

Contemporary Aboriginal Art and the Cultural Landscapes of Urban Australia

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Place identity in Australia is currently in a state of flux, owing to the decentralization of cultural landscapes through urbanization. Indigenous caring for landscape has always been associated with the originary condition of Australian wilderness. This paper argues that an understanding of place identity in Australia can arrive from a reassessment of national cultural landscapes, both wild and urban, when we take seriously the imbrications of colonial and Indigenous landscape practices. It does this through an investigation of contemporary Indigenous art, focusing in particular on the work of artist Michael Jagamara Nelson. His work allowed Indigenous art to become recognized as significant in regards to place identity, referencing the alternate cultural markings within the landscape. The argument also draws on Bill Gammage's observation that Australian wilderness landscapes are not 'pristine' but have already been manipulated by Indigenous people for many millennia, having created clearings, green belts, forests and edges, through the acts and rituals of marking and designing landscape. Aboriginal art is expressive of land practice, which is not purely farming, but a way of life: it is spiritual, human and natural.

Through the reading of Michael Jagamara Nelson's artworks as expressive of the figures spatial identity within the Australian landscape, the paper demonstrates the need for a shift from a technological to a cultural reading of landscape. The paper proceeds to demonstrate that contemporary urban landscapes can be read in a similar fashion to Indigenous cultural landscapes. Inscribed by humans and the choreography of their gestures. Journeys within the urban grid, between its edges, making markings and patterns, making up the rituals of movement implicates the cultural landscapes of urban Australia.

Introduction

A cultural dichotomy exists in the application of or intervention through Indigenous art in urban spaces, not just within Australia but globally. The inclusion of artwork so expressive of a country which Bill Gammage (2011) prescribes to be 'originary'¹ (pp102-122) as a landscape inclusive of human intervention and nurture, within a cultural landscape so shaped by colonized space can be argued to cause seeming discrepancies in readings of cultural landscapes. However, new ways of attending to cultural landscapes has the potential to move understandings of actual landscapes away from technological readings.² Through recognizing the place of the figure and the gestures and resultant markings that it inscribes throughout the cultural layers of the ancient, colonized and industrial urban landscapes.

The application of Australian Indigenous artist Lena Nyadbi's painting, *Dayiwul Lirlim Ngarrangami*, onto the roof of the Musee de Quai Branly in Paris is a case in point of such a duality between cultural and technological landscapes. The symbolism in her work is both local and global. The metaphor within *Dayiwul Lirlim Ngarrangami* (Barramundi Scales Dreaming) is linked to her ancestral totem of the Gija people, from Walmanjikulum in the East Kimberley region of Australia. The Dreaming story that is being expressed is of three women chasing the barramundi to the headwaters of a river in the hope of catching it, only for it to escape from the spinifex netting. It's scales, scattered all over the country that became the site of the world's largest diamond mine.

Nyadbi emphasizes the connection between the scales of the barramundi and the diamonds in the land.³ This expression and reading of landscape that Nyadbi marks with her work is a contemporary reading of country, acknowledging the shifts within the Australian cultural landscape through the layers of alternate land practices, from the ancient to the colonial and industrial. Through the collaboration with the directors and architect of Musee de Quai Branly Jean Nouvell, Nyadbi's work *Dayiwul Lirlim Ngarrangami* has been made to present a global narrative: the painting on an architectural scale in one of the world's most urbane cities represents a key shift in the understanding of global cultural landscapes, acknowledging the inextricable connections between the nature of industrialized and cultural landscapes within urban environments.

