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My island home: Indigenous festivals and archipelago Australia

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Dr Lisa Slater

'My island home is waiting for me: The Dreaming Festival and archipelago Australia'

It's raining in sunny Queensland. Rain wasn't on my mind when I left wintry Sydney, then I was wondering: why so many Indigenous festivals now? what are they doing? where did they come from? to what effect? Having fled a chilly Sydney mid-morning, I arrive Friday afternoon (Day 1 of the Dreaming Festival): after an easy one-hour flight to Brisbane, a clean and surprisingly on time train to Caboolture, a local school bus to Woodford, I share Woodford's only taxi to the festival grounds. My companions are a motley crew, only later do I appreciate that they are somewhat representative of the festivalgoer. John from Nambour, taciturn to the point of almost mute, is meeting up with his young family; Eddie is an engaging, well-traveled Brisbane based, Ethiopian born, security guard working at the festival; 20-year-old Sebastian, who spreads warmth and acceptance like a northern Queensland winter sun and looks like a suntanned angel, is working as a volunteer. Everyone is impressed that I've come from Sydney, bestowing upon me the valued status of the most traveled. Kate, the taxi driver, is like one of *those* Australian characters from a road movie: friendly and welcoming, overwhelming us with local knowledge and, in so doing, enclosing us within her world. She's helpful and kind, yet a little paranoid: blissfully unaware of her own inconsistencies, whilst generously informing us of the 'weird goings-on' around town. It is like backpacking, with the luxury of home culture and language.

Upon arrival, it begins to rain heavily. Thankfully, I decided against bringing my own flimsy tent, instead I'm sleeping in the relative comfort of tent city: thick canvas walls, carpeted floor, foldout bed and hot water. Have raincoat, but no gumboots. Nevertheless, the rain is comforting. Strangely, when it clears so does a little of the intimacy. It is cold; colder than I remember QLD gets. We gather around drums of fire to keep warm.

The Opening Ceremony takes place in the rain. We sit on cardboard, plastic bags, huddled under raincoats around the lagoon to watch performances, primarily dancers, from across Indigenous Australia and the South Pacific. Troupes dance separately, transitioning smoothly to the next, until they merge, making the space an Indigenous place. Performances, such as this, which incorporate and privilege what is predominantly recognized as 'traditional' culture, risk being consumed as spectacle and affirming notions of the 'authentic'. The range of dance troupes, and their distinct styles, interrupts such an interpretation. Perhaps it is how close the performers are to the audience, but there seems little room for spectacle. Of course, there is the rain; we're all getting wet together. No one seems to mind the rain; there is something inviting and commanding about the ceremony that holds the audience in place, but maybe that is just the potency of performance. The ceremony is designed to affirm, respect and celebrate the meaning of country (Roberts, 2006). After, we huddle around the fires to dry off and keep warm. I dry my bum beside George Burrarrawanga.¹ We make small talk; I appreciate the rain for the opportunities it creates for chat.

For those familiar with Woodford Folk Festival, the layout of the grounds of the Dreaming Festival, although smaller, is similar and shares the same site. The Dreaming is an initiative of the Queensland Folk Federation, and developed from Woodford festival. Large venues and outdoor performance sites mark the perimeter of the grounds, interspersed are multi-ethnic food and coffee stalls to delight the cosmopolitan appetite and plenty for those whose budgets or tastes prefer the simpler fare of hotdog and chips. There are galleries, workshop tents, community information booths and the usual festival shopping: tie-dyed clothes, South American shirts and trousers, hand-made jewelry, the trendy festival purchase – this year, colourful Croc shoes – and the stall, going broke or raking it in, selling raincoats. The site is orientated around an artificial lagoon and an open-air dance space – Dancestry. Over the 4 days, walking between venues, to the Hare Krishna tent for another of their simple, yet distinctive, vegetable curries or one more organic Byron Bay donut, one weaves throughout the grounds, until it becomes as familiar as one's neighborhood. Most performances are crowded, the cafés full, but one can find solace on the hill by the lagoon, or back at the tent listening to the rain. Joining a table in a crowded café, lingering on the edges of a venue or sitting in the rain watching an open-air performance, you become a part of the festival.

I'm surprised by the composition of the audience (albeit many are also performers).

