for presenting fixed notions of what the other is perceived to be which in turn leads to stereotypes.

The turbidity that surrounds this discourse of other is enough to make any writer working in cultural interstices stop in their tracks, and possibly rightly so. However, for those who continue, like Muecke and Somerville, there is an undiscriminating critical spotlight that is virtually impossible to survive – and perhaps again rightly so. This section, referencing Bhabha and Spivak’s postcolonial works and other supporting literature, will look at this spotlight, in relation to positioning the Caterpillar Dreaming study. This discussion is important, as essentially the narration of this study — the very depiction of this shared-space — is being represented by myself, a non-Aboriginal.

Firstly, Spivak says the subaltern cannot speak. She is referring to the inability of a subaltern voice to be heard within dominant cultures of academia, implying that it will always be heard from the ears of dominant culture. For this reason, Spivak maintains that it is “absurdity” to imagine that the “non-representing intellectual” could speak for the

1. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313. Within postcolonial literature, the subaltern refers to a group of people who are other, and exist outside of hegemonic power structures in a particular place. In this case, I take Spivak’s usage, and apply her ideas to [Australian] Aboriginality.
subaltern, or allow the subaltern space to have its voice heard in academic scholarship. In the colonial context, she follows Michel Foucault’s work on intellectual discourse as “epistemic violence,” looking at the power structures implicit in the presumed ability of one group to talk about another. She infers that the postcolonial critic remains unaware of its complicity with the imperial project, and therefore unwittingly contributes to cultural erasure. Spivak seeks to demystify subaltern representations of cultural solidarity. She argues that the failure to recognise subaltern groups as heterogeneous strengthens essentialist and fixated notions of cultural power and subjugation dynamics.

This difficulty of this conversation may be the reason why postcolonial critics tend to write about themselves at the cultural interface, for it gives them at least a possibility to affect the power structures of colonialism through their own subjective writing. This can be seen, for example, in Somerville and Muecke’s work. However, it could also be argued that this pathway further contributes to constructions of colonial morality, and therefore to the colonial project itself, given that in this scenario it is the colonial project that comes to the rescue of the subaltern. This insight from Spivak, however, gives no guide as to how to speak at the very edges of colonial interstices, without contaminating work with colonial consciousness.

Spivak describes representations of the 1829 British prohibition of Hindu widow’s performing sati as “white men saving brown women from brown men,” in a satirical attempt to show how imperialism is set up to be a civilising force against ‘savages’. She is not suggesting that the original situation of Muslim widow’s wearing sati is necessarily the most enlightened ritual. She is, however, saying that the prohibition condemns Hindu religious practice in a way that reinforces colonial power structures, resulting in a situation that is more damaging and subjugating than the practice it was intended to prevent. I wonder two things: Firstly, can the postcolonial critic speak at the cultural interface in a

2. Ibid., 88.
3. Ibid., 271-273.
4. Ibid., 274.
5. Ibid., 298.
way that does not attempt to define or trap knowingness? A non-representational non-representation? Secondly, can the work of the postcolonial critic seek to rescue colonial consciousness, and what does this mean, or look like? Is it a continuation of colonial modes a priori?

Spivak’s point on the Hindu widow’s practice of sati is that “one never encounters the testimony of the women’s voice consciousness,” within represented works.\(^6\) It is probably from a similar realisation that Somerville eventually declined the invitation to write the four Aboriginal women’s stories, a move Fiona Probyn marks as avoiding Spivak’s non-representing intellectual.\(^7\) It raises the question of whether there can be an alternative disposition that moves toward collaboration. Is there a way toward the presentation of pluralistic and multiple consciousnesses?

The criticism has been made of Spivak that she “underestimates the power of art and the artist” in conveying cultural complexities. Caitriona Moloney, follows writer Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s intertextualising of Indigenous Irish mythology with contemporary story toward “a view of history characteristic of postcolonial fiction.”\(^8\) Perhaps this was Muecke, Benterak and Roe’s intention in Reading the Country, which Jennifer Rutherford describes as the first time white Australian’s had the opportunity to struggle with un-edited Aboriginal English. Spivak herself does not suggest turning away from the cultural interface. She says: “The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish.”\(^9\) Rather, and as Probyn takes to the [Australian] context she commands declared, responsible iterations of complicity.\(^10\)

For Rutherford in her work The Gauche Intruder: Freud, Lacan and the White Australian Fantasy this includes looking at the links between morality — Spivak’s non-representing, well intentioned, intellectual — and aggression. Rutherford, using distinctions from Freud

\(^6\) Ibid., 298.
\(^7\) Probyn, “How Does the Settler Belong,” 82.
\(^9\) Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” 104.
\(^10\) Probyn, “How Does the Settler Belong,” 82.
and Lacan’s work, shows how white [Australian] morality — “the Australian Good” — is linked to a sustained aggression toward alterity both in other and self. Morality, she says, driven by desire, is fuelled in [Australia] with “limitless plasticity of subjectivity” toward the Australian fantasy of the good neighbour, the Aussie battler, the notion of the fair go, and the rejection of social hierarchy.\textsuperscript{11} However, underlying this desire toward goodness is a form of violence, visible most ardently in programs of social engineering such as the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. The fantasy of conciliation can be included in this account.

Spivak further identifies romanticism toward alterity as a danger when working in cultural interstices. She suggests that, because subalterns exist outside of power structures, postcolonial critics posit subalterns as sources of potential colonial power transformations. This echoes Slater’s take on Muecke’s position in No Road, specifically, Muecke’s desire to transform himself through experiences of otherness. Slater says, “One could argue that in the face of such difficulties and restraints, the writer who desires to write Australia otherwise, is doomed either to be ahistorical or to romanticise otherness.”\textsuperscript{12} Slater continues that the destructive potential of “romantic imagination” is to “efface difference by synthesizing alterity into one’s desires.”\textsuperscript{13} Probyn adds that within “the articulation of belonging to the land, the settler has two options:” these being to mimic Aboriginality — a form of romanticising difference into sameness — or to erase Aboriginality.\textsuperscript{14} I connect this to Carter’s following of Vico’s depiction of the faculties of the mind, where fantasia correlates to the mind’s faculty to fantasise, imitate, and alter, and question if there is a way to imagine without displacing other? It seems that colonial desire is the troublesome attitude in this space of romanticism: the desire to belong; the desire to transform; the desire to know; the desire to have what other has – and the manifestations of such desire have damaging ramifications.

\textsuperscript{11} Rutherford, The Gauche Intruder, 56.
\textsuperscript{12} Slater, “Becoming Postcolonial,” 355.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 356.
\textsuperscript{14} Probyn, “How Does the Settler Belong,” 77.
How then do we collaborate and write into spaces with other in ways that do not enact colonial desire with its essentialisms, and romanticisms? Homi Bhabha states that cultural discourse is dependent on the notion of fixity.\textsuperscript{15} He says rather, that “what is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences.”\textsuperscript{16} This concept resolves to dissolve representative fixity—not difference.

Bhabha’s intention is toward the end of the ideological construction of the individual, not toward real-time culture. Slater expands while writing upon Kim Scott’s Benang, that the “image of subjectivity is not one of self-consistency or fixity, but rather of fluidity and porosity.”\textsuperscript{17} Works such as these find psychoanalytical approaches to otherness useful, where, as per Julia Kristeva’s work, the stranger exists within the experience of self, as well as externally. She writes: “strangely the foreigner lives within us […] the time in which understanding and affinity founder.”\textsuperscript{18} I would say that the representational image of the other does live within us, but that this has no truth in regards to the actuality of the other. Perhaps there is a way of meeting the mirage of other in a way that does not disown, or project—and perhaps this acknowledgment of how the other affects, has an essential purpose of its own.

Bhabha continues; “By exploring this third-space [shared-space], we may elude the politics and polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves.” How do we position this statement beside Spivak’s warning against romanticising transformation through the subaltern? Again, I gesture towards the attribute of desire within this discussion, and the question of how transformation would even occur, or what it would emerge, if it were not connected to ideas of belonging. If nothing was about change, only collaboration, then is it not a complete unknown?

\textsuperscript{15} Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 94.
\textsuperscript{16} Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 2.
It seems important however, that an approach be used in which the projection of *otherness* onto the *subaltern* is withdrawn and realised for what it is: a way of maintaining separation, rather than of holding difference. Jennifer Rutherford says in the *Gauche Intruder*: “Otherness which has been so unfathomable and so unheard in the history of white Australia is what we must learn to hear on the far side of the Australian Good.”\(^9\) This *otherness* then is not speaking of Aboriginality, it is speaking of the repressed aspects of [Australian] morality and to what is necessary for coming into respectful shared-space collaborations that support difference.

If we bring Somerville's avoidance of writing with Aboriginality, into spatial reality, is this not the same as avoiding contact with Aboriginal people? Does desire or the non-representing intellectual not exist outside of academic scholarship? Lisa Slater writes: “In Australia both Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities are constituted from cross-cultural encounters.”\(^{20}\) Is it also an erasure to fail to acknowledge the effects of collaboration upon the self, or realising the self as complicit in the shared — even be it contested — space of postcolonising Australia?

The wish to search for belonging outside of realising relationship, also seems to me to be colonial. Perhaps accepting complicity with a violent past and present could mean belonging to a relationship, rather than a place. Perhaps this is where we all got messed up anyway, when belonging was prioritised over care. It seems that the primary colonial desire for fixity through settlement and ownership has been replaced in post colonialism for a desire — equally fixed — to belong. This too misrepresents the actual fluidity of experience, and being within meaningful cross cultural relationships.

At this point in the literature I am reminded of Nannup's words that if colonial doing disrupted the trails, then it should be colonial deeds that undo this disruption.\(^{21}\) Essentially we are speaking about an unwrapping of colonialism through being with Aboriginal

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ontologies of place. Additionally, we are speaking about how the ontologies of other, meet with the non-Aboriginal to allow for the emergence of new cultural forms. This raises significant questions in relation to the literature discussed earlier in this section: questions about non-Aboriginal morality; about whether this represents yet another colonial construction of priority; questions of how to represent this thesis while acknowledging complicity, and not displacing Aboriginality. With Nannup’s ongoing invitation, I continually tread these lines. It would be misguided to attempt to absolve this study of any misdemeanour of colonial morality, or desire; it would also be misguided to not follow Nannup’s invitation.

In addition to this position, I also interject that the discourse of the subaltern seems to be rooted in notions of power stemming from the non-subaltern’s access to and control over language. This illusion of power is highlighted when considered beside Spivak’s assertion that the subaltern cannot speak. Perhaps it is also useful to consider other notions of power than were considered in this perspective, and the potential of respectful silence as a powerful position. Further, if being in relation can enable emergent experience, without creating meaning and abstraction — that is, without fixed ideas and fixed representations — would entering this pure relatedness subvert the notion of the subaltern?

The next section continues this discussion, by relating the themes discussed above to the cultural interface. It focuses on the concept of conciliation that shapes entering the shared-space of the Caterpillar Dreaming.

2.9 Relationship at the Cultural Interface

One aspect of this conversation on otherness is that we are all perhaps more constitutively related than we think. Christine Black, in her work *The Land is the Source of Law*, quotes Zulu philosopher Mogobe Ranose on relatedness; “ununtu ngumuntu ngsabantu — a person

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is a person through other persons.”

If we were to rest in the fluidity of realising exchange, how might this speak to cultural difference? Aileen Moreton Robinson speaking of constitutive Aboriginality says:

Our ontological relationship to land, the ways that country is constitutive of us, and therefore the inalienable nature of our relation to land, marks a radical, indeed incommensurable, difference between us and the non-Indigenous.

While I respect this difference, and acknowledge my own incomprehension of Aboriginal notions of Country and what this means, I also suggest here that the [Australian] land is constitutive of non-Aboriginal people. That is, that it has an effect. Yet indeed, as per Moreton Robinson, this constitutiveness is not realised in the non-Aboriginal as an inalienable nature of relation. There is something within the colonial mentality that can maintain separation with land constitutiveness. Perhaps this is why the non-Aboriginal can live in an unlawful ‘relationship’ in the [Australian’s] place: because non-Aboriginality resists realising relationship.

Tyson Yunkaporta’s thesis Aboriginal Pedagogies at the Cultural Interface seeks alternative conceptualisations of shared-space toward conciliation. While he acknowledges that his work is at times anti-colonial, and necessarily so, he also finds problems with solely anti-colonial methodologies, as they tend to promote resistance and separation over relatedness. He brings the concept of non-fixity to creating a methodology that is “complex, interconnected, infinite, [and] self organising.”

Tyson models the cultural interface as a boomerang, saying: “The deeper the knowledge, the more common ground is found across cultures.” And conversely: “The shallower the knowledge, the more difference is found between cultures.” To a non-Aboriginal in this matrix I have thought about what a deeper knowledge may be, as for many, cultural

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23. Black, The Land is the Source of Law, 56.
25. Tyson Yunkaporta, Aboriginal Pedagogies at the Cultural Interface (Ph.D., James Cook University, 2009), 55.
26. Ibid., 80.
27. Ibid., 60.
knowledge of ancestral homelands is problematic. What has emerged is indeed acknowledgement of cultural unknowing, and relative infancy in the depth of cultural knowledge. From here I gesture at respect, humility, ability to be in unknowing, ability to hold the paradoxical assemblage of difference, and, as per Bhabba, an ability to change from a fixed notion of self, as being prerequisites to relatedness.

Yunkaporta says in his introductory pages that a Law Woman had revealed to him what was important in the relational sharing of Aboriginal higher knowledge: “not the content,” “but the processes for working with it.”28 Aileen Moreton Robinson furthers: “representation of postcolonial Australia offers the symbolic appropriation of the sacred as a way that white Australia can seek to achieve the unattainable imperative of becoming Indigenous in order to erase its unbelonging.”29 Perhaps it is more accurate to say that being within relatedness is not about knowledge at all. It is about relationship. Furthermore, it is about relationship at the cultural interface that is distinct and separate from what relationship means for Aboriginality.

To return to the concept of desire discussed in the last section, I visit the work of Clare Land, in Decolonising Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles. Land says that there are many “uninterrogated” and “suspect motivations” held by non-Aboriginal people wishing to work in pro-Aboriginal space; she says many do so for their own salvation. This correlates to Spivak’s non-Aboriginal transformation through the subaltern, and Rutherford’s concept of [Australian] morality. Land suggests a continual self-critical process for the non-Aboriginal to acknowledge all forms of colonial desire that contribute to shared-space involvement. This seems to point towards a process of becoming self-responsible within shared-space.

Yunkaporta himself is from mixed heritage. He claims “non-Aboriginal cultures from Europe, Aboriginal families from north, south, east and west, by descent, by adoption and

28. Ibid., 2.
extended kinship ties.” His thesis is coupled with a process of coming into relationship with knowledge through kinship responsibilities. He tells the story of a ceremony that he was required to perform at the completion of his thesis, whereby he was cut deeply by Elders across the chest. During the ceremony, Yunkaporta said the felt need to apologise, “on behalf of my European ancestors for genocide and displacement, and on behalf of my gender for violence against women” arose unplanned. He says, “At that moment I felt myself standing dead at the centre of the Cultural Interface.”

Is this form of enacting responsibility pertinent to the transformation of non-Aboriginal desire in shared-space? We return full circle to the beginning of the literature review in situating this study in connection with the non-Aboriginal return to the first murder and incorporating Slater’s, Spivak’s Rutherford’s and Land’s acknowledgement of complicity. Further incorporating adaptations of Bhabha’s, Kristeva’s, and Scott’s fluid conceptions of other, in meeting self’s other, and becoming responsible this way. How this self-responsible complicity meets Rutherford’s non-Aboriginal morality is still on a tender edge. This will be further discussed in the next section. However, so far this is the entry point of the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space that this study will explore — self-responsible complicity.

2.10 Conciliation

It is important to bring the conversation thus far presented in the literature review to the discourse of conciliation, particularly, in order to further interrogate Rutherford’s non-Aboriginal morality in reference to this study. As mentioned in “Language Usage” at the beginning of this thesis, conciliation is used here as an acknowledgement that returning to a conciliated past is not representative of [Australian] Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal relations. In other words, the ‘re’ in reconciliation is not appropriate, even be it that there have been Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal friendships and collaborations.

31. Ibid., 170.
32. See section 2.2, “The Vagabond,” 47.
Conciliation itself, by definition, may also not be appropriate. The Latin conciliationem is, “a connection, union, bond, [ . . . ] a making friendly, gaining over.” Within this definition is an objective — to make friendly, with an inherent insinuation of power — the idea of gaining over. Firstly, is necessary to question the impact of objectives, especially be they from the colonial mind, within the discourse of conciliation; next is to connect this definition to Rutherford’s conception of the [Australian] morality, which she asserts has a violent shadow. This section will follow other ideas of what conciliation may entail, largely following Aboriginal writings on conciliation in aid of decolonising colonial ideas around the concept.

For Christine Black quoting Yunupingu, and as per Gus Worby, Lester Irabinna Rigney, and Ulaka Tur, conciliation means “a mix of fresh and salt water.”33 This conception — concilium — a meeting — meeting of salt and fresh — is a more apt point of departure for imagining the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space. This essentially situates conciliation in the liminal space — or indeed the littoral as pertaining to the water analogy — of cultures. Conciliation, in this way, is not necessarily a process but a site of exchange; it is not the fresh water, or the salt water, but the site in the middle where the two meet. This would mean that the [Australian] place has always been the shared-space of conciliation, however historically, this meeting has been dominated by colonial power constructs, by hierarchical systems of knowledge, and by colonial desire for belonging — land, ownership, status, money.

Christine Black says that when Senior Law Man Mowaljarlai spoke about the law of relationship he always held one finger from each hand up — never two fingers on the same hand.34 The law of relationship, Black says, is a law that exists between laws. It is a law that teaches across a relation of difference, the responsibility needed for someone to care “for

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34. Black, The Land is the Source of Law, 184.
their totemic other.” Black says this comes with an understanding of “polarisation rather than consensus,” and of ontological pluralism, in respecting fundamentally different ways that people know. This connects with Yunkaporta’s synthesis that ultimately coming together is about relationship rather than knowledge.

Black adds, that the law of relationship maintains balance through the “acknowledgement of opposites and their necessary dynamism.” In this way, there is always a “witnessing law,” — or laws that witness each other. This is a law that prioritises relationship over power and authority. This was potentially the framework for the more-than-four-hundred different language groups in [Australia] prior to colonisation, and offers insight into how necessary cultural diversity was maintained for tens of thousands of years. In shared-space, the site of meeting, of conciliation, non-Aboriginality does not know what Aboriginality looks like as a balancing law, nor as a law that is inherently connected to the [Australian] place.

Black addresses desire in her conversation on relational laws. She says human responsibility rests in actualising rights, toward the continuation of the species. She argues that this “binary of rights and responsibility” — the law of relationship — “leads to a desire for diversity rather than homogenisation,” and this, Black calls, a “desire for balance.” There is an interesting connection here, between the survival of a species, and the law of relationship; this connection seems beyond colonial knowledges; and way beyond colonial ideas and objectives within spaces of conciliation. If we link this back to the first murder, if there was inherent respect for diversity and maintaining balance, then a new imagining may be that Cain is not jealous/desiring of his brother’s offering, and the motive for murder would dissolve.

35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 58.
38. Ibid., 110.
39. Black, The Land is the Source of Law, 58.
Importantly here is the point that conciliation may become a very different concept, if Aboriginal law is bought into shared-space conciliation: the outcomes, and emergences of ‘meeting’ may be entirely different and beyond the scope of definitions of ‘making friendly.’

Moreton Robinson says “there can be no equal partnership while there is illegal dispossession.”40 On a similar note, O’Brien and Rigney say, "Karuna did not concede their sovereignty at contact. Therefore the right of Karuna to control our own affairs and the collective sharing of power over all resources that emerge from Karuna land is fundamental to sharing space.”41 This is aligned with how Whitlock writes on conciliation:

Reconciliation requires the self to be brought to witness and recognize complicity; it expresses contrition, guilt, and shame, and then it invents ways of reconstituting the self and the collective more inclusively. [. . . ] [R]econciliation requires different practices of literary criticism, new histories, and a different poetics that rehearse self-consciously and provisionally newly acquired ways of thinking, hearing, and seeing.42

These are the ideas around conciliation that are pertinent to the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space study. As colonial knowledge and objectives are insidious and oft go unrecognised by the non-Aboriginal, it seems vital for the non-Aboriginal to enter the shared-space with as much an unknowing as possible, as well as to be in a process of recognising complicity and undergoing self-critical reflection as Land and Whitlock have expressed. The Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space is inherently about coming into a space of being within Aboriginal place and law, and meeting this other within the self.

Slater reflecting on Muecke’s No Road says Muecke realises he needs to “reconfigure the representational terrain by acknowledging and accepting his place in a network of

41. O’Brien, Warritya and Rigney, “Conversation: Sharing Space”, 30-31. Kaura people are one of the Aboriginal language groups around the area now known as Adelaide.
Indigenous rights and obligations,” in order to find “new cultural formations and subjectivity.”

Similarly, Fiona Nicoll in her chapter “Reconciliation In and Out of Perspective,” in Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism, argues that the non-Aboriginal cannot know what Aboriginal sovereignty looks like, and often makes wrong interpretations and associations. Nicoll further states that the process of reconciliation “becomes less cohesive [ . . . ] when we fall from perspective into an embodied recognition that we already exist within Indigenous sovereignty.” Importantly, Nicoll asks, how do “[we] white people,” “unlearn what we think we know?”

As colonial law has been largely unbridled in [Australia], it is suggested here that the non-Aboriginal should enter the realm of realising itself within a system of Aboriginal law, for the balancing power to begin to be reinstated. One intention of the Caterpillar Dreaming study is to see what emerges from being within the following of Nannup, in a similar way to Muecke’s following in the footsteps of local custodians. The study intends to explore what emerges from a corporeal experience within the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space as a manifestation of conciliation.

2.11 The Wobble of Conciliation

As indicated by Nicoll’s words contrition, guilt and shame, shared-space has the capacity to evoke difficult and antithetical feelings. This would also include anger, hatred, terror and mistrust. Such an amplitude of possible feelings is not typically acknowledged in definitions of conciliation. To bring the idea of conciliation toward the law of relationships invariably means that it is an ongoing practice that can contain all things. It may also mean that all things within shared-space are somehow important. Worby, Rigney and Tur say of conciliation that “the concept must remain flexible enough to incorporate contradiction,

45. Ibid.
opposition, and slippage without losing sight of its primary objective: to bring peoples and
their different as well as common histories, interests and aspirations together.”

Inevitably in the process of colonial law becoming witnessed, things may become
unsettled. Arghya Chakraborty says in conversation with Bhabha's the Location of Culture;
"If the sign is not repeated, the connection between signifier and signified becomes
unstable." She is speaking about the transgression of fixity; and the actuality of relating
with fluid constructions of self and other. Slater concurs, saying that one is “[e]xposing
oneself to the destabilising process of not being able to recognise oneself in the other.”
Aptly, she comments: "we always knew that the dismantling of the colonial paradigm
would release strange demons from the deep.” It seems that when fixed projections of
self and other are discontinued as narratives, they can inevitably become unsettled.

Black writes, from her visits with four important Aboriginal Elders, that each speak about
the importance of feeling and subjectivity in connection to the land. She says that “this
subjectivity, as discussed in this camp, is the cultivation of feeling—specifically, feeling as
a way of shaping and experiencing knowledge from the landscape and the universe
itself.”

As the intention of this study is toward being with places of massacre, situated within a
return to the first murder, a corporeality of experience is considered important to
realisations of the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space. Cultivating a subjectivity of feeling, as
Black suggested, and seeing how this contributes to the discourse of conciliation, is of vital
importance here. It is posited that anxiety, the strange demons, and the assemblage of
emotions that could be present are perhaps absolutely necessary to be with, toward
furthering the discourse of conciliation.

47. “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism,” on Arghya Chakraborty blog
49. Hall in Black, The Land is the Source of Law, 25.
50. Ibid., 24.
Walking and Silence

The following section discusses walking and silence through related literature to situate the conceptions of walking and silence that I bring to the study. A conception of walking that is pertinent to the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space and unknowing is described in Rachel Fensham’s chapter “Not Walking Falling: Performing Intimate Immensity,” in *Halfway House*. Firstly, however, to return to the *Halfway House* introduction, Rutherford says that many of the articles within the anthology “share a focus on movement.”*51* She continues by saying, “the base of the Australian poetics of space, is the human foot in motion.”*52* This is hardly surprising given the thousands of years of seasonal nomadic ways of [Australia’s] traditional custodians.

There has been a burgeoning use of walking by anthropological and ethnographical studies that use walking as a way of being with participants of any given study.*53* The particular notion of walking I am interested in exploring, however, is toward being in a state of unknowing in place, or to arrive in place in a new way. The Situationist movement of the late 1950’s, with key Marxist theorist Guy Debord, is an interesting movement in segue to this. The Situationists would design walking activities that would allow them see places in new ways. For example they would use French street maps to orientate themselves in London.*54* The Situationists, was a play against the construction of the city that was becoming increasingly powered by capitalism. This links to the Caterpillar Dreaming study using walking as a way of unsettling colonial ways of being in place.

The Situationist activities, however, had an emergent outcome: to disrupt the everyday life of capitalism, whereas Fensham’s, “Not Walking Falling,” I feel, takes this one step further by including a corporeal experience of lostness, within an absolute or unknown outcome.

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52. Ibid.
Fensham uses the idiom of *Not Walking Falling*, to discuss two theatre productions that critique the colonial production of space: *Fiction* (2004), choreographed by Phillip Adams and Rebecca Hilton, and *Still Angela* (2002, 2004), directed by Jenny Kemp. She says falling “is to open the body and space to a different and symbolic relationship between self and world”\(^{55}\) in a way that connects body movements with a “less certain trajectory.”\(^{56}\)

Instead of movement with feet and eyes focused toward a certain horizon, as per walking, falling “represents both a rupture and a shifting perspective that re-establishes an almost involuntary opening towards the ground.”\(^{57}\) Fensham says this articulates a new intra-subjectivity and responsibility in being terrestrial, of realising human-ness. She relates this to dance choreography where the fall in contemporary dance presented an “epochal shift in Western aesthetics” away from the upright “suspended” techniques of Ballet.\(^{58}\) Rather than keep with techniques that maintain knowing one’s position in space, the fall is where the “body slips out of control” and thus holds “potential for a (new) gesture to arise.”\(^{59}\)

Fensham links this rhetoric to Bachelard’s chapter “Intimate Immensity” in his *Poetics of Space*. Fensham conjures the idea that by changing the articulation of space, one can poetically encapsulate spaces that are not discreetly present. Bachelard’s “Intimate Immensity” suggests that by poetically opening to ideas of the desert, the drawer and the shell, the human psyche can find this vastness within the inner self. With the imaginative recollection of having no edge and horizon as one feels in vast landscapes, he suggests that the human experiences an “increase of being.”\(^{60}\)

Fensham connects this notion to the way [Australian] colonial suburbia has been imaginatively disconnected from the desert. In turn this has allowed all types of neglect to occur in [Australia’s] vast places, such as atomic testing at Maralinga and detention centres

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 209.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 210.
\(^{59}\) Ibid.
\(^{60}\) Ibid., 195.
at Woomera. She says, “these uses of the desert depend on a closing of the domestic imagination to these spaces and their inhabitants.”61 Fensham suggests that contemporary choreography, in comparison to theatre, has “sophisticated processes for exploring how one orientation to space is displaced by another.” She discusses examples of productions that recreate metaphor connections between the domestic house and desert through new mechanisms of contemporary theatre, such as through falling.

These ideas resonate with Fiona Nicoll’s “Reconciliation In and Out of Perspective,” where she speaks about a “fall from perspective into an embodied recognition that we already exist within Indigenous sovereignty.”62 This is a fall from relying on privileged positions of colonial knowing. This idea of falling situates the notion of walking important in the Caterpillar Dreaming study. While I cannot predict the fall, the precipice of walking outside of one's own knowledge system and outside of normative privileged colonial assumptions, is likely to invite such a fall. This is especially interesting in light of what Nicoll says about the shifting perspective that re-establishes almost involuntary opening towards the ground. This idea of a shifting perspective, and opening to the ground, will be explored in relation to emergent data in the Caterpillar Dreaming study.

There is also the interesting link between falling into the ground, the imagination, and connection across landscapes, as Fensham’s work discusses, from suburbia to the desert. The Caterpillar Dreaming Walk similarly began in the suburban areas of Perth, and moved towards the desert areas and is an apt context to explore the ways in which this falling may give further insight into conceptions of landscape connection. This will be duly explored.

The notion of silence that is particular to the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space is one that could subvert colonial power dynamics by existing outside of colonial representation and thus the dominant discourse. There is obvious colonial complicity in the silencing of

61. Ibid.
Aboriginal narratives in place.63 The Caterpillar Dreaming study intends to explore the notion of silence in practicing with landscapes where stories have been repressed. Luisa Passerini’s work in her book chapter “Memories between Silence and Oblivion” in Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory, says: “Something may be unsaid because its memory has actually been repressed — by trauma, contrast with the present, conflicts of individual and collective nature”.64 There is an assertion in Passerini’s work that memory lives in silence.65 What is the interplay, however, between finding ways to acknowledge repressed histories through silence, and respecting that the Aboriginal silencing of these narratives has ensured Aboriginal survival through colonialism?66

Interestingly, Passerini locates desire within memory: “Memory is the past tense of desire, anticipation its future tense, and both are obstacles to the present-orientated attitude which is the only one which allows the unknown to emerge in any session.”67 This further correlates to the Caterpillar Dreaming study through key concepts around unknowingness and emergence. Further, Passerini’s link to a present-orientated attitude correlates to ideas generated herein of being in relatedness without desire. What then emerges, through the silent listening to other — landscape, Eldership — without desire, and within a present-orientated attitude?68

This is the concept of silence that the Caterpillar Dreaming study will be exploring. What does a contemporary, present-awareness listening of Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes call forth?

2.13 The Caterpillar Gap

Contained in this chapter is the theoretical underpinning of the gap in current research that the Caterpillar Dreaming Study seeks to enter. The literature review started with an

65. Ibid., 248.
68. Ibid., 249. Passerini discusses the links between silence and listening to other.
archetypal invitation to retrace the first murder, as a way of acknowledging colonial complicity. This is the inherent intention behind understanding what a landscape practice of apology may be in the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space. The study intends to be with this complicity through following the Aboriginal ontologies of Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming.

Foundational to this study is the notion that the entry point to this shared-space is being with these ideas of complicity in a corporeal way. To rephrase it as a question: what does being with spatial anxiety, in a corporeal way — as per Mowaljarlai with a subjectivity of feeling — allow to emerge and contribute to the discourse of conciliation? Further, what does being with the landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming, as facilitated by Nannup, offer to the discourse of conciliation?

The literature review then looked at ideas of subjectivity and poetics, arriving at the idea that multiple subjectivities and poetics of place can be intuited, conceived, or imagined as right by the non-Aboriginal. This study intends to position the idea of non-Aboriginal multiple subjectivity into the realm of realising itself within Aboriginal sovereignty — to look at what processes may be available in exploration of this new contextual awareness, by following Aboriginal Eldership. In other words: can, or how can, the non-Aboriginal enact intuitive responses to place, without displacing Aboriginality?

