

Indigenous kinship with the Natural World in New South Wales

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Deborah Rose Diana James Christine Watson



NSW
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PROJECT SUMMARY

This report describes a project funded by the NSW Biodiversity Strategy, which was released in 1999. As a whole of government document, the Biodiversity Strategy commits all government agencies to working cooperatively towards conserving the biodiversity of NSW. The Strategy outlines a framework for coordinating and integrating government and community efforts to conserve biodiversity across all landscapes.

Project objective/s

The main aim of the project was to describe and explain the place of totemism in Aboriginal culture(s) in NSW both in the present day and over the last 213 years. At the same time the project aimed to clarify whether “totemism” is an appropriate concept to describe the social and religious affiliation of Aboriginal people with plant and animal species in recent and contemporary Aboriginal society in NSW. The project also aimed to assist agencies such as the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service to understand and recognise the relationship between land management and totemism. The report has relevance and application to broader land management actions in NSW as totemic or kinship values transcend tenure and administrative boundaries.

Methods

The project was carried out using a combination of background anthropological and historical research with significant discussion with Aboriginal people in two areas of NSW. The discussions and field trips were conducted on the South Coast and in Western NSW.

Key results

The case studies clearly demonstrate that there are regional differences in totemic law in NSW. The main message from the study is that the lands managed by the NPWS and the agency’s land management programs provide one of the most significant contemporary opportunities for Aboriginal forms of respect for the environment to become a living reality in NSW.

Implications for biodiversity conservation management

The study indicates that totemic values are an important element of contemporary Aboriginal culture and need to be considered as part of the management of ecosystems and individual species.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Somehow in the course of the research and writing this long report turned into a short book. We gratefully acknowledge all the participants in the project, and pay our respects to the Aboriginal Heritage Officers who assisted us and offered us feedback. Badger Bates was unable to participate in the project, but his guiding presence is felt throughout the section on Western NSW where he was a constant presence even in his absence.

1.2 THE BRIEF

This report has been prepared for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (hereafter referred to as NPWS). We report on research undertaken for the project ‘Totemism and the Social Context of Plants and Animals in NSW’. The research is undertaken within NPWS’s cultural heritage strategic research program.

The research brief called for a review of the literature on the topic, and for case studies into contemporary situations, with a final objective of providing recommendations to NPWS arising from the research.

We note at the outset that the term totemism proved to a blunt instrument in NSW. For convenience, and particularly in reviewing the literature, we continue to use the term in this report. The actual relationships between people and particular parts of the natural world are understood to be relationships of kinship and caring, and it is this aspect of totemism that was impressed upon us in our research with contemporary people, and that we emphasise in this report.

This report is divided into two major sections. The first – ‘A Guide for the Perplexed’ – is a critical analysis of anthropological approaches to ‘totemism’ in Australia, with specific reference to NSW. This part joins the past to the present. The second part provides accounts of each of the two case studies: Ngiyampaa people in western NSW, and Yuin people in and around the Wallaga Lake community on the south coast of NSW. This part joins the present to the future. Each case study produced recommendations that, while not unique to the area, arise directly from the people we interviewed. These recommendations are included within the case studies. The final part of this section takes a broader look at issues arising from the case studies and offers some further recommendations for how NPWS could more effectively integrate totemic law into its policy and practice.

The two case studies clearly demonstrate that there are regional differences within NSW concerning totemic law. None of the recommendations offered here can be assumed to be appropriate to all the regions of the state.

The main message here is that NPWS today provides one of the most significant contemporary opportunities for Aboriginal forms of respect – across species, landscapes and ecologies – to become a living reality in Australian lands.

In writing the report, we anticipated that it could be helpful to local communities and to NPWS personnel in articulating their interests both within NPWS and beyond. We have written the report for an educated but not necessarily specialised readership. We hope it will be widely distributed and widely engaged with. Use of the first person singular in this text indicates that the author is Deborah Rose. Use of the first person plural refers either to the whole team or to the authors of each of the two specifically co-authored sections (5.2 & 5.3).

1.3 TOTEMISM DEFINED

Many scholars note that totemism is a technical term that may have outlived its usefulness. Many query the suitability of using an Ojibwa term in reference to phenomena from all over the world simply because an early generation of scholars decided to class them together.¹ Some Aboriginal people in NSW today use the term and seem to regard it as an important part of their culture (Nayutah & Finlay 1988), while others find it unfamiliar, and some find it offensive. In some areas the term ‘token’ seems to have replaced ‘totem’. We would note that in many parts of Australia the term ‘Dreaming’ is used interchangeably with ‘totem’, and is distinctively Aboriginal Australian. Both terms have a huge range of meanings: both refer to creation and activity in daily life. Both are expressive of a worldview, in which humanity is part of the natural world, has responsibilities to the world, and is born from, lives for, and dies to return to, the living world known as country.

A. P. Elkin (1938 [1954]: 133) wrote that totemism ‘is a view of nature and life, of the universe and man, which ... unites them with nature’s activities and species in a bond of mutual life-giving...’ Allowing for the fact that both the academic and public languages have shifted since Elkin’s 1938 study, his words offer a clear exposition of exactly the kinds of things that Aboriginal people in NSW are saying today. The connections between people and parts of the natural world in bonds of mutual life-giving was impressed upon us by all of the people with whom we spoke.

Anthropologists have most frequently focussed on the human aspects of totemism, reducing relationships of mutuality to the strictly human side. The people with whom we spoke consistently affirmed the mutuality of these bonds, and in this report we endeavour to maintain a balance between the ecological and the social.

¹ ‘Ojibwa’ is the term for a native American tribal group whose country is in north central USA and south central Canada.

The terms ‘totem’ and ‘totemism’ convey three main meanings in NSW.

- ❖ The first is an identity meaning – the ‘totem’ is a non-human species or phenomenon that stands for, or represents, the group.
- ❖ The second is a relationship meaning – the ‘totem’ and the person or group share their physical substance, and share a kin relatedness.
- ❖ The third is a worldview meaning – the relationships are embedded in a view of the world in which connectivity is the foundation of all life.

Several main points can be made concerning contemporary totemism in NSW:

- ❖ Totemism articulates a system of kinship with the natural world.
- ❖ Totemism is expressive of a worldview in which kinship is a major basis for all life, in which the natural world and humans are participants in life processes. Relationships are based on the kin-concepts of enduring solidarity, responsibility and care.
- ❖ In some areas totems represent individuals and groups in broader social contexts. Group representation is often achieved emblematically – the image of the totem represents the person or group to others.
- ❖ One major issue arising from the case studies is ecological connectivity. A totemic species is not treated as if it were isolated from its environment. To the contrary, the duty of care that inheres in bonds of mutual life-giving includes human care of the whole environment which enables the totemic species to thrive.
- ❖ A second major issue arising from the case studies is respect. Respect is founded in law and works across human and ‘natural’ systems. Respect for knowledge and autonomy is linked with respect for living things and their habitats.

A worldview, as is widely known, is a people’s basic assumptions about what kind of world they live in, what forces control it, and what the place of humans is. Without action, however, a worldview is relatively powerless. In this report we focus on the kinds of action in the world that arise from, are consistent with, and promote a world of kinship, connection and mutual life giving.

1.4 LAW AND RECONCILIATION

Totemic law, summarised in utter brevity as mutual life-giving, connectivity, and respect, offers the basis for ways of thinking about co-management and sustainable futures. Respect and ecological connectivity broaden the scope of totemism to include non-indigenous people, their interactions with indigenous people, and their impacts on the environment. Totemic law thus poses serious and difficult challenges that cut across many government departments, and across the worldviews of many non-indigenous Australians. At the same time, totemic law offers a guide for social and environmental justice that promotes the possibility for long-term sustainable habitation within Australia’s unique and threatened environments.

2. PART 1: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

2.1 ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES OF TOTEMISM

In this section I offer a brief analytic history of theories of totemism. I follow that up with a discussion of the application of theories of totemism in Australia. My approach to totemism follows quite specifically from the definitions offered in section 1.2 Totemism is a relationship of mutual life-giving between human beings and natural species (or rarely, other natural phenomena). The history of anthropological obsession with its own discourse has been a major impediment to documenting totemism in NSW until recently. So, too, has the history of western denigration of body in relation to mind, nature in relation to culture, and the material world in relation to the mental systems that purport to structure it. The approach in this study is to begin with the definition of totemism as kinship with the natural world.

In seeking to avoid reductionism, I pursue my historical analysis through the question: why has it been so difficult for anthropology to engage with the idea that totems concern non-humans as well as humans? Why has the analysis been so regularly a one-way street in which analysis sought to incorporate the natural into the social? In addressing these questions, I also offer greater detail on the few studies that are not reductionist.

2.2 SAVING THE WEST

'Totemism' was one of the cornerstones of emergent social science and related disciplines around the turn of the century. Sir James Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy* (four volumes, 1910) and Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1918) testify to the grasp of 'totemism' on the minds of these key thinkers. This was an era in which the scientific method had already been put to brilliant use (in the eyes of its own practitioners) in classifying the natural world. The goal was to produce large universal schemes of classification, such as the Linnean system of botanical classification. Such systems were (in theory, but not always in reality) capable of fitting the whole world into a single system devised by a small group of scholars in one corner of the globe. The same method of collection, description, classification, and the ordering of classes into typologies was further focussed on human societies. Again, the intention was to provide a universal scheme that could accommodate everything.

By the late nineteenth century, theories of evolution were added to the arsenal of classification. While not necessarily based dogmatically on Darwin's theory, they worked with an idea of evolutionary progress: from simple to complex, or, in human societies, from savagery to civilisation. The rules of the procedure are clear in retrospect: everything had to be fitted into a sequence, and western civilisation always had to come out on top.

In a recent study of this era of social science formation in England, Patrick Wolfe examines the role of totemism in establishing distance between civilisation and its imagined opposite – savagery. He notes the relentless classificatory endeavour of scholars such as Frazer, and he suggests that totemism was fascinating to them in part because it, too, could be seen as a system of classification. Totemism became the 'covert other' of western science (Wolfe 1999: 106).

Most of the ideas first developed in the nineteenth century were debated throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, over the decades, totemism became a mirror for western social theories. I will summarise extensively in order to elucidate some of the assumptions that have hindered an understanding of totemism in the natural world, and thus have hindered an understanding of the relational and connective aspects of totemism that are at the heart of Australian Aboriginal totemism.

The phenomenon labelled totemism posits a non-random relationship between particular humans and particular non-humans. It is this human/non-human link that exercised the thinking of early theorists such as Frazer and Freud (discussed in Levi-Strauss 1964: 2-3). One must consider that this project of distinguishing civilisation from savagery, and distinguishing culture from nature, was given special urgency by the pressure placed on key concepts of western thought under the intellectual revolution taking place with secularisation and Darwinian theory. The disjunction between nature and culture has been a key feature of western thought, both secular and religious, since antiquity. It was powerfully threatened by evolutionary theory, for if humans are descended from animals, where is the boundary between them? If humans are all one family biologically speaking, what is the difference between 'us' and 'them'?

