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What is this Sovereignty thing? Intimate connection to country

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers a process that exceeds the possibility of the human through strategically, methodologically, and theoretically centring photographs as entry points to narrate the relationship between the colonised bodies of Indigenous Australians and the coloniser (the settler state). The dispossession and dislocation of Indigenous bodies from place, culture, and sense of belonging lies within the realm of humanness, although invasive techniques of colonialisation deemed First Peoples as sub-human; profiled as fauna and flora. This thesis argues that the relationship between White Australians and First Peoples is one of intimacy and brings to the fore the violent and monstrous acts of intimacies in the relationship between colonised bodies and the nation states. I draw from my own families to position the argument outlined in this thesis by disputing techniques of science, the study of First People as objects, and the language that lies within the frame of racialisation. This thesis unpacks the various policies legislated to contain and maintain control over the lives of Indigenous Australians, and while this thesis speaks to my own intimate relationship to country and family, I argue that there are many connecting similarities with other Indigenous groups throughout Australia.

Epistemological understandings and ways of knowledge are the foundations of Indigenous ways of being and lie within the boundaries of country; First People's intimate and deep connection within and in country. Indigenous Australians understand that skin holds important significance in living and breathing country; skin is the earth that is alive and embodied. This thesis responds to how our skin is represented, named, and coded. I engage a methodological and theoretical process of decolonising that lies within the concept of refusal: a refusal of "Indigenous" or "Aboriginal" to instead lay claim to my sovereignty as Yidiniji/Mbarbaram. This is my own intimate understanding of my body and skin and my humanness in those violent and dangerous spaces of coloniality.

Through the creative and research process of performance articulated through the Unbound Collective, I speak to our performance as new science, a new grammar; one that engages with First Nations' understandings and ways of being. The theories of resistance, refusal, human as praxis, decolonisation, and sovereignty is framed through the Unbound Collective performances and how we are represented within the landscape as both First Nations academics and community members who carry the scars of colonialism on the body and in the body. Through our creative work and performances, we are both intellectual warriors and sovereign beings.

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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed...Faye Rosas Blanch

Date... 26th, January 2022.

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PREFACE

This thesis employs a decolonising praxis that centres Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Framing and theorising the thesis through a decolonising praxis challenges Tuck and Yang's (2014) postulation that decolonisation is not a metaphor and the entanglement of Indigenous relationships with the invading coloniser continues to be defined in particular ways, especially through Australia's legislated policies enacted upon the minds and bodies of First Peoples. I offer and articulate voice to deconstruct and unpack Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) notion that, for Indigenous people, research is a dirty word. Hence, the lens of a Yidiniji/Mbabaram sovereign being provides an opportunity to deconstruct, unpack, and reimagine a different approach to the traditional presentation of a PhD.

While I know and understand the conventions of academia, I am disrupting the established norms intentionally to disrupt and convey a decolonising practice. In this act of disruption, I approach this thesis through the offering of an Indigenous decolonising methodology that is expressed throughout this thesis. This ensures that the importance of my voice and the voices of Indigenous community members/academics is clearly articulated theoretically through storytelling of my own thoughts, ideas, and inspirations. The question of "What is this sovereignty thing?' is examined from my Indigenous standpoint and intimate connection to country as a Yidiniji/Mbabaram creative activist and Black feminist scholar to elucidate the lives, worlds, and lived realities of First People in Australia.

Employing photographs as an entry point to the chapters is key to the decolonising process and my engagement with storying reveals Indigenous ways of being and doing. I respond to the theories that I speak to through a process of poetic response and spoken word to make sense of my thoughts and articulation as a form of decolonisation. This 'call and response' methodology through storying of my thesis offers an alternative way to enact my sovereignty and connection to country.

This thesis has provided the opportunity for the development of a 3rd year INDG3000 "Colonial Intimacies, the Economy and the Mathematics of Genocide" topic, situated in the Bachelor of Arts Major Indigenous Australian Studies implemented 2019. Further, I undertake conference presentation and with the Unbound Collective engage in panels and guest lecture into other topics at Flinders University.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Acknowledgement to Country

This thesis was written on the lands of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plain, South Australia. Acknowledging that I currently live, work, and study on Kaurna people's country is an Indigenous protocol. I acknowledge further that the Kaurna people have never ceded their sovereignty nor their lands. I assert that for the last thirty-six years I have been blessed and privileged to be here on Kaurna country. I pay my respects to Kaurna Elders, past, present, and future, and acknowledge the ongoing work to care as country. With and beyond an acknowledgement of country, I also acknowledge the genocide that has taken place on this country; the killings that have occurred since the frontier wars and the various government policies that have attempted to destroy First Peoples. And I honour the survival and defiance of Kaurna peoples and all First Peoples of this continent colonised as Australia.

It is in this context, therefore, that I draw from First Nations Canadian writer, Terese Marie Mailhot, who put forward the suggestion, "How about instead of land acknowledgments we do genocide acknowledgements" (cited in Cornum 2019, para. 9). Writer, Lou Cornum, adds that, 'A burial-ground acknowledgment would require speakers to research not only the names of the peoples whose lands 'we gather on today' but how many of them died to make that gathering possible" (2019, para. 10). The relationship that exists between coloniser and colonised bodies is assembled from the impact of coloniality. To speak about genocide beyond the 'usual' acknowledgment to country, is not only to implicate the true and bloodied history, but also to bear witness to the relationship that exists between coloniser and colonised bodies built from the impact of coloniality.

It is in this perspective that I locate myself and claim my sovereignty. I am Yidiniji/Mbabaram, raised on and around Yidiniji rainforest country where my family continue to live and work. I am of the Dulgubarra (scrub people) Tableland Yidiniji clan and family. As an Indigenous woman of Yidiniji/Mbabaram descent, this thesis is important for intellectual warriorship of academia in examining the intimacies of connecting to *country*. Throughout the thesis I draw from the scholarship of First Nations academics writing into the field of sovereignty and country to assess Indigenous relationship and belonging to *country/s* within the Australian context.

1.2 What is this Sovereignty Thing? Intimate Connection to Country

To set this in context, I start with a moment when my mother was in Adelaide visiting us. I asked my niece, Chantal, to bring my Mum along to an excursion at the South Australian Museum on

North Terrace, often referred to as the 'cultural precinct' of the City of Adelaide. The knowledge sharing was led by Traditional Owner and custodian, Kaurna Elder Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien, and Emeritus Professor Gus Worby who shared an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspective of the South Australian Museum; the 'cultural precinct' from the perspective of Country, representation and cultural landscape. In the sharing of this knowledge, my mother posed the question, "what is this sovereignty thing?" This question was a call to know and understand from my mother to me; an intergenerational exchange and a shift in responsibility for me as daughter and Black academic to consider a response. This question by my mother has grounded this thesis and also put me on path to conceptualise and consider deeply, what does this sovereignty thing really mean? My task is the offering which requires due care, love, responsibility, hope, and transformation. My unbecoming as a Yidiniji/Mbabaram sovereign woman.

"What is this Sovereignty Thing?" grounds my thesis through an examination of body, intimacy, and country, and the intimate relationship between First People and the coloniser. To consider the violent acts of genocide I am arguing lies in a framework of intimacies that converges with the acts and process of colonialism. Even though intimacies are viewed in the sexual and family context, there is not much written about how intimate the acts of genocide were and the underlying factors that continue to be seen in the contemporary landscape. Ann Laura Stoler, Lisa Lowe, and Aileen Moreton-Robinson provide insightful and academic rigour in this area, and I draw from their work to situate how intimate the relationship is between the colonised body and the coloniser.

To provide a framework for this thesis, I draw on five guiding concepts defined in the section below—Sovereignty, Human as Praxis, Refusal, Becoming/Unbecoming and Decolonising Practices/Methodologies—to conceptualise sovereignty and Indigenous connection to country by articulating the 'intimacies of coloniality'.

In the first section of the thesis, I outline the five guiding concepts. Sovereignty; Becoming/Unbecoming; Human as Praxis; Refusal; and Decolonising Practices will each be conceptualised and theorised in this thesis.

1.3 Guiding Concepts

The guiding concepts outlined allow me to provide a framework to unpack, as well as identify, the many ways that the trajectories of sovereignty, becoming/unbecoming, human as praxis, refusal, and decolonising practices intersect. These intersections will demonstrate junctures, points of connection, a criss-crossing to highlight Black embodiment, intimacy, and affinity to country, as country as significant to the lives of Indigenous Australians.

Both Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) and Audra Simpson (2014) contend that, as First Peoples, we are much more than just the concept of 'culture'. For Moreton-Robinson (2015), White Australia's fixation on 'culture' as the only way to see us within the domain of Australia as a whole, is out of place to our sense of belonging to country. Instead, she argues alongside Andersen's (2009) conceptualisation of Indigeneity, that it is "our density constituted through our lived subject positions within modernity that should be and is key to our sense of self" (cited in Moreton-Robinson 2015, p. xiv). In a similar vein as Moreton- Robinson is First Nations scholar Audra Simpson's articulation that, "the fixation on cultural difference and its purity occludes our sovereignty" (2014, p.20). Sovereignty, according to Simpson, "resides in the consciousness of Indigenous peoples" (2014, p. 20) and, as I argue in this thesis, sovereignty resides in the agreements and practices that intimately connects First People's bodies to country.

The guiding principles will provide a framework to theorise what it means to enact an 'unbecoming'. In order to examine this, I refer to Tur (2018) on the concept of 'becoming knowledgeable' grounded in Tur's community context and intergenerational ways of knowing. 'Unbecoming' will be considered through my standpoint as Yidiniji/Mbabaram, to methods of decolonisation to draw attention to and connect body and intimacy relationally to *country*.

The underpinnings to this thesis are the examination of the ways and means of sovereignty, refusal, being human as praxis and the colonial methods of becoming as named for Indigenous peoples to show other modes of becoming that lie within the domain of "becoming knowledgeable" (Tur 2018). As I will argue throughout this thesis, I conceptualise modes of becoming, then engage in the process of unbecoming that allow for me to be Yidiniji/Mbabaram to methods of decolonisation to draw attention to, and connect, body and intimacy relationally to country. Each concept frames my own relationality with and to country intimately through understanding sovereignty as embodied and formulating humanness as praxis that generates a process of decolonisation that engages in an 'unbecoming' to allow a 'becoming' of Yidiniji/Mbabaram that is always me.

1.4 Sovereignty

Drawing from Geonpul scholar, Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2007, 2015) from Quandamooka territory (Moreton Bay) in Queensland, I consider her articulation of the logic of White possessiveness, sovereignty, and relationality. In the context of sovereignty in the Australian locale, Indigenous Australian Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson offers a complex critique of the nation state of Australia and its logic of "white possessiveness" (2015, p, xxii). Moreton-Robinson unravels the logics of White possessiveness and inserts us at all times into the texts of communication that have denied us ownership and belonging.

Moreton-Robinson's (2015) dislodging of White possessiveness shifts this 'logic' through the discourse of the Aboriginal person as the 'problem' through incorporating Indigenous ways and representations. She discusses the ways that this is played out in the context of the invisibility by White people of Indigenous peoples' relationship with country and the many ways that country signifies our sense of all that is intimate within our bodies and in the land.

Within the realm of racialisation, the Australian public, and society, there is an erasure and forgetting of us as First Peoples; we are not seen as being in the landscape of Australian society except as a 'problem'. In this thesis, I draw significantly from Moreton-Robinson (2000) to both discuss and contextualise Australia's sovereignty as well as theorise how our bodies have been shaped by the processes of coloniality.

I argue that both Watson's (2007) and Moreton-Robinson's (2007, 2015) contemplation and conceptualisation of terra nullius and White possession of Indigenous lands remain within a Western legal framework that continues to centre its invasive colonial techniques on the notion of Western imperialistic sovereignty. Watson (2009) unpacks the illegality of the Northern Territory intervention and its implementation of policies for entering Indigenous communities based on a state of exception. She also considers Indigenous identity and sovereignty to give guidance to relationality and connection to land. I refer to and discuss Chickasaw academic Jodie A. Byrd's (2011) notion of arrivants and the settler states and her conceptualisation of arrivants and settler states into Indigenous spaces. Māori distinguished scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith provides insight into the role of western notions of 'right' and scientific research that Smith names in the context of First Peoples as a "dirty word" (2012, p. 1). Tuhiwai Smith argues and stipulates that engagement in research for Indigenous peoples offer a process that lies in a decolonising methodological and theoretical process to overturn and challenge Western knowing of research.

It is in this context, therefore, I contend that my Indigenous 'womanist', as coined by Alice Walker (1983), continues to be viewed through race, sex, and class (Blanch 2013). I return to Moreton-Robinson (2000), where she states that:

> Australia has come to "know" the "Indigenous woman" from the gaze of many, including the diaries of explorers, the photographs of philanthropists, the testimony of white state officials, the sexual bravado of white men and the ethnographies of anthropologists (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 1).

Moreton-Robinson's brilliant seminal book, *Talkin Up to The White Woman* (2000), provides the opportunity to intimately link my mother's voice and our 'womanist' to centre this thesis. It is through my mother's voice, and her thoughtful and complex question about sovereignty, that I begin to disrupt and unpack concepts of sovereignty, voice, refusal, resistance, anti-racism,

decolonising, and being human as praxis to situate her and other Indigenous people in the landscape of this thesis.

The denying of our sovereignty by settler colonialism is framed in the concept of terra nullius and the amnesia of our bodies in the landscape of this country, Australia. I argue in the thesis that sovereignty continues within Indigenous people's quotidian lives, even while discounted by colonialism through the violent and monstrous intimate acts of abjection and dehumanisation (Sharpe 2010). Sovereignty is embodied and lies within all aspects of our bodies, lands and belonging.

1.5 Becoming/Unbecoming

Mark Rifkin (2009, 2012) and Jodie Byrd (2011) unpack the ways that our bodies as First Peoples have undergone a process of all being the same. They argue that we have become reduced to a population of 'aborigines' and 'indigenous' through the lens of the settler states. This is in contrast to Tur's (2018) explanation on 'becoming knowledgeable' from an Indigenous standpoint but not disconnected to the process of 'unbecoming' colonialism and enactment of sovereignty. Therefore, Rifkin (2009) and Byrd (2011) provide clear articulation of this process and seek to disrupt this and place us as First Peoples who have clear understanding of who we are as peoples. This leads me to consider what does it mean when we, as a population, 'become' a certain type of person, a certain group of people, and why and who is this for? Byrd (2011) suggests we become 'woman', 'Indian/aboriginal', and 'native' within the perception and representation of the colonial settler state.

Across the thesis, I argue that the conceptualisation of 'becoming', as articulated by Mark Rifkin (2011) and Jodie Byrd (2011) is a negative (form of violence) in terms of how the stereotypical dispositions rub up against each other. Simone Tur (2018) provides insightful analyses of 'becoming', and conceptualises and theoretically defines this by stating that her relationship with her Senior Knowledge Holders constitutes "Becoming Knowledgeable" through her relationship and connection to her Elders. Through being with her Elders and Senior Knowledge Holders, Simone underwent the process of 'becoming knowledgeable'.

> Senior Knowledge Holders have taught me and continue to teach me about 'Becoming Knowledgeable' – which is embodied and relational – from an Anangu perspective. The process of 'Becoming Knowledgeable' within my cultural context is shared through conversations with my Ngunytju about teaching, and around processes of teaching and learning Inma. 'Becoming Knowledgeable' as applied in Inma is located within Anangu community and is the cultural property of the community which should not be appropriated' (2018, p. 96).

Through Tur's lens of becoming knowledgeable, I argue that this is crucial to knowing and being sovereign and is, therefore, situated in locating oneself and exemplifying what I would argue is the already 'unbecoming'; the shedding of the colonial skin and the ways that the intimacies of coloniality have, and continue to, define our own location and relationality to country. Tur, in relationship with her Senior Knowledge Holders and in tandem with her beautiful mother, Mona Ngitji Ngitji Tur, undertaking the ceremonial women's business of *inma* progresses I am arguing is an 'unbecoming'.

1.6 Human as Praxis

To articulate the concept of human as praxis and human as a social construct, I draw from McKittrick (2015) and Wynter (2003) towards human and the invention of Man 1 and Man 2 to unpack the social construction of the 'human'. Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate academic, Kimberly Tallbear (2013a) of South Dakota USA, provides insightful analysis of the study of genetics and the strategic ways that the DNA of Indigenous peoples have been used to deny humanness, and sovereignty as First Peoples in the realm of scientific techniques of study. To articulate further and examine how the flesh of Black bodies is racialised, I turn to Alexander G. Weheliye (2014). I contend that, in arguing the intimacies of country, Indigenous peoples in this country continue to engage in refusal as Audra Simpson (2014) and Tuck and Yang (2014) notate and perform sovereignty and agency in the everyday.

In addition to sovereignty and becoming, I will also employ and apply the idea of 'human as praxis'. I argue this in terms of the intimate acts of dispossession and diaspora, and I approach the deconstruction of intimacies through the intellectual scholarship of Katherine McKittrick (2006, 2014), Fanon (2001), and Sylvia Wynter (2003) to work through the ways that they articulate Black space and being human as praxis. I use the word 'black' to signify similarities in White identification of Aboriginal, Black, African, and coloured peoples throughout the history of British Imperialism of colonising coloured countries. McKittrick (2014) writes into Black spaces, bodies and belonging; she contextualises the concept of mathematics as key to various ways that archival material speak about and record Black bodies.

I recognise that there are different narratives globally to describe Indigenous and "Black" people based on experiences and understanding of colonialism and sovereignty. Throughout the thesis, I draw from Black, Indigenous and First Nations, including Metis and Inuit scholars, recognising localised and globalised representations of self and community. I contend that in the Australian context and coming from Queensland of Yidiniji/Mbarbaram, I am familiar with the naming of

ourselves as “Blackfullas”. Watego (2021) affirms our relationship with Blackness as “not a source of shame but a source of pride because of our strength even amid struggle” (p. 21).

McKittrick (2014) argues through the lens of Sylvia Wynter how the social construction of humanness has been produced. Wynter (2003) emphasises the various periods in history where the construction of ‘human’ became the normative in White understanding. Man 1 and Man 2, Wynter (2003) argues, arrived through various periods in history. Sylvia Wynter represents a lens by which to understand the concept of ‘human’ and, alongside Fanon, writes about humanness, Blackness and the colonised body. Fanon (2001) writes from the perspective of the colonialised body of the Algerian/French. His work is key to the perception of the ‘Black body’ in a colonised world. Franz Fanon (2001) argues and illuminates the violence foreshadowed in colonial settlements, sense of belonging, and the movement of Black bodies through a society that is racialised. Sylvia Wynter (2003), Franz Fanon (2001), Katherine McKittrick (2014), and Moreton-Robinson (2015) draw my attention to how the Black body is contextualised and seen within the concepts of White settlement, systemic racialisation, and engagement. Accordingly, Indigenous academic, Professor Irene Watson stated that, “the foundation of the Australian colonial project lies within an ‘originary violence’, in which the state retains a vested interest in maintaining the founding order of things” (2007, p. 45). These scholars inform my analysis of what it means to be sovereign, Black, and racialised. I draw on Alexander Weheliye’s (2014) concept of racialised assemblages to explore humanness and intimacy within an Australian context.

Along with the conceptualisation of racialised assemblages, I consider Katherine McKittrick’s (2014) conceptualisation of humanness and her linking of Blackness with mathematics. McKittrick (2014) unpacks how mathematics is entangled in the violence of Blackness and, I contend, Indigenous bodies in those hard and violent spaces of colonialism. In the critique of intimacy and mathematics, McKittrick, alongside Wynter (2003) consider the value of the ‘human’ and the racialised formations that engage in the dehumanisation of Black/Indigenous bodies. This thesis will, as Wynter notates, “unfix the sign of blackness from the sign of evil, ugliness and the negation of whiteness” (cited in Gagne 2007, p. 252) to activate humanness.

1.7 Refusal

In addition to sovereignty, becoming, and human as praxis, I employ the idea of refusal and resistance to understand the connection between body, intimacy, and country. Indeed, refusal and resistance are central to thinking through becoming ‘native’, ‘aboriginal and Indigenous’, and what it means to unbecome such labels and namings. In terms of refusal, I approach through the work of Audra Simpson in *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (2014),

as well as Eve Tuck's and Wayne Yang's (2014) work in refusal in social science research. On the refusal to give and the not wanting to give, Simpson speaks to the sovereignty of "Mohawk interruptus as a cartography of refusal in their nationhood" (2014, p. 33). The work of Tuck and Yang (2014) excavates the approach with which research is undertaken in the academe and challenges how research in Indigenous communities always lies within the victim, pain, and loss narrative without any real to contribution to social justice. In refusal, Tuck and Yang suggest, is to give what they say some researchers don't need to have nor need to know (2014, p. 233).

In furthering the theorisation of refusal, I consider how "refusal is more than saying no" (Tuck & Yang 2014, p. 223); refusal opens up the possibilities to see the wrong in how Indigenous bodies are viewed within not only academic spaces but also public spaces. Refusal also foreshadows the conceptualisation of settler violence and the institutional structures of governance that are implemented to keep Indigenous bodies outside the realm of institutional knowledge production and engagement on equal footing. To consider the concept of refusal is to also acknowledge the invisibility of Indigenous peoples in the colonised spaces of teaching and learning, and how research within universities is framed with White academics as experts in researching Indigenous communities (Tuck & Yang 2014).

1.8 Decolonising Practices

In this section, I deliberate how research, science and, field study organised its own knowledge of First Peoples which lies in the systemic organisation of research as identified, defined, and accepted as such by Western institutions. I turn to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's statement that, for Indigenous peoples globally, "research is a dirty word" (2012, p. 1). Denzin and Lincoln refer to Linda Tuhiwai Smith and her statement on research as a process that "is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (2008, p. 1). I reflect on this and go further to engage another lens by which research can be empowering for Indigenous Australians and for Indigenous women. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003) serves as a counterpoint for new and exciting strategies undertaken by Indigenous and coloured feminists globally. Mohanty (2003) states that:

> decolonizing research is an antiracist feminist framework that provides ways of seeing, interpreting and making connections, as well as a claim to assuring the safety of our bodies, a theoretical lens applied to research undertaken by first nations women provide opportunities for transformative activist solidarity (Mohanty 2003, p. 3; see also Cannella & Manuelito 2008, p. 45).

Denzin and Lincoln highlight key terms and arguments that are "ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing, and participatory… committed to dialogue, community, self-

determination, and cultural autonomy" (2008, p. 2) as essential to researching with and among Indigenous peoples.

Understanding that our bodies are colonised continues through Western concepts maintained within the educational spaces we encounter and engage with as First Peoples. I work through a process of decolonisation as intervening in and disrupting colonial language and discourses (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986) that have impacted upon the minds and bodies of Indigenous people. Aime Cesaire (1950, 2001) argues for an anticolonial process and framework that allow for not only deconstruction of Western thoughts and ideas but a reconstruction for imagining another view to provide a greater sense of love, desire, belonging, place and country that lie within the continual maintenance of intimacy with country.

I contend that implementing a framework of a critical anti-racist paradigm really allows for deconstruction and engagement with decolonising methodology and methods.

Finally, I engage with the methodology and practices of decolonisation, as foundational to my thesis, that inform the key concepts of sovereignty, becoming/unbecoming, refusal, and human as praxis to articulate Indigenous youth engagement with education. Statistically, Indigenous students continue to fall behind non-Indigenous students in schooling and employment (Blanch 2009a), however, what appears to be absent in the statistical data is the life worldview of Indigenous students and how, too often, racism is rife in colonial educational spaces (Blanch 2009a, 2018; Walter & Andersen 2013). The gist of wanting wellbeing and safety in educational spaces offers a decolonising practice that must occur to disrupt those spaces of coloniality.

A process of decolonisation within the sphere and spaces of education, I argue, delivers insight into other strategies for working with Indigenous students to allow for success in their educational journey. Aime Cesaire's notion of a 'new science', according to Wynter, "calls for a rewriting of our present now globally institutionalized order of knowledge" (cited in McKittrick 2015, p. 18). I argue that respecting and acknowledging Indigenous systems of knowing can give credence to the contribution of a new science. I go further and suggest that an approach through an ethical love paradigm might enable wellbeing and safety in the educational space for both Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students, allowing for humanness to pervade those hard-to-be in colonised spaces. In respect to safety and wellbeing, what is called for is a new seeing and being that engages the practices of decolonisation and love as key to the conceptualisation of sovereignty, refusal, human as praxis, and becoming/unbecoming. Shifting students' portrayal as biologically deficit and disadvantaged, and representation as 'problematic' bodies in the learning and teaching spaces is crucial to success in schooling.

Thus, I begin to disrupt and unpack concepts of sovereignty, voice, refusal, resistance, anti-racism, decolonising, and being human as praxis to situate Indigenous people in the landscape of this thesis.

1.9 Cultural Artefacts

I will apply photographs as cultural artefacts to explore intimacy and to signify the key concepts outlined in this thesis, employing theoretical and methodological concepts of interventions as important in the colonial constructions of knowledge production and colonial truths that is entrapped within those knowledges about Indigenous bodies (Campt 2012, 2017). To add context to this section, I will explore how photos, archival documentations, and performance converge to highlight sovereignty, human as praxis, refusal, becoming/unbecoming, and decolonising practices to articulate the intimacy of colonisation.

1.10 Photographs

In this thesis, I will use photos to consider how photographs as archival documents register opportunity for meaning making, memories, and the telling of narratives. Secondly, I consider the frame as important in how photographs are viewed, in and of themselves, which offers a 'going beyond' to reveal what Judith Butler discusses as "frames themselves as operations of power" (2009, p. 1).

I argue that the photographs are central to this thesis as entry points to move the thesis forward. In further contemplation, the cultural artefacts of photographs offer deliberation on the various means of how photographs narrate a story. Further, photos present an analysis by looking at the frame, the contours of the frame, and the numerous ways that archival documentation provides insight into how photographs are read.

I approach through Tina Campt's (2012, 2017) conceptualisation of listening to images as a significant method to critique the ways that images speak to the intimacies of coloniality and the positionality of Indigenous people's bodies in the landscape of country. I move towards an interweaving of analytical, creative, intellectual, imaginative, socially conscious, and challenging process, and endeavour to transform the way that our bodies and our intimate connection to country and culture matter.

Drawing from key writers writing into how photographs relate narratives, memories, and cultural understanding, I consider, in particular, Tina Campt's (2012, 2017) engagement and insightful responses to photographs and visual representations to progress deconstruction and position each archival documentation as significantly important to each chapter in this thesis. I contemplate

Campt's question "what is the place in this archive for images assumed only to register forms of institutional accounting or statement?" (2017, p. 3). Conceptualisation through the photographs offers insight in understanding specific moments in our history where Indigenous Australians were denied their rightful place in this country and serve to work towards a sense of knowing and being 'human'. Drawing upon Campt's (2017) methodological process of listening to images in this context, the thesis is also framed within an Indigenous feminist standpoint position (Moreton-Robinson 2013; Nakata 2007) to show how images and archival documentation are produced with the purpose of tracking and cataloguing (Campt 2017, p. 3; Harkin 2017; Stoler 2010).

My intention is to introduce another lens by which to view such photographs to relate another narrative—a process of reframing—and I engage theoretically, ethically, and analytically my contemplation of the frame as it resonates in relation to each photograph and to myself. Significantly, textually, academically, and creatively, I offer the mapping of the complexities of viewing and using photographs, attending especially to the images' affective properties and impact upon the viewing that allow for perception and reaction (Ahmed 2004; Bhabha 2000; Butler 2009; Campt 2012; Lydon 2016). Turning to Roland Barthes' (1977) Image, Music and Text provides some insight into how photographs relay messages. He posits the questions; "What is the content of the photographic message? What does the photograph transmit?" (Barthes 1977, p.15). Within and outside the frame, I contend, is dispossession, relocation, loss of freedom, detailed in the processes of dehumanisation, the 'aboriginal' body less than or not at all. According to Butler these frames are "themselves operations of power" (2009, p. 1) and the epistemological capacity to apprehend a life or 'aliveness' (Campt 2012; McKittrick 2014; Weheliye 2014) produces what is considered the 'norms' of life (Butler 2009, p. 3) or those intimate moments we take for granted (Berlant 1998) which are in need of reframing. As Judith Butler contends, "when a picture is framed, any number of ways of commenting on or extending the picture may be at stake" (2009, p. 8).

1.11 Reframing the Frame

> The role of any rule of composition is to draw the eye into a photograph. Framing refers to using elements of a scene to create a frame within your frame. For example, you might shoot through a doorway, pulled back curtains, branches, fences, tunnels, or arches to highlight your subject. Adding a focal point through framing shows a viewer exactly where to look. (Price n.d., para. 1).

The importance of developing greater understanding of the way that the 'frame' engages photographs and visual representation is crucial to revealing deeper awareness of how photographs can be interpreted. I explore, methodologically, through critical analysis of the 'frame', drawing from various academics (Baker et al. 2015a; Butler 2009; Campt 2012, 2017; Lydon 2016) the ways that analysing the frame provides another way of looking and viewing archival and family

photographs. Photographs are not lost to me, they sit amongst family belongings, and others of Indigenous Australians are uploaded in public archival records that allow consumers to view, comment on and to utilise at their will. Through the frame of racialisation, I contextualise my sense of intimately belonging to country and identity.

According to Judith Butler (2009), critical examination of Sontag's *Torturer and Ethics of Photography* (pp. 63-100) permit understanding of the frames of photography "and what it means to be ethically responsible to consider and attend to the suffering of others and, which frames permit responsibility of the human and which do not" (Butler 2009, p. 63). Butler, "by recognizing of humans linking to the norms that define what will and what will not be a grievable life" (2009, p. 63), asks what frames apprehend, or fail to apprehend, the lives of others as lost or injured (lose-able or injurable). Colonisation has impacted on our right to walk and be on country, to intimately connect to country. Colonisation deprived us of our language, our foods, our ceremonial business, and our way of life.

Arguably, Butler's (2009) book, *Frames of War: When Life is Grievable*, is insightful in its critique of the value and position of the camera, frames, and narratives that relate such effects of photographs taken of armed conflicts and the military power of the US government. While I am not offering a summary of Butler's text in detail, I consider, however, that there are key themes and ideas that she proposes that are relevant to my own examination of the contours of the frame.

Examining the 'frame' contextualised within my everyday looking and viewing, both in the natural and social world, a decolonisation process is very necessary in delivering and reading the photographic frame throughout this thesis. Contained within Tina Campt's (2012) proposal, that encountering photographs and the frame conjures up a larger history, Campt asks "what are the shifting sensory and affective relations that structure the dynamics of viewing and being viewed… what shifts when we move from focusing on a single image to that of its relations to a set, or archives?" (pp. 74-5). What can appear to mean nothing to someone else is meaningful to me. I situate Campt's argument as central to critiquing photographs that tell of the historical events in relationship to Indigenous people. Campt (2012) further contends that the contours of the frame also communicate a narrative.

1.12 Contours of the Frame

Tina Campt's (2012 2017) analyses of the 'contours of the frame' offer deeper insight and interpretation of what is being observed when viewing images, photographs and the frame. She states that "the contours of the frame communicate how important it is to see not only beyond the

frame but, to also see what is in the frame" (2012, p. 5). Looking beyond the frame, Campt provides "a process of listening to the images" (2012, p. 5), enabling a seeing and attending to the affective elements of the subjects within the frame. In this thesis, I position the photographs as central to examining the intimacies connecting Indigenous people, my own family members, and young Indigenous students to understanding their embodiment of 'country', and how the contours of the frame operate racialisation and the impact upon bodies and worldview. Our identity and living as First Peoples are challenged at every turn. We continue to be on the outskirts of Australian society; our country/s and connection ignored, dismissed, or simply forgotten in the everyday.

Postcolonialism continues in all aspects of our lives; contextualising the contours of the frame is turning the gaze back, flipping the lens to reveal another way of looking. Homi Bhabha's (2000) essay, *Interrogating identity: The Post-Colonial Prerogative*, states that "the problem of identity in the postcolonial text returns as a persistent questioning of the frame, the space of representation, where the image – missing person invisible eye, Oriental stereotype – is confronted with difference, 'Othered' (p. 95). Bhabha argues that "[w]ithin the elements of discursive poststructuralism the perspective of depth gets reflected in the glassy metaphoric of the mirror and its mimetic or realist narratives" (2000, p. 97). I suggest that there is a moment when the identity of Indigenous peoples is encountered through the images and the narratives go beyond the frame. While the viewer may not realise it, what is left, however, is, "a resistant trace, a stain of the subject or sign of resistance … it makes present something that is absent – temporally deferred: it is the representation of a time that is always elsewhere, a repetition' (Bhabha 2000, pp. 98-100), but which also exist in the moment.

Building upon further understanding of the frame in the context of examining the photographs in this thesis, a process of deconstruction is necessary to formulate awareness of how the frame informs my own relationship with the colonial settler state. Jeanne Willette, writing about Jacques Derrida and deconstruction, states that, "deconstruction, like structuralism is an activity or performance. Deconstruction is reading, a textual labor, traversing the body of a text, leaving 'a track in the text" (2014, para. 1). Unlike other forms of critical analysis, deconstruction cannot just happen from the outside but is something that happens also from the inside "[b]etween the outside and the inside, between the external and the internal edge-line, the framer and the framed, the figure and the ground, form and content, signifier and signified" (Derrida cited in Willette 2014, para. 7). Using the concepts of inside/outside and the idea of betweenness (Minh-ha 1991), I rethink the frame to counter gaze (Bhabha 2000) and overturn the tense grammar of colonisation where bodies of First Peoples were captured, forced into segregated spaces, and subjected to the violence of

settler states (Campt 2012, 2017; Moreton-Robinson 2007, 2015; Simpson 2014), allowing progression towards understanding my sovereign rights as Yidiniji/Mbabaram.

1.13 Archival Documents

In addition to photos, I examine and investigate the archival images and, to do this, I employ intellectual and academic knowledge drawing from my colleagues, Harkin (2017), Baker (2018a) and Tur (2018), as well as Katerina Teaiwa (2014) to signify Indigenous academic manoeuvring amongst the insidious violence of the archives and the dispossession and dislocation of First Peoples from country. To further critique the violence of archival materials, I turn to Saidya Hartman (2008), Hortense Spillers (1987), and Katherine McKittrick (2006) to ascertain space and geographies, and the demonic grounds of movement. Capturing further articulation of violence and intimacies, the works of Christina Sharpe (2010, 2016) reveal the extent to which the monstrous intimacies of violence is contained through the ways that Black bodies not only move across landscapes and seas but live in the everyday. In furthering my analysis, I posit that the bodies of Indigenous people captured relate to narrative of dislocation and dispossession through the impact of colonisation. I offer a deeper analysis of how Black bodies, through dispossession and dislocation from places, spaces and 'country', reveal Alexander G. Weheliye's (2014) conceptualisation of 'habeas viscus'; you shall have the flesh and habeas corpus also the bodies of First Peoples that sustains the ongoing violence into contemporary life.

The work of Nurungga poet, feminist, and academic, Natalie Harkin (2017), and Mirning academic and film maker, Ali Baker (2018a), strengthens and contributes to the archives within the domain of the South Australian Museum. What is revealed through their scholarship and knowledge production in Australia is the ways that the funding of exploration into Indigenous territories, bodies, and culture intersected with violence that was documented by its culprits. Harkin (2017) stated that researching archives is hard; as she progressed through immense data collections, she found herself stuck, unable to speak, unsure, and scared—each emotion telling, how one's body feels when uncovering or opening the lid of the archives. Baker (2018a) wanted to understand how Mirning people have been represented within spaces like the South Australian Museum, which is viewed as a natural history museum, and the implications of these representations. Lisa Lowe highlights archival documentations and museums as a progression of naturalisation and considers "the way that humanist archive naturalizes itself and 'forgets' the conditions of its own making" (2006, p. 412). Lowe discusses "the politics of our forgetting", and I contend the amnesia that continues in this country in taking Lowe's words that the "politics of our lack of knowledge" (2006, p. 412) is how the documentation and violent intimacies of the archives provide for its citizens and

for our relationship with settler states. An intimate relationship is forged between the archive and its respondents, even while its hard.

1.14 Performance Unbound Collective

In addition to photos and archival documentations, I draw from the performance work of the Unbound Collective across the thesis. I offer a short glimpse into the Unbound Collective's *Sovereign Acts*, who we are, and our performances. In later chapters, I extend on our role in the Unbound Collective; our participation and engagement with research, community, and academia; and our artistic endeavours within public spaces. The Unbound Collective consists of four academic women from different First Nations in Australia. Our bodies and minds engage a process of deconstruction and unpacking to disrupt the spaces we engage with. Our first performance occurred at the Fontanelle Gallery, Bowden, SA. This performance contextualised our research through poetry, song, installation, and archival documentation. Unbound Sovereign Act II was developed for the Tarnanthi Festival in 2015 and enabled the opportunity to further explore how we engage with a creative decolonising process in the context of film, singing, and moving between the spaces of the State Library, behind the SA Museum, and the Amery Building. This space contained the bodies and lives of Indigenous peoples and our performance offered the opportunity to disrupt the space, with digital projects and words speaking for us. We are sovereign intellectual warriors and scholars. We provide a framework for articulating decolonising to insert new methodologies, new pedagogies, and new grammar into the production of knowledge; 'a new science' as noted by Cesaire (2001) and Wynter (cited in McKittrick 2015). I argue the importance of our lives as sovereign women who engage in refusal, resistance, being human as praxis, and becoming/unbecoming. Each and every concept is tied up with our sovereignty, which was never ceded. We all remember our mothers' and grandmothers' stories. Our bodies perform our stories.

We acknowledge the importance of being a collective of scholarly academics and community members, and the struggles we face. Each of our engagements as a collective is about "location, community and collective struggle in terms of decolonizing research that emerges as fundamental in the ways that feminism, theory and research intersect" (Mohanty 2003, p. 11).

Donna Haraway's (1988) conceptualisation of 'situated knowledges' anchors us as a collective, thus, each of our experiences as colonised bodies encounter the impact of colonisation in similar ways, with the differences of geographical location and timeframes. Within the performative element, I speak to the audience through spoken word; I allow my voice to centre my body and self, I follow behind my sisters in the performance, and, at all times, I am aware of the space, location, and the movement of my sisters in that space. There is a care factor that involves us all.

As a collective, we are stronger, we can reimage, refuse, resist, and reinforce how the violent intimacies of research have subjected and objected our bodies, our communities, and our 'mob'.

As stated above, I examine and critique the performances of the Unbound Collective throughout the body of this thesis to draw attention to the development of other ways to engage in research (Baker et al. 2015a; Baker 2018a; Harkin 2017; Tur 2018; Smith LH, 2012 Martin 2008; Phillips & Bunda 2018) and to document our knowledges and scholarship within those spaces of colonisation. I contend that, as Indigenous feminists, the racist discursive rhetoric can no longer keeps us contained as objects in the museums, nor in the pages of history books that are often taught and relayed to students in schools and universities as past, and not in the present or the future.

Decolonisation, for us as First Nations feminists, "involves transformation of self, community, and governance structures" (Mohanty 2003, p. 7) to reconstruct and we are solidified in the ethical care and wellbeing of our bodies and minds. We love who we are and what we represent; our performance reveals this and often we are caught in the aftermath and joy of simply being women and human. We are more than that, however, and this is related to us when we see our families' faces in the audience. The ability to engage in another way of research, one that is academically creative and performative, is how we have shifted our paradigm, our praxis to one of being human (McKittrick 2015). We action our humanness and we love who we are as First Nations women.

1.14.1 Performing the 'Gaze'

> The extraordinary importance of this change is that it is willed, called for, demanded (Fanon 2001, p. 27).

Illuminating a deep analysis of the intimate connections to 'country' (Baker et al. 2015a; O'Brien & Rigney 2006; Tur & Tur 2006; Worby, Tur & Blanch 2014) I express how the art of performance allows a shift to occur. The performers and the performance disrupt, resituate, and re-represent the surveillance of the 'gaze' to the racialised components of scientific concepts, understandings, and knowledge constructs to apprise the ways that science as a social construct derives a particular type of knowledge with claims of truth telling, as Haraway (1989) and Minh-ha (1989) postulate. It is hoped that this thesis engages truth telling as central to unpacking and deconstructing the ways that Western epistemic constructs inform how knowledge is produced about First Peoples.

Knowledge of racialisation can be seen in Donna Haraway's book, *Primate Vision, Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989). Haraway argues that, according to White men, the understanding of nature in its pristine state "was a theatre, a stage for playing out the natural and the salvation" (1989, p.8). I attempt to untangle notions of biological taxonomy through the critique of Sylvia Wynter's (2001) analyses of the scientific world to unsettle the playing out of the natural

and nature to demonstrate the concept of the human. Wynter (2003) contextualises some of these ideas of knowledge constructs about the 'native/Black' body and, alongside Weheliye's (2014) critique, how not only race, racialised assemblages, bare life, and biopolitics inform these ideas, but how the scientific notions of 'humans', 'sub-humans' and 'non-humans' (McKittrick 2015; Tallbear 2013a Wynter 2003; Weheliye, 2014) contribute to the Western notion of sovereignty to deny Indigenous/First Peoples' intimate connection with the land, sea, rivers, plants, and animals.

Engaging with strategic skills and processes of decolonisation further allows my body to engage in creative performances to disrupt imperial notions of sovereignty, as perceived in the nation's agenda. Refusal and resistive strategies form an enactment of my own state of exception. In the contextualisation of sovereignty, I unpack/deconstruct how the sovereign nation of Australia is an 'imagined' community (Anderson 2006) and impedes upon my people's notion of 'country' through its forces of colonisation to develop townships and settlements for arrivants (Byrd 2011; Lowe 2015): convicts, migrants, refugees, slaves, and indentured labourers. In the critique of 'country', as understood by Indigenous Australians, Moreton-Robinson states, "in all of life's histories, Indigenous peoples are related either by descent, country, place or shared experiences" (2015 p. 14). This is contained in my mother's need to understand what sovereignty is, and how does sovereignty deny her right to country. This is very important, and so I position myself as I know myself to be, that is as a Yidiniji/Mbabaram Australian woman, community member, wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and cousin to extended families throughout this vast country, to revisit country through connecting with family. Ann Stoler (2006a) provides insight into how the empire/s collided with the First Peoples of the many countries invaded and states that:

> relations of empire crash through and then recede from easy purview, sunder families, storm sequestered spaces, and indelibly permeate–or sometimes graze with only a scarred trace-institutions and the landscapes of peoples' lives (Stoler 2006a, p. 31).

Building upon Stoler's (2006a) interpretation of the affairs of the empire in the landscape of people's lives, I contextualise how the intimacies of colonial invasion, dispossession, dislocation, and other experiences associated with settlement, land grab, and stolen children, hinged on relationships forged between the invaders and the invaded. I argue that the building of relationships developed through a sense of intimacies that saw the forced removal of First Peoples' bodies from the land of their birth, as well as cultural affirmation and affiliation, and the dismantling of the intricacy of our kinship systems. The processes of denial by the colonisers informed acts of dehumanisation resulting in continual trauma to the lives of Indigenous peoples in this country.

The many legislative policies and acts implemented since invasion determined and dictated our every sense of being and who we are (see Kidd 1997). I commence this thesis with the position of

'humanness', and state that I have always been and will continue to be Yidiniji/Mbabaram, even while out of country. Moreton-Robinson provides a lens by which to understand our relationship with and connection to country; she states that:

> we are not migrants in the sense that we have moved from one nation-state to another, but the policies of removal transferred different Indigenous peoples from their specific countries to another's…dislocation can mean in effect that Indigenous peoples can be out of place in another's country but through cultural protocols and commonality of our ontological relationship to country, we can be in place but away from our home country (2015, p. 13).

Thus, while I am seemingly out of place in another's country, I acknowledge that I live, work, and play on the lands of the Kaurna peoples of the Adelaide Plains. However, I am embodied intimately with my own country, and carry this knowledge of who I am wherever I am. This thesis provides awareness of my intimate relationship with my own country.

I want to insert the voice of Mumu Mike Williams here to highlight the intricacies and intimacies of country and body. Mumu Williams, a senior Anangu Elder who has passed, states lovingly and provocatively that we need to listen. In his Pitjatjantjara language he says:

> Kulilaya manta miilmiilpa tjara Tjukurpa alatjitu kunpi. Australia pina alangku kulinma. Kulinin Kutitjunku wiyangku manta nganampa.
>
> Listen up! Our land is sacred and our Law and Culture is strong. Theft or misuse of this Tjukurpa (Law and Culture) is a criminal offence.
>
> Australia. Open your ears and listen. Do you hear. Never ever steal our Land. Theft and misuse of this land is a criminal offense (2019, p. 111).

1.15 Overview of Chapters

The key concepts of Sovereignty, Refusal, Human as Praxis, Becoming/Unbecoming, and Decolonisation are explored in each chapter and give credence to the development of new knowledge and new understandings. The invasive and colonial acts of violence are laid bare in this thesis and build on the impact upon the bodies of First Peoples that is and of itself an intimate encounter. Further, what exists between the bodies of the coloniser and the colonised is the forming of a relationship unrecognised in this country. The intimacies of coloniality exist within those moments of violence and erasure and the denial of First Peoples. It is in the context of intimacy that I suggest my mother's question leads to reading the landscape of the country in certain ways to seeing ourselves as intimately belonging to 'country' and as embodied sovereign beings.

With Chapter Two I offer my mother's story to unpack and articulate her question of sovereignty and our shared relationship as mother and daughter. While I do not see my mother often due to living in different states, it is always a pleasure for me when I get to visit and spend time with her. I

approach her story with respect, and honour the work and experiences that she has gone through. This chapter outlines her journey as a sovereign Mbabaram woman, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and her engagement in resistance and refusal that hinges on her remarkable question of "what is this sovereignty thing?" Tracking my mother's question of sovereignty provides a provocative analysis for unpacking that the "story of the new world is horror" as Jodie Byrd (2011, p. xii) postulates. Byrd argues that race, colonialism, and imperialism became the distinguishing features of how First Peoples were considered as less than human, in fact, sub-humans (2011, p. 3).

Chapter Three explores humanity through the critique of dehumanising processes. The chaining of Indigenous bodies and forced removal of these bodies from place of birth and country/s is examined through a photograph that is within the public domain. I consider the intimate relationship between the early pastoralists, Aboriginal peoples, and the police in northwest Western Australia, and the progressive nature of policing that, I argue, continues today. Using the analytic tool of listening closely, acknowledging that photographs are not muted but tell a story, I consider the violence, refusal, and resistance of the men in the photograph. I argue that intimacy of contact, dispossession, diasporism, and proximity is seen through the ways that Indigenous men and Elders, women's and children's bodies are subjected to discretion, at times, but very visible unjust treatment by so-called figures of authority—the police, the pastoralist, and even the Western Australian Premier—in the early settlement of Western Australia. In order to tackle this chapter, I will draw upon elements of how the issues of dispossession and dislocation away from Aboriginal country resulted in a strong belief by White settlers that Black bodies were not vulnerable also denied in its processes its impact upon the humanness of lives.

Chapter Four provides a critical critique of the policies of Segregation and Christianisation, and the theme of civilisation. Again, through the cultural artefact of my family's photograph taken outside the church at Pinnacle Pocket, I consider the role of the church and its impact upon my family. I think through concepts of inclusion and exclusion to work through the relationship that continues to be embodied within the memory of my family members. I argue that, although my family were content in their evangelistic endeavours with a strong belief in Christianity, there still existed the policies of containment and segregation deployed by the institutional powers that dictated the terms by which my family lived; how and where. Within the realm of religion, there was a sense of safety and wellbeing for many of my family and community members that lived at Pinnacle Pocket, with great memories of church-going, where friends and families coexisted sufficiently. I examine how missions and reserves were placed as sites that contained, maintained, and denied the humanness of Indigenous bodies. Through a process of 'becoming', 'unbecoming', and 'being', I consider the

concepts of transversal, negotiation, and how our bodies were subjected as non-citizens in this country.

Chapter Five speaks to my own positioning and life experiences as a Yidiniji/Mbabaram woman and extends on concepts of humanness. Underlining the concept of humanness runs throughout the thesis and relays upon knowing and being Yidiniji/Mbabaram. I attempt to unpack the stereotypes that are associated with being Aboriginal to examine Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell's field trip into the Atherton Tablelands, and the meeting between Yidiniji and Mbabaram groups. Through the analytic tool of deconstruction, this chapter reveals the scientific and anthropological detailed analysis of how research is funded and progresses by detailing a group of peoples. I respond to the detailed study by Tindale and Birdsell (1941) through providing a poem to identify my own sense of self and who I am.

Chapter Six, *Not Your Shame*, examines the visual representation and creative works undertaken by the Unbound Collective Sovereign Acts. In this chapter, I articulate elements of performative theory and performance as a methodology that informs research, texts, art, and digital technology. The methodology of performance also enacts a process of refusal to conceptualise how politics, teaching, and representation enables humanness to take centre stage.

Approaching new thinking, and following chapter six, Chapter Seven burrows into the mathematics, futurity, and intimacies of Indigenous Australians. The Australian Bureau of Statistics continues to dominate the narrative of understanding of 'self' and disrupting concepts of deficit discourses allows for future desires and accomplishments. We (Indigenous Australians) must change how we think about ourselves. Mathematics is conceptualised through McKittrick's *Mathematics of Black Life* (2014), Ferreira da Silva (2017) on the equation of life, and the current Black Lives Matter movement to add further critique on the lives of Indigenous bodies in contemporary life and our youth.

Chapter Eight is my contribution to safety and wellbeing in the education of our youth. I argue for another lens by which they see themselves within the realm of education. Positioning being human as praxis will inform a teaching framework that acts upon a transformative and consciousness raising process.

In Chapter Nine, and following on from Tur's (2018) conceptualisation of 'Becoming Knowledgeable', I contemplate unbecoming in this thesis as the answer to my mother's question of "what is this sovereignty thing?" Unbecoming is what must come before I can become knowledgeable. Helen Vosters contemplates unbecoming as a "descriptor, referring to that which

detracts from or renders less attractive one's image or reputation" (2019, p. 9). Vosters argues that, "unbecoming gestures towards the multiply situated practices and projects that work to unsettle, decolonize, dismantle or unbecome settler-colonial nationalism" (2019, p. 9). This is what the thesis is aiming to do: to *unbecome* the "toxic representations" (Vosters 2019, p. 20) that have labelled and defined First Peoples as non/sub-human; to become human and knowledgeable; to engage in acts of refusal, decolonising processes and always as sovereign.

Chapter Ten concludes by turning the gaze back and flipping the ways that knowledge production can be challenged and disrupted. Articulation of photographs lends itself to memories and stories that can continue to lovingly keep one's family and Indigenous bodies alive. Further, the concluding chapter will position the key guiding concepts of sovereignty, refusal, human as praxis, decolonisation, and becoming/unbecoming as crucial to the body of thesis to answer by mother's question of "What is this Sovereignty thing?"

CHAPTER 2 WHAT IS THIS SOVEREIGNTY THING? INTIMATELY CONNECTING TO 'COUNTRY'

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Reminded of belonging, and intimacy

In this chapter, I examine the guiding concept of sovereignty, as key to my mother's question of 'What is this sovereignty thing'? To consider the question of sovereignty, I attempt to unpack the concept resulting from the progress of colonisation and the impact upon the lives of Indigenous peoples in Australia. This chapter will reveal and examine the relationship of knowing, being, and belonging, and the relationality through my mother's story to demonstrate how colonisation impacted the lives of Indigenous people and my family.

By turning the gaze back, I disrupt Australia's claim to sovereignty and, while we live in a society that is racialised, we as First People continue to identify our 'sense' of belonging. Therefore, I approach this chapter with the understanding that my mother's relationship with colonisation lies within resistance and a refusal to the institutions of racialisation and provide the opportunity to make meaning of her own worldview.