A large part of this initial literature review was dedicated to exploring what assumptions can be inherent in shared-space: those of colonial privilege; of belonging; of colonial directives, desire, morality and romanticism. The Caterpillar Dreaming study seeks to unpack these assumptions — and to propose a remedy to them — by enacting the intention to enter shared-space with unknowing, and with, as per Passerini, a present-orientated attitude. The study asks how these assumptions may be transformed through being in pure relatedness, and toward what impact and affect.

Importantly, the study seeks to explore ways of being in present unfolding awareness, and relatedness in regards to concepts of the other. Furthermore, it questions how the non-
Aboriginal can meet this relatedness in a way that does not resort to creating fixed meaning, or knowingness around Aboriginality, and makes space for what emerges in response to this in terms of unwrapping colonial ways of being in place, relatedness, and a potentially new understanding of conciliation.

Yunkaporta, while standing dead centre in his thesis completion ceremony, says that for an instant he could see what conciliation actually is. He says: “It is a Dreaming event, an act of Creation and Law that is necessary for singing up continued human existence.” This study intends to explore the Caterpillar Dreaming shared-space in such a way, and to narrate what emerges through this relational unfolding.

Of utmost importance, the Caterpillar Dreaming study intends to represent this emergence in a way that does not displace Aboriginality, or speak for Aboriginality. It is purely a study that intends to see how the Aboriginal ontologies of Eldership and place can unwrap colonial ways of being in place, with a view to better understanding conciliation as a practice.

Lastly, returning to Bachelard, and the resultant work *Halfway House*, this study intends to look at what a poetics of [Australian] space can look like when following in-place custodial wisdom, as through the Eldership of Nannup. What may be an [Australian] experience of felicitation?

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69. See Yunkaporta in section 2.9, “Relationship at the Cultural Interface,” 73.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The primary research methodology of this study involved following the iterative unfolding of the Caterpillar Dreaming. My part in this was learning how to come into right-way relatedness with Trail custodian Nannup, story, protocol, and land. With this came a concurrent requirement to hold awareness of colonial privilege and reluctant complicity; thus my part was also the concurrent learning of how to un-follow, or unlearn, colonial modes of knowing and doing research. This chapter will start with a brief critique of landscape architectural research methodologies and continue with an explanation of relational following and decolonising ethics. It will then present a discussion of grounded theory and the affective turn as research methodologies that have allowed and facilitated the relational following necessary for this study. Lastly the chapter will describe the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk and resultant thesis, next to these methodological applications and reasons for key study decisions.

3.2 Landscape Architectural Meta Perspective

It is firstly important to discuss this study’s critique of landscape architectural research methodologies. Being nominally multidisciplinary landscape architecture has traditionally borrowed methodologies from a wide range of divergent disciplines in the social sciences, natural sciences and arts. In the Australian context, however, scholar Jill Orr-Young suggests that landscape architecture resists place-orientated research because of its leaning on these predominantly Euro-Western academic lineages.\(^1\) She says in her study on Indigenous ontologies in place, that there is “an absence of landscape architecture in ‘place’

\(^1\) Jill Orr-Young, “Place and Praxis: Valuing Australian Indigenous Place in Landscape Architectural Practice” (Ph.D., RMIT University, 2012), 234.
research and dialogues.”

Further, that for a discipline concerned with “reconciling damaged relationships,” local Aboriginal epistemologies and ontologies that are centred on place relatedness, are integral. The Caterpillar Dreaming study is aligned with this assertion, and takes it from the theoretical to the manifest by following in-place Aboriginal Eldership, toward untethering landscape architecture’s colonial underpinnings and research assertions.

Swaffield and Deming say that landscape architecture’s multidisciplinary nature means that the discipline lacks a co-defining strategy — “a broader ‘meta’ or strategic perspective.” They further say that landscape architectural research methodologies lack important evaluative mechanisms. This study proposes that place is a pertinent meta-perspective and evaluation mechanism. This study aligns with Aboriginal epistemologies that teach that Law is held within the Land, and that learning to be in relationship with this Law provides an inherent evaluator. The perspective that this study takes is that most landscape architectural research projects in Australia shy away from collaborating with Elders of place, which inevitably keeps the discipline out of relationship to place, and therefore from its potential custodial evaluation.

The research methodological experience of coming into relatedness with the Caterpillar Dreaming study was of a sensed protocol or evaluation. Meeting place in the right way heralded study continuance, whereas meeting place wrong-way led to study discontinuance. Nyungar scholar Len Collard says “Ngulla boodjar ngulla boordier (our country is our boss and guide).” Collard continues: “We talk with it, walk with it, feed it and get nourished by it. Country reveals things to us.” This study uncovers the

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
methodology of Caterpillar Dreaming Country by finding a right-way protocol of following Eldership. Furthermore, this study moves toward coming into connection with how place does research, and how place reveals knowledge pertinent to its particular situation.

3.3 Decolonising Ethics of Relational Following

From this point there are two important intertwining pathways to discuss: the pathway of embodied learning of right-way following, and the pathway of realising decolonising ethics relating to Euro-Western research methodologies. I say intertwined, as the two processes occurred co-dependently within the Caterpillar Dreaming study. As briefly mentioned above, I experienced the methodology of the Caterpillar Dreaming through embodied experiences of the study continuing and discontinuing. The experiencing of and being within this continuance and discontinuance was the greatest teacher of right-way following. Being within project discontinuance bought the required pressure and emotion to transform wrong-ways of being within the study. Theoretical frameworks of decolonising ethics, however, also fundamentally aided the understanding of these experiences.

The following two paragraphs give an overview of pertinent decolonising ethics to the Caterpillar Dreaming study, following the wisdom of Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Margaret Kovach, Shawn Wilson, Linda Tuhiwahi-Smith, Deborah Bird Rose and Susan Streger. These authors state that dominant colonially discursive research has, for the most part, been “unworthy” to,9 and “destructive of”10 Indigenous people. This is often because of the gap between colonially imagined ideals of benefit, and what is of true benefit for Indigenous peoples.11 Accordingly non-Indigenous research should not be about the

11. Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 2.
cultivation of colonially assumptive directives, power, or knowledge. As scholar Moreton-Robinson discusses, ‘whiteness’ also needs to be unpacked as a knowledge that is taken for granted. Instead non-Indigenous research needs to cultivate deep respect, and unknowing, towards ontological and epistemological beliefs of Indigenous people.

Further, Indigenous epistemologies tend towards a relational view of creation and knowledge. These authors convey that relational knowledge is considered sacred, not owned by anyone, and as Nannup teaches, that it is located between relating bodies. They also say that protocols and ethics, showing relational accountability, self-disclosure, reciprocity, and care, are central to decolonising ethics. Additionally these authors offer that because the process of decolonising ethics seeks to offset colonial order, it can contribute to a feeling of lost-ness for the non-Indigenous researcher. This lost-ness can facilitate a beneficial process of unlearning modes of knowing, to the effect of learning to listen and relate in new ways.

In speaking to these ethics, my particular methodological experience of Caterpillar Dreaming study was a process of giving up colonial stances to be within the unknown of emergent relationships. This was a process of embodying an unknowing in a system of Aboriginal ontologies that I was essentially a stranger to. The thoughts that I carried in terms of what conciliation may look like on the Walk, or particular fixed ways of thinking for example, all needed to be given up, to allow project continuance. Wilson says: “If

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15. Kovach, Indigenous Methodologies, 1; and Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 7.
17. Ibid., 56.
18. Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 15.
19. Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 7.
21. Ibid., 120.
22. Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 77.
23. Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 27.
research hasn’t changed you as a person, then you haven’t done it right.”

Often study discontinuance felt like being squeezed through the eye of a needle.

Essentially the process of following informed the application of research methodologies. The most important relational following for the study was toward Nannup. It was, in the biggest sense, about developing trust in a relationship between cultures where there continues to be colonial power bias. The learning of this continued throughout the whole study, and, of course, beyond it. Out of this central relationship other relational followings occurred, such as the following of land, ancestry, and story. Essentially this experience of being within the unknowing of relational following was a process of coming into humility, and the realisation of being in and held by a study, and a cultural system much bigger than the singular self. This relational following toward unknowingness was an important design factor that informed decisions related to the methodological unfolding of the study.

3.3.1 University Ethics Procedures

This project went through the standard process for third-space projects as applicable to the University of Western Australia ethics department. The resultant methodologies included Indigenous protocols as directed by Nannup and as discussed above.

3.4 Methodological Embodiment

It is important to state that the relational following of the Caterpillar Dreaming study was based in a corporeal way of being in the world. Study continuance and discontinuance was felt. This concept has three aligning theories that are helpful for understanding how this point affected the Caterpillar Dreaming study: firstly, from within Aboriginal ontologies; secondly, through the contemporary academic lens of the affective turn; and lastly, as a way of allowing cultural emergence through the theories of cultural interface and Indigenous standpoint theory. These are discussed below.

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24. Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 135.
There is a pertinent link between being embodied, or dwelling in a corporeal experience of the world, and Aboriginal ontological relatedness. Senior Njarinyin Law Man Mowaljarlai says: “In order to experience the world [...] you must suspend your more familiar intellectual thinking in favour of a sensory receptivity, awareness and responsiveness.”

He elaborates that this “is the cultivation of feeling — specifically, feeling as a way of shaping and experiencing knowledge from the landscape and universe itself.” The cultivation of feeling was therefore paramount in embodying the Caterpillar Dreaming methodology of relational following, and particularly toward coming into relationship with place.

The affective turn realises and expresses the corporeality of the affective body within contemporary academia. It arises out of contemporary critical theory’s return to affect, as following theorists: Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Henri Bergson, and later, through a rediscovery of the work of Baruch Spinoza. The affective turn premises that the body is affective within, and participating with cultural, social, political and environmental complexities in a way that exceeds the processing abilities of the conscious mind.

Importantly the affective turn asserts that the body holds affective memory that has otherwise been repressed or disorientated by colonial narratives. Patricia Clough critiques the assertion that the affective turn is about individual states of feeling and emotion, as my correlation to Mowaljarlai’s “cultivation of feeling” may suggest. I expand here, to suggest that Mowaljarlai’s conception, and the corporeality I suggest for this study, are actually demonstrative of Clough’s “non-intentionality of emotion and affect,” and more indicative of pre-individual states of feeling. Within the Caterpillar Dreaming study, the affective turn helps realise the importance of following corporality. Such an approach offers the

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26. Ibid., 24.
28. Ibid., 35-40.
30. Ibid.
31. The corporeality of feeling, as suggested here as an academic and landscopic pathway, is prioritised in this study as it allows distinction over the normative emphasis on the mind and thinking in relation to landscape. Further, linking to
potential reintegration of essential human faculties of realising relatedness beyond narratives of hegemony.

Lastly, the cultural interface and Indigenous standpoint theory is useful to the Caterpillar Dreaming study as it helps in the understanding of this corporeality toward the emergence of new cultural expressions. Similarly to the affective turn, the framework suggests that the cultural politics of hegemony and historic race relations exist as “everyday complexities.” That is, that the past and the future exist in the zeitgeist of the moment. Important to this is an understanding that moves away from fixed representations of culture as represented by history. Instead, this theory resolves perspectives of cultural fixity (historic and colonial) by situating itself within contemporary relatedness. Such an approach allows an understanding of the unfoldment of the Caterpillar Dreaming study, as it provides framework that allows story and memory to contextually surface from the past to affect the contemporary position.

This process of enacting a specific kind of embodiment within the Caterpillar Dreaming study was vital to bringing past and present into relatedness beyond historic configurations. It was also vital in coming into relationship with the unknown, as corporeality exists beyond the lineage of colonial directives. Interestingly and in line with Indigenous epistemologies, this embodiment had me, as the researcher, perform rituals within my research to enact unknowing. Cree Elder Lewis Cardinal says that ceremony bridges space, and strengthens relationship. I found myself at times, in spaces of deep unknowing about study directions, compelled to go and visit a grave of a relative, or walk a particular landscape. These enactments often revealed the next step in the research process.

Importantly this methodological embodiment was also pertinent for walking the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes. Clough says that, “affect is a non-linear complexity out of 

Mowaljarlai’s call that the land needs our feelings, there is a synergy between the affective turn and feeling and emotions that is worthy of exploration. This PhD touches on these academic synergies, although more in-depth explorations will be in future works.  

33. Lewis Cardinal in Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 87;
which the narration of conscious states such as emotion, are subtracted, but always with ‘a
never-to-be-conscious automatic reminder.’” The key here is that the process taking place
cannot be represented or known consciously. Here, I link place as an affective space that
can interact with the affective body, unconsciously. I also link spatial anxiety as discussed
in the literature review as a potential gateway to experiencing the liminal qualities of
affective place.

3.5 Caterpillar Dreaming Academic Methodological Alignment

Glaser and Strauss’ grounded theory and collaborative autoethnography were used in
the Caterpillar Dreaming study as methodological praxes that support relational following,
decolonising ethics, and corporeality. Bagel Chilisa in her work on Indigenous research
methodologies suggests that even the least hegemonic remnant of Euro-Western
methodologies can be further transformed by decolonising research. The least hegemonic
of landscape architectural methodological applications are those that have taken a
qualitative turn. This turn, essentially toward incorporating subjective experience, re-
integrates the researcher into an affective relationship with the research and de-intensifies
objective single-levelled statements that posit a knowable and predictable reality.

Grounded theory and collaborative autoethnography are such methodologies.

34. Clough and Halley eds., The Affective Turn, 1.
35. See further discussion, relating to affective place, in section, 5.2, "Bad Death,” 128.
41. Sacha Kagan discusses that the greatest consequence of an objective reality is ‘the death of the subject,’ making
3.5.1 Grounded Theory

To begin this discussion of grounded theory, it is useful to mention Paul Carter’s *Material Thinking* which is a methodological stepping-stone and also connects to the theme of the poet introduced in the literature review.42 Both theories, grounded and material thinking, articulate the importance of being with complex and critical situations as research experience, and allowing ‘results’ to emerge from this immersion. Carter’s *Material Thinking*, however, in casting the work of the poet as methodological in its own right, allows for the limitless subjectivities of the researcher. Where this is pertinent to the Caterpillar Dreaming study is within the revelation that “the process of making the work becomes inseparable from what is produced,” and further, that this production moves from knowing reality, toward how research can affect new ways of being with reality.43 Where there is a mismatch is the absence of a deductive methodological application that can limit or ground these subjective experiences.

Grounded theory, while also allowing situational data emergence, has such a deductive research mechanism. During the first stage of a grounded theory study, the researcher is largely encouraged to avoid theory, and instead, to be with study situations to reveal unbiased emergent data. Importantly, this data is then incorporated into a reciprocal process with relevant literature, known as deductive theory analysis. In the case of the Caterpillar Dreaming study, deductive theory is reformulated as Eldership wisdom. It is a top-level wisdom that guides the collecting and interpreting of situational data. Within the Caterpillar Dreaming study, this related to the wisdom that Nannup incrementally shared, that guided further emergent data, and so on. To return briefly to landscape architecture, Eldership wisdom, as applied as a deductive function, guides the emergence of a right-way relationship to place.

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42. See section 2.6, "Limitless Subjectivities," 68.
Grounded theory supports the process of the researcher moving toward decolonising ethics. Glaser’s ideal of deviating from an initial review of the literature — in order to “learn to not know” — has absolute resonance with the need for unknowing in research that seeks to critique colonial modes of knowledge. To assume complete un-bias, however, is contrary to well-established history that demonstrates the insidiousness of hegemony and colonial culture. Like decolonising ethics, the process of grounded theory research has further allowance for the researcher to stay within a self-critical mode of acknowledging when biases become visible. In fact, there is a continuing discussion, originating with Glaser and Strauss, regarding when to conduct the literature review so as to remain within an interpretive frame that is as unbiased as possible. The Caterpillar Dreaming study conducted the initial literature review to find theoretical stances on unknowing and to acknowledge in so far as was possible, complicity (however reluctant) with hegemony.

Another point relevant to the Caterpillar Dreaming study is the grounded theory relationship with academic theory. Within grounded theory, the researcher is supported to come into relationship with academic theory after being with the emergence of data from study situations. Glaser justifies this above facilitating an unbiased study emergence, with the assertion that a researcher could not know what theory would be most relevant at the beginning of a study. This was true of the Caterpillar Dreaming study, particularly in being with openness toward potential study outcomes. Being with emergent data took the study in directions that were not originally anticipated and this required different academic theoretical alliances to be woven in at different points within the thesis.

3.5.2 Collaborative Autoethnography

Collaborative Autoethnography was used to capture the emergent discourse of the Caterpillar Dreaming study. Autoethnography is often used in decolonising methodologies to narrate subjective perspectives of reality, as well as to disclose personal bias. This

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45. Ibid., 115.
personal narration offers a counter-dialogue to constructions of a singular and known truth as depicted through hegemony. **Collaborative Autoethnography** takes this further by depicting multiple subjective perspectives from multiple study agents.\(^{46}\) This was used in the Caterpillar Dreaming study to open a realm of possibility within the current discourse around conciliation. A collaborative approach was also crucial to the Caterpillar Dreaming as it provided an effective delimitation of limitless subjectivities by producing data from which collective themes could be captured.\(^{47}\) Collaborative Autoethnography in the Caterpillar Dreaming study will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

### 3.6 The Caterpillar Dreaming Walk

The first two years of the Caterpillar Dreaming study were spent coming into relation with Nannup, story, protocol and land. This included conducting the initial literature review; many yarn-ups with Nannup in his office; many trips with Nannup within the city and to rural areas scouting the trail and the right path to walk; and many of my own scouting adventures on bike or on foot from which I would report back to Nannup. This time also included Nannup and I meeting with property owners and farmers to request permission to pass through [their] land. This time was full with the feeling of not knowing and of serendipity. Many times we experienced coming to a dead-end in terms of knowing how to cross a particular stretch of land, and then coincidently meeting exactly the right person to help.

This study design process itself was also a relational emerging. Due to the fact that the Caterpillar Dreaming path leads to Uluru and beyond, questions such as what would be the study area, how far we would walk, and who would be involved remained constantly open. Moments of study realisation came one step at a time. For example, the scouting of one area, would introduce Nannup and I to a contact, which would spur a further disclosure of the Caterpillar Dreaming story, which would change the course of scouting.

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47. This links with multiple subjectivities discussion in literature review, section 2.6, “Limitless Subjectivities,” 68.
etc. How the Caterpillar Dreaming walk actually occurred and my original research proposal were often worlds apart. The right-way following of each event in turn created this Caterpillar Dreaming study.

3.6.1 Participation

Within the third year of this study, the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks began. Nannup had initially said that many people would be walking. This cultural intention plus the importance of relational ontologies to decolonising ethics saw us invite walking participants. It was decided that these invitations would be extended to people, organisations and groups who had a stewardship connection to people and place along the Caterpillar Dreaming trail. This was considered important to the study so as to allow new discourses of stewardship to emerge within groups that were already involved in these conversations. It was further hoped that these people might act as leverage points for effecting stewardship change within their lives, groups and organisations. It was also deemed important to invite people and groups who had understandings of, or interest in, the importance of relational and cultural following. This was to ensure that participants were open to following right-way protocol on the walks, so as to ensure cultural safety and ease of facilitation within a large and potentially very diverse group.

Invitations were made via email and phone, and by meeting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples of the following groups: Organisations of Aboriginal health and support; Local Council environmental, cultural, and community liaison officers; local land care groups such as the Swan Coastal Alliance, and Claisebrook Catchment Group; Representative Bodies such as SWALSC (Southwest Aboriginal Land and Sea Council); Environmental and cultural government bodies such NRM (Natural Resource Management), and Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW); Affiliations of conciliation such as council and independent reconciliation groups, and Nyungar language learning groups; Nominated Landscape Architecture, and Indigenous Studies students; and Landscape Architecture and Indigenous Studies academics; as well as local walkers, poets,
artists and curators who have done important work connecting with local ecologies and people.

The first invitations went out to four hundred people. Nannup and I had decided to limit the number of walkers to twenty-one per day. This was to keep group size on any particular day small enough to realise relatedness, and also intimate and diverse enough to allow for rich sharing and discussion. Twenty-one, as a multiple of seven, was also an important number for the Caterpillar Dreaming. People were invited to walk for anywhere from one day, to any number of days. The Walk was initially divided into three stages, with a total of twenty walking days. In response to the invitations ninety-two different people in total participated in these stages of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Of these, 41% came for one to three days, 35% for four to ten days, 16% for ten to eighteen days, and 1% for the whole walk.

A very important point to mention is, that while there were originally Nyungar participant enquiries, no people of Nyungar heritage walked in the Caterpillar Dreaming study besides Nannup. This is one example of how my study expectations had to be let go. While there may have been many possible reasons for this unfoldment, it relates to the point Nannup made that if colonial doing disrupted the trails then it should be colonial deeds that undo this disruption. My role was to be in relation to the cultural holding and wisdom of Nannup, whose words on this matter directed further decisions regarding walk organisation, and in particular, regarding data collation techniques.

The Caterpillar Dreaming study held the intention to support the relational unfolding of potential emergent outcomes. For this reason, walking participants were invited to come as agents in creating a relational unfoldment. Walkers were invited to slow down to walking pace with the landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming and come into relatedness with land, story, protocol and Eldership through a subjectivity of feeling.

Participants were thus encouraged to enact their involvement through this subjectivity of feeling. This meant that at any time a walking member could call a circle, or share
information, or call a period of walking in silence, for example. This facilitated increased relational possibility and increased the potential for relational experiences to emerge into new and unknown events. This invitation had all walkers, including myself, in an experience of openness and unknowing within the walking of the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail.

While most of the Caterpillar Dreaming trail had been scouted and predesigned by Nannup and myself, there were times when places to stop during the days, situations on the walk, and occasionally alternative camping places, were decided by the collective of walkers in an unfolding way. To conclude, it is important to note that all walkers signed consent forms showing willingness for all and any data collected during the walks to be used for the purposes of the research. Additionally at intervals thesis chapters were read to participating walkers for feedback in theme explorations. This feedback was used to navigate the material in new ways.

3.6.2 Nannup

Nannup played the key facilitation role for the walking participants. As well as culturally holding the Caterpillar Dreaming walk along with associated Elders, Nannup offered cultural facilitations to the walking participants each walking day. These included sharing the Caterpillar Dreaming story; ceremonies of drawing and stamping in events of the day (see image 1 in gallery); and regular check-in circles. Nannup was always available for yarn-ups and to aid understanding by offering extra wisdom or contemplations. Often Nannup would share with the walkers something to think about during the walking day. Nannup’s cultural facilitation played the most important role in creating relational emergence within the Caterpillar Dreaming Study; how walking participants met and related with these cultural capacities created the study outcomes.

A ceremonial facilitation of Nannup that is important to mention specifically was a message stick that Nannup gifted the walkers on the first day of walking (see image 2 in gallery). Nannup had personally crafted the message stick, and it was to be carried for the
duration of the walk (see image 3 in gallery). Walkers were asked to pass the message stick from walker to walker during the course of the day. Nannup did not give reason for the message stick, or explain its function on the walk. The modality of the message stick therefore opened up a deep space of contemplation around the Caterpillar Dreaming, around the walks' collective holding, and regarding the meaning of walking such a trail. At the end of stage three, the message stick was gifted to Yorkrakine Rock Traditional Custodian Rose Davis for her safekeeping.

3.6.3 Journals

A Collaborative Autoethnographic technique of journaling was developed to capture the emergent experience of being on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. In many ways, the performance of the walk itself was the study. However, it was important that the study could be communicated to a wider audience as a way of unwrapping colonial landscape. For that reason, the journals were devised in order to reveal, to the greatest degree possible, the actual experience, or livingness, of being on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Further, the journals aimed to show emergent experiences as they related to particular landscapes. Essentially, the journals were curated to capture emergent potentialities of being in relatedness with Eldership, story, protocol and land.

The journaling project was the rotation of twenty-one different journals to the twenty-one different walkers of each day on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk (see image 4 in gallery). At the end of each day the journals would be returned and then handed out at random to the twenty-one walkers of the following day. The outcome of this journaling project was twenty-one journals of multiple-authorship, each revealing the twenty walking days of the Caterpillar Dreaming walk (see images 5-9 in gallery). As much of the walk was conducted in silence, the journals provided an opportunity for walking participants to remain in silence and record their experience. They also provided an opportunity to see whether, and how, ‘individual’ experiences were shared within particular landscapes, as similar themes could be mapped to specific places within the data collation phase.
Importantly, the journals were curated to unsettle the historic lineage of colonial exploration journals. Firstly, the journals were intended as acknowledgment of complicity to narratives that are within the colonial project. The use of writing and drawing as media, connected the emergent data to a lineage of writing about and of other. It also connected the emergent data to a lineage of colonial expression as a dominant narrative that is normatively perceived as a fixed truth. The large number of Caterpillar Dreaming journals, coupled with the protocol of rotating them each day, offered a radical reorganisation of this fixity. Within this, there was also an invitation for walkers to write with a subjectivity of feeling, rather than an objectivity of truth making. This (non)directive was intended to create further emergent potentials of re-visioning historic colonial accounts of place, and to allow for a shift into modes of being in place that follow Aboriginal ontologies of relatedness.

The journals involved one further feature designed to facilitate relational awareness of human and non-human otherness: thirteen of the twenty-one journals held a given theme or contemplation, and the other eight were dedicated entirely to free-writing narrative enquiry. Within these journals walkers were free to write anything. Nine journals had contemplations dedicated by instrumental local personalities. These were people who the study had crossed paths with at some point, and had contributed some form of wisdom to the study. Three journals were dedicated to the specific non-human features of boodja, boorn and kep (land, tree, and water). Lastly, one pouch “Water” was a second contribution from one of the instrumental local personalities, Perdita Phillips. Following her suggestion, at the last minute, I exchanged a “free-writing narrative enquiry” journal with a pouch for water collection (Refer to Table 1 below).

Journals were fitted inside pouches that could strap onto walking participants’ waists. Pouches also contained pens, pencils, charcoal, a paintbrush, and small white tags with which to tie appropriately collected items.48 Journals AM, Elaine, Boodja, Boorn, and Kep also had disposable cameras inside in order to fulfil journal instructions. The practices around

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48. Nannup instructed walking participants as to correct cultural protocol of gathering objects. The general rule of thumb was that anything that would decompose could be collected, although everything was to be checked by Nannup.
the journals were explained each day in the morning circle to the old and new walking participants.

While the journals were the main form of data gathering, an extra modality of audio recording was introduced during stages two and three. In the review phase following stage one, it was considered that there was an important iterative level of contemplation that was not necessarily captured through the journals. As mentioned, each day Nannup would share incremental parts of the Caterpillar Dreaming story, or contemplations to think into. The audio recorders were devised to capture generated discussion from these moments. Thus, from stage two, two recorders were passed amongst the group while walking, each with a sentence or two of Nannup’s sharing. Walking participants were invited to talk in response to these contemplations, which would change daily.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Name</th>
<th>Contemplation/Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Journal “One”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Journal “Two”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Journal “Four”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Journal “Five”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Journal “Six”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Journal “Seven”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Journal “Eight”</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Journal “CD” — Davenport, Carly Third-space curator.</td>
<td>“Butterfly — Bindi Bindi; Moth — Baan Baan; Caterpillar — Ngarna; Nyungar knowledge — Kaatatjin; Nyungar places — Boodja. While keeping these words in the forefront of your mind as you walk — see how you can find references, shapes, patterns, symbols, or literal representations. Sketch these. Use also words to describe your own transformation while walking.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Journal “CH” — Hayward, Colleen Edith Cowan University Professor and Head of Kurongkurl Kaatiwin, Edith Cowan University’s Centre for Indigenous Education and</td>
<td>“This country is rich in culture and tradition. The path you are on and the steps that you take connect you, not only to Country, but to those who have journeyed this way before, going back through time. If you truly listen, you will hear their stories and conversations of past times and start to connect in ways that have not been possible before”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Name</td>
<td>Contemplation/Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Journal “EC” — Clocherty, Elaine West Australian Site-Specific Ephemeral Artist.</td>
<td>“Start to notice all the debris on the ground. Flowers, nuts, seeds, leaves. Fill your bags as you walk along. During a break make a small mandala or environmental artwork. Lines of colour, shapes etc. Can be placed anywhere you are drawn to. Take a photo.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Journal “GW” — Walley, George Head of Nidjalla Waangan Mia Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Centre and Storyteller, Musician.</td>
<td>“1. Pay attention to how each step that’s taken on the trail, embraces larger life experiences; 2. Do not step on any ants, as they are our ancestors; and 3. Do not spit on the ground for respect of land and everything around us.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Journal “MD” — Owens, Margaret and Bose-Jelinek, Daniel Prominent West Australian native vegetation and wildlife protectors.</td>
<td>“The red-tail cockatoos are around. Document when you see, and hear them. How many? What are they doing?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Journal “NN” — Nannup, Noel</td>
<td>“Come and have a yarn with me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Journal “PP” — Phillips, Perdita West Australian walking artist with a wide-ranging and experimental conceptual practice.</td>
<td>“A pebble in your shoe. Some time today, write a letter to: a stone; or the wind; or a lone tree.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Journal “Boodja” — Land/Country</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry and “Three times a day, could be at each rest spot take a photo of the ground, sand, beneath, of where you are. Take a photo from 1m above ground.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Journal “Boorn” — Trees</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry and “Take a photo of three trees (three photos) each day along the trail that speak to you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Journal “Water” (Phillips, Perdita)</td>
<td>Free-writing narrative enquiry and “Collect three samples of water per day. Fresh, Salty, Tears, Sweat, or water from a Stranger.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The Caterpillar Dreaming Journal Details
Lastly it is important to discuss the conceptually *performative* action of walking participants. As mentioned, walking participants were invited to come into relatedness with land, story, protocol and Eldership through a subjectivity of feeling. Coming into this relatedness was further facilitated through enmeshed instrumentalities of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk — ceremony, silence and walking. These instrumentalities have been described within Indigenous and non-Indigenous research as transformative, activating, and relation-building techniques that, as Christine Black notes, opens one to a larger *biologic encounter* or conversation. It was considered that through these instrumentalities walking participants became embodied proponents of the relatedness of the Caterpillar Dreaming.

As with walking, and ceremony facilitated by Nannup, silence was a major part of the Caterpillar Dreaming study. Silence is often connected academically to in-between or liminal space. Basarab Nicolescu writes that silence is a *transcultural space*: “(t)he space between the levels of perception and the levels of reality.” Additionally there is an important link to repressed narratives — or silences — within [Australian] colonial history. William Stanner calls the *Great Australian Silence* the repressed and unacknowledged histories of massacres, invasion and land theft. The instrumentality of silence was facilitated on the Caterpillar Dreaming walk to open awareness toward...
relatedness and further toward the acknowledgement and experience of repressed narratives.

Walkers on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail were invited to start the walking days in silence. We would often break the silence after the first five kilometres, or at the first walking stop. As the walk progressed walkers would call silence at key points, or while particular landscapes were traversed. Silence became a modality of being with or witnessing landscape in a way that was not possible when in conversation. Some days were walked in almost complete silence. Some walkers made strategies around silence, for example, suggesting that the front section of the walking group was demarcated for those who wished to remain in silence, while the back end of the group held conversation at a respectfully low volume.