This rethinking of the urban landscape enacted by the application of contemporary Australian Indigenous art as one cultural landscape within another more dominant landscape can be seen to have a precedent in Australia in the work of Indigenous artist Michael Jagamara Nelson. Nelson's painting *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* is installed in the form of a mosaic in the forecourt of the Parliament House of Australia, in Canberra. Vivien Johnson (1997) discusses the symbolism embedded within the mosaic of *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* as creating a representation of the Australian landscape as a meeting place, an all-encompassing terrain that is pivotal to the identity of its people. (pp82-86)

The aim of this paper is to consider the duality of cultural and colonized or industrial landscapes; through contemporary Indigenous art works that transgress the conventional scale of artworks as they are applied to larger industrial contexts and urban settings. The paper will consider cultural landscapes as an internalized set of human markings, with the figure's identity based on the rituals and cultural activities within a specific landscape.

The Complexity of the Australian Cultural Landscape

Cultural landscapes are a part of the identity of a nation. The cultural landscape in Australia arguably has an ancient condition, as a country of spiritual and creative vitality for both land and humans. Gammage (2011) discusses this development of complexity since the colonization of the landscape by Great Britain in 1788, now identified through new human markings within the landscape. (p103) The new colonizers anticipated an 'ideal' of the Australian landscape as governed by an eighteenth century notion of the romanticized⁴ relationship between place and person, and of taming the wild as the other. That is, there was a separation of landscape from the human, and the wild and pristine were to be conquered and regarded as the other. Gammage (2011) suggested this led to a centralized and powerful image of a picturesque and sublime European colony. (pp 307-323)

Indigenous notions of landscape are far removed from the Eurocentric romantic assumptions. The indigenous landscape is not a place to be tamed or looked upon; there exists no hierarchy of human ruling over its landscape. Rather it is a country that gives and receives life. Deborah Bird Rose (1996) describes the Indigenous landscape as not being purely personified, but as synonymous with the Indigenous people. The Eurocentric and Indigenous notions of landscape, did not meld successfully, resulting in a complex cultural terrain.

Since post-industrial urbanization, this flux of place identity⁵ as described by Anne Buttmer (1980) has dislocated the Australian cultural landscape even further. In this paper, urbanization is not being considered as negative, but rather as a dramatic force in the reshaping of the cultural landscapes within an already delicate cultural terrain. For the Eurocentric romantics, the wild and pristine environments had mostly been tamed, thereby questioning their role and identity in contemporary cultural landscapes. And the dependency of the soul of the landscape with the health of its indigenous occupants is also disenfranchised. This has arguably lead to a collective instability and flux of the inhabitant's identities within the urbanized complexities of Australian cultural landscapes.

Both Lena Nyadbi and Michael Jagamara Nelson's artworks speak of this complexity that is prevalent within the cultural landscapes of Australia. Nelson's *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* mosaic in the forecourt of the Parliament House of Australia in Canberra is particularly germane. It is not just a reading of the indigenous condition of cultural landscape, but also of all who have immigrated into the country's landscape and who may be finding their identities and heritage in a state of uncertainty or flux. The mosaic exists as a participatory and collaborative reading of the land, owing to its urban scale and its accessibility. The work is not aimed to be politically loaded⁶ although it sits in one of the most politically charged environments in Australia. Nor is the work sentimental, it is a sensitive response to the cultural landscape, as it exists, a multitudinous geography of identities meeting within the Australian environment.

Shortly after the opening of Nelson's mosaic in 1988, he travelled to New York City with fellow Indigenous artist Billy Stockman. Johnson (1997) discusses the importance for both the artists taking part in the *Dreamings: Art of Aboriginal Australia* exhibition at the Asia Society Gallery, as participating in the ritual of creating sand paintings as an instillation in the gallery space, marking the patterns and gestures of their cultural landscape within another. (pp92-98) Nelson saw this as an opportunity to communicate the globalized and dynamic symbolism of contemporary Indigenous art to the world outside of Australia, as a movement of work that is expressive of country in its holistic

multicultural condition, and not as a romanticized corollary of an ancient landscape. Johnson (1997) described Nelson's 1989 commission to paint the *BMW Aboriginal Art Car* in a similar light, as a global expression of the contemporary elasticity of Indigenous culture and art. The car was exhibited along with vehicles painted by prominent contemporary and pop culture artists of the 1980s. (pp99-109) The design applied to the automobile strongly referenced the symbol of landscape, as an environment of diverse cultural layers, on a local and global scale. The image of this piece became a popular effigy for contemporary Australian Indigenous art throughout the world.