There are far more thirty-something parents and their young children than I anticipated, and far fewer young, environmental ferals and older, concerned, white Australians. Some of the venues' audiences are predominantly Indigenous: most especially the comedy and music tents, and at the headliner acts, such as Yothu Yindi, Troy Cassar-Daley and the

Warumpi band, everyone is up dancing or sitting on the hill singing along. Although there are plenty of spaces, such as particular cafes and coffee stalls, which appear to be predominantly white, there are far more venues that are shared. Performers, even the famous ones, stroll around the grounds like any other festivalgoer.

Festivals occur in a liminal zone: outside the discrete frame allotted to ritual life, yet separate from the quotidian world of the everyday (Kleinert, 1999). This, famously elaborated by Victor Turner, is the significance of staged performances of cultural identity (Turner, 1986). The festival audience is not at home in their ordinary world, however, although not at home, nor is one completely displaced. The Dreaming is, for the most part, a comfortable enough place to be, despite the rain, because of the rain.

Following Turner, Kleinert observes cultural performances are not simply expressions of social systems, but rather they are also reflective: implicitly or explicitly commenting on social life and the way society deals with its own history (1999, p. 347). The liminal zone of the Dreaming might allow white, settler Australians, who I'd argue are most in need of a form of cultural self-reflection, to be both at home and out of place, which in turn might make them available to these critiques without becoming self-alienated or too defensive.

There is a need for many of us to be aware that we do identify with the dominant culture, we are a part of the mainstream, and thus to reflect upon our place in Australia, the telling of history, our social-political responsibilities and how and what we make of Australia, without losing the ground beneath our feet. The Dreaming might just marginalise and accommodate the dominant culture enough to permit *me* to understand that *I* am being

addressed: asked to reflect upon what role I play in assigning Indigenous people bit parts on the stage of *white Australia*.

The Festival does not privilege a particular representation of Indigeneity. It gathers a diverse range of performers and forum participants from vastly different places. The festival director, Rhoda Roberts, considers the Dreaming is about understanding, learning and listening, and recognising that culture comes in many different forms (2005). The Dreaming strives to present rich, diverse and distinctive Indigenous cultural histories, and affirm Indigenous people as historical agents. Over the four days, I watch traditional dancers from across Australia and the South Pacific, contemporary dance, theatre and film, comedy, a range of music from hip-hop, to jazz to country. I attend forums by Cathy Freeman, Gary Foley, Alexis Wright and Chris Sarra, and listen to many lesser-known people speaking on issues as varied as art, education, employment, literature, music and recovery from personal and cultural trauma. The festivalgoer can participate in workshops: hip-hop, yidaki, weaving and traditional games. The Dreaming aims to avow cultural identity and difference, whilst the immersion and intimacy of the festival space enables, as Roberts posits, new ways to engage broader Australia and international audiences (2005). Importantly, the audience is Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; however, this paper takes as its primary focus the non-Indigenous audience: examining the festival as a socio-political initiative to foster non-Indigenous Australians engagement with Indigenous Australians beyond the dominant media images and persistent colonial representations. Significantly, the festival not only bears witness to the ongoing political struggles, but also locates non-Indigenous people in an Indigenous political arena.

Arguably, the Dreaming situates non-Indigenous Australians in proximity to, or even a part of, the socio-political struggle. Unlike the alienating images privileged by the media and politicians, which confirm the problems faced by Indigenous people as both overwhelming and remote – out there somewhere, beyond the civic body, and by extension unAustralian – at the Dreaming, entrenched social issues coexist alongside celebration. Thus, the socio-political struggle is not strange, or estranging, but an aspect of contemporary Australia.

a little bit of history

Since colonisation, there has been a history of Aboriginal public performance for non-Indigenous people. However, they have primarily been received as modes of ‘cultural’ tourism or entertainment representative of a ‘primitive’ age or dying culture. Kleinert writes that:

colonial history is replete with a rich history of such performances. However, the importance of these cultural representations has been largely overlooked, either bracketed off from history as anthropology ...appropriated as theatre, viewed primarily as a form of entertainment and a spectacle of an exotic primitive Other. (1999, p. 347)

The forced sedentarisation of Central Desert Aborigines, which imposed inter-group residency on various Aboriginal societies, Françoise Dussart argues, resulted in public ritual becoming an important tool for inter-Aboriginal engagement (2000, p. 76). Non-Indigenous viewers were rare, however, with the introduction of various *Aboriginal Land Rights Acts* public performance became a ‘kind of legal tool’, due to the legislation requiring proof of genealogical and religious connections to the land (Dussart, 2000, p. 76). Government officials became a new audience for public ceremonies. The socio-

political role and effectiveness of these cultural performances for Indigenous people went largely unrecognised by non-Indigenous audiences. During the Protectionist era mainstream community festivals and events, such as rodeos and rural shows, provided an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to embrace the performative potential of such events for political engagement with settler society (Henry, 2000, p. 587).