This is important as it describes an experience of the Caterpillar Dreaming, and a further function of the walker’s journal entries. Phillip Zarrilli in his work with psychoperformance techniques says that actors working with a particular scenario become sounding boxes for relational expression, meaning that they are relationally resonant beyond conceptions of the small, or independent self. Norman Denzin within his work on Interpretive Autoethnography calls this a move from the narrative I, to the performative I. The invitation made to participants on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk was to speak as this relational, performative I, and in this way be open to relational emergence beyond classically hegemonic experience of place.

3.6.5 The Affective Body

This section discusses some ambiguities and alterations to the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. It is entitled ‘The Affective Body’ to encapsulate the corporeal processes operating below the level of the conscious mind that equally facilitated the walk and the resultant thesis.

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58. Denzin, Interpretive Autoethnography, 25.
This is in line with the affective turn within critical theory that re-instates the body in scholarly research, with the suggestion that the affective body is more in tune with the complexity of the unfolding world than the conscious processing abilities of the mind.

Happenings occurred on the Caterpillar Walk that intersected with these previously mentioned methodologies in important predictably unpredictable ways. The study moved beyond traditional configurations of failures or successes, suggesting instead that the affective body was active in the unconscious manifestations of the project.

Firstly, the dedicated journals did not produce significantly different narratives. While this might be attributable to the rotation of the journals daily, it may more aptly signify the importance of free-writing to the journals. As there were a number of walkers who walked for multiple days, the lack of differentiation could also be accounted for by walkers’ familiarity with each theme, and their resultant embodiment of all themes. It is important to mention, however, that on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, the different journals became like friends to the walkers. At times walkers spoke as if they were walking with the person who dedicated a particular journal.

Secondly, there was a section of the trail on the outskirts of suburban Perth where there was an absolute discontinuation of the path. While permission to traverse these private property had been sought and granted, there was no access to gates, nor any possibility of climbing over high barbed-wire fences that lay between some property divisions. Partial ways through were discovered on both sides of the river, but not as one continuous trail. I left this decision to the very last hour with the hope that a way through would emerge. A few days before the Walk commenced, however, after checking in with Nannup, I hired ten double canoes and walkers paddled this section.

In hindsight this was an important alteration for two reasons. Firstly, the forced discontinuity of the walked path gave walkers the opportunity to feel into land ownership and dispossession in a personal way. The section in canoes forced walkers to not walk, and feel the effect of the inability to walk and connect landscapes by foot. Secondly, the
walkers bonded in a relational sense with the river as an entity, something that had not occurred at the same depth until this point.

Thirdly, journal “six” went missing at the end of stage three. While journal “six” may have made an important contribution to results, it is important to look at other potential avenues of thought. During the process of data collation the missing journal became to me something of an intrigue: a silence to wonder into. Actually it could mean many things. It could indeed have a continuing life somewhere outside of the study. It could likewise turn up at some point and become an adjunct discourse. It could potentially decompose, or be eternally preserved in the very salt-affected landscapes of stage three. In any case the absence of journal “six” created an enforced silence within the study. It came to seem a motif of that which cannot be spoken about, or that which was left behind.

Journal “six” was not the only case of missing data. In the beginning, with such open-ended study methods, it was not always clear what should be recorded. As briefly mentioned, Nannup facilitated a ceremony at the end of each day whereby walkers collectively drew into the ground the significant events, thoughts, feelings and visitations that happened during the day. Nannup then facilitated the ceremony of stamping this drawing into the ground to signify the letting go of these things. This ceremony was deeply sentimental on a personal and collective level, and walkers would sometimes enter secret or unspoken events into the drawing.

I was initially attracted to the idea of scribing these drawings onto paper as they mapped where there were certain landscape features, flocks of birds, and rock formations, for example. However, with scribing there was a felt sense of betraying the ceremony, as the intention was that the drawing be stamped out. Even so, I captured some of the daily drawings with pen and paper as part of the data collection. After stage three, I collated the data and realised that a whole number of these drawings were missing. A whole manner of reasons could be attributed to why these drawings were lost including, on my behalf, poor
data storage techniques. However, the affective body moment is perhaps evident: these drawings, being ceremonial drawings, were not meant for other purposes.

It is also important to note that at various points on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk powerful happenings occurred that had a very strong affective dimension. While it was not apparent at the time, it became evident when the data was collated that during moments of great affect, walkers did not write in the journals, or made only sparse entries. After I wrote Chapter 6 that explored some of the intense happenings of stage four, I gathered the stage four walkers to listen to the chapter as a means of critical review. A discussion arose from this meeting, which revealed that in these situations walkers felt too overcome with feeling to write. There was also discussion around how difficult it had been to find words for some experiences. The walkers at this meeting proposed that there was a line between what could be recorded and what was meant for the experience alone. Based on this discussion, and in respect of those matters walkers felt unable or unwilling to write about, no experiences that were not written about in the journals appear in this thesis.

3.6.6 Photography

Photography did not emerge as a way to capture the main thematics of the Caterpillar Dreaming walk. Five of the pouches had cameras and instructions for taking photographs — for example the Boorn (tree) pouch instructed the walker to take a picture of three trees per walking day. The intention of this was to capture a running visual representation of the changing vegetation on route. The same was such for the Boodja and Kep (land and water) pouches in capturing a running description of these elements as the landscape changed. As well as this there was one standard camera that was passed about the group, without a specific intention towards the study itself, but to loosely record some of the situations of the walk.

The disposable cameras in the pouches broke, and were replaced, on numerous occasions, although sometimes this could only occur at the end of a day, or after two days in more remote locations. The disposable camera lens was also such that it would only produce
recognisable photos if used at the correct distance from the landscape, and this was not known ahead of time. As well as this, when the photos were developed, it became evident that walkers did not necessarily follow the pouch instructions for photo taking — for example, there were many non-tree photos taken on the Boorn pouch camera. With the standard camera, I experienced that walkers weren’t necessarily drawn to take photos whilst on the walk. The outcome of this is that the resultant photo documentation of the walk was not what I had anticipated. This means of documenting the walk did not yield data that I had experience in analysing or could readily make use of in the study.

This most likely occurred as the journals, and walkers depictions into the journals, were the prioritised data collation technique. In reflection, a methodological approach that facilitated a greater variation in data collation may have been more appropriate for landscape architecture, being a largely visually-based discipline. However, I would also say that the outward focus required to take a photograph existed in a paradoxical relationship to Nannup’s repeated instruction to turn in and feel the land. I would also suggest that the themes of what emerged on the walk were largely in contradistinction to a visual representation of landscape. In fact, many of the emergent data outcomes are based in the invisible and transitory aspects of landscape.

For these reasons, the collected photo documentation of the walk was not utilised as a significant source of data for this thesis. I decided to include photographs only to the extent that readers could themselves feel into the walk, and glean a certain feel of the walk — rather than as a precise way of recognising place, people and the landscapes that were passed on the Caterpillar Dreaming walk. This is likely another affective body outcome of the walk.

59. It could be inferred that photography entices a hegemonic way of being in landscape and is not therefore particularly helpful in regard to the main shared-space themes of this thesis. While journal writing or drawing may also be considered a hegemonic approach it does support a turning in important to the instruction of Nannup on the walk. 60. What did emerge in terms of the visual representation of the walk could be the basis for future exploration, particularly in the realm of the intersection between the visual representation of landscape and Aboriginal ontologies of place. This would require a focus of research knowledge around the theory of photographic nuance in landscape architecture.
3.6.7 Stage Four

Possibly the most important evidence of the affective body was the continuance of the Walk. By the time walkers reached Yorkrakine Rock at the end of stage three, the Caterpillar Dreaming story was felt to be held by the walkers in an embodied way, that indicated that the walk was not yet complete. The completion landscape was some two hundred kilometres further away at a place called Nyingarn, just northwest of a very large salt lake named Lake Moore. Stage four and stage five were thus dreamt. Stage four took place from June 4th to June 14th 2015, during which walkers walked from Yorkrakine Rock, through the town of Bencubbin to just north of the town of Beacon. Stage five occurs as the epilogue of this thesis.

I initially intended, even with the continuing walks, to limit the thesis to the exploration of stages one to three. However, stages four and five kept haunting my writing. I realised that these landscapes were vitally important to the conversation. As stage four was not intended to contribute to the thesis material, I offered walkers the choice of whether they would continue the journaling project. We decided to each keep a journal for the whole duration of stage four, and write if and when we were moved to do so. A few contributing pieces of information are helpful here. Nannup made the cultural decision that only walkers that had walked stage three, could walk stage four. This was because stage three walkers had journeyed through important cultural teachings, and the stage four landscapes were deemed unsafe to anyone without this experience. Moreover, Nannup decided that stage four walkers were not to come and go; there was a requirement for walkers to commit to the walk for the whole time.

These decisions offered a new emergence of collectivity on the Caterpillar Dreaming stage four. This was already starting to happen on stage three. Four days before the beginning of stage three I had a large piece of concrete fall onto one of my fingers smashing the bone. I was discharged from the hospital in the evening of the night before the walk, and spent the whole of stage three unable to use my arm. This physical limitation, however, meant that a
more collectively facilitated walk emerged. Walkers began to embody their own agency more fully on the walk; and the walk changed thenceforth. Of note here is the difference in emergent journal data from stages one to three, to stage four. It is as Patricia Clough writes: "all essays render changes in processes of embodiment, that is, employ new writing methods for grasping the materialities and temporalities of bodies."\textsuperscript{61} She calls this being with the body failing.\textsuperscript{62}

### 3.7 Data Collation

The methodologies of grounded theory, relational following, and the affective turn were pertinent to the Caterpillar Dreaming study data collation. The grounded theory process is to be with data and then find within data the systematic emergence of themes. These themes then direct the researcher to find theoretical bases to support the emergent themes and allow for further elaboration of the data. The process of finding themes in grounded theory data analysis — a process that May McCreadie and Sheila Payne call "symbolic interactionism" — involves scanning data for information that forms patterns. A pattern, within this approach, is considered reliable simply due to its repetition.\textsuperscript{63} Whereas most qualitative data analysis largely ensures data reliability through triangulation, Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre make the case that codes that repeat many times in ethnographic data can be considered reliable through "crystallisation."\textsuperscript{64} They say: "There are more than three sides of the world."\textsuperscript{65}

Grounded theory approaches largely find pattern repetition through qualitative software that picks up on word frequency, however I have come to the conclusion that using systems such as these is dangerously removed from the body, and thusly from any subjectivity of feeling. I found trying to decode journal entries on a computer screen

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\textsuperscript{61} Clough and Halley, eds., The Affective Turn, 41.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 965.
simply disorientating. Instead, I realised that it was important in the context of the Caterpillar Dreaming study to be able to move and walk with the data in order to bring the body’s knowledge, as explained through the affective turn theory, toward finding emergent themes in the data. It was likewise important for the Caterpillar Dreaming study that the journal entries and audio recordings be linked to the landscapes in which they occurred. Further, it felt important to create a situation where I could be affected by the journal entries, and thus bring this affect into the study.

The journal entries resulted in eight hundred and thirty double page spreads of journal entries from stage one to stage three. As a note, data collation of stages one to three happened before stages four and five were anticipated to be included in the study, therefore the data collations and syntheses of the stage divisions were independent events. Journal entries of stages one to three were scanned. The resultant scans were then ordered according to the journal they occurred in (along the horizontal axis), and the day and approximate landscape they emerged from (along the vertical axis).

This quilt of journal entries was then printed to fit onto thirty-three A1 (594 x 841mm) sized prints and hung around my study walls tiled three A1 landscape pages vertical to eleven A1 landscape pages horizontal. This meant that as I walked the length of the room from the beginning of the pages to the end, I conceptually traversed the landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming. I also placed collected objects from the walk—such as woven grass, photographs and bark—on the floor alongside the relative landscape from which it came, to help evoke the landscape.

Having done this, I read the journals. As entries affected me, I gave the affect and content a colour. As a new theme emerged, I dedicated another colour to the theme. Mey Günter and Paul Ruppel say of grounded theory that the “open coding process leads to an abundance of answers,” a practice that was in line with decolonising ethics of pluralistic knowledges. Any repetition of a connection, a feeling, an idea, a thought, or an event was mapped. As I

was a walking participant myself, I found myself reliving the journey and deepening my affective experience of it. Up until this point I had not read the journal entries and I was often moved to tears, inner moments of stillness, and to revelation and gratitude. I was not moved to judge or compare journal entries. The outcome of this mapping was the revelation of several important themes as pathways of enquiry (see images 10-11 in gallery).

Interestingly, there were many synergies through the mapping. Particularly I found many instances of a colour occurring numerous times along a vertical axis of the data quilt. This indicated a subjectivity of feeling that was shared by multiple journal entries within the same landscape. Additionally, I found the mosaic of colours used changed substantially from the beginning of the data quilt to the end. This revealed how themes changed through the walking of the Caterpillar Dreaming — as walkers journeyed Eldership, land, story and protocol. Lastly, I transcribed the passages from the journals that had been coloured into the thematic groupings, and these quotes are the basis for the resultant thesis.

For stage four, I went through different processes of coming to experience the data. For stage four, all the entries are used and presented on the relevant day they occurred. On one level, this was possible simply because there were not as many entries. On another level, however, as stage four was moving into greater walker agency as a collective, I felt that my process of mapping (or sorting) was not as relevant. It felt more important that the entries stood independently from a process of analysis. For stage five (the epilogue) all entries are used also.

3.8 How To Read the Caterpillar Dreaming Thesis

I largely use narrative within the thesis to reveal journal entries, and as a mode of enquiry.67 This was appropriate to the goal of this study and in line with decolonising methodologies, designed to bring readers into affective relationship with the emergent data

67. Ibid., 177.
and not to simplify ideas into a fixed knowledge. Paul Stapleton in his work on performance-led research says, "The goal is not to produce a standard social science article. The goal is to write performance texts in a way that moves others to ethical action." 68 I used narrative as a way of avoiding the more restricting effects of critical analysis, or comparative techniques. 69 In the thesis, I present thematically related journal entries into groups of three; I then write into the affective space that the entries reveal. 70

For the most part I have scripted the thesis in the chronological order of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk: stage one through to stage five. This differs only in the first results chapter where instrumentalities such as walking and silence are discussed thematically and incorporate data from stage one to three. This first results chapter aims to create a context so that the reader will be able to access the larger themes that unfold from stage to stage.

As per grounded theory, being with the data in an affective way sometimes bought forth new theoretical links. Some chapters, therefore, are denser than others, and offer theory as potential way of holding and making sense of emergent data. While this flowing interplay between tangible findings and theoretical suggestion can seem haphazard, it accurately captures the relationship with academic knowledge that this thesis has moved through, and duly reveals.

There are three text types, indicating the different voices within the Caterpillar Dreaming thesis: they show Nannup’s voice, the voices of the walkers as revealed in the journal entries, and as per this text, my own narrative enquiry. 71 The interplay of these texts creates the livingness of the Caterpillar Dreaming study and allows a transfer of affect.

Quotes from the other voices will always be displayed in triplets to create rhythm and give

68. Ibid., 180.
69. The use of narrative also connects to Kristeva Moloney’s postcolonial fiction as mentioned in the literature review. I employ this theme to avoid creating fixed representations of self and other within the thesis. See section 2.8, “Constructions of Other,” 41.
70. Criticism exists for the use of imaginative or fictitious academic writing within cultural geography, with criticism focus being the truth claims of fictitious or imaginative vignettes. In the article “Are we allowed to use fictional vignettes in cultural geographies,” the authors describe all ethno/autobiographical work as ‘fictional,’ as these works are relative to the authors’ perspective on reality. The Caterpillar Dreaming study acknowledges the fictional aspects of this study, not as truth-claims, but as per Stapleton, as a template to create new ways of thinking on particular complex issues. Rabbiosi, Chiara and Alberto Manolo. “Are We Allowed to Use Fictional Vignettes in Cultural Geographies?” Cultural Geographies 24, no. 2 (2017): 265–78.
71. At times, as shown in the voices displayed, Elder Gladys Yarran is quoted in the same from as Nannup.
structure to the overall piece. This further correlates to the literature review discussion around the potentialities of conveying cultural complexity of shared-space collaborations through artistic and poetic means. The differences thesis voices are indicated by changes in text type as follows:

**Nannup:** You can take away the all of the physical things but you can't take away the stories.  

Walker: Deep valley, cut through steep rolling mounds of granite, dressed in low vegetation: Powerful, resilient, strong, silent, watching, eternal.  

**Yarran:** There's no way. It'll always be there with you. Oh dear, it's in the land. It's in the land — it travels.

Further, journal entries are referenced to the day that the entry occurred; entries can thus be situated to the landscapes they were written within by locating the day number on the maps at the beginning of each chapter.

Lastly, images, except for the location maps at the beginning of each chapter, are located as a gallery in the middle of the thesis.

The next chapter is the first results chapter of the Caterpillar Dreaming study.

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72. See discussion on Muecke’s *Reading the Country* and Moloney’s point on artistic representations of shared-spaces in section, 2.8, “Constructions of Other,” from page 77.  
73. Noel Nannup and Gladys Yarran (Nyungar advisors), in discussion with the author, November 22, 2016.  
75. Noel Nannup and Gladys Yarran (Nyungar advisors), in discussion with the author, November 22, 2016.
Image 1: Nannup instructing walkers on Drawing of the Day Ceremony

Image 2: Nannup gifting Message Stick to walkers
Image 9: Sample of scanned journal entries
Image 12: View toward Wadjemup from walk start

Image 13: Walkers descending Reabold Hill in silence
Images 18-20: Walkers and landscapes of stage one
Images 21-23: Walkers and landscapes of stage one
Images 24-25: Walkers and landscapes of stage two
Images 26–27: Walkers and landscapes of stage two
Images 28-30: Walkers and landscapes of stage three
Image 31: Walkers alongside the Mortlock

Image 32: Walkers crossing saltlake

Image 33: Women at saltlake
Image 34: Walkers in sand storm

Image 35: Walkers approaching Doongin Peak
4. THEMATIC RESULTS

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION, NANNUP AND WALKING

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first chapter of Caterpillar Dreaming results. The chapter introduces the main instrumentalities of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk: Nannup, walking, silence and ceremony, and discusses how these instrumentalities opened walkers to place. These instrumentalities were found as key themes within the journal entries that spoke of experiencing place in a new way. The chapter then moves to discuss emergences resulting from participation with these instrumentalities: the emergence of a cultivation of feeling; the concept of belonging; following; and otherness. Firstly, however, the chapter discusses important cultural contexts necessary to make sense of the results, and introduces the Caterpillar Dreaming as story, and as the Walk. This creates an important foundation for understanding following chapters.

This chapter presents the general thematic results that emerge from stages one to three of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. The following chapters reveal larger cyclic themes that occur within each stage specifically. For example, the following chapter reveals a vital stepping-stone that emerged in stage one and stage two of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk and prepared walkers for the continuing walk. Subsequent chapters focus on stage three and four respectively. Each stage is discussed in light of conciliation and land stewardship.

4.1.1 Notes to Right-way Reading

Important notes for readers on the contemporary context of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk will be discussed in this section. These notes help position the right-way to approach the following chapters. Firstly, it is important to realise that the Caterpillar Dreaming study walkers walked a contemporary arising of the Caterpillar Dreaming story as facilitated by
Nannup. Walkers entered into a relational experience with an ancient Nyungar trail and story. Yunkaporta says in his thesis on Aboriginal pedagogies in education that the breakthrough idea was the “need to teach Aboriginal perspectives in a culturally responsive way — not by trying to teach culture.” Thus the emergent experience and journal entries should be read contextually, as this contemporarily emergent relationship. It makes no claims with regard to Aboriginality past, present or future.

In this way, the idea of conciliation can be seen as a shared-space event. It is separate from conceptions of Aboriginal sovereignty. It is what happens when these spaces meet — Yunupingu’s “a mix of salt and fresh water.” It can be seen as the littoral space at the ocean edge: conciliation or meeting is what happens at the space where the salt water from the sea meets with the fresh water of the land. These spaces are usually host to very diverse new forms, they are spaces that continually transform, and are continually active.

It is important to emphasise the fact that Nannup was not looking to enrol a non-Aboriginal collaborator for this task. Nor was the initial expectation toward a largely non-Aboriginal walking group. This is what emerged, however. To reiterate: Nannup said if it was non-Aboriginal people who disrupted the Caterpillar Dreaming trail, it is a non-Aboriginal responsibility to restore its continuance. Thus, it is important to see the Caterpillar Dreaming study and walk from within this context. The study asks what of significance emerges from this particular intercultural relational following of the Caterpillar Dreaming.

It is also important to put these last points in perspective with Nannup’s cultural holding and facilitation. Nannup shared with the walkers and myself incremental layers of the Caterpillar Dreaming story and landscapes and the walkers and myself were in a relational following of what Nannup shared. This is to say that there is perhaps much more secret

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1. Yunkaporta Tyson, “Aboriginal Pedagogies at the Cultural Interface” (Ph.D., James Cook University, 2009).
knowledge held within the Caterpillar Dreaming that were not appropriate to share with
the walkers and myself. Thus to reiterate, this study reveals the emergence of being within
the relational holding of the Caterpillar Dreaming as it was for the walkers and myself in a
present-day context.

It is lastly important to emphasise that study outcomes are not revealed here to create a
fixity of knowledge. Rather they are revealed to create *affective* experience: an experience
of reading that moves, creates and inspires further movement.

4.1.2 The Caterpillar Dreaming

This section discusses the fundamentals in understanding the Caterpillar Dreaming trail
that walkers walked for this study. The Caterpillar Dreaming is a physical Aboriginal trail
that was walked at significant cosmologically identified times. The trail crosses the entirety
of what is now normatively represented as [Australia] and extends perhaps even further
than this. It is a manifestation of the particular *Nacuduba biocellata* (two-spotted line-blue)
caterpillar and points to the butterfly lifecycle and inter-species relatedness.3 Other key
non-human players within the Caterpillar Dreaming story are the ants, and the whale.
Essentially, just as caterpillar becomes butterfly, the Caterpillar Dreaming is a trail toward
transformation.

As Nannup tells, the Caterpillar Dreaming trail is the second oldest trail development
within [Australia], after that of the Great Spirit Woman. He tells that the trail was
journeyed between different Aboriginal language groups to ensure the ongoing vitality of
localised groups through genetic exchange. The section of the trail the walkers walked for
this study followed the footsteps of Nyungar women going to Yamatji or Wongi
communities. Several Nyungar paths would collect the Nyungar women from different

3. *Nacuduba biocellata* is the Latin name for the species of butterfly that the trail manifests shown in the first following
reference. The second reference is a book written by Nannup's daughter, Alison Nannup, on the life-cycle and story of
the butterfly (*Bindi Bindi* in Nyungar language). Andrew Williams, Robert Powell, Matthew Williams and Geoff
Walker, *Common Butterflies of the South-West* (Kensington, WA: Department of Environment and Conservation, 2009),
56; and Alison Nannup, *Bindi-Bindi Koondarminy Wer Mammon Waangka: Butterfly Dreaming and Whale Story* (Northern
Territory, Australia: Bachelor Press, 2013).
places within Nyungar Country, and gather them slowly toward one single path. The following of this single trail was vital as it facilitated the Nyungar women’s passage through an integral, deep and transformative process of leaving and arriving.

As per the literature review, following Muecke, the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were following in the footsteps of local Aboriginal guides to find new interstitial spaces of culture. Through Nannup’s guidance, the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were invited to follow the footsteps of these hundreds of generations of Nyungar women who had walked the trail before. Walkers were invited to come into new ways of being with landscape through Nannup’s facilitation of this story. This journey is revealed here as a potential new space of culture and the resultant journal entries are positioned to show what effect such spaces of following have within practices of conciliation and land stewardship. Firstly, however, this chapter will begin by revealing journal entries from the first few days of the walk, as a backdrop to this exploration.

As mentioned in section 3.8, “How To Read the Caterpillar Dreaming Thesis,” this dissertation has been put together by presenting arranged stanzas of Nannup’s wisdom, or thematically matched journal entries, followed by my narration into the affective space these entries create.

4.2 The Caterpillar Dreaming Walk

Walker: Feeling nervous. Anticipation as I stand with others on Reabold hill with views to Wadjemup in one direction over the sea, and to the city in the other, the journey has begun and the dreaming continues.

Walker: In the car park, waiting for the walk to start [. . .] what I want to say is thank you, thank you, thank you.

Walker: Watching the cleansing rain approaching from the island in the mist.

On the twentieth of June 2014, the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk began. The group collected on the rise of Reabold Hill, in Bold Park: a 437-hectare bushland reserve about eight kilometres from Perth city centre. The Walk started here because the hill overlooks Wadjemup, the trail origin, which would have been walkable some 9000 years earlier when the sea level was around 130m lower than it is today (see images 12–13 in the gallery). The day was rainy. On this day, there were 34 walkers, including Nannup and myself. Nannup began the walk simply by gifting the message stick, and mentioning landscape features and non-human species the walkers would encounter. He did not mention the Caterpillar Dreaming story. He said to be with the “powers of observation,” a motif he often uses to facilitate attention toward the world.

Walker: The walk has been going on for longer than it has stopped.

Walker: Sometimes all we need is a direction. Not knowing the way. Not knowing the destination. There is and must be a trust.

Walker: I will return to this place, even though I pass it almost everyday, I haven’t ever really been here.

As the group collected on Reabold Hill, the journals and the idea of walking in silence were explained to walkers. Walkers were invited to record anything, in any way, at any moment within their journals. They were invited to be themselves, and to open into a conversation with place. Walkers were introduced to the idea of starting the walk, and each consecutive walking day in silence, and walkers were encouraged to initiate silence within particular landscapes if they felt a need. The days were largely unplanned except for the meeting and ending place of each day, so as to allow the walking group opportunity to enact a collective agency within the walk.

Walker: To start I get lost, bush-bashing, wrong paths, sweat, so rocked up a little miffed, and amongst a group that I didn’t think I would fit in. [ . . . ] [Later in same journal] I have

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8. In the end divergence from the planned 21 walkers per day happened regularly, so as to not create an air of exclusion, although there were always only the 21 circulating journals per day.
had an amazing conversation, I won't go into detail, but important to me and my journey, and as I sit here with a smile I realise how judgemental I was being.\textsuperscript{12}

Walker: I felt like a bit of an outcast, was worried about feeling judged, but then I thought I signed up for this for a reason [. . .] it wasn't too long before I found a few others in the same boat and I was put at ease [. . .] I started to feel like I belonged. As more people joined I became more settled. The group was united. We were all here to learn how to walk.\textsuperscript{13}

Walker: I am nervous, questioning if my feet and legs will carry me [. . .] I am nervous, should I have the right to be on this trail [. . .] I look up to see Uncle Noel's warm embracing smile and eyes. Yes, I am meant to be here [. . .] It is now not about me, it is about this land.\textsuperscript{14}

The walkers were largely unknown to each other for the first, and sometimes subsequent walking days. As per themes that emerged within the literature review walkers contemplated belonging, and privilege, from the first day of walking.\textsuperscript{15} Some Journal entries reveal anxiety, disruption and lost-ness as the first entry, which represented a kind of gateway in. Within these entries there is resolution found in a change of perspective away from the self. From the outset, there was the first step towards acknowledging a fixed way of being, experiencing relatedness, changing perspective from knowing to learning, and moving focus toward the land. Noticeably, belonging was found through relatedness to the group, rather than to knowing place.

Walker: How often do we come together and sit by the lake? How often together?\textsuperscript{16}

Walker: During less than two hours I walked in my silence, listening to the happy group, the children and seeing the changes along the way.\textsuperscript{17}

Walker: Beneath the ground we feel change.\textsuperscript{18}

Stage one of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk followed a chain of wetlands north of Perth city to the Derbyl Yerrigan [Swan River]. There it followed the river to the outskirts of

\textsuperscript{12} Walker, “Journal 3, Day 1” (unpublished entry, June 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
\textsuperscript{13} Walker, “Journal Water, Day 1” (unpublished entry, June 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
\textsuperscript{14} Walker, “Journal AW, Day 1” (unpublished entry, June 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
\textsuperscript{15} See section 2.8, “Constructions of Other,” 73.
\textsuperscript{16} Walker, “Journal Kep, Day 1”.
\textsuperscript{17} Walker, “Journal MD, Day 1” (unpublished entry, June 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
\textsuperscript{18} Walker, “Journal EC, Day 1” (unpublished entry, June 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
suburban Perth. The walkers then took to canoes for two days to pass property fences impassable otherwise. The walk then continued in the semi-rural outskirts of Perth characterised by vineyards and small farms. Here the walkers continued, following the river on foot along these small farm and mixed industrial acreages into Walyunga National Park (see images 18-23 in gallery). Stage two continued from Walyunga National Park along the river. On this stage the walkers mainly kept to the train service line that runs parallel to the river. This walk passed the rural towns of Toodyay, Northam and ended in York, at this point often walking beside large farms (see images 24-27 in gallery).

The first two stages passed many sites of non-Aboriginal to Nyungar violence and massacre, which is the major theme of the following chapter. These events often occurred near to Aboriginal camping places along the swamp and river landscapes that the walkers traversed. These experiences of stage one and two were in many ways precursor experiences to the landscapes of stage three, and beyond. In stage three the walk left York and journeyed through major teaching landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming: Cunderdin Hill, The Mortlock, Doongin Peak, and Yorkrakine Rock. This stage passed through many large farms, and along rural roads (see images 28-30 in gallery). In the second and third stages, walkers camped together each night, new walkers meeting the group in the morning.

As mentioned, before the thesis moves into the specific nature of each stage, journal entries from these first three stages are revealed in this chapter to give insight into the basis of understanding the Walks, through Nannup, walking, silence, and ceremony. A usual walking day would thus incorporate many instances of the group coming together, holding check-in circles and holding silence in certain landscapes. Also at different points Nannup would meet the walking group to reveal layers of the landscape, or important elements to understand. Nannup would lead the group for the drawing into the ground ceremony and daily check-in circles. These ceremonial holdings allowed the group to be with difficult and paradoxical elements of the landscapes they were passing.
Walker: The Caterpillar Dreaming path mixed with modern world — cars, noise [. . .] group walking together feels we are in our own tunnel together and looking after each other.\textsuperscript{19}

Walker: An absence makes me look harder with my eyes and lean towards my other senses and shared knowledge.\textsuperscript{20}

Walker: I can almost sense the birds, fish, surrounds, in the abundance of the past.\textsuperscript{21}

Following the Caterpillar Dreaming was in many ways in contradistinction to, or in a paradoxical relationship with, the contemporary landscape. The Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were following a journey facilitated by Nannup, and thus engaging in an imaginative relationship with the past. This function was occurring simultaneously with being in the present of the contemporary manifest landscape, including hegemonic land ownership and fence lines, suburban and industrial built form, litter and ecological destruction, and unknown stories of past intercultural events. The imaginative relationship with the Caterpillar Dreaming was also in contradistinction to the contemporary lives of the walkers. This was all part of the make-up of the Caterpillar Dreaming walk, and what contributed to an emergence of new interstitial spaces of culture.