Haydon White (1978) has shown that these boundary questions become urgent when concepts of humanity are threatened. Totemism filled a wonderfully useful role in providing an answer to the question that was not explicitly being asked. The question was that of boundary maintenance: what is the difference between 'savage' and 'civilised' humans? The answer was to be found in the relationship to nature. If civilisation was marked by a separation of culture from nature, it followed that a religious outlook, which posited strong and valued connections between culture and nature must constitute an evolutionary stage at which humans were not fully separated from nature. Analysis of totemism could thus confirm the superiority of western civilisation and the inferiority of the savage, defining and ordering their difference, while simultaneously linking them together as moments in a global history of progress. As Stanley Diamond asserts of anthropology:

We study men, that is, we reflect on ourselves studying others, because we must, because man in civilisation is the problem.... The questions we bring

to history come out of our own need. The task of anthropology is to clarify these questions. (Diamond 1974: 100)

2.3 THE LOST REFERENT

In 1912 Durkheim wrote that 'the totem is before all a symbol, a material expression of something else. But of what?' He would go on to assert that the totem is a symbol of god and of society, brought together, in his view, in the clan (quoted in Lessa & Voigt 1979: 34). This question prompted what I refer to as the search for the missing referent, which has haunted so much of twentieth century anthropology of totemism.² The question 'a symbol of what?' provided an opportunity for people to inscribe their particular theories of society and culture onto the *tabula* of totemism.

Malinowski, for example, accepted the first part of Durkheim's assertion — that a totem is a symbol of something else. In good economic fashion he found a consumption value: 'the road from the wilderness to the savage's belly and consequently his mind is very short', he wrote in 1948, 'and for him the world is an indiscriminate background against which there stand out the useful, primarily the edible, species of plant and animal' (Malinowski 1948: 44). He would go on to characterise Australian Aboriginal totemism as the most 'elementary' form, and would note that totemic cults had as their purpose the provisioning of abundance (ibid: 46). He was thus able to draw Aboriginal Australians into his general theory of science, magic and religion. Radcliffe-Brown developed this view in more elegant manner, suggesting that it was a common characteristic of hunting peoples to elaborate a major food item. While Radcliffe-Brown would initiate analysis into the logical properties of totems, both he and Malinowski are expressive of the theory, stated so succinctly by Levi-Strauss, that totems are 'good to eat' (1963: 62).

Levi-Strauss himself found another meaning in totemism. In his view, totemism answers a universal question of the mind: 'how to make opposition, instead of being an obstacle to integration, serve rather to produce it.' Natural species, he claims, are chosen because they are 'good to think, not because they are good to eat' (1963: 89). Rather than positing a one-to-one correspondence, Levi-Strauss looked to contrasting relationships between totems, and rather than considering that totems index the world, he held that they articulate the mind.

² The broader context is not essential to our purposes here, but it may be noted that the search for that which is missing is a central and enduring theme in western culture, from the empty tomb of Jesus and the search for the missing body (de Certeau 19??) to the quest for the Holy Grail (the absent cup, or absent secret), to the search for the missing totemic referent discussed here.

2.4 DUALISMS

Levi-Strauss's work only makes sense if one accepts as universal a number of dualisms that have been characteristic of western thought since the Enlightenment, and that have been subjected to a range of excellent critiques (for example, Plumwood: 1993):

- *mind vs body*: This dualism promotes the view that totems can be good to eat or good to think but not good both to eat and to think. Reading this dualism back into Malinowski's work, we see that he inscribes savagery in that short distance between the savage belly and the savage mind. The lack of mind/body split is held to be characteristic of savages, and by implication, to differentiate them from civilised man.

- *culture vs nature*: This dualism promotes the view that culture is more evolved to the extent that it distinguishes itself from nature. Reading this dualism back into Malinowski, the short distance between the wilderness and the savage is an index of savagery itself, differentiating that state from civilisation.

- *difference is oppositional*: Levi-Strauss talks about 'opposition' when he quite clearly means difference, and he takes it as given that difference is oppositional and is in need of transformation. He further presupposes that integration is a desirable social goal in and of itself. Such a view generates its own paradox. On the one hand it seeks to close the distance between savagery and civilisation by claiming universalities of mind. On the other hand, it oppresses those whom it positions as different, for it indicates that difference is a problem to be overcome. As Diamond so succinctly reminds us, 'man in civilisation is the problem' (1974: 100).

These great dualisms – mind over and against body, and culture over and against nature – are representative of a larger set of hierarchical dualisms that have been characteristic of western thought. In contrast, totemism is a system of connectivities between humanity and nature. It is a system of classification (mental activity), responsibility, and shared physical substance. Anthropologists can be seen to have had great difficulty extricating themselves from the West's conceptual framework. Whether scholars wish to create distance, or whether they hope to overcome distance, as long as they remain within the framework of hierarchical dualism, they are inhibited in their ability to do justice to the rich embodied connectivities of totemism.

2.5 IN AUSTRALIA

The early research in Australia was based primarily on a method of collecting bits of information to be collated by the scholar. 'Postal anthropology' was a key to this method, and some anthropologists never set foot into strange territory, remaining 'armchair anthropologists' for the whole of their lives. Spencer and Gillen bridge the collecting method and field research, and their contributions to ethnography in Central and North Australia remain in use today largely because of their meticulous recording of information. Fieldwork that involved totemism

could fairly be said to have begun in Australia with Lloyd Warner's pioneering ethnography of 1939 *A Black Civilisation*, based on research he conducted in the 1920s. The title signals the author's distance from the oppressive savagery-civilisation dichotomy. Warner stated that the totemic system of North East Arnhem Land was 'highly elaborated and permeates all the activities of the group and all of its concepts of life in the world about it' (Warner 1969: 378). He found it to be a system of ritual relations between clan members and certain species of plants and animals. Totemism in North East Arnhem Land, Warner contended, 'is intelligible only in terms of the social organisation, the relation of the technological system to society generally, and the ideas which surround the society's adjustment to the natural environment' (ibid: 234).

Warner's emphasis on the religious quality of totemism and its pervasive, indeed foundation, relation to society and the environment, sounds extremely contemporary, and it seems odd that decades were to pass before these ideas were put to work in other parts of the continent.

In the mid-decades (1925 – 1955, approx.) Radcliffe-Brown and Elkin pursued a combined classificatory and functionalist approach to totemism. Much of their work seeks to generalise across the continent, and thus to make some definitive findings about Aboriginal people as a whole. The intention behind functionalism was to shift the analysis away from a classifying endeavour, and to ask what social structures, such as totemism, actually do. In general, functionalism was based on the premise that social structures enable society to function adequately through time. The emphasis was on how structures are linked to work together toward social functioning. In kin-based societies such as Aboriginal societies, kinship and marriage were thought to be basic social structures and, of course, totemism was an important part of both kinship and marriage.

A. P. Elkin was a meticulous collector and classifier, and at the same time was dedicated to functionalist analysis. His insightful definition of totemism (section 1.2) will be taken up again in section 3.6 because of its relevance to NSW.

Another shift in thinking turned anthropologists' attention more rigorously toward the analysis of symbols, myths and other forms of mental activity. Radcliffe-Brown (1929: 399), following on from Durkheim, had asserted in the 1920s that the proper approach to the study of totemism was in the context of myth and ritual. Stanner's approach to totemism and religion emphasised the mystical quality of totemism (1979 [1962]). He did, however, also link totems with clans and with country, asserting that the group has a corporate title that covers not only the country or site, and the mystical relation to the totemic creators, as well as non-material property associated with the country (1965: 13).

Levi-Strauss's structural analysis of myth (and totemism) initiated a huge response across western anthropology. In Australia it was taken up in conjunction with an increasing interest in the natural world. Classification was given new life by an invigorated interest in non-western logic, and these structuralist studies sought to ground that logic both in the mind and in the world. Overlapping with structuralism, there was in the second half of the 20th century an emerging consideration of how totems relate to the totemic animals and plants themselves.

In this period, Worsley's (1967) study of totemism, derived from his Groote Eylandt research, followed the tradition of Malinowski in seeking to distinguish totemism from logic and science. Like Malinowski, he showed that non-Western people do possess systems of logic, classification, and explanation, which can be loosely equated with western science ('proto-scientific' in Worsley's terminology [ibid: 154]). Totemism is distinguished from science, he concluded, by its lack of system; it is 'agglomerative, arbitrary and fortuitous' (ibid: 151). Worsley's detailed and informative study seems to have landed us back with the Victorian gentlemen for whom totemism was science's 'covert other'.

Maddock's (1975) study of the 'emu anomaly' presents a structural analysis of the mythic elaboration of a zoological fact – the flightless bird. Similarly, Mieke Blows's (1975) analysis of eaglehawk and crow draws on the behavior of these birds in order to develop an analysis of the logic that underpinned the significance of these two totems in NSW. It is characteristic of this type of structuralist approach that Blows worked quite happily with existing texts, and did not require new texts or fieldwork, although she did draw extensively on the work of Jeremy Beckett who had carried out fieldwork in western NSW in the 1950s.

Much later, Morton (1999) brought psycho-analytic frames of analysis back into the scene, addressing questions of totemism in Central Australia. His analysis drew on Spencer and Gillen, and Roheim, as well as on his own field research, and brought an up-dated Freudian gaze to male initiation.

2.6 ECOLOGY AND TOTEMISM

Research aimed at an analysis that brought ecology together with society was taken up primarily by Strehlow and, in a related vein, Peterson. Following on from Durkheim, Stanner and Strehlow in examining totemism as a link between person, group and country, Peterson (1972) found totemism to be a mechanism for ordering sentiment toward home place, and thus to be a key mechanism in territorial spacing (see also Strehlow 1970).

Ted Strehlow's 1970 article 'Geography and the Totemic Landscape in Central Australia' marks a major turning point. His foundational assumption was that while totems can and do represent many things, they also, perhaps centrally, are themselves. He was proposing, in effect, that totemism was more than a system of representation, and more than a system of myth and thought. His analysis brings to the fore the idea that totemism is a system of relationships between people and the natural world. Strehlow thus brings the natural world into the analysis in a way that previous scholars, with the exception of Warner, had not done. I will discuss his ideas in some detail because they lead directly to the issues that are pertinent in contemporary NSW.

I emphasise that I am not proposing that Arrernte totemism is a standard by which other people's totemic practice is to be measured. My focus is on the way in which Strehlow managed briefly to overcome the dualisms between mind/world and between culture/nature). The significance of his analysis goes

back to Durkheim's statement that a totem is a symbol of something else. Strehlow was able to consider that totems are significant in and of themselves.