Nyadbi's rooftop painting at Musee de Quai Branly in Paris resonates with a similar narrative. It is steeped in tradition, yet it also crosses into the reading of the landscape in its current condition: the scales of the barramundi scatter across the country and exist as diamonds deep in the land. These diamonds have now been found, removed and tamed from their pristine state.⁷ Nyadbi's work is a narrative that conserves notions of both the romantic Eurocentric, and Indigenous landscapes.

Furthermore, this narrative is read from an international landmark within the urban environment of Paris, allowing a voyeuristic experience of looking down upon the fabric of the landscape. The painting is applied at the scale of an actual urban landscape, as a technological application and an immersive work. The viewing of *Dayiwul Lirlim Ngarrangami* in this way shares its narratives between two distinctly different, yet humanly connected worlds, that of the ancient Australian landscape and urban France.

The Alternate Markings of Indigenous and Eurocentric Land Practice

The ancient cultural landscape of Australia is infused with an assimilation of topography and theology.⁸ Gammage (2011) speaks of an attitude within the indigenous communities of "thinking universally and acting locally" (p4) with this awareness of the environmental systems of the landscape underpinning their cultural and ecological approach to lifestyle and country.⁹ Rose (1996) discusses this ethos as stemming from the Dreaming, an Indigenous belief of ancestral geographical creations and gestures, its laws allowing place to govern time, all dominated by an understanding of ecology.

Song lines are expressive of this law, referencing the paths that ancestors and totems travelled throughout the landscape. Australia is etched with the traces of movement and song lines, which exist as one of many expressions of the cultural identity of its people and their synonymous connection to country. These paths are believed to have brought the landscape into existence, as indigenous peoples imitate the movement of their ancestors and totems between sheltered terrains. Patterns mark survival lines through the land, Gammage (2011) describing these lines as avenues between seasonal water catchments, fauna migration routes, and places for gatherings and rituals. (pp123-205)

Fire burning was widely used as a practice of maintaining country, moving through and marking the patterns of the song lines, creating grass lands for both the hunting of fauna and for the gathering of fresh plants, roots and seeds. As this practice was repeated seasonally, the country became, as Gammage (2011) discusses, a series of landscaped spaces, marked by the actions of its people. (p187) With edges, clearings and green belts creating a series of tribal territories, hunting grounds and conservation reserves¹⁰ the landscape reflected the laws of the Dreaming and movements

predetermined by the song lines. Both Rose (1996) and Gammage (2011) discuss the way in which the complexities of these nurtured environments were balanced perfectly within this unified and non-hierarchical system of people caring for land, as land cares for people.

A greater complexity of the Australian cultural landscape arose with the colonization by the British Empire in 1788. The new settlers of the country had little time for the Australian landscape as it existed. They entered the cultural terrain with a profoundly different ethos, to alter, develop and to gain a profit from the land. Gammage (2011) discusses the impact of the introduction of hooved grazing animals into existing Indigenous cultivated grasslands, which then became fenced and used for farming. This introduced system of landscape markings took its toll, and the ancient patterns of the continent began to dissolve. Where it had once been verdant and plentiful with water, soil began to compact and dry out under the impact of introduced animals. The once nutrient rich topsoil then became dry, shifting across the landscape with the slightest breeze, creating silt in river and stream systems. (pp103-121, 281)

The land has a dependency on the ecology created by its Indigenous occupants. Here exists the duality¹¹ within the landscape practice approaches that have created the Australian terrain. Where the Indigenous Australians farmed the country through religious sanctions and with an attitude of care, the colonizers sought to use the land for profit and export economy. The imbrications of these polar notions and applications of land practices underlie issues of place identity and the complexities of the Australian cultural landscape. And since the increased rate of urbanization, the identity of both the Indigenous and colonizing people of the landscape have been reflected in the flux of the systems of markings placed on the geographical condition of the continent.