Walker: Privatised banks — fences preventing movement along the edge of the river — no trespassing no landing — how do we own this massive presence.\textsuperscript{22}

Walker: Fence to waters edge — preventing movement — preventing access — preventing a journey along rivers edge. How can we walk the caterpillar dreaming?\textsuperscript{23}

Walker: Heart settle with the quiet, while the noise of the city groans in the distance. Around us but not within.\textsuperscript{24}

The Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were walking inside a gap between narratives. They were not of the old way; but neither were the walkers abiding by a hegemonic experience of landscape. They were walking a continuous path, through a now-discontinuous landscape. The walkers had entered liminal space. This ritual studies term is likened to

\textsuperscript{21} Walker, “Journal 4, Day 1”.
being at a threshold: in dissolution and disorientation. Also as per Yunupingu, being where the salt and fresh water meets, liminal space is characterised by being at the threshold between previous ways of being, and the yet to emerge, new ways of being. This was the gap that the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers inhabited.

Walker: Walking beside the damaged river, the ruined spring, where once you did corroboree — how little of the country left — how little — the western way everywhere — devastation — may we heal our hearts — our land — wordless — we stand we walk we bow, one feels it in the body, the land — it becomes so dear.

Walker: Walking through new landscapes in a place I think I know so well — Its almost as if they never existed before and spring into life ahead of my feet.

Walker: “Beyond concrete — beyond constructed landscape — I look for tell tale signs and listen.”

The next section starts the procession through the instrumentalities of the Caterpillar Dreaming. It is important to mention that largely these instrumentalities facilitated and held walkers within this experience of liminal space. The instrumentalities allowed and perhaps even created the experience of being within the gap. We begin with Nannup.

4.3 Nannup on the Walk

Walker: Following a quick chat with Noel wherein I was reassured I was a fit person to be on this walk. Just as I am [ . . . ] Thanks Noel.

Walker: He brings everyone in to be part — spindling little parts of things you have told him into the master story.

Walker: Noel prepared us for walking in the gorge, and challenged us to contemplate the (at least) 2200 generations that have walked this path.

Nannup was the cultural curator of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. He was always present on the walk: sometimes walking; meeting the walkers at all breaks; meeting the walkers at the day’s end; having crucial yarns with walkers; and sharing Story and facilitating ceremony (see images 14–17 in gallery). Nannup enabled the walkers to be with the Caterpillar Dreaming through the enactment of Aboriginal ontological ways of being with Country. These ontologies acted as catalytic frameworks for the walkers toward being with landscape, and community, in new ways. In this sense, Nannup curated the unwrapping of hegemonic conceptions of landscape, for the walkers to walk into.

As a child Nannup was taught an important Story from his Uncle Thomas: *The Carers of Everything*. The Story essentially enlists human beings as the ultimate carers of world, to protect, and also to be supported by, all other forms of life, regardless of cultural background. It is in this way that Nannup likewise spun the agency of the walkers into the Caterpillar Dreaming. Further, Nannup is an exponent for people to return to an essential humanness, away from pretence or reservation. Nannup allowed the walkers of the Caterpillar Dreaming to become carers, in a way that did not require walkers to be anything other than themselves. This was a catalyst to new modes of awareness as to what stewardship actually is.

Walker: *Yesterday Noel said — consider who eats the caterpillar [ . . . ]*  

Walker: *This morning Noel mentioned a tall spirit woman would be walking with us on our left — I can’t help but notice the moon, high crescent facing down.*

Walker: *Noel pointed out two birds flying SE in perfect V, sun setting — that they know how to work together — I’ve been noticing that I jump to action before fully communicating/checking with others [ . . . ]*  

Nannup shared story as incremental contemplations to the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers. Nannup tells that knowledge is held within relationship, or between relating bodies. Within this ontology, contemplative learning takes one into relational awareness where
there is not necessarily a right answer, but a realisation of ever-increasing relatedness. Walkers would walk into the contemplations of story that Nannup shared, and find resonance with contemplations through being in relationship with other human and non-human forms.

To unpack this, I will diverge briefly. This concept of relatedness has had a rebirth within the scientific and philosophic academic realms, since Descartes’ thinking became exponentially prioritised to align with the independence of all things. In this way of understanding the world, nothing was relatively perceived to be connected to a greater whole. These were the birthing thoughts of an objective scientific reasoning thinking and implied that things could be studied and observed by a spectator. Goethe provided an antidote to this mode of thinking through his concept of morphology whereby things could be understood through their process of being-ness, rather than as a completed, fixed, independent form. This new pathway rested in the belief that a thing was made, and is continually made, by its relationship to other things or other-ness.

This re-birthing of the concept of relatedness within the scientific and philosophical discourses brings to closer attention two attributes important here: the arising nature of otherness, and the reintegration of the observer. John Shotter, following Bakhtin, Volosniv, Merleau-Ponty and Rudolph Steiner, speaks about the internal structure of moments in relatedness to other. He says firstly that a thing’s actions in relatedness are not solely its own — rather they are a product of responsiveness with otherness. He says, in these moments each relating body is “infected” with the otherness of the other.

Shotter further says that these moments of relatedness are not repeatable, but rather every event of relatedness is absolutely unique in its expression. Importantly he finds that within an event of relatedness, an extra presence, “a third invisible agency” comes into being.

36. Ibid., 135.
37. Ibid., 137.
which he argues, has its own requirements and trajectory. Shotter implies here that something exists beyond the ordinary nuances and perhaps predictability of relatedness, that suggests at a greater power, force, fate, or perhaps even narrative. He calls this way of being in relatedness withness thinking or “reflective interaction,” where the experience of being with other brings forth something new that is in itself a guiding principle, or a bodily experience of being ‘moved’ forward.

Nannup manifested this withness thinking on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks through his cultural holding, and contemplative Story iterations, and thus demonstrated an understanding of knowledge that is in creation with existence. It was within relatedness that the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk became. Every walker was in relative agency to this becoming.

Walker: Thinking about the impacts of White Settler Colonisation — today as we walk through a valley of Nyungar massacre sites. Such a vast, virtually incomprehensible, history. At this point — at first break — I am at a loss for words [. . .] Noel said walk strong, hold the strength for the group. But the sadness and confusion the load — must be moved on [. . .] Into the ant’s nests — laid to rest. The grief lifted — everything was fresh.

Walker: Noel was talking last night, the story of what happened here during colonisation. [It] has only been told from the process that supports colonisation, and we’re starting to see the stories which are very grievous and hard to hear, but very important to hear for the healing process and the acknowledgement so people know that their reality, and what they have lived through, is accepted on a wider scale as truth and reality.

Walker: Roses for remembrance, a deep sadness in me, feeling heavy as we walked through Northam, grieving. Hearing Noels words and remembering yesterday mornings ritual of sweeping the good and positive over the bad and negative — my good and positives are my children and family. How could I cope if the children and family are separated? Such deep

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38. Ibid.
respect for Kathy and Reggie, their strength and laughter resonate in me after such sorrows. I feel very humble and have much respect for their amazing mothers.41

Further, Nannup facilitated decolonising processes for being with landscape. Nannup often spoke about the concept of balance: the importance of being with difficulty, and then returning to understanding and reprieve—joy even. A large part of Nannup's sharing with the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers was of colonial atrocities that occurred within the landscapes that were passed. This sharing allowed walkers to be with these places, and Stories, that were otherwise hidden from hegemonic narratives of place. Walkers manifested a genuine desire to be with this grief, and acknowledge colonial impact. Nannup then often met the group with a joke that transformed individual depth feeling spaces back into collective relatedness; and walking forward.

Walker: I had a chat with Noel about acknowledging, not shame, for my ancestors part in the death of Yagan, which happened not so far from where I write this — my ancestor was reportedly the one who chopped off Yagan's head. Its important to acknowledge history and learn from positive and negative, and also to move forward [. . . ]42

Walker: We did a ceremony with Noel letting go of any negativity and then the things we would like to change or bring in and surrounded by all positive, the good, things, beings we love. Then at the end the positive and good sweeps into the negative and is let go back into the earth.43

Walker: A moth landed on Noel and he told us the land and the trees here. As I slept last night I felt cradled by the earth. The valley like a birth canal — ready for a rebirth.44

This was the essence of Nannup's sharing on stages one to three. It revolved around humanness, relatedness, the powers of observation, balance, and sites of massacre. Deeper aspects of Nannup's sharing on the Caterpillar Dreaming story, and further knowledges, emerged after these foundations were laid, and these are revealed in later chapters. These initial sharings, however, were catalytic in terms of entry to the liminal space of the

Caterpillar Dreaming; they facilitated walkers beyond an experience of self-alone, into an in-between creative space of self-in-relation.

4.4 Walking

Walker: *just taking my left foot and putting it in front of my right, and taking my right and putting it in front of my left and not much more than that.*

Walker: *Step upon step gently — one after another.*

Walker: *Listening with feet.*

There are two important points to introduce how walking turned up within the journal entries of stages one to three of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks. The first is to recall that walking on the Caterpillar Dreaming cannot be seen as disconnected from the agency of Nannup and his authoring of facilitative story. Understanding walking here, outside of Nannup’s cultural holding would prevent understanding the rich emergences of being within the particular shared-space of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Secondly, there was no break to the continuity of footsteps on the Walk. The walking group changed, and stages started and ended in slightly different positions, however the body in motion, in place, from Reabold Hill to Yorkrakine Rock was continuous.

The Caterpillar Dreaming walkers never, or perhaps rarely, saw the path that they were walking on a map. In many ways this was to counteract a hegemonic experience of knowing where one is. To remember the literature review, Fensham elicited a response of *falling not walking* within Australian spaces to perform a different spatial literacy. As distinct from a protest walk that has a “certain trajectory,” *falling not walking* commits one to “being terrestrial and belonging to the earth with all the responsibility that implies.”

This conceptually describes the space of following on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

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Walkers were potentially lost, lacking knowledge of a direction, potentially even a cause, within a new spatiality of Aboriginal ontological ways of being in place.

Walker: *Things can only be noticed, heard, felt at walking pace.*

Walker: *I feel I have to move slowly through landscape to be able to learn and feel.*

Walker: *We are never in perfect [writer’s strikethrough] balance while walking.*

The instrumentality of Walking on the Caterpillar Dreaming trail facilitated a subjectivity of feeling toward the places the walkers passed. Fensham goes on to say that *falling not walking* represents both a rupture and a shifting perspective that re-establishes, an almost involuntary opening towards the ground.* She likens this walking to a shift of focus away from the horizon — in this case away from a prediction on conciliation — or a knowing of place. Without this direction forward, this fixedness, walkers fell into the places of the Caterpillar Dreaming trail, feeling and sensing the landscapes. It was as if, without this direction forward, this momentum, the invariably unbalanced peripatetic of walking opened to an important reliance on place: a two-way relationship. And within this experience of liminality, an important conversation was opened.

Walker: *Realisations threaded through walking meditation. It manifests our group dynamic. The conversations that enliven us. When inner voice becomes outer voice. When our imaginings, our stories, become manifest. We walk in silence so as to be recept[ive]. To give Country a chance.*

Walker: *Make these footsteps be honest and open, really tell the land how I feel. And feel it talking back. Let it feel the pleasure. The delight and the pain[ . . . ].*


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52. Fensham, “Not Walking Falling”, 209.
Walkers of the Caterpillar Dreaming trail opened to a conversation with place. Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* says that one aspect of societal remembrance that has been greatly neglected is “bodily social memory.” Further, that this memory is accessed by participating in bodily habits and skills such as walking—or knitting, or typewriting—ordinary patterns or repetitions of body movement that have the body participating. Nannup refers to a sensation of the world called *djiba djobbaling* which essentially refers to a rhythm of place. The walking of the Caterpillar Dreaming had walkers responding to this beat, I called forth a social connection, a collaborative gesture, an important practice of care.

4.4.1 The Nikki-Walk

There was an important walking event that happened on the ninth day of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. It was stage two, and prior to this stage I had scouted a route for the walkers along the river through the Avon Valley National Park by following feral pig and goat tracks along the muddy banks. It wasn’t an easy path, however there were not many options; there were partially accessible trails on both sides of the river, but crossing the river back and forth—side to side—to make a continuous track was impossible due to the river’s depth. However, a week before stage two commenced there was torrential rainfall and the bank I had walked was underwater.

There was, however, a train line threaded through the National Park, and a service path that intermittently crossed the train tracks. As crossing the tracks was dangerous and illegal, I approached the train company Brookfield Rail, to request assistance. They were happily obliging and two Brookfield Rail safety staff accompanied the Caterpillar walkers for the majority of stage two, communicating via satellite phones to the train drivers when the Walking group needed to cross the tracks. The service path, with its constant width, consistent surface, ease of traversing, and long straight stretches, starkly contrasted the

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57. Ibid., 93.
soft surrounds of the National Park. The following journal entries are from a particular section of walking this service path.

Walker: What is my place — what is my right to be here — what is my place in this country — along the Caterpillar Dreaming? Until now I have omitted myself from this place.\(^\text{58}\)

Walker: The sound of gravel crunching under our feet upset me — wanted to get off the access road and into ‘country’ just meters away — thankfully others must’ve had the same thought.\(^\text{59}\)

Walker: Today Nikki is walking off the service track and in the bush and my heart feels so happy for it — it seems as a decolonising action — an intent to feel the land as it lies.\(^\text{60}\)

A collective desire emerged for Caterpillar Dreaming walkers, to leave the service path and enter the bush alongside it; the walkers at this point were in silence. The ground that the walkers were falling into on the service path was constant, it allowed a forward trajectory and in fact it facilitated a direction forward. There was a paradox here between this constancy experienced on the path, and the thick, chaotic bush within the valley. One walker slipped into the bush, and the rest followed in a line: following her way through the bush.\(^\text{61}\) Bodies had to bend, and twist, footsteps became important with different lengths between, and different weights. Bodies were moving with the land, the body in communication. A soft rain was coming down.

Walker: I was asked to lead the group across country — I was asked to trust myself — to trust myself to read the landscape — responsibility to lead the group to where we needed to go. The rain came down — through grasses so soft — an orange frog leaped across my path — and soft grey blue butterflies danced.\(^\text{62}\)

Walker: We went for a bit of a walk cross-country — off road — and we filed like a caterpillar through the landscape — we went through a tree bent over.\(^\text{63}\)


\(^{61}\) The said walker’s name is Nikki. When the walkers discussed this event they described it as the Nikki Walk, hence this naming in the thesis.

\(^{62}\) Walker, “Journal 3, Day 9”.

Walker: Walking down the train line — compacted blue metal — jolting legs — made to walk a line disconnected. Walking across country we have to trust our instincts — look for ourselves — learning to read signs other than English...\textsuperscript{64}

This was an example of falling not walking; walkers left the horizon, for a being within place, instinctively moving toward a different experience of spatiality. Fensham notes, “At the point in which the body slips out of control, there is potential for a (new) gesture to arise.” This immersion in place loosened the grip of the observer. The fluid movement of the body through place dissolved the points that maintain fixed notions of self to other. Not only did the expression of movement extend into place, but it also extended lengthwise through the walkers. The subtle changes in place from one person’s passing, to the next, to the next, was experienced through the group. It was as if the Walking group became something other.

Walker: Back on the road I noticed at one point that we were all walking in unison like as a large caterpillar.\textsuperscript{65}

Walker: I feel I have dropped into the Caterpillar — the motion — undulation, imagination, creation, invigoration, exploration — release this nation.\textsuperscript{66}

Walker: I feel like I’m unfolding — a feeling first noticed today on our cross country detour off the track.\textsuperscript{67}

Back on the service path, the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were different. It seemed as if a new gesture had arisen. This falling not walking had emerged a new sense of things. This was the archetypal experience of walking on the Caterpillar Dreaming: something of a collective opening to place that facilitated an emergence from liminal experience — an emergence that was also facilitated by the instrumentality of silence.

\textsuperscript{64} Walker, “Journal 3, Day 9”.
\textsuperscript{65} Walker, “Journal 2, Day 9”.
\textsuperscript{66} Walker, “Journal VN, Day 9” (unpublished entry, August 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
\textsuperscript{67} Walker, “Journal Boodja, Day 9” (unpublished entry, August 20, 2014), \textit{The Caterpillar Dreaming Journals}.
PART TWO: SILENCE, CEREMONY AND THE EMERGENT

4.5 Silence

Walker: In the silence between things I observe.¹

Walker: The silence helping me shift from head to heart.²

Walker: The silence is easy — as if it’s ever been.³

This section reflects on how silence turned up in the journal entries from stages one to three of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks. As mentioned, much of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk was conducted in silence, and silence on the Walk was a large component in realising the emergent. Peter Turchi in Maps of the Imagination speaks of John Cage’s 4’33” piano composition, in which the whole piece is performed as rests.⁴ Cage sits at the piano, the audience is present within the concert hall: everything is presented as if a musical piece will be heard — and yet it is played as silence. In this scenario, there is a stretching between the expected and the apparent, wherein the audience play into the space in-between. The space in-between brings forth something that is just as, if not more, worthy than the replaced performance piece.⁵ Without the habit of filling space with conversation, the walkers of the Caterpillar Dreaming played into the gap that silence facilitated.

There is a hegemonic tendency to fill perceived gaps — spaces between developments, pauses in conversation — for there is discomfort with gaps. Ali Gumillya Baker reflects on the space inside the squeezebox her grandmother once played. She says, the squeezebox “makes sound out of interstituality.”⁶ Reflecting on the instrument, Baker is reminded of

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⁵ Kyle Gann explains that Cage’s main focus of 4’33” was to deconstruct the space between silence – or ambient sound – and music. While this intention is in part different from the intention of silence on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks, there is a similarity in asking for the audience to listen and feel beyond what is usually anticipated as sound. Further Cage’s intent of silence was similar in the desire to move beyond hegemonic conceptions of music and thus sound. See Kyle Gann, No Such Thing As Silence: John Cage’s 4’33" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 210), xii-250.
the “frailty of our [Nanga people’s] unrecorded and unspoken memories.” The historic context of this unspoken space has often been a place of hegemonic overwriting: the concept of *terra nullius* being a notorious example. Silence on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks allowed a hegemonic non-creation. It allowed for a kind of restraint, of not seeking to end discomfort by making it into something else. It allowed an acknowledging non-knowing of Aboriginal ontological ways of being with Country. And it allowed walkers to be with interstitial space.

Walker: *I felt for the first time and truly listened.*

Walker: *Silence while we walk allows for mind chatter, initially. Everything goes ear to ear and bounces around. If you walk long enough the chatter starts to fall away as it gets tired of listening to itself and you start to listen outward, for things beyond you, the things you’re looking at, the things you’re smelling, and hearing, feeling.*

Walker: *I keep my ears open. I’m observant. I listen with my eyes. I listen with my heart [. . .] I listen with all my senses.*

An important aspect of being with this interstitial place was the emergence of being with the body, and a subjectivity of feeling. Silence allowed the walkers to become receptive to the places they passed: to feel. Silence in this way became a pathway to being beyond the individual self. Silence became a space of connection, rather than disconnection.

Walker: *A train just went past and Craig didn’t count the carriages — perhaps silence itself is decolonising*.

Walker: *The silence allowed us all to be drawn immediately into the here and now. With this comes awareness and listening. When we are hear and now, we listen and we hear country. We see country, we feel and smell country. We touch country and we become country [. . .] We are country.*

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7. Ibid.
Walker: I don’t think listening to Country can be a separate thing. I am listening to Country, I think it’s, it’s a becoming of Country. So that separation disappears.\(^3\)

Within the silence of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, walkers began a conversation with place. It was a liminal conversation. The duality between self and other that enables dialogue was dissolved and a new type of conversation emerged. Silence allowed the land to be present within the experience of self. In silence, walkers could feel and connect to land in all of its contemporary paradox. It was as if Country, which cannot be known outside of sovereign Aboriginal knowing, entered the walkers and unwrapped the walkers to uncover new ways of being. Silence enabled Country to become a decolonising agent for the walkers. This was the important, and paradoxical, ‘conversation’ of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

4.6 Ceremony

Walker: We are escorted by two pelicans.\(^4\)

Walker: Manarch [White Cockatoo] that joined us at afternoon tea […] calling to us the whole way.\(^5\)

Walker: Today […] a crow stood awkwardly on a branch above my head […] I was just looking, sometimes catching its piercing eye — then I looked away and across to the train tracks as a big monarch butterfly came flying straight into my face — it all seems really animated and powerful and I wonder if this could be a normal relationship to the natural world when the other layers loose their hold on the psyche.\(^6\)

The following section reveals how ceremony emerged within the journal entries from stages one to three on Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Judy Atkinson and Lewis Cardinal describe Ceremony as maintaining and strengthening relationships.\(^7\) In this way, under the ontological guidance of Nannup, the whole Caterpillar Dreaming Walk could be considered ceremony. There were, however, specific practices curated by Nannup that I

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\(^3\) Walker, “Audio Monologue 69, Day 20”.
\(^4\) Walker, “Journal Water, Day 4”.
bring discrete focus to in this section. These rituals specifically move toward this maintaining and strengthening of relationships: the drawing into the ground ceremony, the message stick as ceremony, and other specific incidents of ceremony.

Walker: The spatiality of knowing myself in relation to all things.  

Walker: I learnt from these birds.  

Walker: There is a juxta-positioning of the current happenings (making breakfast, stoking a fire) and the discipline of ceremony suddenly snapped to. What part of this is more real? How do we make steps from the past and walk in time with the present.

The drawing in the ground ceremony was conducted each evening after the walking day or sometimes the next morning if walkers got in late. The ceremony was ultimately about recognising relationship. All walkers would be present, as one walker would draw into the ground a relational event of the day. The day’s walk would have already been mapped out with marks on the ground in terms of breaks, and landmarks. Walkers would then take a drawing stick and say either aloud to the group, or sometimes in silence — this is where this happened — this is where this feeling was present — this is where the pelicans [...]. This was not only a re-enactment of the relational occurrence, but also a relational holding of the group in witness, and through the passing of the drawing sticks. Lastly Nannup would facilitate all walkers to dance this drawing into the ground, enacting a final relational occurrence through collective letting go ritual.

Walker: What’s in [...] the Message Stick [...] hope of full reconciliation.

Walker: When I’m carrying the Message Stick I’m carrying something precious. I’m carrying responsibility. I’m carrying something bigger than me.

Walker: Carrying the Message Stick also makes you part of a bigger thing and also gives you a bit of a job within that bigger thing so it takes a bit of yourself along with it perhaps.

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The message stick cultivated a different sense of relational awareness. As mentioned earlier, Nannup crafted the message sick for the walkers to pass through the group along the trail. He did not explain the meaning of the message stick to the group. It was just there. Perhaps because of its mystery, it invited walkers’ thoughts toward bigger holding patters and significances of the walk. As it was passed around, it also invited walkers to reflect on the relational capacity of group. Any one person might be holding it at any significant or ordinary moment of the walk, but someone was always carrying it. It was invested with something. It had significance and meaning. The message stick was respected and prized, was passed around with care and consideration. In many ways the message stick was a synecdoche of the nature of the walk. The walkers knew it was important, but its ultimate meaning was a mystery.

Walker: *To me its like taking something home [. . .] home within the heart and that spot where once you have been there you can really feel what the ancestors are saying.*  

Walker: *It feels like I’m carrying something really important, something that tells stories of years and years ago and it is also recording our story as we move along.*  

Walker: *It feels like a record of everyone that’s walking here.*

Contemplation of, and carrying the message stick generated relational experience beyond the physical. The message stick represented people who had walked the Caterpillar Dreaming in the past, people who would walk the Caterpillar Dreaming in the future, and contemplation of these beings. It represented a record, and as such it generated relational experience beyond the here and now. The walkers knew that the message stick was to be passed on at the end of stage three. This generated yet more relational awareness, wherein the walkers’ experiences were contributing to something. The walkers’ part in the carrying of the message stick was important.

Ceremony was perhaps the largest enabling instrumentality of emergence within the Caterpillar Dreaming, as it represents the ultimate realisation of a relational way of being. Cardinal says that in Ceremony everything comes together, specifying that “[w]hen ceremony is reaching its climax [...] those connections are made.” In Yunkaporta’s thesis, he discusses the completion ceremony that he enacted, relating that within the ceremony he realised the “creative purpose” of his “ambiguous identity.” He says that within the ceremony he “saw what reconciliation really is, the creative potential of harnessing the knowledge of diverse cultures in a dialogue of balance and respect.” The next section focuses on moments of emergence from the ceremony of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks, and moments when these emergences coalesced into connective realisations and awarenesses.

4.7 The Emergent

Having walked with the instrumentalities of Nannup, walking, silence, and ceremony on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk during stages one to three, this section discusses the emergence of a subjectivity of feeling, process around belonging, and otherness on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

4.7.1 Feelings and Place

Walker: I felt emotion just before we got to the bridge near Herdsman Centre, not sure why.

Walker: Walking this last section — past the lake Monger massacre site — I’ve been trying to feel the country. Feeling being in my own body — aware of how I react to the land we are walking on — I felt a tightening in my chest.
Walker: To me walking this stage was difficult because of the changes that have been made to country — feeling the beauty of the remnant sections of bush versus the cropped land created an emptiness within me — a flatness.33

A cultivation of feeling was accessed through being with the instrumentalities on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.33 To reiterate: Senior Njarinyin Law Man Mowaljarlai speaks of the cultivation of feeling as an Aboriginal ontology: “as a way of shaping and experiencing knowledge from the landscape and universe itself.”34 The walkers on the Caterpillar Dreaming felt particular things in particular places. Often this occurred through bodily sensations and particular emotions. When walkers walked through some landscapes there was a collective vibrancy; when walkers walked through other landscapes there was a collective flatness, or sadness. Something was present in the landscapes that could be felt. Often, difficult emotions would surface in obvious places such as at massacre sites, and within places of land clearing and ecological degradation, although difficult emotions would sometimes surface in apparently untouched places, too.

Walker: Just a feeling of sadness in my personal life that came up and I need to process.35

Walker: Once I feel something personally then I can take that — and I can walk with that — I can take it further.36

Walker: I slipped and fell and was ok — but it bought up the grief, tears, lots [of] grief — and I thought of walking for the tears, the grief, the down, the out, the broken, all the broken ones, the damaged, ourselves, our brothers, our sisters, walking for all — all the sadness all the beauty, all the heartache — walking with all our ancestors, the blood, the sadness — the damage — holding each others hands.37

Further to this, the cultivation of feeling within a particular place often connected to a personal past experience or feeling. There was a process to being with the cultivation of feeling. In the literature review I discuss the example in Peter Read’s Belonging in which he

34. Ibid., 24.
37. Walker, “Journal 8, Day 14”.
uses a shared sense of belonging across Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to subdue settler guilt. I critique his assertion that his feeling of loss of his family grazing land was able to facilitate an understanding of Aboriginal loss of Country. It seems controversial that a personal feeling should be referenced as a claim of understanding another. Perhaps, however, there is significance to feelings that arise in place, and how place meets a person.

In this, I think there is a space of feeling into that which one cannot know through one's own personal experience. However, it seems this must arise from a space to feel, rather than the creation of fixity through understanding to placate feeling. It seems important to allow feeling or the affective body to operate without making meaning, or presuming similarity. The walkers of the Caterpillar Dreaming cultivated a feeling in place that was resolved through feeling, and resolved through the body — not through making knowledge about something.\(^38\) This concept will be taken up further in the next chapter in reference to some specific places on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

It is important to make the point here that much of the resultant data from the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks was feeling and emotion based. Why this occurred exactly is speculation. It was likely facilitated by Nannup's custodial role and instructions on the Walk. It was perhaps encouraged by the instrumentality of silence and turning in while walking through the landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming. Importantly the emergence of feeling and emotion on the Walks exist in contradistinction to many normative studies of landscape that focus on thinking and knowing landscape. Much of the resultant thesis works upon this emergence of described feeling and emotion for thematic construction. This is not to overly prioritise feeling and emotion, however as an understudied facet of landscape, and as a freely emergent component of the data, it has taken priority within this study.

\(^38\) This point rests in Clough's critique of feeling within the affective turn. It is argued here that walkers are connecting to unconscious, and pre-individual "affects" within place. See Clough in section, 3.4, "Methodological Embodiment," 67.
It is also important to reinstate that these feelings and emotions are not in themselves ways to understand place. It is, however, interesting that similar feelings and emotions occurred in certain landscapes by independent walkers. This thesis goes on in latter chapters to use the process of this affective body in place to write into how place potentially meets people through the affective space of feelings and emotions. As majority of walkers were non-Aboriginal the thesis explores potential meaning behind the affective space of the non-Aboriginal meeting place.

4.7.2 Belonging

Walker: Do I have the right to want to connect with country.  
Walker: Should I have the right to be on this trail.  
Walker: What is my place — what is my right to be here — what is my place in this country — along the Caterpillar Dreaming.

Belonging emerged independently within the journal entries. Walkers brought the question of their participation in the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, and also more generally to belonging to [Australian] place. Walkers walked into the spatial anxiety and uneasy aspects of colonial belonging discussed by the female academic ‘belonging’ protagonists: Grenville, Horáková, Rutherford, Probyn, Slater and Somerville. However, being on a trail, and not in a fixed place, walkers walked with this feeling, and did not push its resolution. The concept of belonging stayed as an open contemplation for the whole Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

Walker: I know so little.

Walker: Its something about being patient — and that the knowledge comes when you are ready.

40. Ibid.  
41. Walker, “Journal 3, Day 9”.  
42. See female protagonists in section, 2.5. “[Australian] Spatial Anxiety,” 61.  
43. Walker, “Journal 4, Day 3”.  
44. Ibid.
Walker: *We went into it not knowing what the outcome would be, and I think that was really important.*

Additionally, walkers brought the concept of non-fixity to explorations of being-ness and belonging on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Bhabha and Muecke both speak about the suspension of fixed conceptualisations within cultural shared-spaces, in favour of Bhabha’s emergence of new cultural forms, and Muecke’s recognition of lost-ness. This non-knowing was also in congruence with Mowaljarlai’s *suspension of intellectual thinking* toward a cultivation of feeling, as has been discussed previously. There was a necessary humility cultivated through walker’s experience, which was a vital part of what emerged on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

Walker: *Learning to see this country through other peoples eyes as well as my own.*

Walker: *I feel like I am participating in something that I cant quite define — maybe I don’t need to define it. Standing here at the moment just having had some lunch with everybody and looking around and just recognising or wondering actually what it must feel like to never feel lost.*

Walker: *Group walking together — feels we are [. . . ] together, looking after each other.*

An important aspect of the conversation of Belonging to the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk is community. Often the onus in academic belonging conversations is on the self — an individual experience of what it is to belong. My original intention was to walk solo to Uluru, and then Nannup said, “many people will be walking.” This speaks both of a shared individual desire, and also of desire that can only be contemplated collectively. Much of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk involved learning how to be in community, to be in place collectively, to share. In this way, belonging on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk was held relationally — through relationship with human and non-human forms. This conception

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relates to Mowaljarlai’s map of sharing [Australia], rather than the hegemonic narrative of private/personal ownership. The conversation was not how can I be in place, but how can we be in place together.

Walker: Its clear from walking through Toodyay that there is a massive amount of damage done, by us, and I believe we need to take action to do what we can to repair what we can. Is that what this walk is about? Is that what we have been called back to do? I think it is.50

Walker: So on another level I think, acknowledging genocide is really important [...] not swerving from the fact and taking responsibility for the privileges and the ways we have benefitted directly from genocide and colonisation in terms of money and land opportunity and safety in space.51

Walker: There’s concrete cultural messages that we need to pick apart and not act out on some of those agreed messages [...] in terms of personal space and money [...] that these are our rights to take these things [...] where does that strong assertion come from? [...] comes from unexamined belief structures that are very, very, very old. [...] we suffer and therefore we deserve [...] this idea that we are entitled.52

The overarching concept of being with complicity was a large part of the walkers’ experience on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.53 Rather than walking into an idea of continuing the walk of the Caterpillar Dreaming post colonisation, walkers walked in the gap of discontinuance of the Caterpillar Dreaming as caused by colonisation. This is akin to the anecdote of Cain being with Abel’s murder. There was an apt unwrapping of colonial privilege, as well as a stepping toward acknowledging complicity, and out of notions of safety and fixedness as supported by colonial land gestures. The concept of belonging was replaced with a desire toward responsibility.

