# NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Protecting Indigenous Knowledges through Oral Histories and Culturally Safe Research Practices



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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Of

**Doctor of Philosophy** 

July 2018

#### ABSTRACT

Indigenous oral history brings life to our community narratives and portrays so well the customs, beliefs and values of our old people. Much of our present day knowledge system relies on what has been handed down to us generation after generation. Learning through intergenerational exchange this Indigenous oral history research thesis focuses on Indigenous methodologies and ways of being. Prime to this is a focus on understanding cultural safety and protecting Indigenous spoken knowledge through intellectual property and copyright law. From an Indigenous and Wiradjuri perspective the research follows a journey of exploration into maintaining and strengthening ethical research practices based on traditional value systems. The journey looks broadly at the landscape of oral traditions both locally and internationally, so the terms Indigenous for the global experience; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander for the Australian experience; and Wiradjuri for my own tribal identity are all used within the research dialogue.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Elders of the Wiradjuri Nation. Without their knowledge, mentorship and generosity I would not be here today. Most particularly my wonderful Aunty Flo Grant for her guidance, her care and her generosity.

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Andrew Gunstone, Dr Sue Anderson and Dr Karen Hughes. Thank you for going on this journey of discovery and reflection with me. Particularly I would like to thank Andrew, from first year to PhD I have really appreciated your guidance, teachings and friendship along the way.

To my wonderful family. It has been an endeavor! The ups and downs of writing a thesis has been a real experience and something that I would not have been able to get through without you all. I would like to thank my mother, Robyn, who has always been there for me. My greatest confidante, my strength, and my inspiration, you are the reason that I have been able to achieve this dream. From the bottom of my heart thank you, you are simply wonderful. Praise Jesus!! To my brothers: Christopher, for our awesome conversations, Finian, for a herculean effort, Ionei, for always cheering me on. Thank you dad, Graeme, for being so supportive. There have been so many conversations and cups of tea over the years. There have been late nights, no sleep, worry, happiness, self-doubt and elation, and you all have been there through it all. I love you guys.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge some of the institutions that have guided me on this learning journey. Firstly, I would like to thank the Australian-American Fulbright Commission for the 2014 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. This experience opened my eyes and allowed my heart to embrace a more international perspective to life and research. I would also like to acknowledge the National Library of Australia for the opportunity to be a Norman McCann Summer Scholar. Being able to roam such an amazing repository of knowledge gave me insights into all levels of historical research. Thank you Columbia University Center for Oral History. Being a Columbia University Oral History Institute Summer Fellow let me truly see what being part of international research cohort means.

This PhD is for my late grandfather, Barrie Francis Heckenberg. You always believed Pop, I hope I made you proud.

#### DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that the content of this PhD by dissertation:

- Contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome;
- To the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome;
- Where the work is based on joint research or publications, discloses the relative contributions of the respective workers or authors.

Signed:

Date: July 2018

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### **CHAPTER ONE**

## WUURAA-GA-NAH INTRODUCTION

... we will not allow any of our brothers and sisters to wander through the night alone. In the same way as the dark of night must inevitably give way to the light of day, so too is the case with discrimination and injustice against indigenous peoples, which have to give way to justice. In the dark of night, we see limitations and losses. In the light of day, we see opportunities.

(Olii, 2013)

My name is Sadie Heckenberg and I am a Wiradjuri woman from the Wiradjuri Nation of New South Wales Australia. We are a people of an expansive land traversed by many rivers. My connection to Aboriginal culture flows through my mother, which flows through her mother and from my great-grandmother, who was born on red earth country in central New South Wales, not far from Bulgandramine Mission at Gulargambone. I come from strong and knowledgeable women. I have learnt my cultural understandings from my mother's knee through her guidance and connection to country. I have learnt an international perspective from my childhood summer adventures exploring the North Island of *Aotearoa* with my father, brothers and the rest of my big boisterous and loving Kiwi family. The only daughter of four children, I have learnt culture, lore, and continued connectedness from my mother and Wiradjuri Elders. These teachings through respectful ways of being and oral traditions have allowed me to be in the place of informed learning in which I reside today.

Indigenous people holding on to our connections through oral tradition and oral histories is something no coloniser can ever take away. This thesis looks at the protection of these traditional knowledge systems through oral history and Indigenist research methodologies. Through interviews with Elders and Aboriginal community members, I have devised a best practice model for culturally safe interviewing of Indigenous people. Through the exploration of case studies across Australia, Canada and Hawai'i, and examining Intellectual Property law and how this can be applied, I

analyse the key area of Indigenous knowledge protection. This thesis talks about identity, power, orality, history and knowledge protection within a context of decolonisation and Indigenous empowerment. My research context carries substantial responsibility where ethics is bound to Wiradjuri law. The spiritual and cultural understanding of protocols, and guide to the nexus between cultural safety and oral story telling is part of my narrative. This is performed from my unique world view and positioning. In Wiradjuri lore, this positioning of yourself within a worldview and alongside knowledge is called *Yindyamarra*.

As an Aboriginal person, I am extremely proud of my heritage and strive on a day to day basis to be true to my culture. As a Wiradjuri woman, the most important thing is to be a contributing member of my nation. This work is my endeavour to do just that. The PhD thesis itself will be a methodological piece, both a model on best practice and a guide or manual on how to create and conduct safe and respectful interview environments. The intention of the research is to add to the body of knowledge on conducting culturally safe oral histories. The thesis is created in an Australian context with international case studies of best practice models. The need for culturally safe interviewing practices and spaces then, becomes highlighted through global applications. These global implications and applications strengthen my understanding of the need for local place-based knowledge systems, which are combined with *Yindyamarra*; to form a unified practice and philosophy, this is translated in my thesis and has underpinned my thinking and my methodology.

My research to date, which began when I was a little girl, has been about how to protect and maintain people's rights or a right to feel safe in any environment, the right not to be judged, or overly questioned because of your cultural background or the colour of your skin, whether too dark or, as in my experience, too light. When I was thirteen or fourteen I sat in my mother's kitchen writing down the life story of my great uncle. Uncle Kay we called him; I did not know his birth name was Nicolas but he was our Kay. When we sat there, he encouraged me to write as many details as possible, as he shared his knowledge of a lifetime; through this experience I knew something changed for me. Though illiterate until eleven years old, I became a lover of stories, both verbally and in the written form.

As I mentally look back through that biography of my Uncle, and beloved mentor, I can still see his 'baby of the year' photo, still feel the letters and numbers from his wool shearing stamp under my fingers and as I reflect on this I realise my will to write. Not for any career progression or love of studiousness, do I write, but because people need to be remembered. Loved ones need to be able to hold those memories close and so within that dialogue, histories cannot be forgotten. This is because as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people our standpoints are "historically rooted" (Nakata, 2003 p.140). Our knowledge systems are grounded in country and I recognise that the history of this country (Australia) looms over and informs how and what I write today. The new knowledge within this thesis is informed by old knowledge and the historical realities of the modern colonized world I live in has significance within my thesis and way of applying this knowledge.

Our Elders strive every day to continue cultural knowledge and practice cultural ways of being (ontology). Oral history and oral traditions keep the ties to our ancestors alive and enable us to continue culture even through times of great colonial hardship. Keeping culture and stories alive through oral transmission is imperative for our Elders across Australia and the world. To lose something so connected to the very essence of us as Indigenous people is to misplace a part of our very being. Kakadu Elder Uncle Bill Neidjie (2015, p.19) knows how important this continued connection is:

Bill passionately felt that without their traditional values his people were lost. His fear was that their beliefs, their story, represented by the Law that had been handed down to them by the Dreaming heroes, would disappear and that their culture, one of the oldest on earth, would soon be no more than ancient history.

Oral transmission of knowledge is ancient and at risk. What underpins Indigenous Elders' need to pass on knowledge to the next generation, is that they recognise their culture is threatened. The challenge to keep cultural knowledges, including language is a continuing struggle. "Every two weeks the last fluent speaker of a language passes on and with him/her goes literally hundreds of generations of traditional knowledge encoded in these ancestral tongues" (Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages 2011). Therefore, it is vitally important for us as Indigenous people to continue on the knowledge of our Elders and to accept their roles as mentors while a desire for cultural maintenance and rejuvenation still has strong resolve.

Through diverse relationships, oral history, as a methodology connects different generations within communities, developing closer cultural connections. "Oral history can be presented to children in an interactive manner"; these oral history and oral tradition practices "can be developed in the community, thereby maintaining its cultural relevance as a living cultural representation" (Janke, 1998, p.36). Too many times this cultural relevance can be misplaced and young Indigenous people miss a 'golden opportunity' to learn from their Elders about the past and their culture. I think it is important for young Indigenous people to work with Elders to conduct oral histories, as this allows for an "opportunity to reach out to the older generations in their own families and communities, in order to learn more about the past" (History Channel, 2000, p.1) and to a further extent to learn about who they, themselves, are as Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander People.

My research focuses on the processes of Indigenous knowledge collection through Oral History and the theoretical framework behind it. It will look at Oral History, that is in itself a methodology, and how this methodology will work within the research. This body of research also expands upon this Methodology to–include ethical and safe research practices as part of core business. It will strive to answer the question:

#### HOW DO WE PROTECT INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES WITHIN WESTERN RESEARCH AND KEEP OWNERSHIP IN COMMUNITY HANDS?

The thesis will explore my standpoint as an Indigenist researcher. An Indigenist researcher is one who comes from a specific cultural background, where you are not removed from the research, but are part of it. An Indigenist researcher writes from within the study, not as an outside observer. My standpoint of working from inside community and cultural topography makes this research at its core Indigenist. Importantly this work recognizes the scholarly work and eldership of those who have written before me. I acknowledge and affirm the work of other experienced Indigenous researchers who have worked extensively within this paradigm or framework (see Rigney, 1999; Foley, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Martin, 2008; Nakata, 1998; Janke, 1998; and Smith, 1999).

The authority I call upon comes from knowledge as theory and praxis acquired through research and writing my thesis, my personal outlook and my time spent within the Wiradjuri Nation of New South Wales, as well as with communities in Victoria and field research overseas in Hawaii and the continental United States of America. My background provides leverage for supporting the research aim which is to assist in protecting and maintaining Indigenous knowledges for present and future generations, and in supporting community aspirations for holding that knowledge within our own families and community members. Through Indigenous driven research and Indigenous people looking after our knowledge systems in a way that reflects traditional ways of doing, we are safe-guarding the methods by which our knowledge and community memories can be shared, as well as protected.

#### CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

This research is aimed at oral histories and safe interview practices with Indigenous people. I locate the research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, the Hawaiian Islands and as part of a more global dialogue. I have been very privileged to have worked with my own Elders from the Wiradjuri Nation, within New South Wales. Wiradjuri country extends from the Great Dividing Range in the east, includes the Macquarie, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Bogan rivers and continues south of the Murray River (Elder, 2003, p.49-63; Coe and Coe, 1986, Clayton and Barlow, 1997). This makes Wiradjuri Nation "the largest cultural footprint in NSW and second largest geographically in Australia" (Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation, 2009).

Wiradjuri County and its people have played a significant role in colonial resistance, from Windradyne in the 1820s, who fought against the colonists (Coe and Coe, 1986), to Paul Coe, who in 1979 took the Australian Federal Government to the High Court in *Coe vs Commonwealth* (1979) (Newbury, 1999, p.46). Wiradjuri people have many generations of dispossession and attempted assimilation. This can be seen in the sheer number of missions set up within the Wiradjuri Nation including from where parts of own family stems, Bulgandramine (Reed, 1984; Kabaila, 2011; Kabaila, 2012).

However, this did not stop people maintaining and protecting their identity. Even when girls were sent off to the Cootamundra Girls home (Kabaila 2012) to be trained and put into service (unpaid forced household labour) those girls still had connections to their country. This means that even if a person has been part of the Stolen Generations, gone for so many years, they are welcomed back into the fold and can embrace their culture and their people. These are my people and this is the reason I choose to set some of my research in this nation.

The reason Wiradjuri, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Indigenous people globally, have such strong connections to identity, culture and country is due to the Elders (Miller, 2012, p.183). Elders pass on traditional knowledge and continue our cultural connectedness. During my time in Hawai'i I was mentored and taught culture by the Hawaiian *Kupuna* (Elders). Elders take care of community and mentor up younger people, such as myself. We as a global society need to protect our Elders and the knowledge, oral traditions and oral history that come from ones so wise.

#### **RESEARCH FOCUS**

From our point of view, we say - you have come as invaders, you have tried to destroy our culture, you have built your fortunes upon the lands and bodies of our people, and now  $\ldots$  want a share in picking out the bones of what you regard as a dead past. We say it is our past, our culture and heritage and forms part of our present life. As such it is ours to share on our terms.

(Langford, 1983, p.2)

The aim of this research is to address the ever-growing need for protecting Indigenous spoken cultural knowledge. According to Hart and Whatman (1998 in Martin, 2003, p.1) the "myth of terra nullius implied that this country [Australia] was uninhabited and terra nullius social policy supported by research enabled for the dispossession of knowledges of Indigenous peoples". This idea emphasizes the connection between

colonial ideas and Indigenous people's rights to own anything even their own knowledge. As targets of exploitation and examination Indigenous people around the world have become the most researched peoples (Mellor and Corrigan, 2004). Professionals in all fields see the need to examine the local Indigenous people for whatever their particular research focus is. This at times is not necessarily a bad thing. It is, however, something that communities have seen time and time again with no tangible outcomes to benefit them. This need for beneficence is the main issue I am addressing. What can I do for my people; and how can what I do be of benefit?

One of the most uncomfortable things for many Indigenous people in this situation is sitting in a room feeling as if they are under the microscope. Feeling, as I have many times, like you just want to get up and walk away. I propose that researchers, no matter how well intentioned, need a guide with which to negotiate their work (such as Janke, 2008; AIATSIS, 2010; NHMRC, 1999). This can be an insight into how Indigenous people globally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Wiradjuri people want to be treated during this process. Indeed, people's stories should remain with them, with their communities, and histories and "need not be taken away from the community for interpretation" (Thomson P, 1998, p.30), but kept within the knowledge holder's hands.

Researchers need to ensure culturally safe research protocols are always put into place to guarantee ethical research outcomes. Knowledge ownership needs to stay within communities and researchers need to respect Indigenous voices. Indeed, as Gunai Elder Uncle Albert Mullett (2012) states, "people need to hear from people of Country, our stories, not other people writing our stories". This idea is backed up by Langford (1983, p.2) who asserts that this is our culture and therefore it is "ours to share on our terms". If Researchers choose to work with Indigenous communities, they need to make sure that the story itself and the power to share this story is held within community hands. This not only empowers the teller of the narrative within a culturally safe space of their own making, but also ensures the authenticity of the story.

There is a need to understand community ontology, ways of being, and epistemologies around Indigenous knowledges. This need for understanding is a major aim of this research, by examining the interview process and creating a best practice model to add to the literature of culturally safe interview environments. This model aims to assist researchers in understanding how we, the researched, feel about treatment of our knowledge.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

...no important decisions about indigenous peoples can be taken without our participation as equals or our consent. In other words, nothing about us - without us.

(Olii, 2013)

Conversations around Indigenous knowledge protection within research are fairly recent. That the Indigenous person or community should still own the knowledge researched, instead of the researcher or institution, is still a relatively controversial issue. Yet the "recognition and intellectual activation of Indigenous knowledge today is an act of empowerment by Indigenous people" (Battiste, 2002, p.4). From an Indigenous and Wiradjuri perspective the research follows a journey of exploration into maintaining and strengthening ethical research practices based on traditional value systems. The journey looks broadly at the landscape of oral traditions both locally and internationally, so the terms Indigenous for the global experience; Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander for the Australian experience; and Wiradjuri for my own tribal identity are all used within the research dialogue.

Much of our present-day knowledge relies on what has been handed down to us generation after generation. Principally learning from Elders this Indigenous oral history research thesis focuses on Indigenous methodologies and ways of being. Primary to this, is a focus therefore on understanding cultural safety and protecting Indigenous spoken knowledge through international law such as intellectual property and copyright law. Within this context, intellectual property rights are of significant interest, particularly because the material is Indigenous knowledge. The Mataatua Declaration (1993), regarding cultural and intellectual property rights, and other similar declarations are examined in Chapter Six. Indigenous communities are increasingly demanding self-determination in terms of cultural and intellectual property rights. With the guidance of the Wiradjuri Council of Elders, the research contributes not only to this broad field of Oral History research, but also to Indigenous methodology and culturally safe protocols. The research ideas come from a unique Indigenous point of view. By working with and for community it ensures that no knowledge meant to stay inside the community will be published and broadcast outside in any wider, more global context as research outcomes.

The significance of oral history is demonstrated by the way that in human history, for tens of thousands of years, oral tradition was the common way to share knowledge and histories. Such was the pattern of teaching for thousands of generations. For example, the stories of Homer were told and retold over many centuries before they were captured in text. So many of our predecessors relied on their orality to forward on knowledge. The folk stories of Aesop, the Grimm's stories, were oral tradition. One powerful example from Aboriginal story-telling are the myths of the giant macropods, giant kangaroos, and giant snakes which were stories handed down from the time of the macropods and era of the diprotodon up until the present. These stories have been immortalized in children's literature by people such as Dick Roughsey, but also in stories across Australia amongst the Aboriginal nations. Dick Roughsey's *The Rainbow Serpent* (Roughsey and Trezise 1994), for example, observes the time in prehistory when snakes on this continent were nine metres long.

With the growth in the academic world of scientific and anthropological studies, at the same time Indigenous knowledge in these areas has been under attack. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories, once recorded by European scholars, get taken from their source and published against the wishes of the people who shared their stories. The scholar's career progresses, whilst the community who is the source, gains nothing, or more to the point feels remorse for allowing their knowledge to be shared. This has been very visible in the visual arts as well, for example the Carpet Case where designs were stolen and appropriated for carpet designs, taking their sacred stories to a completely inappropriate mundane format. In that case the artists were hurt by the treatment of their visual stories (Janke 1995, pp.36-38). The same applies when stories and histories from an oral tradition are taken from our people without their knowledge, or are recorded and not given back to the people who own them. I wish to support protection of Indigenous knowledge. This is best supported by formulating structures that have frameworks within Indigenous methodology, where ethics and proper behaviour are embedded in the way things proceed.

In research and in life we are constantly defining our identity. With every interaction there is a need to justify perspective and place. One such stand is to be acknowledged from the country that gives us our culture and identity. It is important to acknowledge that all Indigenous peoples are not the same, even in individual countries. We come from Nations distinct and unique. We come from strong connections to ancestral ties, lore and creation stories that stream from the Dreaming of our Nations. For my own community and identity, I prefer not to use the term Indigenous or even Aboriginal; I am from the Wiradjuri Nation therefore I am Wiradjuri. The same can be said for more general Indigenous identifiers. Much of the community in Australia choose to use the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people instead of Indigenous. It is important to respect communities by not using generalising terminology, if they prefer their own individual identities to be at the forefront.

The terminology that I have used throughout this thesis has been, to my knowledge, used in the most respectful way. I have endeavored to identify communities using the most culturally correct way of doing so. As such when writing about Hawaii I use the word Native. This is a reclaimed word that may not be used in Australia, however, it is a powerful phrase used as an embodiment of an identifying Indigenous person, strong in culture. Nevertheless, due to the international contexts within my research and my focus on United Nations policy and international frameworks of respectful research and law, I have intentionally chosen to use the term 'Indigenous' throughout my research. This use of the term Indigenous is not to stifle or dim individual community cultural knowledge, perspectives or identity but to add to the discourse that uses this term almost exclusively.

With cultural rights being recognised within international policy the United Nations strove to define Indigeneity to make clear that Indigenous cultural ties are a fundamental human right. It is a right of "indigenous peoples themselves to define what and who is indigenous" (Anaya, 2009, p. 28). We as Indigenous people have our "own mother tongue and traditional customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or oral history" (Anaya, 2009, p. 31). It is important that cultural nuances are acknowledged in any definition by organisations that seek to define who we are. The term 'Indigenous peoples', introduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the 1950s, was at first used as a technique of assimilation (Levi and Durham, 2015, p.416). Yet like many other assimilationist ideas the global Indigenous Community turned negative connotations into a political movement for the right to be recognised. With this move Indigenous peoples became recognised for their uniqueness and in 1983 the UN Special Rapporteur José Martínez Cobo defined Indigenous communities as:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.

(Cobo and Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2004, p.2)

It is important to have this language of self-determination included within the definition of Indigeneity. It is also important to respect the individuality of Indigenous communities and also to respect the right to control and develop cultural aspects and qualities as a group. Indigenous communities throughout the world have all suffered from historical "patterns of oppression"; we are diverse yet face many common issues (Anaya, 2009, p. 30). Niezen (2003, p.47) talks of "visible markers of racial and cultural

distinctiveness" that can be found when also examining common experiences of colonisation, victimization and suffering. Indeed, we as communities are all unique. "Indigenous peoples are collectively oppressed because they are unique, and as indigenous peoples they face this situation together, on a global scale" (Niezen, 2003, p.47).

#### METHODOLOGY

As Indigenous people of this country, our stories are precious. They have survived our generations. Our elderly have passed them on to us and we will continue to pass them onto our children. We have our own ways of telling and listening to stories which are important to us.

(Wingard, 2001, p.v)

The methodology best suited to this research is the Oral History methodology. Oral History "methodology is based on a number of academic disciplines, including history, sociology, anthropology, law, journalism, and psychology" (Russell, date unknown, p.2). It collects and preserves unrecorded information about the past that fills gaps in the written record and results in the creation of primary resources. It is however quite different from other qualitative methodologies (T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, 2010; Shopes, 2011). This is because Oral History interviews about life histories are different from other ones. They are not a question-based interview about a certain topic or time (Thomson A, 1998, p.582). They are interviews about a person's history, their life, and generally have little to no set questions (Haynes, 2010, p.222).

Within this western frame of methodology is also my Wiradjuri methodology, my *Yindyamarra*. My research will be conducted in such an environment to ensure "respect, [to] be gentle, polite, honour, [and to] do slowly" (Grant and Rudder, 2005, p.335). My epistemology springs from my cultural values, educational experiences and

spiritual beliefs. From this basis flow my ideas of an Indigenous methodology, a holistic approach to research and life itself (Roe, Zeitz and Fredericks, 2012, p. 3-4). This methodological approach is based on the work of Indigenous scholars including Rigney (1997), Foley (2007) and Clarke (2005, p.37-49) and includes functions of research such evaluative, as: descriptive, cultural, action research, ethnogenic (phenomenological) investigation and partially historical research. This is all part of a qualitative multi-methodology. However, within the terms of this research they all become parts of the whole, all fitting into a holistic Indigenous paradigm. Indeed "[t]here is little evidence that research epistemologies and ways on knowing in Australia was modelled on any learning's from Indigenous population or that it was produced from presumed equals" (Thomson A, 1998, p.583). I feel that my Indigenous methodology, along with Oral History methodology is the most culturally appropriate way approach.

#### CHAPTER OUTLINES

There are seven main chapters in this thesis. The first is an Introduction and lays the groundwork for my research on ethical research practices and the importance of protecting Indigenous knowledges. The second chapter explores the theoretical framework that underpins my research. Exploring a mix-mode methodological approach the chapter reflects on how important my cultural ties and my Wiradjuri methodology, *Yindyamarra*, is to my research. The third chapter of this thesis centres my positioning as a researcher. It focuses on the Wiradjuri nation and how important cultural connections and 'place' are to Indigenous researchers. Chapter Four will explore the concepts of protecting the rights of Indigenous people who are researched by establishing a Cultural Safety which researchers should utilize. The fifth chapter

builds on this best practice model and looks at other best practice research in the field of oral history and how we can learn from privileging the voices of those who share their knowledge with us. Chapter Six explores protecting knowledge under international law and conventions and what rights do we have. Through a series of case studies, the chapter looks at Indigenous rights within colonized societies and how Indigenous cultural strength and self-determination have ensured continued cultural knowledge. Chapter Seven, the conclusion, brings this research together and answers the question: How do we protect Indigenous knowledges within Western research and keep ownership in community hands?

Chapter One: *Wuuraa-ga-nah* Introduction, sets the scene for the overall research. It explores my standpoint as an Indigenous researcher and how this in turn reflects in the thesis. It is of utmost importance to me as a Wiradjuri person to make sure my research on Indigenous knowledges, oral history and cultural safety, is informed by ethical practices supported through systematic protocols and Wiradjuri lawful behavior. This is central to the research. The Introduction also explores Indigenous peoples' voices globally. The chapter supports a defining of my Wiradjuri Identity within the context of Indigenous cultural expression and outlook that looks towards presenting an Indigenous epistemology. The chapter then outlines the rest of the PhD which aims to create a dialogue for knowledge protection and culturally safe research practice within Indigenous knowledge systems.

Chapter Two: *Yindyamarra* Methodology, develops a multi-layered methodological approach to culturally safe research. It is important to set the groundwork from which the rest of the research and research protocols emanate. When examining Indigenous research methodology, the chapter examines how diverse and culturally rooted this

concept of an Indigenous 'way of doing' is. The chapter then goes on to explore *Yindyamarra*, my own Wiradjuri methodology, and the importance it holds within research protocols and within my own research conduct. Oral history methodology is explored within the chapter to guide my future oral history projects in a culturally safe manner. With such holistic methodological approaches, I go on to examine some of the other frameworks used in this mixed methodology, such as ontology, epistemology, ethnography, auto-ethnography and tribalography. This blending of methodology reinforces my voice as a young Wiradjuri researcher.

Chapter Three: Wiradjuri Ngurambang, is a personal self-reflective chapter for me, as a Wiradjuri researcher. It creates a centering within which my cultural understanding of Wiradjuri cultural practices and knowledges tie in with Yindyamarra, and appropriate ways to perform research within the context of Indigenous protocols. This chapter explores Wiradjuri Ngurambang (Country) and my relationship and sense of belonging. The chapter looks at Wiradjuri life, love and connection to Country and spirituality within this sense of belonging. Warriors of the Wiradjuri are investigated with a snapshot of Windradyne, one of our greatest heroes and conciliators. His life is a performative study of *Yindyamarra* in action. The chapter journeys through the era of Aboriginal resistance from the age of frontier conflict to government control by the Aborigines Welfare Board. No matter what the control, however, many examples of continued cultural connection and spirituality can be seen even in the snapshots of Missions within the Wiradjuri Nation, with particular reference to Bulgandramine, Erambie, Warangesda Mission and Brungle. The Wiradjuri chapter celebrates and gives respect to Elders' voices during this time in Australia. It allows us to learn more of this part of the country's history through those that lived through it, whilst at the same time linking the contemporary effects of this knowledge on the present generation. This

includes the teachings and learnings of our Elders who are still with us and who guide us. This chapter is central to my Indigenist standpoint, and showcases cultural safety protocols.

Chapter Four: Cultural Safety, takes us into the world of researching Indigenous people and how Cultural Safety principles should be explored more broadly within oral history discourse. This chapter takes the time to explore the various levels of cultural training and how we as a society interact with this. Cultural Awareness and Cultural Sensitivity recognise difference within culture and the importance of respecting that difference. Cultural Competence and how these interactions might cause a power imbalance and how people might feel vulnerable within organizational structure is also discussed. The model then culminates with Cultural Safety and how this might determine feeling 'safe' in vulnerable situations. The chapter goes on to explore cultural safety in practice by looking at interviewer/interviewee relationships and also research as conducted in cultural safety Best Practice. It is important that Indigenous peoples globally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Wiradjuri people hold cultural safety in their own hands. This chapter establishes a need for understanding *cultural mores* so as to appreciate an Australian Indigenous cultural value system, which is part of the cultural background of interviewees. The chapter discusses The Dreaming in terms of totemic belief, cultural practices, and relationship to the law of the land. This is very specific knowledge in terms of maintaining and protecting culture, and ensuring cultural safety for interviewees (informants), from the informed perspective of traditional cultural values. In this sense the chapter also captures notions of difference between Black and White ideology and how this could affect outcomes. Resources for this section of the chapter rely on Indigenous academic knowledge, as well as community understandings. The chapter concludes by relating through a complex lens

of understanding what cultural safety *means* in terms of protecting oral tradition, and protecting our stories.

Chapter Five: Oral History, looks at how important oral histories are when trying to understand our society and history. Only a certain cross-section of historical documentation can be found in government repositories, yet oral history allows us an insight into community ways of life. Indigenous people globally and in Australia may have been the most researched, but that does not necessarily translate into true and accurate record keeping. A lot of documentation gets thrown out. From oral accounts, many government files about Aboriginal people and those who went through the protection era were stored in a big open warehouse where the files over time, decay. There is also an oversight in the way there are restrictions on our own access to archives, where again only things that the major repositories consider to be of national significance are kept. In communities where this has been identified, self-determination strategies have resulted in Aboriginal Keeping Places, such as the one in East Gippsland at Bairnsdale. Self-management of cultural and historical artefacts, and accompanying oral histories and stories can protect cultural knowledge and material. Faced with poor government protection of our historical records Australian Indigenous oral history can bring to life our community narratives and portray appropriately the customs, beliefs and values of our Old people in ways we can honour and protect. Spiritually, our Elders live on through story. The chapter then examines three examples of my experiences and research in my practice in oral history research. It examines research conducted on Victorian Stolen Wages and how this research for local community shape my ethical practices today. The chapter reflects upon my time in Hawai'i, My Wondering Heart: Hawai'i and Me, and how this cultural immersion changed and shaped how I conduct myself and my oral histories. Next, the chapter explores my research as an oral historian rummaging around the National Library in *Continuing our Voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oral Histories in the National Library*. The chapter concludes with a discussion of my journey of learning and discovery within oral history entitled *Best Practice Ethical Research: Columbia University*.

Chapter Six: Ngadhi Indigenous Knowledge Protection, Indigenous oral tradition takes my research to the law. It explores the concept of protecting Indigenous spoken knowledge through international polices such as intellectual property and copyright law. The chapter looks at Indigenous peoples' rights under international and domestic laws and conventions, and how protection of Orality is mostly left up to interpretation. It examines research ownership, in particular, traditional knowledges shared orally. Looking the chapter explores beneficence and shared ownership of research conducted on and with Indigenous peoples. The chapter goes on to focus on three examples of Indigenous survival, Hawai'i and the right to language, Canada and the right to have oral testimony heard in court and Australia and the right to be educated. These case studies showcase not the international laws protecting our cultural knowledges, but the determination of these Indigenous peoples to hold onto knowledge and cultural connections no matter the colonial environment. Indeed, significant aspect of examining protection of Indigenous knowledge systems is understanding the important role that traditional law and protocols play in informing contemporary ways of succeeding within western guidelines.

Chapter Seven: Bimirr Conclusion, is a summary of my research. The thesis concludes with a strong platform from which culturally safe interviews can take place. I do not think university research always maintains the collaborative process which to our communities is recognised as having a real impact and importance. The conclusion will give a clear idea of what the law does do and does not do. This chapter reiterates that oral history can be self-managed by the people who want their knowledge kept safe for future generations. The conclusion asserts that institutions conduct the processes of obtaining oral history differently. Libraries, for example, work very differently to universities. The experience internationally is informed by different sets of values and national priorities, then those in Australia. For example, in Hawai'i it is of prominent importance and part of daily life, with tertiary institutions allowing structures of self-determination and cultural independence to flourish.

Australia, on the other hand, struggles a little bit, and Indigenous aspirations of cultural sovereignty, including knowledge protection, are marginalised. Related to this is the fact that our oral story-telling which is a continuous narrative of our people, remains vulnerable. However, through oral history encompassing notions of Best Practice within guidelines of cultural safety, we can enable the capacity to maintain the most optimal outcomes when researching with Indigenous peoples, such as the work of Gunstone and Heckenberg (2009) with Stolen Wages in the communities of Victoria. Community values and community needs should drive the research, not simply institutional demands. Research conducted with Indigenous people needs to be for the benefit of Indigenous people themselves and the way that we do that needs to be at the highest standard of cultural respect and sharing. It is important to remember: 'Nothing About Us Without Us'.

#### CONCLUSION

I fight like Ancestors before me how I applaud thee for keeping us safe whatever it takes you stood with your shoulder to the mountain an act so certain... may destiny never obscure shall I always procure the truth of heritage which never forsakes me so oppression never breaks me embrace the journey no matter where it takes me

(Moreton, 2004, p.104)

Indigenous people cannot simply be an interesting research topic. If research is being conducted with Indigenous communities the community members, Elders and Traditional Owners need to be involved from the very start. The research needs to be of the benefit of Indigenous people, and undertaken in a culturally safe manner. By creating environments of Culturally Safe researchers one can ensure that research about Indigenous people is led by Indigenous people themselves. This thesis examines these ideas and how to create a best practice model for ethical research. It is essential that Indigenous knowledges remain within Indigenous hands. The thesis looks at different ideas of ethical research practice and how oral history research can prioritise Indigenous voices. So that Indigenous people are the ones conducting the research but also that the Indigenous elder voice is given more weight and authority than the non-Indigenous researcher. It is important to me to make sure that Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Wiradjuri voices are prioritised above those writing about our culture. Therefore, I have included as many of those voices as possible. Though these recollections may not come with a page number they hold more power than any peer reviewed journal article can ever possess. This thesis is a journey of discovery and I "embrace the journey, no matter where it takes me" (Moreton, 2004, p.104).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

## YINDYAMARRA METHODOLOGY

#### INTRODUCTION

For as long as I can remember I have been part of the audience of my older family members and extended family telling stories about life as school workers, wool shed workers, those seeking to find out as much as possible about the old ways of looking after Country. Moments shared of going fishing, going surfing, and lazy time by the river all of this was done with story. Growing up Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander means one's world is filled with story. I can remember when my Dad went away one time he left us kids a cassette tape of himself reading the *Magic Pudding*, that was how important story, and hearing story was to us kids, and listening to our parents telling Australian stories, too. So now in writing a thesis I can recall this as part of the reason why it is so important to record and protect our own people's stories for the future. Ours is a living culture and life is painted with amazing colour as our oral tradition lives on. My motive is to ensure the story-tellers and the stories themselves are given the respect and protection they deserve.

This chapter develops a multi-layered methodological approach to culturally safe research. It is important to set the groundwork from which the rest of the research and research protocols stem. When examining Indigenous research methodology, the chapter looks at how diverse and culturally rooted this concept of an Indigenous 'way of doing' is. The chapter then goes on to explore *Yindyamarra*, my own Wiradjuri methodology, and the importance it holds within research protocols and within research conduct more broadly. Oral history methodology is explored within the chapter to guide my future oral history projects in a culturally safe manner. With a focus on holistic methodological approaches, I go on to examine some of the other frameworks used in this mixed methodology. This blending of methodology reinforces and supports my

voice as a young Wiradjuri researcher and informs my own research approach that combines these methodological elements.

As an ontology, or way of being within my research, I have been thoroughly trained by my Elders to sit and listen. I have been a quiet, yet invited, observer when Elders have met together and I am expected to hold my tongue to learn. I am mentioning this because this helps explain my methodology of *Yindyamarra*, which is about doing things slowly and carefully. Part of my methodology insists on taking my time, to make sure what I say has the right weight and value culturally. *Yindyamarra* links humans to nature, and nature to spiritual knowledge. All are interlinked, and my feelings and ways of doing research are guided by this intrinsic link to our cultural protocols and accompanying law. This is what makes my methodology, my way of doing and being through *Yindyamarra* unique and comprehensively different to what western methodology might expect from research. *Yindyamarra* is about cultural safety, and respect, not just collecting data.

This study considers how looking carefully through this methodological lens promises non-assimilationist consequences vital to the overall outcome and shape of my research tasks. A good methodology is essential to provide credibility to all research. As an Indigenous researcher, it becomes even more pertinent that research methods and methodologies are "solid" and "proper". In a cultural context being solid means being strong in culture and being proper in relation to protocols and ethics regarding Indigenous knowledge systems. Therefore, as an Indigenous researcher, I am challenged by the expectation from colleagues in a western hegemony. Here there is tension between the western view and how my Elders have guided me to see the world, my place in it, and my duty and obligations to my community. These expectations crystalize in a number of ways, and in this instance research outcomes need to reflect *Yindyamarra*.

Furthermore, as a young researcher in orality it is vital to establish clearly the difference between the methodology utilized and methods or the tools I use. Many new researchers may become quite confused between the two. This has been part of my challenge, and something I wish to clarify. The way to make this distinction more well-defined is to clearly outline what one's methodology is, and then to explain the methods used within this, an Indigenist methodology. Within my research I have chosen to develop a unique mixed methodological approach. The key to using more than one methodology is to make them complement each other, while at the same time respecting traditional knowledges and cultural beliefs of diverse Indigenous communities. As Indigenous people, we use all our senses, so that Indigenist methodology embraces this holistic way of viewing our realities, our ways of being, and belief systems. I use a cultural filter or lens to sort distinctions and meanings of the narratives and stories I have listened to. Saini's (2012, p.4) work in Canada has been of interest to my mixed method research approach. Saini (2012, p.4) identifies some of the challenges in working with Indigenous and Western designs, and how western design can inundate or assimilate the Indigenous methodologies.

(Saini 2012, p.4)

Without a candid examination of the cross-validation of Western research designs and Aboriginal knowledge, the rules of accepted scientific research can be used as control mechanisms rather than expanding knowledge growth. In other words, when Aboriginal knowledge is evaluated by Western standards of reliability and validity, this can lead to assimilation into Western frameworks, and a preference for Aboriginal research most compatible with Western standards. It can create an illusion that Aboriginal research is primitive and does not conform to Western standards. Such practice can be interpreted as epistemological ethnocentrism where the dominant paradigm establishes the parameters within which 'legitimate' discourse may take place.