2.2 Mother's Story

As a starting point, I offer a conversation between my mother and myself. The conversation adds an important and insightful perspective to our time together and conveys remembering, belonging, and intimacy with country (Bunda 2007; Moreton-Robinson 2007, 2015; Tur, 2018). I offer the telling of our conversation as important, simply because I had no idea that my mother was ever interested in the concept of sovereignty or had any desire to speak about or share knowledge of her language group. In speaking back to the 'fragments of memory' (Carby 2019), my mother always appeared busy with life, working and raising a family, which expresses to me how our lives have been shaped by institutions and structures that have maintained control over our lives (Alexander 2002, p. 85). And, as Miranda states, "our bodies and hearts carry a deep sting, an engulfing shame and a contrary assertion of survivance, which all stem from the fact that our identities and cultures –our hearts- sprang from this land, from a place stolen, defiled, yet still present beneath our feet every day of our lives" (2002, p. 193). While I offer a glimpse into my mother's life, I also reveal insight into our relationship and an unpacking of key concepts that have had a bearing on her/our lives.

There are many layers to my mother's life, and not all is mine to tell, so I will tell what I am comfortable with and what I gathered in respect for her. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998), and other

feminist women of colour writers, like Trinh T. Minh-ha in (1989) *Woman, Native, Other*, and Toni Morrison (1993) in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, identifies the importance of storytelling as a process of positioning. A critical race theoretical framework also enables the concept of disrupting the master script. Engaging with my mother on a theoretical and conceptual level is rupturing and reasserting ourselves into the master's script. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) relates the importance of storytelling as key to research. She states, "storytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of Indigenous research…they tell of their place and is both method and meaning" (Smith, 2012, p. 146). I concur. Louise Gwenneth Phillips and Tracey Bunda's (2018) text, *Research Through, With and As Storying*, details how storying is a great way "to communicate what it means to be human, that tells of emplaced, relational tragedies, challenges and joys of living. Stories are spoken, gestured, danced, dramatized, painted, drawn, etched, sculpted, woven, stitched, filmed, written and any combination of these modes and more" (2018, p. 3). I see my mother amongst the various concepts of storying, as detailed by Phillips and Bunda (2018), and I argue in this thesis that the Unbound Collective engages in storying and performance as a decolonising methodological research practice (Baker et al. 2015a), we all remember our mothers' and grandmothers' stories. Our bodies perform our stories.

2.2.1 Intimacy of home

My mother had come to stay with me in Adelaide for two weeks in 2012 and, as is often the case, being away from her own place and space can make where she is in the moment uncomfortable. I live in Adelaide, South Australia, and have been away from home country, Yidiniji/Mbabaram lands, the Atherton Tablelands, for more than half my life. I left home at 18 years and settled in Adelaide SA, from my early 20s to where I now reside. My husband is from Adelaide, we have raised three children who are now adults and we currently have two grandsons. I am the fourth in a line of twelve children: eight sisters and three brothers. My mother comes from the language group, Mbabaram, in the region of Watsonville near the township of Herberton, North Queensland. Her family in the early years lived on the Aboriginal reserve outside the township of Herberton. My mother remembers some of the times spent there, along with her other siblings. It is this area, Watsonville, that she is referring to when asking the question of sovereignty.

2.2.2 Conversing with my mother, intimately

I contend that my relationship with my mother is built on love and respect, as is culturally expected and adhered to. The importance of my relationship with my mother is to listen respectfully; to hear the words behind what is being said. It is always nice to spend time with her and converse about family members, community members, which community members are still with us and who has

passed on. Halfway through our conversation, with me remembering community Elders, she asks out of the blue, “so what is this sovereignty thing?” Finding myself unable to answer in that moment, she continues, “so, can you tell me?” I wasn’t sure that she was serious. I realised, however, that I needed to respond. Her querying of the subject of sovereignty had come after a visit to the South Australian Museum on an excursion for one of our Indigenous topics on Indigenous research and methodologies.

I was thinking, how do I answer her? Do I even have the answer? I admit that I was struggling to find the answer among the many files in my mind.

2.3 Indigenous Sovereignty

I realised that while I have had conversations within the halls of academia with colleagues about the issue of sovereignty and its meaning for Indigenous Australians, I hadn’t considered the concept deeply. I know that conceptualising sovereignty can be problematic and contested, and that, as a legal concept, I wasn’t sure if I fully understood the theoretical dynamics of sovereignty. Therefore, how do I give her an answer that provided opportunity for her to know? How do I give her what she was seeking?

I started by saying that sovereignty was about this country, Australia, and the British Empire; the belief that Britain had sovereignty over all its lands/country that was invaded and the citizens of those countries. I told her about terra nullius, yet I was not sure I was answering her question. Her question and wanting to know had put me on the spot. Returning to that moment, I now wish I had the book by Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015), *The White Possessive, Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Moreton-Robinson provides a provocative insight into the ways that Britain conveys itself as settled and belonging within the country/s of Indigenous peoples. In the words of Moreton-Robinson, “the British Empire established itself through colonization and the concomitant waves of migrants from British shores to colonized ones” (2015, p. 4).

At this time, however, I was still trying to respond to and understand the depth of answer required to my Mother’s question. Jacqui Alexander offers further insight, stating that although we have impacted upon by structures, we must “use flesh-and-blood experiences to concretize a vision” (2002, p. 85). I contend that, in the asking, my mother was visualising her right to *know* about the word sovereignty, and what it meant for her, her land, and country. First Nations scholar, Jolene Rickard, contends that “sovereignty is manifested in Indigenous communities and remains a critical source of self-determination” (2011, p. 467). My mother was progressing towards the possibility of

moving back to country and had started building a small shack (she saw this as home) to allow opportunity for family members to camp and visit the site.

Extending on my mother and her relationship to the stories that connect her experiences as a young girl, mother, sister, grandmother, great-grandmother, and Mbabaram woman, I contend that the texture of her multiple identities is made into a 'theory of flesh', as Moraga (2015) conceptualises. How does the concept of sovereignty that lies within the Australian context of 'terra nullius' continue its impact upon my mother's body when country is embodied, as Bunda (2007) highlights in *The Sovereign Aboriginal Woman*. Tracey Bunda states that, "Indigenous bodies are connected to country and sovereignty is embodied" (2007, p. 75). Supporting Bunda's (2007) articulation, I concur that my mother's body 'signifies ownership'. My mother's question "what is this sovereignty thing?" speaks to the historical trajectories that border on challenging the aspects of colonisation and not wanting to just take the crumbs that fall from the table.

Contemplating my mother's question of sovereignty, I argue that this short story is significantly important to my research on intimacy and wellbeing. The sensitivity of storying research informs Indigenous ways of being. I am persuaded from my mum's life story as I see it, that she is both a feminist and activist. My own intimate knowing of her recognises how social justice, care, and wellbeing for others is so much a part of her commitment, grounded in Indigenous ways of being and doing, and her engagement with community and family members (Chilisa 2012; Liamputtong 2010; Mohanty 2003; Smith, 2012). It is only now that I am truly realising this.

My mother, and our Indigenous history and experiences, are grounded in a different history, as Moreton-Robinson notates in her seminal text, *Talkin Up To The White Woman*, Indigenous Women and Feminism (2000). While Moreton-Robinson's text deconstructs, analyses and examines the relationship between White feminism and Indigenous women, she brings to the fore elements of colonialism that pervade our relationship and the positioning of the 'aboriginal' woman. Racism and, I contend, sexism was fundamental in how my mother moved through her world; I have also experienced racism and sexism (Blanch 2013), as have others. I suggest that while racism, sexism and silence was pivotal in our oppression (hooks 1981), we still resisted and refused to be contained within a framework that denies us our human rights. Furthermore, even thinking that while we operated by the rules of behaviour dictated to us by White Australia, my mother's generation had to strategically maneuver, negotiate, and work out how to create zones that would be safe for us, as well as equip us with strategies for keeping our own bodies safe.

For my mother, working domestically for White people contained aspects of keeping quiet and getting on with the job; after all she had many mouths to feed and clothe. She worked in the early

years' waitressing, to working on farms picking potatoes, onion, and peanuts, as well as tobacco planting. She worked in the local bakery, cooked in Aboriginal hostels, and was cleaner, cook, and kitchen hand for a White family. My mother visited the sick, organised funerals, comforted the grief-stricken, took in and raised the children of others, and had the ultimate joy of singing in church and at funerals. My mother maintained an elegance that surpasses many White women, even today, hence my admiration, love, and respect for my mother. I am in awe of her skills and experiences. Even to this day, she is called upon to perform at funerals, and organise catering and venues for funerals. Indigenous women like my mother have traversed the system of racialisation since invasion. Moreton-Robinson again provides insightful analysis of great-grandmothers, grandmothers, and daughters (I am not excluding Indigenous men) when she states:

> All Indigenous women share the common experience of living in a society that depreciates us…and Indigenous woman's standpoint is shaped by the following themes…inalienable connection to land; a legacy of dispossession, racism and sexism; resisting and replacing disparaging images of ourselves with self-defined images' continuing our activism as mothers, sisters, aunts, daughters and community leaders as well as negotiating sexual politics across and within cultures (2000, p. xvi).

I assert that Indigenous Australians, within the contemporary context, exist as bodies that have gone through horrific trauma and hold experiences that live within our bodies and our skin. We find ourselves within a colonial and racialised framework and note the inherited history of colonialism in which the normative discourses of White settler Australians invested itself in denying Indigenous sovereignty as a protective concept for White settler Australians to keep the claim of national sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2007, 2015; Watson 2007). My mother, through her asking, was finding a way to untangle herself and shift the power; to navigate her way through this colonial and Western concept called 'sovereignty'. She was exercising her right as *knower* of country. This thesis is my way of answering my mother and other members of my community to highlight the intimate connection we have with ourselves, our community, and our country. I hope I do it justice.

2.4 Standpoint: Locating Oneself

In the previous chapter, I located myself as Yidiniji/Mbabaram and sovereign, raised on Yidiniji rainforest country where my family continue to live and work. I also locate my mum's standpoint as Mbabaram from the area of Herberton. As an Indigenous woman of Yidiniji/Mbabaram descent, I use my mother's story as a guide to navigate through the intimacies that lie within the structures of power framed in Australia's conceptualisation of sovereignty. Investigating these imperial colonial intimacies, allows me to focus on what Alexander Weheliye postulates as, "the layered interconnectedness of political violence, racialization and the human" (2014, p. 1). Drawing from

elements of my mother's story of sovereign rights to Mbabaram country, I work through the key concepts of refusal, resistance, belonging, becoming, and unbecoming.

2.5 Intimacies: Acts of Coloniality

In this thesis I frame and articulate the conceptualisation of intimacy to connect the various paths of contact between the colonial settler states and First Peoples. I am arguing that each encounter was an invasive act of intimacy (Edmonds & Nettelbeck 2019; Morgensen 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2015). While I understand that the conceptualisation of intimacy is often situated within the arena of love, desire, and sexualisation, this is not the form of intimacy that I am critiquing. I analyse the data that capture the relationship of intimate acts of violence in the dispossession and coloniality of Indigenous peoples. Lisa Lowe (2015), in her book *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, navigates the concept of intimacy in terms of European liberalism and modernity. Articulating intimacy, for Lowe, is framed within the world of colonialism when she states that "desire, sexuality, marriage and family are inseparable" from the imperial acts of invasion, dispossession, and dislocation (Lowe 2015, p. 4). However, Lowe pursues particular intimacies and read against the grain in terms of national and state archives to reveal how encounters between the colonised and coloniser appears to be naturalised (2015, pp. 2-6).

I am suggesting, therefore, that for Indigenous peoples, every act of colonisation was progressed through an intimate longing for our lands, engaging in the shifting, moving, stealing, and removal of Indigenous peoples away from country. These violent and monstrous acts of colonisation scaffolded and established modes of 'becoming'. The Northern Territory Intervention in June 2007 is a prime example of becoming in the contemporary. In June 2007, the Howard coalition government announced it would lead an intervention in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (NT) as a response to the findings of the Little Children are Sacred report (Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse 2007), which reported on high levels of community violence against Aboriginal children and women (Watson 2007, p. 45). The act of protecting Indigenous children, safe from the violence of Indigenous men, was framed as an act of humanitarianism while usurping the rights of Indigenous communities, leaving many communities without their rights to be self-determining and have control over the maintaining of their lands.

Moreton-Robinson (2015) states that this country, Australia, bases itself on its White possessiveness, and names its sovereignty, and sees itself as belonging and settled in spaces that are Indigenous spaces. Scott Lauria Morgansen notes the fact that, "we are connected intimately, caught

up in one another and our interrelationships inform all that is touched by settler societies" (2011, p. 1).

Further, I contend that emotions play into the concept of intimacy, and I consider Sara Ahmed's (2004) work on the cultural politics of emotions to develop and progress the key themes examined in this thesis. Ahmed, as does Lauren Berlant (1998), sees emotions in connection to intimacy and writes about zones where the two converge. Sara Ahmed's (2004) journey explores the ways that emotions of anger, shame, hate, and love are both performative and engage with bodies in various ways. For Lauren Berlant (1998), intimacy lies in the frame of familiarity and comfort, as well as points of contact that are quick and brief. Further, Berlant sees intimacies as those things we take for granted and argues that intimacy is not separate from stories of citizenship, capitalism, political violence, nor the writing of history (Berlant 1998, p. 288). I take each conceptualisation of intimacy on board to examine and weave through the key concepts that drive this thesis.

2.6 Intimate Monstrosity

In addition, I critique Christina Sharpe's (2010) articulation of intimacies through photographs, film, and art to show how intimate and monstrous the acts of violence towards coloured/Black and Indigenous peoples were and continue to be. I postulate that Sharpe (2010) not only portrays the acts of violence as intimate, but she provides a path to move amongst these violent and monstrous acts. To be intimate among the intimacies. Sharpe (2010, 2016) pushes the boundaries and contributes to my journey through the violent and intimate processes, the acts of death, killing and the taking so carelessly of Indigenous lives: the massacres, the diasporic movement away from country through the chaining of Indigenous bodies, and the removal of children. Christina Sharpe's (2016) registration of the "Wake" illustrates the lives of Black people, after slavery, the commodification, the violence that emerges and impacts upon the lives of black people in the contemporary by forces of power is articulated in the wake. In the context of First Nations people drawing from Sharpe, in the wake, is to be awake and in the 'Wake'; to permit a shift, a possessing of our own bodies to change an outcome, and to be clear of our role in the Wake as a way forward.

I also consider techniques of scientific study, exploration, and field study to work through the scientific understanding of how our bodies have been used as scientific data. I draw significantly from First Peoples, Kimberley Tallbear (2013a, 2013b), Maggie Walter and Chris Andersen (2013), from the works of Donna Haraway (1989, 1991, 2013) and Ann Laura Stoler (2002, 2006, 2010), to present insight into the elements of science and White scientific authoritative examination of Indigenous bodies; statistical analyses and how those statistics sit alongside dehumanisation; narratives of biological deficits and the denial of humanness. Situated knowledges, as articulated by

Haraway (1988, 1991) and Stoler's (2002, 2006, 2010, 2013) scholarly thematics on colonisation in the Dutch East Indies, afford an insightful analysis and glimpse of Australia.

While I consider American, Hortense Spillers' (1987), work in the ideological discourses that surround Black bodies in the American context, in addition, I argue that, in a global context, Australia is one country where racialised ideological discourses fashioned Indigenous peoples in particular ways. Mark Rifkin (2012) speaks to zones of inclusive and exclusive, drawing from Agamben's (2013a) work on *homo sacer*, and Foucault's (2013a, 2013b) idea of the right to live, the right to make death. Moreton-Robinson (2014) also draws from Foucault to speak to Indigenous peoples and our relationship to the coloniser in the context of sovereignty. The intimate acts of becoming forced our bodies to become bodies pathologised and criminalised, abject to being without country, denied humanness, and obsolete replaced with 'becoming' non-human.

2.6.1 Intimate research

I add the concept of transversal theory, which Bryan Reynolds states "strives to engage everything conceivable, affective and subjunctive within and without discursive practices as well as conceptualize subjectivity, experience, events, along with their contexts and processes of inauguration and propagation, as productively and affirmatively as possible" (2009, p. 288). Accordingly, for Reynolds, "transversal theory emphasises presence and comparison, interconnectedness, relationality, and inclusion; agency movement, and exploration; becomings and potential" (2009, p. 288). In conceptualising my mother's narrative, I map her question of sovereignty and the transversal intersecting of elements associated with intimacy and connection to country.

Further I suggest that my own engagement with the Unbound Collective is based on each of our relationships with country and community. Research, theories, and methodologies, I argue, play a major role in our collective scholarship and positions Unbound's *Sovereign Acts* as leading the way in the intimacies of research, performance, and writing, allowing for the safety of our bodies in spaces that have often damaged and manipulated our trauma. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith eloquently highlight the various ways that theory transverse in the landscape of Native Studies and I think through their argument that 'theory' is a western concept positioned as opposite to Indigenous understanding and knowledge (2014, p. 1).

2.7 What is Intimacy?

I contend that Moreton-Robinson's texts, *Talkin Up to The White Woman* (2000) and *White Possessive* (2015), reveal in-depth and insightful analyses of the intimacies of connection to body,

country, and culture. Ann Laura Stoler (2006b) provides a view into issues of intimacy in the context of colonialism in her edited volume, Haunted by The Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History. Even though Stoler's (2006b) text is based on the North American relationship to colonialism, I contend that colonialism globally informs the concept of sovereignty in all its invasive practices. Lisa Lowe's (2006) work is Stoler's (2006b) edited volume allows me a framework, drawing from the various ways that intimacies played out through the construction and deconstruction of cultural borders of many Indigenous and First Nations peoples. Invading another's country is an act of intimate proportions that is mapped through years of violence, colonial appellations, privilege and subjugation, racial grammars, and the stealing of bodies away from country. The intimacy of dispossession is the landscape of reordered lives and those intimate spaces in which we live in the contemporary to allow ourselves to become who we are. As Stoler reminds us "the colonial intimacies are first and foremost sites of intrusive interventions" (2006a, p. 29).

Lisa Lowe highlights the relationship between the intimate benefits of transporting labour from four continents to the new world as "intimately related to the rise of European modernity" (2006, p. 384). Further, in relation to intimacy, Lisa Lowe articulates that, "intimacy is usually taken to mean romantic or sexual relations, familiarity, or domesticity" (2015, p. 17), though she employs the term against the grain. Elaborating those three meanings of intimacy, Lowe (2006) places them alongside each other to discuss the emergence of modern liberalism. Lowe (2006) describes three meanings of intimacy; the first being intimacy as "spatial proximity or adjacent connect" (p. 193). She further states that "[t]he second meaning intimacy is the more common one of privacy, often figured as conjugal and familial relations in the bourgeois home, from the public realm of work, society and politics" (p. 195). Further, Lowe (2006) elaborates a third and more complex conceptualisation of intimacy in the context of colonialism, race, and culture:

> Finally, there is a third meaning of intimacies in the constellation to be elaborated. This is the sense of intimacies embodied in the variety of contacts among slaves, indentured persons and mixed blood free peoples living together on the islands that resulted in the collision of European, African & Asian components within the [Caribbean] plantations that could give rise to rebellions against the plantation structure itself (Lowe 2006, p. 202).

I am reminded of Fanon's words, "the zone where the natives live is not complimentary to the zone inhabited by the settlers" (2001, p. 30). In the context of Indigenous peoples in Australia, every intimate act of 'racialised assemblages' (Weheliye, 2014) is revealed in violence and the volatile contact of colonised peoples, but is never explicitly named as intimate moments in the documents. There is a gap in the documents relating to the intimate relationship between the coloniser and the colonised; the art and act of intimacies is never discussed within the history of Australia.

Lauren Berlant, according to Sim and Vickery (2014), sees intimacy as "associated with "zones of familiarity and comfort" (Berlant cited in Sim & Vickery 2014, p. 281). Berlant states that "intimacy also involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way" (1998, p. 281). Usually, this story is set within "zones of familiarity and comfort: friendship, the couple, and the family form, animated by expressive and emancipating kinds of love" (Berlant 1998, p. 288). Yet, intimacy rarely make sense of things. Emotions are effectively tied in with acts of intimacies, as Ahmed's book, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2004), reveals. Emotions of desire, hate, love, disgust, and fear, according to Ahmed (2004), can be perceived as a culture of emotions and, I assert, lie in the desire for the removal of Aboriginal bodies; the hate, disgust, and fear of Indigenous peoples within this country. This is represented, as Moreton-Robinson (2015) conceptualises, as White possessiveness and sovereignty, and how White possessiveness names and sees itself as belonging and settled in spaces—these spaces that are Indigenous spaces. I return, throughout this thesis, to First Nations and Black feminist scholars to support and guide my way through this thesis worthy of academic rigorous engagement (Baker et al. 2015a, 2015b; Blanch 2016; Byrd 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2007, 2014, 2015; Rifkin 2012; Simpson 2014; Smith, A 2014; Wynter 2003).

2.7.1 Identity, intimacies and scholarship

I deliberate intimacies further by focusing on body. Stuart Hall defines the body as "constructed and reconstructed by the intersection of a series of disciplinary discursive practices" (2000, p. 24). Thus, the identity of the 'aborigine' is constructed on stereotypical naming through the process of "interpellation or hailing", according to Louis Althusser (2000, p. 33). Interpellation and hailing the Indigenous body into being, through 'othering' occurs, in what Moreton-Robinson (2015) states as the pervasive intimacies of White possession. Christina Sharpe (2010) also articulates intimacies that are monstrous. The contemporary scholarship of First Nations peoples in this country, and the intimacies of connection to country, allow for examination with the desire to engage and create new scholarship. More so ever, I will argue that intimacy is embodied, as is country and culture, and that the relationship between the settlers and First Peoples is one of intimacy, bound within the settler's notion of sovereignty, governance, and its invasive impact upon the lives and bodies of First Peoples.

2.8 The Indigenous Body

It is Indigenous intellectual scholarship that informs and provokes my own commitment to forming new knowledge and understandings of the ways that First Peoples interact within contemporary spaces and have continual, ongoing connection with country on an intimate level (Baker et al.

2015b). Situating myself within an Indigenous feminist standpoint and theoretical framework allows for positioning of self and country and the examination of the ways my body constitutes not only my relationship with colonisation, but all Indigenous Australian peoples and the various ways that black and brown skinned bodies are perceived through the lens of colonisation. Fanon's (2001), *The Wretched of the Earth*, offers an insight into how the body as Black, as 'native', not forgetting Indigenous people in this country, pervades the association of binaries of black/white, civilised/uncivilised, inferior/superior, and human/non-human, highlighting the intimate relationship between coloniser and colonised to articulate the naming as human. Fanon's (2008) introduction in Black Skin/White Masks, and his questions of "What does man want?", "What does the black man want?" (2008, p. xii), are, I contend, related to the desires, and want of my mother's question, "what is this sovereignty thing?" I keep my mother's question at the forefront of my approach throughout this thesis.

2.9 Walking Intimately, On and With Country

In this section, I weave examples of intimate connection to country by alluding to the work that Mbabaram/Yidinji ethnobotanist, Gerald Turpin, undertook with community members throughout the regions of North Queensland (Turpin G 2016, pers. comm., 2 June). I am also informed by Dr Simone Tur's relationality with country that defines her understanding gathered with her close relationship to the mother (Tur & Tur 2006). I postulate that sovereignty, refusal, human as praxis, and becoming/unbecoming intersect strongly with our lived relationality and resurgence of intimately connecting to country.

Mbabaram/Yidiniji, Gerald Turpin, is an ethnobotanist who takes great pleasure in working and walking on Mbabaram country. Being intimately connected to country gives Gerry the chance to detail bush foods and bush medicine, and document specific plants, trees, and their fruits as well as animals from that region. He is concerned with mapping the country and keeping the traditions and knowledge alive with the belief that this allows for the knowledge system and the intimate cultural knowing of country to inform and permit future Indigenous people to find what information they might need in terms of their own country (Turpin G 2016, pers. comm., 2 June). Further, for Gerry, when walking country, he engages members of the Mbabaram group to work as rangers and educates younger members to participate in science, especially relating to the rivers and waters of Mbabaram country. He explores its Indigenous biocultural knowledge; the relationship between plants and people. He reveals an intimacy to country/s sitting around a campfire at night, drinking black or milky tea with Elders, listening to the stories told by Elders about country and sleeping under the stars.

Gerry provocatively analyses how one young person's relationship to country is seen in his ability to apply a plant for medical purposes; the youth knew which plant to use, and he knew that the plant would take away pain. This, again, is referenced to Indigenous ways of knowing and the intimate connection to his own country. The youth had a 'knowing' of place names, and the names of animals and plants. I argue that walking Mbabaram country, for Gerry, reinforces intimate connection to country and in his words "is a bridge between traditional knowledge and western knowledge" (Turpin 2016).

Dr. Simon Ululka Tur, through performance of ceremonial inma/song and story, engages in the intimacies of relationship with country, in the words of Simone's Mum, Ngitji Ngitji Tur:

> the mayu, well the mayu is the essence of the inma/song, dance, ceremony that's been taught to you. You must understand the structure, you must understand the ancestral travels and that is the mayu of the song the whole essence of that song. Some people that are not so knowledgeable just will get the scent of the song, not the full mayu the taste of the song (Tur & Tur 2006, p. 161).

Acknowledging the importance of the mayu means intimately knowing and sensing the ultimate connection to one's own country, it is the taste of the song, the essence as Tur relates.

Exploration of these ideas enables stronger understanding of the continual maintenance and depth of connection to country and *our* relationship to country. Further, the relationality of land and embodied concepts of rights is seen in how my mother's question of sovereignty define connection. Their work moves beyond the context of being on country, detailing all elements of what is entailed by *knowing country* and *being country*. Making the connection with other First Nations peoples nationally and globally allows for stronger commitment to self-determination and self-governance that overturns the concept of sovereignty, as understood within the Western framework of law. Ngarrindjeri academic, Daryle Rigney, reveals how his country that is the Ngarrindjeri, embodies all his undertaking to ensure that the concept of sovereignty is foregrounded in Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar governance that was and is in the Ngarrindjeri community (D Rigney 2013, pers. comm., 11 June). The examples woven in this section reveal a strong connection and care as country.

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have related through my mother's story and her question of "what is this sovereignty thing?" to show how sovereignty is a contested and problematic concept based on Western understandings. Sovereignty, in the Western conceptualisation, is a racialised and erroneous naming of this country as not belonging to anyone (terra nullius), therefore, open for

invasion and land grab that denies our rights as human beings and First Peoples with strong connection to country.

I assert that we did not cede sovereignty or rights to our country (Bunda 2007; Moreton-Robinson 2007, 2014, 2015; Morrisey 2007; Watson 2007, 2014) and this thesis will unpack what this means. We, as a group of people, have always had intimate connection to country and all that is country. The problematic Western notions of sovereignty continue to operationalise patriarchal possessiveness of Whiteness and its own logic of sovereignty (Moreton- Robinson 2015, p. xxi) through laws that are utterly racial in their intent to disavow First Peoples' sovereign rights to country and their rights as humans.

CHAPTER 3 ON STOLEN BODIES (MEN IN CHAINS)

3.1 The Violence of Intimacy/The Intimacy of Violence

Knowing you

I know you. I can tell you how I know you.
You are like a vampire who sucks the blood of my people
Until we are seemingly left with a lifeless shell of a body
Living quietly among you, yet you don't see us
What you see is an image that's produced from
Your own understandings presented in
Ways that make you fearful but safe, hidden
Amongst the damage that's been done from
Generations and generations of violent confrontations
Even in my presence, you still deem right, the
Right to interrupt, the right to be loud, to be better
But that is all a show because while you go about
Your business, benefitting from the stolen lands
The stolen children, the stolen wages, the stolen homes
You are still benefitting from us. Our natural resources
The land production of resources, that connect
To us.
You benefit from our incarceration,
Our lack of educational success, our marginalization.
You benefit from our wards of the State, our deaths
Infant mortality, our elders dying, our loss of languages
You benefit from all of this, the laws you created
Kept us away from our own rights to our country.
You benefit from our loss, but you don't own it
At all.
We know the stories that continue, you want us to
Not be "aborigine", that okay, I can stop being "aborigine"
For I was never "aborigine" in the first place.
I can even stop being "indigenous", these are your words
To describe me, your labels and tags placed on me
For you never took the time to get to know me
You never took the time to learn about me
You arrived in my country already believing you
Know me.
But I know you, I have always known you (Faye Rosas Blanch, 2016).

Cultural Warning

I provide a cultural warning for the image of men in chains on the following page. The photo depicts a violent image of Indigenous men in neck and leg chains, which the readers might find distressing and difficult to look at. While the image is difficult to look at, it offers opportunity for critique to show the relationship between the coloniser and captured bodies. I offer my apologies for family members of the language groups represented in the image.

Photograph 3.1 Aboriginal Bathing Gang, Wyndam Police Station, East Kimberley, Western Australia 1905.

> The police constable load up with provisions and a certain number of chains (The Western Mail 1905, p. 5).

> ‘before the body there is flesh’, however, in naming the socio-political order of the New World, there is a human sequence written in blood, and represents for its African and indigenous peoples a scene of actual mutilation, dismemberment and exile (Spillers 1987, p. 67).

> The story of the new world is horror (Byrd 2011, p. xii).

3.2 Introduction

> Before the body there is flesh (Spillers 1987, p. 67).

This chapter is introduced through spoken word and a black and white photograph, the image of Indigenous men in neck and leg chains. ‘Knowing you’ brings forth the guiding concept of human as praxis, exploring what it means to be human and extending this analysis of colonialism as being both intimate and violent, and continues into the every day. The photograph as a cultural artefact visually tells a story of oppressive policies applied to First Peoples, enacted by the British government in 1900s.

I have chosen to use this image in context of two decades of teaching Indigenous Studies and Education within a university context, where historical images of Indigenous peoples, like the image above, are within the public domain with limited critique of what is occurring within this visual text. I argue a deeper and more considered analysis is required.

This image provokes contemplation of the violent acts and practices of colonisation that resulted in a process of dehumanisation. As I have argued so far in this thesis, the dehumanisation of Indigenous bodies is premised on the denial of Indigenous peoples through the concept of 'terra nullius' and settler colonialism. Every act of violence that has occurred underpins the relationship of the coloniser and the colonised, as framed in my mother's question explored in the previous chapter. I will examine the key concepts of sovereignty, human as praxis and becoming/unbecoming, to focus on the operations of power that are laid bare in the image of the men in neck and leg chains. I will also use archival documentation, along with the portrayal of men in chains in the photograph, to offer a deep critique of early settler-state colonialism and the diaspora of First Peoples from lands and country in the context of Western Australia.

What is significant in this image is how the men are positioned, and it raises questions of what is going on and why such a photograph? When I take the time to view the image, I see that there are many brown and black bodies in this image. Six lines make up the ways that the men are strategically placed; they vary in ages, some wear hats, few wear shirts, but most are shirtless. I consider that the neck chains contain them and keep them in proximity to each other. The neck chains tell me that there is no escape, and that there is no humanity to their lives. I argue that the image of Aboriginal men, strategically positioned in neck and leg chains, constitutes historical archival documentation in the context of imperialism and colonisation. I posit that colonialism is shackled on the Indigenous body today, like the men in chains. This is evident in the lives of First People within the contemporary and continues as a lived reality. I position this photograph as important in reading how the violence of historical events pervades, interferes, and crashes through the lives of First Peoples.

3.3 Listening Closely

In her work on imperialism, Ann Stoler (2006) explores how haunted we are by the invasive techniques of imperialism. She states further that, "a sustained assault on first peoples through the dynamics of colonial rule worked through interventions in the microenvironments of subjugated populations with the opportunity to manage and contain first peoples" (Stoler 2006, p. 33). The invasive practices of management and containment from the past lies in the present and the policies that are legislated to continue such practices.

I argue that invasive techniques of colonialism are contained in this image of men in chains, revealing that particular racial groups are read through a category of biological comparison; and, drawing from Stoler, "secures racial designation in a language of biology and fixity … in a quest for a visual set of physical differences to index that which is not 'self-evident' or visible" (2006, p. 34). I contend that the photograph of men in chains relates to the racial grammar of colonialism and imperialism, as described by Stoler, that "is affective and assigned to a specific group of people" (2006, p. 35).

3.4 Affective Capacities

The affective capacities assigned underpin how the bodies of First Peoples are perceived. I argue that what is read in this image and taking on board ideas of 'valuable or not valuable', 'human or not human', offers deep insight into the colonial perception of 'becoming': this is becoming 'aborigines', 'natives' and 'uncivilised', and, in turn, 'becoming' perceived by settler colonialism as criminals, bodies demonised, unwanted, not worthy of humanness (Byrd 2011). For the settler states, denying the humanness of Indigenous bodies allowed the process of 'terra nullius' to transpire, not only through those violent invasive practices and massacres, but also through the removal of First People from country and lands, opening up the country for the settler-colonial nation to claim and make it their home (Moreton-Robinson 2015; Morgansen, 2011; Watson 2007).

Alongside my own analysis of the image, I also draw upon extensive research undertaken by historian, Dr Chris Owens, in his 2016 book, *Every Mother's Son is Guilty: Policing the Kimberley Frontier of Western Australia 1882-1905*, to position and articulate comprehensive knowledge of what this image, in particular, details. Owens tells us that the photograph "shows nearly one hundred Aboriginal prisoners chained at the neck in the port town of Wyndham, where cattle was exported" (2016, p. 1). If this photograph was taken at a site where cattle was exported, then what does this tell me about the humanness or the non-humanness of First Peoples? This is further explored in this chapter. I draw also from Jane Lydon's 2016 book, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, as well as the online newspapers that speak to the Royal Commission undertaken by the then Protector of Aborigines in North Queensland, Edmund Roth. Roth delves into the horrific and abusive violent treatment of First Peoples in the colonial Western Australia, and I argue each of these texts add further to the critique of First Peoples (men) in chains and provide historical archival data that shifts the narratives that are often told. The signification of First People's bodies in chains ties into the affective materiality of First People's bodies as raced, and leads to the concept of 'becoming', as further examined in the next section.

3.4.1 Colonial intimacies and violence

Arguably, Chris Owens's research (2016) draws from police records, political views, and settler understanding (or lack of understanding) of Indigenous people's relationship with land and the embodiment of all that is in the land/country. Revealed in Owens's book (2016) is the blatant, racist disregard for First Peoples' intimate connection to land and signifies the harshness and disgusting violent treatment perpetrated by the police in Western Australia in the early days of settler-colonial experiences.

Bertelsen and Murphie discuss the ways that we affect and be affected by the collection of bodies included or excluded from 'Australia'. The aspect of affect is personal, according to Bertelsen and Murphie, and lies within a framework of emotions and feeling, each registered in the body of the viewer as well as the men in the photograph (2010, p. 138-139). Therefore, the power to affect and be affected by the collection of bodies in the photograph is, as Tina Campt states, affect in contact with certain objects produces affective responses (2012, p. 16). I argue that the affect and emotional infusion is tied in with Judith Butler's (2009) statement that photographs are powerful in their operation and looking beyond and outside the frame of this image indicates how power is operated and who holds the power.

Drawing from Tina Campt's (2012, 2017) notion of 'listening closely' to photographs is key to articulating what the image of men in chains relays to me. I am the viewer of this image, but I am also the receiver, and my critique forces me to open my eyes and my ears to listen closely and to look deep. Looking deep must also engage a 'listening deeply', as contextualised by Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, Elder from the community of Daly River in the Northern Territory. Listening deeply involves what Rose states as an "inner deep listening and a quietness that is silent and reflective; it is Dadirri" (Ungunmerr [YouTube] 2017). The inner deep listening and the stillness of quiet compares with listening closely, as Campt details, as the sensory of frequencies that are heard, seen, and felt is tangible when engaging with photographs and images (2017, p. 23).

It is in this context, therefore, that I deliberate on the progressive violence of dehumanisation and the marking of Indigenous bodies, and state that this image lies within the frame of 'becoming'. As highlighted above, the notion of 'becoming', as articulated by Byrd (2011) and Rifkin (2013), is the Western epistemological knowledge production and narratives of Indigenous people labelled as 'savages' and 'uncivilised', a population needing to be controlled, a species needing containment.

Reading and critiquing this image, I draw on the conceptualisation of 'becoming' and contemplate on Hortense Spiller's (1987) statement that the capturing of Black bodies in the new world involved a concept of stolen flesh and a marking that Sylvia Wynter (2003) and Franz Fanon (cited in

McKittrick 2015, pp. 16-7) emphasise as a process of dehumanisation that impacted upon the humanity and humanness of Black bodies, skin, and flesh. Coupled with Jodie Byrd's (2011) arguments about the new world as "horror" for First Peoples, I note Spillers' (1987) assertion that the new world order resulted in the shedding of blood and ripping of flesh. The objects of the neck chains and the leg chains embody the shedding of blood and ripping of flesh, and I show that the long-term results of chaining bodies as containment and unfreedom highlights the relationship between the coloniser and colonised in the contemporary.

3.4.2 Embodied sovereignty

Both Byrd (2011) and Spillers (1987) connect with Moreton-Robinson and her 2015 text, *The White Possessive, Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty*. The importance of Moreton-Robinson's articulation of the White logic of possession is revealed through the dehumanisation of First Peoples and dispossession of country. Exploring the process of dehumanisation of First Peoples challenges the intimate relationship of settler states and the colonised bodies. This will be examined in the coming chapters to deconstruct the colonial body leading to human as praxis, refusal, becoming, and unbecoming.

I argue that, theoretically, each author offers deeply insightful and critical analysis of how Whiteness, as a systemic, forceful, and insidious process, impacted powerfully on the lives of First Peoples and coloured peoples of the world. Further, what is revealed is the materiality of the bodies in the photograph and the humanness. Linking to Geonpul Indigenous scholar, Moreton-Robinson (2000, 2015), I contend that the men in the photograph under critique are flesh and bone and, therefore, human, worthy of acknowledgement. Further, I argue that the photographic artefact details its importance to research and study, and provides theoretical insight into Indigenous Australians' embodied sovereign rights and intimate connection to country/s.

I approach with caution, however, and go beyond the methodological process of just reading the image as a descriptive method of engagement (Campt 2017, p. 5) and suggest that the photographs "bear witness to a human choice being exercised in a given situation…[it] is already Berger notes a message about the event it records…at its simplest, the message decoded means: I have decided that seeing this is worth recording" (Campt 2012, p, 7). To clarify, I argue that my engagement with the photograph is also one of intimacy, allowing a deeper analysis to theoretically interpret and enunciate through unpacking and deconstructing the archival photograph of men in chains.

3.4.3 Discipline and punishment

I am arguing, therefore, that the contact with the police—the authoritative figure of law and power—and the men in chain's detainment are intimate acts of law versus lawlessness, revealing, in the words of Lydon, "proof of inhumanity…given a range of meanings by white settlers prevailing ideas of progress Indigenous savagery and white humanity…chaining was the most human method of restraint" (2016 p. 104). The abjection of the men in chains in this image is to position as non-human not human at all, to be chained and locked up but to also be used as labour for the capitalist colonial settler society. These bodies are a commodity, to be valued or not valued, to help build the wealth of White settler society. The cruelty in the imperialistic concept of detainment and restraint through chaining was considered 'normal' for the benefit of trapping and containing Indigenous men together. This resulted in the dispossession and dispersion away from traditional lands, leading to a breakdown in family and cultural kinship values.

This forceful and insidious process of colonisation was framed within violent acts of theft. Hortense Spillers (cited in Browne 2015, p. 93) stated that the violent "theft of the body" rendered the captive body "a territory of cultural and political maneuver"; the theft of bodies to open space for colonial townships and a progression of Whiteness in culture and politics enforcing and profiling First Peoples as racialised bodies needing surveillance. There are similarities and differences in the experiences of First People and settlers' societies; colonisation accentuates the stealing of beautiful Black bodies away from country/s, and there is always a loss for First People. Historian, Jane Lydon, provides further insight to photographs coming from Western Australia. Chained Aboriginal prisoners indicate that "the photographs of heavily neck-chained Indigenous prisoners were circulated by the interests of the settlers as detriment for the rule of law in the outback" (2016, p. 102).

So many complexities lie within this photograph, and undergoing a process of 'listening' to the images, as Tina Campt contextualises in her texts, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (2012) and *Listening to Images* (2017), allows for deeper analysis. What is crucial to Campt's engagement with photographs is a methodology of listening and of participating, and even more critical for Campt is her desire to feel the photos, to contemplate the lives of not only her own family but other Black bodies around the globe. Campt (2012, 2017) argues that such photographs provide the chance to 'see' the lives of coloured peoples as lived; alive not only in the past but here in the contemporary quotidian of their lives. She asserts that the possibilities of resistance and refusal that border on their engagement in a world derive from the experiences of colonialism, a world of displacement and movement, of finding a way to make a

living and to exist. The concept of refusal will be further articulated in greater depth when examining images of sovereignty in the photograph.

Drawing further from Campt's (2012, 2017) sharp and astute critique and analysis of 'listening closely' as a methodological tool to distinguish the impact of such images throughout this thesis provides for a way of turning the gaze back. Selecting an opportunity for deeper analysis of how I critically analyse the photograph of First Peoples (men) in chains, brings to the fore the concepts of 'becoming' and 'unbecoming'. The key concepts of becoming/unbecoming are central to deconstructing the intimacies of coloniality detailed within the familiarity, creativity, racialisation, and political justice of bare life and racialised assemblages (Weheliye 2014). Becoming Aboriginal, becoming Indigenous as identity markers, is framed in Australia's historical invention of nation building and the absence of Indigenous bodies in space and time, geographically. First People's bodies are bound up in the history of colonialism and the impact of removal, dispersion, and the racialised grammar of what it means to be human (Campt 2017; Weheliye 2014). Further analysis of the image of men in chains is explored to read between the lines and beyond the frame as outlined in Chapter One.

3.5 Line Them Up: Take a Shot

In this section, I provide a descriptive analysis of the photograph of Aboriginal men with neck-chains organised into rows of threes, the neck-chains appear prominent. Looking from the outside line into the middle, each man is linked to the next by the chains. The chains hold me in my tracks, but I am also very much aware of the bodies, eyes, and positions of the men. I am aware of how the neck chain becomes an object of power; it is strong and long and heavy, it is burdensome.

The men have carried this weight, I can only assume on a long journey, sleeping, eating, and walking with the chains around their necks, being responsible for, and carrying each other. Each man in the middle lines is central to the other two either side of him as his neck chain connects to the others. In this view of the photograph, the lines of chained Black bodies horizontally moves out of focus. From appearing central and close to the camera, the lines of men disappear into the background.

There are many men, too many in fact, and it is impossible to gauge what the number is. But what is clear is that they range in ages and, I argue, status. On the left, the men wear long pants and are shirtless; on the right side the men have long sleeve shirts and trousers. The six men at the front have hats in their hands. What does this photograph constitute? It is a sepia monochrome photograph taken in the 19th century. The surrounding environment looks like it is dusty and sandy.

While this photograph details an image of men in neck chains lined up, it also relates a waiting; waiting to be transported on boats to other parts of Western Australia or to other prisons?

In questioning how to read the image, I reflect and ask, is it that the men have committed a crime? The title seen online identifies the image as the "aboriginal chain gang". Again, this raises questions of naming, dehumanisation, abjection. Jane Lydon provides another title, "Aboriginal Bathing Gang" (2016, p. 104), and writes that, "the pastoralist lobby argued that neck-chains were the most humane method of restraint, fully justified by the need to defend white settlement" (p. 103). Further, Lydon states that the "the visual assemblage juxtaposed group of chained and orderly prisoners marshalled into rows, signifies their enslavement by the heavy metal neck-chains" (pp. 104-5). Why is every one of them in neck-chains? And why so many? What is the intention of the photographer who took the photograph? I sense there are elements of hate for these brown and black bodies.

According to extensive research undertaken by Owens, "children as young as ten were also arrested, detained and charged with the criminal offence of cattle killing and the detainment was of men, women and children. Groups of men contained up to 33 men, neck-chained at a distance of just 61centimetres apart" (2016, p. 3). As stated previously by Lydon (2016), neck-chaining was considered the most effective and humane way of restraining the groups of men, according to the police reports. Owen's use of historical police records provides greater insight into the complexities that existed between the police, the pastoralists, and the Indigenous peoples of the regions in both the east and west of Western Australia (2016, p. 17). I would argue, that in the contemporary, the relationship between coloniser and colonised lies within the concept of humanness and the inhumane treatment of neck-chaining First Peoples.

Considering Owens's (2016) and Lydon's (2016) engagement with archival material and documentations, Lisa Lowe provides further insight, and states that, "the archive both mediates and subsumes the uncertainties of liberal and imperial governance, in it one reads the predicaments of both the known and the unknown that gives rise to the mathematical genocidal acts of calculations, strategies forms and practices of imperial life" (2015, p. 4).

3.5.1 It's all mathematical

I argue that every progressive act of coloniality was, and is, mathematical: the dispossession of First People's bodies; moving across country borders on the mathematical geographic boundaries of other language groups' lands. Navigating movement, time, and spatiality is framed in mathematics. I will explore the mathematics practices associated with colonisation, and examine them in this photograph, not just as an event or a moment in history, but as something sinister and criminal

carried into our world today, again drawing upon 'becoming' and 'unbecoming' here. Looking beyond the frame offers disruption, deconstruction, and a bringing to the fore, of narratives that exist not only within the frame but also outside the frame (Butler 2009; Campt 2012).

My examination of this photograph and the others that I locate in this thesis reflects the intimacies that derive from a relationship that exists between the settlers and First Peoples, regardless of White Australia's denial and their conceptualisation of terra nullius. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson argues, "becoming part of the Australian national identity, these values and virtues are underpinned by the denial of violent invasion" (2015, p. 29) and the removal of men from country.

3.5.2 Violent in its intent

The capture and incarceration of men from country is an act of intimacy; violent in its action and the violence manifesting both physiologically and psychologically. Christina Sharpe (2010) in her text, *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects*, considers that the diasporas of Black and coloured peoples bodies stolen and moved away from country "account for the ways we observe and are observed as people – whether through the lens of human accomplishment or social justice" (Sharpe 2010, p. 1). What Sharpe (2010) claims is that there are monstrous intimacies in the everyday, and the repetition of slavery exists in the contemporary. She states, "the anxiety around the repeating scenes of dispossession and the configurations of power, desire, pleasure and domination is found not only in the original scene but also in the transmission, transformation and renewal, to which we are presently equally inured" (Sharpe 2010, p. 2). Within the context of First Nations men dispossessed and removed from 'country' for the benefit of White settlers, I state that the photograph exposes that slavery was part of the history of creating an imagined community in Australia.

An imagined community and the narrative lie in the frame of how we as a community are haunted by the past and the mapping of our lives. First Nations people since invasion have been under the gaze of the colonisers, as Christina Sharpe notes, "relations between the past and present, we map the ways that the past haunts us" (2010, p. 60). This photograph, as a record and archive, allocates a position of history telling as an event (Campt 2012, p. 6) and is contextualised within the confines of Aboriginal history as well as White history. I argue that one cannot look at this photograph without acknowledging each of our histories and our part in history. The photograph and others like it document the intimate connection between each Indigenous man as well as the intimate connection between the coloniser and the colonised; Black bodies in space and time, intimately and spiritually connected to 'country' and culturally connected to each other or other members of the group. There is a traditional and cultural law that exists among the men. This is their embodiment of

country, the land and ground they walk upon. The trees and animals along their journey are emblematic of country. This is the great lost that is counted in the chained bodies moving across country.

Monstrous Intimacies (Sharpe 2010) positions First Peoples as undisciplined and perceived as a needing to be disciplined. Lisa Lowe provides an analysis of how slavery through capitalism within four continents across the world involved intimacies of captured workers (2006, p. 408). Spillers notes this as "a captive community" (1987, p. 67), existing together: the proximity of affinity (Lowe 2006). The men in neck chains are not free, and what is freedom when related to bodies that are captured, and enslaved, 'to not be free'? Sharpe postulates this to be "unfreedom" (2010, p. 15). I propose the questions, "what does it mean to be free? And what is unfreedom for First Peoples in Australia?"

I argue that unfreedom exists within my own standpoint and I resist and engage my own set of logic and reasoning grounded in sovereignty, refusal, human as praxis and becoming/unbecoming. Through this lens, I unpack the domains of desire, intimacies, and the possessiveness of the coloniser towards the colonised. Such possessiveness exists within the agenda of sovereignty and living, as well as the layered palimpsest of ontological, axiological worldview of human/non-human played out through colonial and Western understandings of Indigenous peoples in this country.

I consider Foucault's (2013b) bio-politics juxtaposed against Agamben's (2013b) bare life to conceptualise becoming and unbecoming through colonialism, and the relationship between the two sets of cultures, that is Western and Indigenous, and the violent displacement of First Peoples. Alexander Weheliye contemplates the ways that the body and flesh define the modern human and, through the lens of Hortense Spillers (1987), he approaches the positioning of the body and the flesh as "habeas viscus", meaning 'you shall have the flesh', drawing from the Latin legal term, habeus corpus, 'you shall have the body' (2014, p. 2). Weheliye (2014) not only unpacks and deconstructs the theories of the interconnection of race, assemblages and politics but he redefines and rearticulate the ways vileness and violence of racialised bodies is tied up in the continuation of power within nation states. As Indigenous Australian scholars Irene Watson (2014, p. 163) and Moreton- Robinson (2015, p. 134) illuminate, the ways that White possession and stealth of lands, bodies, country continues into today unabated, functions through the disciplines of law, political sciences, history, and anthropology manifested in regulatory mechanisms and the making of government policies and legislation. Agamben (2013a, 2013b) offers a logic to sanction law as state of exception to critique race and power.

3.6 Bare Life and State of Exception

The regulatory mechanisms centered on the bodies of the men in neck and leg chains is one of machines that existed in the mechanism of power and control over their minds and bodies (Foucault 1977). I contend that the legacy of violence on the bodies, minds, flesh, and skin of First Nations men in chains sits within the framework of Foucault's 'to make life and to make death' (2013a) and Agamben's notion of 'bare life' (2013b).

In the context of settler colonialism in Australia, the imperial sovereign's right to make life and make death is formulated through the ways that capitalism and the economic base drove its treatment of First Peoples and the stealing of lands. Agamben's (2013a) chapter, *Introduction to Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, discusses the concepts of "zoe"—expressed as living common to all living things; animals, men, or gods—and "bio", indicating the way of living proper to an individual or group within the realm of the Greek living and understanding of life (2013a, pp. 134-6). I am not inclined to go further into the issue of zoe and bio, but note that scholars such as Bignall (2012a), Weheliye (2014), Rifkin (2012), Watson (2014), and Moreton-Robinson (2015) provide further analysis in the context of Indigenous and coloured peoples throughout the world. Consequently, I argue that to unravel the ways that the nation state and sovereignty deem its subjects as human or not human is to detail the social construction of 'the human', and who is and who is not human.

In Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus*, his critique "differs from Agamben's bare life, Foucault's biopolitics and Mbembe's necropolitics to show alternative modes of life" (Weheliye 2014, p. 2). Seeing alternative modes of life permits me to journey through the historical aspects of colonisation and its impact upon the bodies of First People that gets transferred into the contemporary. However, I also consider Mbembe's questioning statement of "under what practical conditions is the right to kill, allow to live, or to expose to death exercised"? (2013, p. 161). This is also offered through the works of Sylvia Wynter (1999, 2003, 2006) and Katherine McKittrick (2015) to add further analysis through their arguments of humanness to articulate scholarly, intellectually and creatively the theorisation of the discursive regimes of the production and intervention of "human" (McKittrick 2015, p. 1). The photograph of men in chains and the complexities embodied in its representation highlight the "tensions of the empire" (Campt 2017, p. 63), and the state of Western Australia's relationship with Indigenous people.