Walker: Noel gave us these words to walk with — mulling them over: journey, challenge, conflict, power, change, integrity, potential, aspiration — until they become a spiral.54

52. Ibid.
Walker: These are eight words given to us by Noel today — these seem to describe my space quite well! To me these words represent a cycle a life journey that hopefully we will all go through to achieve our potential. The ‘missing’ word was agency [...] the need to be our own agent to actualise our potential [...] also for me potential is about our service to humanity [...] our highest potential is that purpose, that reason, that we have chosen to be here at this time.55

Walker: This is a journey — and I have watched and played a part [...] I saw caring for country and it is very precious — and a service to offer under guidance — I have been very fortunate to have been guided.56

Importantly the concept of belonging was transformed beyond the frame of the individual self. While in the depths of considering privilege, genocide, and entitlement, the conversation left conceptions of my belonging, my connection and my desire and moved toward service and relational responsibility within place and community. It seems clearer that we belong to each other, to other, and in that we are responsible for place.

Walker: I feel privileged to be sitting here in a grove of jam wattles.57

Walker: what we call home — a home is something we nurture.58

Walker: this land boodja, this country so sacred, yet how disconnected I have become — I take time to reconnect for myself — to honour this land.59

Lastly, it is timely to return to Bachelard’s assertion that felicitation is enabled by a refuge in a poetics of place. This was questioned in the literature review with regard to places that consisted of contested belongings. Felicitation, however, did emerge within the journal entries: as an honouring, a respect, a connectedness, and through gratitude. Perhaps there is a felicitation in acknowledgement, non-knowing and non-ownership. While Bachelard’s conceptions of felicitation came from the design of places that evoked an infinite poetics, perhaps being within a relational knowledge in [Australia] outside of design and fixedness enables one to leans into the infinite poetics of unfixed [Australian] place.

4.7.3  Following and Other

Walker: To follow those who have walked before me — it is now not about me — it is about this land.  

Walker: Following those before us and caring for that life and this life.

Walker: A thought around the notion of following in many others footsteps — the importance of respecting their history and knowledge — also that we [ . . . ] are now going to be followed by others and with that comes responsibility.

It is important to touch again briefly on the concept of following by linking following to memory and imagination. Many scholars have linked the vestige of memory with imagination. Vico connects memory, imagination and invention into an assemblage that empowers a new form to emerge. The implication of this connection is that without the function of imagination, concepts and dilemmas stay fixed, and unsolved. The imagination in this sense is not considered adjunct to the real workings of mind, and our perception of reality. Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski call the didactic of memory and imagination “the image-making power of the soul.”

Walkers on the Caterpillar Dreaming followed story and place through this assemblage of memory, imagination and invention.

Walker: We journeyed into a timeless nature [. . .]

Walker: Timelessness — ones life and busyness fading — becoming more with the landscapes rhythms.

Walker: Feeling lots of people walking with us.

This following situated the study’s walkers in a continuum with past walkers and future walkers in a way that brought all time to the present. This past-present-future following was infused with responsibility and care, and instrumental to the emergence of invention or

60. Walker, “Journal EC, Day 2”.
64. Vico in Carter, Dark Writing, 23.
67. Walker, “Journal 2, Day 9”.
68. Walker, “Journal 2, Day 9”.
insight beyond individualism, and beyond the contemporary. This following, through the instrumentalities of Nannup, walking, silence and ceremony allowed for the emergence of other experiences, unusual in a typically hegemonic experience of place.

Walker: I felt the women and children sitting under trees.69

Walker: The spirits and ancestors seem to float back and I feel re-connected again.70

Walker: Deep images, feet happy, running — little people.

This notion of ‘following and followed’ opened walkers to metaphysical experiences of timelessness and otherness on the trail. Nannup had said many people would be walking. Not at all times, but as a significant experience, place became ever-present to the walkers. It was as if the contemporary nature of the place gave way to a new understanding. And the potential conversation of relatedness in place expanded.

Walker: The huge serpent is here right next to me, under the earth a little way. She points her tongue to the left and I see an area of natural trees and spirit women crying tears, needing healing but a ‘holding power place.’71

Walker: The serpent is making echo-pattern rhythm sound.72

Walker: Today I felt the essence of Nyingarn, the echidna. I felt her walking with us. Along with others who crossed the land from many distant places to be with us.73

4.8 Toward the Next Stages

This was the way of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, this coalescence of emergence through the instrumentalities of holding the Walk. These emergent themes are continued through the next chapters in relation to specific events and places. The themes are worked through with additional theory that proposes potential perspectives on the emergent journal entries.

72. Ibid.
Figure 3: Caterpillar Dreaming Map — Stages One and Two
5. STAGE ONE AND TWO — BAD DEATH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses an important aspect of stages one and two of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk that has, up to this point, only been alluded to briefly. It focuses with respect on passing sites of early settler and Aboriginal battle and massacre. I suggest that the process of passing these sites was integral to our ability to continue on the later stages of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. Without an unwavering examination of this massacre passing it would be difficult to fully understand the next chapters. This chapter will be written as a fictocriticism: a writing piece that contains both academic theory and hypothetical narrative in order to make a case for the need for being with these massacre passings.

Fictocriticism has been used in the next three chapters, following, among others, the work of Moloney and Muecke discussed in the literature review, which demonstrates that postcolonial fictions can convey cultural complexities without displacing the subaltern. In addition to fictocriticism I also use hypothetical narrative to bring readers into affective relationship with emergent data as per the discussion in the methodology on narrativity in grounded theory. The following fictocriticism can never be proven to be true or false, and is written to effect new modes of thinking and feeling important to academic progression of such a difficult trope. How I will do this is by weaving theoretical strands, and my own narrative, between the stanzas of Caterpillar Dreaming journal entries to perform the

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ontological knowledge of Nannup that the walkers followed when we passed through these wounded places.

5.1.1 Massacre Acknowledgement

Walker: It rolled up the river [. . .] it shone amongst the ripples [. . .] this golden thread soothed, spoke and bowed its head in respect to the people of the land. Massacred along the banks of this dredged river. This river of blood [. . .] where it leads, I follow.²

Walker: Memories washing through — personal collective — also memories walking past houses and peoples lives — also blood, the aboriginal blood — the untold stories — the taking of ancestral land — river home grief — personal and collective — tears — river of blood. sheoaks whispering the stories — whispering hush sss hhh.³

Walker: Thinking about the impacts of white settler colonisation — today as we walk through a valley of Nyoongar massacre sites. Such a vast, virtually incomprehensible history. [. . .] But the sadness and confusion — the load — must be moved on — into the ant’s nests — laid to rest ... The grief lifted — everything was fresh.⁴

It is first important to bring the places of massacre to acknowledgement in this chapter.

The Caterpillar Dreaming walkers passed a number of massacre sites in stages one and two of the Caterpillar Dreaming. Each of these places exists with varying degrees of disclosure within place-literature, or through on-site verification. Most of the massacre sites passed were made known to walkers through Nannup’s knowing, and through other informed walkers. The first massacre place, known as one of the earliest settler to Nyungar battles, was passed on the second day of walking, alongside Lake Monger: one of the swamps that still exists on the periphery of Perth City.⁵

On May 3 1830 a couple of armed Nyungar parties took to pilfering stocks from settler homesteads and barracks. Until this point settlement had kept largely amiable affairs with Aboriginal custodians. However, as settlement quickly expanded, Nyungar people became increasingly offended at their enforced exclusion from lands and the loss of their hunting

and gathering freedoms. This new Nyungar agency caused alarm among settlers, and despite an initial attempt to remain friendly, when the Nyungar parties’ harassment did not give way, force was asserted to restore settler superiority.

The battle moved through various places with a few resultant injuries on both sides. At Lake Monger, however, the pinnacle of the battle ensued, with settler gunfire used against Nyungar people hiding in swamp bushes. While the reports record that “several natives” were “severely wounded,” Nannup reports that there were many Nyungar deaths on this occasion at Lake Monger. This onslaught set a pattern that would continue for the next century, and battles became more common, violent and one-sided.

Walker: We were greeted at the Aboriginal reserve by local Nyoongar Yorgas [women], we set up camp and weeded the memorial garden.

Walker: Here we walk past where the stream enters the Avon — and where the red blood was seen to enter this big river from quite a distance away. (that the people first went and stood in the wagyul [serpent/river] thinking it would save them — and then no one got hurt as whites didn’t want to pollute water steam — but next time they massacred [. . . ])

Walker: Flea Pool was a little uneasy knowing the history of the site, i.e. the massacre that happened here years ago.

Massacre sites were then passed by the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers along the river at Success Hill, Swan Valley and at various points between the inland rural towns of Toodyay, Northam and York. One of the few accounts of what purportedly occurred in the Success Hill area, says, “I believe one tribe was nearly exterminated by two or three Soldiers who followed them after they had stolen some sheep, and coming upon them unawares the natives were nearly all bayoneted.” While specific places of massacre were often unknown to walkers, walkers reported certain feelings that elicited potential insight.
to places of Aboriginal death. At these places walkers would gather in silence, acknowledge potential massacre, and most importantly subjectively feel place.

5.2 **Bad Death**

Walker: *And one place of darker energy which brings my mind to soft focus.*

Walker: *Just before Millard’s Pool — happy hill — all trees standing up proud, strong, happy — distinct change in inner feeling.*

Walker: *But from Toodyay to here it’s felt sad.*

Like the experience of the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers, there are many academic conjectures that places hold the multilayered memories of their pasts, and that these memories linger in places in ways that can be felt. This is especially found in narratives recounting trauma and violence in place. Social anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin calls these places *affective space*, where she says “subjectivities and residual affects [. . .] linger, like a hangover, in the aftermath of violence.” In places where there has been colonisation and diaspora these affective spaces often go unrecognised within the hegemonic narratives of place that have displaced them. Here, I use Nadia Seremetakis’ term *bad death* to follow the idea that these affective spaces hold death that has been "improperly mourned" or "un-witnessed." Further than this, the effect of being *improperly mourned* and *un-witnessed*, holds bad death in place.

A current trajectory of research around such affective spaces calls for collective practice and participation with these sites of sometimes-unknown cultural history. Landscape architect and writer Jacky Bowring discusses the often-ineffectual marking of such places through memorial. She explains that markers can aim to provide a hopeful closure, or a
fixed completion for the site, without fulfilling the necessary requirement that such sites are allowed to remain an “apparatus of grief.” Similarly, cultural geographer Karen Till makes the comment that marking narratives in public space in an attempt to make them tangible, can be contentious next to the idea that place and place meaning is never “stable in time or space”

She says, “sites of memory have meanings that exceed their forms of authored representations of the past because of the ways individuals and social groups experience them affectively.”

Here Till moves toward specific memory-work practices with place that she terms a place-based-ethics of care. These practices enable memory-work in place that does not singularly move toward making visible repressed narratives as resistance to hegemonic powers of place. Beyond this, place-based-ethics of care support the emergence of a multigenerational “collective security” and “social capacity” in places of sometimes continuing hegemonic disruption. She elicits a response of care – “a reaching out toward something other than self” – in the way she establishes connection with wounded places, and discusses projects that create communities of witnessing through ritualistic, artistic, and ongoing practices of care with place, and the people of places. She says:

What the artists and residents in wounded cities teach us through their memory work and practices of care-giving and -receiving is to respect those that have gone before, attend to past injustices […] and treat the past as a dynamic resource in imagining different urban futures.

Till describes an event of memory-work as occurring in Prestwick Place in Cape Town, South Africa. Three thousand unmarked graves of slaves were unearthed during construction work. Memory-work through candle light vigils, processions and legal hearings halted development for a year, as the community called for larger ideas of place meaning, and during which time ancestral connections were revealed. Till reflects that

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., 12.
place may “act as a threshold through which the living are able to make contact with those
who have gone before, with human and non-human lives born and yet to come.”22 She
shows how these Cape Town residents became responsible to place by engaging with
multi-generational understandings of place, and by having the space to connect with
ancestors, and understand how ancestors’ stories of displacement came about.

On the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, a largely non-Aboriginal group guided through
Nyungar ontologies of place by Nannup, passed over many places of Aboriginal death. This
was not a case of re-connecting with in-ground ancestral lineages, as the walkers and the
massacred were of different cultures. There was, however, a phenomenon of relational
capacity and agency that emerged, through the passing of these sites. The next section will
discuss the following of Nyungar ontologies that had this occur.

5.3 The Blind, the Browns and the Mongers

Walker: I can forgive you, can you forgive me?23

Walker: Two cultures forced together — what is the glue that binds us.24

Walker: When we forget things go closer to death.25

This section sets up two ontological followings aimed toward revealing how this place-
based-ethics-of-care happened within the West Australian landscapes of the Caterpillar
Dreaming. The first is a hypothetical narrative that exposes inter-cultural relationships
important to this chapter’s unfolding; the second is a story told by Nannup on the
relational importance of a particular settler family – the Browns. I then discuss these
followings in relation to my own family’s history within the places of the Caterpillar
Dreaming, and reveal the experiences of the walkers to further illuminate these
hypothetical and Nyungar ontological followings.

22. Ibid., 12.
The first following: As being with bad death is not a hegemonic practice of place, I venture back to an early Nyungar narrative. At the time of the first British fleet’s arrival in [Western Australia], Nyungar peoples carried the belief that the settlers were distant ancestors who were returning home after being away a very long time. Early-settler anthropologist Daisy Bates, recalls Nyungar Elder Joobaitch saying that the settlers were “[. . .] the jang-ga that his fathers told him were the returned spirits of his own dead.”26

Another account from Richards and Richards says, “This is djand ga ... the spirit of a man from gorra — of our tribe long ago. When the spirit goes across the mammart [ocean] to nygurganup [perhaps a place] the skin is made more wilban [white] by the salt.”27

Walker: Looking at river with new eyes, still mostly blind, but light coming in faintly.28

Walker: My eyes are opening up.29

Walker: And I know there are more voices to this place.30

The dominant narrative that was followed at the time of settlement was the settler narrative of [Australia] being terra nullius, and Aboriginal peoples being primitive. These narratives allowed a certain treatment and enactment toward Aboriginal people and place arising from the narrative’s privileged position. What would result from following the Nyungar narrative that early settlers were returned ancestors? What would this mean for conciliation, for place, and for passing massacre sites? Len Collard relates that it was seen by Nyungar people that the returned ancestors were “blind, deaf and without knowledge. They stumbled about in the bush as if they were lost”31 and that “sometimes Nyungar helped the newcomers, reminding them where they were, and how to stay safe.”32

32. Ibid.
Had the newcomers followed Nyungar custodians, perhaps more levels of cultural teaching — of how to stay safe in place — would have emerged. The following story, as told by Nannup, is a further following of safety in place — namely a narrative that aids in understanding Nyungar ontologies of cultural safety and connectedness in place. This story tells of the Brown family, an early-settler family to [Western Australia], of their deeds and resultant generational affects.

Nannup: *The fruit doesn’t fall far from the trees. You see, this is what people learn, you know [. . .].*

*And what happens is as we move across the land, shedding the skin that falls into the soil. And that skin then is taken into the plants and trees and our DNA is in everything then.*

*Then as you travel across the land, remember I’ve said, doesn’t matter what colour you are, the spirit knows you and your skin’s being shed. So every person that’s ever lived and followed the song-line and sat down at the water hole, camped at the campsites, lived on the land, their skin has been shed.*

*We’re talking about the Brown family that used to live in York and he’s the son of Thomas Brown, one of the first settlers out there, at York. And his name’s Kenneth. And the Browns had their children there, and Edith was the third born to them, and when she was almost 12 years old her mother died and she had to be brought down to the city.*

*The story goes that her father re-married and went back to the farm. And he was a real character, he got up to many, many things but he was like his father. And that meant they massacred lots of Aboriginal people.*

*Well the family used to go to a little pool. They used to picnic underneath the sheoaks, and the sheoak we call Quell. And they take in the skin. And then they take so much of it in, the DNA is really strong in that particular plant. So it knows that they picnic there.*

*And when you are in-tune and you know your spirituality, if you go and sit underneath those trees on a windy day you’ll hear the voices of all of the people that have ever lived in that area.*
And I could hear her [Edith’s] voice [...] So, as I was sitting under the tree she said in the wind that her father, Kenneth, and her grandfather Thomas, couldn’t rest because of the wrong they had done to the Aboriginal people.

And that’s the nature of this place that we live in. Our spirituality is in everything. We just have to sit down quietly long enough to know or to take it on board.33

My personal story quite possibly resembles these ancestors of unrest in connection to the Caterpillar Dreaming. My family, similar to the Browns, has been in Western Australia since early colonisation, although prior to the study I was only vaguely aware of them and their connections to wheatbelt towns. Anecdotally, the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail passed the birth towns, graves and living places of five generations of my family – ten direct ancestors. The Caterpillar Dreaming walkers passed right by the burial place of my great-great-grandmother in the old part of the York cemetery, before ascending Mount Brown. Further, as mentioned in the introduction, my great-great-grandfather was a policeman in early Northam. I don’t know the stories of these ancestors — what they did, what they didn’t do, the things that were seen — although I feel an indescribable connection to them in this work.

There are some clues within family memoirs that hint towards expressions of unrest in the wheatbelt towns along the Caterpillar Dreaming trail. My great-grandmother had difficulty sleeping at night in Bencubbin. She took to writing the things that were tumbling about in her head and stopping her from sleep. I have been told that in the morning, each time she had written her night-time thoughts, she would find her papers indecipherable. What was it that haunted my great-grandmother? Further, my grandmother, my great-grandmother’s daughter, who passed along the whalebone at the beginning of this study, also seemed to be haunted by something, she writes:

One could write reams about the way out farms (and by way out — I mean far away). I hated them. For me there was always a sense of desolation, remoteness (terror almost) and was the cause I think of me steering very clear of any farming lad who showed any interest in me.34

Admittedly this could simply be my grandmother’s dislike of being so remote. Terror however, seems a very strong word. My grandmother, Molly Monger, ended up not marrying a farming lad, but my grandfather, Jack Lancelot Duffield, who later in his life wrote an article entitled ‘Toward Shared Nationhood.’ My grandfather’s intention was that this article be circulated across many different organisations and communities of Australia. His intention was toward conciliation. He writes:

Everyday, in this great Continent, we are told of cases of hardship or dispossession deeply affecting our Aboriginal people. We speak of our Aboriginal problem, but fail to recognise that the problem is not of Aboriginal making at all. The problem, and a tremendous problem does exist, is largely one of non-acceptance by the white population.35

In many ways I see this PhD as continuing his work, and some form of a repatriation of ancestral belonging here in [Western Australia]. To continue in this chapter, I follow this idea presented in Nannup’s story of Edith Cowan — of ancestors of unrest — using trauma and spectral trace theory to further unpack the possibilities and potentials of such relational thinking and following.

5.4 The Spectral Face of Trauma

Walker: Trauma doesn’t just extradite itself, it moves in circles and cycles, through generations — until what?36


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Walker: [ . . . ] And I feel our [path?] extending — the people walking now — and my angry father walking too — and my sister [ . . . ] and I felt a presence of support as though we’d never been apart.37

Walker: Just a feeling of sadness in my personal life that came up and I need to process.38

Writer and playwright Susan Griffin’s work, A chorus of Stones: The private life of war, makes important connections between the violence and terror of war, concentration camps, and nuclear warfare, and the personal lives of families touched by these unspoken horrors and the resultant alcoholism, depression, and suicide that can follow. In a personal memoir Griffin, looking at a photo of her father’s face as a boy, says she can see a “silent sorrow mapped on his face.”39 She says, “this sorrow is mine too.”40 She writes that each person carries the history of the world, and particularly of family, and that when ancestral secrets are exposed, “our lives are made suddenly clearer to us, as the unnatural heanness of unspoken truth is dispersed.”41 She continues: “we hold a sorrow deep within and cannot weep until that history is sung.”42

Within academic discourse on trauma and spectral traces, a similar intergenerational theme is noted. I turn to these narratives here in order to unfold a larger pattern. Trauma is said to repeat, as it remains unremembered and thus un-integrated to the conscious mind.43 Trauma un-integrated by one generation manifests as trauma within the next.44 Here we can match Griffin’s sadness to her father’s. Spectral Trace theory, suggests that that which is not remembered can haunt a person. A haunting is not necessarily that of an individual ghost, but fractions of memory that have been repressed from family or cultural narratives.

40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 13.
42. Ibid.
44. This has been called psychic trauma by Vogel, and has been likened to a genetic imprint or cellular memory by Grof. See Atkinson’s discussion in Atkinson, Trauma Trails, 87-88.
Sociologist Grace Cho says, “unspoken and shameful family secrets generate ghosts,” and “ghosts are unexamined irregularities of everyday life.”

There have been academic works such as Cho’s that follow these hauntings. In Cho’s work *Haunting and the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy and the Forgotten War* she reveals hidden impacts of the Korean war, by following traces of the Yanggongju (Western Princesses) who were Korean sex workers for U.S. service men. Her exploration of repressed emotional narratives of the Yanggongju combines fiction writing, dream work, and historical research and in it, she expresses an assemblage of the traumas that could not be held or spoken by those who lived them. Cho says, “unspeakable trauma does not die out with the person who first experienced it,” but that the “ghost speaks through the wound.” In a similar enunciation, Ogaga Ifowodo, cultural trauma academic, says hauntings are followed “till [sic] the word and the wound fit,” until the repressed secrets of histories are named and made conscious.

Is my great-grandmothers, and grandmothers’ unrest my own? Has this unrest enabled me to follow a particular haunting toward this project? Has it provided the opportunity for an investigative understanding of my own belonging and non-belonging? What has this idea of belonging made possible or impossible? In terms of hegemonic belonging Ifowodo gestures toward how shared ghosts find ways of becoming established social practices. He says, cultural histories are a “rather violent and bloody book of atrocities” that “have had to be repressed” in order to function in a normal way. I read this as suggesting that the social conditions that support hegemonic conceptions of reality need to suppress the

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45. Grace M. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 18; and Ibid., 29
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., 6.
48. Ibid., 184.
50. Ibid., 73.
51. Ibid.
ghost of violent histories and thus create structures such as ongoing violent racism to keep hegemonic structures ‘intact.’

Walker: I feel like I am walking underground.

Walker: I felt like I was walking through shin deep water.

Walker: For me the first day of stage 3 was like walking through shallow water. My body struggled and my hips ached.

Another facet of trauma theory that helps deepen this exploration is the connection between trauma and liminality. Ifowodo connects trauma to an “unsolvable paradox,” suggesting that trauma is “the actual representation of temporality.” As discussed in this thesis, the instrumentalities of Nannup, walking, silence and ceremony had walkers connect into the liminal nature of timeless experience. Walkers walked the paradoxical gap between visual expressions of place hegemony, and larger ideas of place relatedness. The gap that played out in stages one and two of the Walk, was this violent history, this blood and bad death underfoot. Here I make a case for the walkers connecting into the liminality of ancestral hauntings and the ghosts that hegemony has repressed. Through simply being in the liminality of trauma in place, all discontinuities representing gaps in ancestral continuity were present, even beyond notions of time and place.

5.4.1 The Performance of Liminality

Walker: Wind that animates form — and allows form to speak.

Walker: The words rattling through my head: Dreaming, layers, Liminal, In-between, Edges of things, Interdependant, Co-emergent, Unobstructed.

Walker: Topography affected mood/feeling.

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52. This idea is also supported by: Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis, ed. Nicholas Rand (London: The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 1994), 176.
56. Ibid., 71–72.
57. Ifowodo, History, Trauma, and Healing, 72.
At this juncture I would like to offer some helpful theories to shed further light on the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers experience and articulation of liminal space. Within the experimental arts Jill Bennett has done some important work on how the affect of trauma can be transmitted through the arts. She begins that we feel pain viscerally, and thus, transferring the feeling imprint of trauma is more affective than portraying a narrative around trauma. Bennett draws on French holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo’s account of the trauma of Auschwitz, specifically her notion of sense memory, to say that sense memory is transmitted “through the body” as the body registers the direct experience of memories of pain. In this way the concept of sense memory resonates with the ideas explored earlier in this section regarding the importance of experiencing the liminal of trauma.

This idea of sense memory is enacted through the pre-performance training and resultant plays of Director Phillip Zarrilli. Of particular relevance is Zarrilli’s production of Susan Griffin’s Speaking Stones, a collaborative performance aimed at transferring the imprint of trauma from European diasporas. Zarrilli explains the importance of granting audiences a “resonant awareness” of trauma, by facilitating trauma to play out through them. He trains actors in a process called psycho-physical whereby actors drop the concept of inhabiting roles or characters, are guided to act, rather, as a “resonant sounding box” for performance content. This is to carry an energetic embodiment or imprint of “words” and “ideas” pertinent to a particular event. Interestingly, Zarrilli’s plays often involve gaps, silence and movement.

It is my understanding that the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers, through the instrumentalities of Nannup, walking, silence, and ceremony became resonant sounding boxes for the liminal experience of place. Zarrilli produces non-narratives rather than narratives in his plays, echoing what has been discussed in this chapter regarding the

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62. Ibid., 26.
64. Ibid.
65. Zarrilli has been developing psychophysical acting methods since 1976.
importance of the gap, of trauma, or of discontinuity. Here I suggest that through the paradoxical following of Caterpillar Dreaming—a trail both continuous and stopped—walkers entered and acted the gap of liminal discontinuity. Perhaps Ifowodo's idea that hauntings continue "till [sic] the word and the wound fit," could be extended to being as resonant sounding boxes to the wound of place.  

Walker: Make these footsteps be honest and open, really tell the land how I feel. And feel it talking back. Let it feel the pleasure. The delight and the pain [. . .]. 

Walker: I have learned to know and understand in new ways. This track where tears collect and through my own eyes and voice — I feel.

Walker: When I listen to Country I hear flies and wind. Birds and footsteps. I hear country in a car engine. And in the conversations of these people. I feel country but can not really separate it from myself.

It is lastly important to make note of the mechanism of empathy in this conversation. Jill Bennett explains that

Transgenerational trauma necessitates empathy in the sense that one cannot relive the losses of previous generations or share their memories, but one is compelled to negotiate a shared memory in which the sense memory of others touches the communal memory of those outside.

Bennett follows Kaja Silverman's term "heteropathic identification" in her explorations of empathy, describing it as "a form of encounter predicated on an openness to a mode of existence or experience beyond what is known by the self." I suggest that this was an important function of the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers' following: that there was an importance to the walkers' empathic following of the trail, and of their encounters with places of bad death. I believe, however, that empathy is only part of the required movement

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69. Walker, "Journal AW, Day 20".
71. Bennett, Empathic Vision, 146.
72. Ibid., 9.
of accessing liminal places of trauma, and that it needs to be coupled with a mechanism that extends outward—honoring. This will be explored later in the chapter.

5.5 **Walking Bad Death**

Walker: *To me it’s like taking something home [. . .] home within the heart and that spot where once you have been there you can really feel what the ancestors are saying.*

Walker: *Transparent souls, whispering, pulling the back of my neck — rest now, have peace — calling from the underground — rest now, have peace — searching how without bodies of the earth — rest now, have peace — may our footsteps bring your rest.*

Walker: *I felt my heart as an old mans heart. I thought of it as my grandfather’s heart — and in a way it was around mine.*

In this next section I reveal the two main occurrences within journal entries of the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers passing through sites of *Bad Death:* ancestral connection and place synchronicity. Firstly, the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers met with ancestral resemblances of their own, and other families through being with *bad death.* Trauma theorist Heller Agnes writes, “every person is traumatized in his [sic] singularity.”

Through connecting with this layer of *bad death* walkers experienced *feelings* within that liminal space that connected them to greater ideas of relatedness. It was as if the sadness, the guilt, the anger, or the unrest, could be met within the individual as a symptom of an ancestral past. This connection did not need, nor necessarily reveal, a story or a narrative from the past.

Leading writers on spectral trace theory within psychoanalysis, Nicholas Abraham and Mária Török write: "The phantom which returns to haunt bears witness to the existence of the dead buried within the other." Grace Cho writes that the world is a “family of

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77. Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 175.
It is as if these feelings experienced are an essential component to grieving sites of bad death: a required processing of emotional states that could perhaps not be processed within another time. That, to return to Ifowodo, the feeling itself occurred as the word for the wound, and living this feeling out served a function in ancestral deeds and connectedness.

I turn briefly to Freud’s 1917 article on Mourning and Melancholia. In this foundational account of trauma, Freud discusses the differences between a ‘normal’ grieving process, a case in which what has been lost is consciously understood and grieving in time comes to an end, and a melancholic disposition which exhibits many of the same symptoms of grief without the ability to regard consciously what has been lost. Freud remarks that the speech of a melancholic ‘patient’ is “hardly at all applicable to the patient himself [sic], but that with some insignificant modifications they do fit someone else.”79 Freud’s later works discuss the possibility of grieving the internal aspects of the melancholic disposition, albeit as a human condition of endless grief, toward relieving the melancholic state.80

I wonder here if we can extrapolate this into spectral trace theory – if in fact hauntings and past deeds — ancestral loss — can occur symptomatically within an individual, as a sign that sometime in another time has not had the ability to grieve effectively. I further wonder if it is not a case of relinquishing this ‘other’ inside in order to become a sovereign un-melancholic being, but rather to make connection with the ancestors precisely through grieving the loss of such a relationship. If this is the case, it supports the notion that the feelings and thoughts within the liminal space can orchestrate a necessary connection to such unconscious loss, and facilitate necessary grieving, which brings us back to Bowring’s conclusion of the necessity of ‘memorials’ (of bad death) to figure as an apparatus of grief.

78. Cho, Haunting the Korean Diaspora, 30.
5.5.1 Grief and Rain at Lake Monger

Walker: Walking from the beginning of Lake Monger where I felt a little overwhelmed, a little emotional. We stopped to pause in silence around the other side and we were told about the massacres that had occurred there.81

Walker: We stopped near the lake where few shared stories of massacre they learnt of. Feeling in my stomach is hard like that when you do something really bad and you feel so guilty for. Forgiveness is something we must work on is the message.82

Walker: Lake Monger a place of tears.83

The second main theme that emerged as the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers experienced being with bad death was reciprocity of place. As mentioned earlier the first place of massacre the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers passed was one of the earliest battles between settlers and Nyungar people at Lake Monger. The walkers gathered in silence under a large tree near the site identified by Nannup. He showed where the Nyungar bodies had been buried: land that has now been reclaimed for housing. The walkers individually and collectively acknowledged and felt the massacre site, and allowed the feelings to work within them. The walkers then left the site in silence and inner sadness, until a soft rain came, turning heavier and heavier as the walkers continued.