Looking further regarding this challenge of authenticity versus inundation, Massey and Kirk (2015) explain the dilemma more succinctly, "Applying Western scientific 'rules' of research can act as a control mechanism and risk the assimilation of traditional knowledge, under the guise of facilitating 'legitimate' discourse" (Massey and Kirk, 2015, p.1).

In my methodological tool kit, western and Wiradjuri philosophy understand each other and work together, because of the very fact that I can use Indigenous principles and value system to self-monitor; be conscious of culturally safe ways to do things, and be continually self-reflecting through eyes that are guided by the knowledge of ancestors. There is authority in this mix of western ways of proceeding partnered with communityspecific Indigenous methodologies. There is ease within research spaces where one can feel and be part of cultural safety as an ethos and a way of doing and being, and where an ontological and epistemological space resonates with my own understandings of research behaviour and personal responsibility. As Durie (2004, p.1138) has observed, "Indigenous knowledge cannot be sufficiently assessed by Western scientific criteria alone", and simply using a methodology constructed within the western academy denies the unique and central aspects of culture that Indigenous methodologies take into account, particularly our unique connections to Country. Durie (2004, p.1139) asserts that "identity is regarded as an extension of the environment, there is an element of inseparability between people and the natural world. The individual is a part of all creation." This is at the backbone of the Aboriginal way of being.

Connection to the land, means feeling connection to all in nature, and also connection to ancestors who have been occupiers of tribal land for many thousands of years. Monica Morgan, Native Title co-ordinator in her summation of Yorta Yorta connection to their lands, during their Native Title claim affirmed that their association with that same piece of land was thousands and thousands and thousands of years (Gregory 1998, p. 8). This case highlights where 201 Yorta Yorta people testified, white law superseded Aboriginal law, rather than the other way around. Native Title was apparent through the testimony of oral tradition and story-telling, introduced by way of bloodlines and heritage given to the Yorta Yorta through their association to their Country. This space brings together an Indigenous voice by allowing my experiences and relationships to contribute actively to Indigenous enquiry. I have been fortunate to gain experience and to build relationships through networks across borders, and within nations.

Within the fabric of Indigenous networks globally, we all learn from each other, as I have done with the opportunity to learn with Hawaiian colleagues. In 2014 during my first semester as a Fulbright scholar, in the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa, I undertook a class that opened my eyes and created a new thought process around the construct of methodologies within the academy. I entered a class for the Hawaiian Masters program called HWST601: Indigenous Research Methodologies. It was run by the esteemed Kumu Professor Jon Osorio and was made up of students across the Hawaiian Masters program as well as other students in programs across the university. As a research methodology class, I assumed that it would be set around structured methodological approaches each week. Contrary to my initial expectations, the class focused on both traditional and contemporary readings by or about Indigenous peoples, mainly native Hawaiians. This was the best environment I could possibly be in to turn and explore global Indigenous culture and the various life ways and methodologies that exist. It also made me realize

just how institutionalized my thinking had become. Kaomea (2001, p.28) demonstrates the contrasting expectations between western and Indigenous expectations:

while the academy expects that its members will speak from theory, Native Hawaiian communities expect that their members will speak from experience. While the academy expects that research relationships will be detached and objective, Native Hawaiian communities expect that these relationships will be intimate and enduring. While the academy expects that its members will contribute to the scholarly community through rigorous intellectualism, Native Hawaiian communities expect that their members will contribute to the scholarly community through rigorous intellectualism, Native Hawaiian communities expect that their members will contribute through vigorous activism.

(Kaomea, 2001, p.28)

Generally, when Indigenous methodologies are transferred into western academia they undergo a simplification that focuses on the methodological theory, and not individual community experience. When this is practically applied within a western paradigm based exclusively on theory, objectivity and intellectualism the expectations for research become oppositional to community-based expectations and ethics (Kaomea 2001, p.28). Indigenous knowledges are assessed and continuously redesigned to fit into whatever academic framework seemingly is the 'right one' at any given time. Yet these knowledges cannot and should not be measured by "Western scientific criteria alone" (Durie 2004 p.1). Kaomea (2001, p.28) underlines the struggle to remain a voice of cultural links and ethical research while being forced into the confines of the academy. Indeed "research validating Indigenous reality challenges unequal distribution of power and structural barriers" (Massey and Kirk, 2015, p.12). From my own experience of coming from a family where oral history has been so important for holding and passing on knowledge, these ideas resonated powerfully with my own world view, and gave me a more empowered idea of what is not only proper, but what should be strived for within the academy in terms of my own research.

Western Institutions such as universities have a tendency to absorb cultural nuances and re-shape them to fit into the defined structure that is the 'correct' way to research. Emblazoned on the office door of the Gippsland Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, I recall Larisa Behrendt's words as she talks about the risk "of going into non-Aboriginal institutions like a university is that Aboriginal people can be used as tokens and then become marginalized". (2000, page unknown). As I reflect on those words, I suggest, the same too, can be said for Indigenous ways of thinking and methodologies incorporating our ways of seeing. It is important to dissect these notions of what is deemed the academic way to research and look more at what is the most appropriate culturally for inclusive ways to conduct community research. There remains some skepticism within our communities regarding the power which researchers from the academy seem to have regarding capturing our knowledge and then taking it away. Looking at Kaomea's statement above conjures up a different kind of relationship, and talks about inclusivity, social justice and enduring relationships. In terms of Wiradjuri society this means *Yindyamarra* research notions which include reciprocity, responsibility and respect.

Optimistically, my philosophy is that I not only conduct research by *Yindyamarra*, but that I also live by *Yindyamarra* through careful, thoughtful and a culturally appropriate demeanor where I aim to consistently provide an environment for which there is culturally safe and sound research dialogues. *Yindyamarra* philosophy, as part of Wiradjuri life teachings, is means being aware of the connectivity there is with every action; every living thing has connection to everything else and to every person. So, this is why one's personal character and living through *Yindyamarra* is important, too. Many of our old stories handed down concern respecting those around you and the nuances of each interaction and how that can affect the whole. This is true of Dreaming stories as well. This philosophy holds central to how important and relevant Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander voices and ways of being and doing need to be prioritized and held apart from assimilationist dialogues.

# INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGY

Over the last few decades the concept of Indigenous research methodologies has been growing within the wider global academy. Indigenous academics like Linda Smith (1999) and Karen Martin (2008), Dennis Foley (2003) all assert the important position of an Indigenous standpoint, which affirms that we have the right to have different ways of seeing and different ways of performing research than the way western models dictate. These Indigenous researchers and authors demand our right to reflect on research and potential outcomes differently. One reason for this is the very nature of oral histories in the first place. The story-teller is not separate from the emotions of the memory, as Yow suggests:

Oral history is inevitably subjective: its subjectivity is at once inescapable and crucial to an understanding of the meanings we give our past and present. To reveal the meanings of lived experience is the great task of qualitative research and specifically oral history interviews. The in-depth interview offers the benefit of seeing in its full complexity the world of another.

(Yow, 2005, p.41)

Therefore, the oral narrative tells us more about ourselves than just a dialogue of history. This too is why oral history research is best conducted within an Indigenous framework, a *Yindyamarra* methodology, which looks after the informant's feelings. Mind, body and spirit are together in these kinds of situations, here one can see the relevance of cultural safety practice. The complexities of dialogues within Indigenous oral histories cannot be foreshortened, and in my view, need to be respected and our methodologies protected as a measure of our cultural practices within the academy,

with relationships "intimate and enduring" (Kaomea, 2001, p.28) that mean something authentic to both participants, interviewer and interviewee.

Yet as this way of researching has become increasingly recognized within wider research circles, those circles have been attempting to conflate these concepts into one single Indigenous entity instead of many different peoples and perspectives. So here I identify another challenge within an 'anti-colonial cultural critique', and that is establishing ways of keeping ownership of our methodologies ourselves, and protecting our right to do things our way, 'nothing about us without us' (Olli 2013).

It is imperative that while our methods and tools for research continue to grow and strengthen in ways that individual peoples, countries, nations, tribes and communities prefer, our ideas are not hijacked and homogenized by the 'mainstream', so that in the end we are forgotten in the process. Globally Indigenous communities learn from each other. We celebrate knowing each other and sitting together to share knowledge. We also celebrate our own unique cultures. That each of us is separate, with separate ideals and priorities and that our unique differences, as well as commonalities, needs to be retained so that the whole is more powerful. As Eckermann *et al* maintain:

Cultural Safety... is the need to be recognised... and to be assured that the system reflects something of you – of your culture, your language, your customs, attitudes, beliefs and preferred ways of doing things.

(Eckermann, Dowd, Martin, Dixon, Gray, and Chong, 1992, p. 215)

Indigenous people around the world are the most researched people (Penman 2006, p.12). Professionals in all fields see the need to examine the local people for whatever their particular research focus is. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It is however something those communities have seen time and time again with no real outcomes to benefit them. Research has become "one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's

vocabulary" (Smith, 1999, p.1). Our Indigenous way of doing research, on the other hand, is to benefit our communities, in other words results that bring good outcomes. Our stories and oral narratives, in particular, inform best practice in many fields of study, including health, education, and contemporary ceremony.

Indigenous researchers and Indigenous academics have been trying to change the structures that enforce unequal power relationships. Therefore, endeavouring to make research something that has visible outcomes and that is conducted in a culturally safe way is the only methodology that is viable for authentic outcomes. My response in seeing the value of *Yindyamarra* and Indigenous research methodology as best practice is part of a broader respectful global community of Indigenous ethical research. Therefore, influential researchers like Linda Smith and Karen Martin, for example, are significant leaders in providing certainty for our right to a research practice that have different ways of seeing and doing, distinct from a western hegemony. How we as Indigenous peoples reflect on research and potential outcomes differently, ought to be a self-reflexive process based on *our own* particular cultural values and beliefs. Often our ideas are modeled through cultural learning, which we have had handed down to us from those who came before. They are not just ideas from books.

Culture and cultural values are fundamental to an Indigenous way of life and to Indigenous research. Working within Traditional frameworks in contemporary contexts keeps hold of cultural values whilst strengthening the authority of Indigenous knowledge in the twenty first century.

An Indigenist methodology decolonizes research methods by including the gathering of narratives, qualitative data and the incorporation of mixed methods or mixed techniques of telling our story. Secondary data analysis as well as primary sources form part of the narrative; each way of telling corroborates another. Cultural practices and protocols are central to ways of performing these tasks. This style of research therefore is about enabling an audible voice for our people. My research is all about asserting the right for our communities to be allowed to speak, which tells our past and informs our future, whether this is a single voice or a voice of our respective nations.

In legitimately and ethically using cultural practice and protocols as part of our research tool kit, now familiar and accepted by wider research circles, who once marginalized our ideas, we are now also more vulnerable. These circles become the very ones who have sought to level our complex notions, stories and identities to a single Indigenous entity instead of many different peoples, sometimes for their own use. So, the marginalization continues, just in a different way; this is a continuing form of colonization, now through stealth. The problem it seems, is that once this concept of Indigenous methodology was taken up by mainstream academia it was placed into a box into which all Indigenous research has to fit, and to which the usual western stereotypes can again become located where we are once again contesting our cultural sovereignty. Indeed, this theoretical framework can be likened to the presence of Indigenous people themselves within the academy. In maintaining control of our own research, we still need to protect our Intellectual Property Rights, particularly as our theoretical frameworks become more refined (Janke, 2016). This is one of the reasons that oral history research methodologies are so relevant to supporting and maintaining control of our research.

For example, if the community story-teller insists on maintaining a certain voice, and way of talking, then this has a ripple-on effect to what must be included in the way the researcher is involved in the project. This in fact informs the methodology. The community itself therefore encourages the way the research is carried out. The community encourages an Indigenist research framework. As I mentioned earlier, a characteristic of my research is that it has to work within the sanctions of *Yindyamarra*. To me this perspective is very encouraging; it is a trickle-up effect, rather than an institutional trickle-down.

The fundamental principle of my framework is that it is a collection of Indigenous methodologies not a single methodology. This is the importance of recognizing the differences and individual cultures that Indigenous people come from. This is the case all across the world with individual research methodologies for not only recognized Indigenous people of a country but for individual nations of people within each country, as is common for Native American tribes (Caldwell, J., Davis, J., Du Bois, B., Hawk, H., et al, 2005). However, as Indigenous people we learn from each other, and elements of this learning from other nations can add depth and complexity to our own individual Indigenous standpoint.

To reiterate, it is imperative that while this method continues to grow and strengthen, that the individual peoples, countries, nations, tribes and communities are not forgotten. That each of us is separate, with separate ideals and priorities and that our unique cultural ideologies and practices need to be remembered and regarded respectfully and individually, so that the whole is more powerful. What this means is that we all have our own knowledge systems, there is not a generic way of approaching Indigenous research, as ideas, value systems and stories are specific to location or place. In terms of location and place, customs, diet, language and stories are specific to the people of that region. So within even a global context, we each have our own identities. Each of our communities has a specific identity, and in shared Country, perhaps a series of identities.

#### YINDYAMARRA

Informing my Indigenous framework of methodology: is my Wiradjuri philosophy, my Yindyamarra. My research will be undertaken in such an environment to ensure "respect, [to] be gentle, polite, honour, [and to] do slowly" (Grant and Rudder, 2005, p.335). My epistemology springs from my cultural values, educational experiences and spiritual beliefs. My way of approaching research is with care and respect. From this basis flow my ideas of an Indigenist methodology, a holistic approach to research and life itself. This methodological approach based on the work of (Rigney, 1999), Foley (2007) and Clarke (2005, p.37-49), amongst others, includes functions of research such as: descriptive, cultural, evaluative, action research, ethnogenic (phenomenological) investigation and partially historical research. This is all part of a qualitative multimethodology. However, within the terms of this research they all become parts of the whole, all fitting into a holistic Indigenous paradigm. Indeed, as "[t]here is little evidence that research epistemologies and ways of knowing in Australia was modelled on any learnings from Indigenous population or that it was produced from presumed equals", (Rigney, 1997, p.114) I feel that my Indigenist methodology, my Yindyamarra, is the most culturally appropriate approach (Rigney, 1997).

*Yindyamarra* is more than simply a methodology or a philosophy of respect. *"Yindyamarra* is the Wiradjuri way to live"; it is in every breath and every action (Sullivan and Grant, 2016). As with other Indigenous ways of being, and with other Indigenous methodologies, it is hard to explain in English. There is almost a non-verbal cultural aspect that unintentionally gets left out by the translation. Yes, it is about respect - respecting Wiradjuri people, respecting Wiradjuri County, respecting Wiradjuri language, respecting Wiradjuri law (Sullivan and Grant, 2016). However, it is so much more, as Sullivan and Grant (2016) explain.

*Yindyamarra* lights the stories in the stars in the night sky over Wiradjuri Country. [It] is the breath in the people and the breeze through Wiradjuri country. *Yindyamarra* is in the song. This song is the song of the past and the song of the future. *Yindyamarra* is the beat belonging to this, Wiradjuri country.

(Sullivan and Grant, 2016)

"*Yindyamarra* is always the story that the storyteller lives and breathes" (Sullivan and Grant, 2016). When undertaking this research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander oral histories I remember that when I listen I need to do so in a respectful way. I remember that the speaker is sharing their knowledge of a life time with me. The *Yindyamarra* is being shared not only through the knowledge being spoken, but with the exchange itself. I feel a sense of responsibility as a young Wiradjuri woman to maintain *Yindyamarra* in my research and as I travel through life. Indigenous methodologies and *Yindyamarra* might seem like just another version of researching. This however is not the case, as *it is* a way of life. Research conducted through these lenses is very different to a more mainstream form of qualitative or quantitative research. Indigenous researchers are on a very personal journey. It is important to keep our culture central and when "we live and breathe *Yindyamarra*, *Yindyamarra* is everything" (Sullivan and Grant, 2016).

Oral History is a form of collecting the life history of an individual or group. Yow (2005, p.3) reminds us, in his account of the Peloponnesian War, that oral history was used as far back as Thucydides, an Athenian general in his account of the Peloponnesian War, which was in the fifth century BC. Yow (2005, p.6) suggests that because of the nature of oral histories and the nature of collecting qualitative data, the researcher in fact has a great deal of flexibility in the way information is collected, and that there is shifting sand within the dialogue of informant to researcher. This is a very different way to collect data than quantitative research which has strict parameters, and little room to move. The idea of oral history collection, listening to narratives and being part of a discussion in terms of memory and cultural and historical knowledge becomes an engaging and edifying experience when all the correct protocols are in place, and cultural safety is stipulated by informants and encouraged through the disposition of the oral history researcher. The sharing of knowledge and cultural information with someone who is willing to record their stories, is often something that Indigenous community members really want to see, as this is a contemporary way to make sure heritage is preserved. In terms of the Indigenous researcher, this kind of get-together in a circle of trust, is responded to by ensuring food is catered for, and the place of meeting is conducive to a culturally safe space. The way that Indigenous community members develop interchanges is also called a "yarning circle" (Queensland Government 2017) and has become a method by which communication takes place in a relaxed, yet informative environment for a learning group:

The use of a yarning circle (or dialogue circle) is an important process within Aboriginal culture and Torres Strait Islander culture. It has been used by Indigenous peoples from around the world

for centuries to learn from a collective group, build respectful relationships, and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge.

(Queensland Government 2017)

The concept of yarning and its relationship to oral history is examined by Anderson, Hamilton and Barker (2018) who relate to the value of family and community yarning as being part of negotiating ways to teach and ways to learn between women and children, in particular, the passing on of important knowledge (Anderson et al, 2015, p.2). Aboriginal women kept their children close, and as the children participated in the daily activities and trips through Country, stories were told as yarns to educate the children in Aboriginal knowledge. Knowledge of Country and matters relating to heritage could be freely shared (Anderson et al, 2015). This a way that even in an era where segregation and assimilation policies were impinging on traditional lifeways, story was strong and passed on cultural narratives to the young ones. "Yarning is a lived experience of a story and the key elements of it are respect and reciprocity, whereby the listener is tasked with the responsibility of transferring the knowledge onto the next generation" (Anderson et al, 2015, p.6). The value of this method of sharing story is highlighted by the fact that this method of sharing knowledge has become accepted as a research methodology (Anderson et al, 2015, p. 4). The implications of Yindyamarra as part of an Indigenous methodology, coupled with concepts of cultural nuances in telling history, helps develop ideas for progressing an Indigenous methodology. Embracing yarning circles, acceptable to Indigenous communities, might slowly find its place in the academy, yet the tension between western and Indigenous methodologies will probably continue to be a challenge for some time.

Usually oral histories are conducted using biographical interviews, personal narratives and life history interviews (Haynes, 2009, p.222). Written historical texts or archives can be used to help support the timeline of this history. However, our individual accounts of events are just as important to our overall historical perspective as any official document can be. There is through this kind of relationship with the story-teller to his/her audience a means by which the individual has control over their own narrative and the shaping of the story. This differs from autobiography or more structured historical texts (Haynes, 2009, p.222; Wright, 1986 cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 130). The process of collecting oral histories is very interactive between the subject and the interviewer. The relationship is developed on a more personal level. The interviewer is not simply asking a direct set of questions but also delving into and drawing from the memory of events that touch the people with whom one speaks. The process is very much subject-led. The interviewer is not going into the process with a designed idea of the outcome or story. The narrative, is in essence shaped by the person speaking. This means that within the scope of oral history and story-telling, the narrator owns the way the story is told. In other words, this process has a strong sense of the teller having self-direction, and greater ownership of the experience than would be the case with other interview techniques.

Both autobiography and oral history involve a person telling their own life-story, but oral history is interactive, drawing on the narrator's memories and another person's questions. This method relies on the ability of the researcher to elicit information from the participant and requires the interviewer to possess skills of restraint and listening, as well as interviewees who are willing to talk and be reflective. Gilmore (2001) describes autobiography as a mode of self-production, "which features a rationale and representative I at its center" (Gilmore, 2001, p.2). Oral history has a more expansive purpose and in fact, has become a means by which even heritage issues are given credence in matters to do with place and environment with government consultations (Veale and Schilling 2004). Oral history differs from a straightforward interview, however. While interviews have some similarities to oral histories, in that they are typically created through interaction drawing on another person's questions, they usually focus on a particular experience or phenomenon. In contrast, oral histories deal more broadly with a person's past, and range widely over many different topics. Some feminists use the term 'phenomenological interviewing' to encompass oral histories (Reinharz, 1992), which suggests an interviewee-guided investigation of a lived experience that asks almost no prepared questions. For the purposes of the research the term 'oral history' encapsulates notions of in-depth personal narratives, which rely on open-ended questions to probe aspects of the narrative in order to maximize discovery and description. Essentially, interviewees are handing down stories, as they always have. This has significance for community knowledge.

Western oral history was once a form of recording the life of the elite, such as is mentioned by Yow, who sites an example from Columbia University in the late 1940s of "white male elites" (Yow, 2005, p.4). Ordinary people were not considered to lead lives that needed to be recorded for historical reflection. This started to change in the middle of the twentieth century and grew rapidly during the decade from 1962 to 1972 (Mos, 1975, p.v). This led to the adoption of oral traditions as a device for community consultations concerning land management issues (Veale and Shilling, 2004). This however, is not always true though for Indigenous Oral History. In traditional Aboriginal societies everyone's stories matter. Indeed, many Indigenous oral history accounts are more community focused. That is not to say there is not particular knowledge or secret stories that are held by one or just a few particular people. However, what I am saying is that there is a strong sense of community in the way that many community histories, and family narratives are told. To put it one way in terms of western ways of seeing, there is a strong sense of folklore within story. Knowledge in this sense is community owned. It is handed down from generation to generation. Our knowledge and stories have been handed down since time before time. Our lore, creations of sounds, songs and stories are an intrinsic part of how we are and have always been. Oral history recognizes these cultural nuances and how important hearing those stories, so often overlooked in historical records, are to our society. To look at this point a little more carefully from a traditional point of view, story-telling is part of our unique cultural exchange system. Story exchange between clans and tribal groups, suggest there were other forms of exchange going on as well, such as exchanges of songs, marriage arrangements and common ceremonies, and shared ceremonial sites and other associations. (Heckenberg 2010, p.23-31). For example, in Wiradjuri Country on the Murray River at Mungabareena, located in stories from oral history, there was a big corroboree and camp site for the Bogong Moth ceremonies. For many years Wiradjuri held the Ngan Girra Festival which brought together people from all over South Eastern Australia to celebrate the ancient tradition of going up to Mount Bogong and the men to participate in ceremony, which involved Bogong Moth. Josephine Flood maintains that Aboriginal groups staying up on Mount Bogong for two or three months could eat several tons of Moth (Flood, 1980, p.80-81). For example, the Bogong Moth storyline and ceremonies were shared across tribal several tribal groups, Wiradjuri, Gunnai and Ngamitji clan of the Ngarigo people. The story of the Bogong Moth and the associations with the ceremonies were an ancient form of connection to place, and sovereignty. It is almost implied in an Indigenous methodology, in terms of outcomes related to recording oral history, that connection to place and sovereign cultural rights resonate within the story-teller's words.

Wider historical applications of this methodology are often used to give a voice to those whose stories would not necessarily be heard. This can be accomplished using traditional library and archived sources. In a move towards the capture of the lives of 'ordinary' people, such an approach recognises all lives are intrinsically interesting and challenges the orthodoxy that autobiographies should be produced by important people (Stanley, 1992). Projects such as obtaining the stories of factory workers with asbestosis (Johnston and McIvor, 2001), or working-class women in Ireland (Clear, 2003), suggest that the use of biographical material is extended to a range of social groups. Harker (2003a), tells of his own grandmother taking paring part in an "oral history project designed to capture the stories of a group of elderly people attending a day centre in Hull... gave the family, as well as others, insights into parts of her life we would never have known". This personal perspective on historical events is why oral history and its methodology are so important to use within research. Giving credence to those voices that have experienced life is not an unemotional historical document. Therefore, bringing stories to light can become something that has the power for social change, as is the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and personal histories, prompting the wider Australian society to take a broader look at our histories and our values. Also, in mentioning feminist phenomenological research earlier, it is also useful at this point to mention the formative work of Betty Friedan (1965), one of the pioneers of the second wave of feminism. Her research regarding the stories of women in a materially wealthy time after World War II in America exposed gendered oral histories of subjugation and discontent that are now regarded as a catalyst for the women's liberation movement and women's voices (Gluck and Patai, 1991).

Indeed, simply by the structure of an oral history methodology quite generally, we can start to give positive emphasis to the voice of the narrator his/herself instead of that of the researcher. So, with an oral history methodology which can be "based on a number of academic disciplines, including history, sociology, anthropology, law, journalism, and psychology" (Russell, 1999, p.2) there is optimism. We are encouraged by what is possible when harnessing this methodology within an Indigenous standpoint: an Indigenizing of the mechanics of oral history. Understanding the mechanics of the process clarifies the activities involved, whomever one interviews. The interviewer needs to ask, what is oral history, and how can I be a conduit to make it a 'good practice' process? Here I am bearing in mind the cultural safety elements mentioned and defined earlier: the Yindyamarra aspect of the oral history practice. Through definition then, "oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form" (Yow, 2005, p.3). It can be a "taped memoir", a typed or written transcript and a "research method that involves in-depth interview", and Yow (2005) established the importance of explaining fully the steps needed to be taken for an appropriate and ethical outcome. Layered upon this are principles from well-established Australian oral historians such as Sue Anderson et al (2015, p.9), who asserts the necessity where possible of oral histories which can be heard rather than read. This work creates audio testimonies, personalising and projecting emotion within the Bringing Them Home Oral History Project (Anderson et al, 2015, p.14). Listening to and hearing the sentiment of the speakers, adds another laying of meaning to their stories. As well as this, the recordings of participants on the project are online to listen to. This is an expression of generousity of spirit offered by those who went through the ordeal of being part of the stolen generation to then share their stories in this way. The immediacy of hearing the voices of the people themselves, cannot be substituted for text. The power of the people's voices demonstrates the power of the recorded word, especially for people, who without the project would have been without audible expression.

Thomson (2000) asserts oral history provides access to social groups that are underpresented, such as Indigenous people. He states "Oral history is widely recognised as an important methodology for such a history" (Thomson, 2000). Looking at manuals such as the *Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (2010) is important as it as an extensive compilation of chapters by noted experts in Oral History. However, they do not include an Indigenous perspective, so with each article we write as Indigenous practitioners, and with each community we give voice to, we are building our own resource. So arguably one of the most important resources within the field of oral history, the *Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (2010) which allows readers to understand the breadth of this oral history methodology and processes of legal and ethical protocols (Richie, 2011), the hegemony is western. The concepts contained in this text prompt the following dialogue for me as researcher/interviewer. My feeling is that while these concepts are vital to my understanding of oral history as a methodology I need to rely on my own wit to interpret and manufacture the eclectic models of Indigenous research methodology in the field of oral history. Indigenist methodology is eclectic and not based on methods found in oral history manuals.

Nevertheless, Indigenous research methods have a lot in common with well-established oral history methods including respect, creating relationships, taking time, listening and ethical behavior and so on. So, these are the spaces in-between within which I find commonality, and these are the places of sharing. In this context or sharing, another source from which I gained an approach of discernment was the work at the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, Louisiana State University. This demonstrates a methodological insight in organizing notions of oral history as part of the tool kit in a qualitative method. The Center collects and preserves unrecorded information about the past that fills gaps in the written record and results in the creation of primary resources. (LSU Libraries 2017). It goes further to look at how the Oral history methodology differs from many other types of interviews. The hypotheses contained in their research philosophies stretches one's ability to focus on the history and cultural phenomena. Williams suggests it is oral history because it is not looking at current events (Williams, Center for Oral History 2017). This resonates with the ideology of Indigenous research, and Indigenous oral history research in that Oral history allows those histories that are hidden or ignored in official historical accounts to become visible. Oral history ultimately can provide voices for the voiceless (Field, 2012)

#### HOLISTIC APPROACH: MIX METHODOLOGIES

Though I speak from the perspective of a young Wiradjuri woman, I know this only tells part of the story. The story is more broadly contained in Indigenous epistemological and ontological approaches populated from ideas on oral history from Hawaii, Canada, Australia and elsewhere. My research methodology at its core champions an Indigenist perspective and looks for solutions across a range of approaches, from around the world, locating heroic gesture in mythology that is foundational to ancient stories and cultural practices. It is important to understand how powerful Indigenous voices can be and how community uniqueness needs to be respected. One device is auto-ethnography, where one's own voice is included and alienation is minimized.

For this study, auto-ethnography is a critical "response to the alienating effect on both researchers and audiences of impersonal, passionless abstract claims of truth generated by such research practices and clothed in exclusionary scientific discourse" (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 450). Auto-ethnography can use the device of highly personal accounts going against the grain of removing one's self from the research account (Denshire, 2014, p.831). By including and writing yourself back into the work, auto-ethnographers

challenge "accepted views about silent authorship" (Holt, 2003, p.2). Autoethnography equips the author to tell their own story within the contexts of oral story telling. It employs critical visibility and employs itself as the oral historian of oneself, in other words including the self in history. One's own responses dictate the way one governs one's own responses. The challenges present in oral history documented by another person, an interviewer, is replaced with self-reflection. As a form of oral history, it develops from a unique dialogue to an audience controlled through the autoethnographic process.

Looking further to Indigenous methodologies that have been devised from within Indigenous activism, and connection to one's origins, tribalography provides an innovative approach, based on connecting to ancient wisdom as a philosophy from the land and sky, linking story and cultural acumen. This approach considers the metaphysical relationships that tribal people perceive as part of their sovereign relationship to creation and spiritual lore. Howe (1999, p.117) for example asks:

What is the power of native stories? Did they create our people, our tribes, ourselves? Are our stories "a living theater" that connects everything to everything, as we say they do? (Howe, 1999, p. 117)

As we step away from more 'traditional' academic methodological approaches and recognize that there are other varied philosophies within the academic and research field, we can see more methodologies that validate Indigenous voices to allow for their academic acceptance. For example, as Doerflier (2014, p.67-68), in appreciating the work on Tribalography of Choctaw scholar LeAnne Howe, asserts:

Tribalography is a methodology that encourages scholars to make connections and form relationships, which, in turn, encourages a culture of ethical standards and reciprocal obligations. Scholars employing tribalography are pushed to consider the possible impacts of their work and, therefore, consciously work towards the creation of a positive and decolonized future.

Looking more closely at the philosophy of Howe and her concept of Tribalography we can begin to understand the influence of stories and community knowledge in concrete terms and as part of decolonisation. This recognizes the power that Indigenous voices have within the creation of a nation. She talks of how "Native stories are power. They create people. They author tribes. America is a tribal creation story. Creation stories, as numerous as Indian tribes, gave birth to our people" (Howe, 1999, p118). This is an active methodology, and has the power to create (Doerfler, 2014, p.67). Howe also talks about the interconnections between tribal regions through relationships to the stories of basin-ball, for example. This phenomenon was used to engage people socially, bring about cultural exchange and trade, ceremony, songs and evening chants particularly, and were places where kinship relations were formed for marriage and children (Howe 2014) In terms of the oral tradition the chant is layered. Embodied tribalography enables one to discuss reciprocal relationships with people, and also incorporate the power of the land itself on influencing people's lives, and the land itself has a desire for peace. Linking to the energy of the earth, itself, relating to the earth and each other are meaning-making. "Ceremony is the map of survival" says Howe in a 2014 video, relating to not only survival but an understanding of ancient knowledge. An effective component of tribalography within oral histories is that it embraces Indigenous mythology as a form of holding cultural and earth history, and supports cultural knowledge.

Within Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mythology, the oral tradition of handing down story from one generation to the next does this same thing of presenting core knowledge and tribalography as a medium. In this way, we can interpret our own oral histories, and the meaning of events from thousands of years ago that are about the history of the earth. Oral history telling can be about social history, tribal and clan, family and personal history, and history from the eons of time. The stories handed down of the Giant Wombats and the Giant Kangaroos, for example, reference the era of the macropods, and are interpreted from oral tradition through this device of tribalography. This reminds me of the philosophy of using the recording of the oral history as a prime source, in this instance the relevance of getting a translation and knowledge base from a language speaker, who understood the nuances of what s/he heard was worth much more than a transcript. From an example in Mowaljarlai and Malnic (1993, p.192) we learn how:

When Mowaljarlai translated the Kalumburu tapes of the five old men, he had found that some ancestor stories were going back to when the islands originated, and even further back to what the Birrimitji... In the Beginning people had seen before the Ice Age-that moon, sun and some of the stars had been on earth, for instance; and that Birrimitji knew why One song told about a flood, long before the last, that was brought by *Kallowa Anggnal Kude*, a star with trails. The symbols that testify to these events are still in the Kimberley.

1993, p.192)

(Mowaljalai and Malnic

Mowaljalai also portrayed Corpus Australis as a map, again a way of depicting oral tradition through the tribalography lens. This map shows the storylines across the whole of Australia. He shows us the way all our stories are interconnected. This is what protects our Dreaming, the Wunnan system.

Indigenous people have influenced the way historical narratives are told. Today there is an acceptance in the creative industries of our stories, such as the way stories are presented at national venues like the National Museum of Australia (NMA, 2018) where *Songlines, Tracking the Seven Sisters* has been exhibited. Interestingly, the telling of our stories, is an example to other sectors of society to start to talk more openly about their social narratives and therefore to be audible to a larger audience. The

hegemony of only recording elite historical accounts was challenged and rebuked leading to ordinary European people's stories being placed into the repository of western history.

# CONCLUSION

The main principle for research practice must be that Indigenous peoples should control their own knowledge. They should do their own research and, if they should choose to enter into any collaborative relationship with others, the research should empower and benefit their communities and cultures not merely the researchers.

(Battiste, 2000, p.41).

With Battiste's main principle for research practice operating like a guiding light for best practice in Indigenous research methodology, that not only do we control our own knowledge but also that the sharing of that knowledge through collaborations only happens for the betterment of our communities. That no more shall the only beneficiaries of the sharing of Indigenous knowledges be the non-Indigenous researcher making a name for him or herself with no reciprocity back to the community. The unfolding before my eyes of knowledges known and felt has been my great privilege, the opportunity to write down and un pack what is known and felt has been my great privilege. Through the writing of this chapter I have shared a deeply embedded practice that began as a young child and I do it not for self-aggrandizement but with the knowledge and a sense of urgency that our old peoples stories must be recorded and protected.

I wrote earlier that by continually self-reflecting through eyes that are guided by knowledge of the ancestors, this is my approach to this thesis, this is one of the tools that I use to enact my research methodology. This chapter frames the thesis in both approach and application, the combination of my Indigenist and oral history methodology intuitively compliments my *Yindyamarra*, my approach to being and knowing. This confluence of experience and knowing and approaching the research in a way that ensures a safe environment for the interaction between the holders of knowledge and those wanting to share in that interaction. The protection of Elders knowledge is paramount to the impetus to writing and the underpinning goal of this thesis. This chapter frames my mixed methodological approach and the methods with which I will enact it.

# **CHAPTER THREE** WIRADJURI NGURAMBANG

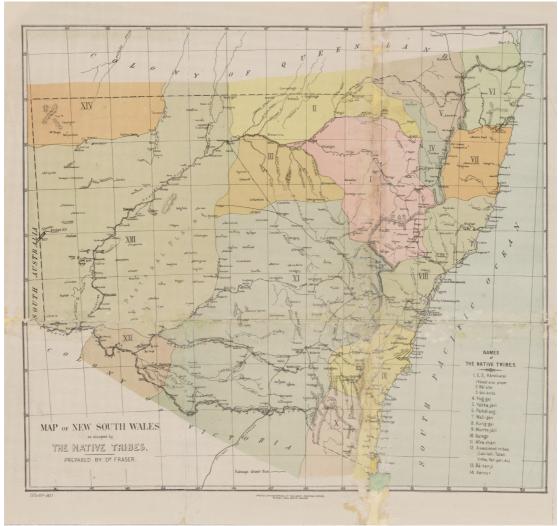


Figure 1: Map of New South Wales as occupied by The Native Tribes (Fraser, 1873)

# INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter talked about methodology. It examined the culturally appropriate, culturally safe, theoretical frameworks to use when undertaking research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Within these frameworks I also discussed *Yindyamarra*, "respect, be gentle, polite, honour, [and] do slowly," and how this concept is my Wiradjuri methodology (Grant and Rudder, 2005, p.335). Yet *Yindyamarra* is much more than this. *Yindyamarra* is a way of life, a unique Wiradjuri way of seeing the world. It runs through your veins and influences every interaction you have. *Yindyamarra* is not possible, however, without knowledge of where you and your people came into being. Aboriginal identity is rooted within the lands we call home, with the country that breathes in and out as much as we do. There is no Wiradjuri without land, without rivers and without our *Yindyamarra*.

This chapter explores where my standpoint as a Wiradjuri researcher originated. It is imperative that I lay the groundwork from which I stand as an Aboriginal woman. Every action within my life and research is from the position of an Aboriginal, Wiradjuri, person. *Dyiramadilinya badhu Wiradjuri* - I am proud to be Wiradjuri and with that comes my history, for the history of my people is who I am today. I stand on the shoulders of giants. I live freely because others fought for me to do so. I am learning my language because others came before me and re-energised a language that white colonial Australia had tried so hard to extinguish. I have a voice because I have been warmly embraced in loving arms by my Countryman and family within a society which has walked on this land for thousands of generations. This chapter gives insight into

Wiradjuri culture, Wiradjuri Ngurambang and colonial ideals that Wiradjuri successfully pushed back against.

# *NGINHA NGURAMBANG MARUNBUNMILIGIRRIDYU*: I LOVE THIS COUNTRY

Karrai binaal birrimal billa Ngangaana-gu birrimal karrai billa Dya birrimal karrai billa durai ngangaana ngingu. Land of much bush and rivers Look after the bush, land and the rivers And the bush, land and rivers will look after you.