The figure of Michael Jagamara Nelson

Place identity as an indigenous notion is immensely reliant on the condition of the landscape, which is apparent through many facets of Indigenous culture. For example, there is an innate and intimate connection between an Indigenous Australian and the landscape from before the moment of birth, as traditionally the spirit from within the country animates the foetus. Landscape is ingrained within the birth, physically and metaphysically;¹² Indigenous art is expressive of this. It is traditionally a tool to survival and a way of passing land practice techniques and song lines on to younger generations, as well as an expression of the inherent spirituality and physical reliance of the people with their country. Howard Morphy (1988) discusses the way in which both traditional and contemporary Indigenous art acts as an expression of the cultural landscape and the identity of the humans within it. (pp23,99)

Growing up in the early 1940s, Indigenous artist Michael Jagamara Nelson expressed his Dreaming and his landscape through sand paintings, skin markings, and travelling the song lines of the Warlpiri land with his family.¹³ Nelson first learnt the English language when his family settled in Yuendumu.¹⁴ After which he travelled extensively before residing in Papunya, in the mid 1970s.¹⁵ At this time in Papunya, there was an art movement stirring. The artists of the Papunya Tula art movement¹⁶ were commercializing their work, not as an artefact but as contemporary art.¹⁷ The art movement pushed for cultural recognition for the Indigenous societies of Western Desert regions of Australia. Johnson (1997) discusses Michael Jagamara Nelson's recognition of this threat of cultural loss through his experiences as a child and during his youth. Witnessing the alteration in the

markings of the Australian landscape, and with the permission and influence of the Papunya Tula elders, he placed his first artwork onto canvas in 1979. (pp47-50)

Nelson is the perfect precedent when looking at the implications of this complex cultural landscape. As an indigenous man, he has his Dreaming, an expression of his identity that continually stirs through his country, urban and wild. His expressions through art exist as a collaborative narration between the innate connection and Indigenous notion of landscape with the Eurocentric notion. As a case study, his art can be read as a bridging and collaboration of the duality and complexities of Australian cultural landscape.

Central to the expression of landscape in Indigenous art is the human figure and its movement through the country.¹⁸ The figure exists as a vessel for the initiation of markings and the practice of laws and Dreaming rituals. The figure is not directly or visually referenced in many contemporary Indigenous art pieces. Rather the patterns of the figure's motion within the landscape are expressed.¹⁹ Indigenous art is the static representation of a kinaesthetic notion of Australia's Dreaming landscape. Anne Buttner (1980) discusses the figure as being pivotal through both the Eurocentric and Indigenous notions of landscape whether as a conqueror or a caretaker; in both situations there is a reliance on the land. (p166) Within Australia there exists a complex series of markings etched into the terrain through the ritualistic gestures of urban, rural and wild landscapes.

The markings of ancient and urbanized Australia are both connected to markings of the figure as caretaker, as well as conqueror. As Indigenous people developed their knowledge of the physical landscape around them, a spiritual system was devised to set up sanctions, allowing the markings and imprint of the people to have a more subtle and synonymous relationship with the landscape. This relationship as discussed by Gammage (2011) as caretaker can also be considered as conquering. The land practices and markings rose out of the dependency on the land to survive. (p107) Areas of the landscape were farmed and altered over time, creating a terrain that would sustain long-term cultural prosperity. A similar occurrence can be read from the markings within the urban environment. As the figure is born into the urban landscape, this exists as their place of survival.

The urban environment can be considered as a landscape to be nurtured as a multicultural terrain. The densely populated areas of Australia have little physical connection to the ancient landscape. But the markings within them can still be read in a similar fashion, as the figure patterns the country for survival and future prosperity. Both the ancient and the urbanized can be read as layers of marking, resultant from higher and lower densities of human interaction.