The state of bio-power as sovereign having power over our lives in the Foucauldian sense lies also in the opportunity of, I state, a "refusal", as articulated by Audra Simpson (2014), and we Indigenous peoples take life over power, we push back, and we are sovereign and life together. In

my looking at this image, I turn the gaze back on the trauma and violence that is contained and incorporated in the processes of dehumanisation that are marked on the bodies of Indigenous men in neck and leg chains.

In refusal, I reject the silence that lies in the story of coloniality and its absence to give not only voice but also *aliveness*: life. I consider Campt's words that such "photographs are not silent nor muted" (Campt 2012, pp. 25-6). So, if photographs are not silent nor muted, then images of horror reveal a slow violence; a violence that is not talked about in loud angry voices but talked about in hushed tones or not talked about at all. Thus, Western sovereign power wants to squash life, the life of these men. There is the belief that these men are not worthy of life; if we don't see them or acknowledge them except as vermin, demonic, and monstrous without soul or body, we can strip away their humanity, their life. I reposition power and give humanness to the men. They are not dead but alive, because they are me and the many parts of me, and I carry them with me as do their family members.

3.7 Royal Commission: W.E. Roth

In this section, I examine the Royal Commission undertaken by Walter Edmund Roth and the lives of "aborigines" in Western Australia to show the entanglement of violence and the relationship between pastoralists and settlers and Indigenous people. In 1904, Walter Edmund Roth headed the *West Australian Royal Commission on the Conditions of the Natives* in northern West Australia. An article published by the *Western Mail* newspaper on 11th of February 1905, titled The Aborigines Question, raised the question of the treatment of Aboriginal prisoners and charges against the police were published. Roth, in his report, stated that cattle killing was the chief offence for the arrest of Aborigines taken as prisoners (*Western Mail* 1905). Roth was scathing in his report, condemning and questioning the use of neck chains on Aboriginal prisoners by police constables, and the commissioner of police in WA declared that, "there is evidence of 'brutal' and outrageous condition of affairs" (*Western Mail* 1905, p. 13). Other reasonings behind the necessity for chaining Aboriginal men related that, "when starting out on such an expedition the police constable take a variable amount of provisions, private and government horses, and a certain amount of chains" (*Western Mail* 1905, p.13).

The Royal Commission ascertained that Aboriginal prisoners worked in chains, slept in chains, and spent their entire time imprisoned in chains. And when questioned by Roth as to the chaining of prisoners, "do you place neck-chains on any other than aboriginal prisoners?" The response was "No" (*Royal Commission on the Condition of the Natives Report* 1905, p. 5). Aboriginal labour was central to settlement (Lydon 2016, p. 103; Owen 2016) and taking Aboriginal men away from their

families was central to the settlers' possession of land and the possessive logic of Whiteness (Moreton-Robinson 2015). As Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues, this worked in the interest of European settling the country with sheep and cattle.

In early settler colonies, such images as these provided for White settlers, proof of the savagery and primitivism of Aboriginal people and sanctioned the punitive, violent massacres and genocide of First Peoples. Thus, local narratives of lawlessness refuted allegations of Indigenous ill-treatment and blinded contemporary observers to the injustice. Photographs of Aboriginal prisoners functioned as a process to subjugate and dispossess lands for Aboriginal peoples (Owen 2016; Lydon 2016, p. 104). However, while Aboriginal people were supposedly British subjects and deemed on equal footing as White British subjects, in this country, time, space, and interaction with the settlers and Western law in remote places were at odds (Owen 2016; Harman & Grant 2014, p. 157) with each other. The emotive response to photographs of Aboriginal prisoners in neck chains were detailed in Britain, with the British Members of Parliament responding with indignation providing a lens politicised for the benefit of its audiences. Sara Ahmed (2004) argues that the public expression of empathy and shame may absolve the confessor's conscience with the effect of allowing them to 'move on', drawing a line between the present and the past, the victim and self.

Within the creation of colonial settlement discourses, what was constructed, therefore, was a paradigm enabling the native/Indigenous body/s to be read in different ways. Thus, through photographic depictions and anthropological scientific discourses, and colonial settler-state, shaped their own kind of 'truths', resulting in their own understanding to perpetuate the ignorance and blame to legitimise the continuation of dispossession and dislocation. I suggest that this draws on Agamben's (2013a) bare life, state of exception, and the apparatus of the state that continues in the ongoing dispossession of Aboriginal peoples (Bignall & Svirsky 2012, p. 261).

Walter Edmund Roth's interrogation into the treatment of Aborigines in the northwest of Western Australia bought to light the atrocious and the unjust treatment of Aboriginal people. Roth's report (*Royal Commission on the Condition of the Natives Report* 1905) revealed, I declare, the relationship as one of intimacy that existed between the police, government officers, the settlers, and the prisoners. The belief held that Aboriginal prisoners were 'okay' about the neck chains revealed the magnitude of what the police and pastoralists believed when encountering First Peoples and their bodies. The discursive rhetoric of neck-chaining, when questioned by Roth, were given in response by the police in the inquiry that, "neck-chaining was in vogue for 30 years" (*Western Mail* 11 Feb. 1905, p. 13). Roth's further questioning posits, "Do you place neck-chains on any other than aboriginal prisoners?" was responded to with, "So far as I can understand the

custom of chaining Blacks as been practiced from time immemorial, and with the present goal it is only the safe way… 'Under the present system the man is in chains from the time he comes into the goal until the time he leaves it – sometimes from two to three years" (*Western Mail* 11 Feb. 1905, p. 13). In my responding to such sinister and uncaring answers by the police, I wonder, do the prisoners ever leave when time is served or is death the only way out?

3.8 Right to Life and Death

In this section, I consider the concept of right to life and death through the reading of Foucault's (1977) text, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. The British sovereign right to death and life offer consideration of Foucault's (1977) insightful and detailed account of imperialism and its relationship with its citizens and those who are deemed as criminals and eligible of committing a crime. The prison was constructed to place such bodies in a dark cell. According to Foucault, the use of iron collars and chains was in vogue in the earlier centuries with prisoners dragging them along beside them when they worked. However, from the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe iron collars were abolished (1977, p. 8). In relation to the Aboriginal population, the transportation of neck chains and locks came into 'vogue' alongside invasion and the processes of colonisation in insidious methods by way of containment and the removal of Aboriginal peoples off their lands, opening it up for White settlement.

In the enunciation of the photograph of 'Aboriginal Bathing Group' (see Lydon 2016, pp. 103-11), such photographs might reflect a need for humanitarian responses by the police and pastoralists. The belief continued to be held through law and the Criminal Code, section 655, "that an aboriginal native of any age can be whipped but not so a white" according to responses given at the Royal Commission by Octavius Burt, Sheriff and Comptroller–General of Prisoners (The Western Mail 11 Feb. 1905, p. 13).

Prisons and chaining, according to Foucault's (1977) work, became central to the bodies of people and the need for a free market was produced through the idea of 'civil slaves' used as the labour force in the economy of the country. Punitive methods were not merely a consequence of legislation or indicative of the social structures but employed as a technique for exercising power, a political tactic for keeping bodies in line (Foucault 1977, p. 23). For Aboriginal people, the use of their bodies situated in a certain "political economy" (Foucault 1977, p. 24) resulted in dispossession and dislocation, freeing up their lands, traditional foods, and medical plants destroyed for the benefit of White settlement. As bodies of the political economy, the bodies of Aboriginal men bound in neck chains were used as labour to pave roads and build the railways for the establishment of townships. Foucault further stated that, "the political investment of the body is bound in complexities due to

the force of labour production and constituted within a system of subjection – the body becomes useful if it is both subjective body and productive" (1977, pp. 25-6). The image of the men in neck and leg chains is read as abjection and less than human, I contemplate that the procedures of power, as suggested by Foucault, "characterizes the *disciplines*: an *anatomo-politics of the human body*" (Foucault 1984, p. 262). I add a poem to notate that man is an invention and is framed within Western understandings of who fits the category of 'man' and, therefore, 'human'.

Man is an Invention

> Man is an invention, Man is made up, Man is discursive.
> My life matters, I am human I will be human I will act human
> Man is an invention designed to make me nonhuman
> I am forced to know myself, to see myself and to be myself
> My skin is in the earth and the tree surrounding me
> My body redefines my being, I can clearly articulate
> My life as alive, as sovereign as living (Faye Rosas Blanch 2016).

In Foucault's (2001) *The Order of Things*, he suggests that in the 18th century, there was no epistemic consciousness of man as such and the formulation of a general stratified table compared to the environmental world, and the production 'man'–'human' is included into the sovereignty of a discourse that has the power to create its own representations. Sylvia Wynter (2003), however, disrupts the discourse, rupturing the concept of 'human' in terms of Western invention of 'human' that emerged through Western historical processes of colonisation throughout the global world. 'Man' is detailed through conceptualising Man 1 and Man 2.

According to Wynter (2003), "the overrepresentation of Man and her conceptualization of Man1 and Man 2 is situated moments in history" (p. 264). Man 1, in Wynter's (McKittrick 2015) work, refers to the Renaissance's 'studia humanitatis' within the Greek understanding of 'homo politicus'. In addition, Wynter's argument that Man 1 is positioned as different to 'homo religious' lead the way to Wynter's conception of Man 2. The conceptualisation of Man 1 and Man 2 allowed for the invention of the 'human' and Western understanding of human within a framework of humanness detailed by Western constructs, leaving 'others' outside the framework of humanness (McKittrick 2015, p. 10). Sylvia Wynter unsettles the coloniality of power through revealing the pervasiveness that embroils Western knowledge systems and the descriptors defined in its own sense of human (Wynter 2003, p. 260). Wynter's work is not just directed to aspects of seeing and knowing who is human and who is not human, but extends into the realm of what it means to simply be 'human' (McKittrick 2015, p. 8).

3.8.1 To simply be Human

Conceptualising the notion of the human, Agamben's 'bare life' and 'state of exception' (2013a), according to Weheliye (2014), reveal how 'bare life' conceals racialisation; it impacts on the lives of the men in chains and how First People's bodies were enslaved. Moreton-Robinson states that 'race' became the means through which the colonising state's exercise of power did not shift but extended from one of "to let live or die" to "let live or die and to make live" (2015, p. 191). Thus, First Nations bodies in this country were/are subjected to "violence and dispossession- and is marked in its proximity to death", according to Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 191). What is unsettling is the way that First Peoples, as marked by proximity to death, are intimately joined in relationship to the Empire, contributing to the diaspora and dispossession of Indigenous lands and country through removal away from country and culture. Weheliye's concept of "racialized assemblages" informs the ways that Indigenous/Black bodies are viewed and maintained (2014, pp. 46-52).

I contemplate the various ways that 'racialized assemblages' offers a lens to critique Hortense Spillers' reference of "hieroglyphics of the flesh" and the intimate ways that hieroglyphics of the flesh lie within articulation of messages that are not seen (1987, p. 67). The violence of language and political discourse described on the flesh and the bodies of first men in this image mark the ways that "racialized assemblages" instils an understanding of "race" (Weheliye 2014, p. 1) within institutions of power that produce, and often reproduce, how the life of the 'persons' is perceived by the sovereign state (Agamben 2013a; Foucault 2013b). Hieroglyphics of the flesh, according to Hortense Spillers, are "that which is transfers from one generation to the next through acts of political violence" (1987, pp. 67-8).

Hence, the photographs detailing Aboriginal men in neck chains were to show, for a British audience, the ill-treatment and violence entailed in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from country. Furthermore, though deemed British subjects in the early settlement of Australia and at a time when settlement was opening up the country to White migrants through the removal of First Peoples from their country/s, the discursive regimes did not see them as citizens of the sovereignty of Britain (Lydon 2016). Citizenship for First Peoples was never really considered simply because of the details of who is and who is not 'human'. Instead, according to Agamben's work, "the extreme place of separation illuminated from the 'rights of man' from the 'rights of citizen' that could only be grasped as human life in the figure of bare or sacred life…despite the humanitarian organizations in politics, it is a maintenance of secret solidarity that humanitarian organizations work in tandem with the very powers they are out to fight" (2012, p. 158). In this instance, the humanitarianism separated by politics cannot fail to reproduce the isolation of sacred life as the

very basis of sovereignty, which Hannah Arendt claims is "the fate of human rights and the nation-state bound together, such that the decline and crisis of the one necessarily implies the end of the other" (cited in Agamben 2012, p.159). Therefore, what did this mean for those images in photographs of men in chains and the violent treatment of First Peoples?

Jane Lydon's 2016 book, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, and her engagement with photographs through an Australian historian's lens explores the ways that photographs "incorporated both Indigenous peoples as human but more so excluded from the domain of humanity" (Lydon 2016, p. xiii). I consider some of Lydon's (2016) thoughts on the photography of Aboriginal people and ponder on her own encounter with the black and white photo titled Aboriginal Bathing Gang. My reading of Lydon's text is undertaken through the way she positions the narrative of humanitarianism to examine her use of Aboriginal photos to support her thoughts and reflection on the relationship the colonisers had with the First Peoples in this country. Lydon states that the "photographs of the Aboriginal prisoners at the center of this debate were displayed in ways that hindered their appearance as proof of inhumanity given a variety of meanings to show proof of savagery and uncivilized in opposition to white humanity and progress" (2016, p. 103; see Lydon 2016, pp. 103-8 for further photographs of First Peoples).

Consequently, the photo is an important signpost of the historical aspects associated with First People's relationship with the colonisers and settlers in this country, and the affect and effect of colonisation on not only the bodies of First Peoples but the ocular trauma witnessed. As Moreton-Robinson states, "white possession of Aboriginal country and lands, disavowing Aboriginal sovereignty through racist techniques, each shaping and affecting the lives of Aboriginal people" (2015, p. xxi). While, this photograph and the words of Moreton-Robinson ring true in their articulation, and Lydon (2016) offers a lens to relate narratives that connect in and to First Peoples' experience within contemporary Australia, I am forced to critique how our voices are "subsumed within the narratives of modern reason and progress" (Lowe 2015, p. 2) and how we get forgotten between the pages of historical data and archival documents that arbitrates our lives in the past and into the contemporary.

3.9 Human as Praxis

The humanness of First People's (men's) bodies that is captured in the image is violent and my conceptualisation of refusal reveals insight into the ways that archival documentations and violent images highlight our historical experiences and the shifting from the binaries of subhuman/nonhuman to human, drawing from Katherine McKittrick's (2015) book, *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. McKittrick argues that being human as praxis signals the opportunity

for action, it is a verb that engages in consideration of ways to move forward while knowing and remembering the past, “the interrelatedness of our contemporary situation and embattled histories of conflicting and intimate relationalities” (2015, p. 3) give chance to moving forward.

Themes of dispossession, dislocation, disruption, and denial of First Peoples, conceptualised as ‘human’ and worthy of being seen as such, drives my critique of the photograph of First Peoples (men) in neck chains. I employ ideas stemming from the progress of imperial sovereignty that informed First Peoples’ lives in the past, the present, and the future. However, I consider the aspect that the photograph and the image, in and of itself, is loaded with complexities and carries the voices of the people seen within. As stated before, this photo is neither “muted nor silent” (Campt, 2017, p. 25).

I refer to my analysis of Tina Campt’s (2017) specifics in her text, Listening to Images. She argues that the photographs are quiet but the series of images, although absent [she is referring to passport photos of people with the image of their faces cut out to situate their passports], sees the photographs shift from “studium” to “punctum” and grabs one’s attention (Campt 2017, p. 20). Studium, according to Barthes (1977), is looking/viewing, culturally and politically, the photograph and its interpretation, whereas punctum is the affect of the photograph that marks the viewer and the feelings that come from the viewing. In terms of the black and white photo of First Men in neck chains, it pricks at my emotions and bruises once again my being; what it reveals is the traumatic experiences that are embedded in the bodies of First Peoples. I respond through poetic verse.

I am jolted, I am disgusted,
I am sad.
My people,
Chained…
Like animals.
Prisoners and imprisoned.
Forced to struggle across
Lands of others
Country.
How are they positioned?
Is the kinship system safe?
Which man stands next to who?
Lines organized, set up.
Who captures them?
Forces them to look.
The camera.
Violence display.
Unimagined containment.
No safety.
Chains linked.
Necks mandatory used
Locked in threes.
No hiding.
All not free.
Taken, removed, stolen.

I am jolted, I am disgusted,
I am sad.
My people,
Chained…
I am angry, I give voice.

I listen. (Faye Rosas Blanch 2017)

Further, Campt's (2012, 2017) examination of archival photographs of families and coloured peoples illuminated within the frames, asks the question, "what is the place in this archive for images assumed only to register forms of institutional accounting or state management?" (Campt 2017, p. 3). Christina Sharpe states that "the significance of black bodies, the policing of space and desire…the discursive production of histories and subjectivities in the highly regulated institutional space of the museum arises out of the hidden histories, its archived and very present depths" (2010, p. 112).

Natalie Harkin's exegesis, I Weave Back to You, Archival-Poetics for the Record (2017), provides insightful articulation in response to the archives and museum in Adelaide, South Australia. Harkin's archival-poetics exposes how intimate the progress that deciphering and unpacking of the archives reveal. Harkin (2017) argues that the scale and size of archival documentations held by the institution of the museum and family history section relate the stories of her nanna as a child and into adulthood. I insert Natalie's words to offer consciousness to her journey and the significance provided, I argue, in relationship to the lives of every Indigenous Australian; our link with the

archives and the intimacy between the coloniser and the colonised that exists within the written documentations of records that detail the lives of Indigenous peoples.

> I sit between almost 200 pages
>
> file-note archives
>
> a portion of a life
>
> under state control
>
> with tight throat my heart pumps
>
> memory in blood
>
> I catch my breath sharp
>
> hold it. (Harkin 2017, p. 5)

Harkin communicates the importance and desire to research and examine the archival material relating to her Nanna: "contact with the archive roused a yearning so deep. I just wanted to find and deconstruct it all" (Harkin 2017, p. 10). I consider Harkin's voice in the context of Lydon's (2016) writing on humanitarianism and state management of First Peoples (men) in chains. Opening the space explores the procedure and progression of colonisation, understood through a lens of state management and archival documentation and the grids of knowledge that become marked on the bodies of Indigenous peoples. And, "how do we contend with images intended not to figure black subjects, but to delineate instead differential or degraded forms of personhood or subjection – images produced with the purpose of tracking, cataloging, and constraining the movement of blacks in and out of diaspora" (Campt 2012, p. 3).

3.10 Waiting for Sound

I deduce that this photograph is "silences waiting, for sound" (Blanch & Worby 2010, p. 1) for someone to recover their voices and to make sense of. Trouillot (1995) asks, "what makes some narratives rather than others powerful enough to pass as accepted history if not historicity itself? If history is told by those who won, how did they win in the first place? And why don't all winners tell the same story?" (1995, p. 6). Thus, I disrupt the accepted narrative that there is some sort of truth that lies in the realm of history (Western notions of history). I take on board Trouillot's (1995) desire for scholars in his text *Silencing the Past* to "engage not the existence of omissions or

historical silences per se, but the active processes of silencing (and absenting) in the production of historical narratives" (cited in Campt 2012, p. 36; see also Harkin 2017; Baker et al. 2015b).

3.11 Silences Waiting for Sound

In this section, I contemplate my own personal struggle at times when, all too often, this image and other images of Aboriginal men in chains are positioned in lecture PowerPoint presentations by teachers and lecturers in those colonised educational spaces. What is offered in these spaces is a visual representation giving an example of the horror and atrocities suffered by Indigenous peoples. I reason that although this placing of men in chains in PowerPoint slides is executed with good intentions, I deliberate on the thought that there is never any decoding by the lecturer or, dare I say, tutors within teaching spaces (I am also guilty of these actions) or placing them in context.

I am arguing here that if given no context, then how can we allow for students to develop the skills to be critically conscious? I contend, therefore, what often occurs in lecture theatre is the 'silenc*ing* and absent*ing*', as pointed out by Trouillot (1995) and Campt (2012). Extending on the notion of silencing and absenting, placing the photograph within a teaching PowerPoint raises other questions such as, how do students feel when they see this photograph, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous? What responsibilities do lecturers/I have, when I/we reveal this photograph that is never articulated in the teaching? Examining this photograph allows for, I argue, an ethical practice that reads not only what is in the frame but what is also beyond the frame, and that examining both, what is represented and what is unsaid or unsayable, against its representation (Campt 2012, p. 127) is important for engagement in ethically responsible ways in teaching.

Again, as Tina Campt (2012) argues, it is important to read the photograph/s and to read what is not in the frame and the ways that the frame frames a scene; going beyond the frame and the contours of the frame to see what is being communicated (Campt 2017). I take from Campt, and extend on reading the photo, by exploring the visibility and visual representation of the neck chains. I deem that what is absence and not articulated in the image is First Peoples' sovereignty, humanness, becoming/unbecoming, and elements of refusal. My engagement with the image offers a deep reading and critique of this image to disrupt and shift the narrative. In defining how intimacies frame the processes of dehumanisation and racialisation that embeds the racialised assemblages that Alexandra Weheliye (2014) so poignantly describes, we must not turn away from the violence, but we need to see the past to know the future (Stoler 2006, p. 43).

3.12 Inhumanity of Chains

In the discourses and rhetoric of dehumanisation, the act of neck-chaining Aboriginal prisoners, the discursive regimes of power (Foucault 1977), suggest that the language of dehumanisation was rife in the relationship between Aboriginal peoples, who at the time were British subjects according to the governmentality of the Empire. However, Jane Lydon stipulates that "the pastoral lobby considering charges of slavery argued that neck-chains were the most humane method of restraint, justifying the protection of white settlers" (2016, p. 103). John Forrester, Western Australian Premier from 1890-1901, attached the report stating that the issue of the neck chains was "as inconvenient to the aboriginal as the wrist-chain" (*Western Mail* 11 Feb. 1905, p. 13). There is a negation and invisibility of seeing Indigenous peoples as human within the context of the settler state and, thus, seen through the lens of troublesome, criminalised, and needing detainment. Proceeding to tame and maintain the troublesome and 'uncivilised' people through use of force seemed the only way to correct behaviour. Jane Lydon tells us that "Indigenous savagery and white settler humanity" was read by European settlers in contextualising their role in the land grab and British ownership of huge tracts of land within the Western Australian region (2016, p. 104). First Nations men's bodies organised in rows lead viewers within Australia to respond to these images with shock and disgust. I wanted to unpack the shock and disgust, to deconstruct further. Images like the ones of First Peoples in chains are the shameful evidence for colonial oppression and inhumanity and the vileness of coloniality.

I assert that taking a closer look permits me the opportunity to examine critically and analytically this photograph, by taking note of Black feminist scholar, Hortense Spillers (1987), and her postulation that before the naming of the new world, there is the "theft of bodies…a scene of actual mutilation, dismemberment and exile" (Spillers 1987, p.67) for Indigenous/First Peoples. In the context of the First Peoples of this new world named Australia (Terra Australis incognita), the lack of seeing the humanness and sovereignty of Indigenous Australian peoples as flesh and human cannot be "brushed nor escape concealment under discourse" (Spillers 1987, p. 67). Theorising the flesh and bodies of First Peoples in this image and throughout the thesis are contextualised in, as Spillers contends, "the theft of the captive body" (1987, p. 67). I am, therefore, arguing that the dislocation, dispersal, and taking of First Peoples' bodies away from homelands and country is explored in this image and points to the question of the men in chains' intimate connection to country and the offering of life. However, as Roberto Montero, drawing from Toni Morrison and Hortense Spillers, states, "slavery throws into crisis the ethical presumptions of modernity; in living and dying operates in an entirely difficult field of relations for those denied the possibility of life in the first place" (2018, p. 1). In the scrutiny of this photograph, there are blind spots that must be

exposed to highlight ways that educators interrogate their own relationship to the photograph. This must be discussed and articulated in the course of educators' relationships with knowledge production. This is the relationship between the coloniser, settler society, and First Peoples to examine the intimacies in those acts of violence and the ways that history is formulated by the dominant voice. Spillers (1987), in her text, Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book, endeavours to make known the intimacies that exists between the captive and the captor. The ideology that goes into the production of the 'captive' is imposed on the bodies with violence, the 'body' is 'flesh' and the identity of the captive is detailed by the captor within a discourse that cannot escape concealment, nor be brushed away.

> Papa, Mama, Baby, your flesh is yours, mine, ours,
> Flesh tells you where you belong, come from
> Place, sense of being a knowing beyond all that is,
> We don't end at skin, we begin through skin,
> The Earth is our skin, our bodies, we can see us
> In our lands, our trees, the plants and the animals,
> We are not without.
> Your flesh is yours, mine, ours. (Faye Rosas Blanch 2020)

The producing of historical discourses and ideology is formulated, as Trouillot (1995) states, in the silence and absence that enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments. According to Trouillot (1995), this occurs in: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and, the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance). I argue that the notion of hegemony lies in the way that history is framed in the production of Whiteness in this country and gets continued in the educational spaces where the norm is the interests of the power of the dominant and the concept of the greater good for the people that is couched in settler society (Moreton-Robinson 2015; Watson 2007; Bunda 2012). I am, therefore, responsible in my role as an educator, community member, and First Person to relate how narratives that tell our stories situate us in the past as lost, in present still as lost and, in the future continued as lost. We continue to seemingly be left out of the frame.

In critically analysing the photograph of Aboriginal men from the region of Western Australia, and for the purpose of the qualified emotions and narratives associated with traumatic visual and textual representation often outlined in lectures, such images connect to the worldview of First Peoples. During the encountering of such photos, what is revisited upon Indigenous bodies both spatially and temporally is 'symbolic violence' within those colonial spaces and is then carried into the everyday discourses that narrate Indigenous people's life stories.

The photograph of First Peoples/men in neck chains contrasts the way "black bodies are fixed and remain in history", according to Dionne Brand, and "situated as a sign of particular cultural and political meanings in the diaspora cursed not valued except as tokens of labour" (2002, p. 35) and, I reason, made to work, breathe, and live in neck and leg chains. The bodies of First Peoples relate and embody history and are alive to First Peoples in present settings; they are fixed in history as objects to study through colonial discursive texts produced as knowledge and understanding about Indigenous Australians. This is an assault on our very being, our flesh, and our bodies.

Taking from Moreton-Robinson's (2015, p. 10) reasoning that, in the Australian context, there is postcolonial thinking that we (First Peoples), somehow 'exist' only in the nation's image through land rights and sacred sites, and again borders on the concept of 'objects on the landscape' (Moreton-Robinson 2000). Within the lecture space, this photograph is brought to life and brings to the fore Indigenous people's realities and what occurs is an experience with the past in contemporary situations.

In conclusion, I have provided a close reading of an image of men in neck and leg chains to unpack and deconstruct how the bodies and flesh of the men relate a violence that is framed in a process of dehumanisation, and the notions of human/non-human/subhuman constructed in the production of man that continues into the present. Australia's history relates an absence when it comes to First Peoples and denies the acts of violence that come from invasion, dispossession, dislocation, and dispersal of First Peoples from intimate connection to country. In response to the photo and the image of men in neck and leg chains, I articulate through spoken word, drawing from Dionne Brand's (2002) text, *Map of No Return*.

History waits

> Enter through the door, history awaits,
> History is hungry, History is thirsty,
> History needs, history haunts,
> Enter the room - see history,
> History sits in the empty chair
> History caresses, kisses, tenderly strips slowly then violently,
> Till there is nothing,
> History is hungry, history is thirsty,
> History is getting its fill on the bodies and flesh of my people,
> Enter through the door - see history,
> History feeds on the diasporic and dispossessed,
> History lodges with its captives, waiting,
> History waits for its next victims.
> History is not kind, not gentle, not genuine,
> History never loses, history is always the winner. (Faye Rosas Blanch 2017)

CHAPTER 4 POLITICISING AND POLICING "BARE LIFE" IINTIMATELY

"The women built the church…" (Worby, Tur & Blanch 2014, p. 10)

> Home carries me away to places
> Spaces that won't confine me
> Deny me, bound or confound me
> But saves me, plays with me and
> Contains me.
>
> (Faye Rosas Blanch 2009a, p. 148)

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I outlined the key ideas of listening closely to photographs, beyond handling and looking. Similar to my analysis of dehumanisation and dislocation of Indigenous bodies through the image of Aboriginal "men in chains" in the previous chapter, I will refer to a photograph of family members taken outside, near the site of a wooden building. I will further conceptualise the notions of 'becoming' and 'unbecoming' to move from listening to images to looking beyond the frame. Again, Campt's (2012) concept of looking closely and listening as a descriptive method for engaging with photographs provides the extension of 'becoming', 'unbecoming', and sovereignty from examining the duplicated photograph (not the original) of my family members outside a small wooden building. The small wooden building is a church. I will extend on the building further in this chapter.

This photograph, as do others, remains in the memories of many of my family members simply because of the family members positioned inside the frame. Such photographs and many more like this have been scanned and uploaded to Facebook, inviting all family members to engage with, raise questions, make comments, reveal our connections, and show our love for family. The social networking on Facebook allows family members and friends to engage in a 'sense' of belonging and surveying of family connections as a communication tool. According to Lumby (2010), Facebook allows its users to connect with other family members and friends to build and rekindle a sense of community (pp. 68-9). Consequently, in rekindling my connection to family, I take this photograph as a historical moment to, as Campt suggests, shift the way photographs might be used as "an enactment of the past" and to see the photograph instead, as a "site of articulation" and aspirations (2012, p. 6). This chapter provides 'looking beyond the frame' to articulate and communicate what is not seen or spoken. I read this photograph as an intimate connection to family narratives that also connects to my own understandings of self.

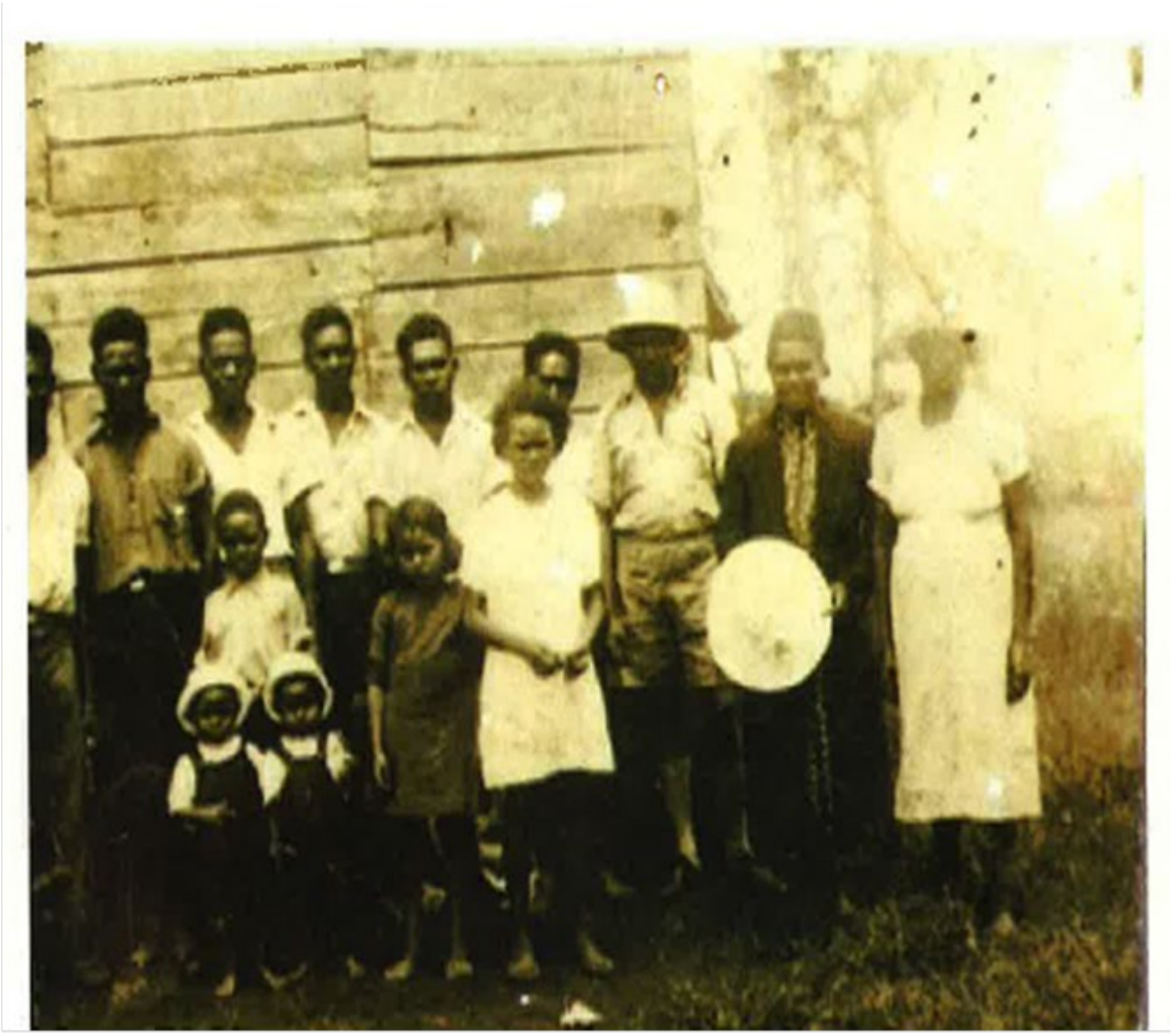
In the Frame

In the frame lies my family,
In the frame stands my family
In the frame I see each
In the frame brown faces look out
In the frame Grandma, Uncles, Aunties,
In the frame my Fathers, tiny and small stand
In the frame held together,
In the frame, in the frame,
I see family (Faye Rosas Blanch 2020).

Cultural Warning

I give a cultural warning to my family and Indigenous members of the community whose family members have passed. The following image of family members might be distressing for some and I offer my apologies. This image offers the opportunity to critique the policies and acts of First Peoples' containment in Christian communities on the fringe of mainstream society. I would like to take a breather here and thank the Con-Goo family members who have the original photograph and have allowed me a photocopied version.

4.2 In the Frame?



Photograph 4.1 Family members outside A.O.G. Bethel church building, Pinnacle Pocket, unknown photographer, n.d.

I postulate this photograph of importance in its link to seeing my family members, simply because all family members in this photograph have passed. Taken on Yidiniji country, this photograph awakens my senses and links me intimately to my people/my mob. I am emotionally, spiritually, and intimately connected to the people in this photograph. The photo touches me through my viewing and affirms my relationship to each family member in this photograph. The correlation between emotions, bodily sensations, and cognition comes together in the viewing of my family, described by Sara Ahmed as "one way of reflecting on this history and the emotions that comes with a feeling of bodily change" (2004, p. 5).

I see my two fathers (the twins) as toddlers. I see the twins' big brother Norman and sister Margaret, my Uncle and Aunty. The emotions associated with seeing the twins as toddlers and family members intersect within the boundaries of not only family, but also cultural and social gatherings. My reflection and analysis of this photograph speaks to the social gathering of living a life of religious acceptance, going to church, and residing in the community of Pinnacle Pocket, Yungaburra, North Queensland, on the lands of the Yidiniji people. The small wooden building is situated at Pinnacle Pocket on McKeown Road, Yungaburra, North Queensland. Examining the image allows the photograph to be read as communal. However, further critique and going beyond the frame, is the policies of protection, segregation and Christianisation, legislated and enacted by the Australian government and the political intrusion of the Foucauldian concept of regulatory mechanism (Foucault 2013b, p. 71) by the State of Queensland's control.

The importance of this small building lies within the narrative of the women at Pinnacle Pocket helping to build a wooden church. I wonder, is it possible that this is the church the women helped to build? Drawing from my own connection to the site itself and my family, I remember this narrative succinctly; the women and the building of the church is a narrative that lies within the community of Indigenous families that were living at the site during the protection and segregation period and continues to exist in the memories, in the contemporary, and with older community members. According to Roslyn Kidd (1997), "in 1897 the first law was passed in Queensland authorising the State to act as guardian of Aboriginal interests and setting up a network of local 'protectors' to regulate all aspects of Aboriginal lives, including freedom of movement, place of residence, employment, finances and family life' (p. xx). The institution of the church and its various dominations played a powerful role in setting up communities through mission and reserve sites. The Assemblies of God (AOG) Pentecostal religion was key to my family's engagement, interaction, and religious lifestyle that impacted upon our ways of being, our humanness, and our sovereignty.

In the contemporary, the Assemblies of God (AOG) continues to play a part in the lives of family members, many of the men having converted to becoming pastors, choosing to be 'men of God', and following a life of conversion to Christianity and service to God. What are retained in their lives are the memories of having lived in the community and attending the church at Pinnacle Pocket. There are other black and white photographs that reveal the many community members and their families inside the church and outside the church. Such photographs have been shared on Facebook, as already stated in the beginning of this chapter, for family. Why did I choose this photograph to theorise when there were others I could have easily accessed?

This photograph is a moment, in which Campt defines as, "the shifting sensory and affective relations that structure the dynamics of viewing and being viewed" (2012, p. 74), when the camera operator and the subjects participate together in framing a moment in history. This is a set up shot, it reverberates with a low sound. Reading the photograph, I argue, is my intimate connection with each person and between each person in this photograph. However, the difficulty is gaining outside information about the photograph, such as who took the picture, and exactly *why* was it taken? These unanswered questions cause me to rely on my 'memories', as well as the memories of older family members who have passed when examining this photograph. Is this the church that the women built?

4.3 Photographs as Living Artefacts

I argue, however, that this photograph is a 'living artefact' where stories are embodied in memories that relate to the object of memory and cannot be separated from feeling and emotion. I am shaped by my contact with memory (Ahmed 2004, p. 7; Cross & Peck 2010). I argue that the image is situated in discourses of religion and reveals how Indigenous people were forced into containment on missions and reserves where the progression of Christianity formulated its program of 'saving the natives'. Dr Roselyn Kidd (1997) provides insight into how the missions and reserves were to progress in its saving the native format. This process relied upon the "catering to the hearts and minds of mission populations… [this] was the duty of the church" (Kidd 1997, p. 60). Does this image of my immediate family members photographed outside against the wall of a wooden building provide a sense of belonging, or is this just own interpretation? My family were not Australian citizens at the time this photograph was taken, so how much did they belong to the land, the church, the religion and to each other?

4.4 Family Photograph/Frequencies

I contemplate Campt's (2017) notion that family photographs can be 'haptic', a relating to a sense of wanting to touch and feel, a visual representation that is also textual; "the grammar of the archives" (Campt 2017, p. 71). Further, she articulates that the notion of intimacy is precisely what she speaks about in the context of haptics, she extends on haptics of image as a responsiveness and relation to images that is both passive and active (Campt 2017, p. 72). I encounter, in this photograph and the photograph in the previous chapter, a production that represents the intimate longing and desire of the governing state to classify its imposition of colonial settlement and the "conduits of an unlikely interplay between the vernacular and the state' (Campt 2017, p. 5). Does this family and community members image offer elements of refusal? A refusal practiced through wanting to be represented their way. I consider this possibility as I look at the children in the image

but, more than this, how the young male adults behind the children are positioned against the wall of the building. How do they want to be seen in this image? What is the performance and how intimate is this performance in the image?

In the words of Cubillo and Cole (2017), in their introduction to the artistic installation, *Resolution: New Indigenous Photomedia*, held in 2017 at the National Gallery of Australia, in the past two decades, Indigenous people were often photographic subject matter used by non-Indigenous people to convey a Eurocentric narrative, often photographed in the "untamed landscape" (Cubillo & Cole 2017, p. 5). I argue that this photograph of family can be viewed as a landscape that is tamed: Yidiniji country settled with a building, a church, and the people inside the frame as 'good Christians', now also tamed and 'saved'. A peaceful settlement is conveyed by this photograph.

I rely upon memories to guide me in relationship to the people in this photograph. I contest that, in its original form, this photo would have been touched and handled by various members of the family, those who have passed and, possibly, those family members still here. The object of the photograph in handling, viewing, and listening to stories relating to the persons in the photograph connects and allows for memory-making. The family members are strategically positioned against the wooden wall of the church, the haptic proximity of the bodies reveals intimacy. The women built the church; They would have known of the labour, the structure, and the materials involved in the building process (see Khesed Ministries 2012).

I see, in this photograph, my grandmother Annie with her large, white-brimmed hat, obviously dressed for church or leaving church; she is the woman second from right (viewer's perspective). She is smiling, she appears happy and quietly confident. She is the mother of the twins, Norman (the boy behind the twins), and Margaret, the taller of the two girls in the photograph. I do not know the young girl positioned next to my Aunty Margaret in this photograph. There is something familiar about the woman standing next to my grandmother. Could this be my Yidiniji great-grandmother, Mary? And the gentleman next to my grandmother may be my great-grandfather, Simeon. I am confident that they are family members.

This is what is "absent in the present" (Campt 2017, p. 23), detailing further information on this photograph, as most members having passed, absent of my great-grandfather, great-grandmother, and grandmother's passing. However, the storying (Phillips & Bunda 2018) of this photo crosses time despite the passing of my old people; they are every present and alive in the telling of stories passed down through the family line. While I cannot name every person in this photograph, I am reminded of Tina Campt's (2012) examination of Black and coloured Germans living in Germany. Campt (2012) argues the images invoke other narratives and imaginings. She further states "that the

texture and tactility of the original materiality of the images is still visible in its hints of graininess and the signs of wear that haunt those who view them by invoking the presence of countless other images and stories for which they stand in by default" (2012, p. 30). Weheliye (2014) suggests that, "differing elements are articulated in assemblage components in their relationality connective with other factors, this is the content, and expression, their acts and articulation" (p. 46). Weheliye's use of assemblages and relationality also inform my theorising of becoming and unbecoming to dismantle and to acknowledge the ways that religion impacted on the lives of my family.

4.5 Haunting

To see family in past photographs is to "confront the ghostly aspects of it" (Gordon, 2008), and to acknowledge that our ancestors make their presence known in their absence; they make their demands on the living (Campt 2012, p. 30). For the narratives derived from the photographs in this thesis, Ann Stoler's 2006 book, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, is crucial in revealing the invasiveness of colonisation and the impact upon the lives of family. Stoler (2006) studies the ways that the Empire appeared and disappeared from the intimate and public spaces in history and is tied up in its colonial progression globally. Drawing from Stoler's (2006) and Gordon's (2008) contextualisation of haunting allows for further analysis of colonialism and the need to know our past for our future lives. I argue that the concept of haunting lies within the framing of place, location, bodies and the intimacy that is contained within the historical aspect of coloniality, and the entangled encounters between the coloniser and the colonised.

Investigating the intimacies of Indigenous Australians' relationship to country and ways of being when looking at photographs is to inhale and register the history of Indigenous Australians. The frequencies of spiritual vibrations and esoteric faith signifies the belief and interests of the Indigenous community in relationship to a lifestyle initiated by the racialised assemblages (Weheliye 2014) that falls within the frame of spiritual worship and living in a space that centres on a religious lifestyle. In the context of racialised assemblages, Weheliye argues that race is not only seen as biological or cultural, but a set of political process that defines humanity, how Indigenous bodies are seen as human or non-human, and the haunting by the spectre of bare life that denies our intimate connection to country (Weheliye 2014, pp. 4-5).

I postulate that this photo of my family near the site of a wooden building is captured at a time in Australia when the legislated Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the sale of Opium Act, 1897 (Parliament of Queensland 1897) was in force and imposed upon the lives of all Aboriginal people through removal from country to reserves and missions. The act defines: "'Reserve'-Any reserve

heretofore or hereafter granted in trust, or reserved from sale or lease by the Governor in Council, for the benefit of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Colony, under the provisions of any law in force in Queensland relating to Crown lands" (p. 1674). Further, the photograph speaks to the Foucauldian concept of the regulatory mechanism of governmentality in North Queensland (Foucault 2013b, p. 71; Moreton-Robinson, 2014). The image, the site, the space, the bodies can also be related to Fred Moten drawing from "Judith Butler's call to subjectivity describes, is understood also, as a call to subjection and subjugation and appeals for redress or protection to the state of idea of citizenship" (Moten 2017, p. 2).

Furthering my examination of this photo, I reinforce Cross and Peck's (2010) analysis of photos, when they suggest that "photographs, archive and memory are intimately connected" (p. 127), in particular with relation to the analysis of the photograph of the men in chains. Comparatively, the photograph of men in chains and that of my family huddled together along the side of a wooden building draws attention to the monstrous and violent acts of coloniality; the neck chains are not there but the chains of Christianity replaced those chains.

Along the wall, six young men huddle together at the back. They are pushed up against each other, each look is guarded, five of the men wear white shirts and one man with a brown shirt, and they each are dressed in long pants/trousers. The men give the impression of not being happy or at ease in contrast to my grandmother. As a matter of fact, it appears that all the participants are not happy except for my grandmother. Did she explicitly want the photograph taken or was she just a willing participant? The men look out at the camera with uncertainty, seemingly forced to have the camera catch them, and they appear tired: is it from departing a church service or getting ready to attend the service? What this photograph does not show is the last man on the left who has his hand on a guitar near his feet. I recognise and can name a couple of the young men; in the community, I know them as my uncles.

Is there some trepidation, or is this normal, the taking of pictures before or after the church service? The physical and emotional features from each of the members in the photo calls me to consider what each may be feeling, and the social, political, and cultural context those of North Queensland, Australia. This photograph prompts questions of why does there appear to be trepidation on the faces of family and community members? Or is this normal when going to and from church? Is there an intimate connection to the photographer that is unseen? Describing my youthful Aunty Margaret, and the young girl near her, the young boy (my Uncle Norman) and the baby twins in front, there is clearly a sense of intimate connection between all in how and why this photo was

taken. The emotions that lie bare in that intimate moment when the photograph is taken (Quashie 2012, p. 3).

Contained further is the way that the bodies have been positioned for the taking of this photograph. The spacing of the bodies is personal. I am drawn to the twins who appear to be about one and half, they are babies and they both stand close to each other looking at the camera. There is no sense of fear, they both give a sense of being safe. The twins are spatially away from their mother. Is it because their big brother Norman and sister Margaret are close that they are safe and appear content? I am in awe of the babies because they both seem settled. To be so young yet know that there is something about to happen, as if this is an important event in their life. This is a staged session and not one just captured by the camera. The quotidian of lived realities is contextualised in this one photograph, positioned intimately within the boundaries of religious activity and life for my family and members of the Aboriginal community at Pinnacle Pocket on the Atherton Tablelands.

The legislated policies of the Protection Era, 'Christianisation' and 'Civilisation' are not discussed within the narratives of my family's relationship with the AOG Pentecostal church; however, it borders on the fringes of my interpretation. The land and site on which the church was established alongside various members of the community, both Aboriginal and South Seas Islander peoples living there at the time, are situated on Yidiniji country as described above. I postulate that there is a moment in the ontological history of my family that we were, and continue to be, apprehended in the significant policy of 'Christianisation and civilisation'. Does this photo relate the narrative of containment, loss of freedom or surveillance? Does it tell of Christianising and civilising? Further examination of the contact between coloniser and the colonised will be investigated in the following chapters.

4.6 Pinnacle Pocket

Pinnacle Pocket is on the traditional lands of the Yidiniji people. Locating the site on which the building sits gives an insight into the history of the church, the people, and the township. Drawing from the tourist information guide (Yungaburra Association Inc 2021) tells us that the township of Yungaburra is surrounded by extinct volcanoes situated 720 metres (2,400 feet) above sea level. My people, the Yidiniji are the traditional owners and continue to live in the township and surrounding towns on the Atherton Tablelands. The Yidiniji language group exists in Yungaburra, Lake Eacham, and Lake Barrine, and along the Barron River to the neighbouring group the Ngadjon-ji peoples of Malanda and have close connection with the Coastal Yidiniji peoples of Gordonvale and Little Mulgrave and into parts of the Cairns area.

Robert Dixon, a linguist relates in his book, *Words of Our Country* (1991), stories, place names and vocabulary in Yidiniji, the Aboriginal language of the Cairns-Yarrabah region. The field work undertaken on the Atherton Tablelands and the coastal area of Gordonvale, Cairns, and Yarrabah. The Yarrabah Mission was established on the Cape Grafton Peninsula, situated approximately 53 kilometres by road from Cairns, North Queensland, and was home to many Indigenous groups from the various areas surrounding Cairns from Herberton to Cooktown (see also Kidd 1997). Yidiniji peoples' country, according to Dixon (1991), ran from the coast of Gordonvale (coastal Yidiny) up to the Atherton Tablelands (Tableland Yidiny).

Prior to European settlement, the area around Yungaburra, traditionally named Djanggarburra (Birdsell 1938), was inhabited by about 16 different Indigenous groups, with the custodians being Yidiniji people and neighbouring Ngajan-ji people, according to Bottoms' (2013) book, *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times*. Many of the language groups were forced onto the Yarrabah Mission near Cairns or sent to Palm Island outside of Townsville. Dispossessed and relocated to Palm Island away from country/s, many Aboriginal families throughout Northern Queensland were subjected to internment on the island; some remained there, and others returned home. My family, however, and other members of the community, were under the care of the AOG Pentecostal pastor and his family who would drive through the rainforest in his big truck picking up families for church service.

Indigenous artist, Vernon Ah Kee, provides insight into the extreme internment of his family members on Palm Island through his art piece of titled, *Transforming Tindale*. Vernon Ah Kee's large drawings of his family members, taken as small photographs by Norman Tindale 1938-1940 were given new forms (Lydon 2016, p. 1; State Library of Queensland 2012). Following his research in the family archives in South Australia, Ah Kee captured a new looking and seeing, one in which he was able to engage in a reimaging and a rereading of the passport photographs of his family members (State Library of Queensland 2012). Ah Kee allows his family members to be alive, to be seen. As Campt (2017) asks when looking at passport photographs, with the small photographs of Ah Kee's family members who are not named, but numbered instead, what frequencies do they register? And what can be attained through their muteness, how can their voice be apprehended and heard (Campt 2017, p. 23)? Deeper analysis offers an insight into not only the colonial progression and legislated policies of internment, and containment of First Peoples but the intimate connection to Tindale's study throughout North Queensland (Tindale & Birdsell 1941).

4.7 Protected, Segregated, Bordering on the Fringes

The family photograph taken outside the church building is framed in the government policies legislated to define the lives of the Yidiniji and Mbabaram groups in this photograph. Although members of my family lived and worked on their traditional lands, they were still subject to the Aboriginals Protection and Preservation Act of 1939 and the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Parliament of Queensland 1897, 1939), legislated as a detriment to not only White settlers but also Aboriginal people, as I have stated in above. According to Kidd (1997) Aboriginal people living on missions and reserves in North Queensland were crucial in being a labour force for surrounding farmers and pastoralists. The policies of segregation, Christianising, and civilising detailed administrative processes undertaken by the Chief Protector of Aborigines to control all Aboriginal people from Brisbane to Cape York to the Torres Strait Islands (see Kidd 2001).

The level of control is evident in an archival letter demonstrating the extent the Chief Protector of Aborigines was able to determine the lives of Indigenous peoples. The letter pertained to the correspondence of the Aborigines Protector in Yungaburra to the Office of Director of Native Affairs, in relationship to my Great Grandmother's application for the Widow's Pension. The letter reads like this:

> The Deputy Commissioner, Widows' Pensions advises that Mary Ann Rosas is an applicant for the Widow's Pension but by reason of her breed it is not possible to grant such until such time as she is the holder of a certificate of exemption from the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act. To enable this certificate to be issued will you please have the accompanying form completed and forwarded to this office. On the 15th September 1941 you advised that she was not under the care of the Protector and presumably you regarded her as a suitable person for exemption (O'Leary, C [Director of Native Affairs] 1945, pers. comm. [addressed to The Protector of Aboriginals, YUNGABURRA], 7 December).