(Senior Elder Wungamaa Pastor Cec. Grant, 2012, p.1)

Wiradjuri Ngurambang (Country) is the central life force of the Wiradjuri Nation. We are intertwined with life that has existed for tens of thousands of years before white settlement. Aboriginal identity, Wiradjuri identity, comes from the very root of us. Something more than just an identity marker of where you live or what race you are but a something that shines through your very being. "I'm not just Koori, I'm Wiradjuri, that's the one I belong to" (Williams in Reed, 2009, p.viii). Wiradjuri Country is a vast place, the "largest cultural footprint in New South Wales and second largest geographically in Australia," with rolling hills, mountainous heights and beautiful red earth country (Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation, 2009). Indeed, you know that you are truly heading into the centre of Wiradjuri country when the earth transforms from brown into a rich warm ochre red. There is nothing quite like being on Wiradjuri Country. You can stand out in the plains, surrounded by red earth as far as they eye can see and still be in New South Wales. It is when you stand in this red earth that you fully come to understand the power of the spiritual connection to country and why those ties are so important. Intrinsically, maintaining cultural connectedness allows a greater more complex idea of self, a powerful sense of Wiradjuri identity. This then is my own

intimate and informed way of understanding and explaining the reason why Wiradjuri people have fought and continue to fight to keep this land part of us. Our forebears have fought to maintain the right to practice culture and to protect cultural values, and to be able to celebrate our cultural expressions. In a contemporary context, I continue to assert this right, particularly in contexts of Wiradjuri knowledge systems and cultural beliefs.

Being such a large part of New South Wales, Wiradjuri Country spreads across the state like a living, breathing entity. The Wiradjuri nation extends from the Great Dividing Range in the east, including the Macquarie, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Bogan Rivers and continues south of the Murray River. Wiradjuri people are peoples of the river, the Murray Darling Basin, in particular. Our lifeways, cultural practices and spirituality are intertwined with the rivers within Wiradjuri country. Even today the river is part of family culture with gatherings throughout the year on the banks of these mighty waterways.

Wiradjuri have a deep and significant connection to country and to the river and a ceremonial relationship with sites around Albury. Remember that the Traditional Wiradjuri wanted for nothing and enjoyed their lives connected intimately to the source of nourishment, the river, and the giver of all things, the Earth. The philosophy of the Wiradjuri is to look after nature and all that is in nature, this is what the old people would often assert. Then all that is in nature is in a relationship with you and you with nature.

(Heckenberg, 2013, p. 67)

The rivers, like the land itself, are a very loved and central part of Wiradjuri life. Through the rivers, life streams. The emotional and physical connection we as people have to such a central part of our lives is immense. Through the river comes a powerful kind of healing. This is a sense of wholeness that has an infinite connection to ancestral knowledge, and yet it always has an impression of renewal in its consequence. There "is something spiritual about the river. Mother Earth is the giver, the old man river is the provider" (Heckenberg, 2013, p.15). From time long, long ago to present day celebrations, people from different walks of life meet on the river to come together, once in trading and cultural exchange. Yet now Wiradjuri come together and share the enjoyment and recognition of the importance of the rivers and the role they play in our lives.

Sometimes when I was a child the old women would go down to the river and sit quietly. When we asked them what they were doing they would say: We are listening to the spirit of the river. Then they would tell us stories about the river, stories to keep us safe. There were rules we had to live by, such as we were never to go to the river alone, and we never went at night.

(Aunty Nancy Rooke in Heckenberg, 2013 p.16)

Indeed, the "river is our bloodline. It's been culturally used by my people forever" (Wiradjuri Elder Uncle Ramsay Freeman in Murray-Darling Basin Authority, 2011, p.10). Like the river the Country is a part of who you are. There is a cultural connectedness that you feel particularly in your own Country that you do not feel when on someone else's land. Your body sings, being on your own country, it knows where you have come from and where you belong on a level not felt in the day to day reality of modern life.

There is an old harmonic that hits the brain and the body when you enter your own country. I feel it today and just feel that my body's magnetic grids are realising themselves: it is a soothing feeling, whilst at the same time makes you well up with pride, really. It's that wild feeling of connectedness that texts discuss in terms of spiritual relevance. I know I used to feel it quite profoundly as a child when we would do our yearly jaunts from the coast to central NSW, the sheep and the wheat-belt. We cross the range at the top of the Hunter Valley and then all the plains would just hit you. The rivers, too, are remarkable. Each one has its own character, and they are fed by different stories and different tracts of catchment land. The Murray is like an Old Man, and in that it seems wise. The giant Murray River Red Gums are part of its ancient beard. Indeed, in the last ice age it was an expansive and glistening and an ancient habitat for past generations.

(Heckenberg, 2017, p.55)

This harmonic is felt to your very bones upon entering country and is more than just a physical thing. Indeed, for "Aboriginal people, land is not only our mother – the source of our identity and our spirituality – it is also the context for our human order and

inquiry" (Healey 2007, p.1). The land and our spiritual connection to the land was created by the Sky God Biaimee (otherwise spelt Baimee or Byamee), our Wiradjuri creator. Biaimee created the rivers and the land. He created the people and the lore by which Wiradjuri live. Biaimee "was a worshipful being, revealed in the mysteries, long before missionaries came" and resides in the forefront of Wiradjuri spirituality (Parker, 1905, p.5).

Not only did Biaimee create our lore, ceremonies, dance and song but he also gifted Wiradjuri with totems. Wiradjuri people are of the goanna totem, gifted by Biaimee. A second totem can then define one's place within the larger language group. Your totem is part of your lore and can not only help you comprehend your place in society, but how you interact with nature. Being given a totem by Biaimee is a reflection of the continued connection to him. "Byamee had a totem name for every part of his body, even to a different one for each finger and toe. And when he was passing on to fresh fields, he gave each kinship of the tribe he was leaving one of his totems" (Parker, 1905, p.7). By this giving Biaimee showed the Wiradjuri that he would remain continually connected. Even in contemporary times protecting and caring for your totem is still very important. My clan totem, the possum, arrives in the backyard at night to eat the avocados off the trees. Even though I know I am not living in Wiradjuri country, I know that I am protected and welcomed.

It is important to live by these messages of lore. To make sure that you are on the right country or doing the most appropriate thing, ensures that you are acting within Wiradjuri protocols. There are many stories or messages of warning that indicate when you are in the wrong place, not abiding by lore, or when you need to do something 'proper' for spiritual and physical protection. These stories from our lore were not necessarily from just one place in our Country, but resonate in many places. However, we could be told aspects of proper behaviour, and law, in different versions right around Wiradjuri country. We can also gain messages at times in other people's Country. This means we always need to be alert and observant. One such story is told by Aunty Olga Naden (my great grandmother's sister) during her days at Bulgandramine Mission, at Peak Hill. Aunty Olga (Naden and Keed, 1989) talked about how people on the Mission would not walk around alone at night because of "seeing a dog which would come alongside as you walked, as it trotted along beside you it grew bigger and bigger and then would disappear" (Naden and Keed 1989). Aunty Shirley Tidmarsh from Brungle (2004, p.43) also talks about being warned of a night dog:

The old people used to scare us with stories, to keep us away from areas or from being out too late at night. Apparently there was a spirit dog out here called the 'Mirriyoola Dog' and they reckon it could change its shape into anything. When we were kids we used to lay in the grass and play hide and go seek in the night. My mum and dad would say, "You'll be laying in that grass one-night thinking there's one of your friends there or one of your brothers or sisters and it'll be something else, it could be a Mirriyoola.

Messages of the Bunyips, as protectors of the creeks, riverbeds, waterholes and swamps, are to be revered and those places avoided. The Hairy Man, mischievous and smelly, would only appear to the few and brave (Aunty Olga Naden in Naden and Keed, 1989). Birds too could impart warnings people should heed. "We called them 'djirri djirris' (willy wagtail) ... they're either there to warn you of something or they're there to protect you (Aunty Tammy Tidmarsh, 2004, p.43).

Then there was their belief in different birds. If a special bird came alongside the home and was calling out in a special way that meant bad news, sure enough word would come of a death to some relative or somebody then they would say, you would hear them say, there you are told you we would hear bad news because that bird was here, its calling out.

(Aunty Olga Naden in Naden and Keed, 1989).

It is important to listen to these messages of warning or advice from the world around you. Birds and other creatures have been a part of Biaimee's creation just as long as people, and everything has a role to play in lore.

# FIRST CONTACT

First contact between the Wiradjuri people and the colonisers was in 1813. Three separated instances were recorded during that year. The first in May can be found in Blaxland's journals recording Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson's first expedition across the Blue Mountains (Salisbury and Gresser, 1971, p.11). The second was in November by Assistant Surveyor George Evans, and five others as they travelled across the mountains following a long established route the Dharug and Gandangara peoples used to trade with the Wiradjuri (Bathurst Local Aboriginal Consultative Committee, 2011, p.1). The third recording was of a more personal contact near Mount Pleasant when a white man was found fishing by a local family.

Traces of the natives presented themselves in the fires they had left the day before, and in the flowers of the honeysuckle tree scattered around, which had supplied them with food. From the shavings and pieces of sharp stones which they had left it was evident that they had been busily employed in sharpening their spears.

(Blaxland, 31 May 1813 in Salisbury and Gresser, 1971, p. 11)

Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson crossed the Blue Mountains at a time when the support of local Aboriginal clans guided their exploration. Konishi (2016) maintains the idea that there were strong relationships between white colonisers and Aboriginal guides who forged alliances with explorers, and helped them gain access to new country. An earlier explorer in the region was a Frenchman called Ballier (Konishi 2016, pp.25-34), who enlisted the services of Gogy, Interestingly, however, a way through the Blue Mountains was not found at that time. However, these kinds of relationships continued, and you often see sketches depicting the Aboriginal guide with explorers. The most famous of these is probably the relationship between Flinders and Bungaree, in exploration of the coasts of Australia.

#### WARRIORS OF THE WIRADJURI: WINDRADYNE



Figure 2: 'Windradyne, Aboriginal Warrior of the Wiradjuri Nation' drawn by J.W. Lewin and engraved by R. Havell & Son (Oxley, 1820, p.302-303)

When Wiradjuri people think hero, they automatically think Windradyne. It is almost built into our psyche. As young children we learn about a powerful being -a man who not only fought for his people but made the ultimate sacrifice as a warrior and surrendered so that no more harm came to them. Windradyne's story starts from when white people first came onto Wiradjuri land and results from the implications of this invasion. Indeed, from 1813 the peoples of the Wiradjuri Ngurambang became more and more controlled by the new occupiers of New South Wales. As the Wiradjuri nation is just over the mountains from Sydney Cove, it did not take long for Europeans to find their way into Wiradjuri Country. European invaders intruded onto ancestral Wiradjuri Country because it "had rich river valleys and land that provided all their needs" (Hayes, Hayes, Harrison, and Solomon, 2001). In 1814 following Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson's entry onto a Wiradjuri pathway as part of our old trade routes into our Country, Europeans started coming in and European settlement started spreading more and more into the central part of the state, Wiradjuri heartland. With Wiradjuri people and white settlers now occupying the same land, difficulties with contact started occurring at a significant level, and more frequently. With fighting increasing across the state, Martial Law was declared on August 14, 1824 against the

Wiradjuri around the Bathurst area. This resulted in over a dozen massacre sites of Aboriginal people being recorded within a ten-mile radius of Bathurst (Heckenberg, 2017, p.57).

Wiradjuri, however, are warrior peoples and not willing to leave their people to the mercy of white settlers. The Wiradjuri fought back led by Windradyne. A hero, freedom fighter and leader in the resistance, Windradyne (c.1800-1829), also known as Saturday, was a young great warrior during this time (Salisbury and Gresser, 1971; Coe and Coe 1986). When the settlers crossed the mountains they forced Windradyne and his people to move from their lands further and further into central New South Wales and started destroying the land Wiradjuri loved:

They were destroying the land. They were destroying the places that were sacred to them but also they were just destroying the environment. Some of these trees that they probably would have been knocking down would have been near burial grounds...There were carvings on those trees which in today's society we look at those sort of things as headstones, so they were destroying cemeteries as far as the Wiradjuri people were concerned.

(Windradyne descendant and Elder, Bill Allen in Windradyne, 2016)

Being forced off their lands caused Wiradjuri people huge heartache and meant they had to start to kill sheep and cows in order to survive (Roberts, 2005). This continued with escalated white retaliation, in one situation leading to a horrible ultimatum over potatoes. A recently immigrated gentleman, Antonio, was growing potatoes and decided to share with some local Wiradjuri (Suttor, 1887, p.44). Thinking he meant to share all the time the local people returned the next day to get themselves another helping. Upon seeing this, the 'gentleman' gathered a posse together and attacked and killed the people including "Aboriginal women and children... near Raineville in May 1824" (Suttor, 1887, p.44, see also Comber, 2009, p.29; Roberts, 2005). Horribly this was not only members of Windradyne's community but also his family and as

"Windradyne's fury [was] without end," he retaliated killing those responsible (*Windradyne*, 2016). After the massacre Windradyne shifted his tactics to "general depredations, killing solitary shepherds [and] large numbers of sheep" (Suttor, 1887, p.45).

From these events, Governor Brisbane placed the western district under Martial Law on 14 August 1824, with 500 acres of land being offered as a bounty for Windradyne's capture (Suttor, 1887, p.45). The martial law allowed white settlers uninterrupted destruction of Wiradjuri people's country and mass murder by any means they saw fit. William Suttor (1887, p.45), who along with his father, George, was friendly with Windradyne, recounts one such instance:

Under this condition of things the blacks were shot down without any respect...The proclamation of martial law was as undecipherable to them as an Egyptian hieroglyph... Negotiations, apparently friendly, but really treacherous, were entered into. Food was prepared, and was placed on the ground within musket range of the station buildings. The blacks were invited to come for it. Unsuspectingly they did come, principally women and children. As they gathered up the white men's presents they were shot down by brutal volley, without regard to age or sex. (William Suttor (1887, p.45)

This horror, becoming more and more common, ended on December of 1824. Martial law came to an end after Windradyne, so tired of seeing his people constantly massacred, wounded and emotionally beaten, walked for 17 days across the Blue Mountains from Bathurst to the *Annual Conference with the Chiefs and Tribes of Natives* in Parramatta. (Coe and Coe, 1986). Windradyne, head held high, the word PEACE on his hat, and followed by over one hundred of his kinsmen, entered Parramatta (Coe and Coe, 1986). Upon his entry Governor Brisbane officially pardoned him, putting an end to martial law, but not before resulting in over ten massacre sites in and around Bathurst. Windradyne fought gallantly for his people and the Wiradjuri way of life (Hayes et al, 2001). Ultimately he made the journey to see Governor Brisbane, not for himself, but to make a conciliation for his people who had suffered so much.

The Sydney Gazette described Saturday as 'without doubt, the most manly black native we have ever beheld . . . much stouter and more proportionable limbed' than most Aborigines, with 'a noble looking countenance, and piercing eye . . . calculated to impress the beholder'. Another observer thought him 'a very fine figure, very muscular . . . a good model for the figure of Apollo'. His sobriety and affection for his family and kinsmen were considered remarkable.

(Sydney Gazette, 8 Jan 1824, p. 2)

Windradyne was a true hero of the Wiradjuri Nation. He not only fought for the sovereignty of his nation but also for his people who were being killed by settlers taking the law into their own hands. Windradyne, taken ill in Bathurst District Hospital, refused help and went home to his people to die (*Sydney Gazette*, 1829, p. 3). In 1829 Windradyne was laid to rest on Brucedale Station, George Suttor's property and Wiradjuri land. He was a hero still remembered with such honour, possessing the spirit of *Yindyamarra*.

#### A NEW LAW OF THE LAND

Having all but lost the early wars against the colonising invaders and with Windradyne passed on, the Wiradjuri people became more and more under the control of the new laws of the land. Time was changing in rural New South Wales. Settlers were starting to create larger outposts further away from Sydney and the Aboriginal 'problem' had to be controlled. One such control was the creation of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines; a government institution that would become both the bane of the lives of communities and their salvation. The Board for the Protection of Aborigines was established on 2 June 1883. It was made up of six members appointed by the Governor who made recommendations about the New South Wales Aboriginal population. Originally operating without any statutory power the Board was enlarged and given more duties under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1909* (The State Records Authority of

New South Wales, 2003). The Act gave the Board rights "to exercise a general supervision and care over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of Aborigines and to protect them against injustice, imposition and fraud" (Brennan and Carven, 2006, p.91). The Board wrote regulations that established local boards for the management of Aboriginal Stations. The Board's principal expenditure was for the distribution of rations, clothing and huts for accommodation. However, within this the Board was given more power under the *Aborigines Protection Amending Act 1915* so that there was:

[P]ower to assume control and custody of Aboriginal children if it believed this action to be in the moral or physical interest of the child, and to remove the child to 'such care and control as it thinks best'.

(The State Records Authority of New South Wales, 2003).

The Board was reconstituted again under the *Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act* (1940, p.162), and its name changed to the Aborigines Welfare Board. The duties of the new Board were to apportion, distribute and apply moneys for the relief or benefit of Aboriginal people. It also sought to assist Aboriginal people in obtaining employment; to maintain them whilst employed and otherwise to assist them to become "assimilated" into the general life of the community (Section 3, *Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act*, 1940, p.162). The Board distributed blankets, clothing, and relief to Aboriginal people. It also had provisions for the custody and maintenance of Aboriginal children, management and regulation of the use of reserves, and a general supervision and care over all Aboriginal people and over all matters affecting their interests and welfare (*Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act*, 1940, p.164). The Board was "to protect Aboriginal people against injustice, imposition and fraud", yet controlled the day to day life of people who were under their control, inspecting houses and running training schools (Section 7, *Aborigines Protection Act 1909*, p.145). The Board would

control the lives of children under its care, sending them out to apprenticeships and employment (NSW State Archives and Records, 2017). The last meeting of the board was held on "29 April 1969"; it ended up being replaced with other government Aboriginal welfare departments (NSW State Archives and Records, 2017). With every changing government departments and policy around Aboriginal people and children, people were left with policies that affected every aspect of their lives.

Policies of the mid to late nineteenth century reflected a lack of respect towards Aboriginal culture and ways of being, regarding family relationships in particular. Many laws in Australia included sections on guardianship of Aboriginal people, including that of children. Section (b) of one such law, Western Australia's *Native Administration Act 1936*, states, "no native parent or other relative living has the guardianship of an aboriginal or half-caste child" (Elder, 2003, p.259). Allowing children to be taken away to Reserve schools without parents even knowing where they were going created breakdowns in ancient kinship links and traditions, as well as social upheaval right across Australia (Haebich, 2000; Mellor, Haebich, and Fullerton, 2002).

The policy of segregation meant that Aboriginal children attended mission schools that had a low education standard (Fletcher, 1989, p.147). Within this education environment children were at times forced to become Christian. The "religious strictness was phenomenal. It was supposed to be for our own good. I believe these people thought they were called by the Lord to become missionaries and to care for us, the Aboriginal children. The stolen Aboriginal children" (Kartinyeri, 2000, p.30). Indeed, my great-grandmother, great-aunties and great-uncles went to Bulgandramine mission school from the early 1900s and then were sent to apprenticeship training (cheap labour for non-Indigenous people), all as part of government policy (Kabaila, 1998, p.63; Groome, 1994, p.172).

As well as being educated in mission schools, some Aboriginal children could be taught in government schools, if no mission school was available (Fletcher, 1989, p.109; Marlowe, 2004, p.22). This policy was countered in 1902 by John Perry, New South Wales Minister for Public Instruction, who said that all government schools in the state should enact a policy of "exclusion on demand" (Fletcher, 1989, p.109). This enabled parents of non-Indigenous children to be able to have Indigenous pupils excluded from the school for little or no real reason (Fletcher, 1989, p.109). The exclusion policy lasted until the late 1930s, but was not taken out of the Teachers Handbook until 1972 (Heckenberg, 2006, p.117).

I liked school in the beginning. I think spelling was my best subject. We had our own little Aboriginal school in Brungle. It was down at the bottom of the yard, not the school that is there now. The Aboriginal school was pretty good. But then they closed it down. They had a white school then, up where it is today. A lot of the Aboriginal kids went there, but the white people didn't like us going there. They were very unfriendly and they really tried to stop us from going to school there, but they couldn't. I couldn't get out of that school quick enough. It was horrible! I never went to high school.

(Aunty Winnie Marlowe, 2004, p.22)

Aunty Winnie's (2004, p.22) story of attempted exclusion from the local school was all too common with Perry's "exclusion on demand" later becoming a no less racist, culturally unsafe policy of "Clean Clad and Courteous" (Fletcher, 1989). These clean, clad and courteous polices were enacted in the 1930s to 1950s as these "policies were based on the belief that Indigenous peoples did not have the ability to make decisions for themselves in the most basic realms, such as hygiene, or the intelligence to be educated in the same manner as non-Indigenous students" (Whatman and Duncan, 2005, p.120). Again, Indigenous cultural values, aspirations or basic human rights were disregarded. These paternalistic attitudes towards Aboriginal people as not having the ability to think or look after themselves would be reflected within the mission system.

This paternalism that has been observed as the way that Aboriginal people have been treated generally can be tied back to the overall motive of my research regarding our histories. Paternalism is a risk when looking at purpose driven Indigenous oral history research, because it does exist within the academy, and within other institutions. Earlier within the thesis the risks and challenges regarding Indigenous oral history research were identified; one of the prime risks being cultural safety in gathering stories, the other in how it is used, thereby asserting the need for Intellectual Property Rights and protection.

## MISSIONS WITHIN THE WIRADJURI NATION

When looking at Country, we need to reflect back onto the Mission or Reserve system of Australia and New South Wales. Like Aboriginal Nations around the country, Wiradjuri Country had not just one Mission, but several. Being the largest Aboriginal Nation in New South Wales meant the land was divided up into many different postinvasion towns from the time of very early colonisation. This implementation of division extended not just to the land but to the people of the land themselves. Family groups became separated into different regions and mission systems. Though Wiradjuri Country saw a large number of Missions established this chapter, will focus on Bulgandramine, Brungle, Erambie and Warangesda, four of the established missions in my part of Wiradjuri Country.

Bulgandramine, in particular, holds a special place in my heart as this is where my family ties come from. The mission system in Australia is wide and diverse and so no two missions were generally managed the same. Some, such as Warangesda, were established under particular faiths, where others, particularly those established after by

the Aborigines Protection Board were government run, though usually they had a little church. For those that were not allowed to live on the Mission, however, there were also town camps and smaller settlements including the Common, Bottom Hill, Top Hill, The Flat, Black Bridge, The Springs, Bell River flats and many more. These places were not officially controlled by any authority, church or state, but were very closely watched. Places such as these camps just outside the reserve were created by those who could not live on the mission due to being excluded by the manager or being deemed not to possess enough Aboriginal blood to live there. My Elders have told me that this created a divide in families, with some being forced to live on the mission where others were forced to live in the camps and reserves outside the gates. From family stories, one of my own great Uncles had to live on the reserve, as he was considered too fair for the Mission.

The establishment of these missions meant that families not only had a connection to Country, but now also to particular place that they may have not had previous to being relocated to the mission. When meeting other Aboriginal people today, and identifying where one might be from, not only would you say which Aboriginal nation your lineage streams from but also, which mission your family was forced onto. Oral histories of this time reflect the good and the bad times of such places. Yet, no matter what a particular family's experiences were on the mission, the mission history is now and forever rooted to Identity. Many of those living off the missions in town camps or on the outskirts of towns near the missions also have that connection to not only place but also to those old memories of how life use to be. Aunty Elizabeth Grant (1998, p.3) reminisces of such a time: My Humpy Home Sometimes I picture through life's haze, The humpy of my childhood days, The dirt floors and the double bed Where five young children lay their heads.

Newspapers that lined the wall Keeping the chills from us all. The cornbag quilts that kept us warm And the tanks that filled when we had a storm.

Bush sheds we built in summer time And the brooms we picked to sweep the grime. Dampers we used to eat, And onion gravy without meat.

> Kerosene lamps we used for light, Candles when things were tight. The Ice-man that came around. The path we used to take to town.

Speckled fruit Mum used to buy Rabbit we used to fry. Broken biscuits made you cry. I often think of days gone by.

(Aunty Elizabeth Grant, 1998, p.3)

These stories of humpies and "days gone by" are familiar around the country (Aunty Elizabeth Grant, 1998, p.3). In fact, Aunty Elizabeth is a Kamilaroi Elder and her stories of a childhood in Coonabarabran reflect a theme of many Aboriginal children. The similarities of life for Aboriginal families across Wiradjuri country and their neighbouring nations resonates with a life simple in western resources but rich in a nurturing, cultural knowledge and Aboriginal story telling.

### BRUNGLE (TUMUT)

Brungle, like other missions is a very important part of not only Wiradjuri history, and Wiradjuri cultural history (The National Parks and Wildlife, 2004) but Australian history too. Brungle Mission was established outside Brungle township in 1888 by the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board, following "pressure from settlers to 'contain' and restrict the movement of Wiradjuri and other Aboriginal peoples in the region" (Paulson, 2012). Housing consisted of tin shacks with hessian bags for side walls. Residents would paper the walls, trying to use interesting or pretty paper much like the *Humpy Home* Aunty Elizabeth Grant (1998, p.3) grew up in. "We used to use the Women's Weekly and that sort of thing. We'd make a paper paste with flour and water, and that would stop the draft from coming through the tin. I suppose you'd call it wallpaper" (Aunty Margaret Berg, 2004, p.1).

Though the manager at Brungle was a hard man and there was constant overcrowding of families it was still very much seen as home (Read, 2000, p.56). A close knit community resided at Brungle and leaders emerged. One such leader was Jimmy Clements, or King Billy, the first Aboriginal person to protest outside Old Parliament House in Canberra. In 1927 Jimmy Clements and John 'Marvellous' Noble, walked over 125 kilometers from Brungle Mission to Old Parliament House to attend the first opening of parliament. Facing resistance at first, King Billy went on to be the face of peaceful Aboriginal protest, even being presented at the opening to the Duke and Duchess of York on 9 May 1927:

policeman took exception to Clements' rough clothes and the dogs at his bare feet and told him to clear off, apparently thinking he would offend the Duke and Duchess of Kent. The crowd took the side of the old Aborigine, calling for him to hold his ground. A prominent member of the clergy declared that King Billy had more right than any man to a place on the steps of Parliament, and the gathered citizens showered the old man with coins. Clements won his prized spot on the parliamentary steps, and the next day he was among prominent citizens who were presented to the Duke and Duchess. The Argus reported that "an ancient Aborigine who calls himself King Billy and who claims sovereign rights to the federal Territory walked slowly forward alone and saluted the Duke and Duchess. They cheerily acknowledged his greeting.

(Wright, 2008)

Although it has been closed since 1951, Brungle is still home to those people who once lived on the mission and surrounding areas. The value of coming 'home' to "my home; my country" is far more than four walls and a roof (Aunty Tammy Tidmarsh, 2004, p.39). Brungle, along with other missions, represents community, family and culture far more than the reason for its existence in the first place (Aunty Tammy Tidmarsh, 2004, p.39). "I don't think I'd be able to call any other place home. It's a lovely place and I never get sick of the scenery. Brungle is like it's in a basin. It's got the hills and mountains all around it. Yes, Brungle is home" (Aunty Winnie Marlowe, 2004, p.18). Much like Brungle, and Aunty Winnie's feelings of home, Bulgandramine too is home. It is home for me and my family.

## **BULGANDRAMINE (PEAK HILL)**

When talking about Wiradjuri country I reflect on where my family comes from, and where my great grandmother was raised and where my roots and bloodline lie. Learning about place and connecting into country is not just something that can be learnt from historical texts. As we explore Bulgandramine we also learn through the oral history of my great grandmother's sister, Mrs Olga Nadan, how Country and place can come alive. Stories of place allow us as Aboriginal people to maintain that sense of belonging and continue that cultural connectedness. Nothing is more powerful in this sense than talking and learning from Elders. This is true even of those who have passed years before we reach that place of learning ourselves.

Bulgandramine Mission is located near the little town of Peak Hill. Officially gazetted in 1892, Bulgandramine was an 84-acre camping area and a horse run for local Aboriginal families (Kabaila, 1998, p.63). My family moved to Bulgandramine Mission after having lived on Bulgandramine Cattle Station. Situated on the banks of the Bogan River, in 1893 the mission became a "managed government settlement," and drew both Wiradjuri and Wongaibon speakers (Keed, 1985, p.24; Kabaila, 1998, p.63; Kabaila, 2011, p.178). Being right on the banks of the river could at times mean the community felt the effects of flooding. With the heavy rain came water overflowing on the banks of the river and right into peoples' houses. Residents of Bulgandramine would watch the river closely during the rain to ensure they were not stuck in the deluge. At times, the community only had a few minutes' notice, all having "to move... away about two or three mile as the river broke over the banks. But it went away quickly, cause it would always go down quickly, that's if the rain stopped" (Aunty Olga Naden, in Naden and Keed, 1989). The Bogan River, such a central place of life before the mission, continued to play an important role even within the mundanities of a more western way of life. The river, which was usually quite dry, would show its might and power, however, when the rain came.

There were happy times, many times in our community, as we lived on the banks of the Bogan river and of course this river never had running water, only when it rained. But we had to drink this muddy water for many years. Then later the water was cleared in a big tank that was layered onto the homes.

(Aunty Olga Naden, in Naden and Keed, 1989)

In 1890 there was an estimated 250 Aboriginal people in the district around Bulgandramine. Many of these people worked on the station as domestic servants or stockmen. Few children went to school though this could be attributed to the fact that a school was not formed at Bulgandramine until 1912 (Kabaila, 2011, p.181). When the school was formed, there were seventeen children who would have been able to attend the school, though only four of those children were receiving rations for children of that age (Kabaila, 1998, p.63). Life inside Bulgandramine mission could at times be quite different from the way people were treated outside in the wider area of Peak Hill. Aunty Olga (1989) remembers her childhood on the Mission as a place where families stuck together, and people were "quite happy just to gather around together... different age groups and nothing worried them, they were free and always happy, they made their own entertainment which was quite simple" (Aunty Olga Naden, in Naden and Keed,

1989). Yet if you attempted to leave the mission you were restricted by government policy at the time:

Out on the mission when you wanted to go, leave to go somewhere, you had to go and report to the manager, let him know that you were going. Couldn't leave the place without reporting and when coming onto the place there again you had to report to the manager. So this was the rules they had for the Aboriginal folk.

(Aunty Olga Naden, in Naden and Keed, 1989).

As was the case in many reserves in Australia, families were separated from those allowed to live on the reserve and those who were not allowed. The people unable to live on the reserve would, most often than not, camp just outside reserve ground to be near family.

Alongside the official Aboriginal reserve was the camping reserve known as the Common. Aboriginal families that camped there had been excluded from the managed Aboriginal reserve, either because they were too light-skinned to be classified as Aboriginal, or because they had been barred from the reserve by the manager.

(Kabaila, 2011, p.178).

These settlements were, and still are, often referred to as 'town camps' if close to the local town or had other names if closer to the mission itself (Read, 1983, p.132). Many local governments do not approve of these types of settlements and often clear out communities of Aboriginal people living in these camps. This practice was taken up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century around Bulgandramine and people were forced to move away, either to another mission or township, or if acceptable onto Bulgandramine itself. As stated above, Bulgandramine's town camp was called the Common (Kabila, 2011, p.178) and many families lived in this place outside the mission due to 'blood quantum' and or minor offences that the manager decided needed punishment. "One of the families who camped out on the common were Bill and Aggie Towney and their son Benjamin. They lived out there because they were too white to go on the mission, in a small kerosene tin hut that was standing up to about 20 years ago" (Uncle Ray Keed in Keed, Keed and Povah, 1998). People living off the mission did not stop

responsibilities with many people like Aggie Towney, a midwife, going onto the Bulgandramine mission to help mothers deliver their babies.

Like many other reserves, the local settlers did not want the reserve near their homes and so Bulgandramine was situated a good distance away from the nearest town. Peak Hill was nineteen kilometres away which meant that the reserve had to be almost entirely self-sufficient. This encouraged one of the few traditional practices still allowed within Aboriginal reserve life, that of hunting (Elphick and Elphick, 2004, p.4). All other food was provided from rations handed out by the Mission manager in small quantities. Residents were given flour, tea, powdered milk, jam, potatoes, cheese and lard (Kabaila, 2011, p.183).

The government used to supply government clothes twice a year to our people. They would supply summer clothes and at winter time they would supply winter clothes. Also winter blankets. And everyone used to line up over at the manager's house to get their supply for the year. Each person would be allowed one blanket a piece. And then of course there was ration time once a week. Folk would have to take cream bags, flour bags, over to the little stall they had there to put their flour and sugar and tea and everything in there and also clean tins for jam and salt. And they'd have potatoes and onions and later on they, milk was added to the rations and cheese and also meat. Meat was supplied once a week. A butcher would come out with his butcher cart and people would line up there and get their quota of meat. Five pounds to each person. In them days we didn't have any fridges to put the meat in so we couldn't get a real abundance of meat, we weren't allowed any more anyway.

(Aunty Olga Naden, in Naden and Keed, 1989)

In 1942 the population of Bulgandramine had shrunk to just thirty-two "as employment declined and the settlement came up for closure by the Board" (Kabaila, 2011, p.187). Houses on the reserve slowly were demolished and the mission was revoked in two stages in 1943 and in 1959 (Kabaila, 1998, p.71). This official closure of a place that had been home to many from well before invasion, left those still officially in residence with nowhere to live. Closing Bulgandramine officially, though, did remove all the people who had lived their whole lives on this settlement and as such many stayed in the local area. Many members of the community relocated to live at Bottom Hill just

outside the now larger township of Peak Hill, although smaller households also moved to Top Hill and The Flat.

A few of the lucky ones might have got into the town. The rest were either at the Top Hill towards where the golf club now stands or down on the Flat near Cotteril's, the government dam. The biggest camp was where we were at the Bottom Hill, just before you get to the railway line out of town.

(Aunty Valda Keed, in Keed, Keed and Povah, 1990).

Heading out of town down Wiradjuri country to the boarder of Victoria lies Erambie. The Erambie Mission is particularly notable for producing a group of strong contemporary Wiradjuri people that took our fight for recognition to the High Court of Australia.

## ERAMBIE (COWRA)

Erambie is in the Lachlan Valley near the town of Cowra. It was established in the 1890s and "became a major managed Aboriginal reserve totally segregated from the town" (Kabaila, 2011, p.389). In 1978 Erambie's land title was transferred back to the local Aboriginal people and 26 brick veneer houses became the Erambie village. Erambie was the last reserve in New South Wales to have a resident manager (Kabaila, 2011, p.389).

One of Erambie's most famous residents was Paul Coe, born in 1949 on Erambie Mission. During his time at Cowra High School, Coe was the first "Aboriginal boy to pass the Intermediate Certificate in Cowra, and had justified the trust placed in him by his headmaster" (Dawn, 1966, p.12). Coe, a very intelligent and forward thinking man, went on to become a lawyer and a great activist for Aboriginal rights. Coe was active in campaigns around the 1967 Referendum and the establishment in 1972 of the

Aboriginal Tent Embassy. He worked with other prominent Aboriginal activists, including Pearl Gibbs and Chicka Dixon, in the fight for basic human rights and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

He played an important role at the Aboriginal Legal Service and was a powerful force in the voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice. In 1979 Coe took the Commonwealth of Australia to the High Court claiming Sovereignty for Aboriginal Australians. As the plaintiff he argued that at the time of white contact and settlement Aboriginal People had already been living in the country for thousands of years (Coe v Commonwealth [1979] HCA 68). Sadly, for Coe and his supporters the case was never heard. In Chief Justice Gibbs (Coe v Commonwealth [1979] asserted in his findings:

The question of what rights the aboriginal people of this country have, or ought to have, in the lands of Australia is one which has become a matter of heated controversy. If there are serious legal questions to be decided as to the existence or nature of such rights, no doubt the sooner they are decided the better, but the resolution of such questions by the courts will not be assisted by imprecise, emotional or intemperate claims. In this, as in any other litigation, the claimants will be best served if their claims are put before the court dispassionately, lucidly and in proper form.

This brave historical example, one among many, consists of seeking recognition of sovereignty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, something Wiradjuri people never ceded. Since time immemorial, Aboriginal people have lived in Australia. Paul Coe's sister and fellow activist, Isabel Coe also took the government to court, arguing correctly, that Wiradjuri "are a nation of persons who have continuously lived on and occupied that land now known as central New South Wales, in whole or in part, according to Wiradjuri laws, customs, traditions and practices, with their own language" (Coe v Commonwealth [1993] HCA 42). The right to our own cultural practices and language, though, were hardly ever allowed on the Missions, no matter how well meaning the Manager, as was the case with Reverend Gribble and the Warangesda Mission one hundred and forty years ago.

Warangesda 'the Camp of Mercy' was established in 1880 by Reverend John Brown Gribble. Gribble had travelled around the area of the Murrumbidgee and saw Aboriginal people, especially women and children, in many degrading situations. Determined to create what he saw as a better life for the Wiradjuri, Gribble packed up his family, "some aboriginal girls he had provided with sanctuary at his home in Jerilderie", and set off (Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.2).