Nelson's mosaic in the forecourt of the Parliament House of Australia in Canberra is an expression of the cross-cultural landscape patterning by humans within the Australian land. It's reading allows for a reassessment of the cultural landscape as a multi cultural and dynamic space: the shaping of urban environments marked through a series of events.²⁰ Transport systems and pedestrian movement mark metropolitan zones through private territories of residential, business and industrial zones; gridded, marked and patterned through an interaction with landscape. A rural terrain divided by fences and stretches of panoramic roads, polka dots of human dwellings within vast strips of crops, with mines and quarries slicing the country into sections. The Australian landscapes of its wild conservation parks, etched by fauna, water courses and the climatic elements, with pedestrian

hiking tracks striking around their edges. The ancient narrative of the landscapes, as mentioned by Gammage (2011), are marked with a series of networks and song lines walking between territories, gendered spaces, sacred sites and seasonal hunting grounds. (p135) There exists a ritual of human gesture and shaping within all of these readings and cross connecting networks within Australia's landscape markings.

The architect of the Parliament House of Australia, Romaldo Guirgola, initiated the idea of including an Indigenous inspired mosaic in the forecourt. Johnson (1997) discusses the primary reason for his choice of Michael Jagamara Nelson's design from a selection of ten works submitted by five Papunya Tula Artists, for its narrative and form of patterning. The narrative of a 'meeting place' was parallel with Guigola's design intent for the forecourt space. (p84) *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* is expressive of Waite Creek, a Dreaming place on the edge of his Warlpiri country. Johnson (1997) describes Waite Creek as a meeting place for Nelson's ancestors, and the mosaic exists as a representation of the congregation space for the figures of the "contemporary ceremonies" (p85) of the Dreaming. The narrative of the mosaic draws on the layering of ancient, colonial, and current urban technological conditions of Australian landscape, in an approach attuned to the cultural nuances.

The Figure as Expressed through Aboriginal Art

The figure not only marks the patterns that create these cultural impressions and expressions. Jeffrey Malpas (1999) discusses the figure as a vessel that holds an identity of its surrounding cultural landscapes, and an awareness of its place within country.²¹ The human figure can be considered as a custodian of its markings within the landscape. Through the Indigenous creations of landscapes, and the overlay of Eurocentric and urban markings, we arguably have a way of rereading and reassessing the urban landscape in a similar fashion to that of an ancient reading, as expressed through Indigenous art. The figure is central to the shifting of cultural lenses and attitudes, through collaborations and relationships between other spaces and other figures. It is the crossover for cultural landscape readings, as it moves through its complexities.

In Nelson's country and the broader Central and Western Desert regions of Australia, Indigenous ancestral law initiates a space from within the figure, moving outwards through surrounding events within the landscape. Nancy Munn (1996) discusses these inward spaces as reactions of memories and associations from their landscape, creating an internalized realm of personal identity.²² Therefore when there has been a shift in the condition of the landscape, the foundations of the associated identities also shift. This suggests a robust and versatile relationship between the Indigenous figures of the Central and Western Desert regions and their landscape. An inward identity that is at once being reflective of and expressive through its markings and gestures within the landscape, suggests an opportunity for a similar contemporary reliance on cultural identity.

This internal spatial environment, built from memories and associations, is apparent in perhaps a less spiritual fashion through the figures of the colonial settlers of 1788. As previously stated they entered the land with an ethos that was different to the ancient laws of the Australian landscape. Yet their ethos in turn affected the approach in which they went about marking the terrain. The manner in which they moved was with an awareness of a different landscape, the events that

travelled through the landscape were from another country with an alternative set of landscape identity associations.

Today the flux of identities within the urbanized landscape of Australia could be seen to have developed from the overlay of such remote associations. The internalized geography is associated with such complexities of external cultural landscape identities. Nelson's mosaic *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* addresses this diverse multiplicity of inward landscapes of identity within urban environments. His work does not reject the dissimilarities, but embraces them as a synonymous part of the process of patterning country.