What are read in the letter to The Office of Native Affairs from the Directory of Native Affairs are those racialised ideologies and terms such as "breed", exempted from the Act, she is suitable. This narrative can be read in the photograph and in the bodies of my family members. Although this correspondence reads as if my great-grandmother was exempt from the Aborigines Act. I have no idea of the outcome and whether she was; I can only assume that she was. Contextualised within the discursive analysis of this letter, is the actual application of *The Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act of 1939* (Parliament of Queensland 1939) and Report of Application by Aboriginal or Half Blood for Exemption from the Provisions of the Act (see Frankland 2004). Highlighted, I argue is the utmost control that the Chief Director of Native Affairs and the Protector of Aborigines had over the daily lives of my family.

Formulated on the documentation are questions pertaining to the application; they range from the sex of the applicant, age, birthplace, "breed" of both father and mother, marital status, nationality of spouse, association to other aboriginals, living in a civilised manner, of good character, employed, industrious, whether or not alcohol is consumed or procured for other aboriginals, educated, intelligent, thrifty (careful) with money, and does the applicant have a saving account. The grid of information designed and dictated by government bodies defined how the 'natives' were to be treated, where they lived, and who they mixed with, all contained and maintained in the rules and categories of the Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act of 1939 (Parliament of Queensland 1939). The letter was signed by the local Protector of Aboriginals in Yungaburra, North Queensland, Bob Brown. I argue that this raises the question of was he the local police sergeant or the Mayor of Yungaburra? The nightmare of government intervention in the lives of Aboriginal peoples, as Kidd (2001) states, "were both petty and momentous, and that the machinery of bureaucratic monitoring provided an enormous amount of paperwork" (p. 7).

To Dr Natalie Harkin, Narungga poet, activist and academic, engagement with the archives at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide, relates moments of reflection, and how traumatic and violent being in the depths of archival research can be (Harkin 2017). Lisa Lowe (2015) also provides an insightful analysis of the insidious ways that "the colonial state archive both mediates and subsumes the uncertainties...in it one reads the predicaments both known and unknown that gave rise to the calculations, strategies, forms and practices of imperial life" (p. 4).

4.8 Intimate Spaces of Control–Bare Habitance

The archival documentation and bureaucratic surveillance exposed the intimate connection government officials had, both privately and publicly, with the lives of many Indigenous people. Letters forwarded and received between the Chief Aboriginal Protector in Brisbane to the local 'protector of Aborigines' in Yungaburra, North Queensland detail the monitoring. The photo of my family outside the wooden church registers the concepts of loss. I am interested in how Mark Rifkin's (2012, p. 79) critique of Giorgio Agamben's concepts of "bare life", "zones of indistinction", and "inclusive exclusive" relate the processes of 'sites' of missions and reserves and the intimate spaces of violence, containment and loss of freedom within these sites.

Rifkin's (2012) critique of Agamben's concepts allows for a redressing of policies that impacted upon the lives of Indigenous peoples. He argues that Native peoples' position within settler-state sovereignty require investigation, that the violence of settler-states policies is performed in various ways (2012, p. 79). According to Moreton-Robinson (2014), Indigenous peoples within the Empire became the subject of colonial violence and dispossession; subjects made to live and die (p. 191).

Following Moreton-Robinson's comment above, I keep in mind the guiding concepts of human as praxis, becoming and unbecoming, and our sovereignty for further examination.

In the context of Indigenous peoples in Australia, the legislated policy of the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 detailed and cultivated the meticulous period of protection, segregation/Christianisation and civilising, negating the rights of First Peoples resulting in 'bare life' in which Aboriginal bodies weren't considered biologically and politically deserving of rights. Lisa Lowe (2015) suggests "there were scarce attention to the *relationships between* the matters classified within the organisation of the archives" (p. 5). Hence, missions and reserves became "a location opened within the settler-states in which unwanted bodies, could be managed as 'bare life' biological beings bereft of any/all the legal protection of citizenship" (Rifkin 2016, p. 81).

The colonial intimate relationship with the colonised bodies is framed within the inclusive/exclusive domain, where those bodies are kept outside the legal processes of citizenship as outcasts in our own country. Turning once again to the photograph, my family were not citizens of the new country; they were left without any power in terms of their lives. They were, as Rifkin states, as "bodies whose political status remains indeterminate, not inherently belonging to any particular space" (2016, p. 342), even while living on their own country; Black bodies, 'saved' without Yidiniji status, kept within the confines of Pinnacle Pocket and the Assembly of God (AOG) daily church-going activities.

4.9 Inclusive/Exclusive

The narratives that lie within the sphere of living and going to church are seen through an acceptance and a strong belief in conforming to religion, not only as safety and acceptance but a way of life. Traditional ways of living put aside, and the hegemonic demands of Western living transferred the bodies and minds of Indigenous peoples through the enactment of Western law and legislated policies to control and dictate how to live. Colonised, 'raced' bodies fall into the realm of social Darwinist attitudes of being weak, not able to survive the violence associated with colonisation, seeing as needing to be saved (McConnochie, Hollinsworth & Pettmann 1991), included in the nation but excluded from rights of citizenship. Exemption from the Aborigines Act apparently provided some means of gaining entry to the 'White' world, supporting the belief that one was no longer Aboriginal/Black, but White.

The hegemony of controlling the ways that Indigenous peoples lived their lives is contained within the belief that living like a 'whitefella' is what is needed to have a quality of life. Throughout most

of Queensland's history, the churches and the government have sought to control the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The records reveal that the relationship between churches and the State has always been uneasy and, on many occasions, confrontational (Frankland 1994). The violence of sovereignty in terms of the Queensland government produced exception and zones of contact in the sites of reserves and missions (Rifkin 2016, p. 341). I consider in the following section what this meant for my mum's siblings and parents.

The inclusive, exclusive sites of containment, and intimacies associated and employed by the policies of protection and segregation interrupted the lives of my mother, her parents, and her siblings, revealing just how the tactics of invasive implementation kept both sides of my family on reserves and missions. The sense of 'unfreedom' (Sharpe, 2012) not only lies in the dispossession and displacement of Aboriginal peoples, but unfreedom is inherent in each documentation that permeated their lives. One such documentation is the Herberton Police Letters 1926-1962 (made available online by the Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies). This authorised government documentation racially profiled First Peoples in the mining town of Herberton, Queensland and outlying townships. The Herberton Police Letters were signed, sealed, and delivered to the Chief Aboriginal Protector of Aborigines in Brisbane under the guise of protecting its citizens but did not protect Aboriginal people. The deceptive and devious nature police and White settlers in the small mining township of Herberton surveyed my grandfather and grandmother, their children, and every other Aboriginal body in that space whilst they lived on the Herberton reserve.

Christina Sharpe's (2010) concept of 'unfreedom' and Rifkin's (2012) thinking on inclusive/exclusive is highlighted in just how much the police were intimately involved in the lives of Aboriginal people. Letters written to the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Brisbane again voice the desire of my mother's father to depart from the Herberton Reserve to find work outside of this site provides an example of time and space within the pages and slips of the Herberton Police Letters (1926-1962). On the 15th February 1935, my grandfather requested to move from the Herberton Reserve with his family to live and find work. His application for exemption from the Aborigines Act (Parliament of Queensland 1897) would contribute to foreseeing greater opportunities for his family outside of the Reserve. Ann Laura Stoler (2009), in *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, delivers insight into how the Empire documented every aspect of First Peoples' lives; the "lettered governance and written documentations trace the lives of colonised peoples…the ways that government authoritative figures inscribed archival information about first peoples prolifically and with such attention producing social categories" (Stoler 2009, p. 1). I consider the photographs, along with Harkin's work (2017) on the archives, that delved into the ways that government policies of absorption,

civilising and Christianising of Aboriginal people reveal a narrative of 'progress' and 'success' in line with the policies of assimilation. Indigenous peoples all over Australia were subject to these acts of inscribing the lives of our people. No Indigenous family escaped the invasive acts of colonialism.

4.10 Becoming Aboriginal, Becoming Indigenous

The surveillance by the police authorities in Herberton and surrounding towns tracked every movement of my mother's family and others; the surveillance detailed suggests that nothing could be done without the permission of the police with knowledge of whereabouts recorded for the benefit of the Chief Protector Aboriginal Board in Brisbane (CPAB). The Foucauldian (2013b) concept of 'apparatus of the state', the strategic implementation of bodies held in space and time continuously kept under surveillance, and the rhetorical discourses referenced our bodies in peculiar ways to not acknowledging to our sovereignty. Becoming as a population of Aborigines, Indigenous, within the nation's concept of sovereignty lies within the jurisdiction of the 'particular or peculiar' as Rifkin (2014) notes, of population being coded as such a group (p. 149). Jodie A. Byrd (2011) states, "becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming Indian is signified through a series of "becomings" that serves all regimes of signs" (p. 19).

The notion of 'becoming', introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), unpacks the Western concept of 'being' as becoming through movement, through being/nonbeing, and the relationship between space, identity and difference. (Colebrook 2002, p. 20). First Peoples were defined through a 'becoming' process; becoming 'native', becoming 'uncivilised', and becoming 'tribes'. Mark Rifkin (2012) provides insight into the ways that First Nations 'become' through the processes of invasion, dispossession, and dislocation, by structures of power and the signification of *terra nullius*—not here, seen but not seen. The naming of who we (First Peoples) are, what our names are, the inability to pronounce our tribal traditional names and instead provided with English names (Jacky Jack, Mary, Katie etcetera) but not our traditional names that link with our environment, nor our association and cultural affirmation of location, our relationship, permission to marry or not, instead transported from country at the recommendation of those in authority to Palm Island for internment. The shifting, moving around, and transporting of whole families, or (singularly) a mother, father, brother, and sister removed from traditional lands and cultural affirmation all at the whim and desire of the police official. Time and space had no meaning to those in Western thought. Jodie Byrd (2011) describes these regime characteristics as transit lines of flight in which power and authority that originated with the position of policing, and how, at the stroke of a pen, the signing off on the lives of my family emanated from "the colonial state premise on intimate

belonging to the space claimed as its own", disavowing existing Indigenous formations (Rifkin 2011, p. 151). The discursive language of 'removal', 'taken', 'stolen', rests within the violent intimacies of our history; denied and punitively scraped from traditional lands, families, and connection (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2007; Rifkin 2011; Watson 2007).

4.11 Colluding: Colonisation

I refer back to linguist Robert Dixon's (1991) research on the lives of Yidiniji people of the Atherton Tablelands, his fieldwork extending into the areas of Yarrabah and Cairns, interviewing Yidiniji Elders about plant and food names, important areas, and creation stories. Yidiniji people, according to Dixon (1991), are known as the Dulgubarra–scrub dwellers/people (Dixon 1991, p. 190; Tindale 1938-1939; Bottoms 2013). The name Yungaburra is derivative of Djanggaburra, the Yidiniji word for the Queensland silver ash (Flindersia bourjotiana) (Dixon 1991, p. 135). By 1911, Indigenous numbers had fallen to 20% of the pre-settlement population due to disease, conflict with settlers, and loss of habitat.

Collusion with settlement and removal to reserves also affected the lives of Yidiniji people through acts of genocide and the violence of massacres. One such massacre happened on coastal Yidiniji country. I draw from Timothy Bottoms' (2013) book, *The Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Times*, which highlights the massacre of a group of Yidiniji people in the 1900s. I consider that these Yidiniji people could be both Coastal and Tablelands Yidiniji, gathering for ceremony. Bottoms (2013) highlights the words of young Jack Kane, then 18 years old. In 1938 (also in Tindale's journal 1938-1939), he took part in a raid which lasted a week culminating in the rounding up of Yidiniji people; men, women and children. The White men wanted to rid the scrub of Blackfellas. Jack Kane says:

> … [i]n 1884 he took part in a police raid which lasted a week, culminating in a round up at Skull Pocket and others following at Mulgrave River and near the Four Mile [Woree]. At Skull Pocket police officers and native trackers surrounded a camp of Inindji [Yidinydji] blacks before dawn, each man armed with a rifle and revolver. At dawn one man fired into their camp and the natives rushed away in three different directions. They were easy running shots, close up the native police rushed in with their scrub knives and killed off the children. A few years later a man loaded up a whole case of skulls and took them away as specimens. [Old Jack] stated "I don't mind the killing of "bucks", but I didn't quite like them braining the kids. From Skull Pocket the raiders journeyed to the Mulgrave & again at [the] Four Mile, and shot other natives, some of them with the wounds received in the raid at Skull Pocket… (Bottoms 2013, pp. 147-8).

The emotional effect of the colonial violence on the bodies of my people reveals to what extent the brutalities were and continue to be imposed on my people. Sara Ahmed states that, "it is not simply that any 'body' is hated; particular histories of association are reopened in each encounter, such that some bodies already encountered as more hateful than other bodies' (2004, p. 54, emphasis added).

Ahmed further states that “histories are bound up with emotions precisely insofar as it is a question of *what sticks*, of what connections are lived as most intense or intimate, as being closer to the skin” (2004, p. 54).

In the above scenario, as witnessed and participated in by the then 18-year-old Jack Kane, is the ‘stickiness’ of the crime. What is interesting in the telling of this scene, is Jack Kane (Old Jack) and his memory of the violence. I argue that this story telling drips with a sense of right; a ‘stickiness’ when Old Jack states, “I don’t mind the killing of ‘bucks’ but I didn’t quite like them braining the kids’ (Bottoms 2013, pp.147-8). At 18, I contend that he might have been terrified by the killings, and this is something that he has carried into his later years. His body is also embedded with the violence of the deaths and the stickiness of remembering is brought into the present through his telling of the massacre. The justification that arrived with the police and the native police and the ability to engage in the murder of other peoples of the same skin colour, the intimate relationship reveals the extent of violence between all involved in carrying out the dispersal and killing of peoples deemed as non-human, Yidiniji families engaging in a Cockatoo Ceremony, a personal, spiritual, and intimate moment for the maintenance of life. The site of the massacre at Skull Creek is a “space of violated intimacy” (Sharpe 2010, p. 9) in which families lost their lives and many were injured by the racial violence.

Turning the gaze back, I once again consider the first photograph of men in chains—neck, wrist and ankle chains—and the diasporic movement from country/s, to the unpacking of the photo of my family outside the wooden church building. Both photographs tell a story and relate an event of history that Achille Mbembe (2003) conceptualises as necropolitics in the ways that sovereignty positions itself in terms of power and the lives of Indigenous peoples. He states that sovereignty struggles in colonisation and is “the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and population” (Mbembe 2003, p. 14). Within the events of history, my family, the protection and segregation years of both my father’s and mother’s family, then bare life, and the state of exception resided within the confines of missions and reserves where, from the beginning of the men in chains to the family members outside the church building, such narratives continue to exist in a state of surveillance and control. Hence, as a political strategy, redemption with its emphasis on saving from ‘sin’, replaces a reckoning with the violence of the historical atrocities that continue to remain unspoken and unspeakable (Sharpe 2010, p. 73).

I insert a poem by Ali Cobby-Eckermann (2015) to provide insight into the monstrous intimacies and violence that are ‘unspeakable’ and ‘unspoken’ in the progression of national identity and

belonging; the massacres and the killing of groups of Yidiniji peoples on the coast and in rainforest areas.

Kulila

> sit down sorry camp,
> might be one week,
> might be long time,
> tell every little story,
> when people was alive,
> tell every little story more,
> don't forget 'em story,
> night time tell 'em to the kids,
> keep every little story live,
> don't change 'em story,
> tell 'em straight out story,
> only one way story,
> all around 'em story
> every place we been,
> every place killing place,
> sit down here real quiet,
> you can feel 'em dying,
> all them massacre mobs,
> heart can't make it up,
> when you feel it,
> you know it's true,
> tell every little story,
> when the people was alive,
> tell every little story more,
> might be one week,
> might be long long time,
> sit down sorry camp (Cobby-Eckermann 2015, pp. 51-2).

I take hold of Ali Cobby-Eckermann's (2015) words and, particularly, to "tell every little story, when people was alive, tell every little story more, don't forget 'em" (pp. 51-2). Story places importance in the narrative and keeping alive this story, just like the photograph of men in chains, and my family outside the wooden church building. Each is contextualised within the attitude and monstrous violence of the massacre, removal, and dispersal. Ali Cobby-Eckermann further notes, "don't change 'em story, tell 'em straight out story" (2015, pp. 51-2).

I consider with the clearing of not only land, but the peoples of the land; the killing of people from my language group. I express a responsibility to voice and interrupt the difficulty of keeping the violence of the trauma in the past and to bring it to the centre. It is, as Ahmed (2004) states, that "the 'doing' of hate is not simply 'done' in the moment of its articulation. A chain of effects (which are at once affects) are in circulation" (p. 57).

Remembering

> I see you all, people I know
> I am reminded, stories tell of you
> Great grandmother and father, grandmother
> Sons and daughters, nephews,
> Stand side by side, ready
> The shot is taken, captured and framed
> There forever, waiting to be. (Faye Rosas Blanch 2019)

4.12 All are Haunted and Intimately Connected

To conclude this chapter, I have argued that the spatiality and proximity of bodies up against and beside a wooden building relate my family's encounter of and connection to a spiritual lifestyle. The guiding concepts of sovereignty, refusal, becoming, and unbecoming, explored through the photograph and spoken word, highlight the repercussions of coloniality on the lives of my family and community members at Pinnacle Pocket, Yungaburra, North Queensland, Australia. I have argued that the bodies as colonised are entangled in their own relationship with each other, the land, and members of their families, as well as members of the church. The settler state of North Queensland premised its ownership of First Nations lands on its own rights of sovereignty without acknowledging Indigenous rights or existence. The disavowal of First Nations peoples' lands and culture, distributed to the settler state, a belief that they, the settlers, had an 'intimate' sense of belonging to the space it claimed as its own (Rifkin 2012). Scott Laura Morgansen (2011) tells us, "we are caught up in one another, we who live in the settler societies, and our interrelationships inform all that these societies touch" (p. 1).

Recognition of stories passed down from families to families conveys the murder of our people throughout the settling of this country, Australia. The slaughter of Indigenous peoples resulted in there being fewer numbers since the invasion of the colonists. Sara Ahmed (2004), in her critique of the cultural emotion of hate, states that "hate is involved in the very negation of boundaries between selves and others and between communities, where 'others' are bought into the sphere of my or our existence as a threat" (p. 51). We were, and continue to be, perceived as a threat to the settlers wanting Yidiniji lands and taking it at any cost. The inhumane way that they achieved this was through their own superior beliefs of seeing Yidiniji as 'savages' and 'beasts', unworthy of human status.

> This in plain language, is how we deal with the aborigines: On occupying new territories the aboriginal inhabitants are treated exactly in the same way as wild beasts or birds the settlers may find there…the least show of resistance is answered by a rifle bullet (Kidd 1997, p. xvi).

Kidd (1997) reveals through examination of *The Queenslander Editorial*, May 1st, 1880, the intimacies that were instilled in the bodies of White colonists and the relationship with the 'native'.

Thus, while we are haunted by the monstrous violence of the past, Katherine McKittrick (2014) asks, “what do we do with the archival documentations that displays this unfree and violated body[s] as both naturally dispossessed and as the origin of a new world black lives?” (p. 19). I have positioned a photocopied black and white photo of my family outside the building of the church situated on Yidiniji land. There are aspects of haunting that draw me into the photo as evidence of the processes of the discursive rhetoric associated with the policy of Christianising and civilising. And, as Tina Campt (2017) articulates, such images are gateways and entry points that demand another seeing, another looking that goes beyond what is just in front, but taking second, or a third look can reveal other things in the image.

The Western philosophy of ‘saving the native’ is fixed within the image, and yet family members continue to have happy memories of Pinnacle Pocket and the man who saved them. However, while family members have memories of the site being a happy place, many have passed and so there are some stories lost, or not being told. Dr Natalie Harkin (2016) states that “dust on the archives lingers and the specters of the archive do not rest” (p. 10); “those of us who search for clues in those gaps, silences and absences on the record or in the family stories, we also bear witness to histories of loss and oppression” (p. 15). I argue that we suffer the ramifications of colonisation, the brutality of violence and trauma transmitted in future generations, even while we may feel protected by the sites of Christianity and religion. I have provided an analysis of unbecoming Aboriginal, unbecoming Indigenous, and always being Yidiniji; I claim my sovereignty (Bunda 2007; Moreton-Robinson 2007). We must remember. The women built the church. These are acts of refusal and sovereignty.

CHAPTER 5 MY LIVED EXPERIENCES AND REALITIES: PART OF BEING HUMAN

Hair: intimate connection to self: Small with ‘Crisp Curly Hair’
My hair defines me,
My land and my country is held in my hair that grows, and holds me
I touch my hair, it is fuzzy, soft and enjoyable to play with,
I have hidden treasures in my hair,
Once I carried a strong wooden comb it sat cradled in my hair
I felt a sense of being safe,
I combed my hair with it
And built up my Afro,
I have tried to tame my hair by plying it with foreign poisonousness chemicals
But to no avail, my hair rebelled and fell to the ground in huge lumps,
New short tight fuzzy hair grew in its place
I tried to put heat to it with a hot iron but again when interacted with water
My hair positioned itself back to its natural state.
I have tied it, bound it, twirled and plaited, wrapped a scarf around it, place a flower
In it and still it creeps out and reveals itself
My hair was on show when I was young
A teacher in primary school stood over me one day
With a pencil in her hand she searched among my fuzzy hair
My hair took the brunt of hate, called dirty and smelly
Hated, it was uncontrollable, hard to deal with, could not be tamed.
Yet, my hair knows me, I am starting to know my hair...
My hair connects me to my fathers, my
Grandmother, my cousins, my family. I don't want my hair tamed I don't want my hair
Controlled.

I look at my grandma and see her hair that is deeply rooted in her background
She is beautiful
I look at my grandma and see her, the backbone of my grandma, the smile of my grandma
The eyes of my grandma, the hands of my grandma and most of all the beautiful, shiny, clear skin
of
My grandma
And
I call to you all, who speaks, who listens, who hears.
In this here place, Baby Suggs in Toni Morrison’s “Beloved” says.
We flesh, flesh that weeps, laughs, flesh that dances on bare feet in sand on Indigenous lands,
Love it, love your feet,
Love your legs as they carry your beautiful body that,
You think is unloved and despised.
They out there can't love you, you must love you.
Love your skin, love your neck that have held chains, unshackle yourselves,
Don’t let your neck be their tool for death, straighten up your neck, face them.
Love your hands raise them up, kiss them, touch others with them, stroke your face.
Love your face because they have tried to change us.
Love your mouth hear what comes forth.
Most of all, Love your beating heart take in air, for each time you breathe
Is a political statement, for we have survived, occupy and enjoy (Faye Rosas Blanch 2014).

Photograph 5.1 Myself with my grandmother Annie Rosas, taken 11th February 1962, photographer unknown.

5.1 Introduction

> Our studies demonstrate that in the eastern coastal and mountain region near Cairns is an area where exist several small tribes of people characterized by a high incidence of relatively and absolutely small stature, crisp curly hair and a tendency toward yellow-brown skin colour (Tindale & Birdsell 1938, pp. 1-2).

The photograph of my grandmother and myself and spoken word at the beginning of this chapter, Hair, offers the lens to examine the record keeping, surveillance, and representation of Aboriginal bodies, in particular, Yidiniji people. Like the image of the men in chains and the family members in the front of a church, how data is captured like photographs offers insights into the colonial thinking of degrees of humanness informed by racialised scientific ideologies and theories.

In the previous chapter, I explored how the bodies of family members are captured in a black and white photograph taken outside the church building on the lands of the Yidiniji people at Yungaburra, Atherton Tablelands, North Queensland. Although missions and reserves were

apparently meant to keep Indigenous people safe, scientists were able to access Aboriginal people for the benefit of scientific study to understand and, as Kimberly Tallbear states, "used to constitute knowledge of human biological and cultural history" (2013a, p. 2).

In this chapter, I extend on my argument about intimacy and colonisation through the key concepts of sovereignty, refusal, human as praxis, and becoming/unbecoming by unpacking and deconstructing the scientific measuring techniques of the British Empire; the measuring of the bodies of Aboriginal people, the studying and taking of hair samples, the study of eugenics. Each techno-scientific study was framed within anthropology and the physical sciences. This will be further extended in this chapter.

This analysis will refer to the travel and field work diary and journal of American anthropologist, Joseph Birdsell, and Australian anthropologist, ethnologist and archaeologist, Norman Tindale (1938), and their meeting with the Yidiniji (Idinji) and Mbabaram (Barbarem) peoples of the Atherton Tablelands and Cairns Hinterland. I delve into these diaries and journals (Tindale 1938; Birdsell 1938) as key evidence of the various ways that scientific data gathering determine the humanness or non-humanness of Indigenous peoples over Australia. I provide two case study data cards to reveal how extensive Birdsell and Tindale's anthropological fieldwork further necessitated the violent intimacies and abjection of Aboriginal bodies. While there is much information on the lives of Aboriginal people in this country collected by Birdsell and Tindale, I focus only on their encounter and study of the rainforest groups in North Queensland.

Through the works of Kimberly Tallbear (2013a, 2013b) Donna Haraway (1989), Trinh Minh-ha (1989), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), and Franz Fanon (2001). I explore science, nature, race, and the research undertaken by Tindale and Birdsell (1941) that informed a kind of knowledge producing process that extends into the contemporary world for Indigenous peoples. According to Tallbear (2013a), "compelling narratives weaved by scientists to support genetics and biological anthropology–the catch-phrase 'it's for research' (p. 146) were the key aspects to understanding human evolution. Further, investigation of the techniques of anthropometrics, and data gathered from measuring the bodies in the case study, highlight the intimate interaction of scientist/anthropologists and the subject (Turnbull 2017, pp. 12-3). I contend that each scientific examination's purpose was to produce a 'master' script on culture, history, and politics that gets narrated as biological and evolutionary stories (Haraway & Goodeve 2000, p. 55) in which, as Baker (2018) asserts, we are their object of fascination. I use these theoretical insights and the case study to argue the mathematics of measuring Indigenous bodies and the impact on the quotidian

lives of Yidiniji and Mbabaram peoples today, to inform and authorise who is human and who is not.

5.2 Intimately Engaging with the Archives

In the following section, I provide insight into the effect of engaging in and with family archival records. I realise that, for every Indigenous person, entering the space of the museum and archives is like opening a world that is hard to digest. This is not an easy feat (Baker 2018a, Harkin 2017). Dr Ali Baker (2018a), in her PhD thesis, *Sovereign Goddess looking for Gumillya: the bound and unbound*, examines the practices of the old Royal Adelaide Hospital in the 1900s and the storage of Indigenous bodies, artefacts, and ceremonial pieces that continue to hold significant meaning for Indigenous groups, that lie within the South Australian Museum.

5.3 Norman Tindale, as I Find

The following section reflects on my visit and encounter with Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell's data records in the South Australian Museum related to Indigenous families and community archives. I did not find any archival material on my family but did find Tindale (1938) and Birdsell's (1938) diaries and journals of their travel into the Atherton Tablelands in the 1930s.

Baker (2018a, p. 4) offers a personal family account of Norman Tindale casting her Great-grandmother's bust when she passed away in 1951, without consent of her family. This example demonstrates the 'relationship' between the South Australian Museum and the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and how institutions collected Aboriginal bodies in the name of scientific study. Turnbull (2017) provides further articulation of the relationship between science and museums and their collection of First People's bodies, skulls, weapons, animals, and tools, in order to engage in the anatomical specimens for the examination and the study of science.

As I sit here in front of a computer, I begin reading Norman Tindale's field trip diary (1938), telling of his meeting with my ancestors. I am not at ease. Norman Tindale's journal and his words relate to travelling from the Cairns coast towards Yungaburra, North Queensland. Norman Tindale was best known as an anthropologist but was also a pioneering Australian archaeologist. Tindale's research focus was analysing the social organisation of Indigenous Australians and their culture. His interests extended to the kinship system, the language, ceremonial context, and each territory that was tied into Indigenous understanding of the world. It is this detail of information that draws me to Tindale's records and holds my interest.

Although I feel uneasy, I am also fascinated, because how do such emotions affect my engagement with such conflicting colonial archives? I recognise some of the places Tindale described; the Goldsborough river, little Mulgrave. I have walked along that river with my Granny Topsy to go fishing, we have stayed fishing from dusk to night, I have swam in this river which is very clean and very cold, and my family, when we've travelled from Atherton to Gordonvale, would stop there for a swim and have a feed. This is a spot well known to my family we have always met other members of families that are known there. This river is very intimately connected to my family and other coastal Yidiniji peoples, the river was the connection between the coast and the tablelands, this is still the case today.

I recognise the squeeze of the old Gillies Range, as Tindale and his party drive up the range heading towards Yungaburra. He tells of waiting at Top Gate for the cars to travel down to the coast so his party can travel up the range. This sounds familiar, my mother tells me the story of travelling and waiting for the cars to come down or travel up the range. I even laugh when I read how the car got stuck on the range. Just for a moment, I am on this journey with him, I am travelling up the old Gillies Range with him. He describes the man who is with him (I forget his name) and Tindale, as an anthropological and ethnological scientist, is undertaking scientific studies on the Indigenous community and families throughout the Atherton Tablelands. Tindale's writing is easy to read. He tells me about my people even while my people are under surveillance and subjected to scientific study. I am reminded of my Yidiniji country and the surrounding areas where I grew up. He describes Lake Barrine and Lake Eacham, both very important sites to the Yidiniji people relating the stories of ceremonial sites and significant in the creation stories of the area.

5.4 Meeting Joseph Birdsell

I am directed to the work of American scientist, Joseph Birdsell (1938) by Lea Gardam, the Archive Collection Manager in the South Australian Museum. Drawing from some of the archival journals and diary within the collections of the South Australian Museum, Joseph Birdsell is a physical anthropologist from the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University, America, and after being introduced to Australian anthropologist, Norman Tindale from the South Australian Museum, he teams up with Tindale in Australia. The School of Anthropology in America, according to Kimberly Tallbear (2013a), rose to prominence through the methods of research in relation to "Native Americans bodies (dead or alive), sources of bones, blood, spit, and hair" (p. 2). The compelling narrative, outlined by Tallbear (2013a) above, highlights the similar experiences between First People and my family in this country and the anthropological studies undertaken on First Nations people by scientists in America. I contend that there would have been some strong

competition to undertake fieldwork and study on the populations in Australia. I am not surprised that Joseph Birdsell looked outside his country to Australia, and Indigenous peoples here, to further his own research and career through the study of the bodies of 'natives' (Tallbear 2013a; Turnbull 2017) and, in particular, before we died out (Turnbull, 2017).

Joseph Birdsell's meeting with Norman Tindale became the impetus for field study research from 1938 to 1939, funded by both Harvard University and the University of Adelaide (Tindale & Birdsell 1941). The aim was to conduct an extensive physical and social anthropological survey of Australia's Aboriginal people. The importance of such a study came out of the desire and need to quickly record, describe, and detail the lives of Aboriginal Australia before 'we' died out, before we disappeared, based on ideas of the fittest of survival and evolution (Turnbull 2017). First Nations scholar, Kimberly Tallbear, states, "tracing evolutionary relationships and frequency differences between genetic markers in populations – tracing their relatedness – goes hand-in-hand with tracing the movements and the presence of those humans in certain geographic locations" (Tallbear 2013b, p. 510). Like mapping the population of the earth (Tallbear 2013a, p. 143), Tindale and Birdsell engaged in the mapping of First Peoples.

5.5 Intimate Connection with the Archives

I continue my own journey… I am sitting in the South Australia Museum, reading data cards (Birdsell 1938) about the Mona Mona and Yarrabah Mission and their communities and, with each insertion of Birdsell's writing, I feel sick and frightened. I hesitate but know I must take the process of reading his journal in my stride. Firstly, I read the data card of an Idiniji (Yidiniji) male. How do these descriptive words register? I consider the concept of becoming; this is a 'subject' to be studied and examined. I am certainly affected by the words as they leap from the computer page to me. I lean in to read, but I also feel outside the words, they roll around before me. Is this what Massumi means (cited in Campt 2012, p. 15) when stating that to be affected is an ability to affect and be affected, a body's way of preparing itself for action in each circumstance? To be affected is emotional. The information on the data card records physical measurements, statistics located within the discipline of physical anthropology. I have some understanding of the data, but the language is scientific and not familiar. What is evident is the numeration of Aboriginal bodies. The record denies the agency of the Idiniji (Yidiniji) male.

I continue to process the information, my physical and emotional response of fear and feeling take over me. I hear a buzzing which, according to Campt, suggests that "sound need not be heard to be perceived, sound can be listened to and, in equally powerful ways, sound can be touched" (2017, p. 6). Further, Campt (2017) links to Fred Moten's (cited in Campt 2017) question about "the sound

that precedes the image" (p. 7). She takes it beyond to a different embracing a 'frequency', as "felt sound, like a hum, resonates in and as vibration" (2017, p. 7). I feel the sound, my heart is beating fast, I find myself wanting to run, I feel like I have been punched in the stomach. As I read further, I think is this what 'domestic violence' feels like? Harkin (2017) describes that "being affected when entering the archives is strategic intervention and a sensory disruption of the reader/viewer…corporeal action/reaction on the part of the compelled writer through intuition, awareness, feelings and uncanny knowing" (p. 21).

I am close to this, I feel like I have committed a crime, I feel as if I should not be in this place, reading this information. I have opened a coffin, as Hartman (2008) reminds me. "Am I brave?" I ask myself, aware that there is a sonic frequency behind the reading of information provided by Birdsell's data cards. Do I have the right to be here in this office on this chair, in front of this computer reading their diaries and journals? I tell myself if, I do not, who will? I am witness to these violent words and descriptions. I am also very much aware that I cannot position these old people into a kinship system in relationship to me or my family. As with the image of the men in chains, I want to unmute the silence, give voice, and, in reading the data cards, register meaning, a linkage (Campt 2017) that is connected to members of a Yidiniji family.

This visit to the Museum has taken me many years. I have always known that members of my language group might be found amongst the many others that Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell visited, examined, and the intimacy in its interpretation, critique, and telling is underlaid by Birdsell's work of studying, examining, and the mathematics and measurement of Indigenous people's bodies. In death, Indigenous bodies have been examined and studied for the benefit of learning about the progression of living (Baker 2018a).

5.6 Case Study: Old People

The data cards of two Idiniji persons reveal the extent of examination and scientific study of Idiniji people. Out of respect for the Old People, I do not refer to their names, as they are not my family members, and I also enact important cultural protocols by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities when referring to members of the community who have passed away. Both were born on the Atherton Tablelands. For the record and purpose of including them in this thesis, I acknowledge that I cannot place either of them in my family kinship system and, for the purpose of this section, I will name the data cards as "Yidinji Old People". Naming them brings them both into the frame as humans and not just objects to be studied. It is my way of repatriating them (see Wilson 2005). The study was conducted by Joseph Birdsell and his wife Bee, who travelled with her husband on this expedition/field study, however, I am aware that Tindale also played a key role

in the recording of body measurements and Indigenous lives. The techniques and anthropometrics of scientific measuring of the human body, (Turnbull 2017; Tallbear 2013b) carried out by Birdsell on the Yidiniji Old People, constituted the producing of knowledge for Western understandings of the 'native' today.

5.7 Racialised Scientific/Colonial Theoretical Discourses

I shift my analysis from Birdsell and Tindale's physical anthropology to authors who write about how science invades the lives of Indigenous peoples and its discourse. Haraway and Goodeve (2000) provide insight into the various ways that science tells itself 'truth' and argues that science is about 'witnessing', and the discipline of biological science is to 'create a certain species'. Homo sapiens as a species and that the taxonomic object, that is the classification of things, is crucial to the construction of object-species, so the measuring practices of scientists such as blood groups, gene frequencies, and craniometrics were invented at different times across the century (pp. 151-5).

It is clear with the invasion into the lands, waters, and lives of Indigenous peoples in this country, an opportunity had arrived for anthropologists, archaeologists, and others to determine the lives of 'aboriginal' peoples and their living rituals. Science is viewed as a witness to all it can produce through the study of other bodies that appear different.

Māori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, states that science positions itself as a "concept that is all-embracing, a method for gaining understanding of the world" (2012, p. 68). Further, she contends that the discourse of "discovery speaks through the global world and market-place of knowledge… 'Hunting, racing and gathering' is without doubt about winning' (2012, p. 114). I suggest that the study and examination through the lens of scientific research, provided a 'making of the aborigine' by taking away the humanness of First People's bodies, lands, and country/s.

The colonial discourses of discovery and primitiveness involved traveling to faraway places, usually from one's own place of residence to communities in Australia that have been in existence for centuries. Haraway stipulates that "science has been a travel discourse, intimately implicated in the great other colonizing and laboratory readings and writings basic to modern constitution and dislocations of the marked bodies" (2013, p. 294). This reveals the mindset that travels with anthropologists and Western epistemic thinking in the disciplines of the sciences and their encounter with the 'other'. Tindale's (Tindale & Birdsell 1941) work across Australia was key to understanding the social material world of Indigenous peoples.

Trinh Minh-ha (1989), in *Woman, Native, Other*, offers insight about what means and methods by which anthropologists perform their work. Minh-ha states that, "Anthropology as human science is

nowadays the foundation of every single discourse pronounced above the native's head. It is as (she notes), an African man observed, the diary of the white man/men in mission; the White man commissioned by the historical sovereignty of European thinking and its peculiar vision of man" (p. 57). Meetings between anthropologists and "aborigines" were contextualised within the confines and binaries positioned by the scientific theories of civilisation/savagery/primitive; the binary of White and Black. This binary was pivotal to research and fieldwork to find the descriptive link between man and monkey (Haraway 1989, Harding 1991), and marked the bodies of the Mbabaram and Yidiniji peoples. Such fieldwork was conducted to get as much data as possible before the savages 'died out'. It was framed within the belief that the White Western human was at the top of the human evolutionary ladder and Indigenous peoples were at the bottom of the human ladder and, therefore, at one with nature and the animals (Haraway 1989; Poignant 2004). Hence, the becoming of the non-human and sub-human.

5.8 Peculiar, Intimate Vision of Man

These racialised discourses and representations are evident in Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell's (1941) encounter with the Mbabaram (Bararem) and Yidiniji (Idindji) groups from the Atherton Tablelands region while undertaking fourteen months of field work (1938-1939). Drawing from Minh-ha's introduction to the "peculiar vision of man" (1989, p. 57), I continue my analysis of Tindale and Birdsell's (1941) work to provide insight into the Aboriginal missions under critique. The language groups that Tindale and Birdsell encountered at the missions varied.

The language groups they encountered varied; the mission of Mona Mona was nestled among the Kuranda rainforest range area above the coastal region of Cairns and the Yarrabah mission was at the inlet of the Coral Sea on the Cairns coast. Both missions are in beautiful spots (Dixon 1991; Tindale 1938; Tindale & Birdsell 1941). The significance of both missions resulted in Idinji/Yidiniji and Bararem/Mbabaram language groups forced onto each of these missions along with other language groups from the regions around North Queensland.

Joseph Birdsell and Norman Tindale detailed their experiences during their fourteen months of field work and research, travelling over 16,000 miles to examine and study over 2,458 full blood and mixed blood peoples (1941, p. 2). The scientific discourse leading the fieldwork is contextualised in numbers, categories and columns that is mathematical by approach. The profound, extensive, systemic violence that is situated within the data cards engages a looking, a feeling, and a naming as a form of madness, and a desire that is not only situated in *habeas corpus* but also *habeas viscus*, you shall have the body, but you can also have the flesh (Weheliye 2014). The bodies of the Old

People under examination tell a story, one that is tied in with a longing of knowing where the link between primitive –the past and civilisation – future lies.

5.9 The Violent Intimacy of Data

Drawing upon the work in Alexander Weheliye's (2014) *Habeas Viscus, Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, I examine the ways that habeas viscus and habeas corpus are inflicted upon and in the lives of Indigenous people through the scientific study undertaken by Birdsell and Tindale. While the theoretical matters of interest in terms of "Australian full bloods", according to the writings of Tindale and Birdsell (1941, p. 2), compelled the opportunity to survey, measure, and examine the bodies of the Aboriginal peoples of North Queensland, before we died out, both scientists undertook certain liberties afforded to their profession. I examine the ways that data were gathered, produced, and projected through the violent intimacy that subjected Indigenous peoples to such outrageous processes through ideas of blood quantum, body measurement, and the examination of other parts of the bodies. Reading through Birdsell's journal (1938) opens insightful contemplation of how insidious and monstrous the handling of Indigenous people's bodies was and how available to science Indigenous bodies were; both alive and dead.

5.10 Violence of Mathematics

5.10.1 Idiniji Male (1)

By providing insightful critique of the data cards as a Yidiniji woman, I bear witness to the violence of the record. I refer to the data cards and pay respect to the Yidiniji Old People reduced to descriptions within these data cards. I shift the language and refuse to use Birdsell and Tindale's descriptors. Instead, I see the bodies under study as human and the mathematics of constructing the 'human' through the examination of two Idiniji individuals, male and female, to show to what extent the methodological study and measurements undertaken by Joseph Birdsell and his wife Bee articulated a 'becoming' associated with the intimacy of First People's bodies. I use the exact words written by Joseph Birdsell in his journal dated the 25th August 1938 to offer insight into his life through his writing, but to also acknowledge the violent ways language impacts upon the identity of living bodies.

> Arrived last night – today made initial contacts. Largely full blooded natives here – and there seems to be a marked pygmoid strain here. Stature is notably depressed here – and the people are the smallest we've seen (Birdsell 1938, 25 August).

Birdsell's journal goes on to describe his understanding of the stature of the men in particular:

> there is an apparently definite trend towards brachycephaly the shape of the skull and more marked curling of the hair (no frizzy noted as yet) and given a panmixa of features (random mating with a breeding population) – ranging from rather convincing negroid types to little people with hyper Australian features" (pp. 25, 26). And: Genetic class – Full Blood (FB) male (Birdsell 1938).

Reading from the data card, I am aware of the intimacy of contact, the touching, the probing, getting the *Idiniji male (1)* to sit a certain way, stand a certain way, the becoming of non-human under study. The intimacy of mathematics is embedded in the data card itself, the tape measuring implement, the distance between standing and sitting, the movement of the eyes, all to ensure that science and biology converge and intersect in regards to humanness which is, according to Haraway and Goodeve, to prove how "race is closely tied to notions of racial purity and type" (2000, p. 151). Harkin (2017) tells us that the "archives are perverse spaces that relay a grand narrative…there is untold violence in the archives, the ways that our lives are documented within archival records, kept in the dark" (p. 73). Katherine McKittrick (2014) provides further critique into the ways that the measurement of Black bodies lies within the framework of control, surveillance, and unfreedom.

The height and width of his body became open to both Birdsell and Tindale, placed under scrutiny, always surveyed: Stature 158.0, Humeral 32.8, Radial (L) 25.5, Femoral (L) 43.8, Tibial (L) 36.3, Hand (L) 189.0, Hand (B) 86.0, the list of numbers goes on. The chest breadth 26.1, chest depth 17.9, head circum 545.0', maximum frontal 103.0. Birdsell measured the face, ear from ear, 131.0; he measured the trans-orbital, under the eyelids; he measured the mouth 65.0; the nose 48.0; the nasal depth, the nasal tip, and the lip thickness 22.0 (Birdsell 1938).

There is such intimacy in the act of measuring, looking, seeing, and touching. The abjection of the body is an act of intimacy itself.

5.10.2 Idiniji Female (2)

Comparative examples are outlined in the data card of female Old Person because she is older. Her stature 152.5, Humeral 28.4, Radial (L)23.9, Index finger (L) 85.0, Head circum 520.0, Lip thickness 19.0, Nose breadth 40.0, and again the list goes on. Every measurement relates the differences in sizes, shapes, colours, and each anatomical outline of the Idiniji (Yidiniji) body. Birdsell goes onto to describe the examination and fieldwork on the grounds of the Mona Mona Mission:

> 8-31-38 Even when total cranial length equals normal Australian – in the pygmoid – the post auricular breath is much less. Measured more women today – mostly below 150 cm. Got 3 F-1s (half-caste) – 2 of pygmoid stock – I of normal type. All have the F-1 "look" – but the pygmoid F-1s are quite difference from the classic type. Curly hair have occurred in one – who looks South European. Skins consistently show yellower traces here than elsewhere.
>
> I wonder how much my racial typing depends on hair form – at this station. (Birdsell 1938).

Reading Birdsell's data cards and ethnographic notations, there is evident interest in the texture of hair of Idiniji (Yidiniji) Old People. This fixation demonstrates a methodological process to build his analysis and concern for hair. Birdsell continues to ask himself questions in his writing and reporting of hair. On the 8th of August 1938, Birdsell writes:

> Hair here – while looking frizzy at a distance – upon close examination is seen to be deep wave with a crispness – which increases towards end of hair – making these stand out. Ends of hair seem dried and cracked (split) – and this may be a minor contributing factor (Birdsell 1938).

Further data description of hair lies within the knowledge of research undertaken in other countries. For example, straight hair looks "Dravidian–low wave; Veddoid–deep wave; and crisp dry wave–Tasmanian or Semang". Perhaps Birdsell notes, "nose form – in some ways- correlated with hair form – but this field typing must be used with caution!" (Birdsell 1938).

This leads me to consider Donna Haraway and her descriptive analysis in her seminal text, *Primate Visons, Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989). Haraway introduces her work by positing questions: "How are love, power and science intertwined in the constructions of nature in late 20th century?" She furthers this by asking, "in what specific places, out of which social and intellectual histories, and with what tools is nature constructed as an object of erotic and intellectual desire?" (Haraway 1989, p. 1). I draw from Haraway's questions to explore the relationship of Tindale and Birdsell as scientists and anthropologists, and the matters theorised in the intimate meeting and relationship between the Mbabaram (Bararem) and Yidiniji (Idindji) groups from the Atherton Tableland rainforest regions. What were the theoretical interests that determined their right to study, implement, and construct knowledge about the people of the Atherton Tablelands? How important was/is the description of the meeting between Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell and the 'aborigines' on the Atherton Tablelands over the period of fourteen months?

It appears to me that the rush on fieldwork, such as that conducted by Norman Tindale, occurred all over Australia and was funded by philanthropic organisations and museums, in particular the South Australian Museum. Minh-ha states that, "anthropology is a western science of man studies, man as the human species, always leaving his own home and country for long periods…the anthropologist

practices total observation, beyond which there is nothing except the – complete absorption of the observers by the object of his observation" (1989, p. 61).

Tuhiwai Smith (2012), in her text, *Decolonizing Methodologies, Research and Indigenous Peoples*, also argues that the ways that research has been undertaken by Western anthropologists and Western ways of research created its own defining elements of understanding, gathering the data, and believing their Western anthropological findings as some form of truth. Tindale and Birdsell's (1941) engagement in research on the Atherton Tablelands region employed the scientific lens of understanding the biological and bodily characteristics of the 'black/native' body and its social surroundings. The anthropologists' research wasn't conducted just with any 'man' but a specific 'man/non-man'. Their examination was undertaken in their scientific endeavours to theorise the 'primitive' to explain not only the 'evolution of man' and the 'natural order', but to also study the geographical movement of the 'primitive', the 'native', the 'savage' (Haraway 1989; Harding 1991; Smith, LT 2012; Simpson 2014; Tallbear 2013a). The social construction of the human, as viewed through Western conceptualisations, I argue, offer unpacking to centre human as praxis. As McKittrick states, "Being human as praxis of humanness that does not dwell on the static empiricism … within the incarcerated colonial categorization of oppression" (2015, p. 3).

The images and visual representations of the 'primitive, native and the savage' were already produced in the Western epistemological colonial discourses, and in conversations and reporting that always subjected the discourse of scientific recordings and observations in the context of 'them and us'; 'them' being the White man/men, and 'us', the primitive natives. This is supported by evidence provided by the writings and fieldwork reports of other anthropologists, dead or alive, to give credit to their work by citing all their names (Minh-ha 1989, pp. 65-8).

In their descriptions of the physical appearances of the Mbabaram (mother) and Yidiniji (father) groups described in the report, Birdsell and Tindale stated that, "the groups could be contextualized with similar appearances as the 'Tasmanoid' (1941, p. 8). This, according to the scientific view of Birdsell and Tindale, could be related to the Aboriginal peoples of Tasmania and became, in my view, the defining element of fieldwork and descriptive study undertaken in the rainforest regions of North Queensland. Thus, their anthropological findings situated 'aborigines' as a group indicative of these areas. Locations and physical appearance were imperative to their findings in determining the category to which each group belonged. Their research throughout Australia documented data to use as proof in the categorisation of groups. The comments were written authoritatively by Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell, stating that, "within the relatively large Atherton jungle area the people thus tend to differ in various degrees" (1941, p. 3).

I contend that what is thought provoking about museums is the showing and laying bare of Black bodies and cultural artefacts that relate to the lives of Indigenous and coloured nations of the world. What is absent in the viewing is White culture, White people. Museums, as institutions, are there for White people, not First Nations or coloured peoples (Baker 2018; Harkin 2017). The study and fieldwork from research into the Atherton Tableland group contribute the opportunity to read what their studies show and to what extent Western understandings and descriptions of the 'primitive' and 'savages' entail.

Audra Simpson (2014), in her book *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, illuminates how anthropologists constructed particular knowledge within the domains of structure and institutions that held sway, leading to confusion amongst her people, the Kahnawa:ke peoples, the Mohawk territory of the Iroquois nation, North America, and the kind of confusion that derives from colonialism that impact upon Kahnawa:ke ways of being. Anthropology, according to Simpson (2014), is defined by their own Western thinking of how the Indian/First Nations peoples were to be described and what such descriptions did for "history, ethnography, and the space between what is conceptualized and written and what is lived and experienced" (Simpson 2014, p. 69). I understand this clearly, as these experiences are located in the study undertaken with my people. It did not, nor does it, escape us.

5.11 The Spectacle Captives

Audra Simpson's words lead me to Robyn Poignant's (2004) book, *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle*. Poignant's text reveals the desire for the native's body, to capture the lives of First Peoples as objects of curiosity, the intimacies derived between R.A. Cunningham and the groups convinced to go with him as "objects of curiosity" (Poignant 2004, p. 4). The relationship built between the groups themselves is illuminated throughout their journey, the staging of the performances and in the containment of their own bodies in spaces, and out of their own 'country' in North Queensland.

The body of Tambo was found in a funeral parlour in Cleveland Ohio, having also been displayed in a Drew's Dime store after dying from pneumonia (Poignant 2004, p. 1). In speaking back to the museum, First Nations artist, James Luna, used his own body as data, as analysis, as an exhibit, and an object of curiosity as an artefact piece in the San Diego Museum of Man, California. Luna puts his own body on the line in his artistic installation and revealed how insidious museums are in their containment, delivery, and exhibition of First Nations bodies (Gonzalez 2008). This, I argue, is an unbecoming; unbecoming the object of study instead refusing to allow his body to be under the scientific study of anthropologists. There are many stories that tell of Indigenous, coloured bodies,

each labelled and related to its audiences as less than human. And the narratives that get told place those cultural bodies in the past, absent of living.

Putting our bodies on the line is revealed through the research outlined in Roslyn Poignant's (2004) book and goes to the heart of how Western scientific thoughts are played out for the 'exotic' and reveals to what extreme lengths the self-proclaimed 'man-hunter' R.A. Cunningham would go to, acquire "aborigines" from the North Queensland communities to travel as show pieces in the circus of curiosities. In this section, I will consider the logic used to justify use of Indigenous peoples as public spectacles in carnivals and circuses, and the taking of Indigenous peoples from their country for the benefit of showmanship. I argue that this was a way to maintain the colonial narrative of the 'primitive' and 'uncivilised'.

These two groups were from the coastal regions of North Queensland, the Cardwell and Hinchinbrook areas, (Poignant 2004, p. 24), and the narrative has not escaped the Indigenous peoples of this area. The ensemble was labelled with English names and forced to adapt to the various European countries and audiences they engaged with (Poignant 2004). The conceptualisation of becoming the 'aborigine' connects to the data cards that reveal the fieldwork and study of Yidiniji and Mbabaram people of the Atherton Tablelands, seen in the writing of Tindale and Birdsell (1941).