Walker: Heavy downpour to represent tears shed for lost lives at Lake Monger.84

Walker: Watching the cleansing rain approaching from the island in the mist.85

Walker: But joy also that grief leads to healing.86

This rain was reciprocal with the transformation of walkers’ inner feelings of sadness turning to joy. Nannup told the walkers that this was cleansing rain.87 This particular

86. Walker, “Journal 5, Day 2”.
87. The synchronous emergence of rain may be likened to John Ruskin’s original intent behind the term ‘the pathetic fallacy’ wherein he critiques the human desire to project emotions onto natural forms such as rocks and the weather. While there may be future research direction in interrogating the intersection of the pathetic fallacy with Aboriginal ontologies of place, the reader is invited to feel into the emergence of rain here and in other parts of this study as a relational aspect of place. The aim is to invite curiosity into the unknown relational operations between place and
downpour had every walker saturated even through wet weather gear. Amidst this walking in the wet, all faces were shining, happy, cleansed, as if a great deed had been achieved. The water falling onto the land near Lake Monger seemed relevant, necessary.

Walker: Lake Monger massacre site — that what brings us together reconciliation can feel into shared pain and victims beyond lens of colour — under the skin colour — bloods always red. 88

Walker: your skin, my skin, our skin... 89

Walker: need to conceive beyond dualistic thinking. 90

Nannup makes the connection between the prominent philanthropic work of Edith Cowan and her carrying of her ancestral misdemeanor. He says the important instrumentality of allowing ancestral rest is reincarnation. He tells a story of genark (the seagull), saying that the seagull sits on water near to where people have been buried, helping spirits pass between the earth and the spirit realm. He says the genark bathe in the sweet water (fresh water) to return spirits to the earth. 91 The only time he says the genark are not sitting in the sweet water is when there has been torrential rain. He says: “because when you have torrential rain you have sweet water sitting on top of salt water all the way from where they are out there, so the spirits can travel by themselves. They don't need birds. Got it? Good.” 92

5.6 Ancestral Continuity

The hypothetical following of the early settlers being returned ancestors, or all settlers for that matter, represents a gesture towards relatedness. Whether that relatedness predates colonisation, or is bound up in the crimes of colonisation is conjecture. It reveals the importance, however, of rediscovering how cultures are linked. Aboriginal trauma

92. Ibid.
academic Judy Atkinson says the absolute linchpin of Aboriginal culture is the “the spiritual continuity of the present — and the future — with the ancestral past.”\textsuperscript{93} Trauma disrupts this relationship.\textsuperscript{94} She says Aboriginal people call cultural genocide the “greatest violence” as it is the “violence that brings the loss of the spirit, the destruction of self, of the soul.”\textsuperscript{95} Perhaps ancestral discontinuity is the biggest ghost that haunts hegemony. Could it be considered that in a very long world history of colonial war and dispossession, of acts that disconnect traumatically, that colonial actions are symptomatic of colonised people? Perhaps following Aboriginal ontology here restores a colonised soul to ancestral relatedness, an otherwise symptomatic blindness.

Walker: The land around York is beautiful — troubled — those who know say it rests a little easier now.\textsuperscript{96}

Walker: My last thought as I sat by the river in the evening was that the river could represent the family heart, a deep ancestral path, and each drop is a soul working its way in a lifetime within the ancestral family heart.\textsuperscript{97}

Walker: I just feel like we are carrying a healing spirit across the land. That each individual step is equally important on the journey to where we are headed.\textsuperscript{98}

It is important to conclude with the acknowledgement that one passing of these sites of bad death is hardly sufficient to cleanse bad death completely. The impact of colonisation, and the ghosts of hegemony, demand constant unpacking. It is perhaps even eternal work; as such traumatic events may never be finally consigned to a fixed recollection of an event. In this way these places of bad death can inform a continual practice with place. Grace Cho offers, “what hovers in the liminal space between forgetting and remembering can open up and inform histories and current practices of domination.”\textsuperscript{99} It seems more likely that continual practice with such places will reveal the necessary ghosts specific to the time.

\textsuperscript{93} Atkinson, Trauma Trails, 32.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{99} Cho, Haunting the Korean Diaspora, 53
Trauma theorist Laurie Beth Clarke writes, “fixity is not living, and the soul cannot respond to this.”

To this end, Nannup tells that it is an individual’s responsibility to forgive their ancestors. I connect this to the idea of liminal space being timeless, indefinable, unfixed. We are not participating with an un-reconciled past, we are participating in an un-reconciled present. I imagine the act of forgiving the ancestors is on par with being responsible in the here and now for the ancestral haunting. Empathy or heteropathic identification with the ancestors gets us as far as understanding and allowing difference, paradox and complexity; I suggest that there is an important function in grieving the ancestors, grieving for them and returning them to their rightful place, to rest in peace. I imagine this to be an honoring of ancestral connection, without which I would not be here. An honoring says thank you. I forgive you. I’ll take it from here.

100. Clark, “Ruined Landscapes and Residual Architecture”, 86.
Figure 4: Caterpillar Dreaming Map — Stage Three
6. STAGE THREE — PERFORMING PLACE

6.1 Introduction

The last chapter looked at walking bad death within liminal space, denoted as imagery of a layer of blood underfoot. This chapter reveals another resonance of walking within the liminal of place – perhaps denoted figuratively as what is beneath the bad death, or what is accessible beyond being with bad death and its acknowledgement. The chapter begins by theoretically situating the concept of the liminality and a particular agency of place next to two main instrumental works that will be discussed in the next section. These works set the scene and help contextualise the emergent journal entries of stages three and four. The chapter then reveals the story of walking stage three of the Caterpillar Dreaming through the landscapes of Cunderdin Hill, the Salty Mortlock, Doongin Peak, and Yorkrakine Rock.

A central touchstone of this chapter is that the landscapes of stage three themselves had agency in the Nyungar women’s journey of leaving their birth home, and arriving in a new home.¹ Cunderdin Hill, a place meaning to be violently ill was where the Nyungar women would find out they would never return to their birthplace. There was also a hill to place memories, a place for tears, a place for healing, and a place for being within a void-like consciousness where the Nyungar women were empty of their previous story and place, and awaiting their new story and place. These were the landscapes of stage three, four (and five) of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk. These stages are what I refer to, as teaching landscapes: landscapes that provided embodied teaching of a particular aspect of the journey. Stages one and two, in contrast, were pathways toward these landscapes that were of absolute importance in the facilitation of the Caterpillar Dreaming as a transformative experience.

¹. This movement is described in section 1.6, “The Caterpillar Dreaming,” 42.
In this chapter I will be revealing the emergent journal entries from the landscapes of Cunderdin Hill, the salty Mortlock River, Doongin Peak, and Yorkrakine Rock. Chapter seven, which follows it, will discuss the inherent agency and co-definition of the walkers with the void in the increasingly barren salt-affected landscapes north of Bencubbin.

6.2 **Two Influential Works**

Two works that I wish to discuss to lay the foundation of this chapter are Ourania Emmanouil's recent 2016 PhD thesis, *Being with Country: The performance of people-place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail*; and Marit Skaatan’s Masters thesis, *The Writer in Exile: States of In-betweenness in Two Short Stories by Katherine Mansfield*. As with the nature of grounded theory research, new relevant research has been found over the course of the enactment of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks, and through the writing of this thesis. This new literature has emerged in parallel with the emergence of the walk.

Firstly, Emmanouil’s work discusses important Aboriginal ontologies of relationship on the Lurujarri Dreaming trail. The Lurujarri is situated in the northwest corner of [Western Australia] and emerged as an open invitation walk for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to restore important place relatedness and connectedness by the custodial Roe family. I follow Emmanouil’s work to trace a theme of *place as agent* in the unravelling of a colonial aesthetic of landscape. Of particular note is Emmanouil’s lead to Val Plumwood, whose insights led to some important questions. Next, I follow Skaatan, in some important links she has made between the liminality, states of exile and rites of passage. Importantly Skaatan discusses Victor Turner’s work on ritual that I will apply to stages three and four of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk.

In the literature review I introduced the concept of Kimberley and Everitt's *unlandscape*, as an in-between response of hegemonic landscape and Aboriginal *Country*. In their cross-cultural collaboration Kimberley and Everitt write that *Country* unwraps landscape. This is a way of saying that *Country*, as a sovereign Aboriginal concept, explicit with blood ties, and attendant kin responsibilities, can affect the non-Aboriginal, without touching what *Country* is for Aboriginality. *Unlandscape*, as they describe it, is *co-existent with Country* and "can enable a more reciprocal and meaningful discussion with Country." Emmanouil's work looks at how *Country* on the Lurujarri is an influential teacher and agent in creating "co-productive acts," with the walkers of the Lurujarri — both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Significant to her discussion is the attribution of livingness to all materiality. In a way that resonates with an Aboriginal ontological view, she implicates all materiality in the co-construction of generative events — such as the walking of a trail. Emmanouil follows authors that communicate the world as having a "poetic structure of reality," and propose that place has the ability to "communicate meaning with people." Of particular note here is her following of Freya Mathews' work *A contemporary panpsychism* where she draws on Mathews' notions of enactment and communicative presence in the world. For Mathews, one is enrolled in place through being "wrapped in chant or song or incantation." This allows, "encounters between human and other-than-human entities [that] constitute a 'dialogical modality.'"

Further to this, Emmanouil connects with Val Plumwood's work that states, "Instrumental culture makes of its objects of attention a terra nullius, a prior vacancy, the better to

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7. Ibid., 240.
9. Ibid.
inscribe its own ends.”10 Plumwood likewise calls for a re-enchantment of the material realm and asks, “How can we re-present experience in ways that honour the agency and creativity of the more-than-human world?”11 She also asks, “can we write stone teaching […] ?”12 This is an invitation, similar to that of unlandscape to enroll Country, and other non-human expressions or materialities of place, granting agency to all forms of livingness.

Emmenouil uses actor-network-theory, an ethnographic modality that allows for all forms of materiality to have engendered agency, in revealing the generative enactments of people and place on the Lurujarri. Emmenouil shows how land, stories, storytellers, and other non-human forms act with people to the realisation that nothing exists outside of relational enactments. Her work with the relational ontologies of the Lurujarri, is similar to that of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk in her insight that “significant scope exists to more fully investigate non-Indigenous people’s ‘coming into country.’”13 The collaborative autoethnography of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk has resonances with actor-network-theory, and this chapter seeks to reveal stone teachings, and a specific pathway toward the unravelling of hegemonic landscape by Country.

Aboriginal author Christine Black says of the Ngarinyin language group that they “are constantly realigning themselves with the original creation—they are not just building on a foundation myth, but rather recreating that narrative on a daily basis, and in doing so achieving a continued balance.”14 Original creation, or the livingness of materiality, affects co-productively with the people enrolled in a particular performance. The question central to this chapter is: what emerges when the materiality of non-Aboriginality becomes co-productive within ancient place and story?

11. Ibid., 19.
12. Ibid., 33.
6.2.2 Ritual Liminality

The next link within this chapter I wish to explore is one of in-between states of belonging. To do so I will follow connections Skaatan makes in The Writer in Exile. Skaatan follows the writings of 1888 New Zealand-born short story writer Katherine Mansfield. She attributes Mansfield’s colonial position in New Zealand to being in a liminal state of exile and extends that to Mansfield’s writings, which explore the liminality in recurring themes such as “home, homelessness, journeys, boundaries and states of in-between-ness.”

She says that Mansfield’s characters are often depicted as vagrants, “with a disturbed sense of cultural belonging.” In effect this links the idea of liminality to states of un-belonging, through, in this case, exile.

Exile, Skaatan follows, is not only attributable to positions where one is forcibly removed from one’s country, or home place, but also when one makes the choice to migrate. As per the discussion in the literature review she traces authors, in this case Stephen Turner in Being Colonial/Colonial Being, who express this position of un-belonging within a paradoxical predicament of wanting to “subordinate the new place to the dominant culture of the home country [. . .] and [. . .] be of, and feel at home in, the new place.” She also draws on the work of John McLeod, saying that the in-between states experienced by the migrant “can cause disillusionment, pain, fragmentation, and discontinuity,” and Edward Said, who calls this state of exile a “condition of terminal loss,” of “crippling sorrow and estrangement.”

She lastly links to Bhabha’s concept of border lives, which exist “between nations [. . .] characterized by thresholds, boundaries, and barriers.”

In weaving these theoretical perspectives into a reflection on stage three of the Caterpillar dreaming walk, firstly, I would like to link these in-between states to the concept of anxiety as introduced in the Literature Review, and Bhabha’s assertion that this anxiety

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16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 21.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
also carries the seeds of transformation into new modes of cultural expression. I likewise link Skaatan’s work on unstable liminality with Turner’s concept of rites of passage.\textsuperscript{22} Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts in \textit{Liminal Landscapes} explain liminality as “pertaining to a threshold,” “a doorway of [ . . . ] physical and psychic possibility,” and “the initial stage of a process.”\textsuperscript{23} Turner, following Arnold van Gennep, articulates these liminal transitions as recognisable stages, even initiations, calling them: \textit{separation}, \textit{margin} (or threshold), and \textit{aggregation}.\textsuperscript{24}

This is of interest to me, both in the imagining of the Nyungar women the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were following, and to the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers themselves. Turner posits that the separation phase marks a split “from a set of cultural conditions.”\textsuperscript{25} This could be likened both to the Nyungar women leaving the knowledge systems of their Nyungar home, and to the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers’ split from hegemonic conceptions of place. Next Turner elicits the margin phase a liminal experience, as a state of in-between where all things are ambiguous.

Turner says, “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.”\textsuperscript{26} He says the liminal passage is often connected to “death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.”\textsuperscript{27} This stage ends, according to Turner, when the “passage is consummated [ . . . ] [and the] ritual subject [ . . . ] is in a relatively stable state once more,”\textsuperscript{28} and as I may conjecture within my imagining of the Caterpillar Dreaming trail, when the Nyungar women are given stories and knowledge of their new place. This telling of rites of passage seems attuned to the significance of the caterpillar, the cocoon, and the butterfly.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
6.3 Stage Three Places

Walker: Have really felt the walk through the stories of the walkers.\(^{29}\)

Walker: Beauty, wisdom — arising from the ugliness, the grief, the damaged, the broken — Caterpillar changing into Butterfly.\(^{30}\)

Walker: Caterpillar to moth — humility, sacrifice.\(^{31}\)

Stage three of the Caterpillar Dreaming was where the Caterpillar Dreaming story really came alive for the walkers. Nannup shared further important layers of the story. It was revealed, for example, that when the Nyungar women left their birthplaces to begin the journey to their new place, they were unaware that they would never return home. It was further revealed that these women were pregnant, and that they were guided through the Caterpillar Dreaming Country by their uncles. These uncles were the sons of Nyungar women of the previous generation who had made the same journey. These were among the many elements that the walkers were feeling and walking into.

6.3.1 Cunderdin Hill

Nannup: Cunderdin, you know, a name that means a place where you are violently ill and that’s where the girls would be told, that they had been balloted to a point where they were going. And of course they would no longer have any physical contact with the people in the area they were born in. So basically they’re sacrificing their lives for the gene pools, for other groups to the north and to the east. Yep.\(^{32}\)

Walker: [ . . . ] I was wondering if the girls might be travelling along with the sense of fear, loss and grief and all those things that maybe at heart feelings, being torn away from the things you know and love. So I was wondering maybe if there is another sense of knowing as well [ . . . ]\(^{29}\)

Nannup: So, when we talk about these girls getting to their final destination, well they were seen as very special people. Because one, they


\(^{32}\) Noel Nannup, personal communication, November 22, 2016.

\(^{33}\) Noel Nannup, fireside sharing, June 04, 2015.
had come from an amazing place in the south where there were these huge trees, so big they blocked out the sun. They’d never even heard of them out there. You know there was this different world. And they’d given all that up so that their genes could be used for the betterment of those people out there. And they knew, they knew, just how much these girls had given up to be out there. So when you’re agonizing over that, you know, there’s this beautiful side to it as well and would just love for my mum to be sitting here to tell you this story. She’d have you in tears. The whole lot of you because of the joy, and the beauty, and the love and the understanding that goes with all of this, you know?34

Cunderdin Hill was the first significant teaching landscape that the walkers encountered. It was here at Cunderdin Hill that the Nyungar woman were informed that they would never return home, and further, that their journey would be about the returning of their home Stories to place, and the retrieval of new place Stories. The story, of kaarda (goanna) and nyingarn (echidna) is intrinsic to Cunderdin Hill. Kaarda was asked to look after nyingarn’s eggs when nyingarn had important business to attend to. Kaarda, however, became complacent, and ate nyingarn’s eggs. Nyingarn, on coming home to this situation became incredibly ill with the betrayal – hence one of the layers as to why Cunderdin Hill is the place of being violently ill.

It is imagined that the Nyungar women also felt betrayed by the news that they were never to return, and at least felt sick upon hearing the news of their exile.

Walker: Just a thought, maybe it comes from having a poor relationship with my father [. . .] as I’ve seen him for the first time in six years and I don’t have a particularly strong harmonious relationship [with him]. And there’s been aspects mirrored in the Caterpillar Dreaming story [. . .] and the walk, the girls leaving their families, no doubt, or quite possibly, with a sense of betrayal, finding out that they’re not going back, in Cunderdin. A place where the goanna vomited up the eggs, the echidna was sick. And so there’s an interesting thread that weaves its way through it about, I guess, blame and forgiveness.35

34. Noel Nannup, fireside sharing, June 04, 2015.
Walker: *I feel sad for the girls taken on this track who won’t go back to an old home, but on to a new one.*36

Walker: *Thinking a lot about the girls walking, approaching Cunderdin only to find out when they get there that they won’t be returning. In some ways it feels similar for us walking as I know all of those who have walked as the caterpillar — their lives will never be the same again after this [ . . . ]*37

Walkers felt into their own life experiences of betrayal, sacrifice, grief and loss. It was as if the Country called for such things. Passing these momentous landscapes facilitated a kind of emotional processing whereby walkers would gain empathy into the women’s story by feeling into their own heartbreak. Memories would arise. Past situations of things that one thought would be in their life forever, that were lost. These things surfaced. There were tears, and there were things that the walkers needed to let go of. This just all naturally arose through being with Nannup, the story, and the passing landscape. Having empathy for the women whom the walkers were following was vital; it allowed connection into the timeless feeling of landscape, of purpose, of significant rites of passage.

Walker: *Approaching Cunderdin Hill [ . . . ] The women only deliberate on whether or not to climb the hill, or encircle it, or avoid it altogether. It’s clearly a powerful place. I am one of a few [ . . . ] who feels called to climb the hill, though this prospect is not without trepidation/caution [ . . . ] But as we approach the base of the hill and near the fence, my body starts to seize up, I’m having a lot of trouble walking any closer, my legs stiff and rigid, my feet dragging. I stop, and offer a silent, sincere explanation to the guardian spirits of the hill.*38

Walker: *At the front of the hill the women sat apart to decide whether to walk up. I felt such a longing to go to the top as if I might sit there and get some clarity.*39

Walker: *There was then more anxiety, no clear way ahead, fences and high grass [ . . . ] we walked below the rock face between the fences. I felt I shouldn’t look up too much and that I shouldn’t stare at the rock with the hole in it (through it) that was sitting on the slope.*40

40. Ibid.
The women gathered at the base of Cunderdin Hill contemplating whether to climb the hill or skirt the perimeter. The walkers approached the hill from the southwest, coming in from large farming properties, to a bush slope with some small properties surrounding the hill. The women were holding both questions regarding their privileged positions of being non-Aboriginal walkers, and their involvement in the story and following of the Nyungar women. The space of decision was tense, and the women sat in this position of uncomfortableness and not knowing for some time. While the group was respectfully holding the question without knowing how to resolve it, they received a phone call from Nannup. He had last seen the walkers hours earlier, and the phone call had an uncanny timeliness to it. Without us asking, he said simply—don’t go up the hill.

Walker: It’s clear to me in this moment that it needs to be Aboriginal women leading the walk to the top, some time in the future. As soon as I’ve offered this explanation, my body relaxes, the guardians retreat up the hill and allow my/our safe passage, and I’m walking freely around the base of the hill [. . .] then through fields of everlasting[s] [. . .]!! And through a welcome party of the men singing with clapping sticks. A powerful day.

Walker: Then the path became clear a single file track through everlasting ‘meadows’ most perfect.

Walker: The fields of everlastings at the base of Cunderdin Hill, where the love and gratitude of the land was so strong.

Next the women walkers had the challenge of navigating the path around the hill. There were no tracks, and the surrounding property fences made slight trespassing necessary unless the group backtracked and skirted the hill by the further out roads. The men had done this, they were on the roads, and had agreed on a place on the other side of the hill where they would meet the women. The men were unaware of Nannup’s phone call. There was still a sense of tension that the women were holding—a combination of not wanting

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41. There were some who did not identify with fixed representations of gender. In situations where gender roles played out on the Walk, walkers respectfully navigated, through their individual processes, where to be, where to go and what to identify to. In the most part gender was enacted archetypically.
43. Walker, “Journal 2, Day 17”.
to trespass, or to disrespect privileges, and not knowing the path ahead. Slowly the women moved together skirting the hill between the private properties and the bush slopes, each woman in her own process of holding space and being careful with her thoughts. The hill had a very strong presence. There was much silence in the group of women. Silence and care.

Walker: I’ve been walking in Caterpillar. A caterpillar of women through carpets of wildflowers — through the stars and galaxies.⁴⁵

Walker: We managed to participate in some radical equality and while the women were doing some separate walking, I taught the man the Nyoongar Boodja chant I had come up with [. . .] then sang the women in at the end of their walk. [. . .] Thank Noel.⁴⁶

Walker: Joy in the group. But also humility — a need for healing.⁴⁷

Finally, the women, in single file happened upon a small bush track. Barely visible at its beginnings, it widened enough so the white-grey sand of the hill could be seen as a linear passage. There was relief in the group of women, a realisation that a threshold had been passed, and the women relaxed. The trail then became abundant with wildflowers. The wildflowers wrapped the women with colour and scent, a gift of reciprocity. A surety that the women had done well, had held well, had been in deep respect. This gave way to tears, and joy within the group of women. There was gratefulness, smiles and laughter. The trail widened and then the women met the men who were waiting. The men had formed two lines that the women were to walk through, and they sang as the women did this. The group, now together again, walked in happy chatter to the nearby camp for the night.

The mood of the group shifted significantly while camping at Cunderdin, half a kilometre from the Hill. A handful of walkers became ill in various ways, and there were reported senses of disorientation and despair. These feeling lead the walkers into the next day’s walk.

⁴⁷ Walker, “Journal CH, Day 17.”
6.3.2 The Mortlock

From Cunderdin Hill to Yorkrakine Rock the walkers went through a series of strong events. After Cunderdin the group walked parallel to the Great Eastern Highway. From the highway they crossed the train line and walked between the train line and the wide expanse of the salt-contaminated Mortlock River (see image 31 in gallery). The feelings of the previous night carried through in a way where each walker seemed to carry a type of estrangement. Here the walkers walked for the entire day, with strong winds and more barrenness than had yet been encountered on the walk, as well as larger, more heavily cleared farms, greater signs of land degradation and salt, and a sense of being alone. The Mortlock is a perennial river that meets the Avon River near to where the walkers left off at Northam. The landscape here is flat, dead flat, and being unprotected, the wind comes in a whole new way.

Walker: The walk was heavy along the steel wagual [Walker comparing the railway to the Nyungar Rainbow Serpent] whose power was in opposition to the Mortlock it lies next to. The heavy was like tears. The salty water.48

Walker: The wind pulls all the water out of our soft bodies, and tears at our clothes. Our tears are as salty as the damaged land. A necessary journey between A and B.49

Walker: Today was void of any real bush, just wheat. Salt, train line, and few remnant trees scattered on a lonely landscape.50

There were lots of references to salt and tears within the journal entries from this first day’s walk out from Cunderdin Hill. To the north of this landscape was the place where the Nyungar women would be guided to express their grief at no return. The Caterpillar Dreaming walkers sometimes walked a distance from the true Trail, marking respect and difference between the sacred Aboriginal journey and this walk’s contemporary

significance. Tears, however, still marked this in-between passage, the Mortlock’s proximity to this place of grief, becoming a force in its own right.

Walker: The salty tears may be the change that is coming. The unknown can be scary. But sing[ing] the story is comforting.51

Walker: Save a drop for each step. On this great old journey. And new directions to unfold. This mystery of what is ahead. Incomprehensive with the head. It is only understood with the heart. Fully dropping our guard. Singing new songs along old roads.52

Walker: Leaving Cunderdin Hill we walked to the Salt Lake Campsite. For me this day felt like a new part of the journey was starting. The winds whipped at us as we walked along. For me the wind felt like it was bringing knowledge from the expanse of country to the northwest. Opening my consciousness to that space. For me the wind bought with it a sense of initiation into new life. For me this day also bought the beautiful lakes and Mortlock system. I found one loche in particular bought up a lot of emotion due to the pure love I felt there and to the strong sense of coming home. Coming home to myself.53

The land felt barren, unfamiliar, and degraded. The day’s walk was straight ahead, so walkers spread out, all still within sight of each other, but slightly more out of touch. Some walked on the wet soft sand of the river system. Some walked along the gravel of the train line. The river came in at times and swamped the track alongside the train. Many walkers took their shoes off. The breaks felt more silent and disparate even. One small group collected and sang together, passing the landscape with song.

That night, the walkers camped at a salt lake near to a large endemic plant nursery that supplied seedlings to farming restoration projects (see image 32 in gallery). The land of the nursery had been in the family a long time and the current owners told the group stories of the nearby lakes, now salted, being once fresh. The surrounding salt lakes felt very powerful to the walkers; the women gathered in the evening and sat in a line by one lake, each holding her own space within the salt-affected suffering, and old rusting pieces of metal (see image 33 in gallery). It felt here as if there was an emptiness that was beginning

51. Walker, “Journal 1, Day 18”.
52. Walker, “Journal Boodja, Day 18”.
53. Walker, “Journal 3, Day 20”.

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to be held, an inference of necessary internal strength. Walkers reported spending the night here in varying states of being half-asleep and half-awake.

6.3.3 Doongin Peak

The next morning before walking, perhaps in light of what had transpired the previous day, Nannup held a ceremony where one by one, the group members drew into a circle drawn on the ground the things they wanted to leave behind. In a larger concentric circle surrounding the first, the group drew the things that they loved, that they had in their lives. Someone was then chosen to sweep, using tree branches, the outer circle into the inner circle, everything returning to the ground. The walkers then embarked north, crossing the Mortlock and leaving the salted river system behind. From here the walkers would be walking north for some time.

Walker: What can I say. An elemental day. Being especially of the element of wind. Leaving Chatfield Nursery (where small things are nourished) Noel did a ceremony with us that lead to a personal challenge of change for each one of us.

Walker: We set straight off with this. And it was full on very strong wind, clay dirt road. Flying dirt in eyes and faces. Very harsh. How to find the inner strength to walk through. Purifying. Also reminded of how little we have to face the elements in our lives. And how much our ancestors did [. . .] Its hard and I’m slow walking. Sore feet. Remembering the circle, the ceremony [. . .].


Before long, a strong wind came from the north, whipping the walkers with stone grit (see image 34 in gallery). The wind and resultant sand storm made it impossible to look forward. Walkers progressed with scarves over their mouths, ears and eyes. It was hot and dry. At points the group would huddle together in a circle on the road with the farthest...
walkers standing with their backs to the wind, protecting the walkers huddled in front of them. The walkers checked in with each other, and then left again into the storm. This continued for a few hours. The group then turned east for a time, to pass Doongin Peak, a significant landmark for the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail saying this way and thereby crossing a large farming property (see image 35 in gallery). The farm crops held the sand in place, however the wind continued. The silence of the group on this day was somewhat enforced by the wind. Walkers were distinctly in their own space, thoughts and processes.

**Walker:** *Today the winds whipped us clean and challenged our resolve to be there.*

**Walker:** *Wind whipping through the wheat. As we walk on. The windblown thoughts left far behind. As I walk on. A challenge from the wild. From the ancestors. To walk on for the past. For the future. In the present. Walk On.*

**Walker:** *Tossed and tumbled, shaken whipped and whirled. You let us advance, but only at the thought of each step/ Dear wind, your reminders are constant, surprising and severe.*

Doongin Peak is known as a directional marker along the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail. In a very flat landscape it stands around 230 metres high, and is made of both large boulders, and earth. The walkers could see Doongin Peak, on and off, for the previous two days walk, and from Doongin Peak the rise of Cunderdin Hill can just be made out. Here the walkers sheltered from the wind within the rocks surrounding the peak. Looking out and up toward the peak, walkers saw and felt many things including guardians of the peak within the rock formations. Here, the group stayed for a time, more or less in silence, contemplation and recovery. From here, the day changed. Walkers continued cutting across the farming property as the day swiftly moved from hot to cool. At the point when the walkers turned onto the next road travelling north, the winds started to soften and change direction. Then there was cool, cleansing rain.

**Walker:** *The whole thing is a privilege, through the sand storms and the wet socks. Realisation of my presence in something so much bigger. And still to play a part in old*

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57. Walker, "Journal 3, Day 20".
stories and new stories unfolding. What do we take forward? The first step is relationship.\textsuperscript{60}

Walker: It felt like wind initiation after which we were cleansed by gentle rain.\textsuperscript{61}

Walker: Spirits of nature challenged us again last night by testing our dedication. I felt protected and went with wind, rain and night.\textsuperscript{62}

The campsite the night of the Doongin Peak day was the last one before Yorkrakine Rock, – the end point of stage three, and the end of the journey as far as the walkers knew at that point. By the time walkers arrived at camp, the rain was getting progressively harder, and colder. The storm broke at dinner, and then settled into constant rain before a thunderous upheaval around 2 am. By morning many tents were flooded; a few people had moved in the middle of the night to bus and trailer refuges, and the main camp had been taken down as it was acting more like a dangerous kicking sail than a shelter (see image 36 in gallery).

There were obvious flaws to the groups’ following, as Nannup had camped on the slightly higher side of the flat rock campsite, staying dry all night. Initiations at different levels. The morning, however, felt cleansed from the previous journey and wind initiations that had visited the walkers from Cunderdin Hill. These represented initiations that tested resolve, dedication and agency — in many different and personal ways. Now the walkers made the pilgrimage to Yorkrakine.

6.3.4 Yorkrakine Rock

Walker: Thousands of women walking — feeling the rock, Yorkrakine Rock, this trail, the ground, mother earth, take me back.\textsuperscript{63}

Walker: For me Yorkrakine Rock is a place where Heaven meets Earth.\textsuperscript{64}

Walker: Increasingly mindful also that this is a strong women’s dreaming — and am watching the feeling/strength/passion — of these women around me with awe.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Walker, “Journal 1, Day 14”.

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Yorkrakine Rock is a very sacred place for women. While this was the end point of stage three and the organised walks thus far, walkers were increasingly aware that they were only part-way through a story. Here, the Nyungar women would rest, and be nurtured for the continuing journey. The group, having been in individual walking and processing states since Cunderdin Rock, walked together again this day, divided with women at the front and men behind.