In his study of Aboriginal religion in Central Australia, Strehlow documents a totemic landscape in its social, spiritual and geographical complexity. He uses the term 'totems' to refer to the creative beings ('totemic ancestors'), who made the world:³

Because the whole landscape of Central Australia was studded with a multitude of sacred sites where supernatural beings had lived and moved and gone to rest, and because these sacred sites were in turn linked by an intersecting network of mythological trails left behind by these supernatural beings, every tribal subgroup area ... was filled with a large number of sacred sites associated with a diversity of totems. (Strehlow 1964 [1978]: 26)

Briefly but tantalisingly he proceeded to discuss some of the ritual which ensured the continuance of each totemic species or other existent. Primarily, however, Strehlow was seeking to draw out the religious/spiritual significance of totemic religion and to bring it into dialogue with contemporary spiritual concerns. In a later study, which I discuss shortly, he turned his analysis more closely to resources and land tenure.

Strehlow agreed that the totem and the clan are connected to each other and to an area of land (this was Stanner's point, and the point of many earlier scholars as well, see section 3.2), and he went on to look to the organisation of ritual life oriented toward sustaining the life of the species, and other totems. Each clan, according to Strehlow's analysis of Aranda societies, is associated with a number of totemic beings, with one of which the clan is most intimately associated and for which it bears a central responsibility. Ancestral tracks, or the Dreaming tracks of these beings, link groups along the way:

... each Aranda local group was believed to perform an indispensable economic service not only for itself but for the population around its borders as well. Thus, the Eastern Aranda Purula-Kamara local group of Ujitja was believed to have the responsibility of creating rain for the whole of the surrounding countryside by the performance of the Ujitja rain ceremonies. Other Aranda rain totemic clans were credited with performing identical services for the populations in their local areas. In the same way, the members of kangaroo, euro, emu, carpet snake, grass seed, and other totemic clans were regarded as having the power of bringing about the increase of their totemic plants or animals not only within their local group areas, but throughout the adjoining regions as well. (Strehlow 1970: 102)

The remainder of this pivotal article is devoted to issues of authority (see Rowse 1992). Strehlow laid out the relevant data for ecological analysis, but chose to proceed in another direction.

³ Often referred to as Dreamings or Dreamtime ancestors.

His analysis is applicable to many regions of Australia. He describes a structure in which a regional social community is also an ecological community. It is a community made up of politically autonomous groups, each of which is responsible for the well-being of several species and of the other groups. It is equally a community made up of relevant portions of the natural world. The system is one of interdependence — the rain people, for example, make rain for everybody, humans and non-humans, and they depend on others to fulfil their responsibilities.

The kangaroo people depend on the rain people for rain, and take responsibilities for kangaroos. Their actions benefit everybody, including kangaroos. This is a system of interdependence – groups are mutually dependent on each other, and human and non-human parts of the natural world are dependent on each other. As Elkin said, this is a system of mutual life giving.

Strehlow emphasised ritual responsibilities; his work is thus consistent with the general western fetishisation of men's ritual (Povinelli, pers comm, see also Povinelli 1993). Responsibilities, it is now clear, include much more than ritual. Totems in an ecological system involve a 'geography of protection' as well as ritual for increase. Practices of restraint may be as important as success in hunting, and action to promote biodiversity (such as cultural fires) is as essential as ceremonies to promote the well-being of species.

The study of the ecological relevance of totemism seriously began with Newsome's 1980 study of the Dreaming track of the red kangaroo in Central Australia. This Dreaming track traverses some of the toughest desert country in the world, and the sacred sites coincide with the most favoured areas for kangaroos. In particular, there is a strong correlation between Red Kangaroo Dreaming sites, and the permanent waters which are the sources of fresh herbage during drought. The red kangaroo relies on fresh green herbage; after rains the animals forage widely, but in drought they must rely on restricted areas. As the sites are protected, so too are the kangaroos at these sites. These are places to which living things retreat during periods of stress, and from which they expand outward again during periods of plenty. Clearly, opportunistic predation at these sites, especially during periods of stress (when humans, too, are stressed), would have long-term negative effects on red kangaroos and other species.

Aboriginal people in this part of the world approach a sacred site with a respect that includes forbearing to hunt. Spears are left at a distance, and the care taking of the site is accomplished without interference with the red kangaroos whose site and refuge it is. Peter Latz, a botanist who has carried out extensive work in Central Australia, notes that the most sacred/protected places are likely to be places where a number of Dreamings meet up or cross over. He describes them this way:

... there's a lot of dreaming trails which cross over, these are really important places. They are so sacred you can't kill animals or even pick plants. And of course you don't burn them. You might burn around them in order to look after them. (Latz 1995a: 70)

Not only in Central Australia, but across the whole continent, there are similar structures of restraint, management for long-term productivity, control of sanctuaries, protection of permanent waters, refugia, breeding sites, and selective burning for the preservation of certain plant communities and the management of habitat diversity (Rose 1996).

In sum, as long as totemism was seen as a problem to be solved, rather than as a phenomenon to be investigated, anthropological investigation remained focussed on the kinds of evidence that was held to be pure – either in old texts or in remote areas. The result for the study of totemism is that anthropologists have often been more interested in their own discourse than in conversations with indigenous people. And as long as they were searching for relatively uncolonised field situations, where, one suspects, they hoped the missing referent would be found, the South-East was bound to be ignored.

3. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC GAZE IN NSW

3.1 TEXT AND CONTEXT

In this section I examine the evidence from the past pertaining to NSW. In section 4 I start to link past and present.

As discussed, the term ‘totem’ comes from a North American First Nations language. The term was picked up by ethnologists in the 19th century, and became a label for a huge range of customs. Fragments of information from all over the world were put into the ‘totem’ category and examined for patterns that might be significant. People who were collecting information in Australia were great contributors to ‘totem’ analysis because they were documenting Aboriginal Australians’ rich and complex systems of connection. NSW was an important region for collecting information because there appeared to be so much variety, but what were people collecting?

In their own minds they were certain that the bits of information they picked up through their various sources were meaningful in their own right. Subsequent analysis both within and outside of anthropology is critical of their lack of reflexivity.

Brad Steadman, an NPWS consultant who assisted in the Manara Hills study (section 5.2), has devoted huge amounts of study and analysis to the early ethnographers who studied Ngiyampaa people. His analysis leads him to ask about the relationship between investigators and indigenous people. He says that investigators come along with their issues already in place. First and foremost is their own set agenda. Investigators, in Brad’s experience, are hoping for answers that will reinforce their own agenda. They don’t know the language, they don’t know the local context. Through their lack of knowledge they have come up with a lot of statements of assumption that they present as facts. They make a qualitative leap from a very low knowledge base to authoritative statements of fact. In his words,

‘the written maps and other sources form our memories, and our histories. Whether you are a person who has had access to that or not, that’s all still part of the memory. People came out and talked to the old people. Memories have holes in it, and ethnographers’ notes have holes in it, and that all goes along and makes up a history for me now. I can read all that stuff, and I can still talk to my Nan. I can look at the history from both sides, the

ethnographic information, and what my Nan has to say – what she knows and what she doesn't know.'

In Ngiyampaa country, the history of ethnographic encounter shows that researchers made three tribes out of two 'talks' (section 5.3.6). The work of redressing these errors is a minefield, both in redressing entrenched ideas, and in arguing against 'authorities'.

Brad's underlying premise is that interviews are relationships. Information needs to be understood dialogically, rather than assumed to be somehow free of language, region and other contexts.

At a deeper level, Brad defines a major difference in the ways in which Aboriginal people work with difference, and the ways in which investigators sought to define difference. Indigenous culture, he says, works on a system of relations, so that 'difference makes the 'same' what it is, and sameness makes 'difference' what it is'. Context, in a relational system, is the determining factor. Brad refers to sameness and difference as parallel tracks, and he states that 'at all times you need to be aware of parallel tracking'. A great deal of knowledge is required to engage with this context-dependent relational system.

In Brad's view, the Ngiyampaa system of difference and connection does not view difference as an opposition to be overcome, as Levi-Strauss would have had it, and nor does it view difference as a demarcation of total separation. Brad states (and I agree) that ethnographers were looking for hard and fast differences. Lines on the map demarcating boundaries between language groups are a good example. They clearly imply hard and fast differences. They also imply a knowledge of how language functions to differentiate people. Scholars working with Ngiyampaa people simply did not have this level of knowledge; they did not understand the system of differentiation, and nor were they looking for a system that could both differentiate and connect, depending on context. Accordingly, many of the lines drawn on maps misrepresent a complex system of relational difference, portraying it as a simple system of pure difference ($A \neq B$).

3.2 GENDER BIAS

I emphasise here and throughout this report, that the earlier texts use the terms 'man' and 'men' ambiguously. It is open to interpretation that they are using these terms as glosses for 'humanity'. Most frequently, however, scholars (mostly, but not only, men) relied on male informants, and discussed men's activities. In spite of what one now sees as gender bias in the research, there is adequate evidence to convince even the skeptical of a large measure of gender equity amongst indigenous people in matters concerning 'totemism'. There were and are clever women as well as clever men. There was and is women's business, as well as men's business. Gender issues arise in the following sections, and throughout the remainder of the report.

The methods in the first generation of scholars relied primarily on interviews conducted in person and by correspondence. Howitt, Mathews, Parker and a few others, had the opportunity to observe ceremony in NSW, and their reports

indicate the vivid proximity they experienced. It was also a highly gendered enterprise. Donaldson (1985: 87) comments on this aspect of the first generation of scholarly investigators that they had a fascination with human sexuality, disguised and rendered scientific through the use of Latin: 'The effect of including terms with sexual reference of a kind thought offensive to female sensibilities, accompanied by suitably learned Latin glosses, was to lend an air of scientific authority... and to distinguish their collection as a masculine, scholarly activity...' In respect of their endeavour towards scientific realism, Donaldson finds that some of these observers were 'prepared to lace together a number of speculations of the day and assert them as evolutionary fact' (ibid: 88).

3.3 THE SCHOLARS

I briefly introduce the cast of scholarly characters whose views will be interwoven with the views of contemporary Aboriginal people in the following sections. The purpose here is to give a quick guide to their methods and overall reliability.

3.3.1. A.W. Howitt (1830-1908)

Howitt is generally regarded by subsequent generations as the least reliable of the nineteenth century scholars. His research was focussed in the South East, and his monumental study *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (1904) was reprinted by Aboriginal Studies Press in 1996. The amount of information he collected is voluminous, but he must be approached with caution. Like many men of his day, he had a weird fascination with men's rituals, particularly those in which blood was shed. This fetishisation of male blood is a constant theme in his work. Women tend to be nearly invisible.