The performance of the 'savage' and the 'cannibal' for the benefit, joy, desire and economic value of the White Western public, as Poignant notes, "the colonial trope [that] sits within the minds of the colonisers" (2004, p. 11). Poignant's (2004) analysis, whilst discerning, highlights to some degree the group's understanding of their role in being professional performers as savages and as cannibals, and as curiosities. Whilst the photographs reveal a sense of agency and resistance, the concept of refusal was noted by Houze and Jacques in 1884:

> when it came to photographing…we had asked them to remove as much as possible of their rags; but our savages, who had already admired themselves in their dress, in the photographs executed in London, didn't intend at all to allow themselves be photographed again without posing with all their finery (cited in Poignant 2004, p. 16).

I am reminded of Campt's (2017) voice and study of photography, and the embodied encounters and the different levels of such encounters. These encounters were associated with meeting Cunningham, leaving their families and community to go on the journey, on the ship itself, arriving in another city different to their own country, the buzz, the underground, the audience; each encounter an embodied process. Again, "what is the performance in the image?"

I can only assume that while there may have been moments of homesickness for 'country' and ontological belonging, members of the group were resistant to Western ways. Refusal is played out here in just a few sentences; the group knew why they were in the city of London, they knew what they needed to do and not play the 'native' away from the stage, and this gave them agency. They wanted their mob to see them posing with all their finery. I would argue that they performed their humanness, their unbecoming, their sovereignty.

The discursive regimes of Western desire through scientific discipline is highlighted by Moreton-Robinson (2000) in her outstanding scholarly text, *Talkin' up the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism*. Moreton-Robinson states that the anthropologist writings in Australia were forged already through the study and examination by male anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski; 'Aboriginalist' anthropology dominated the discipline in academic circles and these men were seen as experts on the culture of Indigenous peoples" (2000, p. 73). Moreton-Robinson's (2000) insightful, analytical critique of both male and female White anthropologists provides greater understanding of the role played out by them to situate their own self-importance as key to Western understanding of the primitive. Further to this was the privilege that came with the wives of scientists and anthropologists which provided the ability to engage in research and the examination of Indigenous bodies on the missions and reserves as well (Moreton-Robinson 2000).

Marianna Torgovnick (1990) suggests that the "West's fascination with the primitive is because of its own crisis and its own loss of identity, thus to study the primitive the West enters a world that is 'exotic' which is also a familiar world, structured by sets of images and ideas that have slipped from their original metaphoric status to control perceptions of the primitive" (1990, p. 5). Amari Barak's quote, in Sylvia Wynter's (2006) *On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Desetre: Black Studies towards a Human Project*, is worthy of a mention, and he states that "the idea that Western thought might be erotic if viewed from another landscape never presents itself to most westerners" (Barak cited in Wynter 2006, p. 107). The privilege of Whiteness is never seen in its own articulation of history and the study of the other.

To extend on the ideas that Torgovnick (1990) raised in terms of images and ideas produced by Western understandings of the 'native/primitive', I borrow Wynter's (2006) thought on the inner eye and how racism is determined to help structure sight and what one sees. According to Wynter (2006), we've been positioned with an "unbearable wrongness of being" (p. 114), even a double-consciousness (Dubois cited in Wynter 2001, p. 2), and we have been labelled according to anthropological and ethnological writings about us to fulfil the might of Western scientific work

about the primitive, the native. The discursive regimes and discourses that continue to keep us outside the realm of inclusive/exclusive, belonging/not belonging, and being seen or not being seen, continue to position our intimate relationship with colonialism in the everyday.

The binary forms of representations—uncivilised/civilised, ugly/attractive, White/Black, godlike/demons—and the ways that signification defined and labelled certain groups of peoples' difference and the interpellations of discourses that sit within the theoretical framework of Western epistemology led to the establishment of human carnivals throughout the colonised empire. Based on Dixon's map of Aboriginal Australian language groups (Poignant 2004, p. 23), it might be seen that the two groups taken by Cunningham came from the language groups along the north Queensland coast: the Nyawaygi (outside Townsville), Manbarra (Great Palm Island) Wulguru (Townsville), Biyay (Ingham), Warrgamay (Herbert River & Cardwell areas), Girramy (Upper Murray) Djiru (Tully) and Jirrbal (Innisfail). All speakers of the languages of these areas sit within close negotiating areas for ceremonial and cultural business (see Poignant 2004, p. 23). There is a connection with some of the people from these language groups who are related to me through the personal and familial intimacies of marriage and close partnership.

Poignant's (2004) in-depth research highlights the lives of this group of people and the story of Phineas T. Barnum. Poignant succinctly contextualises the ways that P.T. Barnum, as a circus owner, invested in human cargo as well as animals from all over the world. His *Circus of Curiosities* was developed through the colonial practices of invasion, settlement and dispossession, and the curation of a collection of what he viewed as savage and uncivilised peoples (Poignant 2004). This drew on notions of human development and man's ability to move through the great chain of being (McConnochie et al. 1991) and the colonisation of Indigenous countries within the context of Australia. In 1882, P.T. Barnum called for the recruitment of someone to find "stone-age, primitive and wild blacks" to travel throughout the European world as curiosities (Poignant 2004, p. 14).

5.12 Displays of Primitive Performance

Phineas T. Barnum's *Ethnological Congress of Strange Savage Tribes* was contextualised within a racialised framework of discourses that signified, and seemingly supported, the stealing and borrowing of peoples/savages captured from various groups of Aborigines throughout the colonised world. Within practices that provided a human circus for the seemingly 'civilised' world, for viewing and performance of the primitive uncivilised savages, First Nations people we colonised and displaced and taken all over the Western world as human circus performers (Poignant 2004). R.A. Cunningham 'recruited' a group of Indigenous people from Northern Queensland in 1883 and

1892 and shipped First Peoples from North Queensland to San Francisco to be exhibited in circus shows, radio shows, theatre, and dime stores throughout America (Poignant 2004, pp. 16-8).

Displayed as primitive, and wild, and to be feared, and engaging in acts of cannibalisation were promoted for the European audiences (Poignant 2004, p. 77). Phineas T Barnum's *Ethnological Congress of Strange Savage Tribes* included two groups of Aboriginal families from regional coastal areas of Cardwell in North Queensland (Poignant 2004, pp. 20-2). Indigenous peoples were exposed to the Western world as 'savages', the discourses and practices of exhibition in ethnographic displays. Such displays supposedly showed proof of human development and the representation of difference (Poignant 2004).

Within the context of performance, Poignant (2004) states that performative space is a space which is one of displacement for the performers and a place for the spectacle for the onlookers (p. 7). It is a chronoscopic/chronotropic space where conjunction and convergence of time and space meet, where certain stories can 'take place' (Poignant 2004, p. 7). However, my reading of Poignant's words and the underlying factors of the Aboriginal group of performers, reveals agency and resistance of the group. This is what Campt notes as "viewers encounter with the group and the quotidian practices of refusal –it might appear as if they inhabit colonization as ongoing wound of dispossession' (2017, p. 65) yet members of the group continue to be Nyawaygi, Manbarra, Wulguru, Biyay, Warrgamay, Girramy, Djiru, and Jirrbal from the rainforest areas of North Queensland, Australia. This is their refusal.

5.13 Artistic (Re)presentation and the Intimacy of Reimaging

Like James Luna's living exhibition (outlined above) which critiqued the ideas of collections, objects of study and curiosity (Gonzalez 2008, p. 39), I refer to the work of artist Vernon Ah Kee (2012). I add to the mix Vernon Ah Kee to inform how Indigenous people are speaking back and turning the gaze of scientific data, and offer his voice in transforming members of his family. Ah Kee is an artist of Kuku Yalandji, Waanji and Yidiniji descent from the township of Innisfail in North Queensland. Through his 2012 exhibition, Transforming Tindale: Photographs Remade and Reimagined, Tindale's photographic representation and naming of members of Ah Kee's family is transformed. Ah Kee suggests that, while gaining access to the Tindale collection and family archival photographs, although a vital reference point, what must be remembered, however, is that such sourced material is scientific data material (State Library of Queensland 2012). How intimate that moment would have been for Vernon, meeting his grandfather and grandmother through Tindale's data photos. His family that he had never met but had always known of their existence. And then to take the passport photos with their numbered identifiers and to rename and reimagine

through the artistic creation of reproducing family photos in charcoal and pencil. I can only imagine the intimacy of each stroke of charcoal. The holding of the small passport photos in his hand and searching for the right moment to begin, the right angle to represent and then to go. This was Vernon Ah Kee's repatriation of his family; taking back, and giving back, a turning of the gaze and a refusal to accept Tindale's numbering of his family–the intimacy of reviving his family data photos and transforming them. I wish I had seen this exhibition in 2012 but having read about it and viewed the Vimeo of Ah Kee and Aird (State Library of Queensland 2012) speaking about the process I share it here to contextualise the intimate act of burrowing through the archives, finding family and refusing to let their stories, their faces, their bodies stay hidden. Lifting the lid on archival data allows for a new imagining, as Vernon Ah Kee (cited in State Library of Queensland 2012) contends.

5.14 The Intimate Act of Storying

In lifting the lid on archival data, I return to the intimate relationship in storytelling between the listener and the teller. My poetic intervention and storytelling are my artistic endeavour to provide another lens by which to work through my own relationship with the archives. Parts of this section have been published in the first e-catalogue, *Bound and Unbound Sovereign Act I* (Baker et al. 2015a, pp. 13-5). This work was written in response to my reading of Tindale and Birdsell's (1941) conceptualisation of studying and examining the 'hair' of my mob.

I respond through storytelling; as Bunda states, "story is the word her mob speaks" (2007, p. 4). I allow myself a way through the memories that are embedded in my body, and my own storage of memories that I carry across this vast land and "argue for storying research as research that is accessible by all, that is everyday practice, that crosses cultures, classes and modes: story and storying does that" (Phillips & Bunda 2018, p. 5). Toni Morrison (1990) notes that, "the emotional memory or what the nerves and the skin remember as well, as how it appears and, a rush of imagination is our 'flooding', a kind of literary archaeology, where the information and guesswork journey us to a site to see what remains were left behind and to reconstruct the world that these remains imply" (p. 302). Minh-ha says, "something must be said. Must be said that has not been and has been said before. It will take a long time, but the story must be told" (1989, p. 119). I relate to each author's conceptualisation of storying, saying what needs to be said, remembering what is told and heard through the storying of family and the connection with family. I tell my story.

5.15 Bound and Unbound Sovereign Acts: Act I

Engaging in *Bound and Unbound Sovereign Act I: decolonizing methodologies of the lived and spoken* (Baker 2014a) as a creative process enables a transformation and a new way of scrutinizing the world but, also one that remember the footsteps taken along the journey through one's 'country'. This is like a song line that remains etched in my mind as I unpack my own journey through the performance of spoken word to bring my ancestors' voices to the fore.

Memories remind one of where they belong and how the body is imbued with memories. Minh-ha (1989) provides an insightful analysis about how stories are part of our memories, regardless of whether we see these stories as truths or not. In making sense of how I proceed to grasp understanding of my story, or the creation of story, what is clear is that I can make my story my own or I can draw from my grandmothers to relate stories and see myself in the telling. However, in the creation of the story/ies and in the telling, there exists fragments, a schism, and in those fragments lie questions, and in the questions a sense of loss but also a sense of hope because the stories exist within the memories and in the memories is love, desire and wonderment. Stories acquaint the reader/viewer with "the rich complexities, layered with symbolic meaning" (Phillips & Bunda 2018, p. 6). It is a free narration and questions are asked, like "what is true? Which truth and how does she know?" I know there is connection, blood lines; these stories connect me to my grandmothers, mother and sisters, as well as uncles, brothers, and all family members. Memories are situated in the body and the concept of memory as an individual's level of memory is carried in our heads or our bodies which comes back and forth in our consciousness. Garde-Hansen, Hoskins and Reading (2009) highlight the ways past moments, places, people, events, encounters, and actions all seemingly contribute to our self-identity. (Re)remembering provides assertions of the involvement of introducing the past into the present to represent and produce a 'reactivated' site of consciousness (Garde-Hansen, Hoskins & Reading 2009, p. 2). Therefore, in (re)remembering and exploring memory to reconstruct my understanding of blood memory, I take guidance from the words of Harkin (2014) as she highlights her desire to find the hidden in relation to her Nanna's experiences. Harkin states: "I longed to go back to that beginning place, to those first colonial recordings of my family, to the frontier-violence-contact-zone and trace my blood from there" (2017, p. 3).

I use hair as a defining element of my own identity to position my clear understanding of how I 'reactivate' a site of consciousness in recognising the way my hair, and my own experiences with my hair, shape and contribute to my memory. Kobena Mercer (1990) discusses hair as a signifying part of discourse and the question of 'the beautiful'. I was keen to engage in the 1960s symbolisation of 'Black is Beautiful' and wrote these three words on all my notebooks back in high

school in the '70s. Mercer (1990) states that "the cultural politics of 'race' and 'aesthetics' since forever have been critiqued in the everyday and argues for the de-psychologize of hair styles that's identified as purely 'black' and therefore 'nature' and consider that hair creation and hair enjoyment is a cultural activity" (pp. 247-8). I speak back to the records that measured and named the texture of my hair, as highlighted in this chapter through the examination and study of Tindale and Birdsell (1941).

In conceptualising hair, Mercer (1987) suggests that hair is an organic matter produced by physiological processes and the biological makeup of humans. Hair seems to be a 'natural' aspect of the body's process and the ways that hair signifies characteristics is visually represented by certain notions of difference. In the context of my performance, it is clearly defined that my hair is part of who I am as an Indigenous person from a language group with family members with very similar hair texture. Mercer (1990), states that "where race structures social relations of power hair, is as visible as skin color, and takes on a symbolic dimension of racial difference" (p. 249). My hair is woolly, curly, not straight, hard to handle, but whilst it is seemingly hated, I have learnt to love my hair to accept my hair as part of my identity.

Measured in the past by scientists wanting to know the evolution of 'man', stolen, clipped, taken and kept, strands of hair were used to evidence their own White, worldly understanding of the 'hair of the native' (Harding 1991). Such signifying representations undertaken by colonial powers studied, analysed, critiqued, and produced knowledge about the 'savage' body. Taped and examined from top to toe, Indigenous peoples all over Australia have been subjected to the language of biological inferiority, the meanings associated with 'difference', and the repertoires of representation (Tallbear 2013b), as read through the confines of Western epistemological understandings. Thus, the knowledge produced about me and my people is socially constructed and we are seen to exist as noble savages or cannibals, Westerns are the peeping toms: "to study the primitive is to enter an exotic world" (Torgovnick 1990, p. 8).

5.16 Good Hair

African American comic, Chris Rock, set out to explore the issue of hair in his 2009 movie, *Good Hair*. His intention was to see what was so interesting and important about the hair of Black women, in response to his daughter Lola asking him the question, "Daddy how come I don't have good hair?" (*Good Hair* 2009). What Chris Rock's movie, *Good Hair*, revealed is the ways that many Black/Coloured women in American go to great lengths to chemically straighten their curly and wiry hair and the lengths mothers will go to also straighten their 3-, 4-, or 6-year-old's

daughters' hair. Rock (2009), I believe, places the lens on hair and highlight the attitude that not only Black women have to curly hair, but also Black men.

What is further interesting in the documentary, *Good Hair* (2009), is how Black hairdressing salons engage in hair design, hair structuring and additional hair pieces, that not only provide opportunity for social gathering but allow for the women to engage in experience of not only beautification of the Black feminist body, but intimate and seductive connection with other Black and strong women. As McKittrick (2006) notes, discussing the cartographies and territorial boundaries where representation of femininity, Blackness, time and space is Black space, Black experiences (p. xi).

Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, writes about hair in her national bestseller text, *Americanah* (2014), through the lens of the dominant character Ifemelu. Ifemelu is Nigerian and is living and studying in the USA. She engages in the writing of a weekly blog to keep herself informed of her experiences and her surroundings as well as share these experiences through a weekly blog. She (Ifemelu) feels ugly after experiencing her natural, tight, curly hair falling out from using too much chemical straightening and relaxing hair lotions (this reminds me of my own experience with relaxing hair). When her friend cuts her hair until it's short near to her natural hair, she says, "'I look ugly I'm scared of myself'…she looked unfinished, as though the hair itself, short and stubby was asking for attention, for something to be done to it, something more" (Adichie 2014, p. 258). Ifemelu goes online and reads a blog from "happilykinkynappy.com to find that the site had a bright yellow background, message boards full of posts, thumbnails photos of Black women blinking at the top. They had long trailing dreadlocks, small Afros, big Afros, twists, braids, massive raucous curls and coils. What Ifemelu received from this blog was that the women were done with pretending that their hair was what it was not…they sculpted for themselves a virtual world where their coily, kinky, nappy, woolly hair was normal, there was a name for hair like hers, Teeny Weeny Afro (TWA)" (p. 262). Adichie (2014) inserts into the character of Ifemelu more of her own personal background as Nigerian; as coming from Africa and as understanding who she is as African, Black, Female, and Nigerian to raise consciousness to her readers of the ways that short, tiny, curly afros are perceived as not 'good hair' (Rock 2009) within the consciousnesses of both White and Black women to recognise that those women with this type of hair can love their hair.

American comic, Chris Rock (2009), and Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014), alongside the writing of Kobena Mercer (1990), provide a critical analysis of how Black and natural curly and woolly hair is loved, appreciated, and accepted as 'normal' for some Black bodies. I am supportive of these authors' work and engage in disrupting the conversations that have signified my type of hair as biologically inferior (Mercer 1990) to no longer allow my hair to take the brunt of

hate, to think it is dirty or smelly, to let my hair feel free and unstressed, to deal with my hair my way to know my hair whether tamed or at times uncontrollable, to remember my hair is part of my family, and that my hair offers me a sense of belonging. I take back power and engage in self-articulation to reassert myself as I want to be represented; to love who I am, to know that all parts of me is who I am, and so to continue to breathe politically, to occupy and enjoy the wealth of my country, and to be normal.

5.17 Disruption to Known and Accepted White Space

In refusing to forget my family and to always be at peace with my 'crisp curly hair', I provide a scenario to show how a hairdressing space, often viewed as White space, becomes Black space, then Black feminist space.

My sister and I sat in the hair dressing salon waiting for her hair to get a dye and myself a conditioning treatment. We went to this hair salon because our niece worked there. She is a fantastic hairdresser and all family members go that salon to get haircuts, treatment, dyes etc. This particular day, my niece noticed I had a book in my hand and wanted to know what I was reading. The book was Katherine McKittrick's (2006) Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle. My niece, who was applying colour to my sister's hair, then asked what it was about. I proceeded to give her information, but because the text was theoretical, I simplified the theory to place context to the text and to give her and my sister a grasp of the text.

My response was to relay what I was reading. McKittrick (2006) writes about spaces and contextualises understanding around spaces. She argues that Black women create and maintain Black feminist spaces wherever we travel, wherever we are. To give further understanding to this, I presented this scenario. I use Aboriginal English to situate my relationship with each.

> Me: See this hairdressing salon, well this is space, and for a long time we've [Indigenous women] have always known it to be White [Migaloo] space. We've been at times scared to enter this space, maybe because we weren't sure if White hairdressers could cut our [curly] hair or would even like to touch our hair, or if we had enough money to get our hair done.
>
> Sister: Mmmm.
>
> Me: Well in thinking about space and Black woman space, the past has changed. We come into this hairdressing salon and we take over, we are cracked [funny, humorous] in this space. Do you want to know why?
>
> Sister and Niece: Yeah.
>
> Me: Mim [our niece] changed the space, she doesn't realise it, but she is the entry point for us to make it Black space. This salon is Black feminist space because Mim works here and, because she works here, we come into the space and [de]colonise the space. We feel safe, we act silly, we laugh loudly, we are not afraid of who is looking at us or watching us, we own this space, we are confident in this space. This is our space when we are all here, we claim the space, simply because our niece works here. It is Black space when we come here. This is a powerful concept. Our hair is cared for; it's loved because she [our niece] knows our hair. We trust her with our hair and whether she is aware or not she tends lovingly to our hair.

By trusting our curly hair with our hairdresser niece, we are empowered and transformed in those known White spaces. Adding Katherine McKittrick to the above scenario and conversation, I am reminded of McKittrick's (2006) writing on geographical terrains and the movement between time-space and spatiality for Black movement. McKittrick is writing about the slave trade and the geographical terrains that Black bodies under the vile and intimate acts of oppression moved their bodies across dangerous lands and waters (Morrison 1990; Spillers 1987; Sharpe 2010). In the Australian context, and in contextualising the spaces of time, I am aware that Indigenous Australian women have also engaged with and negotiated movement across unsafe lands and waters (Baker et al. 2015b).

Using the metaphor of the hair salon as White space, and past relationship to Indigenous women to the hair salon as Black space in the contemporary, I draw from McKittrick where she states, "spatial acts can take on many forms and can be identified through expressions, resistances and naturalizations…these acts take place and have place" (2006, p. xix). Thus, within the Black space of the hair salon, we connect to our own Blackness/Indigeneity and femininity; we relate stories, we tell jokes, we gossip, each and every component of this space informs our wellbeing and we leave there full—we are happy. I contend that this space, while we engage with and are in the space, becomes a space and place for "temporary segregation" (Dyson 2003, p. 139) from feeling unsafe in the world outside. I suggest so, and as Elspeth Probyn (2005) notes in Blush, Faces of Shame, for Indigenous Australian women, going to a White hair salon meant that there was a sense of shame, simply because past experiences did not allow Aboriginal women time or money to go into a White hair salon for the pleasure of having one's hair washed, styled or dyed. My mother and her friends

and family went to the supermarket and bought a box of hair dye and did the job in the backyard of the house with the one available water hose. Aboriginal women's experiences in the 1960s and '70s were different to those of White Australian women. Probyn (2005) notes that "our bodies seem to know when they are at ease or not at ease, knowing the rules and expectations of a social space" (Probyn 2005, p. 49), like the White hair dressing salon, and the hair stylists, can also tell us when the body's sense is out of place. We know such spaces and we know that there is an awareness of being 'gazed' upon. We, as Indigenous women, are no longer shame; our bodies no longer feel out of place, we have claimed our spaces and we know that the land on which we travel is Indigenous and this provides greater awareness and opportunities to resist and refuse the gaze and condemnation of Whiteness. I argue that, at all times, we engage in refusal and unbecoming.

In conclusion, I have shown how hair is an intimate component of my body, my country, and place having been defined and described. I refer to White Western Anthropologists, Tindale and Birdsell (1941), during their field trip to the country of the Mbabaram and Yidiniji peoples to demonstrate the discourse of the 'native'. I have drawn on the spoken word and the photograph of myself and my grandmother and acknowledge my colleague, Ali Baker, when she states that history is "un-natural because the more recent history of this country is not and never will be a natural unfolding…within the 'Museum of Natural History', an institution that has enormous power in the construction of knowledge for our children" (Baker et al. 2020, pp. 859-60). Baker indicates further that, within the spaces of the museum of natural history, are unnatural things; "evidence of crime, stolen human remains, blood, hair, bones and casts of our bodies as violent records of false superiority" (2018a, p. 60). She asks, "Who Speaks? Who Listens? I was left here for dead, but I lived instead" (2018a, p. 58). Therefore, I resist the labels of my hair as being non-human; my hair is natural and normal to the Black/Aboriginal body as is the skin and the cultural affirmation of one's sense of being. I refuse to allow the descriptions that labelled my people to make my body feel out of place. Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2016) provides through poetics a description of hair. She writes, "…Picture the hair. The hair is heaping. The hair is helping. The hair will overtake…" (Gumbs 2016, p. 135). I love my hair.

I have also included in the body of this chapter how other coloured people conceptualise hair and how our hair, wild and woolly, curly and fizzy, has been targeted and we can sometimes feel as if it's unfair. I related, through storying, the many experiences of a group of First Peoples, taken from country; journeyed overseas as performers and playing out their own refusal, sovereignty, and humanness within the realms of stage and performance in a global market economy.

I provided insight into the scientific field work undertaken by Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell (1940), the measuring and examination of Indigenous bodies from both Mona Mona and Yarrabah missions to verify their own understandings, and their own encounters with First People's bodies to permit their scientific world to grasp how First People's bodies are before the natives die out. First People's bodies continue to be studied and examined under surveillance, and the following chapter allows a response through performance to disrupt how our bodies are surveyed in the contemporary.

In this context, therefore, I end with a few lines from Nina Simone's Four Women to situate my body in a performative frame in the next chapter.

> My skin is black
> My arms are long
> My hair is woolly
> My back is strong
> Strong enough to take the pain
> Inflicted again and again… (1966, from the album Wild is the Wind).

CHAPTER 6 I AM NOT YOUR SHAME: CREATIVE WORKS, BEING HUMAN

> Faye: Girls it's started…It's beautiful, full on!
> Simone: Wow sis, how do you feel?
> Faye: Nervous, got to stay out of Port Adelaide
> Simone: True sis, I'm nervous too (Baker et al. 2015a, p. 22)

> We believe in a collective process and a nonhierarchical distribution of power within our own group and in our vision for a revolutionary society…we are ready for the lifetime of work and struggle before us (Eisenstein 1978, p. 11).

> [W]e all tell parts of our story, we can't tell on our own, we do not need to become objects of ourselves (Baker et al. 2015b, p. 63).

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the key concepts of sovereignty, human as praxis, refusal, and resistance through the various ways that performance disrupts and ruptures the confines of entanglements with and within the reins of colonialism. I want to convey a re-articulation and re-imaging of the ways that our colonised bodies are marked through performing sovereignty and being human, and a refusal to allow the entanglement of colonisation to inform who we are in the present and future (Baker et al. 2015a; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Simpson 2014).

I argue that the key concepts of sovereignty, human as praxis, refusal, and resistance connect with the intersectionality of commitment, expressions, experiences, ideology, integrity, rights, quiet, and sacredness that come together in this chapter (Quashie 2004). I assert that through the collective works of First Nations academics we offer and reveal our relationships, locations, communities, and bodies as key acts of refusal and resistance to settler colonialism. Through the performance of activism, politicisation, and scholarly works, and as a collective of First Nations women as descendants of four different nations in this country, Australia, our voices go together in complementary ways. We are the Unbound Sovereign Acts Collective, an all Indigenous women academic/creative collective, located within a university within South Australia, where we work together in spaces that, at times, can be dangerous, inflexible, and rigid to be located in (Blanch 2016; Bunda 2018). Throughout this chapter, I refer to the Unbound Collective as a collective, but also reflect on our roles as individual scholars.

6.2 Engagement as a Collective

Engaging as a collective strengthens our relationship to each other and asserts our right to be in the spaces of the knowledge production, like universities and schools, and to "articulate our

positionality through selfhood" (McKittrick 2006, p. 14). We work together across the institutional spaces of the university, teaching, supporting, and creating knowledge that offer each of us the chance to engage in research that empowers us. As Mirning academic, Ali Baker (2018a), in her role as curator and member of the Unbound Collective in our performances, postulates, "we wanted to (re)turn the gaze onto the white watcher, research the researcher" (p. 92). We enact an ethical consciousness and responsibility to each other grounded in cultural ways of knowing and respect. Our engagement as a collective qualifies shared stories, our voices, and our trust for each other, and a trust in the knowledge we each bring to the spaces of research, our creativity, and performance; we allow ourselves the crafting of ideas, thoughts, and methodological engagement with research (Baker et al. 2015a; Fine, Tuck & Zeller-Berkman 2008; Liamputtong 2010; Mohanty 2003) to centre Indigenous feminism and activism, sovereignty, humanness, and refusal.

Furthering the crafting and creation of ideas, we allow for difficult conversations that shift us from the margins to the centre (Baker 2018b; Harkin 2017; hooks 2000; Tur 2018). Our collective activism positions our ontological, axiological, epistemological, and methodological approaches that inform our performances in spaces that, in past proceedings, revealed a sense of invisibility. As bell hooks (2000) notes, "living on the edge, we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked from both the outside in and the inside out…focused our attention on the center as well as the margin…we understood both" (p. xvi). Located within a site where the production of knowledge has done harm to Indigenous communities as 'objects' of curiosity and study, and engaging in decolonising and anti-racist educational strategies, situates the Unbound Collective and many Indigenous scholars locally, nationally, and internationally as insiders and outsiders, as described by hooks (2000). As both insiders and outsiders, our voices and bodies undertake performances that engage in a process of decolonisation as acts of resistance and refusal; as Baker (2018b) states, this shifts the gaze to make visible the history of oppressive regimes on Aboriginal bodies and lands, and the colonialism which continues to affect our lives.

Being both insiders and outsiders, our voices and our bodies undertake performance that engages a process of decolonisation in contested and hard spaces that might not necessarily see the historical aspects to our world. We perform the shedding of the colonial skin, we reinterpret the world through each of our own lenses to bring forth new ways of thinking, and we refuse to be denied our right to be who we are. Further, even as individuals, we are strong; as a collective, we become stronger and more powerful (Quashie 2004, p. 5), a force to be reckoned with. We speak back to the power of the institutions that produced knowledge of and about us (Fine, Tuck & Zeller-Berkman 2008; Mohanty 2003), and we refuse.

6.3 The Bound/Unbound: Intimate Creative Works

Throughout this thesis and in previous chapters, I have argued that the processes of colonialism and the impact upon our bodies force a shift in First People's engagement in the production of knowledge and how knowledge as a production continues to pervade the educational spaces of universities and schools where Indigenousness and Blackness is commodified. Theorising decolonisation, human as praxis, sovereignty, refusal, becoming, and unbecoming is central to this chapter. As a collective of strong Indigenous feminist activists, we are invested in our communities and the knowledge we each produce; we ensure that we undertake the right way of research and give back to community, as highlighted by the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Aboriginal Studies (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2012). We both resist and refuse to allow the dominance of settler colonialism to continue its imagination and reading of our bodies that is situated in the framework of racialisation. In this section, I examine the concept of 'refusal' and how we perform refusal in the creative works within Unbound Sovereign Acts. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2014) conceptualise as "an analytic practice that addresses forms of inquiry as invasion… [that] cannot, will not, share certain accounts" (p. 811). Furthermore, Tuck and Yang "trace the perimeter of refusal" and "use examples from art and literature" to convey the meaning of refusal in their research and their teaching (2014, p. 811). Theoretically and contextually, the concept of refusal, for my sister researchers and myself, is situated within the domain of research and knowledge production that we formally and personally engage with in our performance and creative works; there is a quiet intimacy to our engagement. I contend that the Unbound Collective reads "the code beneath the code" (Tuck & Yang 2014, p. 811). Within our performances, we engage in code-switching as crucial to how our bodies are viewed when we perform.

6.4 Reading the Code

In reading the code beneath the code, what is stipulated are the various ways that that Indigenous communities are read racially, economically, and politically. Tuck and Yang (2014) state that Indigenous communities "are over-coded, that is, simultaneously hyper-surveilled and invisibilised/ made invisible by the state, by police, and by social science research" (p. 811). Moreton-Robinson (2015) postulates that "Indigenous peoples did not produce this history, but the conditions under which we live, shape our experiences of how well race and state operate in tandem to condition each other" (p. xi). For the Unbound Collective we 'see' the ways that research undertaken by White academics can result in continual over-coding, leading to a deficit view positioned as disadvantaged, and every government policy continuing to consider Indigenous concerns or issues to be framed by the concept of 'disadvantaged' whilst, at the same time, adhering to a thinking of 'closing the gap' (Walter & Andersen 2013). I am not focusing on such government policies, as

previous chapters provide insight into how some of those policies have dictated and impacted upon our lives in various ways.

6.5 Refusing to be 'Othered'

The Unbound Collective's performances turn the gaze back and refuse to be othered; we flip the master's script (Baker et al. 2015a). We take an Indigenous feminist/activist standpoint, and the insertion of key ideas and themes associated with our ontological worldview are employed as a guide towards an Indigenous feminist activist manifesto. We represent and express this through the naming of ourselves:

> we are, Antikirinya/Yankunytjatjara, Mirning, Yidinyiji/Mbabaram and Narungga, we share a legacy of colonial categorisation-containment-archivisation…and all that was carried on tall ships across rolling seas…this intergenerational effect of living under Aborigines Acts of the State. We want to share the weight of the colonised burden to lighten this load…we are sovereign women, we choose to act, speak, look…give back in critical-performative…ways we sing, we weave, we project, we disrupt in order to transform we connect to multiple sites of past-present-future and we share this space with you…with love we are on Kaurna land (Baker et al. 2014).

The Unbound Collective is morally and ethically connected to ensuring that our research embodies our individual and shared communities. As stated above, "we all tell parts of our story and can't tell on our own, we do not need to be the objects of ourselves: (Baker et al. 2015b, p. 63). We refuse to be othered.

I take guidance from Audra Simpson's (2014) theorising of refusal and her writing on Indigenous interruptions. Simpson provides a critical analysis of the ways that the USA and Canada considers their sovereignty juxtaposed against the tribal nation of the Mohawks of Kahnawa:ke, their sovereign rights, and their refusal to be, anyone else but who they are as Mohawk and sovereign:

> The Mohawks of Kahnawa:ke are nationals of a precontact Indigenous polity that simply refuse to stop being themselves…they insist on being and acting as peoples who belong to a nation other than the United States or Canada. Their political form predates and survives 'conquest', it is tangible and tied to sovereign practices (Simpson 2014, p2).

I consider Simpson's work and place in context the various ways the Unbound Sovereign Acts performances generate refusal, identified by Harney (cited in Campt, 2017) as "the refusal to be refused" (p. 32). Refusal can comprise a resistance to making someone or something the subject of research; it is a form of objectless analysis, an analytic practice with nothing and no one to code (Tuck &Yang 2014, p. 812; Baker 2018a, Harkin, 2017). Refusing to be used and abused in the violence of research is to recognise and know that "research for Indigenous peoples is a 'dirty word', as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 22) informs us. This connects to the above statement as to why the Unbound Collective critique the university as an institution, whilst working in the very

space as both insider/outsider. As First Nations researchers and academics, I argue that we take on board Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang's (2014) assertion that "research may not be the intervention that is needed and that there is more beyond the paradigm of research, this is voice, knowledge and interventions" (p. 813) and, accordingly, "refusal is a stance in that it is resolute" (pp. 813-4).

6.6 Performance/Performativity

Within the realm of performance and performative theory, we engage refusal as an artistic form consistent with Indigenous ways of knowing and not as navel gazing. Research lies within the sites and spaces of Western epistemological production that conceals other forms of knowledge framed by racialisation. Donna Haraway (1991) writes of the ways that research is a common factor in scientific discourses, dependent upon evidence to tell their stories. She notes that "the imagined 'they' constitute a kind of invisible conspiracy of masculinist scientist and philosophers replete with grants and labs. The imagined 'we' are the embodied others, who are not allowed to have a body, a finite point of view, and are so disqualified from having any voice" (1996, p. 575). Sometimes, in the teaching and research spaces, this can be quite evident. This thesis challenges and disrupts those notions.

In contextualising our research and theoretical methodology, we assert ourselves through the production and projects of the Unbound Collective's sovereign acts of decolonisation; our voices and our bodies shape our performances. My colleague and friend, Ali Baker, posits the question, "what happens when we deliberately re-insert ourselves inside the record? When we speak from a context of who we are and what we would like to see for our futures; our sovereign voices are central to this discussion" (Baker 2018a, p. 124). As artists, writers, poets, singers, and scholars, our engagement as a collective of First Nations women who perform, exhibit, sing, rap, weave, film, photograph and paint we share our work to respond to the practice of practitioners that have created the archives about and of us, as Indigenous Tasmanian artist Julie Gough (2014) contends. Each of these elements are crucial to who we are and what we carry into colonised spaces. I am reminded of Quashie's (2004) words when he highlights the sovereign rights of Black women: he says the "Black woman is a category of extreme social relevance and power and in terms of essentialism, the body of the Black woman moves in its relevance than biological essence" (p. 4). Hence, the Black woman notices "when and where I enter" (Quashie 2004, p. 4). This is so true for us as Indigenous women, and as a collective. We find ourselves within a race and gender discourse that disavows our engagement, and we often navigate and negotiate the difficult pathways that we travel. Furthermore, within the performative spaces and in performance, we progress towards a coming-to-be, an (un)becoming, towards just 'being' (Quashie 2004, p.4). Just 'being' who we are, as First Nations

feminist scholars and community members, is enough because, as Professor Tracey Bunda notes, "recalling and reclaiming our agency…is a gift to ourselves…it embodies a care (albeit a care that has been taken back from the main caregiver) allowing first peoples another way of being in the nation" (Bunda 2016, p. 77). I argue that this connects Audra Simpson's (2014, p. 1) statement about the right to be ourselves as an act of refusal in just being who we are.

I turn to the images photographed by Denys Finney and Michael Bonner. These photographs, some of which appear in this thesis, were taken of Unbound Collective members and appeared on bus shelters around the city and suburbs of Adelaide. I argue that these photographs highlight a sense of right and sovereignty, informing humanness in the research approach. We have learnt to transverse and navigate unwelcoming spaces and contend that the "relationship between research and art is one of epistemological respects and reciprocity rather than epistemological assimilation and colonization" (Tuck & Yang 2014, p. 237) as research is complicit with power (Moreton-Robinson 2015; Smith, LT 2012).

6.7 Transversal Performance

The Unbound Collective's research, through artistic and creative performances, use our bodies in the act of refusal to move through spaces of colonialism. Parker-Starbuck and Mock (2011) offer an analysis of body in performance. They describe the 'body' as assemblages and the material through which theatre researchers most often discuss the performance. In every performance, the performers and their bodies are scrutinised, critiqued, displayed, transformed, gendered, controlled and determined in critical reviews, historical accounts and theorisation of practices such as theatre, live art and dance (Parker-Starbuck & Mock 2011, p. 210). The Unbound Collective's sovereign acts and decolonising methodologies respond to the ways that the Indigenous/Aboriginal body disrupts and shatters the gaze of abjection by turning the gaze back. Reynolds (2009) suggests "subjectivity supersedes its foundational conditions irreducibly when a person or group negotiates, inspires, or engages in transversal movements beyond the margins and parameters of subjective territories, whether their own or others" (p. 2).

Considering the way that our bodies are seen, I add critique of two bus shelter posters to this chapter to show how the themes of time, place, space, geographic locations, feminist bodies, sovereignty, empowerment, transformation, and power encapsulate other ways of 'coming-to-be' to further conceptualise an 'unbecoming' (Quashie 2004; Reynolds 2009); unbecoming, shedding the colonial skin, the becoming that always was, as described in Chapter Three. Within the scope of unbecoming, I consider the concept of 'quiet' to add further insight into the way that photographs relate to and impact upon the quotidian of the Unbound sisters as a method for creative engagement.

To enable insight into the notion of unbecoming and extending on past conversations of 'unbecoming' across the chapters, I consider aspects of the way that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) perceive human and becoming alongside other modes of becoming. Colebrook's (2002) introduction of *Understanding Deleuze*, states that Deleuze suggests that "all life is a plane of becoming and that the perception of fixed beings such as man is an effect of becoming" (cited in Colebrook 2002, p. xx). Rosi Braidotti (2013) contends that the conceptualisation of 'life' privileges human life but must also take into account the lives of all other living things. Human, therefore, is becoming along other planes of flights (Byrd 2011).

I draw from key First Nations and Black academics writing into the space of unbecoming. Kevin Quashie and his text *(Un)becoming the Subject* (2004) provides further analysis along the flight path of becoming and unbecoming, as also articulated by First Nations scholars Jodie Byrd (2011) and Moreton-Robinson (2000, 2015). Audra Simpson (2014) gives further analysis to consider, as do Black feminist scholars, Sylvia Wynter (2003) and Hortense Spillers (1987), who reveal the many ways that performance of humanness is contextualised within Indigenous/Blackness and sovereignty resides within the embodiment of human. This is an unbecoming of the subject, for we have always been human and we have always been sovereign.

This is reflected in the seminal text, *The Combahee River Statement* (Eisenstein 1978), by a collective of Black feminists in the United States of America. As women of colour, they argued that engaging in research and performance can create new types of methodologies that allow for collective processes to envision a new kind of discourse: "We believe in collective process and a non-hierarchical distribution of power within our own group and in our vision of a revolutionary society. We are committed to a continual examination of our politics as they develop through criticism and self-criticism as an essential aspect of our practice" (Eisenstein 1978, p. 11).

I argue that unbecoming, human as praxis, sovereignty, and refusal by engagement in research and performance can create new types of methodologies that allow for collective processes to envision a new kind of discourse. A 'new science', as Aime Cesaire suggests, offers "the creation of a new society" (2001, p. 23), and is key to how we disturb and disrupt the power structures that bind us in those racialised assemblages (Weheliye 2014). We, as a collective, I am arguing, liberate ourselves from the binds that have restrained us and take a position of right through the Gramscian concept of 'war of positioning' as sovereign women, scholars, educators, and community members (Gramsci 1971). Through a methodology of decolonisation and a critical anti-racist framework, I consider how performance as a state of exception aids in liberation, and guerrilla tactics combine to realise

that we channel care about our work and each other into creative works that speaks for us (Eisenstein 1978; Baker et al. 2015b).

I would argue that as part of the movement from becoming to unbecoming through performative acts, as sovereign, as human and as belonging, we are embodied and form resistance and refusal strategies to counter and rupture Australia's racialised version (Blanch 2016). I rupture this space through spoken word to bring voice and performance to the centre to engage a transversal poetics process. This piece, I argue, engages in a dialogue that signifies resistance, refusal, human as praxis, and a process of decolonisation that enable my sovereignty. The spoken word, *Hip to Be Blak*, derives from a news article in The Herald Sun (15 April 2009) which the conservative commentator Andrew Bolt titled, *White is the New Black*. Bolt questioned the identity of a number of well-known Indigenous people by challenging their Aboriginal and ethnic background.

Hip to Be Blak

It so Hip to be Black, it's so hip to be black, it is so **hip** to be black
Apparently that's a fact, white is the new black
Intimidation, confrontation, condemnation, humiliation,
Politeness of whiteness let me give you a witness
To a policy of segregation denial of the human nation
Racialization and categorization to put this in context
Get this, blood quantum to define a peoples, a RACE: it's a Fuckin disgrace
Full-blood, half-caste, quarter-caste, Fairer, whiter
And darker skin, the mixed breed. Please stand up the "true aborigine"
The inception, the Act and process of public discourse deceptive
Unfettered semantics of how the right to free speech where anything goes
Incite hatred, instead an offence makes no sense, incensed with the
Shame of naming strands of blood definitions where exemption
From Indigenous belonging, the presumptuous attitude
Played out through generations and generations of dominant "gratitude"?
Privilege through the propaganda of racial reality, its insanity
The obsession, conception and the ploy of the Right to deny
Us our identity, I mean what the hell, sell our soul to justify
So-called freedom of speech, whose freedom and whose speech
Rules a nation divides a peoples, but of course, only the powerful
Can provoke racial discrimination to have voice of popular
Debate it's a sham, a travesty, a farce, a parody, a joke whiter, blacker
Heck what next, wait a minute, true fact is that the question was challenged
And dusted busted gutsy, stand up those who know that they are simply
Hip because they are BLACK (Faye Rosas Blanch 2012).

Photograph 6.1 It's So Hip To Be Blak (2014), written and performed by Faye Rosas Blanch in *Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Act I: decolonising methodologies of the lived and spoken*.

6.8 Transversal Poetics

In this section, I deliberate upon our creative works and consider how voice and spoken word as poetics take the form of transversal poetics to further highlight unbecoming, refusal, and human as praxis. Drawing from Bryan Reynolds (2009) and his statement that in the development of transversal poetics there are the points that meet and the ways that "currents along connect with and across trajectories of exploration progressed and the convergence of separate multiple perspectives connections" (p. x). He further notes that engagement with transversal subjectivity is where the entry points and junctions meet to allow for another methodology to inform how transversal subjectivity inform theories of consciousness, subjectivity, desire, cognition, identity, interpretation and compassion (Reynolds 2009, p. x). Transversal poetics as a methodology also informs my undertaking of the creative processes of producing raps and spoken word. The above visual representation relates to the Unbound performance Act I, which was part of a video installation held at the Fontanelle Gallery, Bowden SA (Baker 2014a), and speaks to the binding and unbinding, the visible and invisibility and how racist comments, conversations and narratives get "stuck in our heads, our hair, our minds and our bodies, that is unforgiving and can drive one mad" (Baker 2018a, p. 88-9).

As described above, performativity such as literary interventions (poetics or spoken word) and, more broadly, creative expression and performance, can shift discourse and bring together theory and praxis as human, not object. The poetic elements of language can shift the discourse and are useful here as spoken words to relate narratives in a way that allow for theory and practice to mesh together as key to voice; performance and human as praxis; refusal and sovereignty. What often

happens within the context of creating transversal poetics is the hidden and public transcripts (Scott, J 1990) that pave the way for spoken word/poetic performance. Through the poetic performance of spoken word, brought to the fore is the hidden transcript into the public; I politicise and criticise Western knowledge production and understandings about my body, my humanness, and my intimate connection to country. Raising the critical consciousness of the audience in Unbound sovereign acts, performances through spoken word informs through voice, visual, and performative processes in the unpacking of colonialism. I insert a poetic example:

> I am not your shame, I can play the game
> my body performs its right to be here in this space
> with grace I move across the spatiality of intersectionality
> where blackness and whiteness meet
> with love and kindness, I greet you
> for we are in this together, we have
> been captured forever in this moment (Faye Rosas Blanch 2019).

6.9 Sovereign Love Poems; Loving Ourselves, Loving Country

The Unbound Collective moves away from the feelings of victimhood into selfhood where each can be human and geographically situated in country, instead of being non-human and just Black subjects (McKittrick 2006, p. 19). Taking hold of our ability to be in control of our own decisions and destinations, we engaged in letting our audiences know about the grammar of place and the ways that colonisation impacted upon not only our lives, but the lives of the colonial settlers. We created sovereign love poems and placed them on ten bus shelters all over the city of Adelaide, South Australia. The sovereign love poems spoke to the location of place as a reminder that we all live our lives on Kaurna country, the First Peoples of the Adelaide Plains, South Australia. We let all know that we love who we are and our relationship that connects intimately with country, our bodies, and who we are as First Peoples. The ten images included my own image and Dr Simone Tur's, and each image was powerfully strengthened by the reading of the sovereign love poems that connected us as a collective, and reveal our collective writing, research, and performative theories.

> Be still the silence is waiting…with love we are on Kaurna Land (Baker et al. 2015, p. 4)

> Love poems, words of strength, resistance and resilience and those deep intimate connection with our families, that have been captured in the archives, these very walls felt more than liberating, we had made an impact on those walls (Harkin in Flinders University 2017).

6.10 The Intimate Quiet of Photographs

Photograph 6.2 Bus Shelter Photograph 1, Sovereign Love Poem #4. Photograph by Michael Bonner.

In this section, I introduce two photographs that feature my image of the ten from the series. I insist on borrowing from Sharpe (2016) that these images make "ethical demands on the viewer" (p. 51). The first image brings to light, by way of a sense of quiet, which Tina M. Campt (2017) conceptualises as "a modality that surrounds and infuses sound with impact and affect, which creates the possibility within the constraints of everyday life" (p. 4). We lived in the everyday, these images existed for ten days in the everyday, both my image and Dr Simone Ululka Tur's, our images placed at bus stop shelters in select places in the City of Adelaide and the surrounding suburbs. Bus shelter photograph one, reflecting the sovereign love poem, states that the silence is waiting for sound, however, in the quietness of the night and the taking of the photograph, there is a low hum that sits alongside the notion of waiting.

The photograph on the bus stop was taken by Denys Finney at night. It was obviously taken when there was no traffic, the lights indicate the time because the streetlights are on, the road gives the

impression that it rained and the bus shelter itself sits empty, waiting for a passenger to ascend from a bus. It is also possible that public transport has stopped running for the night. This is a possibility. This bus shelter is along one of the busy roads in Adelaide which, during the day, is busy with cars going to and from and people getting on and off buses at the bus shelter where the poster is seen and the poem read. The spatiality of the bus shelter poster currently at night reveals an intimacy with its surroundings, but more so an intimacy with the poem and the quiet of refusal that creates many possibilities to allow bus riders to contemplate and consider. The bus shelter poster highlights a sense of belonging, of being here; it is neither motionless nor without sound (Quashie 2012; Campt 2017), it provides a narrative of First Peoples, a political creative act. What do people think? What does it mean? What is my relationship to the photo, the poem? These are the questions that I hope are contemplated by the bus passengers.

6.11 Intimacy of Quiet

The idea of quiet is compelling because the term is not fancy–it is an everyday word–but is also conceptual, Kevin Quashie (2012, p. 5) tells us. In their conceptualisation of quiet, both Tina Campt (2017) and Kevin Quashie (2012) take the concept to expose the relationship between quiet and the lives of Black/coloured that have been dislocated, as well as the interior of the body whilst out of place. For Indigenous Australians, this is a continuation of colonialism and this photograph hijacks the notion of the unsayable, the unsaid, or what is forgotten by the settlers in this city. The sovereign love poem tells its viewers to be still, to take time, to reflect, to remember. The silence in waiting indicates a moment in time, that in the silence there is loudness that can be deafening or a low hum that is intense and there is love, for we are on Kaurna land, we are safe, we are welcomed, we are respected. If only we remember to respect the land on whose country we live, walk, and play in the everyday. I now consider Bus Shelter Two.

Photograph 6.3 Bus Shelter Poster, Sovereign Love Poem #7. Photograph by Denys Finney.

> …We are your blind-spot…the invisible made visible…the absent made present…with love you are on Kaurna Land… (Text from Bus Shelter Photograph #7).

Bus Shelter Photograph 2 shows a young man looking at the photograph and reading the words. The image he looks upon is of me with a red wooden toy ship sitting atop my head. I am dressed in red, my shoulder is bare and the photograph looks out at the viewer ready, I contend, to form an intimate relationship. There is an invitation for the viewer to connect to me and the words below my image. This time there is a hive of activity. I read and hear the sound of people talking, waiting to board the public tram from Glenelg to the City of Adelaide. Reading this moment in time, I see the one person who have taken time to consider and read the photograph. He gives the impression that he is interested in the photograph and the words attached to the photograph. Is he a student studying here from another coloured country? Do the words and the photograph mean much to him? Is his world like the world of the person in the photograph? Does he identify with the Blackness of the subject in the bus shelter poster? Did the others take time to also contemplate and read the poster? The positioning of his body as he stands there and looks at the bus shelter poster highlight a quiet, he stands a few feet away from the others and it could be read that he alone is with the poster.

Conceptualising ‘quiet’ is an interplay between the viewer and the person who is viewed; it conveys a message. There is concentration on his face, his hands are in his pockets, he is suspended in time and he alone is connecting to the photograph and the poem. We are your blind spot, the body relates

to a brown-skinned person who is saying, “I am your blind spot, you don’t know me, but I am here, I am all around you, the invisible made visible, you will know me through this photograph, I am no longer absent but very much present and I share with you love and remind you that you are on Kaurna land”. The sovereign love poem is an acknowledgement to country and the sovereignty of First People.

The context of the bus stops provides space for openness as it invites the audience to a ‘mindedness’ about human vulnerability and strength. In relationship to the bus shelter posters in this chapter, the images look forward and direct the viewer. These are not images of disadvantage or victimhood so common in the images ‘about’ Indigenous people where the viewer is located as voyeur. Instead, they are images that challenge the viewer and act as a form of public pedagogy that offers possibilities and transformation. The geographic locations of the bus shelters were chosen strategically to allow audiences to engage with each. There is a refusal instilled with a tension that highlights the ways that bodies as colonised come into being. I would argue there is a quietness in its sovereignty.