Johnson (1997) expresses Nelson's identity and spatiality of his figure and internal landscape as being robust. His art is explicit of a finely attuned and sensitive recognition of the markings that his figure makes, from within himself and within the landscape. (p33) An awareness of the spatial identities, the differing land practices, and the ritual of gestures the figure patterns within landscapes of differing urban densities. Each place, urban to wild, holds a unique system of markings based on the layers of movement made by the figure.

In 1984 Nelson painted two works that lent their narratives to such a notion of landscape marked by human gestures, in different layers, densities, and with different identities, as discussed by Johnson (1997). *Three Dreamings* and *Five Stories*, the first won the National Aboriginal Art Award in Darwin, (pp54-56) and the second was painted for the Art in Australia exhibition held in Melbourne in 1985. (pp61-70) As the title of both paintings suggest, they exist as a synthesis of multiple Dreamings. (pp54-56) With complex asymmetrical forms, interlocking and overlapping, their structure not dissimilar to the gestures inscribed in the urban landscape, but layered with traditional motifs and intricate dotting. In *Five Stories* his tonal variation strays from that of the Papunya Tula artists. (pp61-70) The narrative of the painting referencing the ancient condition of the artistic expression of landscape as painted on the skin of the indigenous figure. With an overlay of Dreaming landscapes of the 1980 cultural terrain,²³ the work reads as a contemporary filter placed over the ancient traditions of the land.

As seen through Indigenous artist Lena Nyadbi's work *Dayiwul Lirlim Ngarrangami* on the roof of Musee de Quai Branly in Paris, and through Michael Jagamara Nelson's *Possum and Wallaby Dreaming* mosaic in the forecourt of the Parliament House of Australia in Canberra, a cross-cultural reading of the complex landscape conditions is apparent, as Morphy (1998) states when discussing Indigenous art, through its strength of dynamic identity and symbolism. (p139) As Indigenous art is expressive and at once ingrained within the Australian terrain, it is dynamic by nature,²⁴ with the ability to adapt to the variations of markings²⁵ placed over the landscape, created by the figures and their identities. Contemporary Indigenous art engages the other; it is inclusive of and relies on the other to move through its realm of Dreaming. In this case, the other refers to the markings made by new settlers within the landscape and the patterning within contemporary urban environments. The actions of the figure, determined by its identity, forms the intricate networks within the Australian cultural landscape, transcending time as the markings of each individual is a continuum of expression and reaction within actual landscapes, as well as the internal landscapes of other figures.²⁶

Conclusion

Urban landscapes can be reconsidered and reread as spaces marked by cultural rituals. The ecologies of these built environments, sculpted by the movements and rituals of the figures that act within them. Movements as simple and modest as a daily routine of initiating activity between the work place and a café, can be read as identity based actions. These kinaesthetic moments between places of settlement mark patterns that are continuously overlaid by a multitude of other movements, and driven by forces of cultural identities with their memories and associations of the urban landscape.

Contemporary gestures and rituals and their patterning can be considered to be as culturally significant as the song lines that marked the ancient landscape of Australia. These rituals that result in the markings of landscape are both based on cultural norms and habits, relevant to the lifestyle and the societies of individual figures within the cultural landscape of collective identities. Hence there are contemporary song lines moving through the landscape and the figure's identities that dwell within it. Whether the country is marked by roadways or by the seasonal hunting grounds of its Indigenous figures of pre 1788, the act of marking is still the same. The human patterns the terrain through a series of gestures and movements. There is no loss of identity within urban environments, but a complexity in relation to its expression culturally through the dislocation of the land practice techniques, of the ancient and settler landscapes. The identity is relevant to the occupant of the space urban and wild. In both, there exists a series of survival patterns. The artworks of Michael Jagamara Nelson contain cross-cultural readings and narratives through the many layers of alternate markings within the landscape. This provides a cultural reading, as opposed to a technological reading, of the gestures of the figure that creates events in daily and seasonal cycles.