Walker: *I walk for my sister who died three years ago, my spirit sister, and my friend whose mother is dying now. This mother had seven daughters. As I walk I feel them all there, all walking, our ancestors, all dimensions.*

Walker: *I think of all the women our groups walking with and for — Our mothers, our families and those of many generations past.*

Walker: *Today I really felt the power of ceremony, understood it in my heart for the first time. The slow purposeful hugs and Reijer’s departing speech to the women’s circle reiterate the tone of the day. Today we walked with all women. A beautiful feminine snake winding through the landscape.*

Walking toward Yorkrakine particularly, the fullness of acknowledgement of the Caterpillar Dreaming as a women’s pathway was present. The men offered words of gratitude and respect to the women walkers before they left camp. They mentioned the important woman in their own lives, and the necessity of finding a better way for holding women in society contemporarily. The women then left in silence, walking around the edge of the flat rock they camped at and out through some scrub onto a gravel road. The men followed at a distance, and kept this distance for the whole day. The men stopped when the women stopped, and waited with incredible patience while the women made their approach to the Rock. At one point the women moved off the road into a farming property to walk amongst some remnant bushland along a small waterway (see image 37 in gallery). The men’s following was considered, supportive and humble.

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Walker: The men walk behind in a gesture of support. We all take our steps in silence. I reflect on the burden of the girls who know their fate. At what point in their young lives do they accept it? Have they already at this point? Is it as a collection or as a woman in her individual state?

Walker: Today while walking I thought about the sacrifices girls would have to make and the importance of not only them but also the family they leave behind being able to forgive and surrender to the circumstance in the name of the universal equilibrium. The range of emotions all would go to get to that point. Anger, sadness, betrayal, fear, duty, legacy, guilt. These hit home for me at one point after lunch [...].

Walker: I have a history with Tammin — 25 years ago I did some tree planting here and bumped into an old friend [...]. In my mind Tammin loomed large for a renaissance of agriculture and I was going to be part of it. As it happened this did not occur and my life went in a different direction. Coming back I feel a loss, and while walking I thought of another loss — the girls going to other lands — never to return — then other walks — the one my great grandparents made [...]. So much about this walk revolves around ‘coming home’ grieving, loss and country.

The women arrived at Yorkrakine Rock and sat in circle in a small patch of dry bush grass. The women shared stories of whom they were walking for, and why; of what was present for them. It was decided not to venture onto the Rock, again to leave the respectful distance of the in-between. The women then headed out the gravel road of the Rock toward the waiting party of the men and Nannup (see image 38 in gallery).

Walker: Ngarna [caterpillar] packed with potential, willing to sacrifice itself — to climb into the sacred space of the unknown darkness and to emerge as jewelled freedom and joy, or soft powered elegance flying through the night [...].

Walker: The last day of the last stage. It is hard not to feel how each forward step is not weighted. Connected into life’s larger experiences. Each step a further shuffle along the golden thread called this life. A golden thread that wove its way to the top of Reabold hill. No questioning, but not following blindly.

Walker: *Feeling of connectedness of each other, this space of deep sharing and being.*

*Tears, grief, joy, acceptance of who and what we are threading through this country.*

The next morning the walkers returned to the Rock to meet Nyungar custodian, Rose Davis. The walkers gifted the message stick to her with collective words expressing an ancestral apology toward the land, toward respecting sacred Aboriginal journeys, toward everything that had been caused discontinuance through colonial culture. There was silence, holding, tears and a sense of some type of a completion. Davis then took the women to some spots within the Rock’s large presence. As mentioned the drawing of the day ceremony was scripted onto paper, and this particular days walk was deemed secret, beyond, ephemeral, something else; and walkers decided to burn the last paper drawing of the journey to Yorkrakine Rock.

### 6.4 A Kinder Approach

Walker: *As we walked along the edge strewn with relics of farming days rusting into the ground. China and glass being uncovered by the wind. It was archaeological. It felt like the ground impulse of the colonial project was faltering. Something was shifting […] some new kinder approach to the Country was coming through.*

Walker: *The western way everywhere — devastation — may we heal our hearts — our land — wordless — we stand, we walk, we bow, one feels it in the body, the land — it becomes so dear.*

I have learnt many things on this journey. But most of all I have learnt to listen to the Country in new ways […] We wind into this Country with those who have travelled before us, who are here now, and will travel here after us. Listening with non-judgment to one another, with open eyes to one another, with open heart to country. Its resonance imbedded with feeling.

Stage one to stage three did herald some from of a completion, toward the gifting of the message stick and a practiced apology. There was perhaps a liminal rite of passage *split* with walkers’ connections to hegemonic perceptions of place. Perhaps even walking with their

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74. Walker, “Journal CH, Day 20”.
75. Walker, “Journal Kep, Day 19”.
own exiled ancestors, and perhaps for the first time, under Nannup's facilitation, landing in place. Perhaps Said's mention of exile as a *condition of terminal loss*, of *crippling sorrow* is mapped within the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail; the ancient reckonings of Aboriginality in place bestowing wisdom into this condition.

**Nannup:** *I think it's pretty special because when you have the caterpillar it eats things, you know, and it eats leaves and plants, so it's what they call voracious. It goes through a period where it just munches and chews everything.*

**Nannup:** *And then once it's done all that, that's when it stops, spins that web and then it changes from that voracious feeder, it goes through this metamorphosis and turns into that beautiful butterfly you're talking about.*

**Yarran:** *But then you think; you have no idea it's going to into something so beautiful.*

To venture back to the discourse of trauma within the last chapter, perhaps there is Aboriginal knowledge that performs trauma ritually through sacred betrayal. Ifowodo writes that trauma “shatters pre-existing frames of view.” Cho writes that trauma has the potential to affect the “perceptual apparatus” of persons interacting with trauma. Could it be that participating in these rites of passage is essential for transforming one's framework for knowledge – toward *unsettling* hegemonic narratives, literally?

Perhaps this links to the transformation of the caterpillar to the butterfly. The uninitiated (read hegemonic) caterpillar is blind to its desire: it desires voraciously, destructively. Here this desire is transformed to the wings of a butterfly, that Nannup refers to as the softest way to touch the earth. Nannup says the Caterpillar Dreaming is the highest spiritual pathway for women to undertake. Sacred trauma itself could be initiatory toward greater

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79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
ideas of consciousness and relatedness to larger systems of human movement. On this Cathy Caruth writes:

If history is to be understood as the history of a trauma, it is a history that is experienced as the endless attempt to assume one's survival as one's own. Actually I would take this as the very opposite. That the survival is linked in with greater consciousness. Another will that determines life and death. The death in fact being that of the small will. The small self and its own experience of what it thought life was all about.83

The continuing story of kaarda and nyingarn is that nyingarn, having forgiven kaarda, asks kaarda one more time to look after its eggs. This time Kaarda succeeds, now understanding the important business that nyingarn is up to. The Caterpillar Dreaming facilitates diaspora healthily, through the enrollment of place that enacts betrayal through grief, forgiveness, acceptance, and finally pride. This is perhaps enrollment into a selfless sense of belonging, where looking after place and culture is more important than individual ideas of belonging, even though personal belonging plays a part. Essentially who knows what significance this trail may have in 20, 200, or 2000 years? The understanding is, however, that the story is continually relevant.

I would last say that the Caterpillar Dreaming walker's in-between proximity to the real path of the Caterpillar Dreaming, and of not assuming agency with regards to all places of the Caterpillar dreaming was integral. Here, we have a different mode of exploring exile without consuming or forcing knowledge and rights to place. Here, we have an essential condition of humility, where the exiled are not subordinating a new place or desiring a belonging that is essentially not theirs. Here, perhaps we have an acceptance of the ambiguous, paradoxical, liminal space of the in-between home.

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It is an uncanny coincidence, but as I finish this chapter the highest level of summer rain,–
ten times greater that the February monthly average – just fell, flooding the Derbyl Yerrigan, the Avon River, the Salty Mortlock, and the towns of Toodyay, York and Northam. The next chapter continues this conversation of unwrapping colonial landscape, exile and liminality in the stage four landscapes north of Yorkrakine Rock.
Figure 5: Caterpillar Dreaming Map — Stage Four
7. STAGE FOUR — THE VOID

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reveals the experiences of the journal entries from stage four, from the landscapes of Yorkrakine Rock to just north of Beacon. Victor Turners work remains pertinent, particularly his ideas and research around the liminal stage of ritual rites of passage. While the walkers passed through aspects of liminal experience, the in-between passage, en route to Yorkrakine Rock, the most tangible liminal space was the void as experienced in stage four. In this stage the walkers walked in a northerly direction following long straight roads, between desolate, large farming properties. Nannup’s words were to keep thoughts close, and that the Nyungar women from the Caterpillar Dreaming story would have been moved quickly through this Country.

There were a few differences between stages one to three of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walks, and stage four. It was understood that on this section of the Trail the Nyungar women the walkers were following would have been without story, as they walked toward the landscapes where their new stories of place and family would be given. Accordingly, this stage saw the women being ushered from behind by the men. This was through the imagining of the men as guides through these landscapes. As the walkers were not in possession of the original message stick (gifted to Yorkrakine Rock custodian Rose Davis at the end of stage three) Nannup had crafted another. This formulation of the message stick was given to the men of the group, to inscribe their wayfaring role, and the women were not to see it.

Stage four was also different, as it was not originally considered to form part of this PhD study. As such, a different form of collectivity emerged on the walk from this point. Organisation, and facilitation of walk events on stage four were collectively held. I discontinued the formal aspect of the journal-writing practice that had been maintained for
the previous stages, suggesting instead that walkers take one journal for the entire stage, and write in it only if they wished. This was perhaps an affective body emergence of the stage four walk, as walkers remarked that losing the continuity of the journals was akin to loosing a particular anchor, or point of reference, perhaps similar in some ways to being in the void, and away from story and place.

Further, the walks to this point had been structured so that walkers were able to come and go—spending a day, a few days, or a week on the different stages. In stage four, Nannup encouraged the group to be on the walk for the whole time, which invited a different type of immersion for the walkers. Walkers on stage four were also required to have walked the stage three landscapes. These differences had the walkers come to stage four entirely of their own choice and agency. The onus was now less on the contribution to a study, and more based in the individual’s desire to be part of the continuing walk and process of stage four landscapes.

Perhaps the most important difference, however intangible, was that during stage four we walked beyond any of my family lineages along the Caterpillar Dreaming. On day eight of stage four we passed the graves of my great-grandparents in Bencubbin. There was no more family history for me in the landscapes further north, nor for any of the other walkers as far as what was shared.

The void is a particularly difficult stage to write about. The journal entries point to particular experiences en route, although many of the more perplexing events have not been shared. Journal entries were much more sparse, and I have written into the affective space of these entries more so with my own narrative of stage four events. The many and varied experiences of the walkers I cannot account for in full. We are now entering the tricky and complex realm of negotiating non-Aboriginal privilege, and what a journey like this means at all.

This chapter contains journal entries day by day. With some trepidation I will illuminate some of the stage four experiences using the writings of Turner, as well Joseph Campbell, a
key writer on the liminal space of archetypal journeys. I will also include some insights from Jacques Derrida. The trepidation comes from my desire to allow the stage four landscapes and ontologies we were following to speak for themselves, and the extreme difficulty faced in doing so. I include these works, therefore, as islands that have the potential to generate further thought around the stage four processes. The chapter importantly begins with Nannup’s words to the walkers pertaining to stage four.

7.2 Keep Your Thoughts Close

From the 4th to the 14th of June 2015, the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers walked stage four, almost a year after arriving at Yorkrakine Rock. This section of the path was bleaker than other stages of the walk, traversing the most north-easterly part of the wheatbelt where rainfall is much lower, farming properties larger, and the impacts of modern farming more tangible. The landscapes varied little along the way and there were few trees, and many large patches of salt-affected land. This was the part of the journey where the Nyungar women, having released their grief of never returning to their homeland, now travelled empty.

The following are some words from Nannup as recorded on stage four:

Nannup: As we’re walking, you know, remember we’re walking in the space we’re in. Keep our vision right close to us. And our thoughts close to us. And we’re walking not just for the memory of the girls; we’re walking for ourselves and our group.

Nannup: So the pain and the heartache you got from them was that gap from Yorkrakine to Nyingarn [Place: Nyingarn Station. Nyingarn is the echidna]. That’s why they took them really quickly, as close to the straight, direct line they could get. Whizzed them through there as fast as they could go surrounded by all the things they needed to be surrounded by, like the butterflies. You know? The moths, being escorted by the sons of the women who had been taken out two generations before. Thirty-year-olds,

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1. Noel Nannup, personal communication, June 06, 2015.
you know [referring to the sons of the women]. Remember the generation
gap is 15. You’ve got to do the work and think about and bring all this
together. And because they’re jarloop [pregnant; referring to the women],
one blood, they know they are already carrying children.¹

Nannup: So as we make our way up through here, this is the hardest part.
The most emotional part we’re going to have [. . .] So from here on let’s
really start to mold together. Let’s start to understand that this is special.
Really special. And the spirit is leaving us to it. You know, sometimes we
get involved in things and we really don’t know the magnitude of them.²

7.3 Turner’s Liminal Void

Stage four in many ways echoed Turner’s discussion on the liminal or threshold stage of a
rite of passage. Using language that resonates powerfully with Nannup’s description of the
Nyungar women during this part of the journey, Turner says that the ritual subject,
passer or liminal being, “has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state.”³ He
adds that liminal beings “have no status, property, [or] position in a kinship system;”⁴ and
are during this phase of the ritual “a tabula rasa, a blank slate.”⁵ It is therefore of the utmost
importance that the liminal being follow instructions of the rite of passage implicitly. “Keep
thoughts close”, as Nannup said. During this phase the liminal being learns humility in a
process that Turner describes as being “reduced or ground down to a uniform position,”⁶ a
passage that “tempers the pride.”⁷ This unifying is said to engender an intense comradeship
amongst participants.⁸

If we venture back to Chapter six’s exploration of exile as a non-Aboriginal rite of passage,
this process of humble following fits. Turner says that such a passage is characterised by a
series of humiliations that “represent partly a destruction of the previous status [. . .] in

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² Noel Nannup, personal communication, June 04, 2015.
³ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid., 95.
⁶ Ibid., 103.
⁷ Ibid., 95.
⁸ Ibid., 96.
⁹ Ibid., 95.
order to prepare them to cope with their new responsibilities and restrain them in advance from abusing their new privileges." I aim to hold this theory alongside the experiences of stage four to connect these themes of exile and conciliation from the previous chapter to this process of humiliation described by Turner.

Also illuminating here is the work of Joseph Campbell, a leading writer on mythology and rites of passage. Campbell describes in great detail the archetypal passage he calls ‘the hero’s journey’, where the hero is one who is able to bring new world-historical insight, back to their home place, after making a mythological descent. Campbell articulates the same phases of the process as Turner: a detachment (split), a descent (the liminal), and a worldly transfiguration (aggregation). Where Turner is describing a physical journey, however, Campbell, by contrast, relates this passage to a deeply internal process. He says the Hero must go to the “causal zones of the psyche where difficulties really reside, and there to clarify the difficulties, eradicate them in his own case and break through to the undistorted, direct experience and assimilation of what Carl Jung has called ‘the archetypal images.’”

Campbell says that this internal journey is a precursor for something new to emerge in the world; it is not necessarily itself an enactment of the new emergence. Finally, for now, Campbell says that the visitation of these “terrible mutations of ubiquitous disaster” of the descent, through the journey, become “penetrated by an all-suffusing, all-sustaining love.”

It seemed that each walker, on stage four, met with this internal world of their individual disaster. This Chapter takes a bit of a turn, into a place that needs to be tempered with critique from de-colonising literatures, as it takes the foundational methodology of following Aboriginal knowledge's into a personal realm, toward a non-Aboriginal initiation of sorts.

10. Ibid., 103.
12. Ibid., 18.
13. Ibid., 29.
Here, I would also like to bring in some of the ideas of Jacques Derrida with the view to revealing an option that is beyond notions of an archetypal wound. Derrida in his work *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* writes about the wound of liminal experience, and the hauntings that take one to the place of redressing this wound. He writes that during the course of a life we rewrite this “bottomless wound,” this “irreparable tragedy” with the law of the time, oft through “castigating, punishing, killing.”\(^{14}\) He says, however, that this wound is rarely of this time, but links more to an ancient and perhaps eternal battle. He asks: “what is justice beyond right?”\(^{15}\) I read this question as pivotal for the exploration of conciliation: if right in his question could be read as hegemonic right; or rather as an unconscious right. This question will inform the explorations of the journal entries.

Finally, it is important to note that the walkers of stage four were not consciously entering into a liminal experience of initiation, if this is indeed what occurred. The landscapes themselves, Nannup’s holding and the story may certainly have conjured initiatory thoughts, although this idea was not formed by the walkers themselves. Walkers were merely continuing a journey that had begun: walking toward an assemblage of conciliation, and of enacting an apology to the land and original custodians, as they had done when they arrived at Yorkrakine Rock.

### 7.4 Stage Four

The next section reveals the journey of stage four day by day, through journal entries, and my own personal narrative and reflections of the stage. As in the other chapters it groups journal entries into stanzas of three except for two of the days where only two entries were recorded. Unlike previous chapters and stages, what is seen in the next section reveals nearly all of what was written in the journals on stage four.


\(^{15}\) Ibid., 25.
7.4.1 Day One

Walker: 5/6/15 [this is all the walker wrote in the entry].

Walker: We walked from Yorkrakine Rock through some reserve bush which was lovely. Hardy trees, a wonderland, adapted to the arid dry. Some such smooth bark — like silk, so soft and varying hues, subtle colours, peeling orange bark to reveal soft inner trunk [...]

Walker: 1+1=3 especially in connection to 1 man and 1 woman having a baby [... 3 eagles circling Yorkrakine Rock when arrived for our first walk on the forth section. Set out through the muted (as in salted colours) bush, coming across the big pale gums, birds sang our silent way.

Stage four began from Yorkrakine Rock. The walkers had camped the night before at Folly Nature Reserve. Here, Nannup explained the landscapes ahead, and offered the protocol to keep thoughts close. Nannup gave the women some quandong seeds and string that the women threaded into necklaces to wear for the journey. The walkers, women in front of the men, wound their way through the bush on the outskirts of the Rock, to meet the road that travelled north at the Rock’s perimeter. Here the walkers began the long journey north along road edges that were often only a single tree deep. Following the rhythm set on the previous stages, each day had some time of silent walking, and each night held a check-in circle, and a drawing of the day ceremony.

7.4.2 Day Two

Walker: 6/6/15. I started this passage with the word feeling disconnected. But that is not the right word. I am not disconnected. I am here. I am walking. My world has shrunk. Anything beyond my body. Beyond the road. The right here and now is almost beyond my comprehension. Too abstract. My words from the last stage remind me, reignite my feeling of the golden thread, I feel it, but it’s less tangible, an unknowing of how it unravels, here at the beginning of a new stage [...]

Walker: And how the trees mirror our journey — peeling bark, shedding our outer layers, as we walk and the girls shedding their old lives, and living in the new freshness of now [...]. Inner beauty reveals itself.\(^{20}\)

Walker: Second day of walking this stage [...]. North. North. North [...]. Rounding the bend into Goldfields road, we’re heading due east for the first time in two days. As we passed the end of the Sheoaks we came abruptly to the Eucalyptus. Right at this juncture I felt a sudden shift in energy. My thoughts fast and jumbled, my body slightly stiffer and slowed, emotions turn to grief. I’m crying without knowing why. I’m leading the group at this point and perhaps this is contributing to this experience being stronger for me. [...]. We arrive at camp a short time later, which is where I’m sitting now and I’m still melancholy, inward, reflective. I mention this shift to Noel and he says this is where the Malaga [A certain type of rocky soil] starts.\(^{21}\)

Day two was much the same as day one, continuing north on long roads, except for the first crossing of malaga. Malaga is a reddish coloured rock that exists in long bands throughout the wheatbelt. Nannup explains the malaga as a trickster place; a place inhabited by people and spirits who cannot find their place within community. Sometimes these are people and spirits who have committed sins that have not been paid for. Sometimes these people and spirits choose to live on the outskirts of community, preferring not to go through initiations and follow community protocol. Nannup explains that this was Nyungar way. Further along Nannup explains that these people and spirits become the enforcers of punishment on community members who broke protocol.

The people and spirits of the malaga travel different paths than the Nyungar trails, though at some places they intersect. These malaga crossings were significant for walkers on stage four. Crossings were felt to bring up raw and sometimes unconscious wounds within walkers. These crossings and the powerful feelings they elicited often came out of the blue for the walkers, and were most likely an underlying factor in Nannup’s instruction to walk fast through stage four, and keep thoughts close. Malaga crossings were also places where the community of walkers fell into individual states of feeling, states that isolated them from

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larger feelings of community holding and union. I’d like to connect these crossings of malaga country as places that put walkers in touch with the humiliations, terrible mutations of ubiquitous disaster, bottomless wounds, and irreparable tragedies evoked in the work of Turner, Campbell and Derrida.

7.4.3 Day Three


Walker: Long roads — lots of wheat, some sheep, other crops. Many dead roadside trees. Even the verges are struggling. Very grateful for the trees that are there that are struggling to come back. Some with little green branches coming back on limbs and trunk [. . .].23

For the first three nights walkers camped in small bush reserves, remnant vegetation pockets that existed amongst the landscapes of broad-acre, salinity-affected farms. The vegetation pockets were isolated and unconnected to each other except for the trees along the road’s edge. Walkers felt the emptiness of the landscape, as emptiness of the landscape’s associated story. It seemed, in fact, as if outside landscape dropped away in stage four, as per Campbell’s evocation of the descent, leaving a more interiorised and individual landscape realm. Interestingly there were few photos taken on this stage and walkers, in reflection, only remember fragments of stage four. More than previous sections of the Trail it seemed a stage dedicated to the underworld, a descent into the depths of the affective feeling body.

7.4.4 Day Four

Walker: 8 June 2015. Yoyi ngangyang koorl. (Now my heart is waling ngooni-al crying brother for). My brother died recently and this walk has allowed me time and stillness in which to let my feelings — tremendous feelings of sadness — to surface [. . .].24

Walker: Cooler breeze. Beautiful morning walk along the shaded roads. Everywhere criss-cross spider threads catching morning light — rainbow colours. After women’s circle last night, like we were walking, light, together, strength.

Day Five

Walker: 9 June 2015. There was much to be admired in the thin veneer of remanent bush on both sides of the long straight roads that bordered endless scarred paddocks of shooting stubble [. . .] I felt like apologising because I am descended from the families of the early invaders. In 200 years the environment is a mere veneer and the Aboriginal people are still struggling for survival. Still now more invaders arrive to receive stolen goods.

Walker: Bus dropped us off from where we left yesterday. Walked through like a cemetery of dead trees. We stopped by the kangaroo body for song and prayer. Lots of salt bush. We come to the lake. Vast — long — lengthy, empty and folded banks [. . .] Went back after afternoon tea with Noel and we stopped the car at a butterfly tree and I got out and shook it a tiny bit and little grey-blue butterflies alighted. Tree had little white flowers that the butterflies sat on and imbibed.

Walker: Rise spirit rise, into the Kangaroo sky, we’ve come to help you, find your way home tonight. The child is gone now. That’s what I feel the passing of the joey [vernacular for young kangaroo] represents. The child within the girls has gone now. Their innocence is gone. It’s down to business now. They’re no longer children. They’re young women on a new journey.

Campbell writes in The Hero with a Thousand Faces that after entering the threshold, a person “moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he [sic] must survive a succession of trials.” This stage of the journey is a crucial part of the initiation whereby the initiate descends into “the crooked lanes of his [sic] own spiritual

labyrinth.” Campbell annotates this as “dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our own personal past.”

The threshold was potentially marked on day six by the walkers crossing a large area of salt-affected land on the outskirts of Lake Wallambin. Wet, white-pink coloured salt and dead stands of trees stretched out on both sides of a road for hundreds of metres. In the outer regions of the [Western Australian] wheatbelt, the significant loss of trees to farming, and small rainfall makes salt rise to the land’s surface. Here the effects of hegemonic farming practices are clear, and devastating. It was right after this crossing that the walkers stopped by the body of a young dead kangaroo. Walkers sang a song to wish the young kangaroo home, perhaps something akin to an offering up of Campbell’s infantile images.

7.4.6 Day Six

Walker: 10 June 2015 [...] The butterfly nests in the tall trees. Wetj djangberi, (Emu’s toes) imprinted into a dry lake. Noel’s knowledge constantly blows me away. Boordawan.

Walker: Packed camp. 1 km out [...] we came to 500km since leaving Perth mark and 100km for this walk!! Noel was there with finishing line on the road!! We went through a difficult area of country, and we all struggled. We had a circle with the women. Noel came by and we were glad [...].

Walker: The blue shadow of the exiled faces of femininity comes through the Malaga. Feasting off that which has not yet been integrated, claimed, dreamt. We all carry her in her many forms. Twisted, silent shapes. The shivering serpent underground. I am privileged to carry your wound.

Day six heralded another trial. This could have been due to another crossing of malaga. The women crossed an area of country that evoked in most women walkers a raw, and deep expressions of feeling. Nothing was spoken about between the women in the lead-up, however each went into individual realms of intensity. Some women dropped to the

30. Ibid., 101.
ground; for others, walking became hard, and as though through quicksand. Some women wailed. Some cried soundless tears. For myself I felt an intense and intolerable raw pain of separation.

It was as if a storm had passed through the walking women, throwing each from their normal walking pace into chaos across the road. We realised we needed to keep moving, and navigated ourselves as best as we could until the other side, which looked unremarkably different from the area we had passed. The women gathered together, bewildered, and much to our relief Nannup turned up a short while later. Nannup offered a few short words, and the walkers set off again in the direction of Bencubbin town. The experience was not spoken about much that night, each women taking shelter in their own way.

7.4.7 Day Seven

Walker: Camped at Bencubbin. Walked through the town. Lovely old town. Saw an old house with gnomes and pot plants — old post office and pub. […] Walked along the road — bitumen — out of town. Some tall gums, little mauve flower bushes and yellow flowered bushes. Whispering sheoaks. Winds rustling cord. A freshness to the day.34 Walker: Birthday Day. Walking through Bencubbin in fancy dress. Chocolate cake for morning tea. Carrot cake for dinner! Sugar high during the day leads to bird formations and synchronized swimming movements on the road. The men later imitate the women after a week of observing us from behind. Hilarious! Hand-holding, hugging, skipping, crying, weaving […] makes us all laugh. A happy day […] A very strange energy passed through the camp tonight […] Has thrown us all off kilter […]35 Walker: 11 June 2015. Bencubbin — Mt Marshall […] Some of the girls upset — unnerved.36

It is here that I would like to suggest another of Campbell’s frameworks for marking the ritual liminal passage — tragedy and comedy: tragedy pertaining to the descent into the terror of the perils of humanity, and comedy being the “redeeming ecstasy” of realising life

continued beyond the tragic shattering.\textsuperscript{37} Campbell equates the “divine comedy of the soul” with a way of transcending worldly tragedy, rather than as the realisation of a fantasy happy ending,\textsuperscript{38} and explains its paradoxical connection with “depths where resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers are revivified, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world.”\textsuperscript{39} After this passage has been accomplished, life does not “suffer hopelessly” under the same tragedy.\textsuperscript{40} The tragedy which is still absolutely apparent, becomes, as quoted in the introduction to this chapter, “penetrated by an all suffusing, all-sustaining love.”\textsuperscript{41}

Day seven saw the walkers pass Bencubbin town and the outer reach of my ancestral lineage on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail, marked by the graves of my great-great grandparents. My grandmother, my mother’s mother, grew up in Bencubbin, and thus my mother, who was acting as support for the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk, led the walkers through the town. It was two of the walkers’ birthdays this day, and we had decided to walk in fancy dress. The day’s walk, again along a continual line north, saw the emergence of collective performances — synergistic anecdotes, comedies — contrasting with the revealed tragic depths of the previous day.

The road that the walkers followed was intersected at points by long straight roads heading west-east. At one such crossroad the women walkers concocted a performance to fool the men wayfarers who were walking at some distance behind the women. The group of women split in two; silently and secretly one group turned west, and the other east. The prank lasted a short while, then the group regathered light-heartedly at the centre of the crossroads. Here in comic significance, all walkers enacted something of a collective ritual honouring the crossroads, the unknown of all four directions which was an honouring of the liminal experience in all. It was a light and joy-filled day, and remained this way until after dinner.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Campbell, \textit{The Hero with a Thousand Faces}, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
It is hard to say what actually occurred this night, and perhaps the full detail of it is better left unsaid. My personal experience however, was a complete fall from grace. I had spoken on behalf of something that questioned a protocol, and the resultant discussion became heavy and dark. It was almost as if the malaga had come to visit us at that camp and I experienced another decent to tragedy. My active engagement with this study and beyond, toward unknowing and following — particularly of Nannup — became unnerved by a surge of reactivity that existed within an entirely different framework. I think some elucidation of this is useful toward understanding the complexity of shared-space collaborations.

Here we were, following an entirely different way of knowing place and self through following Nannup's cultural holding of the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail. My sense however, is that within this shared-space of enacted following, historical and contemporary formulations of self also exist that seek destruction in order to fully participate with the unknown. As a woman in the group, I found myself in an inner state of complete vulnerability, and of being unknown to place, which required of me an absolute trust and following of the men wayfarers through this Country. My contemporary personality however, having been at least partly formed by the winds of hegemonic patriarchy did not always rest easily within this space.

For me, it was as if old ways of knowing oneself were tested against new holding patterns and some kind of binary came to the surface. In the shift toward unknowing and toward emerging new cultural expressions, however, there are binaries that need to be given up: old ways of being that are continually playing out, but are no longer relevant. As a picture I can see it as two marks encircled. The way is potentially neither of the marks, but requires a holding of the emergent space between, a holding of a sometimes-difficult paradox. This space in-between, in my experience, shows up all resistance to being in the unknown, of being enrolled in cultural story, and of small-self thinking. Around the campfire that night, I opened a conversation that was fuelled by a small-self hegemonic wounding, which
gathered momentum, against the cultural holding of Nannup. This was my greatest tragedy.

7.4.8 Day Eight

Walker: A heavy start to the day, all of us carrying the energy of last night’s discussion around the fire. A heavy sky also, cool and grey and still. By mid-morning moods begin to lift, as do the clouds. Sunny and clear by mid-day, though clouds are near. We meet Russel (and Dusty) at lunch. He tells us of the absence of women in this landscape. The farmers can’t find wives and there are no services to attract women to the area. Even the teachers commute and go home on the weekends. I am really feeling this void today. An emptiness where the feminine should be, endless miles of broad-acre farming in its place. There are very few people at all in this landscape [ . . . ] 3 women are absent from our group today, resting in camp. Absence of women’s story from this part of the song-line. Absence of women on this land. A day of absent women.42

Walker: 12 June 2015. Noel taught me an important piece of the puzzle this morning. I respect the quiet way he goes about imparting knowledge. Group dynamics changed today while walking. The women were very playful, inclusive with the men. Great cohesion and love.43

Walker: Today I lost all will to walk another way. My very bones surrendered to a forward path. My heart crucified on the road. Each and every step pumping a new blood underneath the skin of the place where I am headed.44

To reiterate Nannup’s words: You know sometimes we get involved in things and we really don’t know the magnitude of them. I travelled with a heavy heart on day eight of stage four feeling that I had done something irreparably destructive. I apologised to Nannup, and let the energies of the fall temper me. As much as the feelings were present for me from the situation around the campfire, they also seemed to speak of something much older, or from another time even. On an occasion after the stage four walk, Nannup said to me that all leaders needed to fall. I connect this to a hegemonic fall—a potential irreparably wrong

deed of an ancestor; an enacted humiliation toward understanding the importance of
learning not to act from past places.