6.12 Intimacy in Zones of Contact

Both photographs represent the quietness of sovereignty and a refusal to be left without voice or the tongue to speak (Quashie 2012; Saunders 2008). These images reveal an intimacy that is encountered and connects in zones of contact where the viewer engages with the image and the subject portrayed in the posters. In the encountering of the bus shelter posters, I deliberate on the way that emotions operate and are produced. Sara Ahmed (2004) contemplates emotions as situated within the images as an “inside out and outside in”, as a “concept of circulation and in the affective economy, social and cultural practices triggered and leave their mark on the body/s” (p. 9).

In responding to the bus shelter images, receptivity forms a normative responsiveness that is both spontaneous and reflective, which is to say a form of agency through which we are responsive to something or someone in an attitude of answerability (MacGill 2016). The spontaneous moment of receptivity is what we commonly refer to when we speak of openness; openness to that which is unfamiliar or unsettling, a spontaneous readiness to follow a line of flight or descent. Conceiving of receptivity in this way allows us to think of our epistemic and normative agency, our mindedness, if you like, as involving and requiring exposure to human vulnerability—the vulnerability of a being that can be marked, struck, impressed by experienced reality, by what and whom it encounters in the world. It involves and requires a willingness to risk self-dispossession and, thus, it is not so much about becoming open as it is about becoming unclosed to something or someone (Kompridis 2006, 2013, p. 20).

My skin speaks

My skin hears

My skin feels

My skin breathes

My skin is marked…

My skin pushes the boundaries

My skin searches for my freedom (Tracey Bunda & Faye Rosas Blanch 2005, in Blanch 2009a, p. 9).

In concluding this chapter, I have argued that the Unbound Collective engages in acts of refusal and resistance. We are sovereign and engage our humanness as praxis through performance that disrupts the colonial understandings of our bodies. As Indigenous academics/artists/performers from four locations, we are strong as a collective and move across those spaces of power that define us through code-switching, and we reinsert ourselves into the records. Offering insight and critique into the two bus shelters relays an intimacy of quietness in zones of contact that are pedagogical, public, and political. Our roles as researchers and academics inform our performances and how we move our bodies through space and time. The Unbound Collective's performances allow us to breathe and to maintain a loving relationship with our own bodies and each other; we refuse to be drawn into the colonialised factors of how knowledge is produced about us. We speak for our communities with the greatest of respect and love, and we embody all that we are as First Peoples.

CHAPTER 7 THE MATHEMATICS, FUTURITY AND INTIMACIES OF INDIGENOUS LIVES

> We can think of more accounts, more numbers (McKittrick 2014, p. 19).

> When I think of the unbound work our work considers our black bodies beyond eugenics, rations, stolen generations, collections in museums, thousands of racist texts, archival records with dates and notations of our families and objects of physical anthropology (Tur, S 2015, pers. comm., 2 October).

7.1 The Intimate Mathematics of Indigenous Australian Lives

This chapter focuses on the key guiding concepts of unbecoming, human as praxis, refusal, and sovereignty to disentangle the grammar of the historical and racialised data, and the fungibility and futurity of Indigenous lives. Indigenous bodies are intimately signified in various ways. I argue that mathematics or the numeration of Black bodies impacts upon, and continues to shape, Indigenous peoples' lives. We are caught in each other's lives even while we may not realise this (Morgansen 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2015). Even while we are caught up in each other's lives, I turn the gaze back and consider how the intricate mathematical system of kinship is interconnected with every being and species on the planet and is tied up in how we lived our lives. We coexisted with all that is in country, before colonial invasion articulated a rhetoric that denied us our relationality with land and country (Williams 2019; Verran 2000). Further, while there are parts of Australia where Indigenous groups may have lost some connection to kinship in other parts of the country, for example, the Northern Territory and the top of Queensland, many communities have continued strong links with their ways of being and knowledge through the kinship system that has defined and directed their lives forever (Milmarra in Art Gallery of South Australia 2019, pp. 34-5). The mathematics of the kinship system and way of life before invasion also reveals how unbecoming, human as praxis, sovereignty and refusal lie in our relationality and connection to country–this continues.

7.2 Mathematics of Genocide

Following on from the previous chapters, I extend the examination of how Indigenous narratives are formulated through the critique and the conceptualisation of a mathematical system of living that also exists through the mathematics of genocide. As Lethabo-King (2019) tells us, "Indigenous peoples have been stalked by the death shadow of genocide daily" (p. x). Those spaces and places of genocide are etched in every crevice, furrow, and crease of our faces and bodies, and the embodiment of land/country (Lethabo-King 2019; Baker 2018a; Harkin 2017; Tur 2018; Watson, J & Martin-Chew 2009) as well as the landscape of our country. Following from this analysis of

embodiment of genocide and trauma, I examine the context of mathematics, massacres, and genocide that has everything to do with now, today, yesterday, and the futurity of Indigenous lives in contemporary living. We carry deep trauma of invasion and coloniality.

I borrow the concept of mathematics of Black lives from Katherine McKittrick (2014) and Saidya Hartman (2008) to critique and contextualise how elements of mathematics are revealed through the treatment and transportation of Black bodies in the diaspora traded across the seas and lands/country, 'becoming' non-human and invisible within the documentations and ledgers that provide narratives of stolen bodies and removal. Tiffany Lethabo-King states that while 'storybearing' informed her about her family's and ancestors' experiences of slavery, she argues that "her ancestors knew something more; they knew, tasted, smelled, and felt the edges of multiple deaths. They knew more than just their own deaths" (2019, p. x). I consider Lethabo-King's articulation and Hartman's (2008) words as I examine the mathematics of genocide in the framework of contemporary living for Indigenous Australians.

The various ways that the bodies of Indigenous and Black people were commodified exist within the coloniality of settlement and the labour workforces used to progress globalisation (Lowe 2015; Stoler 2010); this was vile and violent in its making. Lethabo-King states that, "each form of violence has its own way of containing, haunting, touching, caressing and whispering to the other... slavery and genocide is not contained, like liquid it lingers and seeps into the spaces and places we do not expect and cannot yet see or define" (2019, p. xi).

Our Indigenous bodies in those spaces and places of trauma understand this history and our history of genocide. The mathematics of genocide is in the domain of unwellness; it 'begins' (Hartman cited in McKittrick 2014) with mental health, illness of diabetes, heart problems, infant mortality, and early deaths. McKittrick states, "the mathematics laid bare in the grid and confines of 'an inventory of property, a medical treatise…an asterisk in the grand narrative of history" (2014, p. 16). McKittrick (2014, p. 16) asserts that knowing and understanding the way that such inventory stipulated the lives of Black people provided a detailed account on the ways that the mathematics and intimacies of Blackness and Black bodies in the US context and narrated the violence and brutalities of Black lives. I contend this is also the case for First Peoples' lives in this country. For McKittrick this, she professes, "gave birth to a new world of blackness as they evacuated life from blackness" (2014, p. 16). I take note and examine the mathematics, futurity, and intimacies in the lives of Indigenous Australians to situate further understanding of Indigenous bodies on country and in country. To highlight the mathematics, futurity, and intimacies, I look to narratives that speak to the lives of Indigenous Australian people through the way our bodies are constituted through the

political domain of this country, and I take from our performances in the Unbound Collective to gauge insight into how our future might and can be.

7.3 Bearing Witness to our Histories of Exclusion—Intimately

In the peeling back, such stories of dispossession and how the lives of Aboriginal people seem easily disposed, I turn to statistics and the ways that government documentations produce their own knowledge of Indigenous lives. Statistics are powerful persuaders, according to Maggie Walter and Chris Andersen (2013, p. 7), and, as such, we 'know ourselves' through recognising the representations held in how statistics is demonstrated in our lives that informs us daily. The mathematics, fungibility, futurity, and intimacy of our lives map our lived realities and influences every element inclusive of "distribution of age and gender, educational level and achievements or lack of achievements, patterns of birth, morbidity and mortality, employment opportunities or lack of and income dynamics" (Walter & Andersen 2013, p. 7).

Each statistical documentation relies upon quantitative mathematical data collection to tell society about Indigenous peoples. Within the realm of statistics, our lives are contained within the gathering of data that define algorithms that "have devastating consequences for people who are already marginalized" (Noble 2018, p. 13).

These statistics can be read by the public as if Indigenous people are the 'problem' or whether we are successful in our lives. We, as a population of peoples, have been and are expected to conform to the racialisation of the dominant society that is, White ways of being. Through the many policies legislated against us in the past, and which continue in the now, have been and are determined by First People's relationship with Australian governments. Our future is determined by the mathematics and intimacies of government census data and the data gathering processes, our lives and positioning in today's world are outlined by government documentations and the grid of knowledge constructs that inform those in authority and power even today. As Katherine McKittrick states: "Breathless, archival numerical evidence puts pressure on our present system of knowledge by affirming the knowable (black objecthood) and disguising the untold (black human being)" (McKittrick 2014, pp. 16-7).

In considering the mathematics, fungibility, futurity, and intimacy in maintaining self-determination and control over our lives I work through the key concepts of human as praxis, decoloniality, refusal and sovereignty to situate our lives in future context. Mathematically, this continent was layered with more than 250 different language groups with around 800 dialects (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2021) and people moved across the landscape in

various ways and at various times to engage in ceremonial business and trade. Seasonal meeting allowed families to meet and greet for marriages, for initiation ceremonies, for knowledge sharing, for maintaining cultural obligations and knowledge. For keeping alive their own wellbeing and care in maintaining the language, the stories and the business associated with selfhood were shared experiences.

Since invasion, dispossession has occurred, and First Nations bodies have been massacred and stolen away from country/s. Hence, existing under government policies expresses the narratives of inequality and injustice in the education levels and distribution of bodies through population growth and demographic locations. Katherine McKittrick, in *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (2006), asks, "what happens to the cartography and understanding of the world when it is continually re-imaged through and beyond the legacy of race and racism"? (p. 28). I wonder what a re-imaging of Indigenous lives would look like through questioning mathematics and numeration of Aboriginal bodies as a colonial tool in the defining and implementation of policies of segregation and assimilation based on constructions of race. I also critically reflect on these acts where Whiteness is seen as 'civilised' regardless of the barbaric acts carried out.

Fanon (2008) would argue that the settler knows us well and that we became 'civilised' to define our bodies in the contemporary and to identify our bodies as human as praxis. However, the conceptualisation of the 'civilised' native is forgotten in various ways when the body of First Nation people is perceived as commodity and free labour in the building of the Empire. Turning to Katherine McKittrick (2014) again, she notes that, "from the brutalities of transatlantic slavery, summed up in archival histories that give us a bit of (asterisked-violated) blackness, put meaning demands on our scholarly and activist questions" (p. 17). Within the domains of archival information and materials gathered, the "toll of deaths and violence housed in the archive affirm black deaths" and, thus, she asks, "how do we ethically engage with mathematics and numerical certainties that compile, affair and honor bits and pieces of black death?" (McKittrick 2014, p. 17). In the Australian context, Dr Natalie Harkin, in engaging with the archives, states, "I am with these records and collections in multiple ways. There is nothing still or stagnant here" (2017, p. 20). Following McKittrick's (2014) understanding, she is saying we need to seek new ways of engagement with Black violence and erasure, and unfreedom.

The complexities of the archives lay in memory that is embedded in the body, blood memory. Harkin (2017) is very present (Perreault 2010), and Kevin Quashie (2004) suggests that "if memory is corporealized, then the process of coming to (a relationship) memory is an ontological process, a process of becoming and being, a practice" (p. 111). Allowing the body to remember, unpack and

deconstruct the archives in creative ways is not only honouring the dead, but also naming the dead (Saunders 2008, p. 65-9). And in creating and through the process of unpacking, we get to know our ancestors; we bring them to life and take voice for them.

Giving Voice

> I take voice, I give voice, I make space for voice,
> My body lays itself on the line,
> I raise my head and hold it high
> I look ahead and state my claim
> No longer denied my existence
> My memories, my imaginings, my thinking
> I honour my ancestors and bring to life through my voice
> My body. (Faye Rosas Blanch, June 2018)

7.4 Intimate Racist Texts

Following my analysis of Katherine McKittrick's (2006, 2014, 2015) work, this section considers the interplay between two pieces of work undertaken by the Unbound Collective. The first is an artistic installation by Ali Gumillya Baker (2014b, 2018c) of which I offer an analysis, followed by Unbound Collective *Sovereign Act II* (Baker 2015), a performance at North Terrace, in the City of Adelaide, South Australia. I theorise the juxtaposition of both artistic pieces to highlight the notions of mathematics, futurity, and intimacy that connect Baker's installation of *Racist Texts* (2014b, 2018) and the Unbound Collective *Sovereign Act II* performance, highlighting a shifting, and moving through issues of Blackness and being to a place beyond the trauma and violence that have impacted upon Indigenous lives in this country. Christina Sharpe (2016) examines and illuminates how Blackness is an investment by Black people; she states, "we, Black people everywhere and anywhere we are, still produce in, into, and through the wake an insistence on existing: we insist Black being into the wake" (2016, p. 11). I contend that this is the reality for Indigenous Australians.

The 'Wake', for Sharpe (2016), is all and everything that has defined our lives as Black, coloured, and First Peoples, from the slave trade and bodies dumped overboard, to the economic, social, and geopolitical bearing on the lives of *all* Black/Indigenous peoples, to the concept of Wake as key to unpacking and deconstructing elements of trauma and violence that impact upon the lives of us all in the contemporary. However, Sharpe (2016) goes further and investigates what it means to go beyond the wake, that is death and the intimacy of death to bring to the fore life, that is life for us in the now. It is exactly as Gumbs (2012) reflects on Audre Lord's question, "how do I define the shape of my impact upon this earth?" (cited in Gumbs 2012, para. 1). Gumbs (2012) considers the word 'survival' and suggests that "survival has never meant, bare minimum, mere straggling breath, the small space next to the line of death" (Gumbs 2012, para. 2). Survival, according to Gumbs

(2012), references our living in the context of what we have overcome. This an act of refusal. Survival is life after disaster, life in honour of our ancestors despite the genocidal forces that worked against them specifically so we would not exist. I concur with Gumbs. I love the word 'survival' because, as Gumbs says, "it places my life in the context of those who I love, who are called dead, but survive through my breathing, my presence, and my remembering" (2012, para. 3). Surviving racism is what the Unbound Collective Sovereign Acts considers in the performative context, in the spaces and sites of denial, and in the absence of our bodies through the frame of Whiteness and the progression of colonisation into the contemporary.

I explore Sharpe's (2016) conceptualisation of Wake and being in the Wake later in this section to further unpack the ways that Baker's and the Collective's performances reveal what Trouillot means by "The Past – or more accurately, pastness – is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify the past as past" (cited in Sharpe 2016, p. 9). Hence, turning to NourbeSe Philip and her statement that we use the master's tool that was developed out of the master's relationship with us and the unstableness of the archives, we need new language, new grammar to use different ways and to make them ours (cited in Saunders 2008, pp. 70-1). Therefore, in our performance, "we are sovereign women…we chose to act…speak…look…give back…in critical-performative ways…we sing…we weave…we project…we disrupt…in order…to transform…we connect to multiple sites of…past-present-future…and we share this space with you…with love on we are on Kaurna land" (Baker et al. 2015a, p. 4). I acknowledge the work that both Ali Baker as curator and the Collective bring to these spaces and sites of oppression; we create new grammar of place as well as language to make them ours.

With regard to the "fashioning of new tools" (Phillips cited in Saunders 2008, p. 70), I move to the work of Ali Gumillya Baker, community member, researcher, and academic (there are many parts to Ali), in the Bound/Unbound Sovereign Acts Collective and her installation, Racist Texts (2014b, 2018c). I contend that what Baker's artistic installation offers is an illuminating insight into the re-imaging of our beautiful bodies beyond the discourses of ideologies immersed in writings that have captivated the colonisers and settlers' senses of our being. I consider the importance of how language displayed and revealed in such texts allows for the opportunity to take, handle, touch, read, and dismantle to begin to own our narratives. Moreover, I argue that Dr Ali Baker reconfigures such texts in many ways, challenging the Whiteness and knowledge production of each text. In the act of reconfiguring of such racist texts, I contend that they are no longer powerful, that the relationship is different, not all knowing; the colonial and racist discourses positioned in the texts that Baker (2014b, 2018c) reveals is produced out of anthropological modes of inquiry served to displace not only intellectual agency but also political agency, with deeply damaging

consequences. Hence, First Peoples suffer as a result of the racist ideologies contained in such texts (Tallbear 2013a).

7.5 Archival Recording

The importance of an archival record is the basis for how the Unbound Collective situates and signifies each act of performance undertaken; the materiality of each performance is in the potency of getting audience members to sign into a record book, the discarded record, and "the haptic repository of re/collection" (Campt 2017, p. 71) bring to the fore its own reality that changes the power and relationship of unfreedom. Detailed in the underlying performance is how we, the Collective, as a replacement for the monstrous intimacies of the archives and data gathering, positions the audience members as participants in the data gathering and research processes; we turn our experiences with research back upon the White researchers (Baker 2018a; Harkin 2017; Tur 2018; Moreton-Robinson 2015; see also Hemming 2013). I contend that we must allow our knowledge and ways of being to guide us and to engage in a praxis that informs our own positioning. I add below the photograph of Baker's racist texts.

Photograph 7.1 *Racist Texts*. Installation by Ali Baker, 2018, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Photograph Andrew Curtis. Unfinished Business: perspectives on art & feminism, 2017-18.

7.6 A New Grammar

The new grammar speaks to refusal, as detailed by Mirning scholar Ali Gumillya Baker (2018a) and revealed through her extensive and intensive work of acknowledging the past, present, and future. Her art installation, Racist Texts (2014b, 2018c), goes beyond the burden defined as 'savages', 'uncivilised', and 'childlike' (Kidd 1997). This work asks the question, "how does this subjection/abjection feel?" (Baker 2018a, p. 132). In the vein of Sharpe (2010) describing Kara Walker's "paper silhouettes affixed to a white wall" (p. 157), Baker is "allegorizing the antebellum" (Sharpe 2010, p. 157) of her/our history as First Nations peoples and the impact of colonialism upon our bodies (Baker 2018a, pp. 129-33; Sharpe 2010, p. 157).

Through the archival and government documentations in the South Australian Museum, buried in the records and government reports were many bits and pieces of her great grandmother extrapolated from ledgers and reports in which Norman Tindale, Australian anthropologist, archaeologist, entomologist and ethnologist, recorded field work, examination, measured data (numerical), and detailed every aspect of the 'indigenous/aboriginal' body (Baker et al. 2015b). Saidya Hartman (2008) states that, "the archives is a death sentence, a tomb, a display of violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise" (p. 2). The archives are about violence and trauma (Baker et al. 2015b; Baker 2018a; Harkin 2017). How do we move beyond the removal and violation of stolen bodies? Hartman (2008) questions if it is " possible to construct a story from the 'locus of impossible speech' (p. 3), the curve by which every point meets in relationship to the very condition of Aboriginal bodies being removed, examined, and on many occasions sent overseas for scientific purposes and consigned to various museums as an object to be viewed and for the mapping of humanness (Moreton-Robinson 2000; Poignant 2004) that was, for all intents and purposes, a dehumanising process. As Simone Tur (2018, pers. comm., 10 May) through an email exchange reflects on moving beyond dehumanising, she states that, "when I think of the unbound work, our work considers our black bodies beyond eugenics, rations, stolen generations, collections in museums, thousands of racist texts, archival records with dates and notations of our families and objects of physical anthropology". I agree with this statement.

7.7 Intimate Discursive Rhetoric

Ali Baker's gathering of racist texts over the years led to her first artistic installation of racist texts at Fontanelle Art Gallery and Studio, Adelaide, South Australia, in 2014. This first exhibition included a performance of the Bound/Unbound Collective's Sovereign decolonising methodologies of the lived and spoken Act 1, a performance in which Baker (2014a) asserts:

> Who speaks? Who Listens? Who Hears? I was left here for dead. But instead I lived. Chaos descended upon my beautiful grandmother's mother and now we are all here together (Baker 2014 in Bound & Unbound Sovereign Act I: Decolonising Methodologies of the Lived and Spoken).

With racist texts stacked from floor to ceiling, Baker tells the audience, "we are standing in the shadow of the racist texts" (2018a, p. 118). She illuminates such racist texts as "wasteful hateful writing" (2018a, p. 119). For Baker and her exhibition installed at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (Melbourne, Victoria) in 2018, the stacking of the racist texts, one upon another until it stretched from floor to ceiling standing eight feet high, highlights the mathematics, physicality, and the enormity of the texts towering against a white wall, in which the linear horizontal space was filled (2018b). I did not attend this exhibition, however, the images provided reveal its brilliance and I can only imagine the immensity of placing as many racist texts as possible upon each other. Such racist texts constitute a psychological arsenal that fills each library within this country from museums and schools, to every bookshelf in people's homes and gets carried into the waiting rooms of medical centres and doctors' surgeries.

I consider Baker's Racist Texts installation as a move towards greater critical consciousness and a refusal that Moten discusses as, "who refused what has been refused to and imposed upon them, as well as that refusal and imposition" (2018, p. 77). A refusal to accept the violent grammar contained in such texts speaks to the "nothingness" of our personhood (Moten 2018, p. 80) and the ways that the predetermined logic of Whiteness produces its own understanding and knowledge of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are nullified through the concept of terra nullius of both our lands and our living bodies (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2015; Watson 2002, 2007; Wilson 2005). Our beautiful Black bodies are fixed in the history of colonisation as 'past' and works written by White authors are bought to life in the contemporary through the lens of racialisation and its assemblages (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2015; Watson 2007; Weheliye 2014; Wynter 2001; Spillers 1987). In the following chapter, I contextualise my own experiences as an educator from my years of teaching. All too often, like the racist texts (Baker 2018b), curriculum materials and resources do not reflect who we as Indigenous peoples, nor as humans; the mathematics of Blackness is defined in particular ways, as Dionne Brand notes, "the Black body is situated as a sign of a particular cultural and political meanings in the Diaspora…those leaping bodies, those prostrate bodies, those bodies made to dance and then to work, those bodies curdling under the stinging of whips, those bodies cursed, those bodies valued, those bodies remain curved in these attitudes" (cited in Mullins 2011, p. 7). I argue that educational institutions, as sites of power in representing Indigenous peoples, including primary and secondary schools and higher learning, continue to dictate our positioning in such institutions. This will be examined in the following chapter.

Many teachers continue to not see the raced bodies in their classrooms, especially if raced bodies do not have voice. What I hope to do in the context of this chapter and thesis is to situate another way of representing and presenting our bodies, and what better representation than through the theory of performativity and engaging in spaces and sites that are not always available to many Indigenous Australians? I suggest that this is a new lens by which to re-image another narrative to be told and, whilst the racist texts tell of our lives, our bodies are not on offer, our voices are our own, our stories are ours and we can share, if we want to. This is refusal as praxis, being human as praxis, becoming/unbecoming, and embodiment sovereignty.

7.8 Beyond What We are Told

Mapping the contours of our lives, we live bound within the statistics that frame us. The notion of Black/native bodies as economic property and commodities in the world of capitalism is framed in the invention of discourses and language about the 'other' (Fanon 2001; Harkin 2017; Tur 2018; Spillers 1987; Wynter 2001). Being the 'other', as non-human belonging to masters and mistresses, within the scope of the language of ownership, words are like our slaves, our property. Within the Australian context, the concept of 'our aborigines', or 'our natives' situated First People in a specific relationship to the ownership of settler-colonialism, that is one where life is stripped away. As McKittrick states, "the practice of taking away life is followed by the sourcing and citation of racial-sexual death and racial-sexual violence and blackness is (always already and only) cast inside the mathematics of unlivingness, where black comes to be (a bit)" (2014, p. 18). Being positioned as 'our natives' and 'our aborigines' renders the non-humanness of the Aboriginal body and our intimate connection to country (Byrd 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2000; Rifkin 2012).

The unwarranted desire of the coloniser, the anthropologist, the scientist; we are wanted but not wanted, we are needed but not needed; our bodies, our country/s are played out through dispossession, dislocation, and dispersal; the stealing of our lands, and the defining of us through the eugenics of blood quantum. Thus, the scientific gathering of data and blood quantum, the measurement of skulls, the reproduction of faces cast and reproduced (Baker 2018a; Harkin 2017), all to supposedly gain better understanding of the 'aborigine'. The mathematical progression of applying numbers, tags, and concepts of 'civilised' or 'uncivilised' to the bodies and minds of First Peoples left its impact on the futurity of our people in a future that must happen. The projections of text that we, the Unbound Collective, projected on the walls of institutions of power provided insight into a future for us as a people. Tina Campt (2017) provides guidance towards the grammar of futurity. She states that, "the grammar of black feminist futurity is a performance of a future that hasn't yet happened but must" (Campt 2017, p. 17). We, the Unbound Collective, proceed to bring

our future into the present with our performances. Considering that all pieces of artistic endeavour that Ali Baker create and mold are for her children and all Indigenous community members. She states, "those objects and ideas are as powerful as their operation and occupation within the contemporary imagination" (2018b, p. 16). And I concur.

7.9 In the Wake: New Beginnings

Harkin's poem, Cultural Precinct (2016), performed by the Unbound Collective as part of Tarnanthi Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Festival 2015, offers insight into the critique of institutions of power and informs our performance and relationship to these institutions.

Cultural Precinct

these limestone walls frame institutions of power shape the main story this colonial 'free' State / these North Terrace statues bronzed famous faces

symbols of colonialism Empire-revered / next door the Parade Ground original quarry raw materials morph grand buildings abound / limestone mined from

this old Kaurna campsite Red-Kangaroo stories ripped from the ground / these limestone walls these limestone walls / consider this Armoury that housed a morgue

cells and gallows watch our people hang / see mounted police perform military

functions 'pacified' our warriors on colonial frontiers / these wretched walls

this Armoury building hear horses-hooves gallop on cobblestoned blood / this

limestone heritage revered cultural-precinct our bodies stolen de-fleshed and

preserved / these limestone walls these limestone walls /

consider this place the South Australian Museum their proudest collection wins the Empire's great race / an uncanny replica London's Natural History Museum

but what is 'natural' about their history of this place? / they 'set up camp' on great expeditions to study and collect us 'experts' in teams / their

cabinets of curiosity their objects and specimens their racialised hierarchy our

human remains / these limestone walls these limestone walls /
the Migration Museum was the old Protector's Office the Rations Depot the

Colonial Store / blankets and flour sugar and tea the removal of
children the first Kaurna school / and behind the Art Gallery the Radford

Auditorium the ammunitions-store for military-police / then a storage-place
for Aboriginal Records where paper-trails trace surveillance and control /

consider the paperwork the archiving process to consign and classify this
resource maintained / consider this fantasy monolith-archive its stunning all-

knowing so easily sustained / these limestone walls these
limestone walls / strive to navigate this violent place be still and listen

there are waterholes here / these fresh water springs flow a limestone-memory
erode and expose our truth will appear (Harkin 2016).

Like in all poetic engagement and performance, poetry, rap, and spoken word, the interstitial spaces and gaps between time and space allow the world of First Peoples to be seen and another perspective for seeing the world anew, as Leanne Simpson (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2018) tell us. Poetry relates the past, the present, and the future. Harkin's words proclaim acknowledgement of the past, present and future violence in institutions of power. She says, "these limestone walls, frame institutions of power, shape the main story, this colonial 'free' state, their cabinets of curiosity, their objects and specimens, their racialised hierarchy, our human remains, these limestone walls, these limestone walls" (Baker et al. 2015a, p. 26). Contemplating Harkin's words, I argue, constitutes our being and our performance as the Unbound Collective in the space and our understanding of why we were in the spaces that have contained and manipulated representation of our lives—the Migration Museum, the Old Protector's Office, the Rations Depot, and the Colonial store—those spaces where it is hard to breathe, where we are haunted by knowing what this means to us as First Peoples. I contend that Harkin demonstrates insight into those 'hard to breath' spaces by employing spaces between the words of her poem. I am suggesting that, by employing those empty spaces in her poem, she is allowing for a taking of breath, a stopping and starting again, making time for the reader to navigate. The poem is rhythmic and moves across the page and engages as it performs. In the Unbound Collective performance, we moved slowly but surely through the surroundings and, again, as Harkin illuminates, the realities of the institutions of

power that have shaped the history of Indigenous Australians lies in the cartography of this landscape, the geography of space/place, as McKittrick (2006, p. x) contends. We reconfigure our stories, our bodies through performance at such oppressive sites. Our words become imprinted into these limestone walls through visual, textual, digital projections held by hand and sweeping across the Museum, the Armoury building, the State Library, and every brick along the pathway. We navigate and produce the space; we bring the spaces to life. Harkin's poem details every aspect of Indigenous Australians' relationship to the buildings we were engaging with (Baker et al. 2015a) and the history of such colonial spaces and colonial buildings.

7.10 Colonial Institutions

The Collective's performance in the North Terrace Cultural Precinct allowed for encouragement, transformation, and theorising of the importance of disrupting colonial institutional spaces of power and knowledge to bring to the fore new beginnings, and, in doing so, forging new language, new understandings. Sharpe's (2016) work provides the opportunity for evaluating the mathematics, futurity, and intimacy of performing in the Cultural Precinct in the City of Adelaide, South Australia. In her illuminating book, *In the Wake on Blackness and Being*, Sharpe (2016) communicates 'The Wake' as waiting, as celebration, as being in the hold, as containment, and weather, but, more than this, according to Sharpe, 'wake work' demands we not slumber, that we keep awake, that we wake up and pay attention to the work we must do (p. 21). This is the futurity of our lives and holds importance to our personhood and humanness. Ali Baker, curator of the project for the performance of Unbound Sovereign Act II, provides a valuable insight into this moment for us. She states:

> Facing the cultural precinct… In this space there is nothing between us and the stars. We return the gaze upon us and shed from us like a cocoon all manner of abjection; we project little and big illuminations onto the outside back walls of the South Australian State Library, South Australian Museum building and Armoury Building along the North Terrace precinct of Adelaide, South Australia. On Kaurna land. What are the possibilities of our relational sovereignty? (Baker et al 2015b, p. 9).

Revisiting moments of the performance, I consider how Sharpe's (2016) being 'in' and 'through' the wake situates our bodies; how we got to where we are and the shape of our impact (Gumbs 2012) on the lives of others within the space of our performance. Being 'in the wake' was demonstrated at the opening of the Tarnanthi Festival at the Art Gallery in Adelaide in 2015, where the Unbound Collective showcased its work as part of the opening. We began our performance with five of us departing from a brick building and moving slowly across the bricks and onto the grassed area behind the Art Gallery of South Australia. We unearthed out ancestors and, as we began the movement towards the Art gallery, a thought entered my mind, and hence my body, with a feeling;

it felt like I was rising from the earth, that I was my grandmother, my mothers, my sisters. I was standing in for them in this moment, at this time. The effect upon my body filled me with love and respect for my Indigeneity, my Blackness, my body, my humanness, and for my sister performers and scholars. We projected words of wisdom and love onto the white canvas of a tent moving in circles around and across each other.

> Am I not Human
> Am I not bleeding
> Am I not here
> Am I not strong
> Am I not listening
> Am I not clean
> Am I not sad
> Am I not happy
> Am I not free
> Am I not smart
> Am I not dead
> Am I not HUMAN (Faye Rosas Blanch, July 2018).

The main performance was located behind the South Australian Museum and through spaces of institutions that have been oppressive to Indigenous peoples in South Australia. As we emerge from behind the State Library with renowned community and Kaurna Elder, Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien, and I see about 200 or more people in the audience. The space for our performance is measured, ready to be filled. Our bodies move into this space and I am mesmerised by how our bodies move in time with each other. Uncle Lewis welcomes all to his country. He tells the story of the first light that appears (O'Brien cited in Baker, Blanch, Harkin & Tur 2015b, p. 14).

We move as a collective in our paperbark shirts with lights to illuminate their affect. The skirts are heavy and we use every muscle in our shoulders, stomach, and neck to hold the skirts. The skirts are held on our shoulders by a strong black band. We move cautiously and slowly, always conscious of each other. We see members of families, friends, and colleagues. There are also strangers in the audience; we wish them well; we wish them goodness and love. We move in time with the haunting playing of the violin by Simone's daughter, Kate Inawantji Morrison. She is solid in the performance she is our future. We trust each other in these institutional and colonising spaces. I assert that we speak without voice and this adds further insight into our performance. Without speaking, we relate our feelings to and of the performance; we tell of our ancestors, their journey, we push through the boundaries that have kept us bound. We free ourselves of the unfreedom, we engage in a celebration like a wake. As Sharpe (2016) relates, "in the wake, in the past that is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present, we defend the dead" (pp. 9-10), and we defend the living. Our beautiful bodies in this space of oppression are challenging. We are aware of the power and authority that is held within the halls and walls of such institutions. Our bodies also hold power,

we carry stories of our ancestors long past, yet still with us. We are no longer chained, no longer bound, unshackled, we are confident and strong in these spaces. McKittrick (2006) offers insight into the ways that Black women and the cartographies of struggles our grandmothers, great-grandmothers, mothers, and ourselves live with every day.

7.11 The Poetics of Moving Across Landscape

Thinking beyond the Museum, the archives, the institutions of power, and working within sites that hold deep trauma, I consider the ways that our performance engages with self-determining governance and refusal. Having control over how our bodies move through and beyond sites of oppression, we communicate and bear witness to our histories of exclusion (Baker et al. 2015b). The violent records that tell of us in the archives give rise to another story/s (Harkin 2015). We give love poems to audiences at our performances, and this makes us strong and confident to tell our stories; we are intellectual warriors, sovereign women, we claim our right to be here (Baker et al. 2015b). Tur (in Baker et al. 2015b) highlights our performance as rein-scribing the space, the sites, the stories. She states, "it's like a gift, to say this is another story – a different story". Our bodies shift to another level, as we, as Harkin (in Baker et al. 2015a) notes, "repatriate our love ones" (p. 25).

In thinking through the repatriation of our loved ones, and loving who we are as Yidiniji/Mbabaram, Mirning, Nurrunga, and as Yankunytjatjara, we First Peoples are vulnerable to racialised representations and power structures, but we engage in refusal to go beyond the mathematics, fungibility, futurity, and intimacy to enable what 'self' and 'country' might mean in the present and the future. I argue that we are 'unbecoming' in those moments of performance.

Turning to what is being undertaken in First Nations communities provides strength and guidance towards a sense of governance, care, and wellbeing for our bodies and our communities. The work of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) and their community is one such effort; 'Speaking as Country' is embedded in the elders who have passed (see Hemming & Rigney, 2018). Laid alongside is the *Irati Wanti Poison Leave It Campaign* undertaken by a group of strong activist A̲nangu Elders, grandmother/mothers, and feminists and their campaign against the Australian and State governments to not use their traditional lands/country as a dumping ground for nuclear waste materials (Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta 2005). I contend that, throughout Australia, many First Nations language groups are creating a viable and positive future for their communities and continue to care for and as country.

In concluding this chapter, I argue that the importance of sharing our stories, our archives, our vulnerabilities, our performances, our strength, our activism, our bodies, and our voices is contextualised in the present and future of our young Indigenous community and through education. I have provided a critique of how racist texts, as revealed by Baker (2018b), can formulate a new grammar and as does Harkin's (2016) poetic description of the cultural precinct in Adelaide, South Australia, where the hybrid of European culture positions its own knowledge production about First Peoples' bodies. I show also the progression of deconstructing and unpacking of colonialism that underpins Western understandings of First People by highlighting the Unbound Collective's performances; our sovereignty is maintained in our performances and demonstrated through our artistic installations and record keeping. In the next chapter, I draw from our performances, how bodies in those interstitial spaces create voice and narratives of positive becoming/unbecoming to offer Indigenous youth opportunity to shift their own engagement with education and how knowledge informs their learning.

CHAPTER 8 PRACTICES AND PRAXIS OF FREEDOM: INTIMACY IN THE CLASSROOM

> …understand the ways in which the field of curriculum has continued to absorb, silence, and replace the non-white other, perpetuating white supremacy and settlerhood (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández 2013, p 72-3).

> Our hometown was a massacre place. People called it taboo (Scott, K 2016, p. 3).

> …we exist through how the concept of culture is seen (Moreton-Robinson 2015, p. xv).

8.1 Introduction

This chapter follows the key concepts of sovereignty, becoming/unbecoming, human as praxis, refusal, and decolonising practice, charted and discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis to foreshadow decolonising practices in schooling for Indigenous students. Contextualisation of the relationship between the coloniser and colonised bodies is one of intimacy, I argue, and lies within the experiences of violent acts and processes of dehumanisation of Indigenous peoples that underpin the relationship that Indigenous youth have with contemporary society, both socially and educationally (Baker et al. 2015a; Blanch 2011, 2013, 2016, 2018; Blanch & Worby 2010). In this chapter, I provide a critical analysis of education and educational spaces as institutions of knowledge production. I discuss the processes of decolonisation and a critical anti-racist framework, toward a praxis of humanness and a 'new science' as well as freedom (Baker et al. 2015a, 2015c, Cesaire 1950; Fanon 2001; McKittrick 2015) in those colonial knowledge production spaces.

In articulating a new science through a pedagogical process of decolonisation, I assert a critical anti-racist framework (Sefa Dei 2017) that joins with Weheliye's (2014) theorisation around "what it means to be human…the liberation in the future interior of the now" (p. 16) and Moodie's (2018) suggestion that, as Indigenous peoples, we "assert the right to shifting modalities of our own, based on the recognition of Indigenous ownership and occupation of land" (p. 33). These important components, I argue, can be contextualised in the key concept of sovereignty, and lead to self-determination, wellness, and safety in a racialised framework of education for Indigenous Australian families in the aftermath of colonialism.

A decolonising practice allows for those hard and dangerous spaces to be unpacked, inserting and re-inserting Indigenous knowledge production, skills, and ways of being as central to teaching and learning, and forwarding Indigenous youth not as 'problematic' but human in context. I contend that seeing Indigenous students as human is key to practices of decolonisation. I argue that

"homogeneity impacts greatly on how schools represent the interests of Indigenous students and whether or not teachers see Indigenous students and their needs in schooling" (Blanch 2018, p. 28). Further, I assert that education plays a huge role in understanding the complexities that come with students' human experiences and recognising Indigenous students' background is a significant factor that shapes a sense of belonging to inform feelings of being 'cared for' within the classroom (MacGill & Blanch 2013). Caring for and understanding students' needs in schooling, and factoring in their relationship to country, is key to the processes of decolonisation. Extending on the key concepts of human as praxis, belonging, and decolonisation, I draw from Sefa Dei's articulation of reframing Blackness. He argues that:

> A critical scholarship on Blackness is, and must be, about anti-racist practice, and particularly resistance to anti-Black racism, as well as the pursuit of decolonial and anti-colonial praxis (2017, p. 3).

The context of Indigenous students' educational experiences leads me to a progression of a decolonising framework, key to those Western practices of naming and knowledge production that continue to deny Indigenous students autonomy and agency in sites of power and authority over those who are named and invented and conceptualised as 'disadvantaged' (Blanch 2016, Sefa Dei 2017). The deficit concept of disadvantage with regard to Indigenous schooling experiences is politicalised as such. I reject this tagging of Indigenous students' bodies and worldview and postulate that, "Indigenous students' representations are still filtered through the lens of the viewer (for example, white teachers), which interpolates the colonised body in a way that fixes their identity in relationship to the observer" (Blanch 2018, p. 28).

Many First Nations scholars and their colleagues reiterate identity and cultural affirmation of Indigenous and Blackness as key to humanness in general (Baker 2018a; Hemming & Rigney 2018; McMillan & Rigney 2016; Morgansen 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2007, 2015; Blanch 2009, 2011, 2016, 2018; Tur 2018). In the deconstructing of racialisation and domination of Whiteness within curriculum, schooling, and universities (Blanch 2016; Bunda 2017; Hemming & Rigney 2018; Tur 2018), the discursive rhetoric of success and failure for Indigenous students continues to be framed within a grammar of deficits, naming Indigenous students as 'disadvantaged' (Blanch 2016; Tuck & Yang 2014; Walter & Andersen 2013). Indigenous peoples, according to Brayboy (cited in Moodie 2018, p. 37), "occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialised natures of our identities". Consequently, the social construction of Indigenous identities in the educational and political imaginary divulges an essentialised representation of Indigenous and colonial settler personhood and voice (Moodie 2018, pp. 34-5). Decolonising practice in education challenges such

essentialised representations and naming to overturn such racist representations and shifts the discourse from non-human to human (Moodie 2018; Rigney et al. 2020; Smith, LT 2012).

8.2 Governance in Schooling and Community

Challenging these representations reveals the strategic engagement of Indigenous students and community in curriculum development in schooling, and how sovereignty is embedded in these constructs. McMillan and Rigney argue for the contextualisation of resistance and activism and shaping of governance as deployment for the rights of first nations peoples (cited in Moodie 2018, p. 39). McMillan and Rigney posits that relationality exists within international recognition of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and transnational solidarity between Indigenous groups in addition to the evolving nature of state sovereignty that has profound implications for how the 'raced' assemblage of indigeneity is being reconstructed as a political tool to seek justice (McMillan & Rigney cited in Moodie 2018, p. 39). Building strong relationships with other Indigenous peoples in the international context fosters greater awareness and offers opportunity for the disruption and decolonisation of White settler states and their relationships to First Peoples. This, in context, can enable the development of a shared relationship for Indigenous young people across the globe to allow greater opportunities for education. An engagement with decolonisation enables acts of humanness and solidarity.

I draw from two articles that drive this chapter and inform pre-service teachers in both second year of the bachelor's degree and master's students in Initial Teacher Education at Flinders University, South Australia: *Considering racialized assemblages and the Indigenous educator's body in tutoring spaces* (Blanch 2016); and *Indigenous Australian youth, identity, rap/hip hop, a tool for wellbeing and care* (Blanch 2018). Both pieces speak to the experiences associated with schooling and educational spaces of knowledge production, and underpin the key concepts of sovereignty, human as praxis, refusal, unbecoming/becoming, and the practices of decolonisation, as discussed throughout this thesis.

The reality of Indigenous academics teaching about Indigenous issues to mainly non-Indigenous students is revealed as needing further development in understanding how hard this can be at times (Blanch 2016). I consider the concept of human as praxis (Blanch 2016; McKittrick 2015) and turn to Johnson's (2017) discussion on the ways that Black and Indigenous bodies are demarcated from the privilege of humanness by the violence of history. He argues that, "the flesh is inseparable from oppressive history, so it radically lands it's blow on the body for generations to come" (p. 28).

As an Indigenous academic within a higher education setting, I find that, at times, breathing spaces are required to rejuvenate to gather one's thoughts, to search through one's knapsack for the right tools to ensure that teaching about Indigenous Australian students, mainly to non-Indigenous pre-service teachers, is performed through an ethic of care for both teacher and learner. I argue further that Indigenous academics teaching about oppressive historical and current practices, and racialised ideas that are present and embodied within our everyday, require cultural safety and self-preservation strategies. I contend that the importance of revealing the worldview of Indigenous students is to ensure that when first-time teachers meet and work with Indigenous students, they see them and engage in ethically and responsible teaching strategies in their roles as educators (Blanch 2016; MacGill & Blanch 2013. To 'see them' means pre-service teachers need to see Indigenous educators and students as humans and of worth. Therefore, an intimate knowing is required.

Further, I posit that the global phenomenon of Indigenous rap and hip hop as a critical anti-racist education strategy can contribute positively to safety, identity, and wellbeing to allow for successful learning through voice to influence their own contribution in and to the learning sphere (Blanch 2009a, 2018). I contend that the theoretical concepts and the elements within the genre of rap and hip hop, when used wisely and with critical consciousness by teachers, can engage Indigenous Australian students and change stereotypical attitudes by other members of society to frame Indigenous students as simply being 'human'. Katherine McKittrick (2015) describes the work of Sylvia Wynter as key to anti-colonialism and a progression towards humanness. She states that:

> to engage her research and ideas is not, then, to take up a purely discursive text; rather, her work reveals intellectual life and struggle…brings into focus the dimensions of human life itself through her intensely provocative intellectual concerns and the correlated practice of cognition: a mind at work/everything is praxis (p. 7).

It is in the vein of intellectual life and struggle that I occupy a provocative process that demands of me transversal movement across the boundary of not human to humanness and sovereignty. Furthermore, traversing the complexities of 'unfreedom' and the monstrous intimacies (Sharpe 2010) that lie within the ways that society determines right to citizenship and the way Indigenous statistics frame narratives of, and about, Indigenous students (Walter & Andersen 2013; Blanch 2018). After the elements of colonisation and its impact upon the lives of Indigenous peoples, in consideration of pedagogically sound understanding and learning, and extending upon humanness, I explore the geographical terrains, spaces, and zones of indistinction (Rifkin 2009) which impacted upon the bodies of our youth in various ways and their engagement in contact zones (MacGill & Blanch 2013) that can be dangerous.

8.3 Decolonising the Colonial "Gaze"

The contact zones that Indigenous students encounter in their journey throughout their education can be dangerous and inhibiting at times. Therefore, challenging the position of how Indigenous bodies are viewed and signified within those spaces is important to the conceptualisation of human as praxis, refusal, sovereignty, and unbecoming. Drawing from Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics (Blanch 2016; Phillips & Bunda 2019; MacGill & Blanch 2013 O'Brien & Rigney 2006; Tur & Tur 2006; Worby, Tur & Blanch 2014) writing into the ways that colonisation continue to impact upon our Indigenous students' relationship with schooling is discussed here. I work through what it means for Indigenous students to carry their relationship with 'country' into classroom spaces. Rigney et al. (2020) provide conceptualisation of culturally responsive pedagogy as a radical shift toward decolonising practices, and posit that:

> for thousands of years, Aboriginal epistemologies and ways of practicing literacy and numeracy have involved the body and senses as well as the mind. In acknowledging these important relationships, it seems appropriate that a CRP would engage with the centrality of the body to learning…Artistic practices also emerge from the mind and body (p. 5).

These rich and deep experiences accordingly allow for critical consciousness raising and permit students to "notice what there is to be noticed" (Greene cited in Rigney et al. 2020). Rigney et al. further highlight that, "in line with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices, the arts have been used consistently to express historical and contemporary issues, and more specifically as a pedagogy for decolonization" (Rigney et al. 2020, p. 5). I argue in previous chapters that, as a result, the creative and performative practices of the Unbound Collective's Sovereign Acts strategically detail engaging in a decolonisation praxis to disrupt colonial interpretations of Indigenous bodies in the wider community. Further, the performances that link to the methodology of decolonisation inform Indigenous students engaging in those educational spaces where they might find themselves the opportunity take up a position to enact simply being human as praxis (Blanch 2018).

8.4 Country Speaks

Turning the gaze on colonisation and settler states in Australia, Hemming and Rigney (2018) argue for the wellbeing of country within the governance of the Ngarrindjeri community of the Coorong in South Australia. Envisioning a future of wellbeing and "speaking as country" brings forth healthy lands and waters, safety, and rights for the Ngarrindjeri community (Hemming & Rigney 2018, pp. 17-8). The *Ngarrindjeri Yarluwar-Ruwe Plan*, according to Hemming and Rigney, "offers a new methodology and a new discourse for engaging with traumatic history of colonialism in the Lower Murray Region of South Australia" (2018, p. 19). Professor Irene Watson stated that "we have

managed this country before invasion and continue to manage our country whilst, under duress from the tenets of colonialism" at the *Thinking Relationally about Race, Blackness and Indigeneity in Australia Conference* in Sydney, Australia (Watson 2018). Speaking as country informs sovereignty for First Peoples in this country.

I postulate that 'speaking as country' can be a key factor to successful educational outcomes, and engaging the intellectual scholarship of Indigenous academics, I articulate, for a deeper critical analysis of Indigenous/Black history to occur to bring to the centre marginalised bodies, as well as a refusal to see ourselves as only engaging in liberatory strategies if we are seen by settler states as *only* resisting hegemony (Weheliye 2014). James Johnson (2017) states that racism plagues Black life today and a state solution has yet to present itself, therefore, does there exist freedom in the suffering of racism that cannot be redressed by the liberal state? His move to do so begins with his conception of race or 'racializing assemblages', and argues that each is predicated on the bodies and flesh of Blackness and, I suggest, Indigeneity, the intersection of Whiteness, racialisation and how Indigenous students experience daily connection with schooling is underpinned by the political violent domains of racism. James Johnson (2017) leans upon Weheliye's (2014) articulation of how the layered interconnectedness of politics, racialisation and being human needs recalibration. Weheliye states:

> Focusing on the layered interconnectedness of political violence, racialization, and the human, I contend that the concepts of bare life and biopolitics, which have come to dominate contemporary scholarly considerations of these questions, are in dire need of recalibration if we want to understand the workings of and abolish our extremely uneven global power structures defined by the intersections of neoliberal capitalism, racism, settler colonialism, immigration, and imperialism, which interact in the creation and maintenance of systems of domination: and dispossession, criminalization, expropriation, exploitation, and violence that are predicated upon hierarchies of racialized, gendered, sexualized, economized, and nationalized social existence (Weheliye 2014, pp. 1-2).

The subjugation of Indigenous students' bodies in those spaces where 'bare life' dictates worthlessness beyond the defining of humanness is underpinned by Weheliye's (2014) conceptualisation of 'racialised assemblages' and is intertwined and identified with the above quote. This can also be formulated in the words of Fanon: "My body was returned to me spread-eagled, disjointed, redone, draped in mourning on this white winter's day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is wicked, the Negro is ugly" (2008, p. 93). In the context of racialising assemblages, Weheliye (2014) demands that we "understand race not as a biological or cultural descriptor, but as a conglomerate of political tenets that designate a changing system of unequal power structures that delimits which humans can lay claim to full human status and which cannot" (cited in Johnson 2017, p. 42). In previous chapters, I detailed the conceptualisation of human as praxis, refusal, and sovereignty to unpack the racialised assemblages as articulated by Weheliye

(2014). Weheliye sees 'racialising assemblages' as the long, historical, and repeated brutalisation, domination, and violence that has engendered bare life and maintains Western state power structures (cited in Johnson 2017).

Ghanaian academic George Sefa Dei (2017) suggests that we must "reclaim our experiences, histories and the past in ethical and responsible ways" (p. 14), understanding that while, colonisation impacted upon Indigenous and coloured bodies differently its impact upon our bodies were violent. I would argue that this violence upon our bodies continues in the educational space for Indigenous students. Sylvia Wynter (cited in McKittrick 2015) puts forth the idea of "creative-intellectual project of reimaging what it means to be human and thus rearticulating who/what we are" (p. 2). I posit that we, as colonised bodies, refuse, resist, reassert, and reimagine our bodies as grounded in our country/s and our historical ontologies (Baker et al. 2015a, 2015b). We, as educators, researchers, and academics, work through the violent concept of the 'hold' (Sharpe 2016) that continues in various ways to impact upon our bodies in those university and schooling spaces.

8.5 In the Hold, Violent Intimacies

Being grounded in our country and sovereignty, the concept of refusal to colonial understandings of our bodies, I argue, provides for deep critical analysis of the trauma of past and its continuation in our modern lives. McKittrick (2006) argues that those who have a stake in the production of space forget or have no understanding of the relationship between race and difference incorporation into social, political and economic patterns and the connection Black/Indigenous bodies have with space and place (p. 14). McKittrick further notes that "measuring blackness in fact begins to reveal that there are other ways that race makes itself known in the landscape" (2014, p. 15).

While there is a strong resemblance to how Indigenous youth are seen in the landscape of Australian society, through the continual surveillance mechanisms, our youth are forever trying to find ways to keep their 'self' safe from harm. Turning to Harney and Moten (2015), I contemplate the big question of those dangerous spaces, and through Harney and Moten ask, "How can we survive genocide?" Harney and Moten suggest that this can be understood through "studying how we have survived genocide" (2015, p. 81). Within the domain of education and the development of curriculum, Indigenous concepts, ideas, and thoughts continue to sit outside the knowledge production of Western epistemic ideology. I argue for a critical consciousness raising that must occur for teaching and learning, and how to "bring our own vested interest when producing knowledge" (Sefa Dei 2017, p. 4) and strategic ways of protecting and keeping safe our youth (Blanch 2009a, 2016, 2019). I provide examples of the trauma and violence that sit with the realities

of youth's ontological worldview within today's society and how this is carried into the classrooms today.