In due course, my father resigned his charge at Jerilderie, hired a horse team for the household effects and with mother and the three younger children in the buggy, Arthur riding on top of the wagon, myself on a small pony, helping an Aboriginal lad to drive a small flock of Angora goats, we set out. The whole town turned out to see us go. It was said that Parson Gribble had developed 'blacks on the brain'. We also had a cow and calf given to father by Mr. Alexander Wilson of Coree Station but these apparently were not keen on missionary work among the Aborigines and getting away from us, they went back. (Gribble, 1990, in Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.2)

Arriving on the South bank of the Murrumbidgee River, three miles from Darlington Point, Gribble started the reserve with 500 acres, increasing to 2,100 acres in 1883 (Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.2). Warangesda became a haven for many people in the region. Known as almost an "Aboriginal Noah's Ark", Warangesda was a place to escape massacre or dispersal (Heckenberg, 2017). Soon after the creation of Warangesda a provisional school was introduced (Sadleir, 1883). Eventually accepted into the state system, Warengesda's school closed in 1939. Gribble's vision was to give a safe location for Aboriginal people, especially young girls, to live and learn. Rarely practiced in those times of segregation, Gribble's school taught both Aboriginal and white children in the same classroom, with fifteen white children and twenty-seven Aboriginal (Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.3):

This mix of Aboriginal and white students was contrary to the regulations of the Department of Public Instruction, which required separate schools. Gribble also set up an evening class for young adult Aborigines, who could not read or write.

(Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.3).

Not only did Gribble care about his residents' education, he also provided a small village-style atmosphere with both family and single quarters, funded mostly out of his

own money. Warangesda is still very much celebrated near the old mission in the town of Darling Point. As remarkable as Gribble was, in a place considered a haven, he still kept very busy watching everyone with paternalistic thoroughness and an iron fist. This is because Gribble even with all his good intentions still had very strong ideas of what he considered moral behavior. "When people left he would chase them, bring them back and flog them. He searched out indolence during the day, and drunkenness and immorality at night" (Gammage, in Clayton and Barlow, 1997, p.20). Though he created Warangesda with the best intentions Gribble still had his notion of what an ideal character was, not allowing people to act freely. Gribble would only stay at Warangesda for the first five years of the Mission. Though he fought to establish a self-sufficient and safe place for local Aboriginal people to come to, he was eventually pushed out by the Aborigines Protection Association (Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.7). He died, 56 years-old, having been vilified because he went against the general consensus at the time and stood up for justice for Aboriginal people.

Throughout Australia, Government policies ruled every aspect of life. Mission life was very hard on Indigenous children and reserves such as Brungle, Bulgandramine, Erambie, and Warangesda were places where people were under strict rules and regulations, which gave no value to the Aboriginal way of life and no freedom of movement. Warangesda can be remembered not only for Reverend Gribble and his work but also because in its later years the mission became the first training school in the state. Looking at Warengesda history and prior to the opening of Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls, children from all over the state had been sent to Warangesda to be trained. Indeed, there is an estimate of "300 children sent to work from Warangesda by 1909; 570 girls sent to work between 1916-1928; 400 boys sent to work from Kinchela to the 1970s" (Elphick, and Elphick, 2004, p.72; see also

Read, 2006 for general interest). Cootamundra is in Wiradjuri Country, a town today which is a hub for traffic in all directions into heartland NSW, perhaps the reason for its location. Kinchela on the other hand, was near Kempsey, far from central NSW.

### COOTAMUNDRA DOMESTIC TRAINING HOME FOR ABORIGINAL GIRLS

The Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls was established in 1911. It was maintained by the Aborigines Welfare Board until 1968. This was the place where Aboriginal girls were placed after forcible removal from their parents under the *Aborigines Protection Act* of 1909. These removals were more often than not horribly traumatic. Aboriginal Activist Aunty Margaret Tucker (*Lousy Little Sixpence*, 1983) tells of how she and her sister were taken from Warangesda by the police car. Their mother insisting on going with the girls was taken as far as Deniliquin (NSW) before she was not allowed to go any further; breaking her and her daughter's hearts.

I heard years later how my mother cried and cried and she went out, she had nowhere to go, and she went out into the bush. My old aunt told as they were coming past a certain point right out on the outskirt of Deniliquin and they heard this moaning like an animal and they stopped the buggy and went over to see and they discovered that it was my mother laying under this tree and in the tall grass...moaning she couldn't cry anymore... I often wonder how many other children were taken like that, just like animals, because our hearts were absolutely broken.

(Aunty Margaret Tucker in Lousy Little Sixpence, 1983).

Taken from all around the state, the ages of girls entering the Home varied greatly. "Some girls from the Home were institutionalised from infancy" while others were taken at older ages, remembering their lives at home with their families (Kabaila, 2012, p.118). At times it was not just girls that spent time at the Home. In many cases baby boys were also brought to Cootamundra Girls Home where they were then moved on to the infamous Kinchela Boys' Home near Kempsey, New South Wales. Kinchela was very far away from home for many children sent there and was a place of both training and punishment. Indeed, Uncle Manuel Ebsworth (2012) remembers even the gate being a symbol of imprisonment. "This is what kept us in, kept us from our culture. Going through that gate, it was going into hell" (Uncle Manuel Ebsworth, 2012).

Many accounts from Cootamundra Girls Home, too, were of harsh treatment and physical punishments if learning was not fast and correct. "Before we realized we'd have real hard smack in the face... but I feel their teachings were very strong, I have marks on my body right now from the beltings I had" (Aunty Margaret Tucker in *Lousy Little Sixpence*, 1983). Children within the Homes were trained in service for future placements. Girls were taught how to cook, clean and how to be a domestic servant. Boys learnt how to be farm hands and work outside. Being taken from such an early age affected children's relationships with family, culture and community. Many of those that were able to go back home or meet with family again never regained the connection lost (*Lousy Little Sixpence*, 1983). The Aborigines Protection Board believed incorrectly that if you were to remove the child from the environment then the culture would eventually disappear (Kabaila, 2012, p.118).

The ultimate outcome for a child taken from family greatly depended on the colour of a child's skin. Under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1909 (NSW)* and the Aborigines Protection Board children were taken from families if they were deemed to have fifty per cent or more 'white' blood, breaking up families and siblings. This qualifier, however, meant the child was taken, but it was not necessarily known what became of the child. Oral histories, films such as *Lousy Little Sixpence* (1983) and films such as *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002), show that lighter skinned children were more 'acceptable' for adoption purposes. 'Well meaning' middle class non-Aboriginal families did not necessarily want a child of darker skin colour. The Board strongly advocated that a

child needed to fit into European society. According to their policy, that child when an adult then married a 'white' person and the Aboriginality would slowly die out (*The Advertiser*, 1934, p.20; Pilkington, 1996; Haebich, 2000; *Rabbit Proof Fence* 2002; McGregor, 2002, p.286).

It is a very sad case that because of this policy and the purposes behind it many families were broken apart. Mothers would beg the Board access to see their children but were overwhelmingly denied (Kabaila, 2012; *Lousy Little Sixpence*, 2002). Once children entered the system they were almost impossible for family to find.

We'll give them what you can't give Teach them how to really live. Teach them how to live they said Humiliated them instead Taught them that and taught them this And others taught them prejudice. You took the children away

Told us what to do and say Told us all the white man's ways Then they split us up again And gave us gifts to ease the pain Sent us off to foster homes As we grew up we felt alone Cause we were acting white Yet feeling black

(Archie Roach, 1990)

Due to this disconnect with anything familial, children grew up not knowing their culture or even if they were Aboriginal. When confronted by this fact many reacted the way society had taught them, with disgust and denial. Many others tried to re-connect with their culture.

Many lost their Aboriginal identity, but were still unable to totally merge with white society. Girls were separated from their Aboriginal family and learned to reject their Aboriginal identity found it challenging to be introduced to or reunited with Aboriginal families, while others found it unbearable.

(Kabaila, 2012, p.118)

People of Stolen Generations are still finding it hard to connect back in with their communities and Aboriginal Nations. Many records were not kept properly or have been destroyed over time. The exact figure of children placed in the Homes in New South Wales is not known, however, Kabaila (2012, p.117) estimates that during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries there were as many as 6,000 children processed through this system. This figure does not include those children taken to be put directly into the foster care system.

The legacy of this system of removal still continues today. Aboriginal People who have gone through this system suffer from mental and emotional distress. Reports have found that people have been put into mental health facilities (long-term and short-term care), become alcoholics, drug addicts, suffer from depression and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2009; Broome, 2010, p.313). In 2008 the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised for past government policy that removed Aboriginal children from families. Yet this gesture of acknowledgment and past wrong has in fact not stopped Aboriginal child removal. "We are now seeing more Aboriginal children getting taken away than at the peak of the Stolen Generations, when assimilation (genocide) was government policy. Sorry means don't do it again" (Onus, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

Despite the long-term effects of colonisation, Wiradjuri people and Aboriginal people across the country are fighting back against these notions of cultural genocide. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to raise their voices. We remain here, in the lands of our peoples, surrounded by life, love for country and cultural connectedness. It is imperative to have a voice and to remember our history, both pre and post invasion, for our history is what makes us stronger today.

Today communities are revitalizing cultural connections that government policies and non-Indigenous actions and attitudes tried so hard to extinguish. Wiradjuri Ngurambang has been revitalizing our language and building up nationhood. Senior Wiradjuri Elder Uncle Stan Grant Snr has been a huge force in Wiradjuri language revitalization (Grant and Rudder, 2005). The Wiradjuri Nation have introduced traditional language classes into primary, secondary schools, TAFE and Charles Sturt University across our Nation. Children and adults from all backgrounds are learning to communicate in Wiradjuri, the mother tongue of the Nation in which they live. This is a true representation of the strength of spirit and culture that Wiradjuri Ngurambang continues to embed. A reflection on teachings and learnings of our Elders who are still with us, and who guide us, and future generations, the chapter celebrates my Ngurambang-gu, "the mother, the first born", and gives privilege to Elder's voices (Gilbert, 1990, p.4). This chapter is central to my Indigenist standpoint, for without my culture I am not me, and without my people I have no voice to express. My Wiradjuri Ngurambang-gu and Yindyamarra is who I am. From Biaimee, to the land, the bush and the rivers; Wiradjuri Ngurambang is a part of your soul.

> It's good to be the Blackside when there's justice on our side empowered by the spirit and firm and humble pride in being on the Blackside with nature and her might the Blackside is the rightside for this land: the colour's right.

> > ('The Blackside', Gilbert, 1990, p.3)

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

# CULTURAL SAFETY

Cultural Safety... is the need to be recognised... and to be assured that the system reflects something of you – of your culture, your language, your customs, attitudes, beliefs and preferred ways of doing things.

(Eckermann, Dowd, Martin, Dixon, Gray, and Chong, 1992, p. 215)

With past effects of colonisation, most western countries today, including Australia, have relatively small populations of Indigenous people compared with the descendants of their colonial counterparts. Chapter Three Wiradjuri Ngurambang, showed that attempted genocide, massacres, segregation, assimilation, Stolen Generations, withholding all rights to citizenship, intergenerational trauma and poor rates of health have occurred throughout Australia and the rest of the world. This has left Indigenous peoples today wounded and still fighting for the same basic human rights enjoyed by the rest of the population (Sutton, 2009, p.139; Elder, 2003; Reed, 1988). The poor standard of living and ongoing felt effects of colonization around the world are manifested in old oral cultures. The brutality of the colonial powers has been handed down through stories and songs and quiet reminisces from the old to the young. This used to happen while making dinner or in quiet spaces, around fires or hunting. These quiet spaces suddenly filled with stories of white men in Toyota's or old waterholes where families where killed. Chapter Three, and the stories within, scream for a need for a modern relevant culturally safe space for the holder of these stories to pass them along to the next generation, "not to make them angry, but make them aware" (Kumanjayi Kemarre Morton, pers.com, 2000). Chapter Three highlighted the need for these spaces, this chapter says not only do they need to exist they need to be sacrosanct. The need for culturally safe spaces and the importance of a *practice of cultural safety* that includes the protection of elder knowledge is the underpinning premise of this thesis and this chapter.

The key to gaining a successful hold on bringing about changes regarding all aspects of cultural safety, and in particular, culturally safe spaces for our informants or interviewees, lies in the sentiments mentioned by Eckerman et al (1992, p.215). Our greatest strengths lie in maintaining our connections to our languages, our cultural practices and our staying 'solid' with our traditional value systems and beliefs. This study asserts that the actual *practice of cultural safety*, as discussed in Cultural Safety in Practice, aligns with traditional Indigenous knowledge systems, and this informs the optimal way a framework regarding cultural safety can be formulated.

The paucity of Australia's Indigenous history being taught in schools and being acknowledged in general society, results in Australia's children growing up to become Australia's citizens without knowing the cause and subsequent effects of colonisation (Tindale, 1972; Ramsden, 2002, p.2). Indeed, without this knowledge base these citizens who become teachers, service providers and researchers possess "little information of substance on which to build their practice among this seriously at risk group" (Ramsden, 2002, p.3). The application of Cultural Safety principles in academic areas helps overcome this lack of knowledge. When the researcher acknowledges their underlying cultural values and personal power, they can create a space in which Indigenous people are comfortable; which in turn allows people to feel included not excluded (Orr, Kenny, Gorey, Mir, Cox and Wilson, 2009).

This chapter will examine historical and contemporary examples of Cultural Safety principles and practices. Originating in Aotearoa (New Zealand), Cultural Safety and Cultural Safety Models were developed to reflect principles of respect, specifically developed for Maori people, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa (Ramsden, 2002; Bin-

Sallik, 2003; Voyageur, Smith, Morris, Kelly, John, Hunt-Humchitt and Dick, 2006; Wepa, 2004; Wepa, 2006; Wepa, 2015). Adapting this concept for a model in Australia will better reflect the principles specific to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The model will include a cultural understanding through an Australian Indigenous way of being and Indigenous way of seeing the world.

The place from which a researcher comes has an influence upon why certain work is important to research. This research comes from my perspective as an Aboriginal woman from the Wiradjuri Nation of New South Wales. Such importance is placed on practices of Cultural Safety because I have spent a lifetime in various unsafe environments. Experiencing racism first hand makes one understand what others could be going through within Australia. It is important for current and future generations, therefore, to examine Cultural Safety practices towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. It "is an issue which has not received adequate recognition" and needs to be looked at (Bin-Sallik, 2003, p.21). For me, this makes it a personal quest.

The focus of this chapter is the concept of Cultural Safety, and how it can be implemented into certain sectors in Australian society. It is important to reflect upon the principles of Cultural Safety and determine how they can create an environment that not only empowers the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people sharing their oral histories but also ensures that the knowledge being shared is protected for the people and communities themselves. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, have been, and still are, treated with racist undertones either in daily life when seeking services or out in the general public (Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991; Larson, Gillies, Howard, and Coffin, 2007, p.323; McGlade, 2017;).

Cultural Safety, when working effectively in regard to interviewing and collecting oral histories, allows the interviewer to understand his or her own personal power as well as understanding where the interviewee comes from. Cultural Safety Models allow interviewers to reflect upon where their awareness stands and what steps need to be taken to gain a better understanding of other cultures. The Cultural Safety Model in this chapter looks at the four progressive steps of Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety.

Wording, or semantics, is also important when looking at Cultural Safety and such models. Some researchers criticise the word 'safety' as it is a more medical term and feel that people can associate "Cultural Safety, [with having] racist overtones", where if under a different name or label, the practices and teachings of Cultural Safety would not be so closely associated with race or ethnicity (Papps in Rasmden, 2002, p.151). Though people such as Papps (in Rasmden, 2002, p.151) have argued the name change, in her case to Critical Social Theory, the term Cultural Safety has for Indigenous people a clearer connotation. The use of the term Cultural Safety enables Indigenous people to judge for themselves, what is or is not culturally safe. This gives opportunity for the full meaning of the term 'safe' as it is down to people feeling that they are in a safe environment that accepts and does not judge them. Within the research environment, or interviewer/interviewee relationships, a culturally safe environment is one in which the Indigenous people don't feel like the subject of research but instead are a contributor. This kind of environment is free of judgment and is not set up like an interview but instead a conversation. The safe environment is ensured by community Elders and Leaders (Orr et al, 2009). Ultimately, Cultural Safety allows for the full exposition of intersubjective discourse to be performed. In that the exchange and the relative safety of those involved in it, both bring a subjective viewpoint. Langton

(1993, p.33-34) in her paper, *Well I Heard It on the Radio and I saw it on the Television*, describes it as:

'Aboriginality', therefore, is a field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people create 'Aboriginalities'.

In this intersubjective space the definition of Aboriginal knowledge holder or Elder and non-Indigenous 'knower' is disrupted allowing space outside of the mainstream narrative, for the Elder to determine his or her sense of safety and the level of knowledge that is safe to be shared within any given space or interaction.

Adherence to Cultural Safety practices and models is important for the learning process of non-Indigenous people. Within the development of such a Cultural Safety Model, language must follow best practice, as there is the very real possibility of inappropriate terminology operating as a 'double-edged sword' (Razak, 1998 p.58). One side of the 'sword blade' is language which could be considered to stereotype, label, and marginalise; that is used in an effort to explain situations which are hard to understand without contentious metaphors and phrases (Voyageur et al, 2006). However, the use of such phrases, however unintentional, directly challenges Cultural Safety as an approach to research and intersubjective discourse. Language such as 'Aboriginal', 'non-Aboriginal' 'Indigenous', 'non-Indigenous', 'us' and 'them' create a distance and a romanticised 'other', generating a space between that of the 'subject' or member of the minority culture, and that of the 'pupil' or member of the majority culture (Voyageur et al, 2006).

This is put into context, however, by the other side of the 'sword blade' as there is the danger of failing to critically and openly discuss the experiences of these "marginalized

individuals and groups" (Voyageur et al, 2006). Without and often with these critical discussions mainstreams versions of Aboriginality remain in this far away from reality place. People are operating in this romanticised and idealized version of Aboriginality that comes from a place of ignorance rather than a grounded knowledge of Aboriginal peoples actual lives and realities. Indeed, without such discussion to appreciate that, the general population has very little, if any, true understanding of why Indigenous people are the way they are and what ordeals they have had to go through to get to this point in time. Certainly Voyageur et al (2006) explain that if we do ignore such issues of racism, "we risk perpetuating oppression". One way this oppression comes into being is the manner in which Indigenous peoples are always being categorised as those who need to be 'helped' and are entirely omitted from doing the ''helping'' for themselves. As John (in Voyageur et al., 2006) explains:

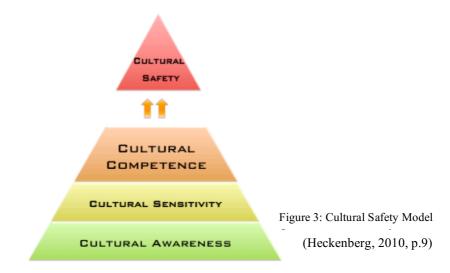
When I was doing my master's research — I did mine on Indigenous ethics for counselling indigenous clients — what I noticed is that so much of the research focused on cross-cultural work. A lot of the research was geared towards helping, for lack of a better term, helping white people to help Indigenous people or brown people, or what have you, and my concern with that — I just had a concern with that whole model — because what that does is that it removes Indigenous people from the solution because we are not able then to be the professionals, we are not able to be the solution, we are the ones who always have to be helped.

Challenging these attitudes towards Indigenous peoples is a vital part of this thesis. Looking at how to overcome these opinions, if it is at all possible, is an issue that is raised. The Cultural Safety Model, as a way of challenging these concepts, is explored within this chapter, looking at each step within the Model and how effectively they work. It is essential within these steps to speak more openly about these relationships both between individuals, between organisations and individuals and between the researchers and the researched. It is imperative to "acknowledge and challenge the double-edged sword... at all times" throughout all the steps of the Cultural Safety Model (Voyageur et al, 2006). It is important when looking at the Model to know the meaning of Cultural Safety in practice; how people misconstrue these concepts; ways to overcome these misconceptions; and just how important it is to have the subject of such models, Indigenous peoples themselves, involved in every step or process.

Australia needs Cultural Safety in every area and aspect of society, especially within the research field. It is vital to improving and retaining a safe environment for Indigenous people within Australia. The fundamental basis of such principles of life and for the research in this thesis is *Yindyamarra*, a Wiradjuri word meaning, "respect, be gentle, polite, honour, [and] do slowly" (Grant and Rudder, 2005, p.335). Without ideologies like *Yindyamarra* to live by, little is respected and held close and that is why Cultural Safety is imperative.

## A MODEL OF CULTURAL SAFETY

The development of a foundation on which to build relationships between cultures is a long and complex learning process. Cultural Safety models help facilitate this process with each individual, each researcher and each organisation being able to learn at their own pace. It is important to recognise culturally unsafe relationships within every environment, but this cannot be done without introspection and understanding one's own personal power. The Cultural Safety Model presented in this chapter discusses how the four steps, Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety, fit together in a learning process. As part of the learning process participants may reflect on how they succeed or fail in developing a better understanding of these stages, and their intercultural relationships. It is important to develop a more complex schematic of how individuals of different cultures relate within a society. Though there have been other such versions of the Cultural Safety Model within best practice models regarding respectful relationships with Indigenous people, the chapter considers the most relevant for today's ethics and practices to be Cultural Awareness leading to Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Competence and then to Cultural Safety (Ramsden, 2002, p.117). This model can be illustrated by the following figure created by the author in 2010 (see also Ramsden, 2002, p.117; Taylor and Guerin, 2010, p.10-15):



Cultural Awareness is the first step in this Cultural Safety model and is an acknowledgement that there are other cultures, such as Indigenous people, in society (Smye, 2004). The second step is Cultural Sensitivity, which acknowledges that there is a difference but also recognises the importance of respecting difference and the value of self-exploration into one's own identity (Voyageur et al, 2006). This respect and introspection is vital to truly understanding that lifelong practices and histories of minority cultures are just as important as those of the majority in any given country. Cultural Competence, the third step, delves deeper into such knowledge and respect and looks at "skills, knowledge and attitudes" in organisational practice towards minority groups (Coronado, 2013, p.15). This concept is far beyond what most organisations have in place, but which many are striving to achieve. Though Cultural Competence is vital in today's society it is not as all-encompassing as Cultural Safety.

Cultural Competence looks at the organisation to individual relationship and not the individual to individual relationship. For instance, a hospital with Cultural Competence in place would look at the hospital to patient relationship or even the doctor (an entity of the hospital) to patient relationship. Though this understanding in practice is useful, it overlooks the doctor as an individual with personal power and prejudices. The same can be said in a research context. Cultural Competence, ethics and protocols put into place by research institutions mainly hinge on how they affect the researcher, the research or the organisation, then how it effects the participant or 'subject' of this research. It is a top down approach and does not look at the subject and whether they want to be researched in the first place (Janke, 1998, p.33). As a further step forward, Cultural Safety looks at such concepts and how such a relationship might affect the ultimate outcome.

Indeed, in an ideal world, organisations and individuals, researchers and the researched themselves would be working and living within the final level of such a model, and within a framework of Cultural Safety practices. This in turn would allow such entities the ability to recognise that "we are all bearers of culture and we need to be aware of and challenge unequal power relations within the individual, family, community" and all social levels (Voyageur et al, 2006). The application of Cultural Safety models can culminate in a program designed to educate non-Indigenous majority peoples who will gain a better understanding of the 'other', the minority peoples. The use of the Cultural Safety approach, by care providers or researchers ensures Culturally Safe protocols with Indigenous people "in such a way that those who receive care define it" (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2006).

### CULTURAL AWARENESS

Cultural Awareness is what could be termed as the "beginning step towards understanding that there is difference" between groups of people (Papps, 2005, p.21). This understanding is in its simplest form, that of the 'us' and 'them' mentality. Cultural Awareness is the very beginning of a process of understanding. With the Cultural Awareness construct the observer might see other people's different activities and how they go about them as 'culturally different'; it "does not usually involve looking at the political, social, and economic characteristics of difference or at one's own experiences or relationships to these characteristics" (Voyageur et al, 2006). Cultural Awareness training is the most common way people learn about the concept of Cultural Awareness and why it is important in today's society. Cultural Awareness training should help people understand other cultures in society, and why people act the way they do. The problem with such training is that it "focuses on exploring non-white cultures and experiences and ignores or marginalises the impact of practices of whiteness" (Gunstone, 2009, p.3). Further, within many organisations Cultural Awareness training is seldom undertaken and when it is, it is often non-compulsory, effectively "preaching to the converted" (Gunstone, 2009, p.3). This presents another problem, with Cultural Awareness training largely failing to "interrogate complex concepts such as 'culture', 'power', 'language' and 'identity'" (Gunstone, 2009, p.3). Those who feel they 'know' another culture are not challenged within their own power and identity constructs, to see how their knowing effects interactions with those they know so much about. It can bring about an arrogance of cultural blindness.

This training and newfound awareness can at times seem a very ironic turn of phrase. Though Cultural Awareness acknowledges there are other people within society who have different cultural practices and beliefs than that of the dominant culture, it does not fully articulate 'awareness'. Cultural Awareness often identifies Indigenous Australians in the broadest, most stereotypical way. Foley (2000, p.44) asks what does make a person an Indigenous Australian under such standards? He goes on to question:

Does your skin colour, the colour of your eyes, the shape of your nose, the size of your brain or some other biological measurement govern it! Do we still measure the cranial cavity of the skull with millet to determine brain size of the indigenous versus the non-Indigenous? (Smith, 1999). Can Aboriginality be determined biologically, is there a blood test?

(Foley, 2000, p.44)

The question remains: what makes an Indigenous person? Is it the broad stereotypes that the majority of the population might believe or the cultural values Indigenous people maintain? Ideas and questions such as these are brought out into the open constantly with 'well-meaning' people who have more than common 'Cultural Awareness' or a feeling that they 'know' Indigenous people. Yet by knowing how and what makes an Indigenous person they are not understanding that Indigeneity cannot be boxed or typecast. These well-meaning people are often the ones with the most "substantial attacks on Indigenous cultural safety" (Gunstone, 2009, p.2). These attacks are seen when Gunstone (2009, p.2), talks about such well-meaning university course advisors who "advised [university] students not to study Indigenous Studies unless they wanted to work in the Northern Territory, 'where the Aborigines live'".

Though most likely not meaning to be racist or biased in any way such comments just show how some 'educated' 'intelligent' people, who are given the responsibility of educating the next generation of 'educated' 'intelligent' Australians, themselves have little idea what a culturally inclusive and understanding environment is. This type of Cultural Awareness does not mean understanding where someone is coming from within his or her life. Cultural Awareness is the beginning. It gives no more than the simplest understanding of a culture. In fact, at some points it over simplifies racial understanding to the point that people think they know about another culture from watching them on TV. Indeed, the average Australian person may very well believe that all Aboriginal people drink or all Muslim women wear a Burqa. This idea is much too simple and at points quite racist. Indeed, many people undergo courses, such as Cultural Awareness training, designed to sensitise them to formal ritual or practical aspects of a society "rather than the emotional, social, economic and political context in which people exist" (Ramsden, 1992).

### CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Cultural Sensitivity is beyond Cultural Awareness or "the next step up" within safe cultural practices (Taylor and Guerin, 2010, p.17). Within Cultural Sensitivity there is recognition or sensitivity regarding what is learnt about another culture. It involves getting to know and understand other cultures and perspectives. "Culturally sensitive approaches acknowledge that difference is important and must be respected" (Voyageur et al, 2006). Cultural Sensitivity prepares people to appreciate cultural diversity and how this is fundamental to an equitable society. This process involves "self-exploration as the powerful bearers of their own life experience and realities and the impact this may have on others" (Ramsden, 2002, p.3). It enables introspection and knowing of cultural differences as well as similarities "without assigning values, i.e., better or worse, right or wrong, to those cultural differences" (National Maternal and Child Health Center on Cultural Competency, 1997). This in turn enables one to be sensitive to the potential impact one's own personal culture and values may have on others (Taylor and Guerin, 2010, p.13).

Though Cultural Sensitivity looks to be a relatively good practice in developing cultural understanding, Voyageur et al (2006) maintain that "culturally sensitive approaches... tend to focus on 'others' as the bearers of culture", and does not look at the role and culture of both parties within the framework of a relationship, for example that of a doctor/patient, interviewer/interviewee, researcher/researched. Though it is starting the process of self-reflection, it does not focus enough on just how much personal power the care provider, member of an organisation or researcher has over the individual.

One area this power comes into play is in the university classroom, through unintentional situations that can at times put Indigenous people in even more harm than outright racist behaviour. One such example of this sort of behaviour happened when "a White academic requested, within a large class setting, for any Indigenous students to identify themselves and then interrogated the students about their Indigeneity" (Gunstone, 2009, p.2). Such behaviour makes the student feel uncomfortable and put on a public stage about how much they know about their culture. This type of behaviour is neither safe nor appropriate. Even more disturbing is that these academics "later claimed that they were trying to 'encourage' the Indigenous students" (Gunstone, 2009, p.2). These people need to fully understand what Cultural Sensitivity is, what role their own culture and power plays in their understanding and how through their own actions they could improve the environment so that unsafe situations do not happen again.

### CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural Competence is the capability of interacting effectively and respectfully with people across different cultures (New South Wales Health Department, 2009). It is defined as the ability of systems or organisations to provide services to people with "diverse values, beliefs and behaviours" (Betancourt, Carrillo and Green, 2002, p. v). Cultural competence recognises the differences in each individual, "that we are all born, raised and living in social, educational and organisational cultures" (NSW Health Department, 2009). Being culturally competent is being able to work or interact with people effectively who are culturally different (Taylor and Guerin, 2010, p.17). However, being culturally competent is also about understanding one's own personal or professional power within a relationship. For example, a doctor not only holds his or her 'personal power' towards the patient but also holds the power of every other doctor who has come before. The patient is in a vulnerable state, which is something the doctor needs to be aware of. This too can be said about the researcher. The researcher or interviewer might not fully understand just how much personal power they hold (Benari and Enosh, 2013, p.423; Kvale, 2005, p.91-94). As so many communities have been researched and researched and "researched to death!", many people are sick of the process or intimidated and just tell researchers what they want to hear (Castellano, 2004, p.98). With Cultural Competence the researcher can see that his or her position has power that might influence research/interview outcomes and allow for an environment of sharing and openness.

The New South Wales Health Department (2009) identifies several components vital to Cultural Competence and essential for a better understanding of working with peoples from other cultures and societies. NSW Health Department (2009) states that it is necessary to have awareness "of one's own cultural worldview (assumptions, biases)". For Cultural Competence it is important to have gained some knowledge from such areas as Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Awareness to build upon. This will enable an understanding of different cultures and their practices as well as more complex understandings of one's own world view and how this affects interaction. Such understanding will gain a positive "attitude towards cultural differences... [and] crosscultural communication skills" (NSW Health Department, 2009). This training of Cultural Competence includes many aspects of understanding not only about the other cultures but also about one's own cultural values and position of power.

However, Cultural Competence is different to Cultural Safety. Taylor and Guerin (2010 p.18), put this difference quite simply:

From a purely semantic sense, competence relates to the practitioner and what they do; safety implies, more broadly, the practitioner, system and, most importantly the client, who is the only one able to assess the services as culturally safe.

While Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety are both very important developments in the Cultural Safety Model, are they equivalent? Wepa (2006 p.19), answers this question with an "emphatic no!", they are not the same. Wepa (2006, p.19) asks when comparing these concepts, "does a person achieve certain competencies to become safe or do they achieve certain safety milestones or requirements to become competent?" Where competence is achieved within the workplace, being culturally safe is something you either have or do not. This places Cultural Safety along with other important forms of safety such as ethical, legal and physical safety (Wepa, 2006 p.19). Indeed:

It would be difficult in New Zealand to discuss ethical, legal and physical competence, the meanings just aren't the same. Similarly the nature of cultural safety will always place the defining with the person receiving the service or care so the power is maintained at that level. This is somewhat different to other approaches where groups of people other than the consumer or client determines a person's cultural competence.

(Wepa, 2006 p.19)

In Aotearoa, the birthplace of Cultural Safety, the term Cultural Competence is not "referred to much at all" (Wepa, 2006, p.19). The expectation is that competence is achieved within the workplace. This learning process is achieved over years but as the

worker becomes more competent, in their organisation, they should in essence be in a state of becoming more Culturally Competent. Indeed "[s]chools of nursing and midwifery for example are very clear that they are educating graduates at a beginner practitioner level and the workplace takes it from there" (Wepa, 2006, p.19). Ideally over time there is an evolution in the workplace environment where cultural competency becomes imbedded into normal workplace practice.

#### CULTURAL SAFETY

The concept of Cultural Safety is very important within every aspect of society. It can be defined as, "an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need" (Williams 1999, p.213 in Bin-Sallik, 2003, p.21). Cultural Safety is about shared respect, meaning, knowledge and an experience of learning together (Williams 1999, p.213 in Bin-Sallik, 2003, p.21). The concept was first "coined by a Maori nursing student in the late 1980s" (Wepa, 2006, p.7). The need for Cultural Safety was publicly expressed in 1988 after weeping first year student, Hinerangi Mohi, from Christchurch Polytechnic, made an emotional statement to a "hui or meeting" (Wepa, 2006, p.7). Mohi's (1988 in Wepa, 2006, p.7) statement challenged the current models of cultural practice and this "new term 'cultural safety' was added to the nursing lexicon" (Wepa, 2006, p.7), showing the Aotearoa health system how to treat its Maori patients. Mohi (1988 in Wepa, 2006, p.7) stated:

You people talk about legal safety, ethical safety, safety in clinical practice and a safe knowledge base, but what about Cultural Safety?

This approach argued that current systems of dealing with Maori patients were inadequate and that Cultural Safety went beyond such ideas as Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Competence. Cultural Safety is about the right of Indigenous people to be able to feel safe in their own country; surviving within an alien and socially dominant culture after an act of invasion or colonisation.

The dream of Cultural Safety was about helping the people... become aware of their social conditioning and how it has affected them and therefore their practice. (Ramsden, 2002, p.2).

Rights and practices such as Cultural Safety have come about because of sections under the 1840 *Tiriti o Waitangi*, Treaty of Waitangi, considered "New Zealand's founding document" (History Group of New Zealand, 2010). Named after Waitangi in the Bay of Islands, the treaty was first signed on 6th February 1840 "by the British Crown and about 540 Maori *Rangatira* [chiefs]" (Besterman, 2007, p.11). The Treaty has both Maori and English versions and while contentious, it is fundamental to sustaining and governing many Maori rights in Aotearoa today. Figure 2 shows how important the Treaty is within the cross cultural service delivery life and how Cultural Safety is at the core of such interaction.



The Treaty was and still is the benchmark for legal matters concerning the customary rights of Maori people. In essence it is the agreement on which rights to land and practices are affirmed. "The Treaty has always been the reference point from which Maori people have negotiated with the Crown for self-determination over their resources" (Wepa, 2006, p.6); and is therefore the reference point for cultural safety in New Zealand. This means that the Treaty ensures organisations and "the Crown, or agents of the Crown" such as the Nursing Council of New Zealand maintain their responsibilities under the Treaty to Maori peoples (Wepa, 2006, p.6). In turn these obligations enable health students, as well as students from other areas, to graduate with the ability to create safe environments and areas "to be defined by those that receive the service" (Wepa, 2006, p.6).

The Australian healthcare system embraced this idea of cultural safety and started to train its upcoming nurses in cultural practices based on the importance that the New Zealand healthcare system had already placed on Cultural Safety for Maori people (Eckermann, 2006, p.174). With this new concept coming into Australia, Williams (1999, p.8) asked, how "can we ensure meaningful development and delivery of effective and appropriate services for Indigenous peoples in Australia?" In order to develop solutions to Williams' (1999, p.8) question, Cultural Competence needs to progress into Cultural Safety and the effective expansion of appropriate delivery of services to Indigenous people of Australia will be increased. In present times Cultural Competence has broadened its research and is being implemented in more and more organisations. Cultural Safety training is still developing as a best practice for organisations to be providing their staff.

Like the healthcare system, the Australian education sector also needs to implement

more culturally safe practices for researchers undertaking research on Indigenous issues. Karen Martin (2008, p.129) expresses her concern with the code of ethics that a researcher has to adhere to within the university system. "I felt these didn't adequately address matters of cultural safety and cultural respect, nor in observing cultural protocols in the context of research" (Martin, 2008, p.129). Indeed if the researcher abides by the protocols set out by universities they are often officially not doing anything unethical if and when they disregard aspects of cultural protocols. "Universities need to genuinely negotiate with Indigenous peoples, organisations and communities regarding the appropriate level of Indigenous engagement with university research concerning Indigenous knowledge and issues" (Gunstone, 2009, p.4). This kind of negotiation will help involve Cultural Safety in every aspect of education within Indigenous and non-Indigenous research frameworks. It is vital that, "Cultural safety... be nurtured. This can only be done where research purpose is returned to Indigenous hands" (Doyle, 2004, p.8).

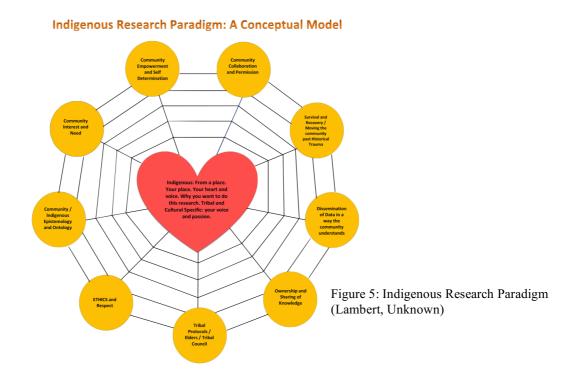
Cultural Safety research needs an Indigenous viewpoint, which my thesis provides. An Indigenous way of seeing these issues has highlighted the importance of what culturally safe practices are and what needs to be explored, because as an Indigenous person, the issues are personal to me. Due to past policies, uninformed attitudes and the "government's terminology for Aboriginal people... [being] seeped in racism" Indigenous people, have always been at a disadvantage (Doyle, 2004, p.1). However, Indigenous researchers themselves are fighting back. With guides and manuals about ethical and culturally safe research practices, researchers have ways to educate practitioners to create and operate within culturally safe environments (see Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008, Martin, 2008, Smith, 1999, Battiste, 2000). Doyle's (2004, p.1) words reinforce the importance of culturally safe practices:

The damage of generations in Aboriginal education demands that we all actively create cacoons [sic] of cultural safety to begin to properly grow up indigenous research, education, learning and knowledges.