¹ The 'originary' condition of landscape referencing the time of settlement by Indigenous Australians, not the country in a state of wilderness untouched by human intervention. Gammage, B (2011) *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*, The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia, Sydney, Allen & Unwin pp. 102 – 122.

² The technological reading of landscape here refers to the conceiving of landscape as driven by human prosthetic functions, rather than that of the immediate human gesture.

³ ABC News (2013) *Paris rooftop display shows Indigenous artist Lena Nyadbi's work to the world*, viewed 11 June 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013.06.07/paris-rooftop-display-shows-lena-nyadbi-work/4738990>

⁴ As discussed in both Gammage, B (2011) *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*, The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia, Sydney, Allen & Unwin p. 5, and in Buttimer, A (1980) "Home, Reach, and The Sence of Place" *Human Experience of Space and Place*, as she recalls the changes through different periods of time in the relationship between identity and place, making reference to the eighteenth century Romantic literature, which holds a centralized notion of home and place.

⁵ Buttimer is pushing for place identity to be taken into account at the time that she was writing her article, pre 1980, in a time of urban growth, where feelings of decentralization and loss of identity are abundant with the loss of culture. Buttimer, A (1980) "Home, Reach, and The Sence of Place" *Human Experience of Space and Place*.

⁶ Throughout Johnson's text the point is stressed that Michael Jagamara Nelson never pushed his artworks as a political agenda, but as an expression of cultural collaborations. It was not within the Law of his land and people, from the Warlpiri country to protest and cause disruption at public events. Johnson, V (1997) *Michael Jagamara Nelson*, Craftsman House Roseville, New South Wales.

⁷ Pristine, as a landscape inclusive of its indigenous occupants and the ecological land practices that were sustained through their soul occupation of the landscape.

⁸ Topography and theology as an alternate take on “theology and ecology” as written in Gammage’s text, Gammage, B (2011) *The Biggest Estate on Earth; How Aborigines Made Australia*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, page 133. Where he expresses the density of the religious sanctions and the ecological sanctions placed over the land, by the Indigenous people, for survival of future generations, to “leave the world as found”. Although for the concern of this paper, the appropriate use of topography, as a pattern of marking is being expressed, not as a bias ecological stand point.

⁹ Refer to the use of the word country as an Indigenous definition of landscape in Rose, D.B (1996) *Nourishing Terrains, Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness*, Canberra, Australian Heritage Commission.

¹⁰ As expressed by Rose, the term conservation is an idiom of the contemporary time, along with the realization of loss and need for preservation, but this notion was prevalent with the health of the Indigenous people relying on the health and preservation of the landscape. Rose, D.B (1996) *Nourishing Terrains, Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness*, Canberra, Australian Heritage Commission.

¹¹ The duality of land practices within the cultural landscape, relating directly to Michael Jagamara Nelson and Lena Nyadbi’s artwork, implemented into urban environments, the duality exists in the modification and layering of landscape, with dislocations and assimilations.

¹² The innateness of the spiritual insemination of Indigenous life through the pregnancy is directly associated with Michael Jagamara Nelson’s own condition of birthplace, and therefore connected with the identity of his landscape. Johnson, V (1997) *Michael Jagamara Nelson*, Craftsman House Roseville, New South Wales pp. 9 – 13.

¹³ Michael Jagamara Nelson as a figurative vessel acts as a bridging between the dichotomies of land markings within the Australian cultural landscape, as he has lived through many variations of alternate markings, from ‘originary’ through to highly dense urban markings, such as New York City. Johnson, V (1997) *Michael Jagamara Nelson*, Craftsman House Roseville, New South Wales pp. 92 – 98.