In my experiences of classroom teaching and engagement, what is insinuated by teachers is the colour mute (Pollock 2004) of young Indigenous bodies and the viewing of their bodies within schooling system (Blanch 2009b, 2018). Colour mute drawing from Pollock (2004) is the articulation of the various ways that race is played out in the everyday and knowledge making of the Indigenous and Black/coloured bodies that appear seemingly void of any connection to self and being. This chapter is arguing that there must be a re-imagining and knowing of Indigenous students as First Peoples and the governance of their bodies as embodied in place, space and country in the Australian context (Hemming & Rigney 2018; Moreton-Robinson 2015). Indigenous students know country, and on whose lands, they are situated; they know the trauma and history of place and space, they are very much aware of their own sovereignty. An example is, as Indigenous author and teacher Kim Scott's words highlight, "our hometown was a massacre place. People called it taboo" (2016, p. 3). We relate such stories to our young, we want to keep them safe, however, the absence that is entailed within the settler colonial understanding is hidden and our young often find themselves unsafe and can at times follow a path of unknowing. How do we signify in the domains of curricula the becoming and unbecoming of Indigenous relationship with schooling and our refusal of always maintaining our intimate connection to country and sovereignty in hard spaces?

8.6 Fallen Bodies

The unsafeness of our youth is revealed in the intimate relationships that our bodies have with the settlement of this country; our ongoing relationship with the police is based on surveillance and keeping in check our rights as peoples. Hence, I argue that the fallen bodies of young Indigenous Australians continue to occur within police cells and under the eyes of governmental bodies that hold power in this country. The state police in each case of death in custody contribute to the ongoing genocide of Indigenous bodies that impacts violently upon Indigenous people's wellbeing and safety (Giannopoulous 2019). Christina Sharpe (2016) highlights the concept of 'the hold' and states that, "the hold repeats and repeats and repeats in and into the present, into the classroom, into the hospital, into the police cell" (p. 90). Sharpe (2016) further conceptualises that in the hold and of the hold, "we understand the compulsions of capital in our always-possible deaths. But these bodies nevertheless try to exceed those compulsions of capital they, we, inhabit knowledge that Black bodies is the sign of immi/a/nent death. These are the accounts of the hold in the contemporary" (p. 71). And Sylvia Wynter suggest Sharpe, "has told us: *the function of the curriculum is to structure what we call 'consciousness, and therefore certain behaviors and*

attitudes" (cited in Sharpe 2016, p. 92). Sharpe further state that, "these certain curricular attitudes structure our, all of our consciousness" and we are, "locked in a violent arithmetic" (2016, pp. 92 7).

It is the concepts of mathematics, futurity and intimacy that I employ to critique the police's relationship with our young. I look at two cases in Australia on the treatment of Indigenous youth in youth detention centres to show the importance of allowing conversations and teaching of ethical safety in our classrooms. The CCTV evidence in the cases of Koorie man, David Dungay, and Noongar woman, Julie Ivanna Dhu (The Guardian 2016, 2018), provides insight into the hold and the unsafety of our youth. The handling of both David Dungay and Julie Dhu's cases brings to the fore just how unsafe the world is for our youth, as further critique of the youth in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Northern Territory, Australia demonstrates (see Blanch 2018). What is left out of the equation is the fact that two family members are still awaiting justice for their loved ones. Holding cells become the space and place where death can occur; it's never safe. What are the holding cells and what is the significance of such a space? Christina Sharpe (2016) articulates the hold as "the first language the keepers of the hold use on the captives, it is the language of violence" (p. 70).

Regarding the holding and handling of young Indigenous bodies, the CCTV footage reveals hardness, an unwantedness, not wanting to care, a throw, a smash, a drag, limpness, uncaring, held down, choke, hold, can't breathe, sick, help, inhumane, hate; there is so much that is reflected in the relationship between the police on duty in each of these cases. I draw from Harney and Moten's (2015) articulation that "the state can't live with us and it can't live without us" (p. 83). The violence that is enacted upon the bodies of our young within prison and detention systems, according to Harney and Moten, is war against its own resources and condition. Harney and Moten further postulate that the violent reaction is in "life itself, which is the earth itself, which Blackness doesn't so much stand in for as name, as a name among others, that is just a name among others (2015, p. 83). I insert my voice:

It repeats and repeats and repeats

Death occurs
Death awaits, I see
I am never ready
But I know it's coming
I can't breathe, I can't breathe
Held down
Choke hold
Not free, never free
Hard, drag, smash, throw
My body is nothing
My voice is nothing
I scream can't breathe
I'm sick, something is wrong
Unwanting, not wanting, no need
I am always at war
My life flashes by, I cry
Where am I
How did I end up here?
Detained, detention
In the hold beaten and bruised
I can't breathe
(Faye Rosas Blanch 2018)

brutal
I don't know when
I am no longer
Am I to be remembered
Will you remember
I am flesh
Your flesh our flesh
We are same
Blood runs red
Bright, living, alive
through my veins
My beautiful body, mind
In the hold, lingering
I can't breathe, can't breathe
I Can't breathe, Can't breathe
I Can't breathe I can't breathe
I can't breathe, I can't breathe
Can't breathe, STILL….

The complexities and entanglement that are derived from our everyday relationship with colonisation and the positions of authority must allow for the educational spaces to unpack, deconstruct, and rupture the unsafeness within learning centres like schools and universities. Hemming and Rigney (2018) argue that the complexity of re-building the Ngarrindjeri shares similar understandings and narratives with other nations, both internationally and domestically, and needs to be incorporated into educational programmes (p. 18). We all, as Australian citizens, have a greater responsibility to know our history; both the Black and White history of this country and acknowledge the experiences of Indigenous peoples to enable a process of moving forward. How much longer must we have to survive the trauma and the violence of the 'hold' as our youth continue to find strategic ways to survive? It is beauty and testament to their love, their being, and their belonging to this land and country.

8.7 Matters of Love

To allow Indigenous students engagement as sovereign and human as praxis, I argue for a process of decolonisation and a decolonising of our minds and bodies (wa Thiong'o 1986) as 'captive' in colonisation. Further, I argue that love is key to our identity, our belonging, and our being. As First Peoples, we must break the chains that have bound us to engage our youth in the process of becoming sovereign and unbecoming the violent and stereotypical labels that have defined First Peoples. We, as sovereign bodies, must love who we are and continue to stand in refusal (Moten 2018).

The politics and ethics of engaging in a pedagogical practice of love, according to Glass (2009), reveals how "love opens the door to such insight which enables people to see they are connected" (p. 419). There is a need for engagement as humans within the learning and teaching spaces of our schools and universities (Blanch 2016, 2018). I also consider the words of Kaurna elder, Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien, and his insightful understanding of Kaurna people as educators (O'Brien, L 2021, pers. comm., 10 February). Uncle Lewis speaks with love and generosity each time we, as a collective, engage with him. He opens our minds to the wealth of knowledge that comes from the relationality of *being* and living on Kaurna country. This is what we want as Indigenous academics and teachers for our students. We want our students to engage with understanding aspects of coloniality and the impact upon the bodies and minds of both Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students. It is, therefore, with love and respect that I consider a framework for engaging students in schooling positively. I insert the profound gift of words that Uncle Lewis gifted to Flinders University and state that there is no absence in Kaurna belonging in site of education. This poem also offers a deep philosophical insight into the country on which I teach, and students learn and reminds me of the connection to country that Kaurna people have. It reminds me also of my connection to Yidiniji/Mbabaram country while out of country. This is sovereignty, human as praxis, and unbecoming.

> Wardlipari is the homeriver in the Milky Way.
> Purlirna kardlarna ngadluku
> Miyurnaku yaintya tikkiarna.
>
> The stars are the fires of people living there.
> Yurarlu yurakauwi trruku-ana padninthi Wardlipari.
>
> Yurakauwi the rainbow serpent goes
> In the dark spots in the Milky Way.
> Ngaiyirda karralika kawingka.
>
> When the outer world and the sky connect
> With the water and the two become one.
>
> (Original verse by Uncle Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien in O'Brien & Baker 2019, p. 49).

Within the framework of looking for a process of accountability, love re-emerges as an ethical and wellbeing foundation to begin the movement towards a socially and political format to begin engaging young Indigenous adults in this country in the contemporary postmodern world (Edelstein 2009; hooks 2001). Looking deep within oneself can give rise to disruption of self and how oneself can begin the examination of finding those gaps that have impacted on self. The embodiment of 'shame' and the entanglement of colonisation have impacted upon us in various ways and "shame" is a concept that, for a long time, has been the driving force for why we (Indigenous Australians)

are at loggerheads with the racialisation of society. At times we may feel incapable of love, care, and wellbeing for community. My intention is not to be the voice for all Indigenous Australians, but contend that the traumatic experiences that have impacted upon our lives since invasion and the intergenerational traumatic experiences continue into modern day Australia, as I have stated throughout this thesis.

8.8 Self-awareness

Examining not only my own sense of self as educator and learner, as well as a community member, I also consider the 'self' of others, especially in the context of futurity in connection to our youth (Campt 2017). Considering the situations that many academics find themselves in, it is important, I argue, to address what Edelstein (2009, p. 839) and Sandoval (2000) state as the relationship to power and language and meaning as well as racial difference, and how it informs knowledge production in a global context. The foundation to love needs a definition of something much more than just feelings to explain it; it needs, as hooks (2001) would argue, respect, trust, value and, justice which is very much inclusive of action. Michael Eric Dyson states that "justice is what love sounds like when it speaks in public" (2003, p. 301) Love brings action; love allows for refusal and resistance, and unbecoming. As hooks argues:

> we need to create a community and society where black people feel loved, accepted and appreciated and loved by their own people. Salvation calls for us to return to love an ethics of love as a platform for us to renew progressive and self-determination (hooks 2001, p. xxiv).

The reality of an Indigenous academic teaching about Indigenous issues and Indigenous studies to mainly non-Indigenous students is revealed as needing further development of the understanding of how difficult this can be at times (Blanch 2016; Tur 2018). As an academic senior lecturer, I, along with other Indigenous academics, ask the questions, "how are we seen in such spaces?" and "what do we bring to the educational spaces of knowledge production?" (Baker, A 2020, pers. comm., 12 May). We, as Indigenous people, need breathing spaces to turn away from those contact zones to rejuvenate and gather our thoughts, to ensure that teaching about Indigenous Australian students to many non-Indigenous pre-service teachers in the sphere of university is safe (Blanch 2016). I suggest that decolonial spaces like the Nunga room offer many possibilities for connecting to safety and care (Blanch 2009a).

8.9 Nunga Rooms

The theoretical conceptualisation of Nunga rooms is that they can be a space for 'temporary segregation' from the demands and danger of unsafe spaces like the classroom, the school yard, and the school hallways in which raced bodies are under surveillance and profiled (Blanch 2009a,

2009b, 2018). The Nunga room is a classroom allocated for the benefit of Indigenous students; it is educational space, community members gathering space, it can also be a managing space, at all times it is a space that offers refuge (Blanch 2009a). The Nunga room is a space that allows for unbecoming, being human as praxis, and sovereignty in relationship to matters of love and loving self (Blanch & Worby 2010). Michael Eric Dyson (2000) draws from the voice of Martin Luther King Jr. when he says, "there are points at which I see the necessity for temporary segregation in order to get to the integrated society…we don't want to be integrated out of power, we want to be integrated into power" (p. 115). Temporary segregation, according to Dyson (2000), is "a means to preserve political power, consolidate economic resources and shore up psychological strength" (p. 115). Thinking about Indigenous students, family members, and community, as well as Indigenous academics and teachers, the key words that jump out at me are "preserve", "consolidate", and "shore up". These words are key to Indigenous sense of place and belonging in Nunga rooms, but it also lies within the humanness and sovereignty of First Nations youths.

Examining further the safety of Nunga rooms as a conceptual space for successful learning as a decolonising practice, and supporting wellbeing and care for Indigenous students, I insert the voices of Indigenous students and the Indigenous Education Worker (AEW) from my 2007 research with young Nunga males at a school site. The mixed emotions of having a space like the Nunga room is evident in particular ways; on the one hand, it's great having a Nunga room and, on the other, it defeats the purpose of integrating all students in the learning classroom spaces. The Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) feels that "All them mob, the teachers, always think that the Nunga room is just where they send the kids if they problems". The AEW suggest that the Nunga Room might be seen as causing segregation. However, allowing the space for students who are non-Indigenous, the AEW invites those students also into the space and says, "You can come in, don't be scared, any friends of --- can come in here" (Blanch 2009a, pp.66-7). What is often perceived in these discourses is a sense of social justice but also a seemingly dysfunctional articulation of how the Nunga room is viewed by the school community (Blanch 2009a). In this context, therefore, the Nunga room is seen as a site for behaviour issues, yet also learning and wellbeing for students, and a space for social gathering. I also argue that the Nunga room plays a subversive role in resistance and refusal and is contested space that gets knocked down but is built up again through empowerment and transformation (Blanch 2009a). The Nunga room is a space that gets negotiated each time students and community members enter and shift the space and how the space is embodied. The space provides opportunity for mapping and rapping their lives and experiences of schooling, and the space offers creating history and memories against the dominant interest of

Western knowledge. I include the voice of one young Indigenous male's interpretation of the Nunga Room:

> I haven't been in here a lot of times but the way I look at it, yeah pictures on the wall, like Aboriginal drawings and stuff. Yeah, it's like a home, you know what I'm trying to say? Its like a home for like the black kids cause, they know they're welcome here and stuff like that yeah (Participant B2K, Blanch 2009a, p. 71).

To contextualise further I give voice to this quote through a rap/spoken word/poem.

> Home, Home, my place for safe,
> Comfort zone, alone
> In times of worry, times of need,
> Greed brings me here
> To see my family, friends and countrymen,
> When I need
> Reminding of how it was,
> Is, can be, drawings on the wall
> All done by us fellas, joy flows through me,
> Welcoming is
> True, pictures tell the stories,
> Posters highlights the faces and
> Places, yeah (its like a home), as safe,
> As safe can be (Faye Rosas Blanch 2008).

While the Nunga room is located away from the main school building, it is a known space recognised as specific territory that exists for students' connection to cultural identity and belonging to a place to be sovereign and human together (Blanch & Worby 2010; MacGill & Blanch 2013). The Nunga room can be the space and place for gathering and recuperating the desire to go on. The importance of revealing the worldview of Indigenous students is to ensure that when first-time teachers meet and work with Indigenous students, they 'see' them as well as engage ethically and responsibly in their role as educators (Blanch 2016, 2018; MacGill & Blanch 2013).

I argue that conceptualising the Nunga Room as a transformative and empowering site—a 'home'—provides processes of unbecoming, human as praxis, and sovereignty that allow Indigenous students progression towards decolonising their minds to honour country and all that is entailed within country (Blanch 2018; Hemming & Rigney 2018; Tur & Tur 2006; Watson 2002). Work from Bawaka Country (Bawaka country & Suchet-Pearson et al. 2013), *Caring as Country: Toward an ontology of co-becoming in natural resource management*, provides an insightful analysis of how country and the ontological connection an Arnhem community in Northern Australia sees "humans as one small part of a broader cosmos populated by diverse beings and diverse ways of being, including animals, winds dirt, sunsets, songs and even the troop carriers" (2013, p. 185). The authors argue that "knowing and doing come into 'being' through an ongoing process of be(coming) together" (p. 186).

In this context, therefore, coming or be(coming) into being is important, and for Indigenous students their bodies in educational spaces can possibly enact an 'unbecoming'. Teachers must find a way to enable the relationship that is embodied to take centre stage in the daily life of Indigenous students' and their learning. I argue that teachers must always keep in mind questions, such as: How might Indigenous students go forward? What strategies need to be developed to enable going forward? How might Indigenous students maintain their self-worth in learning spaces? These questions allow for insightful and critical analysis for reflection. In the next section, I explore the idea of a 'rapping' methodology as a possible tool for Indigenous students in learning and schooling engagement, in ethical and responsible ways. This supports a shift toward unbecoming and being in 'the Wake' (Sharpe 2016).

8.10 Rapping Method

> Educators can utilise knowledge about contemporary oppression and resistance lodged in critical hip-hop, a subgenre of hip-hop which highlights the social, economic and racial injustices prevalent in our society and advocates for Indigenous struggles for social transformation (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade 2002).

I draw from educators writing in the field of rap and hip hop as a tool for teaching and learning. As Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) tell us, knowledge drawn from contemporary oppression and social economic issues impact greatly, I am arguing, on the bodies not only of Black youth but also the bodies of Indigenous students as well as non-Indigenous students. Finding a way for them to engage in their schooling in equitable ways can be developed through a rap and hip-hop paradigm. Michael Eric Dyson (2004), in the "foreward" to *That's the Joint: Hip Hop Studies Reader*, states:

> We need to study the way that cultures of articulation and representation have traversed international boundaries and been adopted in fascinating manner in the languages and accents indigenous to their regions—this phenomenon alone is a cause of intellectual curiosity. Hip-hop is being studied all over the globe, and the methodologies of its examination are rightfully all over the map. They are multidisciplinary in edifying, exemplary fashion, borrowing from sociology, politics, religion, economics, urban studies, journalism, communications theory, American studies, transatlantic studies, black studies, history, musicology, comparative literature, English, linguistics, and many more disciplines besides (p. xiv).

Rappers and Hip-Hop artists consider themselves as educators and engage a process of consciousness raising in their performances. (Lipsitz 1994; Rose 1994). As articulated by Shor and Freire (1987), the raising of critical consciousness in people who have been oppressed is a first step in helping them to obtain critical literacy and, ultimately, liberation from oppressive ideologies. He argues also that it's important to teach the world not just the word (Shor & Freire 1987; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade 2002, p. 89). Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) put forward the argument that "Hip-hop texts are literary texts and can be used to scaffold literary terms and concepts and ultimately foster literary interpretations. These literary texts are rich in imagery and metaphor and

can be analysed for theme, motif, plot, and character development" (p. 89). I contend that there are young Indigenous students already engaging with rap and hip-hop in school. One can go online to YouTube and see engagement with literacy and elements of translanguaging. Translanguaging, according to Garcia and Wei (2014), "is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, to maximize communicative potential" (p. 140). A prime example of a young Indigenous rapper in the contemporary is Yolngu sensation Baker Boy out of Arnhem country in the Northern Territory. He provides insight into the power of translanguaging. He performs with both English and Yolngu Matha languages. To highlight the conceptualisation of translanguaging I insert parts of the lyrics to *Marryuna* (to dance with no shame):

> I'm a proud Black Yolngu boy
> With a killer flow
> Listen to the yidaki, listen to it blow
> Brother boys, Yolngu boys
> All the way from Arnhem land
>
> Rawkpay Yindi djal nhaburra dhuwal kirtjirru
> Nharow Yolngu Balana bungul
> Gudhumurrya nganya marritjigu (Baker et al. 2017)

I argue that, for Indigenous students, the performance of, and engagement with, rap and hip-hop is human as praxis, refusal, and unbecoming in the performance of rapping. The students engaging with rap and hip-hop in the schooling context have voice, they speak to country, they provide the narratives that are often kept silence in the teaching space. School community groups include *The Colli Crew* out of Collarenebri (Robinson 2011); *B-Town Warriors* from the community of Burke (Ainsworth 2017); and from the country town of Wilcannia come the *Wilcannia Barkindji Soldiers* (Knowles 2019). Each of these groups come from the state of New South Wales and consist of school-age girls and boys. From my own practice as an educator, I believe that these groups' engagement with rap and hip-hop supports success in their schooling. I contend that these groups of students present a creative body-based multimodal learning that becomes central to their identity as sovereign in educational spaces. Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002), and their recognition of the wealth of knowledge and learning that come from the literacies of hip-hop, provide the framework for a classroom unit with three objectives:

1. to utilize our students' involvement with Hip-hop culture to scaffold the critical and analytical skills that they already possess;

2. to provide students with the awareness and confidence they need to transfer these skills into/onto the literary texts from the canon;

3. to enable students to critique the messages sent to them through the popular cultural media that permeate their everyday lives (p. 90).

From the visual articulation of the school groups and creative body-based learning, embedded is the articulation of voice and discourses, performance, dance, history, literacy, language, and politics. This is reflective of Morrell and Duncan-Andrade's (2002) statement that "given the social, cultural, and academic relevance of Hip-hop music and culture, an exposure to the literary canon brings into the learning spaces expository writing, oral and written skills to debate contemporary issues, critical consciousness awareness of lived reality, note taking, opportunity for re-imaging self in the genre and art of learning" (pp. 90-1). As seen in the practices of creative body-based learning and public art-like graffiti (MacGill 2016), a rap and hip-hop-based paradigm provides for a community of learners a sense of belonging to place and space; memory and imagination to see beyond self; cultural and social interaction; connecting with body and mind; and meaning making. It offers another perspective and builds upon their own critical analytical skills. All of these are important components for students achieving successful outcomes in their learning and schooling journey (Blanch & Worby 2010). Each of these elements speak to human as praxis and are key to their learning.

Formulation of a rap/hip-hop paradigm following Morrell and /Duncan-Andrade contributes to issues of safety, identity, and wellbeing for First Nations students. I contend that through the theoretical concepts and elements within the genres of rap and hip-hop when used wisely, and while problematic (hooks, 2004), there are key elements for critical consciousness to change the racial profiling of Indigenous students to frame simply being 'human' (Blanch 2018).

Simply being human allows me to draw from Katherine McKittrick (2014) and her description of Sylvia Wynter's work as key to anti-colonialism and progressing towards humanness. McKittrick states that:

> to engage her research and ideas is not, then, to take up a purely discursive text; rather, her work reveals intellectual life and struggle…brings into focus the dimensions of human life itself through her intensely provocative intellectual concerns and the correlated practice of cognition: a mind at work/everything is praxis (p. 7).

It is in the vein of intellectual life and struggle that a provocative process demands transversal movements across the boundary of not human to humanness and sovereignty. Furthermore, sovereignty permits traversing the complexities of 'unfreedom' and the monstrous intimacies (Sharpe 2010) that lie within the ways that society performs rights to citizenship. The rights of citizenship in Australia lie within access to equitable resources in education as well as society at large. Australia, as a sovereign nation, is seen through its relationship with its citizens and who is deemed worthy of claiming Australian citizenship (Moreton-Robinson 2014, 2015; Watson 2009). I argue that the features of coloniality and Indigenous people's relationship with citizenship in Australia continue to have impact upon the lives of Indigenous peoples in varying ways. In the consideration of a decolonising pedagogical practice and sound understanding and learning, I extend on the concept of being human as praxis in association with Indigenous students' sense of belonging and sovereignty as a move towards unbecoming. George Sefa Dei (2017, pp. 5-6) argues that, "racialization works differently on different bodies and not often with the same result, given that the 'gaze' and contexts are continually shifting". Concurring with Sefa Dei (2017), I also agree that racialisation impacts on Black bodies differently and argue the need to critique positions of Whiteness is critical to Indigenous students' engagement in schooling. Further, Sefa Dei contends that, in the realm of racialisation, "whiteness is a privileged position within normalisation and invisibility…. but is also privilege through non-normativity and hypervisibilty" (Sefa Dei 2017, pp. 5-6).

8.11 Whiteness as Race

To place context to Whiteness, the privilege of Whiteness as normativity is in the techniques of, according to Sefa Dei (2017), how White bodies hang onto their identity with their privilege and power that, can command acceptance, making them complicit in their relationship to those without power and privilege. The connection to coloniality, for Indigenous students and families entering the schooling space, lies in their experiences with the trauma that is ongoing in their community; the trauma of youth suicide, police brutality, unemployment, poverty and marginalisation narrates not only a story of a student's past but also their future (Blanch 2009a; Sefa Dei 2017). We are shaped by history. We are in close proximity with each other, although non-Indigenous people may not realise this. Our bodies are pushed into spaces where we have to negotiate our sense of self and our emotions. Sara Ahmed (2004) reflects on this: "The surfacing of bodies involves the over-determination of sense perception, emotion and judgement...through recognition that responses to objects and others that bodily surfaces take shape" (p. 25). We need to recognise that our relationship is defined by the impact of colonisation upon our bodies and our minds.

For our future to we need to develop strong strategies that challenge the historical violence and racism that continue to maim us in those institutions of Whiteness that establish, reproduce, and reinforce the norm of Whiteness through education systems. We must be responsible and ethical in providing the space for students to know who they are as First Peoples and to know their relationality with country (Baker et al. 2015b; O'Brien & Baker 2019; Blanch 2016; Harkin 2015; Tur & Tur 2006) and how knowledge production informs our own sense of social justice and consciousness-raising within educational spaces of power.

8.12 Rapping and Mapping a Praxis of Humanness

In further examining power and privilege, social justice, and the raising of consciousness for Indigenous students in their life experiences in schooling, I reference parts of my article on rap and hip-hop as a tool for wellbeing and ethical responsibility that works towards a progression of decolonisation and anticolonialism (Blanch 2018). I also argue that, in this context, sovereignty, belonging, being human as praxis, and refusal are situated in how rap and hip-hop cultural appropriation in learning and teaching spaces might work for the successful engagement of schooling. I draw from Indigenous and First Nations rappers to add context to Indigenous students' engagement with rap and hip-hop as tool for learning. Indigenous rapper Wire MC tells us:

> Hip-hop is really a voice of the community, of the area. It helps you represent where you're from. It teaches you self-knowledge and self-awareness. I'm Abo-digital because I'm a 21st century Aboriginal, I'm down with laptops and mobile phones and home entertainment. But digital also means your hands and your fingers. I'm still putting my fingers in the dirt; I'm still using my hands to create things. So that's the ambiguity (Wire MC cited in Mitchell 2006a, p. 135).

For Indigenous rapper, MC Wire out of Sydney, hip-hop is voice; it is one of location and represents which country one derives from. MC Wire puts forward the argument that, in the 21st century, he is equipped with the skills of technology. This is counter to how many young Indigenous students and families are perceived by Whiteness and the schooling arena. For MC Wire, he is very much Indigenous, and he is very much aware of his relationship with the cultural affirmation of belonging and sovereignty (Mitchell 2006a). I considering Whiteness pervades the educational outcomes and knowledge production for Indigenous students, I argue for the in schools to give space for the psychological wellness of Indigenous students. As Roychoudhury and Garder articulate:

> Hip-hop psychology provides a shared space where the roles of therapists and client evolve to a point where they engage each other in a call-and-response manner. Their interaction is authentic, timely, honest, active and empowering…communicating and using their bodies…in a manner that exemplifies the dynamism, feeling, and experience that is hip-hop (2012, p. 238).

Rap and hip-hop are popular cultural phenomena that have impacted on young people globally, as well as nationally, and Indigenous students bring their engagement with the phenomena of rap and hip-hop into the classroom. This is evident in the caps, hoodies and shoes worn, and the music they are listening to, all promoting what is occurring in their worldview when they engage with rap and hip-hop. Roychoudhury and Garder (2012) suggest that we must "challenge the lens maintained by the status quo" (p. 241), to work *with* subjugated and marginalised youths *not* against. Challenging the colonial traditional schooling spaces, and drawing from the field of rap and hip-hop, is a means by which to enhance learning for Indigenous students.

Rap and hip hop is a political platform and, as such, allows Indigenous Australian youths the opportunity to voice their knowledge of processes of dehumanisation through the filter of racialisation and its impact upon their lives. Rap and hip-hop are a praxis where one can evaluate, reflect, and build upon expressions that move towards a greater awareness of the concerns of Indigenous Australian youth today. Toby Jenkins (2013) suggests that "hip-hop is a cultural space where individuals that have been kicked out of schools, locked out of opportunity, and imprisoned in oppression, have created a space where they can shine, excel, and be great" (p. 14). Thus, disrupting traditional teaching processes can be a transformative approach to reshaping learning from a structured, automated experience into a creative, imaginative, and socially conscious endeavour (Blanch & Worby 2010; Jenkins 2013).

8.13 Looking for a Message Inside the Message: Rap as Hidden Transcript

Teachers asking themselves questions such as "whose voices are silenced?" and "whose voices are legitimised?" as an entry point to open up space for dialogue about issues of racism, sexism, inequality, surveillance, harassment, learning outcomes, and desire of and for quality education are pertinent to everyday understandings for teachers, students, and families (Blanch 2018). In conceptualising the ways that rap/hip-hop facilitates performance in educational spaces, Rose (1994) states, "rappers are constantly taking the dominant discursive fragments and throwing them into relief, destabilizing hegemonic discourses and attempt to legitimate counter hegemonic interpretations" (p. 102). Looking for messages hidden in rap/hip-hop can be facilitate a shift for Indigenous students, enabling and encouraging agency and wellbeing. Rap and hip-hop open spaces to have conversations about issues concerning students that exist within the lived worldview of Indigenous Australian youths. The Freirean (Shor & Freire 1987) concepts of epistemological curiosity, writing, and reading the world can be relative to students proving the ability and skills to transfer their lived worldviews into knowledge; to critique and challenge their thinking and to give ownership to their learning (Viola & Porfilio 2012). Rapping, for young Indigenous Australians,

means having voice, and having voice means listening, understanding, and producing knowledge. This can make them leaders in their learning and schooling, and in the world outside of school, to ensure wellbeing. Facilitating voice, learning, and development of knowledge is, for the teacher and the students, an opportunity to go against the grain in how they rethink and reimagine power relations in pedagogy (Blanch & Worby 2010).

Rap and hip-hop relate to political literacy; they focus on grammatical, lexical, and semantic qualities of discourses to support academic literacy (Hafner 2013, p. 38). Further, they provide space for a new language and offer the opportunity to converse about race and racialisation in the classroom. Michael Eric Dyson (2003) states that we must let the beast out of the cage; he references race as an "inevitable feature in the classroom" and argues that we should "examine the intents, affects, goals, ideals, norms, privileges and practices of race" (pp. 83-4). By not seeing educational spaces as liberatory and transformative, what continues is the denial of subjugation of students' liberties and personhood and, as Roychoudhury and Garder (2012), highlight, this "is an insult and an assault on students' humanity" (p. 245). I assert, therefore, that interactions with rap and hip-hop allow for the performance of identity, engagement, and being human as praxis (Blanch 2009a, 2016; McKittrick 2014). Rap and hip-hop have layers of "hidden" and "public" transcripts (Scott, J 1990, p. 45) that offer a platform that recreates public performance and challenges 'surveillance' and policing of identity to allow for human agency. The call and response of rap and hip-hop has allowed Indigenous hip-hop and rap artists (Wire MC, Adam Briggs, Caper, Jimblah, Naomi Wenitong and Joel Wenitong to name a few) the chance to voice issues that Indigenous Australian youths identify with and engage with the Indigenous communities all over Australia to "represent" and teach "self-knowledge and self-awareness" (Wire MC cited in Mitchell 2006a, p. 135).

8.14 Representing in the Contemporary: In the Wake

Indigenous Australian rapper, writer, actor and record label owner, Adam Briggs's song, *The Children Came Back* (Moroder et al. 2015), is a response to Archie Roach's song, *Took the Children Away* (Roach 1990). Briggs's song offers hope and celebration, and is a shout out to Indigenous sporting heroes, Gavin Wanganeen, Adam Goodes, and Australian gold medallist Cathy Freeman, as well as basketball player Patty Mills. The song pays homage to and commemorates the activism and triumph of Indigenous Australians who have gone before: Sir Doug Nicholls, musician Jimmy Little, boxer Lionel Rose, and politician William Cooper. This song is pertinent to Indigenous students' engagement with their Elders, contemporary heroes, identity, and links to what they know about their people. Adelaide rapper Caper and his rap *How Would You Like to be Me*

(2011) contends with the issue of racism and discrimination and how racism is played out in society, and positions his experiences by asking all listeners to walk in his shoes. Caper's (2011) lyrics offer a study of race within the classroom domain. The band, The Last Kinection, consisting of brother and sister team Naomi (MC Nay) and Joel Wenitong (Weno) with Jacob Turier (Jaytee), wax lyrical in *I Still Call Australia Home*,[1] a counter narrative, remixed and with reworked lyrics, to Peter Allen's *I Still Call Australia Home* (Allen 1980). The song challenges and disrupts White Australians' contextualisation of Australia as their 'home', framed in what Moreton-Robinson (2015) notes as the concept of White "possessive logics" to denote a mode of rationalisation (p. xii) and the ways that White possessive logics operationalise discourses of ownership as common sense. Against this, according to Moreton-Robinson (2015), "stands the Indigenous sense of belonging, home, and place in its incommensurable difference" (p. 3) which Last Kinection brings to the fore in their music as a counter narrative. To first year Indigenous students at university, I introduce Last Kinection's song *I Can* (Wenitong et al. 2008) featuring Radical Son as a possible mantra for Indigenous students 'seeing' self in educational spaces, and caring for self as they move through these hard and, at times, difficult spaces.

By introducing Indigenous Australian rappers and my engagement with rap/hip-hop as pedagogy into the teaching spaces of Flinders University, South Australia, I always deliberate the issues of safeness and wellbeing. I know teaching spaces can be unsafe spaces. Teaching in core Indigenous education topics, I encourage initial teacher education undergraduate and postgraduate students to contemplate rap and hip-hop as a tool beneficial for performance of identity, collective belonging, history, education, storytelling and memory-keeping, all components fundamental to the wellbeing and safety of Indigenous Australian youths. Indigenous youths recognise their connection to country, land, and culture intimately through interconnectedness to mind, spirit, body, and land (Blanch 2009a). Indigenous Australian rappers speak to the young; they understand the injuries and trauma that young people are going through. Indigenous rappers want wellbeing and care for Indigenous youth, as many of them have lived through these experiences and know ways to find that safe place, that sense of wellness, and the humanness of being (Blanch 2009a, 2018). All that is needed is for teachers to see the human in their teaching practices, and for students to also see. I insert the lyrics of *The Children Came Back* by Adam Briggs and Gurrumul Yunupingu to signify the many ways that rap and hip-hop can be used as a tool for learning and teaching.

[1] The Last Kinection's reworked recording of I Still Call Australia Home can be viewed online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGzoGhfM24A

The Children Came Back

I'm Fitzroy where the stars be
I'm Wanganeen in '93
I'm Mundine, I'm Cathy Freeman, that fire inside-a-me
I'm Adam Goodes, and Adam should
Be applauded when he stand up
You can look to us when that time stop
I'm Patty Mills with the last shot
I'm Gurrumul, I'm Archie
I'm everything that you ask me
I'm everything that you can't be
I'm the dead hearts, heart beat
The children came back
The children came back
Back where their hearts grow strong, back where they all belong
The children came back
I'm Patty Mills, u-huh, with 12 million dollars
I'm Doug Nicholls, I'm Jimmy Little
With a royal telephone
I'm the world champ in '68
Boy I'm Lionel Rose
I'm William Cooper, I take a stand
When no one even knows
I'm the walk off, I'm the sound of
The children coming home
Boy I'm Gurrumul, I'm Archie
I'm everything that you ask me
I'm everything that you can't be
I'm the dead hearts, heart beat
The children came back
The children came back
Back where their hearts grow strong, back where they all belong

The children came back
Royal Patty Mills
Let me take it home, I'm Rumba
I'm the sand hills on Cummera
I'm Les Briggs, I'm Paul Briggs
I'm Uncle Ringo with all them kids
I'm Uncle Buddy, everybody loves me
Ain't none below, ain't none above me
I'm the carvings outta every scar tree
I'm those flats that birthed Archie
Now Mr Abbott, think about it
Me and you we feel the same
That might sound strange, but I'm just sayin'
We both unsettled when the boats came
I'm Gurrumul, I'm Archie
I'm everything that you ask me
I'm everything that you can't be
I'm the dead hearts, heart beat
The children came back
I'm the dead hearts, heart beat
The children came back
I'm the dead hearts, heart beat
Back where their hearts grow strong, back where they all belong
The children came back
The children came back
The children came back
Back where they understand, back to their mothers' land
The children came back
The children came back
The children came back
Back where their hearts grow strong, back where they all belong
The children came back
(Moroder et al. 2015)

.

In conclusion, rap and hip-hop is a multimodal art form. It can be a form of expressive theory (Roychoudhury & Garder 2012, p. 237), provide a reimaging of a future, a strategy for finding a new form to demonstrate and engage in core emotions, transformative pedagogy (hooks 1994) and engagement with Indigenous students' worldviews (Blanch 2009a), as well provision of care, safety and wellbeing (MacGill & Blanch 2013). Rap and hip-hop constitutes a decolonising practice that allows for Indigenous students' sovereignty, engages the conceptualisation of refusal, and provides

opportunity for unbecoming. I provide my conceptualisation of rap and hip-hop in the poetic verse below.

> It is solidarity, collective, elective, and reflective
> It is globalised, localised and clarified to carve dissent
> It is revolutionary, scary and exciting all at the same time
> It executes, pays homage and salutes the disenfranchised
> It inserts, assert, subvert to convert the disempowered
> It is consciousitization, radicalization, and evaluatizaton
> And it is action, reaction and active in its performance.

In other words, rap and hip-hop are tools for shifting power dynamics and creating new knowledge and new discourses and offer a lens by which to see self in the contemporary to allow for wellbeing. I have argued the key concepts of being human as praxis, refusal, sovereignty, and becoming/unbecoming in relationship to Indigenous students within the sphere of education and their own experiences of schooling. I have articulated a decolonising theoretical framework and process to work through those dangerous, colonised spaces to articulate Black/Indigenous spaces, like the Nunga room, and to consider how rap and hip-hop genres can work towards ensuring Indigenous students' voices are heard in teaching spaces and the community context.

CHAPTER 9 DECOLONISATION, UNBECOMING AND INTIMACY: CREATING NEW KNOWLEDGE

9.1 Introduction

Following on from previous chapters, I specify how the Unbound Collective's performances engage an unbecoming format. In this chapter, I draw upon arguments from previous chapters to articulate what I mean by unbecoming, which is the central offering of this thesis. I will articulate a praxis of unbecoming that is intimate within the realm of knowledge production within educational contexts, in particular, higher education from an Indigenous standpoint, as a Yidiniji/Mbabaram woman. A praxis of unbecoming will draw out key ideas of inclusiveness, exclusiveness, belonging, place and space, as outlined in previous chapters, including the key concept of sovereignty as both embodied and central to a process of unbecoming.

In previous chapters, I analysed how concepts of sovereignty, human as praxis, refusal, and decolonisation allow for the theorisation of unbecoming. Unbecoming, as articulated by Helen Vosters (2019), lies in the examination of memory, violence, performance, activism, and nationalism. She articulates this in the Canadian context. I am speaking to the Australian context here, and its notion of sovereignty and narratives of nationalism to unravel and unsettle the various ways settler society impacts upon the bodies of First Peoples (Baker et al. 2015a; Moreton-Robinson 2015). Moreover, articulating the concept of unbecoming in this chapter offers a framework that engages the fundamentals of anti-colonialism and decolonisation leading towards human as praxis, refusal, becoming/unbecoming, and sovereignty to answer my mother's question of "what is this sovereignty thing?"

Vosters (2019), in *Unbecoming Nationalism: From Commemoration to Redress in Canada*, offers key insights into First Nations issues in the Canadian context around colonialism and unbecoming nationalism, offering a critical reference point to the praxis of unbecoming in the Australian context. To explore the notion of unbecoming, I draw on the work of the Unbound Collective (Baker et al. 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). In the Australian context, the performance and research of the Unbound Collective, I argue, allows for the navigation of the traps of "settler-colonial toxic representations" (Vosters 2019, p. 20) of our bodies and our minds to enact a process towards being human as praxis by 'unbecoming'. Vosters (2019) further articulates that she uses 'unbecoming' "as a descriptor, refer[ing] to that which detracts from or renders less attractive one's image or reputation" as well as a process to unpack and deconstruct "situated practices and projects that work to unsettle, decolonize, dismantle or unbecome Canadian settler-colonial nationalism" (Vosters 2019, p. 9). Just as Vosters discusses 'unbecoming' within the context of Canada, I argue that the

same conceptualisation is transferrable to the Australian context. Therefore, drawing from Vosters' (2019) description and theorising of unbecoming, and the relationship of First People with colonialism, I voice my own unbecoming. I am Yidiniji/Mbabaram. This is my unbecoming which goes beyond my location and standpoint. I argue further that unbecoming answers my mum's question.

9.2 Performing Collectively

While I cannot examine every single performance of the Unbound Collective, I will look at three of the Unbound Collective's Sovereign Acts performances: *Sovereign Act IV: Object*, performed at The National Gallery in Sydney (Baker 2019); *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake*, performed at the Migration Museum in Adelaide (Baker 2019b); and *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, performed at Hart's Mill in Port Adelaide (Baker 2018d). All of the Unbound Collective Sovereign Acts, I contend, relate to the key concepts of human as praxis, refusal, decolonisation, becoming/unbecoming, and sovereignty, as demonstrated and articulated in this thesis. Extending further on those key concepts, I postulate that unbecoming, for the Unbound Collective, occurs through deconstruction, rupture, disruption, and a reimaging and positioning of our bodies in spaces and places of colonial violence. For the Unbound Collective, unbecoming is extracted from our performances, our songs, our poetry, our spoken word, our visual art, our film, lyrics, and our photographs, to embody the notion of unbecoming. This embodiment is further laid bare at conferences, on panels, in the development and creation of curriculum, and in our workplaces.

9.3 Unbecoming Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) provide insightful analysis of how a methodological approach to research can incorporate creative processes. They further articulate that the fragmentation of layered texts can enact representation and narration of self. Additionally, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) provide a conceptualisation of autoethnography comprising various elements. I contend that this is highlighted through the Unbound Collective performances, and that is our unbecoming. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) reflect upon creative works that are possessing of utility in the qualitative process.

> These forms include not only performance autoethnography but also short stories; conversations; fiction; personal narratives; creative non-fiction; photographic essays; personal essays; personal narratives of the self; writing stories; self stories; fragmented, layered texts; critical autobiography; memoirs; personal histories; cultural criticism; co-constructed performance narratives and performance writing that blurs the edges between text, representation, and criticism (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, p. 12)

Deliberating on the performances of the Unbound Collective Sovereign Acts (Baker 2018d, 2019, 2019b) to highlight our creative and insightful projects, I consider the key factors of layered texts,

conversations, stories, personal narratives, and performances, as highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2008). In so doing, key concepts of human as praxis, refusal, decolonisation, becoming/unbecoming, and sovereignty are contextualised. I also add Indigenous voices to the mix—poems, spoken word, lyrics, and quotes—to validate the ways that unbecoming is theorised and contextualised in this chapter. I critically reflect on the Unbound Collective's performances, and argue that each of the performances is a testament to the collaborative strength of the Unbound Collective, our working from a place of Indigenousness and humanness, and a rights agenda as well as love. I position spoken word and poetry throughout this chapter to support the theoretical process of unbecoming in the same context as the creative performances of the Unbound Collective. Moreover, I propose that new knowledge is formulated through the performances and they are central in the development of knowledge production of curriculum within the university sphere.

Furthermore, examining the three Unbound Collective performances—*Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, *Sovereign Act IV: Object*, and *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake*—allow for new knowledge production; I pay close attention to the fundamental themes of research, performance, identity, representation, bodies in spaces, movement, light, and praxis as key to unbecoming. Additionally, I will investigate the skirts and props used in the performances as pivotal objects signifying the ways that bodies move through space and time.

9.4 Sovereign Women/Unbecoming

I argue that the scholarly work of my colleagues and sisters in the Unbound Collective, Dr Simone Tur, Dr Natalie Harkin and Dr Ali Baker as well as myself, is sovereign in our representation and performances (Baker 2018d, 2019, 2019b). I proclaim that we exist as sovereign women who have always moved beyond the working spaces of decolonisation, engaging in a process of deconstructing elements of coloniality. We 'unbecome' in those colonial and dangerous spaces that have bound us and, as the Unbound Collective, we move to a space where we find ourselves engaging with the creative processes of new knowledge, new research methodologies, and new ideas that strategically inform our teaching and our life. Thomas Riccio (2010), in his theoretical and performance work with Indigenous communities in the international context, suggests that while some cultural fundamentals of the Indigenous worldview appear absent, they are not forgotten by Indigenous communities. Instead, he states that a new Indigenous system of place can occur. He argues that "Body + Space = Place" (Riccio 2010, p. 150). Thus, the work that he does with Indigenous performances is about "locating the body in a space and defining relationships in order to make, negotiate, and re-image a (new) place" (Riccio 2010, p. 157). In this section, I contemplate Riccio's words to work through how our bodies in certain spaces allow for a place. We execute, in

each performance, who we are as Indigenous researchers and academics to reinforce a new beginning, and I contend that reinforcing our sovereignty is both captured in our performances and is provocative in its articulation.

To start the process of looking for the various ways that unbecoming occurs in our performances, I evoke the words of Alexis Pauline Gumbs in her poetic text, *M Archive: After the End of the World* (2018), in which she states, "this book offers a possibility of being beyond the human, but a 'you beyond you' (Gumbs 2018, p. xi). This leads me to my argument of unbecoming. We, as First Peoples, have carried the naming and toxic representations of non-human and sub-human (Tallbear 2013a; Haraway 1989) since invasion which brought the violence of colonialism. Therefore, situating the Unbound Collective as beyond the human allows for a 'you beyond you' (Gumbs 2018) that is relational with country and signifies who we are and who we have always been, this is unbecoming; that is Yidiniji/Mbabaram, Ngarrunga, Yunkunytjatjara, Mirning, sovereign women. We are unshackled and unbound. What does this mean, therefore, and in what context? I examine this in the following paragraphs to demonstrate unbecoming.

9.5 Bodies + Spaces = Place

Contemplating Thomas Riccio's (2010) theatre and drama theory work with Indigenous communities in Alaska, the !Xuu and Khwe Bushmen, the Sakha in Siberia, and the Zulu peoples of South Africa, brings together the conceptualisation of ceremony and performances that signifies the importance of body, space, and place. I draw from Riccio's (2010) statement that "performance for indigenous people puts the everyday into the context and perspective of continuum of living on earth…it gave power by which to apprehend, consider, and create a place in the part of the earth they inhabited, comprehending the everyday mysteries that surrounded them, enabling survival and sustainability" (p. 150). I argue that, for the Unbound Collective, deeper analysis of performances is contextualised in and through our performances, and our body/s in space and time. Riccio's (2010) conveying of body, space, and time in the context of Indigenous performance stipulates that "performance is a process of practice and immediate interaction and, through, application a means by which to help an individual, community and the world become whole again" (p. 151). I concur and further argue that the Unbound Collective engages with other colleagues and works respectfully with the Elders as well as other members of the communities where we are geographically located, and our performance is situated.

I assert that, in our roles as Indigenous performers and community members, we acknowledge the importance of our Elders and members of the community who have laid the foundations for our movement through tough spaces. Engagement with Elders in other country/s (Kaurna in Adelaide,

Gadigal in Sydney) must be included with respect and trust, as well as the ethical responsibility and accountability that justify our community Elders and members. I argue that this is important when honouring the work and philosophies of local Elders situated in country and all that country is. As a collective, we follow the protocols of First Peoples visit and welcome to country. In the Adelaide context, we work with Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien and his son Senior man Michael Kumatpi Marrutya O'Brien. We have also worked with Kaurna Elder the late Aunty Veronica Brodie's family members and, in the Sydney context we worked with Gadigal Elder Aunty Rhonda Dixon. I will provide further detail in the sections where I discuss the various performances.

Each performance undertaken by the Unbound Collective is informed by an articulation of how the human body performs and engages in performativity which is key to what I am arguing as becoming/unbecoming, sovereignty, refusal, human as praxis, and decolonisation; this is the core of meaning making for the Unbound Collective and is formulated in each creation of performance and the performance itself. This is a methodology of unbecoming, I suggest. Riccio states in the context of space, time, and the Indigenous body that:

> the action of locating and articulating the human body in space lies at the core of methodology…creating a performance place is both lateral and metaphoric, serving to organize many formerly disparate spaces, objects and actions into a meaning system (2010, p. 153).

In consideration of meaning making and the processes of unbecoming in our performances, I deliberate on the creation and design of our skirts and the physicality and materiality of our skirts as essential to our performance. Firstly, I investigate the Unbound Collective's *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, performed at Port Adelaide, South Australia (Baker 2018d). Secondly, I discuss the *Sovereign Act IV: Object*, performed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney (Baker 2019), and I critique the *Sovereign Act VI: In The Wake* (Baker 2019b).

9.6 The Materiality of Our Skirts and Props

The materiality of our skirts, I propose, is situated in the design of the skirts and how each one of us move in our skirts in the allocated geographic and performative spaces. I argue that, central to performative spaces, is the importance of the materiality in relationship to colonialism and embodiment of First People's culture—how it was stolen and displayed in colonial institutions, how it was destroyed, and how indigenous culture resiliently and defiantly resists and speaks back to past and continuing efforts of colonisation (Sandlin & Letts 2016, pp. 185-6). Our bamboo skirts, our calico tops, and the small torches we attach to our upper arms, the billy cans with dry ice, the flask with hot water, and the bell represent and symbolise our engagement in the space; ringing of the bell tells the audience that the performance is about to begin. Beyond this, however, the bell also

represents the ringing of the school bell in those sites of exclusion that were the missions and reserves that held and contained our families. These objects are part of the performance, and each item contributes to bringing our bodies into the present, the now, and is not of the past. Our bodies carry and tell of our past, our present, and our future. We are unbound, no longer contained only in the archives. We are worthy and sovereign in the telling of our story.

As related throughout this thesis, we speak back to colonialism and defy misrepresentations of our bodies (Sandlin & Letts 2016, p. 186). I argue that our bodies have been subjected to abuse and trauma as specimens under study; each section of our bodies provided a production of knowledge that colonialism considers as their truth. I have spoken to this in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis. In performance, our beautiful sovereign bodies in the bamboo skirts are revealed, and how our bodies' movement progresses through space to disrupt and challenge those binaries "between nature and culture, body and mind, and textual and material" (Sandlin & Letts 2016, p 187).

We express to the audiences that our bodies are not separate from our ontological worldview and our everyday lives. Our worldview and ways of being is in that space at that time; this is our reality. As Karen Barad (1996) states, "our constructed knowledges have real material consequences" (p. 183). Indigenous ways of being are embodied and performed in time and space and, as artists, we shift and push the boundaries that have contained us. According to Barad (1996), "knowledge comes from the 'between' of nature-culture, object-subject, matter-meaning" (p. 188) and, akin to those spaces 'between', materiality matters (Barad cited in Sandlin & Letts 2016). Interaction with our audiences and the space in relation to the performance comprises materiality and the materials matter. The performance untangles the discursive practices of violence that are contained in language and the way that language represents us in the now. How we position ourselves in the performance is both within, above, and outside the world, and accounts for understanding, observation, and articulation of our being and our unbecoming in, and outside of, the performance.

Karen Barad (2007) states that matter is neither fixed and given, nor the mere end result of different processes. Instead, matter gets produced and generated; it is agentive, mattering is differentiating and with differences that come to matter (p. 137). Further, Barad (2007) suggests that "different patterns do not change in time and space; spacetime is an enactment of making/marking the here and now" (p. 137) and highlights the ways that diffraction of light, sound, movement and the performance become entangled in matter:

> What we need is to make a difference in material-semiotic apparatuses, to diffract the rays of technoscience so that we get more promising interference patterns on the recording films of our lives and bodies. Diffraction is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world…. Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference Haraway cited in Barad 2007, p. 71).

Materiality and matter further add to the conceptualisation of unbecoming.