(Doyle, 2004, p.1)

## CULTURAL SAFETY IN PRACTICE

Creating these cocoons, as expressed by Doyle (2004, p.1) is an essential part of ensuring an environment which is culturally safe within Indigenous focused research. It is imperative to keep the community needs in focus when undertaking Indigenous research. There are global Indigenous as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models that have been created to ensure a holistic approach to research, which are enabling all aspects of the supportive research 'ways of doing' to be acknowledged and implemented. The Indigenous Research Paradigm by Lambert (below), looking much like an Indigenous spider web of knowledge realization, fits below my Cultural Safety Model from the previous section above, because it aligns ideas that are concordant with community collaboration, tribal protocols, and Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies.



These ideas clearly resonate with the sentiments of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).* Article 13 (UNDRIP, 2007, p.7) states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

The significance of the UNDRIP Article 13 (2007, p.7) is that it specifically mentions our right "to designate and retain" our oral traditions, and this is highlighted in the expectations of the Indigenous Research Paradigm which defends and supports outcomes inclusive of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Indeed, Article 13 and the Indigenous Research Paradigm both enforce ideas that create culturally safe cocoons that value all aspects of Indigenous identity. This identity comes in the form of language, community knowledge, ownership and continued connectedness to culture and cultural protocols.

This connectedness still embeds itself in the story or oral history. Story to Aboriginal people is more than just a mere reiterating of a single event. It is a message from Dreamtime and from the lore in which we have continuing cultural connection (Wallace, 2009; Hughes, 2015, p.86). No story is only connected to one person but to many, for everything in society affects another. Even contemporary story has so many more layers and cultural meanings than a single event. In fact, "Story-telling is closely associated with singing" (Gardiner, 1996, p.9). There is a lyrical sound and a bigger meaning behind such speech. Both story and singing "involve a means of cultural transmission and memorization in an oral society, and both are intimately concerned with myth" (Gardiner, 1996, p.9). This link to the mythical is our link to the Dreamtime, our link to Biaimee and the lands which hold us close.

When undertaking culturally safe research interviews there is a need to remember that contemporary and traditional cultural values and practices are very important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each nation of people has very individual cultural practices. Indeed, each clan or family group within each nation can have different cultural values. Take for example basket weaving, dot painting and possum skin cloaks. These are three cultural practices associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, however not every nation or clan conducts these practices in the same way or even conducts these practices at all. Baskets for instance are made differently in each nation. Dot paintings originated from Papunya and possum skin cloaks are only made by certain clans; indeed, as discussed in Wiradjuri *Ngurambang*, for many people the possum is their totem and therefore they protect it and do not kill it.

It is important to know individual community protocols prior to research; for example: community based objectives must be set, with strict adherence to culturally safe guidelines. As such researchers going into communities to undertake research or conduct oral history should be contacting the community organisations and leaders first. It is respectful to introduce yourself and the proposed research. Many ethics applications now require community support. However, community support given exclusively by local Aboriginal organisations is insufficient and Aboriginal Elders of the areas being visited must be consulted. It is also a good idea to take part in community events if possible and create deeper connections than just a single visit.

Though it is recommended in Australia to always provide the information for local counselling should there be any stress associated with an interview, it is just as relevant to remember that the vast majority of people being talked to suffer from intergenerational trauma through events that have occurred in their lives and the lives of

their families due to colonisation of Indigenous people (Sutton, 2009, p.139; Elder, 2003; Reed, 1988). Training and awareness of trauma-informed care needs to be put into place to ensure "a sense of control and empowerment" within any interview situation (Hopper et al., 2010, p. 82). Culturally safe research practices bring a fully informed researcher to a situation that allows for the interviewee, no matter their life experiences, to feel safe.

Sometimes communities need more reassurance to feel that their cultural and community knowledge is going to remain protected once researched. This is something I was very proud to have developed and taken part in when establishing my research with the necessity of presentation to the Wiradjuri Council of Elders. This approach placed an additional burden, however I wanted to work with my community to make sure all cultural protocols were taken into consideration. Firstly, I needed to assure the Council in person and in writing that I would abide by cultural protocols. I then needed to assure the Council that I would endeavor to give the Elders I was consulting as much authority as required within the interview process. This produced an interview format that was sufficiently explorative yet respected boundaries. I then created an agreement of sorts that guaranteed all oral history interviews conducted, once approved by the Elder, would then go onto the Council for their approval. Once both parties were happy with the final product any and all future publications would be published under the auspices of the Wiradjuri Council of Elders with all copyright belonging to the Elder interviewed. This process was the best practice model for my community. It is imperative that community knowledge stays within community. It is essential that community knowledge is still owned by community. At no point did I want to own copyright of one of my Elder's oral histories nor have an institution be the intellectual property holder of my community's knowledge.

This process worked for my community. However, each community is different and needs to be fully consulted. After all, the research being conducted could not occur without Indigenous people themselves. As Winona Wheeler (2005, p.204), a member of the Ockekwi Sipi (Fisher River) Cree First Nation states:

Learning in the oral tradition is not about racing into Indian country with tape recorder in hand and taking data. Neither is it about hiring locals to interview old people and supply transcripts for detached academic reflection in the isolated confines of distant offices.

In developing relationships with your interviewee it is important to place yourself within the situational context. Who are you? How do you fit into the community you are currently working in? How you relate and interact with the interviewee, or in my case Elder, is vital to the final research outcome and the feeling of cultural safety during the process. The ability to relate to your interviewee and conduct ethical interview processes in a culturally safe manner is discussed further in Chapter Five when exploring oral history best practice.

### **REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD**

Early on in my research I fell into the trap of being too self-assured. I was working in my own community. I was conducting oral history interviews, to be turned into autobiographies, at the request of my senior Elders. I was a young Wiradjuri woman who just wanted to sit and listen to the Elders that I had grown up hearing from and take part in adding voices to my community. So there I was. I set out for the 15-hour train ride from where I was living in at the time, Gippsland Victoria, back home to Wiradjuri Country. I arrived tired but very enthused and the next day dropped into see the Elder I was going to be conducting an oral history interview with. This Uncle I had met many times and we both felt comfortable working together. I arrived at his house, bearing cake, and he had tea ready and waiting. We got to talking and as we chatted I

realized that turning the tape recorder on at that moment was not appropriate, so we agreed that he would decide when the time was right and we got back to chatting. I learnt so much about Aboriginal politics during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s and even more so about the importance of the Communist Party to Aboriginal people at that time. The Communist Party led the way for Aboriginal rights in Australia and to learn the ins and outs of such a time from a still staunch communist was amazing (Boughton, 1999, p.38; *Lousy Little Sixpence*, 1983). As I left for the day Uncle asked me where I was staying. As I told him I could tell he was not too happy. I was staying at the local pub, a place known by locals as not the best place to be. Yet that was all I could afford at the time. After getting a bit of a lecture about staying safe I was sent off full of so much more knowledge, none of it recorded.

The next day I arrived again food in hand ready and eager to get under way only to find nice hot stew waiting. As we got back down to chatting and looking over Uncle's old records it was decided again not to turn on the tape recorder. Cold and rainy outside, we settled down to chatting away about an amazing life. As it started getting into the midafternoon Uncle wanted to talk again about my accommodation. He wanted to know how much it was costing me, how much food I was eating and how long it was going to take for me to get home. From this conversation it was decided that we would end there and maybe pick up again sometime in the future. You see he was worried. It was raining and the weather was only going to get worse. I had not placed myself correctly within the research. I had assumed because I was known and Wiradjuri that the best most comfortable, culturally safe, outcome would be possible. For a young Wiradjuri person, the oral history Uncle shared was amazing. I left knowing so much more of not only Uncle's history but Aboriginal and global politics more generally, particularly behind the 'Iron Curtain'. However, I did not take into account how I would be seen. I

was in my early twenties, was a long way from home and staying it a place *not quite safe*. I was a like a granddaughter in our cultural ties and I was putting myself in a position considered unsafe. My tribal kinship and the Elder's concerns for my wellbeing, necessarily superseded my role as researcher.

Cultural Safety is not just ensuring that the interviewee or interviewer feels safe at a particular moment but that the entire interaction is conducted in a culturally safe manner. Cultural Safety is making sure that at no point does the interviewee feel vulnerable about the situation, those around them, or themselves, for whatever reason. It is essential to listen to Elders whether they speak verbally or with their body language. Though there is a lack of scholarly work in regards to Cultural Safety within the oral history field, cultural protocols should always come into play within these interactions whether you are Aboriginal or non-Indigenous. Indeed, it "is important for Indigenous protocols to be followed when working with Indigenous communities so that our knowledge system (and ways of being) is not disturbed or broken down" (Blacklock, 2010, p.21). Researchers need to remember that "the researcher is NOT [author's emphasis] separate from the research" (Peters, 2013 p.7). It is essential to understand that the relationship and dynamic created by the interviewee and interviewer influences the outcomes of the research. As seen in the example with the Uncle, how the research fits or does not fit into the community structure will greatly change the final product.

In the Aboriginal worldview, there are diverse ways of knowing: those of thinking, feeling, and willing. Each is interwoven yet distinct. Thinking is part of the flux, feelings are a particular location in the flux, and willing is using thinking and feeling.... The object of knowledge is to reunify the world or at least reconcile the world to itself.

(Martin, 2008, p.97)

Remember that cultural safety grew out of an Indigenous/colonised experience. Non-Indigenous professionals who have not had the experience of being colonised and who enjoy the privileges of the dominant society need to ensure that they don't colonise cultural safety.

(Eckermann et al, 2006, p.174)

This is a key point that will be expanded on later but it is important to remember that it is the lived experiences of Indigenous people that recognise the need for cultural safety. That the concept is not some abstracted theoretical position but based on interactions of the colonized in the dominant societies institutions. Some cultural safeguards need to be put into place so that the actual lived experience of Indigenous people are not whitewashed in a scramble for ownership over the concept. That in fact any theorizing or exploration or development of the concept needs to come from those who feel it and know it and deal with it daily.

This chapter has shown that there may be poor standards of Cultural Safety practices and lack of Cultural Safety Models within organisations and research in Australia today. As the chapter has shown, it is imperative to look at many areas of Australian society and see how to make these domains more culturally safe. The Cultural Safety Model is very important when implementing safe practices of understanding. Being conscious if one does not possess little more than a basic Cultural Awareness is important, especially if working in a client-based field. Statements such as 'I have never seen an Aborigine' show a complete lack of understanding of contemporary Indigenous Australia and need to be analysed and addressed. Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Competence build on this basic knowledge and help people understand the effects their own culture has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Cultural Safety is of course very important as it allows one to see one's own personal power and how this affects their attitudes of race relations. The model is very important for teaching non-Indigenous people how their attitudes and behavior affect Indigenous Australia today.

Also as above Eckermann et al. (2006, p.174) state it is essential not to allow non-Indigenous academics and researchers to "colonise cultural safety". Indeed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should always be contributors to such models of Cultural Safety. Cultural Safety models led by Indigenous people themselves help non-Indigenous people understand what has gone on beforehand and decolonizes Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships to bring to fruition the dream of an Australia free of racism, as Cultural Safety has the "universal potential to improve humanity" (Eckermann et al., 2006, p.167). Indeed, Cultural Safety embodies the principles of Yindyamarra, "respect, be gentle, polite, honour, [and] do slowly" (Grant and Rudder, 2005, p.335). We need to ensure when conducting oral histories, or any other research, that we create a respectful process. The insufficient recognition of cultural safety and Indigenous cultural process in oral history handbooks, guidelines and conferences can be highlighted in this chapter by the lack of scholarly work in this area, other than a few exemplars in the field such as Lorina Barker and Napia Mahuika. Oral history discourse needs to include cultural safe guidelines so that interviewees are assured that they hold the power to voice their needs above all else. It is also essential to create a relationship of mutual sharing and ownership, because this knowledge being used is from the community, from the Elders, and to ignore that they are rightful owners of their own knowledge is to ignore Cultural Safety.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

# ORAL HISTORY

### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the concept of Cultural Safety, and how it can be implemented into certain sectors in Australian society. Furthermore, it reflected upon the underlying principles of Cultural Safety and determined how these principles can create an environment that not only empowers the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people sharing their oral histories but also ensures that the knowledge being shared is protected for the people and communities themselves. The Cultural Safety Model examined the four progressive steps of Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety. The chapter finally demonstrated that there are poor standards of Cultural Safety practices and lack of Cultural Safety Models within organisations and research in Australia today. This is particularly relevant within the field of oral history.

This oral history chapter looks at how important oral histories are when trying to understand our societies and history, particularly from the vantage point of our Indigenous community story tellers, who often transmit knowledge through their voice and have this oral tradition entrenched in their psyche. Only a certain cross-section of historical documentation can be found in government repositories, yet oral history allows us an insight into community ways of life. Though Indigenous people globally and in Australia are heavily researched they are also overlooked within historical record keeping, with many records intentionally lacking in detailed information or discarded. Australian Indigenous oral history brings to life our community narratives and portrays the customs, beliefs and values of our old people. Spiritually our Elders live on through story. The process of looking at the nature of Indigenous oral history, and comparing the expected and resultant outcomes, has clarified the importance of a focused study of these oral histories. In particular, there is a potential discord between Orality and more general Indigenous knowledge transmission. This chapter while exploring that gap will also explore the need for a study of this kind.

The chapter proceeds to examine three examples of my experiences and practice in oral history research. It reflects upon my research on Victoria Stolen Wages, my time in Hawai'i, *My Wondering Heart: Hawai'i and Me*, and how this cultural immersion changed and shaped how I conduct myself and my oral histories. The chapter then explores my research as an oral historian rummaging around the National Library in *Continuing our Voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oral Histories in the National Library*. Next, I explore my journey of learning and discovery within oral history entitled *Best Practice Ethical Research: Columbia University*. All of this research ties back to my intention for this study, and that is, gaining a greater understanding of the processes involved in oral traditions, and how to protect storytellers and their stories.

## ORAL TRADITION

...our oral tradition is a kind of web in which each strand is a part of the whole. The individual strands are most powerful when interconnected to make an entire web, that is, when the stories are examined in their entirety. Each of our stories possess meaning and power, but are most significant when understood in relation to the rest of the stories in the oral tradition.

(Fixico, 1997, p.108)

Our storylines crisscross Australia (Donovan and Wall, 2004, p. xvi). Trading routes follow these storylines right across Australia (Donovan and Wall, 2004, p. xvii) and all our people are interconnected, and reflect the continuation of oral tradition for

Indigenous peoples across our continent. This shows our relationship to one another. Cultural links and ties to ancestral ways of doing are not put aside simply because there is a more modern way to transmit knowledge. Colonial practices have attempted to stamp out this intergenerational sharing of culture but Indigenous and First Nations peoples globally have prevailed. Each oral history is one aspect of an interwoven cultural web (Fixico, 1997, p.108). Our oral histories, our cultural histories, are "our source of identity, our cultural DNA" and we can go as far as to say that oral history "affords us collective immortality" (Lynaugh 1996, p. 1). From one generation to the next our stories are passed down. They create and re-create life, lore and ways of being with each new telling. This a powerful holistic concept in terms of our cultural connections and sharing of knowledge.

Indigenous peoples' oral traditions and indeed their life histories are not just a single story about self but include all of life and therefore "often incorporate the experiences of other both human and nonhuman beings, as well as the experiences of their ancestors" (Fixico, 1997, p.103). Fixico (1997, p.103) maintains that oral history is part of oral tradition because for us as Indigenous peoples each aspect of life is part of our cultural learning journey and as such an act of telling or sharing an oral history is part of maintaining life ways and connections to ancestors through oral tradition.

For the Dakota, "oral tradition" refers to the way in which information is passed on rather than the length of time something has been told. Hence, personal experiences, pieces of information, events, incidents, and other phenomena can become a part of the oral tradition at the moment they happen or at the moment they are told, as long as the person adopting the memory is part of an oral tradition. This definition also implies that while those who belong to an oral tradition would be able to relate aspects of oral history, not everyone relating oral history necessarily belong to an oral tradition.

(Fixico, 1997, p.103)

The distinction between formal oral history and oral tradition is important when working with Indigenous people and recognising that while oral history is a vital tool in the recollection of lives, events and cultural aspects, oral tradition is part of the very fabric of the Indigenous culture (Kelly, 2015, p.16, Vansina, 1960, p. 34; Vansina, 1985; p.13; Attwood & Magowan 2003 pp.xii-xvii; Fentresss and Wickham 1992 p.xii). For instance, Vansina (1985, p.xii), talks about how intertwined in both the past and the present oral traditions are:

...oral traditions are documents *of the present*, because they are told in the present. Yet they also embody a message from the past, so they are expressions *of the past* at the same time. They are the representation of the past in the present. One cannot deny either the past or the present in them...Traditions must always be understood as reflecting both past and present in a single breath.

Growing up with Indigenous oral traditions meant I learnt about the history of the Mission System first hand from the stories of my Old people. Within that context they talked about appropriate ways of behaving, the correct way to come into country and how to show respect for those more senior than me. During my teenage years my Great Uncle Kay came and lived with our family to help my mother raise us and to share his cultural knowledge and oral traditions. For a school project I sat down with him to create an autobiography of his life. Sitting and learning from our Elders is one of the most rewarding things you can do as a young Indigenous person. One learns not only about the life journeys of those who have come before us but you learn law, importance of country and continued links to our ancestors. My uncle was not just sharing his oral history with me, he was going well beyond that. Though the school project I submitted contained the facts and events of my Uncle's life, what I learnt by doing this through oral traditions strengthened my ties to my people and to ensure continuity of my cultural links. Such story telling also known as *Yarning*, is an oral tradition, that passes on important knowledge and ethical practices from one generation to the next (Anderson, Hamilton and Barker, 2018, p.5).

This is an intrinsic part of the cultures of Indigenous peoples. It is important to acknowledge that oral histories and practices of transmitting knowledge through orality and oral tradition have been central to Indigenous lifeways for millennia. More recent oral history practitioners may claim ownership of such traditional practice but Indigenous communities should not be silenced within this space. Indigenous knowledges have been handed from generation to generation this way for a long time in an unbroken chain. There are many instances of sharing stories that connect us back into culture. These are usually simple things like my grandmother telling a story of her childhood and the boiling pots full of yabbies. This may seem like just an interesting fact about my grandmother's childhood, however it has deeper significance. Such a story discovers the importance of supplementing rations and subsistence food with the knowledge of bush tucker and a practice of communal food sharing, which allowed a diet more diverse than any Mission or Reserve manager would provide. These simple practices are foundational to the maintenance of oral traditions of Indigenous people (Anderson et al, 2017, p.5).

#### TRANSCRIPTIONS

We have a tendency in research, whether personal or professional, to try and find the information in the fastest manner. With oral histories transcripts provide this. You can read someone's oral history, potentially their life story, in mere minutes. The reader can pick or choose which part of the oral history they want to read and eventually, theoretically listen to it. If the researcher wants a particular piece of information, written text is comparatively expedient to read as opposed to personally listening to an audio file. Many repositories, such as the National Library of Australia (NLA), use a combined audio and text-based interface that further streamlines the search for

particular information.

However, I feel that the nature and the power of oral history is not appreciated without going through the process of listening to the audio recordings. When we remove the process of listening to people's personal accounts of history, we remove the emotion that contextualizes historical events. We live in a world "where the keepers of oral tradition must contend with the power of textual histories that claim to be more accurate than mere talk of the past" (Shryock, 1992, p.1041); yet oral histories are from the very people, the families, the communities, that live through these events. Furthermore, the action of listening to oral histories has to be done in real time, that is, they need to be listened to for the minutes, hours or the sessions in which they were recorded (Boyd, 2017). To me, the listener has been given the privilege of being able to hear the personal journey of others: that is its beauty. It is vital that we respect that privilege. To do otherwise is to be an agent of the coloniser.

Imagine sitting before a room full of elders from the culture you are studying, after your first book on them has been published, and having to be accountable for your methodology, your translations, your editing, your terminology, your analysis and interpretation, and how you have used their stories. If this does not make you sweat, it should.

(Fixico, 1997, p.106)

Accountability should not only be respecting the beauty of the oral history process, but also honouring the subject material by making sure the transcript is as accurate as possible. Time and time again, flaws and mistakes can be found in transcriptions (Shopes, 2017). This is particularly so in Indigenous transcriptions that involve use traditional languages, words, or place names intermingled with English, or other languages. The vast majority of the time, oral histories are transcribed by people who are unfamiliar with these words, their spelling or cultural meaning. This can prove problematic when those coming after are trying to follow the history being told. During my research, I have come across many instances of erroneous transcriptions. For example, place names may be written as completely different words because the transcriber does not fully understand what the narrator is saying. This is particularly prevalent with Aboriginal words or Aboriginal English, which when recorded without translation, or clarification, provides a contentious historical record. Some institutions acknowledge that this is indeed a short fall within their collections. Yet they do not have the resources or trained professionals to be able to translate or transcribe these oral histories. Then there is the question of creole (a dialect formed from multiple languages) being used in oral histories. There is a particular spelling and oral vernacular that is used with creole that requires familiarity for accurate transcriptions. Without this, transcribers are left to transcribe based on their own interpretation of how people's spoken words should be written down rather than following any formal training (Shopes, 2017).

Significant events or cultural nuances, too, can be undermined or completely overlooked due to the transcriber's own interpretations of context. The reader may not read the emotion or involved or the emphasis that are put on certain words or the overall recollection (Portelli, 2017d; Clark in Bearman and Portelli, 2017). Things deemed unimportant to overall context can be removed from a transcript, therefore not giving the reader full understanding of the personal historical account. During my research I have come across omissions of information within oral history transcripts. One such example can be found in the oral history of one of my Senior Elders. When working with her transcript I found it was filled with significant historical, cultural and personal knowledge that are invaluable to Wiradjuri people. Yet I found that there was important cultural information missing. For instance, at one point the transcriber writes "interviewee/interviewer sings hymns", when referring to Mission hymns sung by Aunty and the interviewer. Yet the words of the song/s were not included within the

transcript. The transcriber had chosen, for whatever reason, to leave out these lyrics. Songs of the Mission era are greatly important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Indigenous peoples around the world. They talk of a time of multilayered state control; they talk of a time when people were allowed very little to no freedoms; and worship song was used by the church to convert; yet people used such hymns to raise their voices. Which were the hymns being sung? Were they songs of freedom or were they songs of control? In what way were they being sung? With love for what once was, or with dispassion for a time best left in the past?

However, notwithstanding limitations and errors, transcriptions give us the power to keep another documentation of oral histories. They are necessary in our modern world. We can follow along with them and find quotes or information word for word faster than listening to someone's speech. But they need to be taken as part of a whole, not the alternative. They need to be in front of the researcher while they are listening; as supplemental to and not instead of hearing. (Portelli 1981). We need to make sure we continue to honour the oral histories that are so humbly shared with us to better our knowledge of the past, of culture, of our families, our communities and our histories.

#### THE EDITING PROCESS

"Turning an interview into a publication is an act of translation" (Shopes, 2017). We don't simply turn an interview into a written piece of work. We need to translate the context, verbal cues and cultural meanings into something that is a flat format and then re-energize it to give even half of the meaning a face to face exchange enables. By translating the oral history into a written document we create a facsimile with changes that are almost inevitable when turning something communicated solely oral into the written form (Portelli, 2017a). The role or place of an interview in a publication shapes the editing process (Shopes, 2017). We need to ask some questions. Why are you conducting this oral history? Is it a family record or something bigger? Is it for academic or community research? The type of publication will affect how you edit the interview and the overall shape of the publication effects text, content and meaning (Shopes, 2017).

It is important to understand that when undertaking this process, editing and transcriptions are two different practices. Whereas transcripts tend to be for a research document, editing is more of a publication process. Editing is working with the actual narrative. Providing context for the reader and making meaning of a verbal conversation (Shopes, 2017). This translating process is so important as it recognises just how fundamentally different spoken and written language is. It is about making oral histories of time and events accessible, but editing does not mean paraphrasing or altering to make what sounds good, great. "We don't re-write we edit" (Shopes, 2017).

It is essential to recognise that chronological order is not going to necessarily be the way that an oral history is told. While this is the way most written accounts are undertaken in western culture, it is important not to force chronology onto stories where there may not be any (Shopes, 2017). An oral history can flow from theme to theme or topic to topic with much more of an organic feel and convey more meaning than that which is forced into a 'beginning to end model' (Clark, 2017). When working with Indigenous Elders many Aunties and Uncles would tell their stories in an order that suited them, for them time has a different dimension, there is always time for everything. In *Yindyamarra* philosophy, things are done carefully, maybe the amount of time taken does not matter so much. People with trauma also do not necessarily have

that chronological order to their story telling either (Shopes, 2017). They may stop, start or jump in their interviews. Shopes, (2017) talks of how you "almost look for those jumps to understand the trauma", but need to edit delicately in such a way that this pause, this break in the dialogue of itself, explains to the reader that this person sharing their story has suffered.

When editing a transcript or oral history for publication you need to set a stage for the reader. A written oral history is like a radio presentation. The initial exchange may have been between two people, the interviewee and the interviewer but it needs to be presented in a way that the interviewee or narrator is speaking directly to those reading their story rather than to a faceless person who has asked questions. The reader needs to be orientated to this context in which the oral history is taking place. Whether it be historical, regional, or global, set the stage, think of the narrator and describe from their position (Shopes, 2017). Editing should be done for meaning, not to make sure the story fits a particular context. This can all be done in a context that allows the Indigenous voice its own power and resonance. However, this meaningful story should be reflected within whatever context you and your interviewee, have chosen to situate it. The story should sit by itself as a unique voice within the research, not molded to fit the proposed research outcome. This is an important point for me as this reflects self-determination for the people who are sharing their knowledge through story.

The historical context is essential to being true to your interviewee's narrative, as it is the methodological context of your research undertaking. In essence the reader needs to get a sense of your editorial process. "If you are leaving in certain 'fictions' you need to inform the reader" either by footnote or by another means (Shopes, 2017). Changing minor mistakes such as dates may be just part of the editing process, however, larger 'mistakes' or "historically wrong but in experience right" facts may add a meaning to the story that simply cannot be removed (Shopes, 2017). There is a difference between history and memory and it is significant to see the importance of both in a narrative. The question then arises "what is the nature of what you are producing? Is it historical reproduction or a more cultural narrative?" (Shopes, 2017). As editors and learners/readers of oral history we do not cherry pick oral history accounts but recognise them as crafted views of the past. Each one works together to give us greater insight of the past. When editing transcriptions "how much do you try to save the sound?" (Portelli, 2017d). We need to leave the dialogue as the dialogue started and inject "treats of orality into writing" (Portelli, 2017d). Meaning and vocal inflections "can tell a different story to the actual words" (Clark in Bearman and Portelli, 2017). To reiterate, if we cut out the listening, then we take away the power of having access to such a powerful resource.

There are so many theories on how to interview or how to edit but we need not let this dictate interaction to the point where we over think the naturalness of the simple interaction that an oral history interview is. Let the interviewee lead. "Have them drive the theory, flip it, be interview led" (Shopes, 2017). Shopes (2017) suggests to not overload your oral history practice with too much methodological theory. Let the interviewee be the centre of the narrative and let the interviews illustrate the theory and show why the chosen methodology is the right way to conduct the narratives and eventually intertwine them (Shopes, 2017; Vanderscoff, 2017).

There are many different ways that a researcher can conduct their research. We can go into communities and do quick consultations. We can have pre-arranged interviews that focus on just particular aspects of life histories. We can build relationships with participants by interviewing over a longer period of time. This chapter delves into these different ways to approach research, best practices and what should really happen. That is because community needs certainty in the way we conduct our research ethically. At the same time our research needs to benefit the people that we talk to and who generously allow themselves to talk to us. Otherwise what we do is useless.

In this section I will examine four projects. Firstly, I outline a project that was really important for the community people of Victoria. The people who participated gave us permission to use their oral histories, undertaken for the 'Stolen Wages' project, in our study. Then I discuss oral histories in another context in Hawai'i which involves phenomenological research. As an 'insider' researcher I learnt about the Hawaiian context of oral tradition first hand. Next, I am going to discuss my time at the National Library of Australia and what I learnt there about oral histories and how I was privileged, in fact, to listen to old Wiradjuri people talking about country and experiences of mission life. Lastly I will discuss best practice and ethical research from my experience at Columbia University contexts.

#### VICTORIAN STOLEN WAGES

...familiarity with the concept of reciprocity breeds a realization of the need to give something back to both the individual and the culture from whom and from which one has taken material. This goes far beyond the economic compensation that many scholars have used in exchange for the "informants" time. Rather, what is called for is an acknowledgment of a moral responsibility to give back in a far more profound way, one that matches the value of the stories that are shared...[A] central consideration would have

to be whether such work will help or possibly hurt a community by demeaning or discrediting its elders or culture.

(Fixico, 1997, p.105)

The background for the research into the Victorian Stolen Wages project came from a desperate need by the contemporary communities of Victoria to gain a realistic insight into what had happened to these communities historically, and what had created a lasting impact and memory of exploitation regarding stolen wages. The lack of regard for all the people who had worked for nothing and who had supported the development of the colony and state of Victoria impinged deeply on the lives of the Aboriginal people who were never paid the wages that were owed to them for the work they had done. Andrew Gunstone, as chief investigator, and myself as research assistant (see Gunstone and Heckenberg, 2009, p.73) researched the background story of this era when Aboriginal people worked for little or no pay, by going through interviews and oral histories of Aboriginal people with knowledge of or direct engagement in this enforced policy.

In the mid nineteenth century, when Victoria was still a colony of the British, Victorian policy created *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864 (VIC)*, a duplicitous and sinister policy which deceived Victorian Aboriginal families and demonstrated a regime of paternalism and violated the Human Rights of Aboriginal communities and their families. The Act allowed "for the superintendent of the school to control all monies 'for or on account or for use or benefit of any 'inmate" (Gunstone and Heckenberg, 2009, p.73). As a young researcher, this project allowed me to gain insight into the significance of oral histories in an impactful way. The project had direct and meaningful outcomes to the communities of Victoria and was supported by influential Elders who also could see the importance of the research. When the people who allowed

us to listen to their stories had their voices prioritized it gave them a real sense of legitimacy. They were given enough respect to be heard and their personal experiences were seen as important. That meant so much to the people who told their stories, and so much to those who provided a legitimate testimony. For me this project not only taught me about the power of the oral tradition, but also about reciprocity. The aunties and uncles who participated had an expectation of reciprocity, that they gain benefit in some way regarding what they had given. For example, one Aunty was given her video recording which realistically became part of the heritage of her children and grandchildren. As a mother of children who were stolen, this record of her input into this research was significant, and also meant her grandchildren had something of herself for the future. The memories that she shared, amongst others of the community, were significant in terms of adding to the knowledge of the events and emotions of the people of the time. The narratives of the people who had participated were located within a certain timeframe and knowledge system which made their telling possible, and in a sense feasible.

The situations in which oral histories are told are as significant as the content of the telling, and the genres that give shape to narratives must be understood before their content can be properly used as evidence.

(Shryock, 1993, p.1041)

This is reiterated in *Lousy Little Sixpence* (1983), which remains the most profound oral history of Aboriginal people in the mission era, with activist Charles 'Chicka' Dixon the narrator. In *Lousy Little Sixpence* the question of control of labour is deeply examined and it is obvious that the concept of stolen monies from Aboriginal trainees cannot be separated from the history of issues regarding education since the circumstances of 'free labour' around training programs was a government responsibility (Lousy Little Sixpence, 1983). Upon reflection, it was evident as we carried out our research, that there were some limitations in the questionnaire approach

to our interviewing. Particularly when interviewing older participants, we adopted a more conversational interview approach that increased the overall element of a culturally safe methodology within the interview setting, and this allowed much more of the Best Practice of Indigenous history research: an 'Oral Tradition Narrative Approach of my own design. I have reflected on the model used at that novice stage of my interviewing career and have adapted an updated model here, with due respect to former projects but specifically achieved to enhance culturally safe interview protocols through the following as a best practice procedure.

#### MY WANDERING HEART: HAWAI'I AND ME

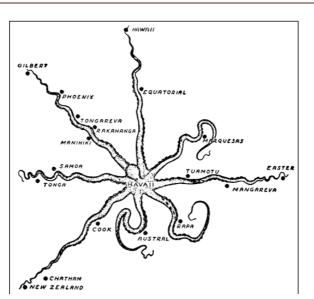


Figure 6: Map of Polynesian Islands (Buck, 1959, p.88)

Hawai'i is a land like no other, distinctive in its assertion of Indigenous identity. She uniquely informs ancient Indigenous knowledges for this part of Polynesia. It is part of the Polynesian triangle yet so uniquely herself. The Hawai'ian Archipelago has a spirit and soul only these little islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean have. My time in Hawai'i was an amazing journey, not just for my research but for myself. My Fulbright has allowed me the opportunity to undertake a richer, fuller, deeper research than I ever expected. My Fulbright scholarship, undertaken in 2014/2015, was in Indigenous Oral

History. This research included many aspects of my doctoral research including: cultural safety, interview relationships, protecting oral history using international copyright laws and intellectual property rights, Indigenous methodologies and how Indigenous people can protect their own knowledge. It is important in terms of Indigenous cultural sovereignty, and Hawaiians have remained resolute to support their own immersion schools and progress knowledge, language and cultural practices. Hawaiian ways of doing informed me in terms of supporting sovereign rights regarding ownership of knowledge, and managing pedagogy that supports Hawaiian education structures for Hawaiians.

Indigenous people should own the copyright and intellectual property of their own knowledge, and be able to manage that knowledge themselves (UNDRIP 2007) Many times once researchers have been into communities and published work based on knowledge collected in those Indigenous communities the copyright becomes that of the researcher, or their organization, instead of the intellectual property of those it came from, such as was the case with David Unaipon (Jones, P. 2018) for example with his original publication being stolen from him.

The in-depth field research I conducted in Hawai'i not only contributed to my PhD research but also to dialogue on Indigenous knowledge protection overall. I found during my Fulbright time that Indigenous communities are very interested in my work for *our rights* in protection of our copyright and intellectual property because this is an area where we lack research not only in Australia, but globally.

This journey has not only allowed me to develop a much richer aspect to my research journey, but also to my understanding of the world, and the world of story. I will continue my close connections to those in Hawai'i and will continue to visit. I have fallen in love with Libraries again, having spent so much time in the University of Hawai'i Manoa Law Library. This is an interesting thought, because over time I have, because of my National Library Scholarship, been able to fulfil my dream of spending even more time in libraries because I love libraries. I am a slightly different person from when I first went to Hawai'i, a person that I love. One of the aspects of Hawaiian-ness, or Hawaiian Native identity, relates to an oral story of heritage. One's Piko is their connection to the past, such as is sung in chant, which is passed down the generations. Here is an example from history:

The Kumulipo is a genealogical creation chant composed in Hawai'i for chief, Ka-'Ī-imamao, around the 18th century. Consisting of 16 wā (era or period) this chant has over 2,000 lines that were passed down orally generation after generation until 1889 when it was first printed in Honolulu from a manuscript copy owned by King David Kalākaua. Queen Liliuokalani's translations were later printed in 1897 and Martha Beckwith's version in 1951. The Kumulipo is not just any creation chant, it is our genealogy; it is our piko, our connection to the past that will never cease to bind generation to generation.

(Purdy-Avelino, 2014)

In participating in Hawaiian cultural life, I learnt about the strength of language, chant and the relevance in developing a whole curriculum that substantiated connection to ancestors and cultural practices, within the diversity of experience related to these associations to Hawaiian culture. Within the Hawaiian education system, Indigenous ways of being and oral traditions of knowledge-sharing are central to every day practice, even within the western academy. This focus on oral traditions is central to Hawaiian research methodology. Even when entering class as students, we would share a chant with our Professor to show respect to the learning environment we were about to enter and to the Kumu (teacher) we were about to learn from and the gods and ancestors who had made this learning possible within the power of oral expression. This resonates with the cultural nuances and lifeways of Native Hawaiian philosophy. The story, the narrative, the chant, orality itself is lived daily; hula and chant intertwine to define lifeways and respect for oral history and tradition of all the Hawaiian Islands, each bearing its own identity and 'Āina.

My learning of self and of Polynesian culture grow sitting in my office surrounded by trees and ferns, overlooking a stream within Kamakakūokalani. This environment allowed me to relax and spend a lot of time on writing up my research. I felt more confident both my research and my overall PhD and my progress and outcomes were really improved by my environment. During my time at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa I attended six classes in the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies. Learning in Hawai'i was an amazing adventure and a true learning journey. Not only were the undergraduate classes very informative but the graduate classes gave me new understandings of the necessary directions for my research and a group of peers with whom to converse. Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies classes are equally taught in both Hawaiian and English and is such a wonderful environment to be in. Though I entered only speaking English I felt so privileged to be in a place of learning that had a foundation in language.

Below is a list of courses I took whilst in Hawai'i:

- **HWST107: Hawai'i: Center of the Pacific -** An introduction to the unique aspects of the native point of view in Hawai'i and in the larger Pacific with regards to origins, language, religion, land, art, history, and modern issues.
- **HWST270: Hawaiian Mythology** Survey of gods, 'aumakua, kupua, mythical heroes, heroines, and their kinolau as the basis of traditional Hawaiian metaphor.
- **HWST341: Hawaiian Genealogies** Survey of major Hawaiian chiefly lineages from the four main islands: Hawai'i, Maui, O'ahu and Kaua'i. Political history from the Kumulipo to Western contact.
- HWST362: Pana O'ahu Famous Place Names A survey of the famous place names in each ahupua'a of O'ahu, including accounts of mythical heroes, heiau, fishponds, wind, rain names, and their metaphoric value in Hawaiian literature
- **HWST601: Indigenous Research Methodologies** Reading seminar for developing a Native Hawaiian epistemology from sources in comparative indigenous thought.