Throughout the history of the Australian nation, Indigenous people have participated in festivals commemorating nationhood, and staged counter festivals to protest colonisation and to celebrate survival. These are a means of entering into dialogue with mainstream Australia and testimony to ongoing political struggles (Kleinert, 1999, p. 345). The annual Survival Day concerts staged across Australia unsettle and challenge official Australia Day celebrations, and have grown out of a long history of utilising public performance to remind broader Australia of the continuing Indigenous presence. For contemporary audiences performance has become an increasingly familiar aspect of cultural practice among Indigenous peoples. In recent years, major Indigenous festivals have emerged including, Garma Festival, Yeperenye Dreaming, Barunga Festival, Laura Festival, CROC Eisteddfod, Coming of the Light and NAIDOC events. In 2003, in recognition of the vibrancy and significance of Indigenous festivals, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funded a touring photographic exhibition, *Kickin' up Dust: Contemporary Festivals of Indigenous Australia*, featuring images of Garma, Torres Strait Islander, Stompem Ground and Irapuna festivals (Payne, 2003). For both Indigenous performers and their audience, these array of settings provide an important context for the contemporary negotiation and transmission of Indigenous peoples'

identities (Myers qtd. Kleinert, 1999, p. 346). The range of performances and the diverse and divergent identities presented at the Dreaming defies anyone's ability to define and categorise Indigenous identity. The Dreaming offers far more than an avenue for the expression of Indigenous culture, cultural performance provides a space for representation and identity formation, and also political engagement and critique of the dominant culture. In several different forums, Indigenous speakers directly addressed their non-Indigenous audience members, asking us how we justified the continuing appalling health and education statistics, and what we might do, in conjunction with Indigenous Australians, to improve the situation. In particular, Chris Sarra, the ex-principal of Cherbourg school, insisted that only when white Australians (because they are the majority), decide it is no longer acceptable *would* change occur. Sarra suggested that what is broadly interpreted as Indigenous community dysfunction is instead, amongst other things, a mainstream malaise.

At different stages, critiques of the dominant culture have required Indigenous people to engage with, adapt and use political ideas, like those of citizenship, justice and self-determination, while drawing upon Indigenous cultural traditions (Stokes, 1997). In recent years, the political idea of human and Indigenous rights has enabled Indigenous people to gain a political purchase both nationally and internationally. The protection of the rights of Indigenous people, Cribb and Narangoa note, stands in some ways for the broader issues of protecting cultural diversity from the homogenising effects of the market (2006, p. 233). The growing disquiet about the effects of globalisation and capitalism arguably supplies a ready audience for the Dreaming. However, I would also

suggest that the festival is the socio-political initiative of perceptive Indigenous activists harnessing, like so many before them, the troubles and fashions of the mainstream for their own means. The question remains: to what consequence? The Dreaming Festival arises out of a long history of cultural performance, but also a long history of negotiating settler resistances and anxieties.

The assertion of cultural and political difference has situated Indigenous people as un-Australian or not Australian enough. Mainstream Australia regards the claim for first nation's status as a refusal to belong to the nation. Yet, assimilation into the dominant culture also excludes Indigenous people from being 'truly' Australian: perpetually becoming Australian, never quite being it. Repeatedly the upholders of the 'nation' welcome and withhold recognition of Australianess. Gaining political recognition has long involved a simultaneous assertion of Indigenous culture and notably, despite continuing struggle and marginalisation, has been a successful tool for asserting rights, gaining forms of self-determination, and challenging and transforming colonial representations. So much changes, yet stays the same. It seems, therefore, necessary not only to gain recognition, but also to intervene in and transform the imaginary nation. The Dreaming, arguably, is not only attempting to defy the images of Indigeneity that prevail in the media, but also to participate in reimagining the nation. Our hearts and minds, after all, compose imaginary Australia. The Dreaming, defined and directed primarily by Indigenous people, attempts to establish *within* mainstream Australia an understanding of Indigenous custodianship of the country, and emphasise Indigeneity as dynamic, living cultures. Unlike Indigenous participation in mainstream festivals, festivals primarily