9.7 Progressing New Work

In the progression of creating new work, we consider the spatiality and timing of movement, as well as the geographical location. We undertake reconnaissance, visiting the site to ensure we know where to move in the performance. Contemplating and measuring the site provides a mathematical approach to our performance. We take into consideration the time frame, the season, the weather, and the surroundings of the landscape in which we perform. While researching the site, we discuss as a Collective how we will undertake the performance. Key to our performance is the importance of contacting the Elders in whose country we will perform. We always have a fire burning as part of our performance, and this signifies the fire in our bellies, hearts, and minds. It is also an articulation of a smoking ceremony that offers cleansing and is ongoing during our performances. The fire also enacts a time past and present, and the flames of the fire is for us and our mob's future. There are multiple diffractions (Barad, 2007) as our knowledge and theory become part of the materiality of the performance and the movement between and across space and time.

9.8 Skirts: In Geographical Terrains

Our skirts are made of strong, long-lasting bamboo. The skirts are flexible and structured as a representation of the early colonial period and the type of skirts women wore in that time. The skirt without covering looks like the shell of a small ship. In *Act III: Refuse* (Baker 2018d), we gathered leaves and branches from around the Adelaide area and attached them to our skirts.

In the *Act IV: Object* (Baker 2019), we worked closely with Indigenous curator Clothilde Bullen, of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, to link us with the local Indigenous community. We were introduced to Wesley, a young Gadigal man, who welcomed us and invited us to walk country. Gathering branches from the trees on Gadigal country meant that we had to work with a Gadigal person. Wesley kindly informed us of creation stories and introduced us to the traditional herbs and food in his country. He helped us gather the leaves and spoke with us about the political issue of the Sydney Council wanting to develop a huge memorial to Cook for $50 million on the landscape of Botany Bay. What does this mean, therefore, when White Australia continues to reinforce its own image of nationalism, its sovereignty and 'discovery' of Gadigal country? I contend that this again emphasises the denial and absence of the young Gadigal man Wesley. The seascape and landscape of Botany Bay is a beautiful space, and being on Gadigal country with Wesley reinforced how we wanted our performance to occur and what narrative we wanted to relate to the audience. For the care of the artwork in the Art Gallery of NSW, this meant that the branches

and leaves had to be fumigated to prevent bugs, spiders, and any nasties from entering the gallery and spoiling the artwork. The colonial artworks were protected through this process.

The flexibility of the bamboo skirts, when covered with branches and leaves from the landscape of Gadigal country, narrates a sense of belonging and being. We were wrapped and our bodies re-framed in Gadigal country, moving with country through the detailing of branches gathered from Gadigal country. We bring our ancestors to the space. We are reminded of whose country we perform on and we remember our own communities in and during the performance. We are haunted by the violence and trauma of the site, but we acknowledge the ancestors that have gone before, and we wait for the wind and the natural environment to be with us. Barad (2007) proposes "a posthumanist performative approach to understanding technoscientific and other natural/cultural practices that specifically acknowledges and takes account of matter's dynamism" (p. 135). While posthumanism is articulated in relationship to humans and non-humans, First Peoples continue to live with and as country, and all that is in country; everything in country includes the life and living as well as the spirits of our ancestors in country. I insert a poem by Dr Chelsea Bond to highlight how discourse and language relate to our humanness and all that we are.

Dear Ancestor

~~Homo Erectus.~~ People.
~~Cannibals.~~ Warriors.
~~Baboons.~~ Survivors.
~~A Real Live Golliwog.~~ Old Song Woman.
~~Poor Miserable Halfstarved Bottlenosed Caricatures Of Humanity.~~ Mob.
~~Brute Man.~~ Dad.
~~Gins.~~ Mother.
~~Waitresses.~~ Children.
~~Domestics.~~ Elders.
~~Aborigines.~~ **Ancestors.** (Chelsea Bond 2020, para. 1).

The importance of the performances of the Unbound Collective is seen through Bond's (2020) poem and Barad's (2007) articulation of matter and the coming into existence through time and space. The strategic ways our bodies perform as sovereign, discussed in previous chapters, leads to a state of unbecoming, I argue. During each performance, I am reminded of our very first performance at the opening of the Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in Adelaide, South Australia in 2015. Our performance started with moving from the space of the building outside towards the space within the Art Gallery. We moved across the surface, from cement to the grassy surface outside the Art Gallery. It felt like I was rising from the earth; it was a knowing that our ancestors were with us. With each performance, we consider what we will wear with our bamboo skirt, and the importance of how our skirts relate to our history of colonialism and this, in turn, is related to our audiences.

Considering the conceptualisation of Indigenous feminist and activist bodies, I find Ferreira da Silva's (2017) articulation of 'Blackness as a rare and obsolete definitions of matter, through the Black Lives Matter as both movement and a call to respond to the everyday events of racial violence' (p 1) is crucial to the ways that Black and Indigenous lives matter in the context of storying and performance. Denise Ferreira da Silva (2017) thinks through the concepts of the 'thing'. She discusses this as "the substance, or substances collectively of which something consists: constituent material, esp. of a particular kind" (2017, p.1). The 'thing' that constitutes the materiality of our bodies in the bamboo skirts is worthy of articulation here. In the Unbound Collective performance at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, we, alongside Ferreira da Silva's (2017) articulation of the 'thing', ask the question, "what is the value of Black lives?" I draw once again from her words and stipulate that the value of Indigenous lives matters, and through a process of unbecoming we matter; that is all Indigenous/First People's lives matter. The techniques undertaken when designing and discussing the means by which we engage in progressing the development of the skirts for each performance is important to us and our articulation of research. I insert the photograph of our skirt with coverings of branches and leaves, taken by Tristan Deratz, as a critique of the materiality of our skirts. I will also add a photograph of our skirts in the Unbound performance *Act VI: In the Wake* (Baker 2019b), which is also key to materiality and matter.

Photograph 9.1 Close-up of Unbound Collective Skirts (Materiality). Photograph by Tristan Deratz 2019.

I claim that the conceptualisation of materiality is also important to the performance, and the materials used in our performances, and focuses on the moment when actors within artistic expression process form over matter. Within the performance of movement, light, sound, water, and earth, we are sovereign and, as we progress our performance, we are seen differently. We prepare ourselves physically and psychologically when we are performing.

I draw from newspaper arts reviews, and I contemplate on public opinions and consider personal outpouring from the three performances of Unbound's *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, *Sovereign Act IV: Object*, and, lastly, *Act VI: In the Wake* (Baker 2018d, 2019, 2019b). Examination of the three performances bring to the centre perceptions of Indigeneity, feminism, activism and beyond human to locate our bodies, our work and our research as actively participating in tough colonial spaces to employ an unbecoming.

9.9 Unbound Collective *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*

The Unbound Collective's *Sovereign Act III: Refuse* (Baker 2018d) was part of the VitalStatistix Theatre Company's *Climate Century* performed at Hart's Mill, Port Adelaide (VitalStatistix, 2018). The performance focused on the Port River and the Newport Quays housing development as well as the nuclear waste issue that was being debated in Adelaide at that time. Through song, music, spoken word, poetry, film, and research, this performance spoke to the environment and the community's needs. The Port River itself was central to the performance as a result of what was revealed during the research process and working with members of the Kaurna community. The Brodie family shared stories of growing up along the Port River with their mother, Kaurna Elder Aunty Veronica Brodie. The Port River and the Newport Quays housing site held great cultural significance for the late Aunty Veronica Brodie and related to her belonging with her mother. Aunty Veronica's granddaughter, Bonnie, welcomed us to country. Bonnie carries on the legacy given to her by her grandmother the late Aunty Veronica Brodie.

9.9.1 Articulating 'Refusal'

> Refusals are needed to counter narratives and images arising (becoming claims) in social science research that diminish personhood or sovereignty, or rehumiliate when circulated (Tuck & Yang 2014, p. 811).

Progressing the project of Refusal meant listening and hearing the words given to us by the Brodie sisters. The Brodie sisters provided insight their mother Aunty Veronica and her mother Latelare family history in Port Adelaide, the sisters were key to our unpacking and deconstructing of the Port Adelaide river as articulated by Aunty Veronica. I inject a few words here because they provide

detail of the discussions that took place and the words were projected onto the building of Hart's Mill.

> Lartelare – Home, I know this river, we know this is the birthplace of our ancestor, her spirit is everywhere – we are bumping into memories, this was never barren land, our hearts were always here; hearing tears of love from river flows, tears of belonging, of longing of grieving, of healing, it's all about love, we were free, her teachings, our spiritual awakening (Baker 2018d).

As the Unbound Collective, we were able to develop words that connected the river to the Kaurna community through working with the Brodie family and allowing their voice to take centre stage in the performance. Equally important to the process of the production of *Refuse* was the collaboration with Yorta Yorta/Dja Dja Wurrung language activist, artist, and musician Dr Lou Bennett, and violinist Katie Inawantji Morrison, adding their talent as artists to the mix with the composition of music and lyrics. The song *River Lullaby* was developed with Lou, Simone and the Unbound Collective to feature in the performance. The lullaby speaks to the Port River as connecting with the Kaurna community and the land surrounding the Port River. I am reminded of Dr Romaine Moreton's (2006) PhD thesis, *Right to Dream*, and also her article, co-authored with Lou Bennett, where she states, "the vibration of the body and the land was not separate, for through song, the voice of the singer, and the speaker of language they become one" (p. 99). It is a beautiful piece; a lullaby that can be sung to babies.

River Lullaby

> Still Awake in the Land of Sleep
> Still Awake in the Land of Grief
> There's a Yearning, Rising from the Country
> A yearning She Awakes from her Sleep
> Rest Your Head and Listen
> River, this River,
> This River
> Stars Burning, Dark Waters
> Home River in the Sky
> In the Land of No Horizon
> Awake in the Land of Sleep
> Still Awake, Still Awake.
> Still Awake in the Land of Sleep
> Still Awake in the Land of Grief
> There's a Yearning, Rising from the Country
> A yearning, she Wakes from Her Sleep
> River, this River,
> This River
> Stars Burning, Dark Waters
> Home River in the Sky
> In the Land of No Horizon
> Awake in the Land of Sleep
> Still Awake, Still Awake.
> Sea Above, Sky Below
> River, this River,
> Hey ee yeh, yeh, yeh (Lyrics by Lou Bennett, Simone Tur; music by Lou Bennett 2018)

9.9.2 Unbecoming in colonial spaces

I add sections of our transcript from *Act III: Refuse* as an example of the performance. By adding sections of our scripts, I reveal how refusal is articulated in the space as mapping the terrain and to stipulate that our performance in Refuse is not passive, but is alive in its material, experiential, and representational sense that allows a paradoxical space; that is freedom in itself and unbecoming. McKittrick (2006), in writing about space and the cartographies of struggle relevant to Black bodies, states that, "[g]eographically, in the most crude sense, the body is territorialized—it is publicly and financially claimed, owned, and controlled by an outsider. Territorialization marks and names the scale of the body, turning ideas that justify bondage into corporeal evidence of racial difference" (2006, pp. 44-5).

We start by acknowledging Kaurna Yarta Puulti; we acknowledge the spirits of the ancestors.

Photograph 9.2 Unbound Collective, Sovereign Act III: Refuse. Photograph Tony Kearney 2015.

We tell the audience which First Nation/country/s we belong to. Natalie begins: "Kaurna elder Aunty Veronica Brodie compels us to imagine our way into this place, this space". She says:

> imagine your way back to the year of 1840 on the Port Adelaide River. Just think what it would have looked like then. No buildings, just natural trees, and the Kaurna camps that were there. The whole area was filled with traditional wurlies, with the Kaurna people moving up and down. It would have been a wonderful sight in those days to stand on the hill and see all the campfires lit up all the way to Outer Harbor…it would have been like fairyland (Harkin in *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, Baker 2018d).

Ali Baker says:

> in this place Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien calls purdu pari (former river banks) where the river once curled through the mangroves where Tjilbruke (ancestor) still lives. This place of beginnings where fresh-water springs give forth to wetlands is where the trees carry the marks of the time before; trees marked during the long lawful time; the time before the concrete rivers and polluting engines. This place has old stories that make you want to rest your head and listen. There is always smoke and shadows and morning mist. On the small bark canoes we can drift on the river out to sea. Only time separates these moments. Let the ground water seep back into this place and let the old trees live on. More treasured than can be expressed, our shared stories and this place (Baker in *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, Baker 2018d).

And Simone's voice:

> Black mist from totem atomic tests, Maralinga, and Emu Junction. What will winds carry to and from poison land? Acid rain? Cultural genocide? What defense can protect our Skin, in this nuclear armed world? My skin blisters. My skin burns. Visit these old British bomb-test sites. It will be quiet there, go for a sunset walk, rest on sand dunes with ghosts, shut your eyes in radiation-blindness, stay safe. Try not to breathe-in as the wind blows remnant plutonium-dust from old mushrooms clouds to settle on your skin. Take time, listen to people who know. Irati Wanti the poison leave it (Tur in *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, Baker 2018d).

I call out:

> the earth our skin. We move across the landscape, my skin speaks, my skin hears, my skin feels. My skin breathes. We are moved across the landscape. My skin is marked. My skin is cut. My skin ruptures and is toxic. My skin pushes boundaries, my skin searches for my freedom, my skin breaks, my skin changes, I am a shapeshifter.
>
> My skin is under surveillance, contained, controlled, managed, strangled and choked, without agency to resist my skin will die. To let live or die. To let live or make you live. The landscape as memory, intimacy's connection with country is the intimacy's connections that is landscape. We are written on and in geographical terrains. We are written between space and time (Blanch in *Sovereign Act III: Refuse*, Baker 2018d).

With ethical care and following cultural protocols, we worked closely with community to imagine country and all that is in country. Listening deeply to stories associated with country informed the development of the creative narrative for the performance. We each played our part and offer our voices that are central to our thinking, as McKittrick (2015) suggests, "thinking the world anew" (p. 7). I argue that, in the materiality of our performance, each and every time we engage in performance, we are thinking the world anew; this lies in unbecoming. Our performances occur through the themes of movement, sound, light, water, and earth, noting that each element is central to our performances. Additionally, the performances articulate themes and key concepts of human as praxis, sovereignty, becoming/unbecoming, and refusal. The geographical location, the community context, and the environment are always considered and drive the performances. Before moving onto the Unbound Collective's *Sovereign Act IV: Object*, I finish this section with a tiny part of a poem by Claudia Rankine, a Black activist and scholar, who penned *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014). She writes:

> when you lay your body in the body entered as if skin and bone were public-place, when you lay your body in the body entered as if you're the ground you walk on, you know no memory should live in these memories becoming the body of you (Rankine 2014, p. 144).

9.10 Unbound Collective *Sovereign Act IV: Object*

Indigenous curator, Clothilde Bullen, states that the Unbound Collective was created "as a response to a variety of different urgent political concerns that they saw and felt that they could respond to with a form of loving activism….[they] researched each of the three sites involved in the National, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Carriage Works and the MCA and researched the archival material as it related to indigenous activism and indigenous involvement and occupation at each site" (The National 2019, para. 1-2). Visiting the archival museum of the Art Gallery of NSW allowed for further research and telling of the archival materials that involved Indigenous peoples in the colonial Sydney area. Undertaking research, meeting the team at the Gallery, and negotiating our performance brought to the fore the importance of the process of negotiation in the undertaking of performance.

9.10.1 The performance

We are ready, we hear the digeridoo sounds as we move towards the front of the Art Gallery of NSW from the right side of the building. We have our billy cans with dry ice, we start to pour hot water onto the dry ice, creating a fog-like mist. We are led by Gadigal Elder Aunty Rhonda Dixon and her daughter Nardeena Dixon. We know what needs to be done. We follow in formation as Simone leads us with Katie playing the violin. Ali follows, then myself with Natalie and the flag bearers carrying the Indigenous flags behind us. We move towards the fire, we smell the eucalyptus leaves burning by the fire tended to by four young Gadigal males. We see them standing strong and tall, proud to be Gadigal and part of the Eora nation; their representation is key to our performance. We move to the sound emanating from the violin; the sound is sweet yet haunting. This is played by Katie Morrison, the daughter of Simone. Even while the violin continues throughout the performance, we are also met with the sound of the didgeridoo. As Riccio (2010) says, sound vibrates through our body and we hear the sounds clearly and our bones and tissue connect to the sound, it grows on our emotions, and is emotional, and our mind is filled with thoughts of the performance, and the narratives of First Peoples and biology shifts to the warmth of the performance. There is depth to our movement in time and spatially. We follow Aunty Rhonda and Nardeena Dixon around the fire, taking in the smoke and, at all times, conscious of the smell of gum leaves and the rustle of the skirts as we move. As we move away from the fire, we glance around us. We look at the statues, the names on the institution of the Art Gallery building. The words tell of European art history, and the architecture reflects European colonial structures, and

offers the gallery a gateway into culture as articulated by Western thoughts and ideologies. The view from the art gallery is amazing. The building overlooks the Sydney Harbour, a beautiful spot.

Photograph 9.3 Unbound Collective performance at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Photograph by Tristan Deratz 2019.

Aunty Rhonda Dixon welcomes all to country. She relates a story of removal from country and speaks to the space/country as a site of living on for her ancestors, the Gadigal people, in the past. She remembers the stories that have been passed down; those stories that tell of camping, fishing, swimming, and knowing the creation story of the eel that takes place in Sydney Harbour. These stories are embodied; they are in country and in the animals and trees from that country. We know such stories. These stories are in our families and community members. We are not separate from such narratives.

We begin the shift towards the ramp that leads to the gallery. Slowly, we turn and stop for a moment to look around us. We still carry our billy cans with dry ice and hot water flasks. We continue to pour hot water on dry ice, creating steam. We move slowly but surely, our bodies move with the skirts, the skirts hang on our bodies, we wear calico tops, we are very much aware of our bodies in that space. Unbecoming allow us to shed the colonial skin, we are sovereign. We stop for a moment near the *Offering of Peace* statue. The colonial architectural structure highlights grandeur with the statue *Offering of Peace* that speaks to all wars and peace. What is absent in this reminder

of war history is the war upon the bodies of First Nations people, this is the act of colonialism. As we move gracefully and purposefully, we look towards the audience and see friends, school children and the public. There are so many people. They see us, and we are aware of them, but look beyond them and through them. We are there with a purpose. We don't smile, we continue looking around the site. We are in performance mode and this is our performance of sovereignty.

We enter the gallery with the Aboriginal flag, and the flag bearers stand guard at the entrance; they hold power. We move into the gallery with the audience following us, we place our billy cans and flasks on a small table and pick up our small digital projectors. As we move into the centre of the gallery, we twirl and walk with the intention of making the space ours. We perform a process of making the space an Indigenous, Black space (Blanch 2018). We have control over this space, in this time; our moving across the gallery space is articulated through the performance. We head into the colonial art space and begin projecting our words onto the space. Our bodies disrupt and interrupt the history of the place. We demonstrate a knowing that is beyond the responses of the audience, beyond the art pieces on the wall. The words projected on the walls of the colonial art gallery speak back to colonialism. It speaks back to representation, invasion, and cultural genocide. We disrupt the colonial works with deep intent to unsettle the colonial history that is visually articulated in each colonial art piece. There is a shifting in the space as colonial. It is reproduced through the stories told, the texts that tell, and the movement of bodies through the space.

Photograph 9.4 Welcome to country by Aunty Rhonda Dixon at the performance of *Sovereign Act IV: Object.* Photograph by Tristan Deratz 2019.

Photograph 9.5 Flag bearer at the performance of *Sovereign Act IV: Object*. Photograph by Tristan Deratz 2019.

Drawing from the essay by Dr Romaine Moreton in the art catalogue, and her lyrical waxing of our performance at the Art Gallery of NSW, I provide an excerpt of her descriptive analysis of the Unbound Collective and our performance as one of intense intimacy. She writes, "four women enter the gallery space. They move softly, quietly. The carriage of light, the vibration of voices, and the spectre of Indigenous womanhood gently moving through the western coloniality of power, represented by the gallery itself" (Moreton in The National 2019, pp. 154-5). Further, Moreton contends that:

> The Unbound Collective's 'Sovereign Act IV Object' is an interrogation of passive condition of the object, an active protest of objectification. The performers physically and conceptually move within this binary, their identities bound and unbound. The Unbound Collective move together as an embodied single, complex thought, where living flesh and the archive are caught in a dance (The National 2019, pp. 154-5).

In every performance undertaken, we call upon our ancestors. We acknowledge the traditional owners of the country we perform with and on, and we draw strength from each other.

Again, I consider Barad's (2018) positioning of performativity as 'posthumanist': one that incorporates important material and discursive, social and scientific, human and nonhuman, and

natural and cultural factors" (p. 226). I suggest this contributes to how the Unbound Sovereign Acts progress towards the development of new knowledge and a new way of being. Donna Haraway's (1991) notion of "the cyborg manifesto, gender, race or class consciousness forced on us by patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism" (p. 155) is reflected in our performances. Our bodies are viewed and perceived in those colonial spaces. We carry those colonial understandings with us and work towards outcomes that are strongly weaved throughout our performances and the process involved.

We have an ethical responsibility while on other First Peoples' country. We critique the site, the space, and the geographical location. We see ourselves in the space, even while we know we are on another language group's country. We understand that the performance space is surrounded by certain other spaces and the landscape is poetic in telling the stories of country. Katherine McKittrick (2006), when discussing geographical spaces, sees such spaces as mathematical, having patterns of movement, and as "subaltern or alternative geographic patterns that work alongside and beyond traditional geographies and a site of terrain of struggle" (p. 7). Our Unbound performances involve a process of disruption and rupture and how we 'employ' the right to breathe freely, to see the sky and map our world. This, I contend, is 'unbecoming'. The challenge and disruption of the "repeat of a repeat of a repeat", and as Helen Vosters (2019, p. 193) argues, is key to our worldviews.

Entering the space of colonial art, we see a larger-than-life statue of Captain Cook; it takes up the centre of the room. This sculpture by Māori/Pakoha artist, Michael Parekowhai (2015), is polished steel and reflects the dress of Cook with a pig's tail and flowing cape. He sits on a small, polished steel table with his feet dangling. It is a reflective piece that raises questions of Cook's relationship with colonialism. I am reminded of Wesley's (Gadigal male) telling us about plans to build a memorial to James Cook on the lands of the Eora nation at Botany Bay.

> They carry small projectors, will sing to the portrait of Captain Cook, and speak poetry to the outdated, violent, racist ideas of western colonialism. The women are captivated in their stillness, enduringness (Moreton in The National 2019, section 3, para. 1).

We move around the gallery and stop in front of Cook. Simone sings to him the song, For I Aborigine, by Indigenous singer-songwriters and performers, the late Lillian Sansbury and Caroll Karpany (1993). This song is a counter narrative to the violent descriptive naming of our bodies in the contemporary. We move across the space that houses the 15th-19th century colonial artworks by prominent colonial artists; these "places of obscurity" as Denise Ferreira da Silva states in reading the artistic installation of Otobong Nkanga, *In Pursuit of Bling* (Nkanga cited in Ferreira da Silva 2017, para. 5). We continue our promenade in this place of obscurity with the audience alongside,

behind, and near us. We shine love poems on the paintings and the walls of this colonial gallery. We give the gift of beauty and love through both our performativity and sovereign love poems. This is human as praxis, sovereignty, becoming/unbecoming, and refusal. We deconstruct and decolonise the minds and views of Whiteness, racialisation, and those colonial interpretations of humanness.

In our performances, we engage in the deconstructing and dismantling of "the repeat and repeat of a repeat" (Vosters 2019, p. 193) that is the unbecoming of nationalism. Vosters further stipulates, that in the context of memory, the "social memory is a frame with material consequences" (2019, p. 202) intersecting between Indigenous and colonialism. Reading Vosters' (2019) articulation of grieving at public memorial locations like war museums, which are celebrated every year, we often hear, "lest we forget". But what is forgotten, absent and disavowed in "those institutionally supported for 'celebratory public grieving'" is the grief of those outside of the popularly accepted narrative (Vosters 2019, p. 203). Colonial art pieces speak to memorialising the settlement of First Peoples' country; they speak to invasion and the violent removal of First Peoples off lands. I assert that the lives of First Peoples, the denial of massacres, and the reality of Indigenous deaths in custody in Australia are not perceived as important in the telling of our historical relationship of settler colonialism. Thus, I argue that it is important to realise that we, the Unbound Collective, unbecome absent, and unbecome forgotten throughout our performances with all the multiple layers that signify our engagement as academics, researchers, and community members with strong links to the colonial history of our lives. Through our performances, time and matter meet and are entangled in reconfiguring our hopes; we want to re-imagine new his/herstory, and we take all that we are into our performances. I insert my own reflective prose about our Unbound Collective performances:

> The intimacies of the Unbound Collective
> We perform intimate acts of disruption.
> We dislodge the discursive rhetoric of coloniality.
> We present ourselves as beautiful, strong Indigenous women.
> We articulate the intimacies of selfhood, humanness, and our relationship to each other.
> We acknowledge the intimate relationality of first peoples on whose lands we stand on.
> We trust our own intimate belonging to country

To further provide proof and guidance of the ways that the Unbound Collective express our relationship with each other and community, as well as the spaces and sites we perform with/at, I provide the text from our audience handout at our performance at the Art Gallery of NSW as an example of the words that represent us in the telling.

Eora Nations Gadigal country ancestors elders past present future
we honour this country taste the salty residue of the old people's tears
we bask in the warmth of your enduring fire we see you here
fishing and singing and birthing we see you here shining in the sun

glide on sweeping land-scapes abundant lavish healthy full

follow riverines freshwater creeks we lean toward vast beauty
this mighty wreckage we are small at the water's edge giants of our histories

tread lightly voyage and conjure this projection of old stories carried forward

see these fateful encounters white sails buoyed on sparkling waters
booted-feet and bleached horror *Warrane* *Sydney* a new world carved
disfigured distorted

sink deep-deeper imprint stir on currents rise on tides
cleanse your tainted blankets bleed rupture and seep

hear these walls speak bear witness to creaking and rocking grand corridors
resonant symbols stifled breaths impossible possession
step into the in-between silent spaces bear witness to our bodies
objects of fascination terra-nullius minds we object

disrupt these sites of knowledge production muted containment from the 'Primitive Gallery'
unnamed objects of colonial desire deep in the boughs right here beneath your feet
feel them stirring agitating from down below hear their murmurs and cries
how they shine beyond Cook's monument as they call we respond
we invite you to bear witness to our love as we honour them

from monstrous colonial intimacies
to young and old warriors who refuse the end of their world
we will stoke these old resistance-fuelled fires warm those cold hardened hearts
fly our flags high there is unfinished business here
we are still afloat in the wake of deep colonialisms

know this country know your place re-act act resist refuse
collectively we object (Baker et al. 2014).

The materiality of the handout reveals how the format engages our performance. What is interesting about the design of the floor sheet is how it represents our movement and voices in the performance itself. I suggest that having gaps between sections is like taking breath; sometimes those gaps are long, sometimes short. I contend further that the sentences, paragraphs, and words are ongoing; there is no full stop at the end of sentences, so the process continues. The material entanglements of space, time, and movement matter, and our bodies matter in the space and time as performative empowered actors. I suggest that the floor sheet can be placed in context according to Barad's (2007) statement that "theory and experiment are no longer understood in their reified forms but seen as dynamic practices of material engagement with the world" (p. 55). First Nations colleagues, Smith and Simpson (2014), state the importance of theorizing is happening in Native communities

and that different forms of analysis that take up political issues in ways that have important consequences for communities of every sort (p. 7). In Haraway and Goodeve's (2000) considering of 'flesh', they state that "it's to insist on the join between materiality and semiosis. Flesh is no more a thing than a gene is. But the materialized semiosis of flesh always includes the tones of intimacy, of body, of bleeding, of suffering, of juiciness...it is clear one cannot use the word flesh without understanding vulnerability and pain" (p. 86).

In performance, our bodies are not mute; we wear small torches beamed onto our faces. I suggest this reveal our faces as alive, marked with our beauty but also in the folds of our eyes, cheeks, noses, and ears, we weave the stories of our people, and our relationship with the earth as skin. Our faces reveal our ontological worldview, our connection to our ancestors, the bodies moving through material spaces. Each element is crucial to our performance and the materiality of our bodies that matter in spaces and time of coloniality. This is our way of being in the world.

I argue that the performance of Object speaks to the dehumanisation and naming of us as objects in archives and museums. Harkin's (2015) text and poetic assertions in *Dirty Words* challenges and disrupts the ideological Western epistemic knowledge production and 'knowing' of the Indigenous bodies alongside *Living in the Shadow of the Racists Texts* (Baker 2018b). The Unbound Collective honours social justice and rights to inform our performances through creative and supportive networks of other First Nation academics and community. This is a journey; we flow like a river as Tur and Bennett sang in their lullaby. We are still awake in the land of grief, we yearn for our country, and ask that you rest your head and hearts and listen; we are a river that continues to flow. I insert the text of the Sovereign Love Poems we handed out to our audiences as we moved through spaces of coloniality in the Art Gallery of NSW. We are generous and loving in our activism and political protest, and we acknowledge and name those upon whose country we stand.

Glide on sweeping landscapes, abundant, lavish, healthy. We are on Gadigal country.	We acknowledge the spirit of our ancestors. We call to them. We are on Gadigal country.	We are compelled to find our way into this place, this space. We are on Gadigal country.	Muted containment from the 'Primitive Gallery. We are on Gadigal country.
Follow riverines, freshwater creeks. We are on Gadigal country.	We are small at the water's edge. A new world carved. We are on Gadigal country.	On small bark canoes, our imaginings drift on the river, out to sea. We are on Gadigal country.	The dust cannot settle while the grieving persists. We are on Gadigal country.
Life arteries, forever pumping stories of place. We are on Gadigal country.	We bask in the warm of your enduring fire. We are in Gadigal country.	Transform upon the tides. Rise and fall with the moon. We are on Gadigal country.	Layers of story, eroding an inevitable ephemeral change. We are on Gadigal country.
Honour this country, we see you here. We are on Gadigal country.	Taste the salty residue of the old people's tears. We are on Gadigal country.	See these fateful encounters. We are on Gadigal country.	Intimacy with country is intimacy with landscape. We are on Gadigal country.
White sails buoyed on sparkling waters. We are on Gadigal country.	Know this country, know your place. We are on Gadigal country.	From monstrous colonial intimacies. We are on Gadigal country.	Disrupt these sites of knowledge production, bear witness. We are on Gadigal country.
Sink deeper, stir on currents, rise of tides. We are on Gadigal country.	Re-act, act, resist, refuse. Collectively we object. We are on Gadigal country.	Creaking and rocking grand corridors. We are on Gadigal country.	To young and old warriors who refuse the end of their world. We are on Gadigal country.
Here beneath your feet, feel them stirring. We are on Gadigal country.	Our words are on the wind. Never stop talking. We are on Gadigal country.	Unnamed objects of colonial desire. We are on Gadigal country.	Stars burning dark waters. A yearning rising. We are on Gadigal country.

(Baker 2018d).

9.11 Unbound Collective *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake*

Photograph 9.6 The Unbound Collective enter for their performance of *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake*. Photograph by Brenda Croft 2019.

> We wear well-rounded skirts covered in collated, carefully placed paper archives. Archives of Protection Acts and the Aborigines Protection Boards. Archives of personal family domestic servitude. State Aboriginal Record archives – surveillance and control. South Australian Museum archives – data cards and beating hearts, their cabinets of curiosity…some texts is blacked -out. Some texts is visible (Baker et al. 2020, p. 91).

In this section, I introduce the last performance of the Unbound Collective and continue with my reflection on *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake* (Baker 2019b). This performance was undertaken at the Migration Museum in Adelaide, South Australia, and focused on the servitude of First Peoples

forced to work in government offices, rich White homes, and out on pastoral and farming homes as domestics.

This performance considers being 'in the wake' and draws strongly from Christina Sharpe's (2016) articulation of this in her book, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. The performance enunciates unbecoming of the violence and monstrous intimacies (Sharpe 2010) contained within the narratives of family records.

> Family records…highlight policy measures targeting Aboriginal girls for removal into indentured domestic labour and trigger questions about surveillance, representation and agency; they bear witness to the state's colonising and archivisation processes and reveal what is both present and absent on the record (Harkin 2020, p. 155).

The Acts that we confirm and utter in our naming of performances are sovereign, decolonising, human as praxis, refusal, and becoming/unbecoming in expressing our understanding and love of our bodies and minds in the untangling of how coloniality impacts upon our knowing of self: "we began in 2015 with Tarnanthi, first light. We close with Karrka, a time to reflect in the wake of the last light" (Baker et al. 2020, p. 91). Being 'In the Wake' offers another lens by which to challenge our relationship with knowledge production and theorising of our bodies as First Peoples, Indigenous feminists, and activists in offering celebration and a love process. I have argued throughout this chapter that unbecoming is central to our performances to transform and refuse the misunderstandings that have labelled and defined us. Drawing from Kaurna Elder Uncle Lewis Yarluburka O'Brien and the Unbound Collective's conversations with him, I insert Uncle Lewis's words here to show his own relationship with his ontological understanding of history as a Kaurna Elder:

> I saw their Data Cards too, but didn't want to spend too much time with them. I knew what they did and how it made me feel. Like an animal to be analysed…testing out their theories that they dream up (Baker et al. 2020, p. 93).

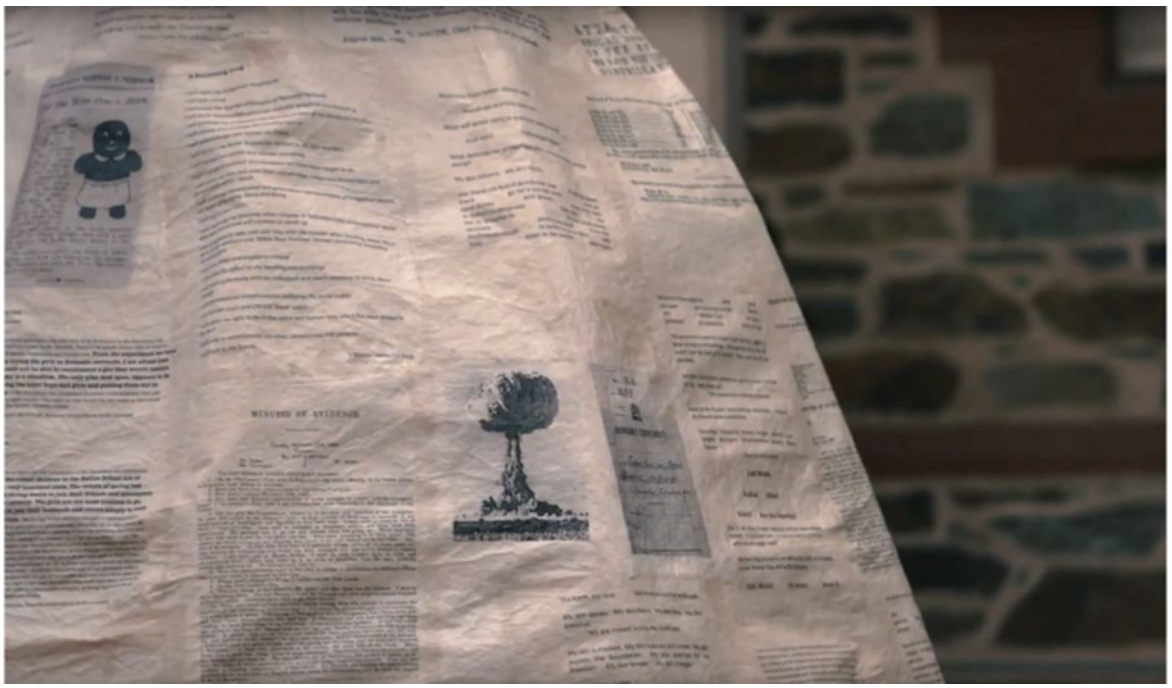
Uncle Lewis clearly demonstrated his understanding of the techniques of scientific study of his body and how mathematical measurements are contextualised in his memory; the measurements did not leave him. This narrative is articulated in our performance of *In the Wake*.

In each of our performances, we speak with Uncle Lewis and find ourselves at all times in awe of Uncle Lewis's articulation and conversation relating to his worldview. The quote above reveals his narrative from when he was about eight years old and Tindale's examination of him and other First Nations people in the city of Adelaide (Baker et al. 2020). This is just a snippet of a wide and long history of studying the bodies of Indigenous peoples. This performance was undertaken in the Migration Museum and reflected on Uncle Lewis's relationship and knowledge of the space and his

articulation of the space as the first school for Indigenous children. The performance of In the Wake speaks to the domestic servitude and slavery of Indigenous women and girls who were subjected to the chores of domestic service and the violence and unsafety of working in White people's houses.

Photograph 9.7 Performing domestic servitude, Unbound Collective performance of *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake*. Photograph by Tom Young 2019.

The entangled material practices of unbecoming and knowing, expressed through gestures, acts and enactment, and Barad's theoretical understanding of "how the body's materiality forces that is its anatomy and physiology and other material forces actively matter to the process of materialization" (2018, p. 226) offer further examination. I argue that discursive aspects and practices are framed in our performances and the narratives that we want to share. I situate the question, as noted by Haraway and Goodeve—"why should our bodies end at skin or include at best other beings encapsulate by skin?" (2000, p. 87)—as a key response to questions of our sovereignty, our unbecoming, and our refusal of colonial interpretations of our right to *live as country*, as we position ourselves in our performances.



Photograph 9.8 Close-up of skirts, Unbound Collective performance of *Sovereign Act VI: In the Wake.* Photograph by Tom Young 2019.

Furthering the conceptualisation of 'unbecoming', I conclude that our Unbound Collective performance, *In the Wake*, performed at the Migration Museum in Adelaide during Tarnthani 2019, is a prime example of unbecoming. The Unbound Collective's sovereign acts comprise six performances spanning from 2014 to 2019. I argue that the process of each facilitates a progression to 'unbecoming'.

The notion of being "In the Wake" considers what it means to be bound but also what it means to be free. As stated in previous chapters, the conceptualisation of 'in the wake' and 'wake work' (Sharpe 2016) states that we must be awake; we engage in the wake and articulate how wake work is our engagement in research, academic output, as well as community work. At all times, we are undertaking wake work. In review of our performance and positioning of wake work, I draw from our article in Artlink: "we [The Unbound Collective] encounter the past through uncanny triggers. We will ourselves to recollect, reassemble and reconstitute what we know and don't know in order to counter dominant narratives of our lives. to reinscribe stories and experiences. To shape consciousness. To transform and liberate. This is our responsibility to remember. To rise-up, stay afloat and keep watch in the wake of the last light" (Baker et al. 2020, p. 91). This is our creative activism; this is our gift to our mob and our community, but also to our audiences and students.

I contend that unbecoming is changing the dominant narrative; unbecoming is the quiet of our sovereignty (Quashie 2012). We are informed by our belonging to country and our relationality with mob and country. Unbecoming is human as praxis, in those hard and dangerous spaces and

places that are often unwelcoming (Blanch 2016). Unbecoming is refusal that "pulls back the curtains of coloniality" (Vosters 2019, p. 206) and challenges every element of colonialism. Unbecoming is becoming and belonging that is grounded in our country, and unbecoming is those processes of decolonisation that can lead to new thoughts, ideas, and articulation in which I, as Yidiniji/Mbabaram, am included. Unbecoming is me and I am Yidiniji/Mbabaram.

To add further context to the process of unbecoming, I include the manifesto by Dr Simone Tur which, in its articulation, speaks back to those experiences in the educational sphere. I contend that, her voice and articulation offer new insight into my own relationship with those difficult spaces while knowing that such spaces can also be joyous and loving. I insert also, a poem by Dr Romaine Moreton to add to the processes of unbecoming and the many ways that First Nations peoples in this country eloquently communicate unbecoming.

A Becoming Song Manifesto

I will claim my Indigenous sovereignty
I will talk strong
I will enact the Anangu philosophy of Ngapartji-Ngapartji (of reciprocation)
I will build relationships which are mutually beneficial and rewarding
I will privilege my embodied Aboriginality as part of my standpoint position
I will always acknowledge the Country I am on
I will acknowledge and honour my Elders
I will honour my Senior Knowledge Holders as my first teachers
I will honour our stories and counter-narratives
I will engage in activism and resistance as I have been taught to do
I will name my bias and state that I will privilege Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives when I teach
I will challenge stereotypical and generalised representations of Indigenous people, our ways of knowing, being and doing
I will not accept racism
I will challenge my teaching when I engage in 'uncomfortable conversations' about race and racism and will continue to speak up
I am prepared to take risks and 'stay with the trouble' when teaching about 'Race' as a social construct and 'White Race Privilege' through facilitating 'unsettling' conversations
I will love ideas and engage in critique
I will critically reflect on my teaching and pedagogy
I will work collectively with my colleagues and teach creatively to bring about change
I will demonstrate transformative pedagogy for social justice
I will border-cross and CREATE 'Black' space
I will claim my right to be in this space and human-ness which has been denied in the past
I will sing to communicate my ideas, perspectives and critiques
I will look to the future (Tur 2018, pp. 273-4).

And: Dr Romaine Moreton's poem:

I Shall Surprise You by My Will

I will make oppression work for me,
With a turn and with a twist,
Be camouflaged within stated ignorance,
Then rise,
And surprise you by my will,
I will make oppression work for me,
With a turn and a twist,
I shall sit cross legged like a trap door,
Then rise,
And surprise you by my will,

I will let you pass me over,
Believe me stupid and ill informed,
And once you believe me gone or controlled
Will rise,
And surprise you by my will,

I shall spring upon you words familiar,
Then watch you regather as they drop about,
Like precious tears thick with fear,
Hear you scream and shout,
Then I shall watch convictions break away,
And crumple like paper bags,
And then as beauty I shall rise,
And surprise you by my will,

It is only when you believe me gone,
Shall I rise,
From this place where I
Wait
Cross legged
Wait,
To surprise you by my will,

In the alleys, in the clubs, in the parliaments,
In courts of law, parking cars, driving buses,
And generally watching you
Watching me
As you pass me by,

I shall wait cross legged,
Wait,
To surprise you by my will,

For I shall stumble from houses of education,
And I shall stumble from institutions of reform,
I shall stumble,
Over rocks, over men, over women, and over children,
And surprise you by my will,

I shall stumble over poverty, over policies, and over prejudice,
Weary and torn,
I stumble,
Then bleary and worn I shall rise,
From this place where I wait cross legged,
Wait,
And surprise you by my will,

For the mountains we crossed,
They were easy,
And the rivers we swam,
They were easier still,
And even then,
As I attempted to outrun inhumanity,
I surprised you by my will,

I have witnessed the falling of many,
Heard them cry and hear them still,
Even with grief inside me growing,
I command my spirit to rise,
And surprise you by my will,

And for all people,
We are here and we are many,
And we shall surprise you by our will,
We shall rise from this place where you expect
To keep us down,
And we shall surprise you by our will,

For the bullets we dodged,
They were difficult,
And this ideological warfare
More difficult still,
But even now,
As we challenge inhumanity,
We shall rise,
And surprise you by our will
(Romaine Moreton 2001).

I argue that Moreton's words, "I will make oppression work for me" (2001) counter the violence of colonialism. She engages in refusal; a refusal to be weighed down by the violence, and so, with a twist and a turn, she engages in what I contend to be an act of unbecoming. Dr Moreton clearly defines not only the violence but also the intimate act of shedding the colonial skin to be exactly who, how, and what she wants to be and always is. Her words offer hope and joy for First Peoples. She will stumble over the educational institutions of reform, stumble over poverty policies that have be informed by acts of genocide. She will wait and surprise those in positions of power in the national agenda of colonialism and Australia as a nation. Moreton (2001) engages an insider/outsider standpoint; one that is watching, always watching. I suggest that the articulations by both Romaine Moreton and Dr Tur are powerful and bring to the fore the relationship that we have with settler colonies in this country. I contend that art and performance of unbecoming connects strongly to Romaine Moreton's poem and Simone's manifesto. Both relay defiance, a daringness, that is confronting in its speaking. Each is audacious and makes one take note, because what is asserted is identity, feminism, justice, and the right to humanity and personhood.

In this chapter, I have presented a deep conceptualisation of unbecoming factors in that we are sovereign, empowered, and transformative in our performances. We are proactive, and activists. We are informed by our research, our discussions, our theoretical understandings, and our relationship with each other. We are powerful, and we are beautiful. We are sovereign goddesses and intellectual warriors.

Photograph 9.9 Speaking back to the camera. Photograph by Ali Baker 2017.

CHAPTER 10 ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE

> This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown (The Uluru Statement From the Heart 2017, para. 2).

Sovereignty

take off your shoes

let the land speak heal your feet

feel the earth find your stride

walk with Indigenous sovereignty (Harkin 2015, p. 32)

In concluding this thesis, I have journeyed through my mother's question of "what is this sovereignty thing?" Argued and revealed throughout the chapters are the ways that the invasive practices of colonialism and the settling of this country continue to deny First Peoples' intimate connection to country/s. An absence lies in the various ways that White scientists, educators, and politicians stipulate their knowledge and owning of First Peoples' lands as well as how the bodies of First Peoples were subjected to associated techniques (Baker 2018a; Harkin 2017; Tur 2018). However, what is embedded in the bodies of First Peoples is country, land, sea, and air; this is the relationality of our existence and our worldview (Moreton-Robinson 2015; Baker 2018d, 2019, 2019b).

Contemplation of my mother's question of "what is this sovereignty thing?" comes into existence provocatively in the chapters through the guiding key concepts of sovereignty, human as praxis, refusal, becoming/unbecoming, and decolonisation, and is articulated through First Peoples' relationship with colonialism. Each chapter provides disruption, deconstruction, and dismantling of Whiteness and the colonial toxic naming (Vosters 2019) of First Peoples' bodies that is often highlighted in the rhetorical and violent domains of language and knowledge production within Western frames. Revealed throughout the thesis is Australia's contextualisation of nationhood and settlement, the taming and maintaining of control of Indigenous people and the settler nation's relationship with First Peoples (Moreton-Robinson 2015; O'Brien & Rigney 2006, Tur & Tur 2006; Watson 2009, 2014).

However, while it may appear that colonialism continues what this thesis has shown is the reality of survival, the refusal to not sit still, to not allow colonialism to dictate its terms on the minds and

bodies of Indigenous peoples (Baker et al. 2015a; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Watson 2014). Engaging with an unbecoming and the shedding of the colonial skin allows First Peoples to remember, to be reminded, to bear witness, and to always be awake and be in the wake (Baker et al. 2015a; Sharpe 2016) as sovereign people.

Further, in the context of educational spaces where the production of knowledge continues, focusing on the processes of decolonising practices intersects with challenging racialisation and the racial profiling of Indigenous youth in unsafe and dangerous places. The removal of First Peoples from country, and movement spatially to and from those geographical landscapes, is told through the dehumanisation of First People's bodies and the techniques and intimate acts committed against First People.

Wynter's (2003) conceptualisation of refiguring humanness and humanity, according to Ferreira da Silva (2015, p. 93) is Wynter's offer to expose the projects of colonialism in the modern era. Ferreira da Silva further notes Wynter's question of the juridical-economic power that is encoded in colonial projects and ponders human existence and who/what we are alongside "the idea of race" (2015, pp. 91-4). Hence, this thesis unpacks notions of dehumanisation to reconfigure humanness and to situate our lives as First Peoples within a colonial worldview.

Photographs were used as entry points to formulate and articulate the chapters and speak back to the photographs; looking beyond the frames provided further insight into the lives of First Peoples and the impact of colonialism that continues into the contemporary. Allowing the photographs to have voice and to narrate a story is framed is a looking that goes beyond the frame of what is seen. This country was built on the backs of First People through slavery that is not acknowledged, nor seen as such. The violence of dispossession and the economy of this country was built on the imprisonment and chaining of First People's bodies and the policies of The Aboriginals Protection and the Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act (Parliament of Queensland 1897). Karen Barad (2007) discusses how diffraction and patterns become recorded in history:

> Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. Diffraction is about heterogeneous history, not about originals. Unlike reflections, diffractions do not displace the same elsewhere, in more or less distorted form (Barad 2007, p. 71).

Government policies that contained the bodies of First Peoples, in spaces that were exclusive to First People, through the legislation of protections and segregation (e.g., Parliament of Queensland 1897). I weaved cultural artefacts of photographs, lyrics, and spoken word; I added poems that speak to those sections that, at times, I find difficult to say or write and could only do so through spoken word/poems. I have stated that, in knowledge production spaces like universities and

schools, rap and hip-hop is an effective tool for teaching and learning for Indigenous students. This allows their political voice to shine, as well as see and hear the hidden and public transcript move through their bodies to burst forth. I inserted, throughout the chapters in this thesis, the academic prowess of my sister colleagues, academics and artists, along with documents to support my own thoughts and ideas conceptualised and theorised through the guiding key concepts of human as praxis, refusal, sovereignty, becoming/unbecoming, and decolonisation.

The overall argument put forward is *unbecoming* as central to my shedding of the colonial skin, and decolonisation of my mind to intimately connect to my country. I have related my own family's relationship with the policies of assimilation and protection by Aboriginal Protectors and their signifying of religious selves as a strategic network of safety. I insert Natalie Harkin's Memory Lesson 7/Archival-Poetic Manifesto (2019) as vital in her articulation of memories, racialisation, Whiteness, and the archives of knowledge that lie within those institutions of museums, law, education and language, and gets pushed into the settler-nation's intimate relationship with First Peoples in colonial spaces. Harkin voices this journey; she says:

> Lean in close. Take this offering as a slow situated-unfolding. Bear witness to the work of mourning; to those official narratives of history that oppress/suppress voices of loved ones that are rarely, it ever, represented as their own. Follow ghosts and paper trails. Bear witness to buried histories that manifest seething, fantasy norms and fixed-imaginings maintained as 'truth' in the present. Disrupt it all, through and beyond the colonial archive, with rupturing intent. Feed your desire to return to the origin as restless-gathering/feverish-hoarding. Honour what you conjure and recognize this as everyone's story: surveillance file-notes / letters/ correspondence files/ inspector reports/ genealogies and photos/ data-cards-artefacts-specimens-remains. Soak up the blood. Don't let the weight of it kill you. Find new ways to negotiate loss imbued with affective-aesthetic concerns for justice. It will come to you in uncanny moments and unanticipated places where blood-memory, haunting and the potency of place collide. Expose state violence. Make visible the humanity of those trapped and lost, now complicit in their vision of refusal to be silent/silenced you will recognize them as your own. Seek company of others who refuse to accept a culture of amnesia, who refuse toonce again be left out of history. This is active reckoning through recognition/ transformation/ action: a rememory collision; a fight-flight-guide response; an embodied literary intervention to the ongoing project of colonialism and all its attempts to smooth dying pillows, toward something else gentle and restorative and just. They will take you back there with them. they will host you on beginnings and never end. Don't stay still for long for their vision is urgent and our decedents need you. Get to work. Repatriate love. Write decolonial poetry. Forever mourn and weave your way out (Harkin 2019, p. 34).

I argue that, as intellectual warriors and sovereign goddesses, our work continues. Unbecoming empowers future generations to imagine and claim their connection and commitment to their worldview as First People from tracts of country/s and lands that always was and always will be their lands.

We are so much more than *just* a population of peoples or just a group of people that are viewed as 'Indigenous', 'Aboriginal', 'native', and 'savages'. We can begin to allow our future generations a stronger connection and commitment to their worldview as First People embodiment of country/s

and lands that always was and always will be their lands. As sovereign First People, we love who we are, we unchain ourselves from the bounds of colonialism and fight to see another day. This is our motto, our manifesto, our prayer; to always love our bodies on our lands. I insert a photograph of my image as important to unbecoming.

Photograph 10.1 Unbecoming/Speak back. Photograph by Ali Baker 2017.

10.1 Appendix: Indigenous Rap and Hip-hop Resources

Baker Boy ft Yirrmal 2018, *Marryuna*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afQcYH2nwoM>.

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