• **HWST602: Hawaiian Archival Research** - Research seminar aimed at familiarizing students with the rich historical primary sources existent in various archives in Honolulu.

Every one of these classes gave me a different perspective of not only life in Hawaii but of my relationship to it. For example, in HWST107, a first year class taught me more than I have ever had been taught about Polynesia. I found it interesting that as Australia sits outside the Polynesian Triangle, all of the complex relationships between Polynesian countries are largely overlooked in the Australian education system, even though they are essentially our near neighbours. Being able to sit in classrooms with other Indigenous students was also very rewarding, as we generally do not have Indigenous cohorts of students as large as these in Australia I was impressed that the majority of second and third level classes were taught mostly in Hawaiian. This was a big struggle for me at first having at least half of each class taught in a language I could not understand, but I soon picked up a number words, and was honored to sit and learn in such an inclusive environment, something that is incredibly rare in Australia.

I am also very appreciative to have gained friends in the graduate classes with whom I can talk about research, Indigenous methodologies, colonization and globalisation with them. The Professors I have had there have not only taught me so much but will also continue to be professorial contacts into the future. My two main professors, Kumu Professor Lilikalā K. Kame'eleihiwa and Kumu Professor Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, are very strong voices in Hawaiian rights movements and had a major impact on my research. Being able to undertake two Masters classes in the Fall Semester not only gave me an understanding of graduate research in the United States of America, it also gave me a cohort of other graduate students with whom I met

on a weekly basis to consult with about research and potential research problems or outcomes.

In October 2014 I became a member of Ka Lei Pāpahi 'o Kākuhihewa in which I have been very privileged to be allowed to learn 'Ōlelo (Hawaiian language), Hula and Oli (Chant). The majority of people in this organization are Kūpuna (Elders) who work in the Kūpuna program in the Hawaiian school system. Working with Elders gave me great insight, and they generously shared their knowledge with me, as well as providing a nurturing safe space to belong. These classes taught me about Hawaiian culture, language and sacred sites (I visited six sites in the year I was living in Hawai'i). The connections with the group continued even after my official time in Hawaii had ended, so I was included to participate in their annual Hula performance which was an Annual Fundraiser, in October 2015, for the local community. Being able to be part of a group like Ka Lei Pāpahi was a great privilege that reached further than just purely academic. I was introduced to Hawaiian wisdom and knowledges through the kindness of the Elders.

I spent many days with Aunties teaching me about Hawaii and showing me more of O'ahu; and also I participated in community events such as the Aloha 'Āina Unity March, on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2015, where 10,000 people marched through Waikīkī for land protection. These experiences and relationships have created a greater understanding of the Hawaiian community, the Hawaiian culture and myself as a young Wiradjuri woman. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are part of the Pacific Rim yet we sit just outside of the Polynesian triangle, however we are still brothers and sisters in Indigeneity. We all face the same day-to-day battles to have our voices heard, the love for the 'Aina (land, mother earth) and the strong voices in the fight for sovereignly.

My Indigeneity, which gave me a special level of participation within the community of Hawaiians in O'ahu. I was able to participate in programs and events because of my unique interest in Indigenous ways of being and ways of doing, that many others either would not have been invited to or may have had no interests in. I was nurtured by own Kūpuna who made sure I was well. Being completely introspective, I think being a Native person means you are almost always looking at the culture beneath the norm; I found this in Hawai'i. I sought the company of my peers, of native/Indigenous people with whom I could openly reflect, and I think this brought a realness and honesty to my work that may not have been there otherwise.

My research would not and could not be as strong without my time in Hawai'i. Reflecting on my Fulbright experience I believe there were three main areas that influenced my time there and my research outcomes. Being a participant in Hawaiian University research classes gave me a unique time to understand the experience of Hawaiian people and the structures of Hawaiian cultural practices and beliefs, as taught from a Hawaiian perspective made possible by a reclamation of the academic space. Furthermore, the community activities I participated in and the environment I lived in added to my understanding. I realize my research has international relevance. There are sections in which Indigenous professors could give advice based on cultural understanding and Indigenous philosophy. In terms of an Hawaiian context, the Hawaiian Center at the University of Hawaii, provides a focus for the Hawaiian community. It also provides courses which support development of ideas from an Hawaiian standpoint. With regard to my own research topic, I became more knowledgeable in the processes of protecting Indigenous knowledge, by listening first hand to those who had not only fought for Hawaiian rights, and continue to do so, but who are part of strategies to support cultural aspirations and education. The oral tradition is extremely relevant to Hawaiian kinship and ways of being.

As one of my mentors Professor Dennis Foley said to me 'when you leave Hawaii a part of your soul will stay there'. Hawai'i will have part of my soul and I shall be forever connected to this place I hold in my heart. *Aloha Hawai'i a hui hou*... Goodbye Hawai'i until we meet again.

### CONTINUING OUR VOICES: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORAL HISTORIES IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

Where are my first-born said the brown land, sighing; They came out of my womb long, long ago.
They were formed out of my dust – why, why are they crying And the light of their being barely aglow?
I strain my ears for the sound of their laughter.
Where are the laws and the legends I gave?
Tell me what happened, you whom I bore after.
Now only their spirits dwell in the caves.
You are silent, you cringe from replying.
A question is there, like a bowl on the face.
The answer is there when I look at the dying,
At the death and neglect of my dark proud race.

(The First-born by Jack Davis, 1970)

*Continuing our Voices: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oral Histories in the National Library* is an in-depth research project I undertook in summer of 2017 at the National Library of Australia (NLA). The research at the NLA investigated Indigenous knowledge creation, storytelling and communication through oral history, as well as its theoretical framework, using the Library's significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander oral history projects, such as 'Bringing Them Home' and 'Seven years on continuing life histories of Aboriginal leaders'. In particular, I examined oral histories related to my Wiradjuri Elders in both the NLA and in the archives of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Through the oral histories and archives found in these collections I came to realise the need for cultural safety practices and a system for Indigenous knowledge protection. I incorporate this into my own research practices within Indigenous knowledge systems.

During my time at the National Library of Australia I was able to assess just how important oral histories and in complementing, verifying and adding to how they seem to fill in the gaps or furthermore state uncomfortable facts otherwise missing in historical written accounts. History, it is said, is written by the victor, so Aboriginal voices are easily overlooked. No matter how well intended the writer there is a certain importance put on areas that we as Indigenous people may not necessarily value or agree with; oral history collections can help rectify this. The R.H. Matthews Collection (MS 8006) is one such example. It is a vast collection of stories, daily lives, language, oral testimonies and historical fact. The Matthews collection is one of the most important anthropological collections in historical record, particularly for the Wiradjuri. The NLA recognizes just how important these documents are to the community and historical record and the need to digitise them; whilst also recognising that this important process needs to be undertaken in a deliberative and culturally safe manner.

It was an aim of mine during this research project to examine and identify the similarities of the methodology that researchers and oral historians use in the acquisition of Indigenous knowledge and stories, both acquired through specific NLA and academic procedures. University procedure is a very particular set of rules and guidelines that are followed from institution to institution. Researchers must undertake an ethics process and must adhere to the policies this process dictates. The National Library of Australia is Australia's foremost repository for literature in all forms. The

library also has small significant items, newspapers, and other forms of information technologies, old and new. The NLA is a national government body that has its own set of guidelines when it comes to conducting research or recording oral testimony with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. These guidelines are different from those that are usually found at universities. When the NLA conducts oral histories they first determine whether or not the person's oral history is deemed as nationally significant. This process unfortunately cherry-picks the work of authors, and creates a collection that will exclude some voices. However, I was fortunate to track down several Wiradjuri Elders and hear their stories reiterating oral historian's observations on the power of the spoken word in recording through oral tradition.

There were quite a few different collections of oral histories I listened to while in residence. Both in the NLA and AIATSIS archives. Two of the most notable collections that the NLA possess are the 'Bringing Them Home' and 'Seven years on - continuing life histories of Aboriginal leaders'. These notable collections were part of NLA projects, which demonstrates their commitment to oral history research as a way of documenting memory. Within both of these collections there were oral history testimonies which I was able to learn from and engage with. I was also able to listen to other collections from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander poets, activists and inspirational Elders.

For example, Noongar poet Jack Davis, talks of when he originally wrote *The First-Born* (1970) at the age of 20, living in Western Australia and not yet given citizenship of Australia (Davis and De Berg,1971). Davis recalled that "it was not long after that I had my twenty-first birthday... and that I remember very vividly because I was out on an out-camp and I'd baked myself a birthday cake, I had no eggs so I remember using

an emu egg for the cake to give it added colour as it were" (Davis and De Berg,1971). When writing his haunting poem Davis (Davis and De Berg,1971), as an Aboriginal person, was not yet considered a citizen of Australia:

I have had full citizen's rights since I was twenty-five years of age. Of course, the only way I could get full citizenship rights was the way that anybody else could get them, you had to get a certificate which gave you these rights, which is very irksome and was very embarrassing.

He talks about how "poetry is completely feeling", and for him poetry is "not like the man who writes a song because he can rhyme words which don't rhyme because it is sung, and he simply gets away with it, but not a poet. True poetry is just simply feeling" (Davis and De Berg, 1971).

This understanding of the thought processes of remarkable people in the field of Indigenous literature may well allow us to explore the meanings of their work so much more. Oodgeroo Noonuccal in her 1976 oral history with Hazel De Berg talks about the creation of one of her well-known poems *Son of Mine* and how it came into being. Not only does the poem evoke emotions and, to some, memories of their own experiences, but also Oodgeroo's reflection upon learning that her son was being introduced into a world of racial overtones and adult perceptions of self (Noonuccal and De Berg,1976):

I wrote that poem one day when my son was in his fourteenth year. It was a very interesting situation because the night before, he had taken his little white friend from across the road out to a theatre. I remember I was cooking rice in the kitchen at the time, when he came into the lounge and sat in a very thoughtful mood, and I glanced across and saw that something was puzzling him. When I said, "What's the matter with you?", he said, "Mum, this colour bar. It's strictly for adults. Kids don't have it." And all of a sudden, I realized my son was on the threshold of walking into the ugly world of adulthood. I grabbed the paper and the pen and in five minutes flat had "Son of Mine" written. I was so excited about it that I clean forgot about the rice and burnt my saucepan horribly. I lost one saucepan, that was the cost of "Son of Mine".

#### To Denis

My son, your troubled eyes search mine, Puzzled and hurt by colour line. Your black skin as soft as velvet shine; What can I tell you, son of mine? I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind, I could tell you of crimes that shame mankind, Of brutal wrong and deeds malign, Of rape and murder, son of mine; But I'll tell you instead of brave and fine When lives of black and white entwine, And men in brotherhood combine--This would I tell you, son of mine. (Oodgeroo Noonuccal, 1966)

Oral histories allow us to understand not only the event or the historical context but also people's thinking. It enables us to take a journey with a world many of us are not personally familiar with. While a document can give us the facts, the oral history can tell us the emotions, the personal reasoning and the heartbreak such an event causes.

There were also archival documents that brought a deeper understanding to both my research and knowledge, such as those that recorded the thought process of colonial amateur anthropologist Robert Hamilton Mathews. After his retirement as a surveyor in the early 1890s, Mathews spent twenty years researching the anthropology and languages of Aboriginal people (NLA, 2017). The Mathews Collection (MS 8006) comprises of thirteen boxes containing a vast array of documentation. These include: diaries; anthropology correspondence; field notes (anthropological and linguistic); photographs of rock art and draft papers from which he would publish 100 papers (NLA, 2017). This collection is one of the most significant anthropological accounts of Wiradjuri people from the 1800s I found working my way through these documents. While informative to my own historical knowledge and men's lore. The NLA is planning to digitise this collection and has begun to work with the New South Wales Native Title Service Corporation on this process. It is important when any organisations take documents containing Indigenous knowledge to a wider audience that Indigenous

protocols are followed when "working with Indigenous communities so that our knowledge system is not disturbed or broken down" (Blacklock, 2010, p.21).

When undertaking this research, I had to reconcile the emotional strain of listening to traumatic experiences within oral history testimonies. These oral histories, in particular those pertaining to the Stolen Generations, are filled with emotional moments that are part of the historical accounts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living through the trauma of colonial oppression, attempted genocide and forced removal from their families 'for their own good'. In one such oral history interview, the late Yankunytjatjara Elder Uncle Bob Randall (Randall and Guth, 2000) talked of his own harrowing experience of being ripped away from his mother and family and the bafflement about why the government would do this in the first place:

So that break away would probably affect every single child who has that experience, for the rest of their life, and may even go onto their children's lives, their grandchildren's, great grandchildren's lives. That's the sad part about that, and for what reason? Was I neglected? In what way? I have four immediate mothers if you're talking about one woman being a mother to one child. I had four mothers. How many fathers did I have? I had six fathers.

(Uncle Bob Randall in Randall and Guth, 2000)

Uncle Bob talks of his confusion and sadness that his removal had on not just him but on whole generations of children and their descendants. The emotion in his voice conveys more gravity to his experience than can be related in written text. The shake, the sadness and quiet gentleness that speaks of a man who has suffered so much pain and yet is still so open and loving of the world that he finds himself in. The emotional connection ones feels as the listener and the depth of understanding gained listening to an oral history is beyond anything that a written text can convey. However, with this emotional connection comes emotional vulnerability. For any listener this is true, however for someone who has family with experience of the same events. Listening to Stolen Generations oral histories as an Aboriginal person is an emotional experience on many levels.

One of the focuses during the research was to make connections back to my own Wiradjuri Nation and to my family. While exploring through the NLA and AIATSIS archives I found documents and oral history recordings about and from my own family and community. This research gave me a greater knowledge of historical events in Wiradjuri country and my family. Furthermore, during this process and as I transcribed some of these recordings and listened to recordings of varying ages, I recognised a phenomenon that is an important consideration when looking at variable depths of information. In particular, older interviews seemed almost staged follow a more formal approach to knowledge documentation than my own conversational approach. Therefore, they were less exploratory. Overall, this process informed my final presentation to the NLA – a summary of the collection and advice as to their future use. The principal recommendation I made was that culturally sensitive information needed protection from misuse. The background to the collection (in particular the level of ethnographic participation by the subject) was variable; and the cultural significance and sensitivity rating, which is part of the metadata to each item was not clarified. Given my background in cultural safety, I feel particularly that some form of recognition as to the cultural sensitivity of items pertaining to sacred ceremonies and other practices should be initiated.

### BEST PRACTICE AND ETHICAL RESEARCH: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

<sup>...</sup>no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I rewrite myself anew. I am still author,

authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now the centre of my talk.

(hooks, 1990, p.151-2)

Indigenous and other minority and marginalised peoples are very popular topics of research and as such, have historically been open to exploitation. However, with this potentially positive research topic comes greater exploitation of the research subject. The research becomes "a new form of colonizing of the powerless subject furthering the careers and interests of the colonizers, but doing little for the owners of the stories". (Bornat, 2008, p.4, see also hooks, 1990, Plummer, 2001). This mistreatment of the vulnerable is why it is so important to have culturally safe, ethical and best practice research.

At the start of my research I began looking at how oral history 'came into being' in the western sense. This brought me to Allan Nevins at Columbia University who has been considered the grandfather and person who modernised oral history into being what it is today. Columbia University, apart from being one of the best universities in the world, holds a special place in modern oral history as it is the first major oral history repository. In June of 2016, I was fortunate to be a Columbia University Oral History and *Aging: Transmitting Life Stories of Being and Becoming Across Cultures and Generations.* The ability to study with some of the premier oral history experts allowed me to better hone how my ethical practice and concepts of Cultural Safety and *Yindyamarra* would fit into the broader best practice and ethical research of the oral history field.

(Palmer, 1976, p. 118)

<sup>...</sup>major value of history, historians, and methods of historical thinking is not in their contribution of and to things past, but in the knowledge and involvement history establishes in everyday people in the everyday world.

Historians have not always realised at the time of an event that "memory is the most important historical fact" (Portelli, 2017a). Oral history allows that memory to play a central part in the historical record. It is, however, vital though to remember that the interview is as much about the person themselves and their experiences as it is about the events of the past. It is a way to capture emotions and lived experiences when looking at society and our history.

It is essential within research to recognise what a community wants and needs (Vanderscoff, 2017b). Researchers need to spend time listening to and building relationships with their narrators and the communities in which their narrators reside (Vanderscoff, 2017b). When undertaking research oral historical research one needs to be flexible and ensure the research gives back to the community one researches. As Sinclair (2017), states "You cannot go and take stories without serving the community". It is a good idea to work in with community needs and community environment and acknowledge that "all oral histories belong on many grids not just institutional, community or individual" but are a bigger part of the picture and become a recollection that is a combination of these factors (Clark, 2017 in Vanderscoff, 2017b).

When working with our interviewees it is important to create a safe place for interviews when discussing issues of trauma, resistance, place (Portelli, 2017c). Oral history narrators can be fragmented when talking about their life events and as such interviewers need to allow the interviewee to know about yourself personally to open these forms of dialogue (Portelli, 2017c). From where the interview is situated, to the interview environment itself, you can learn a lot about a person. You need to let the narrative speak for itself and feel the emotions of the story. Indeed "if you don't come out of the interview changed then you're wasting your time" (Portelli, 2017c).

Oral history interviews should operate on the interviewee's terms. "We build from the language and issues that we are familiar with to help people find their terms" (Starecheski, 2017). This is enabled by respecting and understanding the narrator's feelings and cultural nuances (Clark, 2017a). For Portelli (2017d) it is important not to "violate the dignity of the speakers" by reducing them to the stereotypes but being respectful of culture and dialect. There can be a regional divide between the research and those you are talking to. It is important to do background research of the community and go into the interview with respect. Try not to bring one's own biases to the conversation. Assuming cultural nuances, familial ties and class circumstance may alienate the interviewee or narrator before the discussion has started (Clark, 2017a). "Deep listening and mindfulness is connected to oral history" and it is up to the researcher to ensure these practices are upheld (Clark, 2017a). Deep listening and mindfulness when working with Indigenous peoples is an essential aspect of ethical research. Stories shared are multi-layered and multi-generational. Arrernte Elder Kathleen Kemarre Wallace's (2009) book, Listen Deeply: Let These Stories In, allows us as readers to be invited into a level of understanding and cultural knowledge almost incomprehensible to those not from the Arrernte Nation. By having this knowledge shared with us as listeners and readers we are learning more spiritually and intrinsically than we are aware of. Respecting the world view of our narrators is important but so is respecting the privilege that we are being given to have knowledge shared with us.

When working with our interviewees, particularly those who are older; have suffered trauma; are unwell; or are from a language background different to your own, it is important to ensure that they are giving fully informed consent. Our Narrators need to have full knowledge of the process, need to have entered into it freely and in the case of patients, need to understand that their oral histories are not connected to care, and

that they have a choice not to take part which will not have negative consequences on them medically or in any other way (Winslow, 2017a). Narrators need to have a full and clear understanding of how the interview will be used. There is a power relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer that occurs and this needs to be acknowledged and treated in a culturally safe manner. Because of this relationship dynamic, interviewers may seem like they have 'expert' knowledge, but as Portelli (2017a) maintains we, the researchers, are the ones learning.

According to Portelli (2017a) researchers "need both empathy and distance" to give more 'authority' to interviewee accounts. Cultural knowledges, however, can and should be shared with a greater authority from those that hold the knowledge and not those that choose to research within the field. Interestingly the "oral historian is the person who navigates the 'no man's land' between the anthropologist and the historian" but prioritises the voice of the community being researched (Portelli, 2017a). This is because oral history is designed to capture context life histories over time. Oral history does not seek a "conventional" chronological history but feelings and perspectives of historical events (Bearman, 2017). Oral historians need to find the facts and meaning in these historical perceptions. "The meaning is in the space between the event and the narrative" (Portelli, 2017a). This space not only shows us how our narrators "life force is embedded" within these historical narratives but the degree to which it is shaped by such events (Bearman, 2017). There is always a gap between "the national narrative, the family narrative and the personal narrative" but oral histories show us how the personal narrative and at times the family narrative is embedded into the national one (Portelli, 2017a).

When undertaking oral histories, we recognize that there are different ways of interpreting and preserving these cultural and national narratives (Vanderscoff, 2017a). Vanderscoff (2017a) suggests that the first questions a researcher should ask are: "How can oral history capture different areas of cultural society? How can it connect with people?" Some further questions include: Who do we want to talk to, who do we care about? What voices do we care about? Looking after the interests of interviewees should be the top priority of the oral historian. "Ethics becomes the beginning and ending of oral history" (Vanderscoff, 2017a). When undertaking ethical oral histories, we need to "build a soft place for hard truths to land" (Chow, 2017). Interviewers need to create an atmosphere that 'dignifies the shame' that people may feel when discussing of their lives. There needs to be a shared understanding and honesty. Chow (2017) maintained that she "cannot ask them [her narrators] to be that honest and not do it myself'. It is relevant in all one's work in oral history to have regard for the fact that in people's minds, "Memory is a living history, the remembered past that exists in the present" (Frisch, 1990, p.xxiii).

Indeed, "our identities themselves shape our interactions" and this needs to be taken into account when we interview (Vanderscoff, 2017 in Winslow, Clark, and Spiegel, 2017). The environment we create for our narrators should be one of Cultural Safety. There is also an importance in the kind of place where interviews and talking occurs and making sure this place is pleasant allows for a comfort of sharing because "space matters" (Vanderscoff, 2017 in Winslow, Clark, and Spiegel, 2017). A safe space allows feelings of safety and trust to develop between the interviewee and interviewer. "Trust is imperative", and narrators need to be able to ask themselves "can I trust you with my story?" (Vanderscoff, 2017 in Winslow, Clark, and Spiegel, 2017). Memorable or comforting objects within a space can also allow for comfort and help restore old recollections. Memory of the past can be segregated in the brain and a connection to physical manifestation of this memory can lead to a clear remembrance (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017). When creating these safe spaces however, interviewers should be aware of their own knowledge and life experiences and make sure they are the right person to accept the narrator's memories, and self-reflection.

Starecheski (2017) states that good oral history "has a good blend of anecdote and interpretation, asking narrators to make meaning of the world with us". An effective oral historian must recognize that there needs to be a conversational narrative, while at the same time enabling informative dialogue (Grele, 2017). "If people are talking on an abstract plain ask meta questions, if people are talking in a grounded way... lead to abstraction" (Starecheski, 2017). An oral historian's job "is to ask interesting questions and to push and challenge oral history with questions about the past, in the present and aimed at the future" (Starecheski, 2017). This can be challenging particularly depending on the age of the narrator (Staudinger, 2017a). As a general rule, "things people wouldn't say when they are younger they may say as they get older because they may have nothing to lose" (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017). In turn the age or the cultural background of the interviewee may ensure that they will never feel comfortable with sharing certain information about their lives and they need to be assured they can share their stories on their own terms. It is important to remember though that whatever information or anecdote is being shared that the emotion of the oral history is respected. It is important to remember that the emotion of the oral history be respected. The emotion of an oral history is what Portelli (2017d) refers to as "time and performance". He asks what the intent of the research is and whether the researcher is looking for a purely textual account of history or looking for an emotional performance (Portelli, 2017d). The interviewer needs to navigate the space of an oral testimony that starts as a performance being turned into textual accounts or that stated as a performance, recognising "the space between sound and meaning" (Portelli, 2017d). Furthermore, Portelli (2017b) believes the most important contribution he brings to the interview is his own ignorance, and an adroit oral historian realises that the interview can be a learning process for narrator and interviewer alike.

This learning process and acknowledging one's limitations helps to create a culturally safe respectful interview process. For example, Indigenous peoples' stories come from a nation within a nation. They are a collection of stories of different generations and deal with people with historical trauma (Sinclair, 2017). When undertaking an oral history with an Indigenous person, generations of knowledge are shared with you. "Knowledge does not simply go from generation to generation; it seeps, it oozes through generations" (Portelli, 2017b). With communication being non-verbal, we learn from the social cues of our family and community, particularly in terms of the hardship that all Indigenous people have had to face (Portelli, 2017b). Portelli (2017c) maintains that the role of the oral historian is to help the community by making the rest of the world understand. The oral historian takes these narratives to the rest of the world and does not "bring culture to the 'masses'" we as oral historians listen in order to "arm the 'masses' with their own strength" (Portelli, 2017b).

#### DEALING WITH TRAUMA

How do these people live with open bleeding hearts?

(Portelli, 2017a).

Oral History is an act of deep listening (Clark, 2017b). Oral history interviewers are witnesses to events of the past that shape our present. When talking to people who have suffered, and in many cases are still suffering from trauma, we need to develop an

understanding relationship and have care for the sensitivities involved. The trauma sufferer invariably has a need to heal and the oral historian, by listening deeply, can facilitate this process, and possibly even something of a catharsis for the narrator. "Not everyone can take on this work", but as oral historians we need to listen for how people shape their reality (Clark, 2017b). The goal is to stay connected anyway you can, by remaining present and remain engaged even in silence.

It is important to create pre-interview relationships with individuals, communities and Elders who are going to be sharing their oral history. This is particularly the case when working with people who have suffered from trauma and will be sharing these events. "The ethics of doing oral history through trauma" can entirely depend on the topic of conversation or the individual themselves (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017). Chat beforehand to build up a relationship and assure the narrator that there is dignity in being listened to (Winslow, 2017b). This is because sometimes people might be suspicious of the interviewer, unless there is a rapport and relationship built. Indigenous community prefers Indigenous people to work with.

We need to be understanding and respect our narrator's own timelines in the interviewing process. As oral historians we must respect that first and foremost, we are human beings, with varying tolerance for exchange, for example: "Recording itself creates a different environment/dynamic" than that of a normal conversation (Taylor, 2017). Telling a story is therapeutic for most people but not everyone. Sometimes you need to go very slow (Taylor, 2017). This could mean interviewing several times over a longer period of time might be the right way to interview someone who is sharing intimate details of their lives. It can be good to interview people several times. This may not only give you more detailed accounts of their lives but may also be more of a

healing process for the person (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017). Hearing traumatic stories can be distressing for the interviewer as well as the interviewee. It is important to remember that "we need to take care of who we are talking to but also ourselves" (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017).

As listeners to other's life histories we need to acknowledge "the silence as a subject" and that collective trauma can need silence for a while (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017). This silence can be something that occurs in the interview, can be something that the narrator may need over time or can be a result of past trauma which has had "forced silence" inflicted upon the people experiencing the event (Portelli, 2017a). People who have lived through times of trauma, particularly children, can also experience two ways of dealing with such an event. "One way you were obsessed by the event. Or you grow up obsessed by the silence of it" (Portelli, 2017a). This can become intergenerational and there is a need to heal for both the community and the narrator (Roth, 2017). Oral history not only allows people to understand that there is no shame in their story but also allows us to learn from those that have, in some events, survived "hating and being hated" and held "onto compassion" (Portelli, 2017d). This wisdom comes particularly from our elderly and Elders who have "knowledge on how to survive hatred" (Roth, 2017).

Our elderly narrators and those that have survived trauma may also be suffering from illness when the interview takes place. Oral histories can be a type of therapy and can reveal "the person behind the patient" (Winslow, 2017a). It can be a form of healing in a potentially very vulnerable situation. Oral history allows you to communicate on a deeply personal level with people sharing 'their truth' and understanding (Winslow, 2017a). "Life threatening illnesses ruptures lives, life story can help make sense of

them" (Winslow, 2017a). Oral histories of life and illness can help bring meaning and act as a type of therapy (Winslow, 2017a). That they can be "validating, dignified, satisfying and social, autonomous, authentic, professional, use in research/education" is rewarding and makes peoples feel as if they are not "forgotten as human beings" (Winslow, 2017a).

Oral history can act as therapy with many valuing the process that allows life exploration and sharing of both sad and happy stories (Robson, 2017). When interviewing older people or people who are starting to lose their memories it is a good idea to use short sentences, ask questions in multiple ways, share your own experiences and use pictures to prompt memory and people's ability to answer (Robson, 2017). Interviewers might hear certain stories multiple times and will need to accept that some facts may be inaccurate (Robson, 2017). In this case Portelli, (2017d) asks, "What is the meaning of story filled with non-facts?" and maintains that it "is to make sense of life. Not fact based. Emotion filled." Researchers need to "value the person who remains", their emotions should be valued and the researcher should be honored to have those memories shared with them (Robson, 2017). Indeed, "memories may be 'wrong' but the feeling and emotions are real" (Robson, 2017). Remember there is a therapeutic value by being listened to from someone who genuinely cares. "You can't pretend what you don't feel. You can't fain empathy" (Spiegel, 2017).

As researchers we also need to acknowledge that those we talk to are the ones who are able to give their voices. "We work with people who can talk about it so that leaves out the people that can't and where is their sense of belonging?" (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017). Oral histories allow us to gain knowledge of the past and people's personal experiences but we do need to acknowledge all of those that are still voiceless

within this process, either because they are unable to express themselves or because we cannot interview everyone. We have to know that there are gaps that will never be healed and voices that will never be heard (Clark, 2017b). Trying to allow a window from which these voices can speak is an important aspect of beginning to heal, however. We need to understand and acknowledge our feelings in the process and that "sadness is not the enemy of oral history, it is about subjectivity not objectivity" (Clark, Pozzi-Thanner and Hecht, 2017).

It is important to stress 'the oral' as much as the 'history' when undertaking research. It is also important to acknowledge that a historical account will not be what a person recounts, as memory is dynamic and the memory of the past changes (Portelli, 2017d). No two stories are the same, but both are still just as historically important. Do not "throw away a great story just because it isn't 'true'. Find the truth" (Portelli, 2017d).

## CONCLUSION

Indigenous orality lends itself to being able to interpret and know in highly innovative and creative ways. This chapter has explored notions of ethical research around oral history practices. By looking at different instances of oral history research the chapter was able to demonstrate that even in different fields of research listening to community and prioritising their needs creates stronger more ethical outcomes. We need to respect the individuality of our communities and persons we work with in order to truly hear the knowledge that is being shared. Whether researching locally, nationally or internationally the researcher needs to build a respectful culturally safe environment that allows this connection to occur. Over time this field research developed core principles within my work, discussed in Chapter Seven, that ensures Indigenous people maintain ownership of their own knowledges within research.

# **CHAPTER SIX**

## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE PROTECTION

## INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored best practice of oral histories. It looked at how the oral nature of Indigenous knowledge sharing needs to be protected in all forms of research. Oral history research honours the nature of oral histories shared within cultures that maintain cultural connections through oral tradition. Looking at different case studies of oral history research the chapter opened the door to connecting local and international research priorities with community based principles needed in order to conduct ethical research with Indigenous interviewees and communities.

In the late 1980s, ownership of knowledge and artistic creations traceable to the world's indigenous societies emerged, seemingly out of nowhere, as a major social issue. Before then, museum curators, archivists, and anthropologists had rarely worried about whether the information they collected and managed should be treated as someone else's property. Today the situation is radically different.

(Brown, 2003, p.ix)

This chapter explores Indigenous "ownership of knowledge" under domestic and international law (Brown, 2003, p.ix). The chapter looks at how protection of Orality is mostly left up to interpretation. It examines research ownership, in particular, traditional knowledges shared orally. A significant aspect of examining protection of Indigenous knowledge systems is understanding the important role that traditional law and protocols play in informing contemporary ways of succeeding within western guidelines. This chapter will also examine case studies of different Indigenous cultural rights being protected and maintained by Indigenous people themselves. Working to protect cultural rights against adversarial colonial nation states that would prefer them to be "limited, extinguished or individualised; however, for Indigenous people intellectual property operates as a collective right" (Allen and Xanthaki, 2011, p.414). Additionally, this chapter discusses how Indigenous people combat systemic

difficulties through direct activism, community unification and sovereign areas within academic institutions.

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

(United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Article 31:1, p.11).

Rights for Indigenous people globally are defined under numerous different state and international laws, recommendations, conventions and covenants. When it comes to rigorous protection under the law for Indigenous rights, particularly those around ownership of knowledge, there is a lack of clarity or enforceable doctrine. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (UNDRIP) talks about the fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples. The UNDRIP (2007) asserts that we as Indigenous peoples have the right to not only maintain our cultural knowledges but we have the right to maintain and control the intellectual property of such knowledge (UNDRIP, 2007, Article 31:1, p.11). The UNDRIP, however, is only one document and only adopted recently and even if nation states have signed on, it can and has been ignored time and time again. This is because international laws such as the UNDRIP are not legally binding in any single nation state even if they are a signatory.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

As examined in Chapter 1 the term Indigenous peoples has been and is being used when referencing First Nations peoples, Native peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other peoples who identify as being the first peoples of a land. This is because Indigenous peoples and communities and their continued existence inform the information when designing the legal category Indigenous peoples. That the will and existence of bodies designed to the development and "to the creation of a well-established body of international human rights norms specific to indigenous peoples" (Cha, 2013, p.46), comes from an urgent need to protect old cultures. Indigenous peoples adopted this term (Indigenous People) in order to make a legal distinction between First Nations people and that of other minority or ethnic groups within each nation state (Cha, 2013, p.46). There is a distinction between minority peoples and the first peoples, of a particular land whose cultures and existence is born from that land, the literal 'Indigenous' to that areas people. Globally, first peoples have an intrinsic caring for country. Our relationships to country, to creation and to language is "intergenerational, linking the current people to their ancestors and to the future generations" (Tsosie, 2013, p.83).

The use of the word peoples instead of people as terminology, is a recognition that Indigenous groups have unified interests throughout the world. However, the use of such 'collective' terminology also needs to remain respectful and reflect the cultural differences between Indigenous peoples not only in each nation state but also in each Indigenous nation within these nation states. Each Indigenous nation has distinct cultural lifestyles and ways of being, yet there are also parallels, this is the reason for the plural term peoples. The term Peoples is one that this thesis has chosen to use most broadly as it is one that was chosen by representative First Nations people and bodies throughout the world. This term is also the term used within all major international covenants, conventions and laws, making it the most culturally appropriate and legally relevant term for this chapter. The rights of Indigenous peoples under international law is a complex framework of these international covenants, conventions and laws. While some international documents, like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are written especially for First Nations peoples and are written with self-determination and cultural rights in mind, other mechanisms include very little mention of Indigenous peoples with narrow specific fields on interest. The tide, though, has been changing when it comes to Indigenous issues and more international and regional human rights bodies have paid increasing attention to "the status of Indigenous peoples" (Cha, 2013, p.48).

My first session at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations was a moment of tremendous insight and recognition. I was sitting in a room, 12,000 miles was from home, but if I'd closed my eyes I could just about have been in Maningrida or Doomadgee or Flinders Island. The people wore different clothes, spoke in different languages or with different accents, and their homes had different names. But the stories and the sufferings were the same. We were all part of a world community of Indigenous peoples spanning the planet; experiencing the same problems and struggle against the same alienation, marginalisation and sense of powerlessness. We had gathered there united by our shared frustration with the dominant systems in our own countries and their consistent failure to deliver justice... As members of the worlds peoples, are the subjects of international law. We are entitled to be the full and equal beneficiaries of that law and make claims over our rights.

(Dodson, 1998, p.18-19)

As Dodson (1998, p.18-19) notes Indigenous peoples around the world have been rising up and making their voices heard. As the United Nations and nation states have finally recognised the importance of including First Nations voices into decision making, this has led to recognising the true value of self-determination and how Indigenous rights are fundamental to accessing basic human rights as First Nations peoples: "These rights have their source of both human rights instruments of general applicability and human rights instruments specific to indigenous peoples" (Cha, 2013, p.48). For Indigenous people, Articles such as 13:1 of the UNDRIP (2007, p.7) are of substantial importance, as they recognise Indigenous People's rights to: "revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons".

While international covenants provide declarative statements as to the validity of intrinsic Indigenous rights, the application of global Intellectual Property and Copyright legislation to this field is limited; in particular copyright law does not cover all types of rights that Indigenous people want or have customarily exercised (Janke, 2003). Janke (2003), states that because Indigenous people themselves are responsible for creating their culture, they are therefore the owners and guardians of their culture as a form of intellectual property. As such, intellectual property laws must recognise that Indigenous rights to heritage are determined by the customs, laws and practices of the community and can be exercised by an individual, a clan, or a people as a whole. As such, because the systems of knowledge that Indigenous people use have evolved over thousands of years, and are uniquely bound up with their customs, beliefs, traditions, land and resources; then the only true realisation of respect of Indigenous people's intellectual property, is through the absolute ownership of both their cultural expression and their physical resources (Janke, 2005).

Intellectual property protection in law has developed to protect the originator's commodification of knowledge and invention, however Indigenous knowledge and products including "oral histories, traditional practices, songs or art have not been 'created for the marketplace'" (Xanthaki, 2007, p.217). This is because our knowledge was developed prior to and outside of a western framework of particularised ownership that then transferred into the "public domain". If this is the case then our intellectual property cannot be protected under the current systems (Xanthaki, 2007, p.217). This

kind of reasoning has caused conflict for many years with anthropologists and researchers who use community knowledge for their research benefit or for the "benefit of mankind":

...as the cultural practices have been captured by anthropologists in field notes or on tape and are used in publications, they find a place in the body of scholarship for the benefit of mankind. Therefore, scientists should be able to copyright this specific material.

(Xanthaki, 2007, p.217).