Howitt's work was re-analysed by Brian Egloff (1979) and became part of the case for the protection of Mumbulla Mountain, discussed briefly in the Wallaga Lake Case Study (section 5.2).

3.3.2. R. H. Mathews (1841-1918)

In contrast to Howitt, Mathews was a more sober and thorough researcher. He recorded information in areas where he worked as a surveyor, and he pursued his interviews with a humanity that was acknowledged at the time and subsequently. He collated information from correspondents, as well as conducting interviews himself. He was a genuinely interested observer, wrote copious field notes and published immense amounts of detail.

Mathews did not share Howitt's penchant for suppressing the particular in favour of the grand theory, or for suppressing women in favour of men. His work played an instrumental role in the case for the protection of Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) as a sacred site because he provided information that showed the existence of women's law and ritual (Rose 1990, section 5.2).

3.3.3. Katherine Langloh Parker (1852 – 1940)

Mrs Langloh Parker learned a local language, Euahlayi (U'alari, Tindale), located in the area north east of Brewarinna, according to Tindale (Tindale, ref p. 199). She recorded stories from Aboriginal people on her station Bangate. After recording stories, she took them back and checked them with the storyteller, usually an older person. She asked for a story to be told several times, and working with a bilingual person, she translated the story into English and checked her translation with the storyteller (Lambert 1993: xii). Her work is regarded as unusually reliable.

3.3.4. Geza Roheim (1891-1953)

Perhaps the last of the great universalisers was Roheim. His monumental study of Australian totemism was based solely on information he collected whilst in Europe. His great effort was to attempt to bring together two major theoretical interests: totemism and Freud. Roheim worked on Australian materials that were available to him in Europe. His major work *Australian Totemism: A Psycho-Analytic Study in Anthropology*, first published in 1925, was written just after World War I. His detailed maps of cultural traits demonstrate a touching faith in the idea that every fact can be fit into a scheme somehow, and that no fact should be treated as accident or contingency.

3.3.5. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1880-1955)

Radcliffe-Brown was an Englishman who lived and worked in Australia in the 1920s as the first Chair of Anthropology at Sydney University. In Australia he relied on interviews rather than participant observation, and was deeply reliant on other people's research. He achieved world renown for his studies in kinship, and was a leading exponent of the stream of anthropological theory known today as British structural-functionalism.

3.3.6. A. P. Elkin (1891 - 1979)

Elkin was a student of Radcliffe-Brown, and he dominated anthropology in Australia for decades. He was Chair of Anthropology at Sydney University of twenty-three years, and his mark is everywhere. Elkin attempted to assess many issues in Aboriginal Australia at a continent wide level. His book *The Australian Aborigines and How to Understand Them* (1936) is the first study to attempt to assemble information on Aborigines from all across the continent and to summarise and explain it in a manner accessible to the general public. It has been reprinted numerous times. Elkin was an Episcopal priest, and had the great merit of taking religious phenomena seriously. A good biography has been written of Elkin (Wise 1985). His early fieldwork was followed by research using methods relying primarily on interview techniques rather than the participant observation that characterised the work of people like Warner who immersed themselves in a local community and culture.

3.3.7. Norman Tindale (1900-1993)

Norman Tindale established anthropology in South Australia. Over the course of an enormously productive life, he travelled to almost every part of Australia recording myths, 'tribal boundaries' and genealogies. He produced the first comprehensive map of Australian Aboriginal 'tribal boundaries'. The map and accompanying text has become a source of much dissension over the years, heightened at this time by Native Title applications. It is important to note that in-depth research has almost invariably failed to confirm the information on his map in its entirety. Furthermore, the information on the map and the information in the text are not always consistent: in some areas the map does not show exactly what the text describes.

3.3.8. Ronald Berndt (1916-1990)

Students of Elkin, R. and C. Berndt visited almost every part of Australia and published something of their findings for almost every part that they visited. Their writings are voluminous, and their attempt to write an account of the whole continent that would be accessible to the general public, *The World of the First Australians* (1964) makes an interesting and more contemporary companion to Elkin's earlier study. Their approach was extremely pragmatic; they aimed to document the facts while the facts were still available (section 4.1). One looks to them for copious facts, but not for analytic depth.

3.3.9. Janet Mathews (d. 1992)

Mathews travelled throughout NSW collecting music, and became interested in stories as well. Her tapes are deposited at AIATSIS, and are a rich source of information. She is best known for her biography *The Two Worlds of Jimmy Barker* (1977). Janet Mathews was the grand daughter-in-law of R.H. Mathews.

3.4 MARRIAGE AND DESCENT

The work of Howitt and Mathews, each a key figure in the documentation of NSW totemism, was deeply enmeshed in questions of marriage. The early European and American efforts to describe, classify, and order the customs of other people took marriage patterns as a signifiers of social evolution. On the one hand, they thought marriage was central to defining humanity because it distinguishes people from animals. On the other hand, they thought that different types or systems of marriage could be ordered into an evolutionary sequence, with their own patriarchal monogamy at the top of the ladder. Totemism captured their attention because it is linked with a system of ordering marriage. A great deal of the data collection went to show how totems were used to classify people and thus to determine whether people could or could not marry each other. The early decades of collecting, sorting and classifying were linked to those same methods in Europe and North America. Howitt and Mathews are outstanding figures for our purposes here. They collected, recorded, classified, and developed temporal and spatial schemes. They corresponded with individuals in remote places who provided them with information, and they corresponded with scholars

in Europe and North America, sending them data and following their theoretical arguments with interest.

The correlation between totemism and marriage rules is unmistakable. Parker's statement is a good example. In describing the origins of totems (discussed below, section 3.3), she noted that 'people of the same totem may not intermarry, "however far apart their hunting grounds"' (Parker 1905: 7).

A related obsession concerned descent. Recall that the rules of classification in nineteenth and early twentieth century evolutionary schemes were that everything had to be put in a sequence, and that contemporary western custom had to come out on top. Those rules were vigorously applied to systems of descent.

Descent is a relationship defined by connection to ancestral figures. The connections are passed down through the generations according to social rules. Usually descent passes from parent to child, but adoption also works as descent, and in clans the understanding of descent is often from one generation of people to the next. The western world developed a system in which individual descent took precedence over generational descent within a group, and in which descent from the father took precedence over descent from the mother. Thus, in the nineteenth century children took their father's surname, property was transmitted in the male line by preference, and hereditary status also followed the male line by preference. It seemed inevitable, then, that a system of descent that followed the mother line would have to be thought of as an earlier or more primitive form of descent. Debates about the 'mother-right' were extensive (see Wolfe 2000). Generational descent was even more suspect; scholars speculated wildly about 'group marriage'.

In Australia, two large systems were being mapped. One was a system of patrilineal (father line) totemic clans, and the other was a system of matrilineal (mother line) totemic clans. A large number of the NSW tribes followed matrilineal descent. It is fair to say that each system was always and is today more complex than the large scale labels 'patrilineal' and 'matrilineal' indicate. The types of descent can co-exist, as the discussion below will show, and most scholars no longer think that contemporary types of descent can reasonably be placed in an evolutionary sequence.

Throughout the twentieth century the bias amongst anthropologists went against matrilineal systems. Radcliffe-Brown, for example, repeatedly refers to the patrilineal system as the 'normal' system (for example, Radcliffe-Brown 1930: 235), even though matrilineal clans covered large portions of NSW and Queensland. Elsewhere he described the patrilineal clan (or horde, in his preferred terminology) as 'certainly the most interesting form of totemism in Australia' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 121). He seemed convinced that matrilineal tribes did not have increase ceremonies, and his further contention was that there were not sacred sites associated with totemic beings. There is evidence to contradict both claims. It is also worth noting that Howitt classed the Wallaga Lake area under the label 'anomalous'. He described a system of patrilineal inheritance of totems, and it is not clear exactly what he thought was anomalous. Christine Watson was advised of complex systems of totems, and transmission

involving both women and men (section 5.2.2). Perhaps Howitt's lack of attention to women prevented him from gaining the insight he was seeking.

3.5 CEREMONY AND CREATION

The major ceremony events in the South-East have generally been called initiation ceremonies. Today we would probably simply call them ceremony. The major ceremony was variously termed bora (Kamilaroi), bunan (Yuin), burbung (Wiradjuri), burba (Ngiyampaa), along with other names. Here again the ethnographic record highlights men's activities and knowledge. Howitt's description of Bunan, for example, emphasises men's myths, sites and ceremonies while those of women were only noted in passing. The result of this male focus is that 'the landscape recorded was a male landscape and not a female one, a male culture not a female one' (Jacobs 1989:90). I know very little from European sources about how girls became women and about the intellectual and spiritual aspects of this intense form of education.

In a technical sense, the term initiation refers to the process by which a person's status is transformed. In most Aboriginal societies this transition is (or was) marked by an intense period of education and by actual physical marks on the person being transformed from a child into an adult, or advancing along various stages of initiation. In the South-East tooth avulsion for men and scarification for both men and women (Howitt 1904:746) were the outward and visible signs of a transformation that was intended also to be inner and spiritual.

Three things are clear: 1. Both girls and boys (separately) were transformed into adults; 2. The transforming event was a period of intense instruction; 3. Ceremony was not simply an event for young people, but rather was a major part of people's religious life. Intellectual and spiritual understanding developed through continuing participation in the religious life, and one's status as an adult woman or man was enhanced through participation in numerous cycles of learning.

Early reports from the South-East discuss a Creation Being known as Biame (with many varied spellings). In broad outline, he created many of the basic parameters of the world – water, some land forms, animals (totems) and humans, power (for clever people) and Law. Then he withdrew from the world to the sky country with his family, and there they usually remain. Contact between the sky and the earth was said to be a two-way process. Biame and his wife were able to return to earth, and clever people were able to ascend to the sky country. Contact was particularly important in the contexts of ceremony and in the actions of clever people. Howitt referred to the Being as the All-Father, and he recorded a number of names: Bunjil, Daramulun, Baiame, and Mungan-ngana (1996: 490-491).

Recently Tony Swain has argued that Biame, the 'All-Father' was brought into being in response to European invasion, and that he is modeled on the Christian God. Swain offers compelling evidence that Aboriginal people in the South-East were responding dynamically to the changes that were thrust upon them, and their use of ritual and story to seek to explain and control white people and the effects

of invasion is thoroughly documented (Swain 1993). It remains open to question whether Biame was an indigenous Creator Being, or was brought into being through colonisation. In my view, the question is irrelevant in the contemporary context.

The more interesting point may be that Biame (as a cultural figure) is at the apex of a structure of power; the broadly active and personified figures of Biame and his wives create, but in some sense stand outside of, the totemic system. Neither Biame nor his wives were totems, but nor were they distant and removed. They were continuing elements of creation, but were not in daily contact with people the way totems were.