initiated and run by Indigenous individuals and organisations present Indigeneity on its own terms, rather than presenting it as a supplement to settler Australia. Thus, Indigenous festivals provide an opportunity for counter hegemonic processes to operate. Of course, festivals are also enabled by liberal democracy and western cultural formations, while concurrently resisting the processes of assimilation. Indigenous festivals are both oppositional and borrow, appropriate and adapt dominant cultural forms, which facilitate opportunities and impose constraints. Events such as the Dreaming, ask us to not only see but also to think, feel and partake in creatively re-imagining the country and Australianess.

The Dreaming provides a lens through which Indigenous cultural politics can be examined. Not only are there many different performances of Indigenous identity, but also importantly performances that demonstrate commitments to other or multiple social-political bodies. During a forum in which the Black Swan Theatre company discussed their recent production of Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, which took its creative impetus from the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, one of the actors, Peter Docker, passionately proclaimed that it is unAustralian not to accept that first and foremost this is Indigenous country. For so many, his claim is unthinkable. My point is not that it is incommensurable, but rather that we lack the images to facilitate such thinking. Recurrent representations separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in time and space. Notably, some Indigenous people parallel the mainstream's conflicting exclusion and absorption of Indigeneity, through a contradictory rejection of and desire for inclusion: a mutual resistance despite a parity of desires.² Many have noted that the

failure to value Indigenous cultural and political practices as legitimate and productive part of contemporary Australia reinscribes colonialism. Stephen Muecke argues that within mainstream Australia there is a strong tendency to identify Indigenous people with pre-modern traditions, whilst the settler culture assumes the role of modern Australians. He suggests that Indigenous people's cultural inventiveness, in the face of continued colonisation, is an assertion of their modernity. Yet, Indigenous people are continually excluded from contemporaneity (Muecke, 2004). Mainstream Australia and institutions resist admitting Indigenous people to the socio-political body by defining them as still in a state of development – 'not ready yet' – which continues to restrict Indigenous people's participation and influence in the contemporary socio-political body. Furthermore, the politics of recognition – the refusal to see, engage with, the multiplicity of Indigenous identity – disqualifies many from taking up a speaking position. Yet, what goes unspoken, or is it a refusal to see, are some Indigenous people's contradictory desires to be accepted as Australians and to reject such inclusion. If this rebuff is noticed it is interpreted as a sign of 'not-ready-yet', rather than a critique of the nation, reflection of our socio-political history or that a more homely place might be found in being 'un-Australian'.

The rain has eased, but the wind has picked up. I'm wearing my Sydney clothes like I'm in Melbourne: tightly zipped leather jacket stuffed full with a woollen jumper and skivvy, and a scarf squeezed into offending gaps. As usual the Thai café is crowded (nominated by many to be the best food); I join a table with two young Koori men, Wayne and Corey. I ask what brings them to the festival. They're musicians with Coloured Stone.

They can't quite believe that I have the hide to call my job a job. I reassure them that I don't just go to festivals, listen to music, and chat to people whilst eating particularly good chicken sate. They're unconvinced. I wave my note book around in the air. The night before, they arrived back at their camp to find the neighbouring tent had blown away. Only their luggage kept theirs tethered to the ground. I tease them about my secure, dry, comfortable tent. Rock and roll isn't what it used to be. We have a laugh and talk about home. Corey tells me where to buy delicious waffles. We depart.

A continuing political task for Indigenous politics has been to criticize and attempt to overthrow the received colonial conceptions of Indigenous identity. As leading Indigenous scholar and activist Michael Dodson argues, non-Indigenous representations of Aboriginality continue to define Aboriginal people in relation to the dominant culture, projecting unwanted aspects of the white self onto Aboriginal people (2003). Representations of Indigenous people have primarily been racial stereotypes, in which Indigenous people are deployed as alternatives to mainstream culture, but not perceived as legitimate members of the social body. Both Dodson and Marcia Langton accuse white Australia of talking to itself. Indeed, they suggest that white, settler narratives stand in for non-Indigenous relationships with Indigenous Australians (Dodson, 2003; Langton, 1993). At the Dreaming, the white audience must negotiate their identity within a cultural space orchestrated by Indigeneity. We are inserted into a cultural terrain that privileges Indigenous identity. To remain comfortably (enough) integrated into this Australia, one must see and imagine oneself as connected to, in relationships with, Indigenous people.