Furthermore, Xanthaki (2007, p. 227), discusses the possibility that Indigenous claims to cultural knowledges are not "fully accommodated by current international law". The reasoning behind this argument is that in there are variable definitions of what actually constitutes cultural knowledge, contained in "many general international instruments", which in turn treat "property" owned by individuals, and communities differently, therefore "They ignore to a large degree Indigenous control and ownership of their cultures" (Xanthaki, 2007, p. 227).

However, DeVoss and Rife (2015, p.2) maintains that what is of real importance for intellectual property and copyright law is that it is not immutable to change, and the context for legislation has always been influenced by the historical, economic, cultural, and religious perspectives of legislators, therefore the legislative framework can be adjusted to fit Indigenous requirements. Their argument is in contrast to Xanthaki's (2007, p.217) discussion that Indigenous knowledges have been created outside the system. At a minimum, there is a disconnect between ongoing ownership of Indigenous knowledge and its protection by intellectual property law. As the Report of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations on its Twenty-third Session (2005) discusses, Indigenous peoples themselves: "feel that the current approaches to traditional knowledge... have not necessarily corresponded to Indigenous views". There is a divide

which needs to be bridged in order for the existing system of protection to adequately address collective rights.

Copyright cannot be truly engaged without situating within its historical, technological, and cultural context; and cultures make intellectual property, and intellectual property makes culture.

(DeVoss and Rife, 2015, p.2)

As Indigenous knowledges become increasingly commodified, Indigenous people are at risk of further theft of their property. Should nation states acquiesce to commercial interests above Indigenous interests, and limit judicial recourse, such an approach effectively promotes theft and the will of the mighty; and as the Preamble of the *Declaration of Continuing Independence of the Red Man in the Western Hemisphere* (1974) states: "Might does not make right. Sovereign people of varying cultures have the absolute right to live in harmony with Mother Earth so long as they do not infringe upon this same right of other peoples".

Treaties between sovereign nations explicitly entail agreements with represent "the supreme law of the land" binding each party to an inviolate international relationship. We acknowledge the historical fact that the struggle for Independence of the Peoples of our sacred Mother Earth have always been over sovereignty of land. These historical freedom efforts have always involved the highest human sacrifice.

Indigenous People's ongoing ownership and protection of their cultural expressions and resources cannot be divorced from notions of sovereignty. They were birthed in sovereignty, and the restoration of sovereignty is the goal.

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

traditional knowledge is developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, and transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, artistic expressions, proverbs, cultural events, beliefs, rituals, community laws, languages, agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds, traditional knowhow relating to architecture, textile-making and handicraft-making, fishery, health and forestry management.

(Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2005)

Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge is highly diverse and has always taken the form of "stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practices" (Charters, 2009, p.186). Furthermore, while traditional knowledge can be conveyed in many forms, much of this knowledge, however, is transmitted orally and rooted in cultural practice. With traditional knowledge shared in a more open sense this knowledge can be misappropriated under existing intellectual property law (Charters, 2009, p.186; Davis, 2006; Brown, 2003, p.54). Traditional knowledge (Indigenous and First Nation's knowledge) can opportunistically or systematically be exploited from many different avenues. Charters (2009, p.186) discusses the medical industry's ability to 'discover' particular chemical aspects of plants that they have 'found' through Indigenous knowledges. Though these discoveries would have never happened without the people themselves, scientists and the organisations they work for, can patent this 'invention', ultimately protecting their ownership for such knowledge under copyright and trademarks (Charters, 2009, p.186; Brown, 2003, p.8). Intellectual property rights generally do not protect such knowledge because "intellectual property rights are individualistic and are concerned with innovations, whereas traditional knowledge is collective and tradition-focused" (Charters, 2009, p.186).

In recent times, the international community has initiated global agreements to limit previously egregious and exploitative processes concerning Indigenous people's resources and cultural expression. For example, building on the international concern to protect traditional knowledge in Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) (see section 3:26) urged governments to strengthen the role of Indigenous peoples and their rights of patrimony in global partnerships. The Rio Declaration recognised the need to protect Indigenous lands and have a say in what

activities are deemed culturally inappropriate; furthermore, to use Indigenous knowledge and practice in land management decisions, specifically to apply "indigenous values, traditional knowledge and resource management practices" where possible (Rio Declaration, 1992, p.9-10).

Additionally, the *Earth Summit: Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) (1992), Article 8 (j) obliges states to protect "knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity". While these are noble goals, as Charters (2009, p.186) discusses, these agreements often contain phrases like "as far as possible", and "subject to national legislation" which allow governments enough wiggle room to circumvent key obligations. When looking at international regulations that are created to protect Indigenous knowledge, this kind of 'soft' terminology is used time and time again (Charters 2009, p.186). International regulations, laws and conventions are implemented by nations that will ultimately exercise power when necessary to maintain complete control of all cultural ownership and exclude mention of Indigenous people owning their own intellectual property rights. MacKay (1998) goes on to talk of this weakness of language and how the CBD may be prioritizing the intellectual property rights of the wrong people:

This is even more the case given the emphasis placed upon intellectual property rights in international trade agreements, that protect the expropriator of Indigenous knowledge and culture rather than the Indigenous originators. Second, it only protects Indigenous intellectual property when relevant for 'conservation or sustainable use of biological diversity' and; finally, it merely 'encourages' the sharing of benefits derived from Indigenous knowledge

This is not to say that the CBD does not have some strong systems in place in order to protect Indigenous rights. Indeed, upon noticing such deficiencies the CBD's Conference of the Parties (COP) addressed how better to implement Article 8(j). This came in the form of providing a way to have more Indigenous peoples' participation and including in its mandate the "development of legal and other appropriate forms of protection for the knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities" (Charters, 2009, p.186).

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), one of the 17 specialized agencies of the United Nations, has been a vanguard for protecting the orality of Indigenous knowledge: such initiatives as the WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty of 1996 provide protections of producers' and performers' work, including expressions of folklore (WIPO Treaty, 1996). The WIPO has also been responsible, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), for the adoption of Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions in 1982. Their Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) brings together nation states to discuss issues arising from the need for protection of traditional knowledge and "traditional cultural expressions" (WIPO, 2015, p.1). Furthermore, in its role as the premier source of International property information, the WIPO routinely organises events with an Indigenous Panel, to facilitate the introduction of Indigenous concerns over intellectual property rights at the intergovernmental level.

#### CULTURAL PROPERTY

Concepts of ownership of Cultural Property and other more community based information and practices are difficult to define, and therefore protection of Cultural Property under law is particularly challenging. While most laws look at the ownership of knowledge by a singular individual to be transferred at will, this understanding of culture as capital does not necessary reflect how Indigenous communities might feel (Xanthaki, 2007, p.209). Though mentioned quite liberally in international law, cultural property needs to be reflected as being owned by many, that is all of those in a particular Indigenous nation, not necessarily owned by the individual, even if the individual is the one given the task of carrying down this knowledge on behalf of the community (UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict, 1954).

For example, the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) Discussion Paper on Biological Diversity and Biological Ethics (1996, p.5) reinforces this by maintaining that "No person 'owns' or holds a 'property' [of] living things". Indigenous connectedness to the land and to our relationships with all living beings around us means that no human being has greater right to live or more rights than other living beings which we share the earth with. "Our Mother Earth and our plant and animals' relatives are respected sovereign living beings, with rights of their own in addition to playing an essential role in our survival" (IITC Discussion Paper on Biological Diversity and Biological Ethics, 1996, p.5)

The European concept of the natural world, knowledge and culture as 'property' (therefore commodities to be exploited freely and bought and sold at will) has resulted in disharmony between human beings and the natural world, as well as the current environmental crisis threatening all life, this concept is totally incompatible with a traditional Indigenous world view.

(International Indian Treaty Council Discussion Paper on Biological Diversity and Biological Ethics, 30 August 1996, p.5)

Unfortunately, several international agreements endorse this understanding of "culture as capital" and look on it as physical property, transferable and rootless (Xanthaki, 2007, p.209). Article 1 of the 1954 *UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* defines cultural property as "irrespective of

origin or ownership... movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people". The movable or immovable terminology is defined greatly in western terms, with items defined under Article 1, sections a, b and c containing architecture, works of art, archaeological sites, libraries and scientific collections. These are all very physical definitions of property and not what one is usually looking to protect when thinking of Indigenous cultural property.

The UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) defines Cultural Property as "property which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each State as being important for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science". (p.1 article 1). Cultural property must then fit into one of fifteen definitions under Article 1 of the Convention. This narrow definition of cultural property evidently means that Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous cultural property is harder to protect within a document that was wholly created for the protection of such knowledge. Indeed, orally transmitted knowledge is hard to find protected under the Convention. For example, Section J of Article 1, protects "archives, including sound, photographic and cinematographic archives" (p.1) however only when oral knowledge has already undergone collection and archiving to a non-oral source. The 1970 Convention attempts to defend cultural property from "illicit import, export and transfer of ownership" (P. 2 Article 2); yet when this cultural property is knowledge that is transmitted orally the convention cannot guarantee protection. In fact, the definition of cultural property "was one of the most contested points in the Convention" because it is up to the states to define what is of cultural significance (Stamatoudi 2011, p.36):

States are free to define the scope and content of their own cultural property subject to two reservations. First, it has to be of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history,

literature, art and science, and second, it has to belong in one of the categories of cultural objects enumerated in article 1.

For much of the international laws and conventions surrounding intellectual property protection, the ultimate responsibility of cultural protection falls to the nation states themselves. This could be because many of these international agreements do not address the common cultural knowledge of Indigenous peoples. Cultural property, as outlined by many of these agreements, is more a physical symbol of the overall cultural value of the nation state and as such needs to be deemed important enough to protect for the nation and the international community. In recent years, more and more instruments are being created in a bid to have sub-cultures, those of the Indigenous people of a nation-state, recognised as valuable cultural property.

There is still a long way to go in this recognition as many main agreements still do not have this recognition included (Xanthaki, 2007, p.211). Take for example two of the below UNESCO Conventions: the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict (1954); and the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership and Cultural Property (1970). Both are clearly written in order to ensure cultural protection. However, upon examination, these are aimed at the protection of 'worth' to the general population of the nation state; for example, placing importance on the cultural heritage of a national library, not the cultural heritage of the remains of an Indigenous site that was destroyed to create this library.

The 1970 UNESCO Convention (p.2) indicates that the sharing and protecting of cultural property is very important and "its true value can be appreciated only in relation to the fullest possible information regarding is origin, history and traditional setting".

Indeed, the Convention does go on to recognise the nations within the state, however still gives ownership back to the state itself and that which the state deems of importance (Article 1). Indeed "indigenous heritage can be removed from the territory of the state, exchanged or given as a gift to other states without even asking for the consent of indigenous communities" (Xanthaki, 2007, p.212). Article 4 (UNESCO Convention, 1970, p.6) defines Cultural Property as:

- a) Cultural property created by the individual or collective genius of nations of the State concerned, and cultural property of importance to the State concerned created within the territory of that State by foreign nationals or stateless persons resident within such territory;
- b) Cultural property found within the national territory;
- c) Cultural property acquired by archaeological, ethnological and natural science missions, with the consent of the competent authorities of the country of original such property;
- d) Cultural property which has been the subject of freely agreed exchange;
- e) Cultural property received as a gift or purchased legally with the consent of the competent authorities of the country of origin of such property.

(Article 4, 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership and Cultural Property 19).

#### CULTURAL HERITAGE

Since the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, there has been a desire to shift terminology; in particular, where terms such as property are used to refer to culture or religious spirituality, there has been a move to shift the wording from property to heritage (see Technical Review of the United Nations draft Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples). The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property also discussed the need to use the term "indigenous cultural heritage", instead of "cultural property" (Daes, 1993, p.4). This is because according to Tasdelen (2016, p.4), "Cultural heritage emphasises the linkage and emotional bond between certain items and their source nation", which would then seem slightly different to cultural property which "stresses the aspect of ownership and the fact that cultural objects are material goods which can be traded as any other goods" (Tasdelen

2016, p.4). This is not to say that cultural property has any less of an emotional and cultural bond than cultural heritage but to acknowledge that they are now becoming two distinct entities under law and that in order to protect Indigenous knowledge both must be considered.

The UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage (1972) has established the term cultural heritage as synonymous with cultural property (Xanthaki, 2007, p.210). Article 1 of the 1972 Convention identifies Cultural Heritage with three areas: Monuments; Groups of Buildings; and Sites. Though inscriptions, cave dwellings, and works of nature and man including archaeological sites are included within these definitions, these types of classifications largely favour the recognition of the built environment. Xanthaki, (2007, p.210) maintains that while its "definition of cultural heritage broaden(s) the scope of protection" to include folklore and artefacts the protection is still very much up to the national interpretation. Xanthaki (2007, p.210) goes on to explain that Indigenous knowledges and cultural heritage may not fall under the qualification of "outstanding or monumental value" leaving little to no protection.

An illustrative example is unauthorised filmings of indigenous religious ceremonies and secret recordings of songs and rituals: the Convention protects photographs, films and sound recordings that have a historical value (hence the use of the term 'archive'), but it is arguable whether indigenous peoples have any protection against all unauthorised filmings and recordings.

(Xanthaki, 2007, p.210)

Documents such as the Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights on Indigenous Peoples (1993) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) have been addressing the needs for international protection for Indigenous knowledge and cultural property. The Mataatua Declaration (1993, Articles 1.1, 1.2, 2.1) affirms that Indigenous people have the right to determine for themselves their Cultural Property/Heritage and notes "that existing protection mechanisms are insufficient for the protection of Indigenous People's Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights" (Article 1.2, 1993).

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) Article 31.1 states (see start of chapter) that Indigenous peoples have the right to "maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge". These principles while internationally broad, can be applied within national or state legislation. For example, the state of Queensland in Australia has both the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* in order to attempt to protect cultural heritage rights of Indigenous people within the nation state. The Acts "provide blanket protection of areas and objects of traditional, customary, and archaeological significance" and acknowledge the role that Traditional Owners play in protecting cultural heritage (Queensland Government 2017 p.1). This well-intentioned wording does not, however, ensure actual traditional owner protections or rights. As Daes (1993, p.4) rightly puts it:

Everything that belongs to the distinct identity of a people and is therefore theirs to share, if they wish, with other peoples. It includes all of those things which international law regards as the creative production of human thought and craftsmanship, such as songs, stories, scientific knowledge and artworks. It also includes inheritance from the past and from nature, such as human remains, the natural features of the landscape, and naturally-occurring species of plants and animals with which a people has long been connected. (Daes, 1993, p.4)

## CASE STUDIES

These international protections and good intentions need to ensure the rights of traditional owners across the globe. It is important to look at all the cultural, environmental and educational rights of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples have been stifled by colonial oppression yet have held their knowledges close to their hearts

until their self-determination could prevail against this oppression. These case studies reflect both the strength and power of Indigenous oral histories within different geographical locations. Historically, the people represented in the case studies were colonized by the British. The stories interconnect through narratives of stolen sovereign rights; people being stereotyped and frozen in time; and knowledge keepers holding ground in spite of challenges within education and health.

The first case study focuses on language protection and revival. In a colonized society diminishing or controlling Indigenous language use controls the population. This example will focus on how the independent nation state of Hawai'i became a part of the United States of America through a concerted effort towards extinction that saw the Hawaiian language almost eradicated'. This case study explores how the Indigenous peoples of Hawai'i, the Native Hawaiians, protected their language through relying on cultural knowledge and old ways of cultural protection through oral history.

The second case study looks at how Indigenous people struggle to have our traditional knowledges and through them our oral histories recognised as a valid form of historical testimony within the court system. This example will focus on Canada and how the Aboriginal people of Canada, the First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples, have fought to have their oral history testimony heard and taken as a true and factual account of historical events.

The final case study examined in this chapter will be that of protecting and continuing Indigenous knowledge through education. For many years of colonial occupation Indigenous peoples were first denied the right to education and then had education used against them to indoctrinate a new way of thinking into the psyche. This example will focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia and how the post-colonial education system of exclusion is being turned around and used as a means of cultural expression and strengthening of Indigenous knowledge and identity.

#### USA –HAWAI'I

*Ōlelo Hawai'i* is a spring of life for Kanka people; our identity, culture and worldview pour forth from our native language. (Kapāanaokalāokeola Oliveira, 2014, p.84 citing Thiong'o, 1986, p.3)

The Kingdom of Hawai'i, since annexation in 1898 and statehood in 1959, falls under the legal guidelines of the United States of America. Native Hawaiians now fall within United States Indigenous classifications which also include Alaskan Native peoples and Native American Indian tribes (Tsosie, 2013, p.80). This recognition though does not allow for overall equal rights. Specific treaties and tribal agreements are linked to the 'concept Indian Country' (Tsosie, 2013, p.81), as the United States Supreme Court has issued a restrictive reading of 'Indian Country'. This in turn leaves Alaskan Native people and Native Hawaiian people with a struggle for reconciliation and widespread rights. For Alaska this is the result of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 1971 which, among many other controls, resulted in all but one reservation being disbanded. For the people of Hawaii such legal doctrine is particularly hard as they are situated 3,976 kilometers from the US mainland, are part of Polynesia and were a free and respected Kingdom. Hawaiian people are recognised as Indigenous by both state and federal governments, however, "Native Hawaiians do not enjoy the same status as 'federally recognized' tribal governments", and are not "eligible to petition for recognition under the administrative rules governing recognition for Indian tribes" (Tsosie, 2013, p.81).

This lack of recognition is particularly hard for peoples who once had full sovereignty over their lands to now find that only "federally recognized Indian tribes have jurisdiction to govern their land and resources" (Tsosie, 2013, p.81). For Hawaiian people, who have been fighting to regain sovereignty over their islands since before annexation, to have no legal right to exercise meaningful control over air, water, or land resources or the "ability to generate environmental laws of their own choosing and apply them to their lands and resources" is galling (Tsosie, 2013, p.82).

The right to govern and control their own land was taken away when on January 17, 1893 the Hawai'i Monarchy was overthrown, instigated by a group called the Hawaiian League, whose members ironically consisted solely of wealthy Caucasian businessmen" (Krummenacher, 2016 p.1). This overthrow saw the independent nation state of Hawai'i become a subordinate of the United States of America. Since the reign of King Kamehameha III Hawaiian monarchs held fast to independence. Through five rulers, King Kamehameha III, King Kamehameha IV, King Kamehameha V, King Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalani, the independent kingdom of Hawai'i resisted repeated attempts of the United States to implement annexation treaties (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.20). Hawai'i, like any other nation, lived under an independent constitution and was recognised globally as an independent nation state until 1887 when King Kalākaua "against his own will and better judgment" repealed a constitution which Hawai'i lived under for twenty-three years. "The late King Kalākaua was constrained by the foreign element to abrogate this constitution" and until this repeal all people living on the islands "lived together in harmony throughout the kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands" (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.20).

Sadly, it was King Kalākaua's generosity to all that lived on the islands of Hawai'i, including those American-born *haole*, that became the undoing of the Kingdom. Kalākaua during his reign saw that Hawai'i needed more labour and on a world tour, to strengthen Hawai'i's global ties, visited Japan and China to create labourer agreements. With this new workforce farmers, particularly those with sugar crops, became wealthy and with this wealth came power and a 'revolutionary movement'. When the King was again overseas visiting the Queen of England the 'revolutionary movement' made moves to overthrow the monarchy via the constitution (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.57; p.120):

...he thus devoted the earlier part of his reign to the aggrandizement of the very persons, who as soon as they had become rich and powerful, forgot his generosity, and plotted a subversion of his authority, and an overthrow of the constitution under which the kingdom had been happily governed for nearly a quarter of a century.

(Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.57)

The King, upon his fast return home, was met with the tear-stained faithful who knew, "although no word was spoken, the changes which had been forced upon the king" (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.121). The 1887 constitution the King signed under the watchful eye of the Missionary Party stripped all power from the Monarchy and was "never in any way ratified, either by the people or by their representatives" (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.125). The people who had been embraced and been given land and places in parliament had betrayed the kingdom. The King had "signed that constitution under absolute compulsion" and, according to Queen Lili'uokalani's account, threats of assassination (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.125). Known as the *Bayonet Constitution* this document, signed under armed militia, enabled the Hawaiian League to appoint themselves as government officials and take control of Hawai'i.

Native Hawaiians refused to allow this overthrow to take place and at one point a coup to reinstate the monarchy was attempted. The King himself even after betrayal and takeover still worked for his people and country. At the end of 1889 he sailed to the United States to meet with the Hawaiian Minister in Washington (Segrest, 2002, p.118). Queen Lili'uokalani (1897, p.141) remembered her "poor brother" said "good-by to us all, and bade farewell to his beautiful Islands, which he was never to look on again". On this last journey for his people King Kalākaua passed away in San Francisco, leaving Queen Lili'uokalani the last reigning Monarch of Hawai'i.

Now the Queen, Lili'uokalani continued the fight of her brother and people to regain control of the Hawaiian Kingdom. One of the late King's aims at the time of his death was to convene a Constitutional Convention to roll back the enforced new constitution. (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1987, p.157; Van Dyke, 2008, p. 150; Segrest, 2002, p.118). With the arrival of the 1892 election and petitions pouring in "from every part of the Islands for a new constitution" (over 6,500 of 9,500 registered voters called for change (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1987, p.157, see also Van Dyke, 2008, p. 150; Segrest, 2002, p.118), Queen Lili'uokalani followed in the footsteps of her predecessors, drafting a new constitution which would fully restore rights of Native Hawaiian people and their ability to regain the throne (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.157).

To have ignored or disregarded so general a request I must have been deaf to the voice of the people, which tradition tells us is the voice of God. No true Hawaiian chief would have done other than to promise a consideration of their wishes. (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.158).

The Queen's proposal sparked retaliatory actions of the Hawaiian League and the United States military. On the 14<sup>th</sup> January Queen Lili'uokalani, seeking to sign the new constitution restoring power to her kingdom, was persuaded by her ministry to wait until a further date, claiming they had not read the document. The frustrated Queen

agreed to seek their counsel again at a later date. The Hawaiian League took full advantage of this act of conciliation and on the 16<sup>th</sup> January at 5pm "the troops from the United States ship Boston were landed, by the order of the United States minister, J. L. Stevens, in secret understanding with the revolutionary party" (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1987, p.38; p.260; Segrest, 2002, p.118). The next day, the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani, under threat of violence, signed away her rights as a sovereign leader. The argument for the destabilizing of the monarchy by the Haole, was that they were trying to restore power to the people, so she yielded her authority on the proviso that her authority would be rightfully restored. However, the Haole determined that the Monarchy had taken "intolerable' measures" and as such the Queen's government stood charged of treasonous acts (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.162). Hawai'i was now filled with wealthy foreign citizens who held office, were allowed to vote and stood with the protection of a foreign army. These "quasi Americans, who call themselves Hawaiians now and Americans when it suits them" were claiming to have more rights to Hawai'i than the Queen or her people (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.162).

Seeking help from the United States, who had illegally sent its military into a foreign nation, Queen Lili'uokalani corresponded with President Harrison. Unfortunately, she found no ally there. Where once there were strong bonds of friendship, now there was betrayal. The President of the United States set aside the Queen's statement and petition and instead privileged the voice of a very few *Haole*. Whilst the Queen's petition to reinstate sovereignty was ignored the Hawaiian Revolution petition was sent to the United States Senate for consideration which resulted in the President's recognition of the provisional government (Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.172). President Harrison's death opened the way to a sense of optimism and fair play from

President Grover Cleveland who sent an investigator to Hawai'i to find out the real circumstances of the Hawaiian takeover (Krummenacher, 2016), for it was Cleveland's opinion that it was "the right of the Hawaiian people to choose their own form of government" (Cleveland in Queen Lili'uokalani, 1897, p.172).

The Queen, having fought for years for her country's freedom was on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1895 arrested and held prisoner in her residence. The next President William McKinley, during the war with Spain recognized the strategic significance of the Islands and, without Cleveland there to post any opposition, the United States ignored the illegality of American ownership and built American military naval bases in Hawaii. President McKinley had officially annexed the Hawaiian Islands. During these years the Hawaiian people and their Queen fought every step of the way to maintain control of their beloved country. Indeed, even those "who now claim that the Native Hawaiians had lost control of the Kingdom prior to the 1893 overthrow are wrong" (Van Dyke, 2008, p. 150). The *Aloha 'Āina* and culture was and still is present in every action:

#### Kaona

Ua 'ola ka 'ōlelo mai ka paikū 'ana o nā pua Our language survived through the passing of flowers In 1896 The last reigning monarch of Hawaii, Queen Lili'u'okalani was Held prisoner in her own palace Communication with the outside world was prohibited Thus newspapers were snuck into her room wrapped around flowers For months our Oueen and her people wrote songs and stories Hidden in Hawaiian. So as to converse without the Overthrowing Provisional government knowing It is because of this we know our history The language of hidden meanings Kaona. The first written Hawaiian poetry Songs and dance were the medium in which we decoded their Denotation

(Osorio and Wong, 2008)

With the formal annexation of Hawai'i in 1898 a further restriction of Hawaiian autonomy and language occurred (Krummenacher, 2016). During the battle to regain

control of their beloved land Hawaiians were faced with more and more laws restricting their cultural rights. In 1896 a law was introduced that proclaimed "English would be the language of instruction in *every* school without exception and was the measure that brought Hawaiian to the edge of extinction" (Krummenacher, 2016). Given the extremity of the threat to their native language and identity, Hawaiians improvised by using Kaona (language of hidden meanings) and hiding their language in plain sight (Osorio and Wong, 2008). '*Ōlelo* Hawai'i continues to be one of the richest, most unique examples of Indigenous language restoration globally. Passed down orally in part through hula (traditional Polynesian dance) for centuries, it is unique and the standardised alphabet for Hawaiian is divided into two parts:

There is a standardized alphabet for Hawaiian divided into two parts with the following order and names: nā huapalapala 'ōiwi (the indigenous letters) - A ('ā), E ('ē), I ('ī), O ('ō), U ('ū), H (hē), K (kē), L (lā), m (mū), N (nū), P (pī), W (wē), ' ('okina) nā huapalapala paipala (the introduced letters) - B (bē), C (sē), D (dē), F (fē), G (gā), J (iota), Q (kopa), R (rō), S (sā), T (tī), V (wī), X (kesa), Y (ieta), Z (zeta.) Vowels can be marked with a macron called a kahakō in Hawaiian. Thus there are two versions of each vowel, e.g., ā ('ā kō) and a 'ā kō 'ole.) The introduced letters are used primarily for words and names from foreign languages.

(Aha Pūnana Leo, 2017)

This beautiful combination of 'okina and kahakō form the Hawaiian language's "trademark mellifluous sounds" (Krummenacher, 2016). Hawaiian Language revitilisation became stronger in the 1970s under *Aha Pūnana Leo*, the Hawaiian immersion school system. Language immersion schools were a particularly significant step as "the number of native speakers did not increase until *Pūnana Leo*'s founding" because starting with children was "the most essential step to revival" ('Aha Pūnana Leo, 2017; Krummenacher, 2016). This model, now known as the Hawaiian Model, has become a best practice model for language instruction, and is used across the world for Indigenous language renewal. *Aha Pūnana Leo*, "nest of language", was started in 1982 with "the hope of reviving the language by feeding children bits of their language

and tradition in a similar manner to birds" (Krummenacher, 2016). With language emersion the key is the children learn and then take that new knowledge back to their families and communities.

 $\overline{O}$ lelo Hawai'i is also unique in its ability to survive systematic oppression. Hawaiian Native peoples were actively punished if ' $\overline{O}$ lelo Hawai'i was used in the community, in the classrooms or even in day-to-day life, which led to a "gap generation", a generation of children that were born "far enough after the ban to be raised by non-Hawaiian speaking parents but too soon to be affected by the revitalisation efforts" (Krummenacher, 2016). Yet people prevailed in their efforts to keep ' $\overline{O}$ lelo Hawai'i from completely disappearing despite the United States intentions. Many children were given Hawaiian middle names, with the language being hidden within the family, because children under this new oppressive regime were not allowed Hawaiian first names. This Kaona, "language of hidden meanings", displays the "craftiness and ingenuity" of the Hawaiian people who would not have their language or cultural connections taken away by the coloniser (Osorio and Wong, 2008; Hawaii News Now, 2017).

Even today there are instances where the dominant American culture can dictate to Native Hawaiian people that their language is not deemed as important as English. Even though both languages are the official languages of the State of Hawaii, ' $\bar{O}$ lelo Hawai'i can still be considered the language of the 'other'. In January 2018 Haleakala telescope protestor Kaleikoa Kaeo refused to speak English in court (Blake, 2018; CNN WIRE, 2018). The judge in turn refused to provide Professor Kaeo an interpreter and would not even recognise his presence in the courtroom, issuing an arrest warrant for his supposed non-attendance. This has sparked fierce debate in Hawai'i, for if Hawaiian is an official respected language then why would those that decide to speak Hawaiian be treated in this manner. Indeed, if Hawaiian is an official language then should judges not need to know the language themselves? Though this bench warrant was quickly dropped following public backlash the question remains as to how much Hawaiian culture is protected:

'O ka 'Ōlelo ka 'Ōlelo o kēia 'Āina. 'O ka 'Ōlelo ke ea o kēia 'Āina. 'Auhea 'oukou e nā kanaka o ka 'Ōlelo a o ka 'Āina 'ē: pehea nei 'oukou e kāko 'o 'ana i ka holomua o nā mea maoli o kēia wahi, 'O iā nō o Hawai'i? Mai kū me nā po 'e ho 'okolonaio. E kūpa 'a a kū i ka pono me mākou.

'Ōlelo Hawai'i is the Language of this 'āina. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i is the breath and sovereignty of this place. To all of you people of foreign languages and of foreign lands who currently live and benefit from being in this place: what are you going to do to support the continuance of the things that make this place Hawai'i? Our language is not ornamental. Our language is not to be relegated to hula performances and prayers at Lu'au. Our language is the breath of our people.

(Osorio, 2018).

Indigenous languages and cultures should not be for the benefit of tourism and not "an exotic flair adding color to life in Hawai'i" or anywhere else (Kanaeokana, 2018 p.1). Kanaeokana (2018 p.1), a Native Hawaiian Education body, talks of *Ōlelo Hawai'i* as being "at the core of our being". Language for Indigenous people is the "the lifeblood that connects us to our ancestors and to future generations. It informs the very way we think about the people and 'āina and the world around us" (Kanaeokana, 2018 p.1).

Language and oral tradition is central to life in Hawai'i and to other Indigenous peoples around the world. Even though the language was almost driven to extinction by oppressive colonial powers, it was the maintenance of their oral tradition and oral histories that allowed the language to be maintained and revitalised. So even though the language was not allowed to be spoken language transmission happened in stories, songs and middle names. As language protection took an underground stance, it was the old grandmothers whispering words in their babies' ears or stories of modern and olden days that communicated words and their meanings, keeping language alive. Oral tradition and process of passing on oral histories continued to maintain links to this knowledge. Through oral history, language was not only protected from those wanting to destroy it, but also revitalised to the strong, powerful and vibrant force that language is today.

#### CANADA

This section will further discuss the importance that Indigenous oral histories and knowledge have within the judicial system and how memories of the past are just as important, sometimes more so, than historical documents (Xanthaki, 2007, p. 250). The old ways often interact at odds with the western system of being and doing, which is why the clash between the judicial system and our Old peoples memories seem at odds with each other. This is the fight for recognition of culture and ways, this is why the memories of the past are more important today to young Indigenous people but not always to the western judiciary. This is a fight that Indigenous people have had against colonial systems for many years. "While Indigenous peoples are told we cannot have rights if we move too much, we are also informed we cannot possess rights because our societies move too little" (Borrows, 2009, p.414). Judges time and time again deny rights because "we are too settled, unmoving, intransient and static in our cultural practices (Borrows, 2009, p.414). However, as cases like Mabo vs Queensland 1992 (the ground breaking case in Australia which recognised oral histories and dispelled Terra Nullius as a legal fact) attest, oral tradition is vital to asserting the cultural, situational and historical sovereignty of a people. Memories transmitted through orality have lasted for millennia and contain not only the facts about a situation, but the emotions and cultural context.

When considering Indigenous testimony within courts of law this section will examine cases in Canada and how all kinds of unspoken parameters are put into place in order for Aboriginal (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) people to be deemed 'authentic' enough to testify. Indigenous authenticity seems to be something that others can question without prejudice. In order to fit into the category of Indigenous, a person's parentage, community, language, and physical appearance are questioned. Even having more contemporary cultural aspects can be deemed inauthentic. The Canadian Anishinaabe, Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation, Scholar John Borrows (2009, p.414) explains how they "often view our societies as frozen upon the date of non-native contact or sovereign assertion" and embed this concept into law and other areas of society:

They entrench this approach in the law, thus making it difficult for us to travel beyond their assertions. These doctrines are widespread throughout the world. Judicial stereotypes imply that Indigenous political communities are inferior to those that arrived subsequently, because only non-Indigenous states and people are given the privilege of moving through time with unfettered power relative to pre-existent societies. Under this approach, Indigenous peoples' interaction with other societies is held to create assimilation and loss rights.

(Borrows, 2009, p.414)

There has been a move to counteract this prejudice through judicial directions, however, it is still a battle to have oral histories and Indigenous knowledge given more weighting than mere hearsay. The Supreme Court of Canada, for example, acknowledges these difficulties and has on occasion overturned trial judges' decisions because sufficient credence has not been given to oral history testimonies (McNeil, 2009, p.271). Indeed, Canadian Supreme Court Chief Justice Lamer stated that:

(McNeil, 2009, p.271).

<sup>...</sup> the laws of evidence must be adapted in order that this type of evidence can be accommodated and placed on an equal footing with the types of historical evidence that courts are familiar with, which largely consists of historical weight to be given to any evidence, including oral histories.

Though there is good intention in the higher courts, prejudice still remains. For example, "in Canada, many of our most respected elders and chiefs have been discredited because they made claims by referencing events that occurred after European arrival" (Borrows, 2009, p.415-16). This is a common theme amongst judges when it comes to Indigenous knowledges and oral history testimony. Claims to knowledge of life, historical events, pre-colonial and post-colonial traditional customs and links to land are all brought into question because of a history of contact with the coloniser. Another example is in the *Ontario (Attorney General) v Beal Island Foundation* case, where the Ontario High Court of Justice dismissed an "Aboriginal title case because the *Temagami Anishinabek* understanding of history" was apparently influenced by "'a small, dedicated and well-meaning group of white peoples', who pieced together 'limited pieces of oral tradition" (Borrows, 2009, p.416).

One of the main testimonies to the *Beal Island Foundation* claim was that of *Temagami Anishinabek* Elder Chief Potts. His position as chief and a senior member of the community, should have assured the credibility of his oral history that asserted his people's cultural ties, but he was however found to be an unreliable witness. Yet as Borrows (2009, p.416) recounts Chief Potts had "four strikes against him". Firstly, his ancestral ties to his community were called into question by his parentage. Chief Potts had a non-Indigenous mother and a "father who was not of 'pure' Indian ancestry" (Borrows, 2009, p.416). Secondly, Chief Potts' family had supposedly arrived into the "territory after the disputed event had taken place". Third, he only spoke English, not *Anishinabek* and fourth Chief Potts learnt his oral history by not only talking to members of his family and community over his life time but by also "reading a short academic memoir about the Temagami in his teenage years" (Borrows, 2009, p.416).

The lesson learnt through *Ontario (Attorney General) v Beal Island Foundation* and other trials like it throughout the world is that our culture must remain static in order to be taken as a true historical account of our cultural connections. Chief Potts found himself and his people in this very spider web of colonial intellectual superiority. His heritage was called into question in numerous and discriminating ways. His parentage deemed him, in the colonial system, not Indian enough, his family's ability to move, called into question generations of cultural ties to his people's land and him not being fluent in *Anishinabek*; all conspired to rob him of his voice and declare his very identity to not be genuine enough. Furthermore, reading and learning from a written testimony or being in contact with well-meaning white people automatically puts doubt into the truthful and honest accounts of events; while conversely applying the stain of judicial censorship to all of those who give oral histories. This effectively implies that Indigenous people, once influenced, are irrevocably inauthentic and that their accounts cannot be true and accurate. As Borrows (2009, p.416) illustrates:

This is another example of the courts inappropriately blocking our journeys through time. The manner in which the court depicted Chief Potts illustrates an exceedingly narrow view of who constitutes an authoritative Indigenous person, and thus what qualifies as Indigenous knowledge.

(Borrows, 2009, p.416).

If first nations leaders such as Chief Potts are ineligible to provide authentic testimony, the broader implication is that Indigenous people are naturally unreliable witnesses who are therefore systemically disadvantaged when seeking to assert their most basic rights in court. Cases such as *Sagong bin Tasi v the Selangor State Government*, and many others affirm that "oral stories of the aboriginal societies relating to their practices, customs and traditions should be considered as valid evidence in a trial" (Chingmak, 2008, p.447).

### AUSTRALIA

The fight for representation and recognition of First Nations oral histories within the court room has been mirrored in other areas of mainstream society. In Australia the ongoing struggle for access to education has been a hard fought battle, considering past policies, such as 'exclusion on demand'. The struggle now is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be able to see themselves and recognise their culture in some way within the education that they receive. The move from access to recognition has taken place within all sectors of the education system from early childhood and primary to tertiary. This case study will look at the Tertiary sector in Australia and how it has responded to this call for recognition.

The push for inclusion highlighted a gap in the preservation and storage of Indigenous knowledge. Any formal mechanism to be able to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and Intellectual Property did not exist until relatively recently. Change happened slowly since citizenship was granted and the 1967 referendum seemed to be the easy 'solve all' solution as Moreton Robinson (2009, p.62) says in her paper Imagining the Good Indigenous citizen:

Within the white imaginary, citizenship represented equality and it was assumed that this status would enable Indigenous people to overcome their poverty and become the same as other Australians.