Here again, Parker is instructive: ‘Byame... is the original source of all totems, and of the law that people of the same totem may not intermarry...’ (Parker 1905: 7). She goes on to state that no totem can claim Byamee, he is Father of all. Similarly, no totem can claim Birrahgnooloo, the Mother of all, and Biame’s wife, because she created the totems (ibid).

Across Australia, and NSW is no exception, the Creation Beings imprinted themselves on the world as they travelled. In section 5.3.7 we discuss the role of the Rainbow Snake in making the land. There are also many sites where Biame was active, including his footprints, his cooking area, and places where his dogs made creeks (reported in Mathews 1994: 8-9, and elsewhere). I will return to sites, tracks and creation in the case studies (section 5)

3.6 TYPOLOGIES – A LANGUAGE FOR TYPES OF TOTEMS

A. P. Elkin (1938 [1954]) wrote that totemism ‘is a view of nature and life, of the universe and man, which colours and influences the Aborigines’ social groupings and mythologies, inspires their rituals and links them to the past. It unites them with nature’s activities and species in a bond of mutual life-giving...’ (ibid: 133). As I have noted, for Elkin the relationship between nature and society was a one-way street. Nature, in his view, is brought into the social world, and species are grouped with, and become aligned with, social groups. This ‘segmentation’ of nature into human social groups distinguishes totemism from more generalised animistic religions (ibid: 141).

Following the logic of group and totem, Elkin created a typology based on types of social groups (or elements of groups) with which they were associated. From least inclusive to most inclusive, his typology identifies the following totemic forms: individual, sex (as in gender), moiety, section, subsection, clan, local (or locality-based), and multiple. Clearly some of these categories concern groups, others concern sets of people who may or may not be a group; some, like ‘local’, overlap with others (like ‘clan’), and some, like ‘multiple’, are simply the left-overs.

Elkin was writing in the era when functionalist explanations were beginning to be balanced with structural ones. Having created a typology based on form, he then developed one based on function. This typology yields the following categories:

social totems, conception totems, dream totems, classificatory totems, and assistant totems. Here again there was overlap – a dream totem is usually (not always) the totem, which represents the person in another person's dreams. It might be a conception totem or a cult totem. Classificatory totems are taken as those totems which call into play a method of classifying the whole of the known natural world (the moiety totems of Arnhem Land might be an example).

Each system seems relatively clear on its own, although it remains open to debate whether either of them is adequate or necessary. Taken together, however, they delightfully scramble each other into a relatively unworkable system. They thus destabilise the whole notion of making this kind of categorisation. To compound the chaos, Ronald and Catherine Berndt (1964) took on the task of up-dating Elkin in their study *The World of the First Australians*. Their efforts to simplify the typologies may seem to create even more uncertainty.

For my purposes, the significance of these typologies is not that they prove the arbitrariness and generally unsatisfactory quality of this kind of classification. Rather, it is that however unsatisfactory the system of classification, it is based on evidence from Aboriginal people, and therefore captures significant aspects of social reality. Clan totems, for example, are significant whether Elkin's typology is a help or a hindrance in understanding them. Many of the types of totems Elkin identifies are significant today.

3.6.1. Elkin's typologies – Forms

- ◆ Individual – the relationship is between one person and a species of nature. There is an example of a relationship between a person and only one member of a species.
- ◆ Sex – each sex (male and female) possesses its own totem
- ◆ Moiety – the tribe is divided into two over-arching groups, and each group has its own totems (groups may be matrilineal or patrilineal)
- ◆ Section – the tribe, or collection of tribal groups, is divided into four categories, and each category is related to one or more totems
- ◆ Subsection – the tribe, or collection of tribal groups, is divided into eight categories, and each category is related to one or more totems.
- ◆ Clan – the clan is a group of people related by descent from a shared ancestor. They share in relationships with one or more totems.
- ◆ Local – relationships between persons and totems depend on location rather than on descent, bearing in mind, of course, that most groups are located within a territory.
- ◆ Multiple – a number of people and social groups and natural objects and species are grouped together under the name of one or more totems.

3.6.2. Functions

- ◆ Social – these totems are concerned with the regulation of marriage, and are often or usually matrilineal. Social totemism is thus closely linked to matrilineal totemism: 'all its members are relations, and the moiety totem... symbolises the sharing of a common life based on descent through the mothers (ibid: 149). Social totems establish relationships in which people and

their species share the same ‘flesh’ or meat’. Usually people do not kill or eat the flesh of their own totems. Social/matrilineal totems are also frequently familiar totems: ‘the animal or plant in actual life or in a vision or dream acts as a mate or friend of the persons whose totem it is; it warns them of danger, gives them courage or strength and imparts to them information regarding absent clan’s folk’ (ibid: 149).

- ◆ Cult – these totems are involved in secret religious or cult organisation. Myth and ritual are part of the cult and belong to the cult-owning group.
- ◆ Conception – several meanings are attached to this concept: 1) membership in local cult totemic groups is determined by conception; 2) conception totem (Dreaming) identifies a relationship between an individual and a species, and the species (or members of it), work as the person’s protector.
- ◆ Dream – A dream totem is the totem by which the person is identified in the dreams of others. It may be a conception totem, but it may also be an individual totem, a cult or clan totem, or a matrilineal totem.
- ◆ Classificatory – this term really repeats most of what has been said above: totemism is a way of grouping the whole world into groups and categories; it is a system of classification.
- ◆ Assistant – these totems are generally associated with healers or clever people. Most often the totem is an individual totem. This function is most prevalent in eastern Australia, although it also occurs elsewhere. (Elkin 1938 [1954] 136-155)

3.7 CLAN TOTEMS

Totemic clans are groups of people who are descended from an ancestor who is identified as a Dreaming figure. The clans are identified by their totem – the emu clan, or the kangaroo clan, as discussed above. The coastal region was generally a region in which patrilineal clans were the norm. The inland regions (roughly, west of the great divide) were home to matrilineal clans.

In the matrilineal area tribes were divided either into two divisions (moieties) or, in some areas, into four sections. There were other classifications that further complicated the social structure. For the moment, however, I will just lay out the big picture. Each division (moiety, section, clan) was associated with a number of totems. A person’s totem, therefore, was given as a consequence of the person’s parents’ totems, and their totems were the consequence of their parents’ totems. The evidence from the early years all indicates that totems were handed on through the mother line. (Some factors that suggest that this was not the only way totems were transmitted are discussed below).

Within a tribe, totems differentiated people into groups – some were possum, some were snake, and so on. Each totem was also present in numerous tribes. Thus, for example, possum people could be found in tribes all over Australia, wherever there are possums (the animals). Totemism thus expands the boundaries of kinship across tribes and into the natural world. Radcliffe-Browne noted that in the large matrilineal clans, a person regarded any other person of that same totem as kin, regardless of what clan they belonged to (ref). This is true of totemism generally, and it may be best to regard the totemic group as being comprised of both its human members and its non-human members, as all are descended from

the totemic ancestor. Within the same logic, a person was not to marry their own totem, no matter how distant the connection (Parker 1905: 22).

As stated above, Radcliffe-Brown defined the patrilineal totemic clan as the 'normal' system for Australia. In his view, only patrilineal clans would have the 'cults', or male rituals, which he took to be the prime significance of totems. He expected that increase rituals, organised into a system similar to that described by Strehlow for the Arrernte was not only 'normal' but also proper and masculine. Accordingly, when he had the opportunity to do some fieldwork in NSW, he visited the far north coast where there were reported to be patrilineal clans. He discovered what he was looking for: Totemic sites and ceremonies (Radcliffe-Brown 1929: 399). The general disregard of matrilineal systems means that the record in those areas is not as thorough as one would wish.

The general disregard of the natural world was also implicated in the general disregard of the ecology of matrilineal totems. Where matrilineal totems co-exist with patrilineal totems, they have generally been classed as 'social' because they are not territorially located in the way that patrilineal clans are. The assumption that they simply represent groups and marriage categories overlooks their fundamental role in establishing kinship with the natural world. My work with matrilineal Dreamings in the NT, for example, shows that the relationship between people and their matrilineal totem is termed 'flesh' (*ngurlu*). The relationship involves mutual care, and the people of a given totem have the right and responsibility to prohibit hunting of the animal (in particular). Their prohibition extends across the region in which their social network extends, and only they can release the region from the prohibition. Matrilineal totems are thus extremely significant ecologically (Rose 2000).

Throughout most of eastern Australia descent totems were referred to as 'meat'. Janet Mathews states that the first question Aboriginal people would ask of a stranger is 'what is your meat?' The answer would be a totem, or list of totems, and the knowledge of 'meat' served to situate the stranger in the host group (Mathews 1979: 27).

The term 'meat' is roughly equivalent to the English term 'flesh' when used in the context of kinship. British-origin people speak of their own 'flesh and blood' meaning their own kinfolk. Aboriginal people speak of 'meat' and mean their own human and non-human kinfolk. 'Meat' is thus a category that brings the human and the non-human together as kin by reason of descent from a totemic ancestor (Mathews *ibid*). Within the same logic, the requirement that one not marry one's own totem is stated as a rule: your proper spouse is your 'right meat' (Beckett 1959: 203). Parker explicitly made a point that is alluded to throughout much of the literature: that the relationship between person and group or clan totem is a sibling relationship. Many of the scholars refer to brotherhood, and it is not clear whether they are using the term in its specific or generic sense (see Parker 1905: 15).

3.8 HUNTING

There is little consistency across the literature concerning hunting. Parker is one of the best, as she had ample opportunity to observe what people did, as well as what they claimed to do. She states that there was absolutely no taboo on hunting or eating one's own clan totem or related totemic affiliates. The prohibition was on marriage, but not on eating. In contrast, people never killed or ate their own personal totem (below), because to do so would weaken themselves. In contrast, they had no prohibitions concerning marriage to a person whose clan or personal totem was the same as their own personal totem (Parker *ibid*: 20-21). Mathews (1979: 41) and many scholars point out that there were many food prohibitions, but these related primarily to age, sex, status in life, and degrees of initiation, more than to totemic relationships.

It is probable that there was variation in rules concerning hunting and eating in the past, and it is certain there is variation today.

3.9 INDIVIDUAL TOTEMS

Elkin and others note the existence of individual totems in the South-East. More attention is directed toward the assistant or familiar type of totem, but it seems clear that there was a type of individual totemism that was not inherited, and was not necessarily linked to magic, healing, and rainmaking. It appears that the individual totem, like the clever person's totem, worked as a guardian and dream totem for the individual.