¹⁴ Learning the English language, was not only one of Michael Jagamara Nelson’s first interactions with the Eurocentric society, but also was the beginning of him creating a narrative between cultures, symbolically and linguistically. Johnson, V (1997) *Michael Jagamara Nelson*, Craftsman House Roseville, New South Wales pp. 33 – 37.

¹⁵ Through Michael Jagamara Nelson’s traveling, experiencing differing urban environments and layers of cultural landscape, this is reflected in his art works, with systems of layering of alternate Dreaming stories and song lines.

¹⁶ The Papunya Tula art movement, as expressed by John Kean in *Papunya, place and time*, in Johnson, V (2007) *Papunya Painting; Out of the Desert*, National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra, pp. 5 – 15, as a meeting of two cultures, leaving one with the need to assert itself within the other, through its expression through a contemporary art movement.

¹⁷ Contemporary art speaking of the abstraction of traditional Indigenous symbols, such as the circle, line and dot, to reference the contemporary culture of the Australian landscape. Morphy, H (1998) *Aboriginal Art*, London, Phaidon Press Limited p. 124.

¹⁸ The kinesthetic actions of the Indigenous figure based on the rituals of land practices, as expressed through art. The notion of such Indigenous kinesthetic movement through land referenced from throughout Tawa, M (2002) “Place, Country, Chorography. Towards a Kinesthetic and Narrative Practice of Place.” *Architectural Theory Review Volume 7*.

¹⁹ In this case the figure moving through contemporary landscapes of alternate markings is reflected through contemporary Indigenous art, just as the ‘originary’ movement had been expressed in traditional art, the dynamic state of art and figure in relation to place has its strength in this notion.

²⁰ Referencing Munn, N.D (1996) “Excluded Spaces: The Figure in the Australian Aboriginal Landscape” *Critical Inquiry Volume 22*, and her writing on the spatialization of the actor within events, in the realm of social theories of “space, time and bodily action.”

²¹ Maplas discusses this awareness of self within place spatially, and as a site within a system of regions, through the notion of memory and experience, in great detail throughout his text, Malpas, J.E (1999) *Place and Experience; A philosophical Topography*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

²² Landscape within figure, making reference to the Indigenous notion, that stems from ancestral law of land use, territories and movement, discussed by Munn, where a space moves from within the actor, moving out throughout surrounding events, creating a landscape of identity and event based geologies. Munn, N.D (1996) “Excluded Spaces: The Figure in the Australian Aboriginal Landscape” *Critical Inquiry Volume 22*.

²³ "Since universe and Law never change, time is irrelevant, as in a dream. Change and time exist only as cycles: birth and death, the passage of stars and seasons, journeys, encounters, and after 1788 the appearance of plants and animals seemingly new but always there. Cycles are eddies, ending where they begin or eclipsed by larger cycles: travel by death for example, or seasons by life spans. Eddies exist not on a river of life, for a river has a beginning and end, but on bigger eddies, in a boundless pool. Time is an eddy; the pool is timeless. Pool, eddies and Law are the Dreaming." Gammage, B (2011) *The Biggest Estate on Earth; How Aborigines Made Australia*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin p. 123.

²⁴ Morphy considers Indigenous art and landscape as synonymous to one another, as it is an act of cultural identity. Morphy, H (1998) *Aboriginal Art*, London, Phaidon Press Limited p. 99

²⁵ Morphy sees little concern for the survival of indigenous art, as it is so intrinsically connected with landscape, it is dynamic in its form and expression, as are many art movements from all over the globe. Morphy, H (1998) *Aboriginal Art*, London, Phaidon Press Limited p. 139

²⁶ Tawa speaks of being within the landscape, when referencing the commercialized image of Uluru, and gazing into it, as an Indigenous notion, not to look upon it, move over it, or exist upon it, suggesting a reconnection of identities to the interiority of landscape as a sheltering environment. Tawa, M (2002) "Place, Country, Chorography. Towards a Kinesthetic and Narrative Practice of Place." *Architectural Theory Review Volume 7* p. 53.

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