This however was not the case. Government and societal attitudes often still resonate with those of the general community, and the racism within the general community hadn't changed so much. The research of Pedersen, Beven, Walker and Griffiths (2004) highlights the fact that mainstream Australians might often have negative attitudes regarding Indigenous issues. This realization gives clarity, that we as a people need to manage our own Intellectual Property protection, health, education and so on. The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) (Australia and Johnson 1991) underscore the fact that we as Indigenous people need to be active in the solutions that are the negative effects of colonisation. After all, the RIADIC was an oral history project that relied on the strength of personal story to convey the truth of the reality for Aboriginal and Islander people. That these stories were so powerfully received by the royal commission yet widely ignored by the greater structure brings me back to identifying some of the aspects of protection that have been highlighted by research in this area, both in Intellectual Property Rights and Indigenous people and journalism ethics.

My own early editing and production of a student publication, *Threshold*, shone a spotlight on these issues (Dimas 2007; Heckenberg 2007). The Dimas article discussed concerns of ethical and unethical media (Dimas 2007, p.8), the Heckenberg article looked squarely at the promising work around folklore and community ownership of knowledge (Heckenberg 2007, p.9). The interest here is that as this debate continues, there is still the question of recording one's story or song, before you can claim ownership of it. This happened to David Unaipon, when his work was published by William Ramsay Smith, but he had no ownership of it (Heckenberg 2007, p. 9). This is because if someone else records it before community members do, legitimate ownership can be questioned because copyright lies with the person recording the story not the owner of the original knowledge.

The other aspect, mentioned elsewhere in my thesis, is regarding my work at NLA, which was listening to the voices of Wiradjuri Elders telling their own stories, whilst being able to maintain ownership of their work, because they had a say in the way it was recorded. This as well brings to mind the work of Sue Anderson (Anderson, 2003,

p.26), who in her discussions on oral history, refers to the importance of the primary knowledge holder, the one telling the story, being heard directly, rather than through a transcript, this being a primary resource of the archives. In the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations, being able to source archived information in the library is seen as significant to healing. Libraries become, therefore, holders of information, but also places of education and learning for those who come after. These recordings become another way to pass on knowledge.

The contributions made through the stories that come to us from the earlier histories of our community people foster the health and well-being of our present-day communities. By understanding the misguided policies placed on our ancestors, the younger generations can begin to see that they were not at fault. The history of education which has been informed through oral history and the research of people such as Fletcher (1989), is one way to tell the story of subjugation, and policies of segregation, which will help Aboriginal children and students training to be teachers today, to understand historically the origins of present day challenges.

For example, in early Australia, even when Indigenous children showed that they were able to learn as well as non-Indigenous children, if not better, their efforts were soon dismissed. Heckenberg (2006, p.117) talks about one such example:

[I]n 1824 an Aboriginal girl topped the state in a public examination. She studied at the Native School in Parramatta. However, that was later disbanded: the teaching of Indigenous people was considered a useless and impossible challenge.

Along with these attitudes, each state had policies of their own. These policies affected every aspect of Indigenous life. For example, the Victorian State Government policy, in the mid nineteenth century called *The Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864 (Vic)*, was insidious for some families and Indigenous families in particular. The Act targeted children deemed to be neglected and often the most visible of these were Aboriginal children (Gunstone and Heckenberg, 2009, p.73). When the Central Board of Protection of Aborigines instructed all protectors to send the neglected children to Coranderrk reserve, this included children from Aboriginal parents who had surrendered them, as well as children from various communities in that area nearby of the reserve (Gunstone and Heckenberg, 2009, p.73). Surrendering was a euphemism and the children were taken against the will of their parents (*Social Service Act 1969 (Cth)*, p.270). All of this history defined Indigenous knowledge as either missing or of little significance. This is our challenge to regain our voice, and situate our knowledges and histories centrally in the Australian collective story, not just at the margins.

As our people were kept at the margins, further policies of the mid to late ninetieth century reflected a lack of respect towards Aboriginal culture and ways of being regarding family relationships in particular. Many laws in Australia included sections on guardianship of Aboriginal people, including that of children. Section (b) of one such law, Western Australia's *Native Administration Act 1936*, stated, "no native parent or other relative living has the guardianship of an aboriginal or half-caste child" (Elder, 2003, p.259).

Allowing children to be taken away to Reserve schools without parents even knowing, created breakdowns in ancient kinship links and traditions, as well as social upheaval right across Australia. Throughout Australia, Government policies ruled every aspect of life including that of children and education. Mission life was generally very hard on Indigenous children and reserves, although from our family's own oral history, their memories had stories full of humour and insight. Warangesda and the missions generally, were places where people were under strict rules and regulations, which gave

no value to the Aboriginal way of life and no freedom of movement. However, in comparison to many other stories, Warengesda has also been called the camp of mercy.

Turning now to the significance of oral histories, and their exposure to a larger audience, it was not until the release of the report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (known as the 'Bringing them home' Report (1997)) when Aboriginal children, who were now senior people in their communities, could have a voice to express what had happened to them in being taken from their homes and extended family life to the world of institutional living and training. The transformational effect of oral history in terms of healing for community people who went through these experiences could again be identified as one where old wounds were opened, but for many there was also recovery in being listened to.

The policy of segregation meant that Aboriginal children attended mission schools that had a lower education standard than European schools (Fletcher, 1989, p.147). Within this educational environment children were forced to become Christian. As Kartinyeri, (2000, p.30), relates the "religious strictness was phenomenal. It was supposed to be for our own good. I believe these people thought they were called by the Lord to become missionaries and to care for us, the Aboriginal children. The stolen Aboriginal children". The desire to inculcate Christianity into Aboriginal people in their youth, led to a program of training for domestic and pastoral work. Indeed, after my great-grandmother, great-aunties and great-uncles went to Bulgandramine mission school in the early 1900s they were then sent to apprenticeship training (cheap labour for non-Indigenous people), all as part of government policy (Kabaila, 1998, p.63; Groome, 1994, p.172). That is a story held in our family's oral history. My mother in fact tells

me stories she heard as a child, that my Nan did not mind very much being put into an apprenticeship because she had her own room and her own little bed. The mission houses were really tiny, and children shared with several others, so the idea of her own bed appealed to her. As well, my mum also said that Nan used to scrub the back steps and always had an immaculate home as that is what was expected of them in those days. Even as a distant memory and an old story, there are implications involved.

As well as being educated on mission's schools, some Aboriginal children could be taught in government schools, if no mission school was available. This was affected in 1902 by John Perry, New South Wales Minister, who said that all government schools in that state enact a policy of "exclusion on demand" (Fletcher, 1989, p.109). This enabled parents of non-Indigenous children to be able to have Indigenous pupils excluded from the school for little or no real reason (Fletcher, 1989, p.109). The exclusion policy lasted until the late 1930s, but was not taken out of the Teachers Handbook until 1972 (Heckenberg, 2006, p.117). From old stories missions like Brungle and the local school had a good headmaster, who did not have that poor attitude, which meant the old people, both black and white have good memories of those times.

After Perry's exclusion on demand policy came a no less racist and culturally unsafe policy of "*Clean Clad and Courteous*" (Fletcher, 1989). Enacted in the 1930s to 1950s, these "policies were based on the belief that Indigenous peoples did not have the ability to make decisions for themselves in the most basic realms, such as hygiene, or the intelligence to be educated in the same manner as non-Indigenous students" (Whatman and Duncan, 2005, p.120). Again Indigenous cultural values, aspirations or basic human rights were disregarded. From our family stories of this time, the young men

would leave the missions and get work as seasonal workers, but that made it hard for them to get back on the missions, so they would camp outside on the reserves or 'blacks camp'.

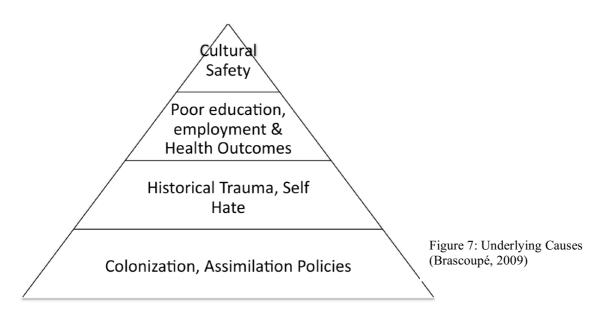
These past government attitudes towards Aboriginal people prevented them from asserting any form of self-determination concerning their own education. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children suffered on a day-to-day basis without any broader understanding by Europeans of what they were going through. Furthermore, without an understanding of children's home life, learning within a usually culturally conflicting school environment can become a daily struggle (Holland, 1996, p.101-3) Beresford, Partington and Gower (2003, p.1) discuss one example of this struggle:

A couple of years ago, a group of Aboriginal teenage boys attending an alternative education program were asked to depict in a painting their perceptions of education. The resulting work, which was part of a research project, had a simple but powerful image: a dejected figure heading into a darkened tunnel having walked away from an open book lying on the ground. When the painting was shown to local Aboriginal people, none was especially shocked at the chosen themes: rejection and despair.

Themes of rejection and despair exist throughout the educational system, as well as other areas of society, such as shown in Atkinson's (2002) work: "Trauma Trails". Atkinson (2002) talks about trauma and how it "seeps slowly and insidiously into the fabric and soul of relations and beliefs of people as community" (Atkinson, 2002, p.53). In her own work Atkinson brought her ideas into the university system, and one of my Aunties who attended her workshops, valued significantly the fact that at a university, there could be a culturally safe place to learn, and also at the same time, a place to heal. Lack of understanding of trauma continues to exist across the education sector, however.

As a way to minimize such effects, practicing teachers and those still undertaking training, need to be educated in Cultural Safety practices and cross cultural awareness

(Department of Education and Training, 2006). Brascoupé (2009), for example, identifies a culturally safe environment, as the place where Indigenous people need to be able to belong, minimizing the many obstacles to be overcome presented in the education system. Figure 5 below, provides an explanation of how Indigenous people have had to survive colonisation, assimilation policies, historical trauma, self-hate, poor education, poor rates of employment, and poor health outcomes (Brascoupé, 2009).



Surviving such historical trauma has left Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in, a vulnerable position when it comes to relationships with mainstream service providers. Optimistically however, over time and through Indigenous community lobbying, the education sector has improved in attitude towards Indigenous students' learning and the cultural practices needed to improve outcomes (Department of Education and Training, 2006). Yet, even today it is a one step forward, two steps back process, with examples such as the Northern Territory Minister of Education, announcing, on 14th October 2008, that Bilingual education will be taken out of the first four hours of the Northern Territory school day. This comes after years of improvements in teaching methods that advocate the bilingual learning process (Partington, 2002, p.137). The Minister (2008) stated that: Teaching and learning programs in Northern Territory (NT) schools are to be conducted in English for the first four hours of each school day, in order to improve literacy and numeracy results, particularly for Indigenous students. The teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and culture may be scheduled during afternoon sessions.

For many children such programs of Bilingual education and Two-way learning are vital to the learning environment as English is sometimes a second or third language. Community Elders were greatly disappointed with the decision as students in Two-way learning schools are performing "marginally better than... students in 'like' non-bilingual schools" (Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, 2004-2005, p. xii, 37). In a letter to the Minister protesting the changes Yunupingu (2008) stated that, "our children are learning in a second language ... I think it is your job to stand up for our children, to acknowledge their Yolngu skills and knowledge and not to keep saying they are failing".

This kind of attitude in Australia, is very different to my experience in Hawaii at the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies where language speakers are given much support, and there are also immersion schools provided for selected students. This means that when higher education students in Hawaii want to write their Masters or PhD thesis, they have had the scaffolding at university level to succeed in this endeavour in their own language. The idea of cultural safety is much more embedded in education frameworks when one's own language is the language of pedagogical engagement.

Locally, within the context of early childhood, Martin (1999, p.7) explains that services, particularly those run by Indigenous organisations, are "more likely to be aware of and find ways in which limitations of not having fluency in Australian English, particularly its written form, do not inhibit relationships between the service, families, and communities". Two-way learning helps children be able to transfer into a mainstream English education at their own rate. Such educational practices use the "home language" to build upon and support such educational outcomes, as well as supporting Indigenous ways of learning and being (Martin, 1999, p.7).

It is important for providers, then, to recognise and practice Cultural Safety procedures and have regard for our continued links to Indigenous knowledge. One way to ensure this is the employment of Indigenous staff, which "assures cultural safety" (Martin, 1999, p.6). The education system also needs to recognise how extended an Indigenous child's family may be, with family relationships and responsibilities well beyond the biological parents. Staff members and students of education providers can form meaningful personal relationships based on concepts of extended family and reflecting community needs (Martin, 1999, p.6). Such relationships are more possible with people from the local Indigenous community employed. Once established such personnel "become another important facet in attainment of cultural safety. These personal relationships operate beyond the parameters of service provision and extend into the local community" (Martin, 1999, p.6). Seeing a familiar face makes an environment more user friendly and culturally safe. This has been an important challenge as well in the education sector. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, like staff in the service provider sector, add a level of cultural understanding, Indigenous knowledge, and acceptance to community participation.

Protecting Indigenous knowledges and therefore including culturally safe practices within the education system goes well beyond that of safe teaching practices. In order to enable a true sharing and safeguarding of knowledge, education needs to go deeper and include involvement of the community, and Elders interaction and knowledge of cultural and family circumstances (Martin, 1999, p.7). Craven, d'Arbon and Wilson-Miller (1999, p.240), express how important it is to follow these culturally safe practices within the school community and classroom. Non-Indigenous teachers need to teach only certain aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, with it being essential to include Indigenous people and the community in both the process of structuring curriculum and the practical classroom teaching (Craven et al 1999, p.240; Beresford and Partington, 2003 p.19). For a culturally safe experience and to enable Indigenous knowledge between educator, student and community it is essential that teachers realise their responsibility is not only fiduciary but also cultural, acknowledging community aspirations of cultural inclusion. Heckenberg (2004, p.1) suggests:

In working in Indigenous education, one has a social responsibility to the Aboriginal community, to remember tradition and to celebrate culture when teaching children... In accommodating the Indigenous child, to be able to experience cultural practice in teaching styles, can create an environment for good changes within the child. This change is a healing experience and a scaffold for further learning. Acceptance of self in terms of identity contributes, also, to the educational wellbeing of the child. All these are factors of the ecology of his or her learning environment.

Further, the educational arena needs to develop an understanding of cultural flexibility and what cultural inclusion means. Brislin (1993, p. 211) defines cultural flexibility as involving "changes in one's behaviour to meet the demands of situations found in other cultures". This cultural flexibility works in with Cultural Safety practices within classroom practice. If the teacher has no knowledge of such issues, then there is a very good chance unsafe practices could become the norm in a space frequented several hours a day by vulnerable children.

Craven et al (1999, p.240) guide future teachers through best practice models when teaching Indigenous studies demonstrates what is acceptable for non-Indigenous people to teach students and what should be taught only by Indigenous people (Craven et al, 1999, p.240). This is vitally important when considering cultural knowledge belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves. Within the spirit of *Yindyamarra* and respect for cultural values there are aspects of Indigenous knowledge that are vital to keep in Indigenous hands.

This brings the discussion back to what for me is a core feature of my way of seeing, and that is that Cultural Safety and continued protection of our knowledge systems is absolutely imperative within the university system. Though many universities have introduced mandatory classes that focus on Indigenous Australia and issues of cultural understanding for some degrees, many are left without a required Indigenous content. Indeed, some degrees have not had a positive response from students who feel they are forced into learning about Indigenous culture. For example, my personal experience found untenable levels of racism and stereotyping from nursing students. It is often the students themselves that see no need to learn about matters to do with other cultures especially those of Indigenous Australians. This could be because many "[believe they] have never met an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person" and therefore see no reason to learn about Indigenous culture and Cultural Safety practices (Mooney and Craven, 2005, p.6).

Considering the diversity of contemporary Australia, a curriculum framework inclusive of Indigenous content has a positive impact on all of society. Classes within this framework might need to be contextualised so that learning modules are put into the context of Indigenous culture. "Contextualisation is an approach which aims to empower Aboriginal identity. However, a key component of understanding identity is cultural safety" (Watego, 2005, p.769). This framework of learning is supported by Indigenous Elders as a pedagogy to support training of young people and community in cultural issues (Watego, 2005, p.773). Surely, part of such a curriculum framework, would be enabling students to have a more considered regard for Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander knowledge systems, and for students to understand the complexities of a society of Indigenous nations that can honour its knowledges and hold its values and beliefs over thousands of generations through an oral tradition.

Within the context of university ideas and the necessity for a more culturally competent way to handle Indigenous materials and knowledge systems, I can see the need for a universal framework that protects our oral traditions. I believe this can be facilitated by a national study looking at cultural safety within university research structures and providing a model for ethical ways of talking to Indigenous participants. This would require a memorandum of understanding between all universities in Australia. This model could be informed by collaboration with other Indigenous researchers globally. Cultural Safety in regard to holding Indigenous knowledge, including the development of an oral tradition national ethical study, could be applied across all the higher education institutions.

## CONCLUSION

Indigenous peoples do not view their heritage in terms of property ... but in terms of community and individual responsibility. Possessing a song or medical knowledge carries with it certain responsibilities to show respect to and maintain a reciprocal relationship with the human beings, animals, plants and places with which the song, story or medicine is connected.

(E-I Daes, 1993).

The responsibility that comes with being a member of a community brings both great reward yet also great moral weight. For there is no 'opt out' button that allows knowledge once received to be transmitted or shared in ways that don't benefit the broader group or nation. The reciprocal responsibility is not limited to people when a there is a deep place based knowledge that is a part of your soul and runs through your veins creating, since birth, an unbreakable bond. This in turn creates an internal ethical research compass that this research is voicing.

There is not always this kind of compass, though, within those that make the laws that are there to protect our rights as Indigenous people. Through an exploration through the UNDRIP and other international laws, conventions and policies it is safe to say that many law makers have good intentions. The majority of the time, however, these international documents are not legally binding on nation states and therefore lose their impact.

There is, though, a strong will within our communities that will not allow our cultural connections and intrinsic knowledge to be stifled by colonial oppression. Across the globe there is example on example of communities holding their knowledges close until they can be openly shared again. Through the case studies we see both the strength and power of Indigenous oral histories and traditions and the ongoing denial of voice and power within the western system. The innovative ways that culture and language are passed on are hampered by a particularly western and rigid way of defining and qualifying knowledge and knowledge transmission. In the next chapter, the Conclusion, the thesis examines how we can protect our knowledges in these western frameworks.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# **BIMIRR CONCLUSION**

### INTRODUCTION

We want hope, not racialism,	Give us choice, not cold coercion,
Brotherhood, not ostracism,	Status, not discrimination,
Black advance, not white ascendance:	Human rights, not segregation.
Make us equals, not dependants.	You the law, like Roman Pontius,
We need help, not exploitation,	Make us proud, not
We want freedom, not frustration;	colour-conscious;
Not control, but self-reliance,	Give the deal you still deny us,
Independence, not compliance,	Give goodwill, not bigot bias;
Not rebuff, but education,	Give ambition, not prevention,
Self-respect, not resignation.	Confidence, not condescension;
Free us from a mean subjection,	Give incentive, not restriction,
For a bureaucrat Protection.	Give us Christ, not crucifixion.
Let's forget the old-time slavers:	Though baptised and blessed and Bibled
Give us fellowship, not favours;	We are still tabooed and libelled.
Encouragement, not prohibitions,	You devout Salvation-sellers,
Homes, not settlements and missions.	Make us neighbours, not
We need love, not overlordship,	fringe-dwellers;
Grip of hand, not whip-hand wardship;	Make us mates, not poor relations,
Opportunity that places	Citizens, not serfs on stations.
White and black on equal basis.	Must we native Old Australians
You dishearten, not defend us,	In our land rank as aliens?
Circumscribe, who should befriend us	Banish bans and conquer caste,
Give us welcome, not aversion,	Then we'll win our own at last.
	(Oodgeroo Noonuccal, 1962)
	(

# Aboriginal Charter of Rights

Research on oral traditions of Indigenous people and research conducted using Indigenous oral histories and stories needs to be led by, and in collaboration with, Indigenous people themselves. Research needs to be for the benefit of Indigenous communities and lead to productive viable outcomes for the people who are the participants in the research. When using Indigenous people's knowledge for the benefit of a research outcome, Indigenous people and communities need to be part of the research process from start to finish and should share in all academic authorship.

This thesis has explored various best practice models to examine how effective they are in protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples within research structures and what mechanisms have been put into place to ensure Indigenous knowledges are protected. Written from a Wiradjuri perspective, with my insight through personal story and ancestry, this research on Indigenous knowledges, oral history and cultural safety makes ethical research practice core business. Indigenous peoples' voices globally must be the priority.

To enable me to undertake this research I needed to create a theoretical framework that would both represent community needs and also be accepted by those of the academy. Indigenous methodologies can work in partnership with western research methodologies to enable the creation of a culturally safe research environment. During my research I explored the cultural appropriateness and flexibility of a mixed method approach, with Indigenous methodologies being central. By utilising approaches which use methodologies such as oral history and tribalography, enhanced by knowledge incorporating Indigenous cultural values and *Yindyamarra*, I created the appropriate combination of those methodologies to produce culturally safe methods and a culturally safe environment. Yindyamarra is central to the Wiradjuri philosophy of my research practice. This weaving together of a mixture of methodologies has allowed me to conduct research in the unique way that privileges the voices of our communities. Diverse and culturally rooted, this concept is my 'way of doing' as an Indigenist researcher. Placing myself within this research through Yindyamarra, my own Wiradjuri methodology and respectful system, I uphold the importance that this alignment has within research protocols. This provides a powerful connector for all elements of my enquiry: a framework of best practice.

With *Yindyamarra* at the core of my research practices and with this research being such a personal journey for me, it was imperative that I centre my culture within this research and to explore my own cultural positioning. As an Indigenist researcher the cultural background I have is part of my research. The everyday interactions and the

ethical protocols I strive to maintain are all informed by this. Exploring the Wiradjuri Nation and the importance of the land, the bush and the rivers allowed an insight into my way of thinking, reflecting my upbringing and Elders' teachings. It is expressed through my research methodology of *Yindyamarra* being central to Wiradjuri and that our spirituality lives on. Connection to culture and to those that teach us, our Elders, shapes us into the people we are today. Without these connections, neither this research nor myself as the person I currently am, would exist.

Situating my cultural context and my Indigenist positioning puts in focus how I approach research and, in particular, my ethical approach to research. I put forward my intrinsic respectful ways of being I was taught as a child and I take that with me into my research practices. Treat every Elder that you work with like a grandparent and listen respectfully to whatever they want to share with you no matter if it directly answers your research question or not. If you do not give the same respectful listening process to all of those who are sharing their life stories with you, then why undertake a research that is supposed to privilege their voices, if you choose not to privilege them in the initial conversation? This is my way of thinking and my way of being as a researcher. Each researcher brings a unique position to their research and my Wiradjuri culture and perspective underpins mine. Within this I follow the teachings and learnings of our Elders and work from that standpoint to privilege their voices and create culturally safe environments I would want them to feel respected in.

These environments of Cultural Safety demonstrate how an awareness of one's own personal power within all interactions, particularly research, can create a safer space for people who may feel more vulnerable. The Model, exploring the conceptions of Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety, looks at this self-reflection and best practice in how to ensure we the researchers are not influencing our interviews in a negative manner. The model culminates with Cultural Safety and how this might determine feeling 'safe' in vulnerable situations. For the researcher or for the institution to be creating these places of safety on their own is to defeat the purpose of Cultural Safety, for we risk falling into the trap of colonizing cultural safety (Eckermann *et al.*, 2006, p.174). When looking to undertake research with Indigenous communities, researchers must first work with the community to create a truly safe framework. It is vital that we empower communities and the knowledge holders to share on their terms or not at all.

It is also essential to create a relationship of mutual sharing and ownership, because this knowledge being used is from the community, from the Elders, and to ignore that they are rightful owners of their own knowledge, is to ignore Cultural Safety. However, unless there are set guidelines and approaches that bind researchers to use culturally appropriate ways of being and culturally safe methods then there is no unified way forward. Everything else is inadequate. We need to hold Cultural Safety in their own hands and make sure that Indigenous people, their oral histories and their knowledges are protected and only used in an ethical manner.

Indigenous oral histories need to be assured protection and remain within community hands. Oral history is a way we can privilege the individual voice and cultural perspective in an academic context in a world that can otherwise seem alien to the oral tradition. Oral history works with the narrators to allow them to share their individual perspective of historical events and their own lives. The oral history researcher aims, not to make their voice the most heard in the research, but the person whose story it actually is. It is important to respect the very nature of this type of collaboration, the orality of this sharing. Oral history transcriptions are a useful valid method of retaining people's stories and allowing for easy access to them. Yet, they are an imperfect way of retaining Indigenous traditional knowledges that are so intrinsically oral. Transcripts can be useful as a side tool but we need to ensure that the voices or our Elders and Knowledge holders are privileged while being kept safe. Our Elders live on through story and that sharing can never be truly recreated.

Exploring the world of Indigenous oral history allowed me insight into global community contexts. My time spent in Victoria, Hawaii and Columbia University has given me a certainty on direct consultation in the future for Indigenous driven research. Columbia University's global best practice has given me a unique perspective on how to work with domestic Australian obligations and global Indigenous practice at the interface of Indigenous people and the academic word. Though oral history is one of the best ways in which to work with Indigenous communities and safeguard Indigenous knowledge it is still up to the individual researcher to create culturally safe environments. Communities and Elders are still at risk of being taken advantage of if the research does not respect the unique knowledge sharing experience that is an oral history recording. I would also assert to researchers that they allow the option for joint authorship on work produced from using Indigenous life stories. Without this kind of ethical practice people who are interviewed may be excluded from any publication of their own knowledge. There is a risk that even a good model like oral history and storytelling, may not meet the absolute needs of Indigenous people in retaining their own knowledge under their own terms.

There should ideally be a way for Indigenous people to be able to retain their knowledge under international law and conventions and other global protections for Indigenous peoples. However, internationally there is insufficient legal protection and restraint for the exploration of Indigenous knowledge with safety. As national examples attest it is an imperfect post-colonial system that is counter to Indigenous sovereignty. There needs to be cultural protections in place to ensure that nation states are not using outdated processes of assimilation to box in Indigenous knowledge and cultural rights. When looking at case studies on language rights in Hawai'i, oral testimony in Canada and education in Australia, nation states do not ensure protection for their Indigenous people, but Indigenous people themselves have learnt to stand firm in the face of oppression. Each example shows how countries in the past and in the present have tried to stifle Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.

Indigenous knowledges even when deemed culturally acceptable within the country still end up as 'other'. This is because even protections that have been created were formulated in a system that was not designed to protect Indigenous rights. Indigenous people need to be respected and become part of the process and decision making of this protection process. Traditional knowledges that are shared orally are left vulnerable in a system that allows for very little flexibility for what is legally conventional. Though the written word is still relatively new to that of oral communication, orality is not seen as legally legitimate within these western guidelines. Even when international documents incorporate protections for Indigenous knowledges, nation states can and do choose to ignore them in favour of their own idea of what the Indigenous peoples of their countries should be entitled to. It is essential nation states, and we as individual researchers, understand the important role that traditional law and protocols play in informing contemporary ways of being, and pay respect to that which is as old as time.

# HOW DO WE PROTECT INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES WITHIN WESTERN RESEARCH AND KEEP OWNERSHIP IN COMMUNITY HANDS?

Indigenous Knowledge can be protected within research if ethical processes and policies are put into place, within government, education and health. These processes, however, tend to be up to the individual researcher or at times a socially conscious institutional policy. It is important to have a combined approach to Indigenous research. We need an approach beyond Cultural Safety methodology and individual ethical processes to ensure that Indigenous knowledges are protected within research. As previously evidenced through this study it has been found that a combined approach of Indigenous interaction is necessary. This need for a collective approach combines key elements of culturally safe research practices, ethical practice learnt from Indigenous methodologies such as *Yindyamarra* and institutional research reforms towards prioritizing Indigenous knowledge ownership.

There is a three-tiered approach to the research of Indigenous knowledges that needs to be enacted in order to ensure that Indigenous knowledges are protected. Firstly, a grassroots individual research set of best practice guidelines should be encouraged. There are many versions of how best to research with Indigenous individuals and communities, such as AIATSIS's 2012 *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS)*, among others. Guidelines and best practice models for individual researchers to adhere to allow for a broader understanding of the importance of Indigenous knowledges and the ethical ways in which to research in such communities. The GERAIS for example focuses on concepts of rights, respect, reciprocity and recognition. The document, and others like it, talk about how we need to take a collaborative approach to our research and how giving back to communities is essential.

The second tier to ensuring that Indigenous knowledges are protected within research is to have research institutions and universities enact policy that directly protects the interests of Indigenous communities they may be working with. This ethical research process, like that of the Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) in Australia, oversees all research involving humans. However, though the HRECs generally do have a higher level of ethical consideration when undertaking research with Indigenous peoples, bodies such as this do not hold the protection of Indigenous knowledges for the communities as one of the risks to be assessed.

The third tier in the process to ensure the protection of Indigenous knowledges in research is to create a charter that is enacted globally. This charter on Indigenous knowledge protection will endeavor to create a global protection and recognition of Indigenous knowledges transmitted orally into research as still belonging to the individual and the community not the researcher and the institution from which the research is published.

The following section will expand on these three tiers and how working together this approach can ensure Indigenous knowledges are protected from research exploitation. Through all of these steps it is vital to acknowledge that the best ways of protecting cultural rights can only come from Indigenous peoples themselves. At every step of the way Indigenous communities need to be a part of the process to protect their own knowledge.

### A BEST PRACTICE WHEN RESEARCHING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

It is important to establish a best practice model when working with Indigenous communities. When undertaking my research, I worked with the Wiradjuri Council of Elders to determine what the community wanted and what ethical protocols I needed to abide by in order to undertake my community driven research. Some of these principles may seem common practice if you are an ethical researcher. However, this is not always the case for other researchers and so it is best practice to work with the community before the research begins so as to work out research boundaries and community protocols. Within my research the community chose to have a written document that showed exactly how I would abide by the protocols that we had been agreed upon. This was something that both the community and I felt was the best step to ensure ethical processes were followed through.

One such ethical process that I constructed was to create a framework that enabled publishing of any community knowledge independently of a research or educational institution. The Wiradjuri community and Council of Elders were concerned with where their knowledge would end up and if they would be able to continue to have a say on its distribution. To ensure that community ownership was never questioned, nor individual Elders ever de-identified within university ethics process I implemented a research structure that ruled out this possibility. With this particular community research being the creation of Elder autobiographies it was ensured that the Elders themselves would be given the authorship of their own life histories. This is not always the case with other research and so it was essential to make sure that this occurred. Next the community was concerned about where and how such stories would be published, particularly as many such researcher-community collaborations end with the researcher's institution owning the Intellectual Property Rights of community knowledge. To ensure that this would not be the case, in this particular community, the auspices of publication would fall to the Council of Elders. This would maintain community ownership, while also providing community approval for individual accounts of community knowledge. This is only one such example of ethical research guidelines to follow and each individual community needs to be involved in this process to determine their own.

There are also general guidelines which can be followed that ensure this ethical research process is undertaken. As is demonstrated in the case studies within this thesis there is 'no one size fits all' models and it is important to work with each individual community and community member to maintain culturally safe research environments. Below is a list of best practice ethical research principles that should be taken into account when working with Indigenous communities.

- 1. Respect that you are standing on someone else's country.
- 2. Respect that Indigenous people still seek sovereignty from a country you might identify as being a part of.
- 3. Be aware that you may need to be welcomed into Indigenous Nations by community leaders before research begins.
- 4. All research conducted with communities must be of benefit to those communities in a tangible way.
- 5. Create links and try to attend community events before research to build a rapport and show ongoing respect.
- 6. Acknowledge that English may not be the most culturally appropriate language to conduct research in.
- 7. Learn the local history and, if possible, the language of the community you are working with.
- 8. Respect community timelines and that those timelines may be longer than those of your research grant or institutional outcomes.
- 9. When researching with community understand that they are giving up their time and even if monetary compensation is not available provide meals, tea and coffee and other commitments to prolonged discourse.
- 10. Be open to discussions around your own cultural background. You are asking communities to share intimate details of their lives; you can also share yours.

- 11. Recognise the traumatic nature of some topics discussed. Provide information about where to find culturally appropriate help to support interviewees. Respect the need for breaks or abrupt conclusions to discussions.
- 12. When working with Elders embrace the knowledge they share with you, even if it does not answer your question the way you want to hear it. Remember that it is a privilege to be given such knowledge.
- 13. Questions should always be straight forward, and open ended, so that participants are able to freely discuss their life history in whichever way best suits each participant. This creates organic and honest dialogue.
- 14. Do not enforce a certain type of audio or audio-visual recording on participants. Choose whichever medium they prefer. Some researchers still even use pencil and paper if this ensures a more culturally safe environment.
- 15. Following the interview process audio-visual recordings and transcriptions should be provided to the participants, to review and, if necessary, modify their statements. This practice shows the process is conducted in good faith and is also culturally safe.
- 16. If Elders or community members request certain audio-visual technology is used, for community or family record keeping processes, honour their requests. The testament nature of the process can give lasting significance to future generations.
- 17. De-identification as required by institutional ethics processes may not fall within community wishes. Be aware that this practice can be contentious, particularly as this information then loses its community ownership.
- 18. Work with communities around de-identification. A solution can be created that follows both community and institutional ethical protocols.
- 19. Acknowledge that research may highlight a contradiction between community experience and government liability.
- 20. Recognise that you as a researcher may have access to more government documents on the community, than the community itself, due to varying access issues. Share these resources openly.
- 21. All Knowledges shared within the research should remain the intellectual property of the people / community who has been researched.
- 22. If the publishable outcomes rely on the knowledge collected within the research, co-authorship should be given to the people / community from which the knowledge derives.

#### NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

A National framework on protecting Indigenous knowledge in research provides systematic protections that individual's research protocols may not be able to provide.

A framework or even a national Memorandum of Understanding between universities

would ensure that there is an across the board approach to ethical research practices

when working with Indigenous communities. Currently each institution will determine how they allow their researchers to interact with their human participants. Organizations such as the Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) in Australia, oversee the implementation of ethical research practices, institution by institution. Yet protection for Indigenous participants within this framework are more centered around their emotional and physical wellbeing than around Intellectual Property protections of their knowledge. This is not to say that emotional and physical wellbeing is not important, because it is. However, the other layer of protection regarding Intellectual Property Rights is fundamental to spiritual, cultural and emotional well-being. Giving away knowledge through inappropriate behaviour by researchers can haunt participants and cause upheaval in communities, spiritual loss, and generally grief. It is essential to ensure that research with Indigenous communities protects all aspects of people's safety. Research frameworks, however, need to also ensure that communities' copyright issues and Intellectual Property are protected from being siphoned off by researchers for their own self-interest, just as much as the institution itself has to provide for auditing of ethical research practice.

To ensure that Indigenous knowledges stay within community and that ownership of all knowledge shared is respected, a national agreement needs to be implemented that requires institutions to prioritise the respect for, and the protection of, Indigenous knowledges. If institutions signed onto this agreement, not only would individual researchers have to adhere to these ethical research principles, but so would the organizations they are part of. As it sits currently, it remains up to individual researchers themselves as to whether they decide to respect community ownership of knowledge, or whether they use it as they see fit, to advance their own interests. An international charter for ethical research practices when working with Indigenous communities, would hold an international accountability to those researching Indigenous knowledges. This would make not only the researchers and institutions accountable for any breaches of knowledge protection, but also the international community that uses Indigenous knowledges on biodiversity. Indigenous knowledges are being exploited on a global scale. For example, in terms of health care, almost 80 per cent of the world's population rely on traditional medicinal knowledge (Brown, 1995, p.201). Since Indigenous knowledge is shared by verbal-oral communication very little is written down by communities themselves to prove ownership in this written focused and technological driven world.

An international charter would enforce ethical practices to take place. It would enshrine the rights of Indigenous peoples to still own their own knowledge even if they were not the first ones to write it down. Oral history practices would be protected and community driven protocols put into place. While researcher frameworks or institutional commitments are still individually or organizationally led, an international charter would require that all had to follow the ethical research processes. Indigenous people themselves should be able to define when they feel safe in a research setting. Indigenous people should be able to define when they feel that their intellectual property is being misused. Also, they should be able to control the use of such knowledge even after it has been shared with a wider audience.

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has been a labour of love from me. The research has been a part of my learning journey from community driven research to international fellowships. As a young PhD student I was asked by one of my Senior Elders, Aunty Flo Grant, if I would think about doing some oral histories within my community. This opened up a door I had never seen before. Though I had been working with Elders in Victoria before that, to be able to sit down with my own community and listen to their life stories was truly an honour. This process also got me thinking about the safety of our Indigenous knowledges in research and how I could protect my own community's ownership of this knowledge if it was a central part of my research. From there I have gone on a research journey of exploration to examine how we can ensure that Indigenous knowledges are protected within this space. It is truly imperative for us as Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Wiradjuri communities that knowledge which is shared outside the community is still protected from harm and exploitation. Oral tradition and within that, oral histories are tools that have been used for millennia to maintain cultural connectedness and continue cultural practices. For this practice to now be threatened is horrific. If a researcher is going to use knowledge learnt from researching within Indigenous communities, they need to make sure that the knowledge distribution remains in the hands of those they learnt from. As Indigenous people, we should not simply be researched or written about. It needs to be a collaborative process with community needs and interests at the forefront. "[N]othing about us – without us", it is that simple (Olli, 2013).

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