The personal totem was said normally to reside within the person's chest. Howitt (1996: 147) offers the example of King Merriman of Wallaga Lake who said that years ago someone of the lace-lizard totem sent that totem while he was asleep, 'and that it went down his throat and almost ate his *Budjan* [totem], which was in his breast, so that he nearly died. This man could not eat his *Budjan*, Black Duck, which in its corporeal form gave him warnings against enemies or other dangers.'

3.10 CLEVER PEOPLE

Another individual type is the totem associated with clever people and healing. Elkin termed this type 'assistant totemism'. Radcliffe-Brown reports on this type of totemism in the Kamilaroi region, stating that:

Throughout this region there is a system of personal totems. Any man or woman who wishes to acquire skill in magic must acquire a special relation to some species of animal which becomes his or her personal totem. Magical power depends on this possession of one or more personal totems. No one will kill or eat his or her personal totem (Radcliffe-Brown 1930b, part II: 233).

Ronald Berndt provided a wonderfully detailed account of personal totemism in the context of his description of Wiradjuri clever 'men'. He notes that women could become clever, but for the most part he confines his discussion to men.

Based on a brief field trip in 1943 to Menindee Government Station, Berndt retells detailed stories told to him by men who, when younger, had experienced clever men's work in ceremonies and in healing.

For my purposes, the significant points concern totemism. Ordinary totems amongst Wiradjuri people were termed *djindji*, translated as 'meat'. They were inherited matrilineally and were part of the person at birth. In contrast, the clever person's assistant or familiar totem was sung into him by his father or grandfather. The totem was the same as the father's or grandfather's, and thus the assistant totem was transmitted patrilineally. It was termed *jarawijewa*, translated as 'the "meat" which is within him' (Berndt 1947: 63-4).

Clever men were key figures in ceremonial life, and were well travelled. Attending ceremonies across a broad area, they sustained a ritual community that crossed tribal and other boundaries, and that was sustained through adherence to the law of Baime who gave the knowledge and power to clever people (Berndt 1947 part I: 33). They were also key figures in rainmaking, and only clever people were allowed to make rain. Using song and action, and manipulating quartz crystals and emu feathers, clever people travelled to the sky to release the rain (Berndt 1947 part II: 361-3).

A clever person's totem was itself 'clever'. The totem guarded the person while he or she slept, guided and warned the person, and in other ways worked as the person's double and protector.

As stated, a person did not eat their own familiar totem. This system was believed to inhere amongst the creative beings themselves. Thus, according to Berndt, Wiradjeri people believed that the powerful sky woman Kurikuta, wife of Biame, had emu as her personal familiar. This is to say that she and emu were one and the same, and she would never eat emu. Furthermore, she would become upset if she smelled emu being cooked (R. Berndt 1947: 77-8). There were widespread and strict rules about how emu could be cooked, many of which are described by J. Mathews (1979: 38-40).

4. CONTINUITY AND DYNAMIC RESILIENCE

4.1 FATAL IMPACT

Throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries the majority of white Australians held to a view that Aborigines were doomed to extinction. The corollary to this idea was that culture loss is a one-way process – culture could only be lost, not recovered. The dynamic recuperation and reworking of tradition, when it was recognized at all, has often been labelled inauthentic. In this section I acknowledge the phenomenal resilience of Aboriginal people, and examine some living traditions. No one denies that there has been a great deal of loss. Less well acknowledged is the fact that along with the loss, there is astonishing survival and recovery. My purpose in this and subsequent sections is to document the significant role of totemism in the dynamics of Aboriginal cultural resilience.

In the process of colonisation, white people regularly wondered at the way Aboriginal people failed to thrive under conditions of dispossession. For most of the period of colonisation public views and official views coincided in the idea that Aboriginal people would ‘fade away’ before the impact of civilisation.

Anthropological thought was also focussed on this question. Elkin ruled anthropology in Australia, and he had very clear views on the subject. The arguments went this way. On the one hand were the advocates of the idea that the harshness of colonisation was the primary cause of ‘depopulation’: ‘there is no mysterious law of Nature, which causes native races to die out before the white man. The causes of the extinction of native races are ... violence, and starvation and civilised drink and disease’ (Sydney Olivier, quoted in Wise 1985: 84). On the other hand was the theory of ‘cultural potential’, put forcibly by the British anthropologist Pitt-Rivers. According to this theory, ‘whenever a native group’s ‘cultural equilibrium’ was disturbed, it seemed that their ‘cultural potential’ could not cope’ (ibid: 85). Elkin was persuaded by the Pitt-Rivers theory of cultural potential. Natives, it seemed, were doomed to disappear because of their own inadequacies.

Discursive forms of deflection, such as the ‘tide of history’, the ‘doomed race’, the practice of ‘soothing the dying pillow’, and other tools for talking about probable extinction covered a multitude of cruel practices. As every recent Aboriginal history shows, in addition to outright murder and massacre, Aboriginal people’s lives were treated with a careless negligence and

manipulative arrogance that enabled whites to participate in destruction without having to take responsibility for it (see for example Rose 2001).

Not until after World War II did Elkin shift his thinking. The experience of Aboriginal people in the army camps of North Australia proved without doubt that decent food, sanitation, and fair treatment had the effect of promoting Aboriginal people's well-being. It seemed that perhaps they were not doomed to extinction after all. According to Wise (1985: 167), 'the more Elkin reflected, the more obvious the theory of dietary deficiency became.' He finally realised the truth of what a few members of the public had been saying for a very long time. For example, the Reverend J. Tennison Woods became publicly irate about the conditions around Penola (NSW) in 1867.

When other commentators in New South Wales argued that the natives were doomed to extinction because they could not compete with civilisation, Woods countered indignantly:

...it is such a common thing to find politicians shaking their heads and saying so wisely that it seems destined for the black races to fade away before the white. Fade away, indeed. You stop a white man's wages and give him nothing to eat, and see if he won't fade away. (Woods 1867)

Even after Elkin made his revolutionary shift in thought, many anthropologists remained obsessed with the idea of salvaging information. In examining the books and articles in which anthropologists have decreed the imminent or recently accomplished death of groups, languages, social relations, and modes of behaviour, one concludes that anthropologists have been the necrologists of the nation. For example, Elkin wrote an article in 1970 entitled "Before it is too late":

"Before it is too late" has been a recurrent challenge to research in Australian Aboriginal Anthropology. Faced by the sure and certain dying out of tribes and by the even quicker breakdown of their culture, George Taplin . . . [and numerous others] recognised and responded to the challenge. With the help of correspondents near and far, they observed, gleaned and garnered what and where they could . . . As with search in the mineral and oil fields, so, too, the Institute [of Aboriginal Studies] is observing, surveying, probing, sounding, drilling and extracting. The dividends will be high, though probably not in every project. Some fields are poor. (Elkin 1970: 19, 21)

This scientific practice is itself a form of death work, as it values the living primarily to the extent that they can offer up information concerning the past. The assumption seems to be that these people have no future. Such thinking is itself a one-way process; it has no way of engaging with the dynamism of indigenous people, other than to dismiss contemporary knowledge as 'inauthentic'.

A scientific orientation toward 'salvage' work converged with the everyday racism that pervades much of Australian society to produce an image of Aboriginal people in NSW as 'cultureless outcasts' (Creamer 1988). Creamer was writing in the context of an 'assault on the cultural integrity' of NSW

Aboriginal people, and he called for greater attention to the integrity of people's knowledge, especially in reference to sites and the landscape (ibid: 45).

The remainder of this report takes up that challenge within the contexts specified by the research brief. I look first to an example of complete adherence to given tradition, and second to an example of dynamic reworking of an ancient tradition.

4.2 PROTECTION – UNCHANGING ADHERENCE

One of the outstanding issues arising from the earlier literature is the distinction drawn by Roheim. In his view (and displayed on his maps), he drew a line separating a large portion of south eastern Australia from the rest of the continent. The basis of his divide is that of 'negative' versus 'positive' totemism. 'Negative' totemism worked principally with prohibitions, while 'positive' totemism worked principally with increase rituals and reincarnation beliefs.

In my view, his terminology deflects attention from the actual distinction he was drawing, and I reject the terms. The concepts, however, are worth considering. The first 'type' ('negative') can best be termed protectionism. The emphasis in a protective system is to protect the totemic species from harm or depredation. The second 'type' ('positive') can best be termed promotionism. The emphasis is on promoting the well-being of the totemic species through ritual.

The early scholars all report that totemism is a way of classifying much of the known world. Thus many animals, plants, and other phenomena were incorporated into the totemic social system, forming a rich and dense concentration of intersecting associations and responsibilities. There is less evidence concerning the responsibilities that arise from these totemic relationships. Radcliffe-Brown documented numerous increase rituals in the far north coast where he went looking for them, and he seemed to conclude that they may have been unique to this area.

This hypothesis seems unlikely. Parker's account of an area within the matrilineal clan region of NSW shows a system that linked life-giving forces with seasons and social groups, and that allocated responsibilities for ensuring the life of the world. She wrote:

Every totem even has its own special corroboree and time for having it, as the Beewees or iguanas, when the pine pollen is falling and the red dust storms come. And if you abused these dust storms to a Beewee black, you would insult him: it is not dust, it is the pollen off the pines, and so a multiplex totem to him! The winds belong to various totems, and the rains are claimed by the totem whose wind it was that blew it up. If a storm comes without wind it belongs to Bohrah, the kangaroo.... Away to the North-West a tribe of Blacks have almost a monopoly in wind-making, holding great corroborees to sing these hurricanes up. (Parker 1905: 81-2)

This is a superb statement of totemism in its life affirming and life-giving essence, and is very similar to the organisation of connectivities that Strehlow documented for Arrernte people. It should be noted, therefore, that Parker's

ethnography is situated squarely within the area that is generally classed as 'matrilineal' (and therefore would be thought by earlier generations of anthropologists, to be lacking in these relationships). The other side of these responsibilities is that totems take care of their people. Jimmy Blacksmith explained to Janet Mathews that when an animal left its group and stood still staring at a person who was its totemic human brother, 'this searching look and special attention warned a man that he had troubles and must be wary. Everybody was careful that this creature was not harmed or some mystic power might be released' (Mathews 1994: 151).

Another side of the power to promote life is aggressive and destructive power. Parker (1905: 82) noted that one of the women on her staff turned down the courtship of a man from big wind country, and he sent a storm that blew the roofs off all the station buildings except Parker's home. Within the case studies I offer contemporary examples of communication, protection, and promotion. My point here is to consider of other evidence for the continuity of protection.

Much that is now known about Aboriginal care of country tends to undermine the idea that any system is either protective or promotive. Both types of care are present – protection of species and promotion of their well-being. The two 'types' really seem to be two sides of the same coin. In addition, since the great debates about fire-stick farming, it is clear that care of country is not only a matter of ritual, but also, and equally importantly, a matter of practical care in daily life.