As Turner posits, the liminal journey is marked by the importance of the liminal being
following instructions implicitly. He also describes it as a series of humiliations that bring
the liminal being to the ground, tempering pride. Nannup’s instruction to keep thoughts
close, to move fast through the stage four landscapes, his cultural awareness of the malaga
and all that can rise from its depths – these things escaped me in that fireside moment.

7.4.9  Day Nine

Walker: 13 June 2015. An experience difficult to find words for. We have walked 180km
together.45

Walker: Camped at beautiful bushy camp. […] Beautiful walk. Full of ceremony
together with the women. Natural earth, tree honouring, rock, each other, wedding bush,
prostrating to the earth. […] Beautiful last campfire dinner, damper and check-in … Such
closeness and love amongst us all … Dark, dark starry night … So many incredible trees
[…] All shapes of branches …46

Walker: I’ve held the journal for the whole stage — not writing daily but still holding
thoughts as we walked along. […] We’ve walked beside the water pipeline along the way
— leaking here and there. All through the landscape of fields and paddocks have been
dams — seemingly dug deeper and deeper47

Day nine was the last day of stage four. It was a reasonably short day’s walk, although
walkers made it last the whole day, arriving at the last camp at sunset. This day was adrift
with symbolic meaning for each and every walker; it seemed this day that we acted
entirely as archetypes, collectively performing ritual without a director, or a spoken
agreement. This day seemed to draw forth symbols out of the landscape itself. One such
performance saw the women walkers in unison drop to the ground. With foreheads against
the red gravel road, we stayed here for a timeless amount of time. On standing, right there

on the road’s edge was a bush with the common name wedding bush, the only one any of the walkers had seen this trip in flower.

On reflection, the women walkers had different ways of interpreting this event for themselves. Some women saw this as the end of the stage four threshold; of leaving behind the remnant youth and states found in the malaga initiations toward the walking of stage five: a crossing of a line. Perhaps it was the mark of return from the ritual descent: a return from the underworld back into the living landscape. I found myself in an experience of deep gratitude toward the land. As if, just as Fensham described, I fell into place to meet it for the first time in a new way. It seemed like a ceremonial end to a long and difficult stage.

7.4.10 Day Ten

Walker: Beautiful last campfire [...] Cold morning. Drew yesterday’s circle with Noel and then we did leaving ceremony ritual with Noel in the sand. Got on bus and cars and left. Went to Billyburning Rock. Amazing views. Saw rock-water hole. Great to see start of the bush and end of the wheat and views to the next stage of the walk.48

7.5 The Holding Pattern

The last day of stage four had the walkers say to each other that we would keep the holding pattern of stage four until stage five emerged. By this walkers meant that the holding pattern of the men guiding, and supporting, from behind would stay intact. There was an acknowledgement that stage four would in some ways remain active until the walk continued, whenever that might be. The stage five story — the stage where the Nyungar women the walkers were following would meet their new stories — was still to emerge.

I can only propose ideas to illuminate the truths of any such spaces we traversed on stage four, as these chapters reflecting on the substance of the Caterpillar Dreaming walk have

been more akin to fictocriticism than analyses that allow fixed conclusions to be made. It is useful for me to see the malaga as areas of marginalised community. Here I imagine many ancestral feelings reside: those of being exiled from the industrialised becomings of England and Europe; those of transgressions against the Aboriginal communities at early colonisation. On a more general level, perhaps the malaga represents the aspects of the personality that need to be transformed in order to enter into greater dialogues and reciprocities of place and conciliation, and as such, also represent aspects of the trained colonial or hegemonic mind.

To turn back to landscape architecture, perhaps stages three and four, and the malaga crossings, could represent a passage by which the landscape architect lands here in place. In the literature review I discuss the two formations of landscape: landskip and landschaft. Perhaps the idea explored here, of ceasing to act from past places, could be seen as a shift away from Corner’s definition of Landskip — the “impulse to shape large areas of land according to prior imaging”\(^\text{49}\) — towards Landschaft: coming into a relational situatedness with land. In any case, it is interesting to think of the landscape architect as in a position of exile.

Fensham’s article, “Falling not Walking,” discussed in the literature review, also provides an apt theoretical grounding for coming into unknowing and landing in place in a new way.\(^\text{50}\) The landscapes of stage four of the Caterpillar Dreaming trail perhaps became the locus for the actual fall; this correlates well with the idea of being tempered by a passage of humiliations brought about in part by the disorientation of finding oneself within another system of knowledge.

Fensham also discusses how the hegemonic psyche has effectively disconnected colonial suburbia from the desert and that this disconnection has allowed all types of hegemonic

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\(^{50}\) See Fensham in section, 2.12, “Walking and Silence,” 55.
neglect to occur in [Australia's] vast places. Interestingly, authors have commented that colonial [Australia] clings to the coast. Perhaps there is something powerful in connecting suburban landscapes with, and orienting them towards, desert landscapes—as the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail does. Perhaps the hegemonic psyche literally cannot survive further inland, and therefore, the passage towards the interior does describe an actual coming into place. I return to Stuart Hall in “The Wobble of Conciliation”, saying, "we always knew that the dismantling of the colonial paradigm would release strange demons from the deep." Perhaps the walkers of stage four met these demons in the malaga, the repressed secrets of hegemony, the demons that keep the desert separate.

Fensham's link to the desert was inspired by Bachelard's, “Intimate Immensity” in The Poetics of Space, and by places that open the human psyche to vastness. Bachelard equates the mind contemplating this vastness with an “increase of being,” also a felicitation. Perhaps a felicitation for the [Australian] place is an imaginative reconnection from suburbia to the desert as per Fensham. And perhaps this implies meeting these hegemonic demons—revealed for what they are in the tragedy and the comedy of stage four, which is also the catastrophe and the felicitation. Deleuze writes:

Chaos and catastrophe imply the collapse of all the figurative givens, and thus they already entail a fight, the fight against the cliché, the predatory work (all the more necessary on that we are no longer 'innocent'). It is out of the chaos that the 'stubborn geometry' or 'geologic lines' first emerge and this geometry and geology must in turn pass through the catastrophe in order for colours to arise, for the earth to rise towards the sun.

51. Ibid.
I wonder if the stage four landscapes enabled a meeting with catastrophe — aspects of hegemony, ancestry, or self — in order to allow for an acknowledgement of past tragedy, so that it may not longer continue in the present. Derrida asks: "Is it possible to find a rule of cohabitation under such a roof, it being understood that this house will always be haunted rather than inhabited by the meaning of the original?"56 Perhaps humans are playing out an ancient battle — as per Derrida’s assertion of acting vengefully from ancient wounds. If this is the case, might conciliation be conceived of as simply ceasing to live this out?

56. Derrida, Specters of Marx, 22.
8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Revisiting Belonging

It will be six years from the start of this PhD study to its submission, and nine years since I first met Nannup on the runway strip on Wadjemup. This time has seen many different phases of the study: from relational learning, to scouting, to theory alignment. It has also encompassed many of my own personal life navigations. In fact this six years has seen me meet many of my own versions of the themes explored in this PhD. It has not been an easy passage, although it has been one marked with learning, grace, and guidance.

When Nannup first invited me to work with him on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail, I cycled out to some limestone cliffs on Wadjemup's north coast. There I sat, in contemplation of such a task, and the words that came, were that this was a lifetime's work. At this point I do not know the significance of these words, and I perhaps never will, though I hold to the recognition that landscapes of conciliation, and conciliatory practices are forever unfolding, and require continual and fresh participation.

Nannup says that a person never experiences a feeling that has not already been experienced by one of that person's ancestors. He continues that each person is having a much less unique and individual life than they may necessarily understand; that some person before you has carried the same suite of totems, or has been required to participate in the same terrain of experience as you do during this lifetime. Admittedly, there are aspects of this thesis that could be considered overly personal or subjective. But, in fact, this thesis demands that the reader consider the dynamic interplay between the personal and the collective, the relational experience of knowledge, and what moves or is created by such personal, albeit collective, explorations.

This study is grounded in cultivating relational awareness, particularly by coming into deep and committed relationship with Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers. This
exploration has seen this relational awareness extend to other materialities, namely place and story, and toward ancestral awareness and connection. These connections are ongoing.

I began this thesis exploring the theme of belonging: particularly belonging in place where there has been dispossession, exile, contested histories and most significantly violent displacement. I began with belonging as I saw a connecting thread through many different discourses of [Australian] place writing — settler-culture theory, post-colonialism, decolonisation theory, poetic subjectivity and shared-space. This thesis was grounded in the intention to explore a counter-narrative to the powerful and dominant story of hegemonic ownership in contemporary culture, and sought to contribute to a counter-narrative that might support contemporary humanity to humbly approach realisations of conciliation.

I began with reconsidering the archetypal story of Cain and Abel, and the necessity for Cain, who cultivated the land, to visit the bones of his brother, Abel, the keeper of the flock, whom he murdered. This ‘visitation’ materialised on the Caterpillar Drearing Trail by following Nannup’s knowledge of massacre sites — and through his cultural holding, to journey with these violent histories. It was seen that these places had a marked affect on the walkers, specifically by connecting the walkers to unconscious realms of repressed histories. It was also seen that by being with these places corporeally that a reciprocal agency emerged toward new relational understandings, cleansing rain that brought healing and peace, and emergent joy of something becoming complete.

The literature review went on to consider belonging through the lens of [Australian] writers who work this space, looking at themes of settler-colonial desire, of poetic subjectivities of place, and interrogating the lack of shared-space collaborations toward finding a first step in to non-Aboriginal [Australian] belonging. Through following Nannup and Nyungar ontologies of place, the Caterpillar Dreaming study found that new concepts of belonging emerged. The process of being on the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk seemed to transform hegemonic desire for small-self security, into care of community and
stewardship of place. It seemed to elicit a sense of belonging, and joy, within experiences of collectively performing a poetics of place. The journal entries became a written script for this discourse of belonging.

A significant part of the literature review, and of the resultant work, was an epistemology of unknowing. Initially this was considered through Bhabha’s concepts on non-fixity, Muecke and Nicoll’s lost-ness within Aboriginal sovereignty, and Fensham’s “Not Falling, Walking”.¹ In retrospect, I would argue that essentially the Caterpillar Dreaming is a template for being with unknowing. Further, that the spatial anxieties present within the corporeal experience of being in a state of unknowing must be mastered in a world that is heading toward greater and greater complexity. From being in unknowing on the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail, many new modes of cultural expression emerged for the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers, namely, of knowing themselves in relation to place, and connected to a myriad of ancestors. These continue to have an effect in each walker’s life.

One emergent outcome of the walk was seeing how place and story meet non-Aboriginality— in a way that cannot speak for an Aboriginal connection—although in a way that is not outside of relationship with Aboriginality. I find Kristeva’s idea of the stranger in ourselves helpful here. In the literature review I quote her: “strangely the foreigner lives within us […]”.² This idea makes projection, and assumption, onto other obsolete: the non-Aboriginal can meet the unknown agencies of place and story within self without coming to fixed ideas or meaning making about other. And, equally importantly, without the fantasy of becoming other in order to find belonging.

An important emergent understanding from this study is that affective place speaks to contemporary materiality. That is, that the affective transmission of story and place, is not

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restricted to history: the same places and stories can contribute marked wisdom to contemporary communities. Indeed, it is vital that they do.

In terms of conciliation, from the literature review onwards, this study sought simply to be in the shared-space of the Caterpillar Dreaming — in the liminal space between cultures and at the meeting point of fresh and salt water — to see what would emerge. The study found through the landscapes of the Caterpillar Dreaming expressions of non-Aboriginal exile, and repressed symptomatic expressions of hegemony, that had to be met and not continued. There seems a non-Aboriginal component to conciliation that requires an acknowledgement and laying to rest the ghosts of participating in hegemony, that is separate from any morality that says that conciliation must be done co-culturally. The idea that these ghosts of hegemony continue to play out disastrously for Aboriginal people is not a symptom of Aboriginal people needing help. In saying this, these findings would not have been revealed outside of a relationship with Nannup and the Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes. Hegemonic tendency can be blind to itself without being within a witnessing law.

This study argues that the first step toward Aboriginal sovereignty becoming a balancing power to hegemony is for hegemony to realise itself as lost, and thus to lose its false sense of knowing, and from there, to discover that it is already situated within Aboriginal sovereign law and place. This is the place from which new cultural forms toward ongoing conciliation can emerge.

The study found that a corporeality of experience emerged from the walkers being within Aboriginal sovereignty. Without the tendency for walkers to rely on hegemonic thinking within the landscapes and ontologies of the Caterpillar Dreaming, a new way of being in place was cultivated. Walkers dropped into a more intuitive, corporeal, and relational way of being with place. In this way walkers sensed another protocol surrounding them, for
instance when the walkers felt not to climb Cunderdin Hill. This was potentially an example of Fensham's falling into the ground and opening toward a new "symbolic relationship between self and world."4

The study explored, through the emergent journal entries, how Nyungar ontologies further invited this corporeality of experience with place. These ontologies, through Nannup's facilitation, seemed to unwrap hegemonic ways of being in place and allow new relational ways of being in place to be found. Walkers wrote that they could see, hear, and be with experiences in place that were new and unfamiliar, even, that they came into place for the first time – even places that they had previously visited often. Importantly, Nyungar ontologies, through Nannup, facilitated a transformation from small-self realisations of place, to notions of stewardship, community and responsibility. Non-Aboriginal recognition of place as active and alive is vital for cultivating non-Aboriginal respect for Aboriginal notions of Country, and the significance of Country for Aboriginality.

At a conceptual level it is likely the findings of this study are important universally. It is also likely that other old paths of travel offering similar custodial wisdoms and facilitations exist in the world. Although it is most vital to understand that each place and each path of travel potentially offers different wisdoms at different times. The Caterpillar Dreaming landscapes were specific teachings offered through Nannup. Perhaps there was a contemporary motivation for these landscapes to enter the academic world. Like Muecke's No Road, this thesis offers a transformational journey that hopefully touches the sides of many diverse paths ahead. The significant point being to be in a process of relating to place and being present to what emerges.

8.2 **Landscape Architecture**

The study made a stance toward decolonising landscape architectural practices by following Aboriginal Eldership; correlating with Orr-Young's research that landscape architecture lacks collaborative projects that prioritise in-place custodial wisdom.\(^5\) In terms of working in collaboration with Eldership, I would say the principal finding has been the importance of seeing Eldership and place as active and activating forces, and the recognition of the necessity of local Eldership and place to be respected within academia, and the various disciplines, as a knowledge source.

Landscape architecture is positioned as a “subaltern” to other disciplines of place design such as architecture, engineering, and planning, and as such potentially resonates with *other* subaltern forces, such as non-dominant culture, non-dominant gender, land, and non-human material form. As a discipline, there is sufficient breadth for corporeal attunement to these subaltern distinctions in ways that can further release structures of hegemony around land and place discourse and design. This will happen with deeper engagement with landscape and Eldership.

I followed a grounded theory research approach that situated Eldership and place as deductive mechanisms in landscape architectural research and design projects.\(^6\) In many ways this correlates to the non-Nyungar subject finding itself within Aboriginal sovereignty, and advocates for the landscape architect to come into unknowing within this position. It should be mentioned here that this unknowing is an active process: ready, open, and able to find itself corporeally within agencies of place and Eldership. It drops the landscape architect into a place of testing their subjectivity of place poetics against a corporeal experience of being within place and Eldership, and allows the landscape architect to come to know themself within another protocol.

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It seems especially important for the landscape architect to transform ideas around desire and morality within research and design projects. There exists scope for the landscape architect to be within shared-space collaborations, while releasing any colonial desire for Aboriginal knowledge and place meanings. Scope exists for the process of shared-space projects to be researched in terms of the qualitative benefits of being (without desire) within the emergent unknown. More similar shared-space collaborations will lead to a broader acceptance of the central role of design practitioner’s personal transformation. This acceptance paves the way for the transformation of landscape architectural practice.

This is to say that there may be a positive function to landscape architects finding themselves within landscapes here articulated as the stage four void — with the attendant experience of humiliations — so as to meet, whether actually or metaphysically, their own exiled aspects, conditions and belongings. Perhaps this would allow the landscape architect to stop reformulating past places onto the [Australian] place.

This thesis argues for a return to landschaft landscapes, particularly in inviting landscape architecture to involve itself with conscious participation with place. In a contemporary sense, and particularly in view of the move toward conciliation, this may look like a practice with bad death in the landscape, in the knowledge that this ongoing practice will allow the emergence of the right expression toward freeing hegemony.7 It may also look like continuing practices that connect landscapes of suburbia to landscapes of desert, in ways that unwrap hegemonic tendencies to create fracture, and therefore neglect.8

Many scholars and practitioners have written protocols of shared-space Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal collaborations. The most important perhaps being the invitation to work in Aboriginal space. Protocols of engagement are vitally important as a first point to decolonise the shared-space. This thesis, however, concerns itself with the more unconscious, hidden, or felt parts of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal collaborations, and thus

7. See landschaft in section, 2.3 “The Poetics of Space,” 24.
8. See discussion, linking Fensham and Bachelard’s poetics of place to the suburb and desert in section, 7.5, “The Holding Pattern,” 187.
offers engagement protocol at this level. Essentially this thesis asserts that landscape architectural practice needs to contain a process of practitioner transformation, with the recognition that this personal transformation will transform landscape architectural practice.

The next points summarise suggestions emerging from this study that facilitate this personal/discipline transformation:

1. To reinforce the protocols that already exist in shared-space collaborations.
2. To have an Elder, Elders, or constituent body of local Aboriginal peoples collaborating on all landscape architectural projects.
3. To have a resident Elder available to all educational faculties that can facilitate a transition to decolonised landscape architecture.
4. For non-Aboriginal collaborators to realise that successful shared-space collaborations require personal transformations. This involves acknowledging:
   5. Shared-space collaborations involve a personal commitment to acknowledge and claim deeper aspects and awareness of hegemonic complicity.
   6. The legacy of colonial design is perpetuated by failure to acknowledge non-Aboriginal complicity in maintaining hegemony, colonial desire and fixed ideas around project outcomes.
   7. That building and maintaining relationship, not only between collaborators — also between all living and non-living project aspects of landscape — is the fundamental guiding principle of any shared-space design collaboration.
   8. For the non-Aboriginal landscape architect to realise themselves to be within a realm of Aboriginal ontologies and protocols that is potentially unknown, and unknowable to them in shared-space collaborations of relating to landscapes.
   9. For the landscape architect to accept and take responsibility for feeling difficult emotions (feeling lost, feeling dislocated, feeling confused) as part of shared-space design collaborations without pushing for resolution. This involves using these emotions as ground for personal or professional transformation.
10. For the landscape architect to realise that if a particular shared-space design collaboration isn’t progressing, that the onus is on the landscape architect to bring him or herself to the collaboration in a new way.

11. The realisation that this process has the ability to deeply transform and potentially decolonise the landscape architectural discipline toward new emergences of landscape relationship and design.

8.3 The Path Ahead

There are conditions of academic scholarship that premise a reproducibility of the study toward finding the same, or similar outcomes. Reproducibility exists here in the form of the methodology, particularly for landscapes of colonial impact where enacted conciliation is a necessary process. The reproducibility of study outcomes is potentially inimitably different — as this particular study was called into being by Nannup's, and corollary Elders', insights into cosmological events. Additionally the study outcomes were completely dependent on relational aspects of the Walk unfolding. It is entirely conceivable that if any one of the study relationships were different, different findings would emerge. It is, however, highly important that conciliation work with relational and emergent methodologies, such as this, continue to be performed with academic rigour, to instruct new formulations of knowledge.9

The use of collaborative autoethnography, through means of the journals, proved an important tool for capturing emergent collective experience. While the journals did not capture every interaction within the Walk, the mapping of emergent themes in line with the grounded theory research methodology, powerfully captured the emergent potential of the walk. I attribute this to the walkers’ ability to write in secret, whenever they were called, and within the landscapes that they were being affected by. The flexibility of instruction around writing in the journals, has further captured a corporeality of study...

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9. This correlates to John Shotter’s discourse on relatedness, and Val Plumwoods discourse on livingness of materiality, in suggesting that an emergent relationship is never repeatable. See Shotter in section, 14.3, “Nannup on the Walk,” 99; and Plumwood in section, 6.2.1, “Place as Agent,” 149.
representation — some things coming to light, and other things not. Furthermore, the
journals and audio monologues facilitated a free-form narrative that would have been
different if there had been a witness to what was being shared, as in an interview setting.
Collaborative autoethnography, through the journals, makes a contribution to how
relevant data in emergent studies such as this one can be captured.

The use of fictocritism, or postcolonial fiction, was likewise vital in the exploration of the
themes that emerged through the journal entries, and in the bringing together of Nannup’s
wisdom, and stories, theory and Walk data. The hypothetical and exploratory nature of a
fictocritical narrative, avoids the risk of implying cultural fixities that are not true
representations of shared-space studies.

I feel there is pertinent future work in the exploration of shared-space collaborative
projects through affective turn theory and important connections to be made at the
intersections of affective place, affective body, and affective collectivity. This study
revealed that many emotions and feelings within the affective body were similarly
resonances of place and illustrative of pre-individual affective states. Further research in
the correlation between processing these pre-individual states and weather patterns —
such as cleansing rain — is full of potential. Likewise, the way in which affective place and
states are shared across a collective of people proposes new directions forward within the
affective turn.

A significant limitation to this study has been the lack of nuance in understanding the
multiplicity of subaltern subjectivities within all of the study relationships. The focus on
collecting the walkers’ experiences on the Trail, meant that I overlooked important
capturing of the dynamic interplay between the non-Nyungar walkers — myself included
— and Nannup, and other Elders who visited the Walk. This has resulted in a
representation in which Nannup’s voice may at times seem idealised and fixed, rather than
as it was: in dynamic relationship with other actors and subjectivities within the shared-
space.
Furthermore, to keep emergent data as open as possible, I did not wish to record all the subaltern distinctions within non-Aboriginality. There is significant potential for future studies to explore all of these nuances—of how subalternism meets subalternism—and the greater complexity and potential that this creates, toward capturing the reality of social and relational being-ness.

Most importantly, this study reveals the importance of focusing and collaborating with in-place custodianship, toward better understandings and stewardship of place. There are many more knowledge landscapes that would substantially affect the direction of academia and progressive human-ness. It is essential that these explorations happen in shared-space, enacting right-way protocol with place and places’ true custodians.

8.4 The Ancestral Beginning

My engagement with the Caterpillar Dreaming has been the following of a haunting. At one point in the study, I was reading my grandmother’s memoirs. I stopped right before she described the family’s move from wheatbelt Bencubbin, via Wagin, to Fremantle. I had an acupuncture appointment with a clinic that I had not been to before. On my arrival at the clinic, situated in an old North Fremantle house, I looked at the letterbox and saw the number 26. Twenty-six May Street, I thought—what a sweet sounding address. On return, I continued the reading of my grandmother’s narrative. There on the next page, she writes: “I sometimes feel that 26 May St was one of the happier times of our lives, and can still experience that sense of ‘coming home,’ when we pass the big (for those days) old house where we lived.”10 I was receiving acupuncture in my mother’s bedroom when she was 6. A house, that for some reason, I had never been shown before. I now feel related to my ancestors in ways that before this study were outside of my perception of possibility.

Finally, what would the flow on affects of a decolonised landscape and a decolonised practice of landscape architecture be? This study suggests deeper connections with place

and place wisdoms, more meaningful relationships within design, education happening more nomadically in alignment with place, more acknowledgements of joint histories that abate racism, and central to this doctoral thesis legitimising the process of personal/discipline transformation toward new experiences and emergences of place.
9. EPILOGUE — THE PRIVLEDGED SURRENDER

9.1 Dryandra Bushland June 2017

The work of this thesis has always been in two spaces — the Caterpillar Dreaming walk, and this dissertation. It feels important, in acknowledging the open-ended nature of the work itself, that stage five existed as an epilogue — opening the Walk again back into the emergent unknown.

Two years after the completion of stage four, stage five had not yet emerged. Some political land issues had become evident in the areas through which the Caterpillar Dreaming Trail had been set to continue. Nannup and I decided to hold a camp for the stage four walkers, to regroup and check-in with one another. We camped for two nights in bushland two hours from Perth city. I took the journals. As a group, and following Nannup, we decided to surrender the walking of stage five into the complete unknown.

Nannup took the group to a significant place for bird ceremony. As we were leaving a nyingarn (Nyungar name for echidna), came out of the bush, and moved in a slow and steady progression toward the group. The group stayed here in almost complete silence watching nyingarn for thirty minutes or more. It occurred to us that nyingarn is also the name of the place at the end-point of stage five. The following are the last journal entries, as far as time can tell — the concluding walkers comments of the Caterpillar Dreaming Walk:
9.1.1  Journal One

Walker: Stage 5, 25 June 2017. [...] From caterpillar to butterfly and back to caterpillar. Journeying on. One and all. Only to find that the end of the journey was the same place where it all began.¹

9.1.2  Journal Two

Walker: 25-6-2017. Dryandra. Misty morning all lifted now at 11.30. What a treasure to be reconnected with the group. I can see and feel the difference in my connection to Noongar culture since the start of the walk at Reabold Hill. [...] My spirit is invigorated and blessed with actually knowing this is the start or beginning of another phase in my journey for me to connect at a deeper level in our creation of a new Australian way. If it’s to be, it’s up to me. [...]²

9.1.3  Journal Three

Walker: June 25, Sunday. Partly cloudy, cool. [...] The fact that I didn’t know anyone at the start, that many things happened along the way that I didn’t understand, and that it’s been a beautiful experience. [...] I am convinced there are two good things ahead of us, learning about aboriginal culture, and hence, validating their pre-existing and still continuing claims to custodianship of this country; and learning about our own cultural heritage, and its pre-existing and ongoing qualities. [...]³

9.1.4  Journal Five

Walker: Stage 5. [...] The lake crossing that we do each and every day. In reconciliation with right-way action in the world. [...]⁴

9.1.5  Journal Seven

Walker: Stage 5. Here we are camped together again, picking up so easily from where we left off. [...] Personally, I’ve come to love rocks in a completely deeper and more conscious way! Since our journey I’ve really appreciated getting to know and feel the

massacre places that our walk led us through. So much our countrymen/history washes over these terrible realities. Maybe within the Aboriginal culture the stories remain strong? How can we heal if our history is secret, is lies? [...] 5

9.1.6 Journal Eight

Walker: Stage 5, 23/25 June 2017. [...] The expectation unmet. The path un-trod. But I think we have all arrived regardless. We all hold something more than we started with. Experiences shared, knowledge bestowed, relationships strengthened, responsibility gifted, lives changed. The transformative power of walking together has been more massive than I could ever have imagined. [...] 6

9.1.7 Journal AW

Walker: S 5. And so, the journey continues, to where, who knows? As the seed is sown we need to suspend our need to see the fully, grown tree till its demise and decay. [...] 7

9.1.8 Journal CD

Walker: Campfire Dryandra. Circle of silence, nothing particular is present, only this, tired of thought, moving under the ripples of emotion, the good is deep, never empty nor full, neither waiting nor non-waiting, neither expecting, nor non-expecting, not chasing, not yielding, simply sitting strong. These moments come and go, into and out of the stillness and silence. [...] 8

9.1.9 Journal CH

Walker: 25 June [...] To speak, not for you, but to speak allowing voice, yours and mine, ours as one. [...] As I sit here with you now, wherever you are, allowing there to be a connection and fragments. [...] A void, a precipice, a new beginning, an open, a goodbye, a fall-back position, shared, gathered, felt, shed and dreamed. 9

9.1.10  Journal EC

Walker: Dryandra [...] I feel unbelievably blessed to experience the unknown in the company of solid, safe people who are a little further down the track than me. I am grateful for the security they offer and for the illumination they share. This stage has caught me by surprise: the enormity of this journey and a sudden feeling of being overwhelmed, uncertain, panicked [...] Then [...] A relaxing and release of the panic. Release brought on by being alone in this beautiful, still, mild, mysterious bush and then by being surrounded by the love and insight of this Caterpillar Dreaming Community. [...] 10

9.1.11  Journal NN

Walker: 25/6/2017. Sometimes it feels like I live a mythology. We live a mythology 5 has been an experience of the liminal. Neither here nor there, unformed shapes, nothing defined, only questions arising from question [...] Life, I feel, will always be ill-defined, unknowing, vague shapes and forms, more questions and answers — for me. What matters is the relationship to the liminal, and the awareness of Event Horizon, singular beats in a larger story. Alive to cadence. Comfort in the unknowable. Poetry. And trust in what I know to be true deep down. The warm, dark, safe depths. A holding. 11

9.1.12  Journal Boodja

Walker: 25th June 2017. As a toddler of the 1950’s I grew up in the country without many people around. I grew up with the bush and wildlife encompassing my senses and shaping the person I have become today. I have always seen myself entwined in its great glory but through my fortunate encounter with Noel Nannup I have learned to see the environment in a way that has changed the way I interact and connect with the natural world forever. There are so many complex layers in Noongar education and I am only just beginning to understand some basics [...]. 12

9.1.13  Journal Boorn

Walker: Stage 5. 23-25 June 2017 [...] This small group of travellers; we’ve walked through many landscapes — seen the unseen — to be here now. We too seem like, collectively, a rare creature, sheltering from a world of foxes, gathering strength,

sustenance, remembering why we’ve come together, building our resolve, resolving our journey. We will all set forth now into the unknown, perhaps like the butterflies emerging from cocoons [...].

9.1.14  Journal Kep

Walker: [...] The journey is untold, I let go of what I can no longer hold. It’s in my blood, this country. I go boldly into the unknown. Fearless. Brave. Free [...].

9.1.15  Journal Water

Walker: Dryandra [...] Two years after the last camp, listening to our experiences, lots of changes and transitions [...] Life is not to be lived without sacrifice, of the old/known. The eternal cycle of coming and going, every second in my body, cells contracting, expanding, like the entire universe. [...] TBC.

9.2  No End to Conciliation

Stage five, following the story, was the stage the Nyungar women would be taken to their new place, with new Story, and new community. It seems fitting that the walk ended at stage four, both in acknowledgement of the ongoing process of belonging/non-belonging; and in parallel with the contemporary walk’s connection to conciliation – the realisation of conciliation as an ongoing process. Perhaps this also signifies the movement of the repressed content of hegemony toward its own conciliation.

As in previous stages where the walkers surrendered their agency in the presence of significant landscapes — such as not climbing Cunderdin Hill, and at times walking a distance off the true path — the surrendering of stage five was likewise an offering toward Nyungar completion.

Through Nannup’s facilitation the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers were enrolled in the Caterpillar Dreaming story; essentially the story was alive in them five would see the

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Nyungar women go individually to different places, the whole process began like a massed assemblage of caterpillars, turning to cocoon alone, and becoming an individual butterfly five was considered similarly for the Caterpillar Dreaming walkers, as an individual path ahead; striking each walker in an individual and complete way — although now with new attendant responsibilities and tools toward meeting the unknown, without bringing the past; and toward the continual release of hegemony’s secrets.

In a spiritual way of seeing, I can imagine that humans are both privileged and non-privileged – victims and perpetrators both. In a contemporary political language, however, we are contemporary political beings, and our spirituality depends on how, in this contemporary political climate, we relate.
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