The Dreaming provides a space for multiple and contradictory performances of Indigeneity, importantly destabilizing the persistent image of the 'real', 'authentic', Indigenous person. In so doing, it creates a space for the many who are rendered voiceless by the cult of authenticity (Panagia, 2006, p. 122). Too often, minority peoples are made unrepresentable if they don't partake in the authentic images provided and accepted by the dominant culture (Panagia, 2006, p. 123). The liberal, democratic, multicultural state, demands that a discriminable cultural difference be presented to it in a prepackaged form, which conforms generally to textually mediated imaginary of Indigenous traditions and legal definitions of ownership (Povinelli, 2002, p. 182). According to Panagia, those who are deemed unrepresentable by the dominant culture – not 'real' Indigenous people or Indigenous and/or Australian enough – despite their desire to be seen and heard aren't easily translatable into mimetic terms (2006, p. 123). To be unable to self-represent and represent oneself as Indigenous, further alienates one from being a full member of the social body. The festival provides a cultural space whereby the processes of translation and recognition might begin and the contradictory performances of Indigeneity might work to reveal and delegitimise governing representations.

Importantly, festivals work in an in-between space, which facilitates face-to-face encounters. Arguably, the potential for self and social transformation lies in, what Turner refers to as, liminal space: between belonging and not, home and anxiety. The subject loses sight of oneself and the imagined, unified nation – the imposed shape of the nation – yet is provided with a temporary space where social interrelations occur. It is the

Indigenous body, and the body of performances, to which the audience responds. The cultural-political experiment, the Dreaming Festival, is designed not only to challenge the limited perceptions of Indigeneity, but also perhaps to confound. The cultural space privileges competing identities, histories, perspectives and desires. To challenge and change the stranglehold of dominant representations of Indigenous people requires that the permutations of inhabiting a contested land, and encountering and living with multiple and conflicting interpretations, infuse social space.

my island home is waiting for me

George Burrarrowanga, lead singer of the Warumpi band, struts across the stage in the colours; leather. There is something of the preying mantis about him: all spindly arms and legs, yet somehow enticing us to him. He's electrified: wrestling with emotion, with the power of live performance, as if charging into battle. He screams, near hoarse, that he loves us. He makes believers of us. His unbridled energy fuses his audience: he is rock and roll. He's more than an entertainer; he immerses himself in the performance. Yet, ironically watching George Burrarrowanga on stage, somehow one still knows it is a performance and he's only playing at rock and roll, albeit a serious form of play. Later, on the way back to my tent, I'm reminded of Jacqui Lo's suggestion that the theatricality of performance not only claims a cultural space and speaking position, but also allows the racialised body to take hold of new ironic possibilities, free of the limitations of the dominant culture. Burrarrowanga's act mischievously suggests that his subjectivity, like everyone else, is in a continuous dialogic play with the world (Lo, 2000, p. 163). A performance such as Burrarrowanga's – or just George as many affectionately refer to

him – and arguably much at the festival, troubles at the cult of authenticity, by introducing ironic, contradictory possibilities beyond the bounds of the reductionary images of Indigenous people beloved by the mainstream.

He commands a relationship with his audience. Almost everyone – from those to who rock means the Stones, to those who find the term, if not the genre, passé – are on their feet, hands in the air, shouting the lyrics. Burrarrawanga performs a multiplicity of subject positions, yet maintains an authority and integrity. He is a contemporary of Mick Jagger, a Yolngu man, a land rights warrior, a storyteller, an oral historian of Indigenous Australian politics, teacher and, at this moment, a playful and generous performer.

George forges a sense of relationship with his audience not through the general but the situated. His performance grounds his identity in a specific body, history and geographies (Lo, 2000, p. 160). George Burrarrawanga comes from particular places, has lived a life unique to him. Is this what the audience is also responding to? The lyrics indicate a political, cultural and historical knowledge of the country: both Australia and his traditional country. Burrarrawanga performs a modern Australian identity: a willingness to embrace, reflect upon and make something from our history.