Having pointed to the interpenetrative quality of protection and promotion, it is also important to state that Roheim was articulating a matter of significance in NSW. Other accounts confirm the existence of practices of protection in NSW. For example, Dame Mary Gilmore, daughter of one of the early Wagga Wagga settlers, wrote about sanctuaries, contrasting Aboriginal promotion of species with the settlers lack of management:

...when I asked my father why we could not get fish as formerly he said, "When the blacks went the fish went," meaning that the habit of preserving the wild was destitute in the ordinary white settler. Yet at that time the white population on the rivers was only a fraction of what the black had been.

Beside the fish, where there were deep valleys, running water and much timber, the natives invariably set aside some parts to remain as breeding-places or animal sanctuaries. Where there were plains by a river, a part was left undisturbed for birds that nested on the ground. They did the same thing with lagoons, rivers, and billabongs for water birds and fish. There once was a great sanctuary for emus at Eunonyhareenyha, near Wagga Wagga. The name means "The breeding-place of the emus" — the emu's sanctuary. The one-time fish-traps on the Darling, the Murrumbidgee, and the Lachlan all indicated sanctuary; the small fish would escape, or could multiply beyond the rocky maze that formed the trap or balk; the large remained within the fishing area. When on the lower side the fish were plentiful and the upper part required a rest, keystones were lifted, or put in if they have been lifted, and sanctuary was moved over the barrier.

Pregan Pregan lagoon at North Wagga Wagga was a sanctuary for pelicans, swans and cranes; and the land between it and the Murrumbidgee was a curlew sanctuary. I have forgotten what that was called, though I remember that my father gave it the name he had from the blacks. At Ganmain and Deepwater there were alternately swan and duck sanctuaries. The law of sanctuary in regard to large or wide breeding-grounds, such as Ganmain and Deepwater, where once there were miles and miles of swamps (as also down near Deniliquin), was that each year a part of the area could be hunted or fished, but not the same part two seasons in succession (Gilmore 1963 [1934]: 117-8).

It is significant, then, that totemism in NSW today continues this tradition of protection. We will take up issues of protection and care in the case studies.

4.3 DYNAMIC RESILIENCE

4.3.1. Rainbow Serpent

The Rainbow Snake, or Rainbow Serpent, was a significant Dreaming figure in NSW, and continues to be so today. It is associated with water, especially with permanent waters. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1930a), the Rainbow Snake is recognised throughout Australia as a powerful figure associated with water. In some tribes it is part of the cult totemism, and it was regularly associated with initiations. It was also particularly associated with clever people because of the association of the Rainbow Snake with quartz crystals, and the fact that these crystals were important objects of clever people. Terms for Rainbow Snake include *Wawi* (Ngiyampaa, Wiradjeri and others), *Karia* (Kamilaroi and others), and *Ngadji* (Barkandji and others).

The use of Rainbow Snake objects, including ground sculpture, in initiation ceremony was attested by Parker (1905: 66), among others. In addition, Parker asserted that the Rainbow Snake was the personal totem of a clever man who ‘kept a miniature form of it within himself’ (Radcliffe-Brown 1930a: 345). Parker also notes that a woman who was skilled in rain-making erected two posts in Parker’s garden to protect it from drought. She writes that the clever woman who occasionally worked for her

was going away for a trip. Before going she said, as she would not be able to know when I wanted rain for my garden, she would cut two posts in it which had in them the spirits of Kurreahs, or crocodiles.... These posts are painted red, black, and white, with a snaky pattern, the Kurreah sign, on them’ (ibid: 47).⁴

Radcliffe-Brown (1930a: 345) came to the view that Parker’s ‘crocodile’ was a Rainbow Snake, and I am inclined to agree with him. It is interesting, though, that Fred Biggs, seventy years later, also referred to *kuria* as a crocodile (in Robinson 1989: 45).

⁴ *Kurreah* is the same as *karia*.

I will return to the Rainbow Serpent in the western NSW case study (section 5.3). At this point I want to show a parallel process of cultural dynamics across vast distances of time.

4.3.2. Rapid Change

From year to year and decade to decade right across the continent, the social and ecological effects of European colonisation were devastating. Elkin's view was that Aborigines were so well adapted to their environment through millennia of stability that they had no resources for adapting to change.

And yet, over the millennia of Aboriginal inhabitation of Australia there have been massive environmental changes. The end of the last ice age (about 15000 BP) is the most recent major event. Great climatic change initiated huge environmental effects that must have had major social impacts. What changes occurred, and how did Aboriginal people manage their adaptation to those changes?

During the ice age the sea level was lower. Consequently, more land was exposed. The end of the ice age brought about greater rainfall, along with global warming, and the sea began to rise. Evidence from North Australia shows that the rising sea would periodically have caused rapid change: mainland regions would have been cut off to form islands, and islands would have become submerged. Tidal reaches would have invaded freshwater river systems, turning them brackish and then changing them to salt water. People who experienced loss of land or loss of freshwater would have had to move inland to survive, and the inland peoples would have had to accommodate them or fight them off (summarised from Lewis 1988: 83-95).

Darrell Lewis suggests that the rock art of Arnhem Land may offer evidence of one way in which people managed rapid change. He draws on Luke Taylor's analysis of the composite Rainbow Snake in contemporary Arnhem Land art. Taylor analyses art work produced for ritual which depicts a Rainbow Snake whose body is an amalgamation of numerous animals. This amalgamated, or composite, Rainbow Snake represents the alliance of numerous clans, each of whose totems is worked into the Rainbow body. Taylor's analysis (1990) goes to show the 'transformative potential' of the Rainbow Snake.

Lewis notes that composite Rainbow Snakes first appear in the rock art during the period of sea level rise, and he suggests that they had the same function then as now. In that early period of rapid change, alliances between groups would have enabled people to manage change more effectively than if they had simply fought it out. The composite Rainbow Snake 'symbolises the possibilities of alliance among clan groups; it is a means of inclusion, a counter-balance against tensions that tend to fragment larger social groups' (ibid: 91).

The theory is that people used their totems in negotiating social change, and that the Rainbow Snake was an important form in sustaining alliances between groups. In the composite Rainbow Snake, totems, like the groups they represent, are linked up in the body of the snake. Their own unique identity is present in

recognisable features; they are juxtaposed but not obliterated, allied but not subsumed.



Figure 1: Composite Rainbow Snake, Arnhem Land rock art. (Lewis 1988: 272)

The role of totems in identifying groups and representing them to others has become a significant element of Aboriginality in many parts of NSW today (section 5.2.4). This was one of the elements of totemism identified by all the early accounts, and it is prevalent throughout Australia. ATSIC reports have become a medium of representation. The Umbara Regional Council covered the area of the Yuin nation, and selected the Black Duck totem (Umbara) to identify and represent the whole region. The 1992-3 report depicts three Black Ducks beautifully silhouetted against the Aboriginal flag.

In 1988 the Canberra (Bogong) and Umbara ATSIC districts were combined to form the South Eastern NSW / ACT Indigenous Regional Council. A Ngunnawal elder, Matilda House, designed the report cover. She chose the Black Duck, Dolphin and Rainbow Snake as the totemic representations of the region, and her design is still used on the letterhead and logo of the renamed Queanbeyan Regional Council. She talked about the significance of the totems she chose:

The Black Duck was for the Yuin mob... Us mob, the Kamberri mob, have the Wedgetail eagle [also known as Eaglehawk] and crow that draw us all together.... The Rainbow Serpent represents everybody... The Dolphin is for all the sea people, it travels around the coast. These two are big Dreamtime ancestors, not just totems for one clan. (interview with Diana James)

Ms House said of the Rainbow Snake: 'It brings us all together. It is for all Australians.' The composite Rainbow Snake is thus a traditional mode of totemic dynamism, drawn on to manage major change. Today images of the Rainbow

Snake or Serpent are being used in the same way. The apparent continuity of a system for managing major change is impressive.



Figure 2: report cover

5. PART 2: SWIMMING UPSTREAM: RECONCILIATION AND AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE

5.1 LIVING TRADITIONS – THE CASE STUDIES

The brief for this project included the objective of conducting two case studies in order to investigate three main questions:

- 1) Are 'totem' relationships relevant to Aboriginal people in NSW today?
- 2) If so, should NPWS be integrating recognition of 'totems' into its management strategies?
- 3) If so, what recommendations could be offered for how NPWS strategies could be more responsive to 'totems'?

The answer to each of the first two questions is 'yes'. We will discuss the answers to these questions in detail, and will offer recommendations in this report. We must note at the outset, however, that:

- 1) There is a great deal of regional variation, and my research has not covered the whole of NSW.
- 2) Strategies will need to be regionally based in order to work effectively with local culture. It follows that more research is called for. It may be that if people in other parts of the state find this report useful, they may wish to articulate their own positions without the benefit of outside research.
- 3) The term 'totem' has proved to be a blunt instrument. Far more subtlety is required, and again, there is regional variation on this issue.

We decided to carry out one study in a coastal community and one in the inland. The coastal study was carried out at Wallaga Lake on the south coast of NSW. This area was chosen because of Rose's previous research with women in their efforts to protect the sacred mountain Gulaga. Chris Watson has long-standing friendships with some members of the community. She managed this portion of the study, conducting in-depth interviews with community members and NPWS officers. We report on that research in section 5.2. The inland case study relied primarily on work with Ngiyampaa men. The research was managed by Debbie Rose and Diana James. This research relies primarily on in-depth interviews with

NPWS officers and consultants, as well as park visits. We report on this study in section 5.3.

5.2 WALLAGA LAKE: RESPECT AND THE SACRED

Christine Watson & Debbie Rose, with Trisha Ellis, Dave Tout, the late Guboo Ted Thomas,⁵ Ann Thomas, Mary Duroux, Mervyn Penrith, Warren Foster, and Randall Mumbulla.

The research for this section of the report is based primarily on a series of interviews conducted by Christine Watson in April - May 2002 with a number of the Yuin people of Wallaga Lake and surrounding towns. The report is also based on Deborah Rose's earlier work in the area in 1990, and on writings, tapes, web sites, and videos by Yuin people. Christine's experience of having visited Gulaga and other sites in the area since 1994, participating in women's Dreaming camps led by Ann Thomas, also underlies the report.

The April-May 2002 interviews included community elders, and younger men and women who are deeply immersed in traditional spiritual knowledge and are becoming elders, as well as people with less exposure to local traditional knowledge. Their ages span six decades, ranging from 93 to 33. One person, Trisha Ellis, is a staff member of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, while another, Dave Tout, does periodic consultancy work for the Service. Warren Foster and Randall Mumbulla have undertaken NPWS training and work occasionally for NPWS.