The performing body instructs the audience to take the performer seriously.

Burrarrawanga does not conform to a representational certainty. His charged performance takes command of his audience, directing us to participate in an exchange. He jumps we jump. We mimic him. He tells us he loves us, we not only believe him, but also reciprocate. Singing his song, made famous by Christine Anu, ‘My Island Home’, he

encourages us, pointing the microphone into the audience, to sing. What island are we singing about? Are we longing for George's Elcho Island, from the distance of land locked Papunya, Christine Anu's Torres Strait Island home, or for most of us the biggest island, mainland Australia? Through this, the audience sings of an Australia composed of 1000's of islands: an archipelago, connected by imagination, desire and rhythm.

In a sense, Burrarrowanga's performance demonstrates how to create something new from the complexity and heterogeneity of identity, place and belonging. A sentiment not echoed in the dominant culture. Poignantly, Vanessa Castejon writes that reconciliation put an end to the great Australian silence, but no words were spoken for the future (2002, p. 29). I agree that the political leadership has fallen silent, and mainstream Australia seems lost for words. However, scattered throughout the country are many words, images, performances and ideas from which a new future might grow. Burrarrowanga's performance can be likened to a form of nomadology: a disruption of dominant narratives by infusing a text with local knowledge and little histories. Unlike History, nomadology makes connections between incommensurabilities, without imposing a unifying logic. It endeavors to engage with otherness, whilst maintaining differences and differentiation by disabling the romantic imaginary gaze, which purports to render alterity knowable under its imperialising poetic 'I' that refuses limitations. Whilst inviting disarray into dominant and colonial Australian history and narratives, many of the performances at the Dreaming borrow and appropriate dominant cultural forms, refusing cultural-political boundaries and imposed notions of authenticity, attempting to forge new connections and participating in the creation of new social dialogues. A sense of belonging at the

Dreaming festival is contingent upon recognising it as an Indigenous place; non-Indigenous people are guests. Non-Indigenous identity is conditional upon Indigeneity, which is in stark contrast to the norm of Indigenous people being defined in relation to the unmarked dominant culture.

Rhoda Roberts encourages the Dreaming audience to imagine a new future together on Jinibara lands (2006). The festival is opposed to colonial logic: a logic that attempts to overcome the heteroglossia and plurality of the world by imposing unifying and authoritative discourses upon cultural life, in an effort to maintain power by ordering the unruliness of the world. The performances of cultural identity and social action are open to and make contact with an indeterminate and unfolding contemporary reality. The festival is infused with the voices and knowledge of others. It could be understood as a dialogic text, which seeks to bear witness to the heteroglossia, contestation and open-endedness of the world (Bakhtin, 1981). The Festival is shaped by, and devised from, and entangled in the multiplicity of cultural life. It invites contestation, incommensurability and understanding. Conflict is the very thing that 'Australia' avoids, in so doing, it could be argued that this prevents, inhibits, understanding or indeed reconciliation.

Heterogeneous cultural topographies hold out the possibility of forging new connections and re-imagining Australia.

At the Dreaming, the comic and celebratory co-exist alongside the tragic and examinations of seemingly intractable social issues. This place of celebration and serious reflection not only challenges mainstream representations of Indigeneity, but also the country. The Dreaming enacts, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a deterritorialisation

(1987). Colonialism codified southeast Queensland as the space of private property, a rural, white Australian place, where the white subjects of History recognise themselves. At the Dreaming Festival bodies, performances and desires connect and reconnect, disrupting the predominant idea(l) that there are white or black only spaces within Australia. In so doing, it challenges mainstream understandings of Indigeneity as located in remote Australia by affirming heterogeneous Indigenous identity and connections to place. With the Dreaming Festival, the space becomes an Aboriginal place of strength and joy, refuting the degraded representations of Aboriginal life that circulate in the media, which maintain the idea that Indigenous people are fringe dwellers on the civic body. This home away from home is a space that allows conversations between and the co-existence of, what the likes of John Howard might think of as, the quintessentially un-Australian.

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¹ The man I am referring to was the lead singer of the Warumpi band who recently died and is now referred to as George Burrarrawanga.

² I am thankful to Shino Konishi for her insightful reading of this paper and this phrase.