Relationships of kinship between people and non-human species are significant to the Yuin people of Wallaga Lake in many contexts, from totally public, to personal, to familial, to secret/sacred. Only public information and personal information approved by the particular person is presented in this report. The analysis presented here is based on a small segment of Yuin knowledge, philosophical thought and spiritual experience. It is not intended to produce a complete representation of the knowledge Yuin people may wish to share with non-Aboriginal people, or to replicate the large amounts of information already in the public sphere in Yuin people's own words (see for example, Warren Foster on www.dreamtime.net.au/gulaga/index.cfm).

5.2.1. Parks and Sacred Mountains

The Yuin people of Wallaga Lake are situated in a sacred landscape dominated by two major sacred sites: Gulaga (also known as Mt Dromedary), and Biamanga (also known as Mumbulla Mountain). Najanuga (Little Dromedary), a small mountain South-East of Tilba Tilba, and Barunguba (Montague Island), off the

⁵ Guboo Ted Thomas was active as an elder, guiding the transmission of knowledge almost until the day he passed away - Sunday 19 May, 2002. His contribution to this manuscript was checked with him on 16 May.

coast, are young men who have moved away from their mother, Gulaga, in this sacred and storied geography.⁶

The Wallaga Lake community is adjacent to the Gulaga National Park (previously Wallaga Lake National Park), and about 30 kilometres from Biamanga National Park. Wallaga Lake National Park was gazetted as an NPWS Park on 1 January 2001, following a nomination made by the NPWS that it be declared an Aboriginal place - of special significance to Aboriginal culture - and be protected as part of the NSW National Parks system of lands. Gulaga National Park is in turn made up of the Goura Nature Reserve and the Gulaga Flora and Fauna Reserve. Biamanga National Park includes Mt Mumbulla / Biamanga and the upper reaches of the Murrah river. Merriman's Local Aboriginal Land Council recommended that Biamanga be recognised as an Aboriginal place and transferred to Aboriginal ownership through the NPWS.

Negotiations to transfer Gulaga and Biamanga to Aboriginal ownership and then lease them back to the NPWS under a joint management board are taking place simultaneously. Over the last year, the names of the traditional owners have been listed with the Office of the Registrar - *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. Registration as an owner enables that person to be nominated onto a board of management for these lands. Nominations have also been gathered for an independent Negotiating Panel to negotiate the terms of leases between the NSW Minister for the Environment and Merriman's Local Aboriginal Land Council as title holders for the Aboriginal owners. It is envisaged that the Negotiating Panels will be finalised at the end of May 2002. The process of handing back the Parks to Aboriginal ownership, immediately leasing them back to NPWS to manage for a 30 year period, and the formation of a majority Aboriginal joint management panel to oversee this work, will be finalised over the next six to twelve months.

The fact that each of these mountains is sacred is central to the Yuin people of Wallaga Lake and other communities in the area. Their efforts to protect these mountains and thus to ensure their spiritual and environmental integrity are well documented (for example, Byrne 1984, Egloff 1979, Kelly 1975, Rose 1990) and are on-going. Significant local control over information sharing is ensured by the fact that cultural tourism is managed by Umbarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Tours, at Wallaga Lake. This organisation runs Aboriginal-guided tours to both mountains, as well as cruises on Wallaga Lake and visits to other sites in the area.

As this case study will indicate, for Wallaga Lake Yuin people, 'totemism' is a dynamic system set within a broader context of respect and care. The two sacred mountains are central to this broader context; they are sites of origin, of connection, and of teaching.

5.2.2. 'Totems'

The word 'totemism' is not widely known or generally well regarded by contemporary Yuin people from Wallaga Lake. Howitt, who visited the area in the 1880s, lists 22 Yuin totems provided by the old men (1996 [1904]: 133). As

⁶ Gulaga is geologically linked with these landforms in that they were all formed from ancient volcanic eruptions.

noted in section 3.3, his work generally does not take women's knowledge or practice into account. He states that totem names are inherited from the father and were bestowed at initiation, and that as totems are in some ways like magic, very few people knew other people's totems (ibid). The contemporary Yuin people with whom Christine spoke agreed with a number of aspects of Howitt's information, and disagreed with others. Two people pointed out that in the Dhurga language from Moruya, *budjan* is a general term for a bird, rather than the word for a totem as Howitt stated (1996 [1904]: 133). Three people, two women and a man, gave evidence that totems are passed down through women as well as men, thus adding a crucial dimension to Howitt's description of the operation of totemism among the Yuin.

Elkin's (1938: 133) definition of 'totemism' as a view of nature and life that unites people and nature in bonds of mutual life-giving is extremely appropriate in the Wallaga Lake context. Here, mutual caring between human and non-human kin, and between land and living things is a dynamic reality. Mutual caring has three main aspects:

- 1) As a general worldview
- 2) As a system of social relations
- 3) As a system of environmental interaction

We will discuss each of these aspects of mutual caring, and then we will discuss a concept underlying all three: Respect.

5.2.3. A general worldview

Gulaga is the source and centre of the created world for the Yuin people; to damage the mountain would be to physically damage the people (Rose 1990: 55). 'The ties between person and country constitute an intense and enduring solidarity; they exist before the person is born, are manifested throughout the person's life, and continue after death' (ibid p 14). The connection between the people and their land, particularly their sacred sites, is so strong that the facial features of Jack Mumbulla (also known as Biamanga) and Percy Mumbulla are believed to have been present in the rocks on Biamanga before they were born (personal communication, and Thomas and Stacey 1980). The person is the land, and the land is the person.

In Yuin culture totemic connections exist within a broader cosmology of non-totemic male and female creator beings, and other non-ordinary beings. In practice these systems intertwine. The creator beings made the other beings and the totems (see also Parker, section 3.5). The spirits of creators such as Tunku and Ngardi have become metamorphosed in the features of sacred sites in the area, just as Umbarra, the black duck, has become the form of the island in the middle of the Lake.

Yuin people's cosmology of creation starts with Darumala (Daruma, or Darumalan), and his mother, Ngalalbal, along with two other creator beings,

Tunku and Ngardi.⁷ All were active at the beginning of creation. A group of Wallaga Lake elders including Max Harrison, Ann Thomas, and Mervyn Penrith, set out major aspects of their cosmology on the *Umbarra Cultural Tours* video 'Journey to the Dreamtime' made in 1996:

At the beginning, before Daruma, the Great Spirit, created Tunku and Ngardi, there was only oneness. (Max Harrison)

Our creation stories on the south coast tell of Tunku and Ngardi coming down from the star. They came from the star to this beautiful land. They became this, this earth. They became part of the stones, the rocks, the clay. They became part of the trees and the mountains itself, and the ocean. And they developed from the earth. All our energies and everything else that we are, are part of the rocks at Gulaga and every other teaching place. And so we became part of this earth. We never professed to own the land. This land owns us. And so we are an ancient race of people still living in this country. (Ann Thomas)

The culture is in the trees, in the bush, in the waters, mountains, the animals and the birds. It's all there for the teaching. How can it be gone when all these things, all this oneness, all this creation is still around us? For thousands and thousands of years our elders have brought our people through [the teaching site at Gulaga illustrated on the video] and taught us the lessons of life... Daruma's creation is all our relations... Daruma the Great Spirit who created everything he's not man or woman. He's both. Daruma's not black or white, nor yellow or red. Daruma is creation within itself. Tunku and Ngardi were first here on Gulaga. All of the teachings come from there. (Mervyn Penrith)

Other elders stress the sacredness of sites on the two sacred mountains, Gulaga and Biamanga, and the equivalence of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spiritual practice. In the words of the late Guboo Ted Thomas:

There are powerful places in the mountain, blessed by the Great Spirit. There are rocks I call my cathedral. It is more powerful than a man made church. We don't have glass windows or statues of angels, to make it sacred. These rocks were not put here by cranes they were put here by Mother Nature. These rocks are where you should sit and meditate to understand the Great Spirit. (c 1999: 15)

And in the words of Mary Duroux:

I liken it to a spider's web. There are a number of paths going outwards and linking threads. You have the choice of going through the Catholic or Anglican path [or through Aboriginal

⁷ Or Toonkoo and Ngaardi. Darumala is sometimes equated with Biame.

spirituality]. It doesn't matter what path you're on, you've got to go to the centre, to the one God. (interview with Chris Watson, 2002)

According to Thomas and Stacey in *Mumbulla - Spiritual Contact*,⁸ Darama gave the Law to the people in the Dreaming, and this is handed down by the elders when they take young people to teaching places in the land for initiation:

The Mountain [Biamanga] is our school where we teach our young men how to behave. They are taught respect for the elders and other people. They are taught about foods and plants, about herbs and medicines. They learn about hunting and tracking, about what to eat on the walkabout and how to survive.

Custodianship of country, sacred sites and knowledge is carried out jointly by men and women. Gulaga is predominantly a women's mountain, with areas which men may access and use for teaching purposes. Women take care of important sites on the mountain from which men are excluded. Similarly, Biamanga is a men's mountain, which contains some women's sites. As women were involved in certain stages of boys' initiation (Rose 1990: 21-25), and men were involved in certain stages of girls' initiation, there are places on Gulaga and Biamanga which men or women, respectively, may visit.

Teaching about the connection between human beings and the natural world, and specific connections between individuals and their totems is part of Yuin Law, which continues to be taught to men and women separately; open aspects of this law are taught in non-gender contexts. According to *Mumbulla – Spiritual Contact*:

They are taught to respect the Land, and all its plants and trees, its animals and birds and fish. They are taught to respect life. All things are bound together. All are part of the Dreaming. The unity and harmony must be respected.

They learn about their totems, especially their special totem, which is Umbarra the Black Duck. They learn about the Yuin people to whom they belong. There are Dreamtime stories about these things. Many are secret and sacred.

5.2.4. A system of social relations

Wallaga Lake people spoke of six different levels of interacting beings:

- i) beings interacting with the Yuin nation;
- ii) beings interacting with tribes or named groups;
- iii) beings interacting with families (operating like clans);
- iv) beings interacting with skin groups;
- v) initiation totems and names;
- vi) beings interacting with specific individuals.

⁸ This text also appears as an information sheet 'The Law Comes from the Mountain' c1979.

While some levels of these relationships with other species, for example the family group, may not be as strong today as before European invasion, the practice and feeling of connection with other parts of the natural world, with Gulaga, and with the earth, is very strong. One of the older women, Mary Duroux, described these categories as families, saying that there are families within families. Thus individuals are part of families, which in turn are part of larger language group and nation families. Connections between humans, plants, animals, birds and fish exist at each level of this kinship structure – families within families.

Beings interacting with the Yuin nation

Umbarra, the Pacific Black Duck, has become widely recognised as the 'totem' and symbol of all Yuin people on the south coast. An ATSIC Regional Council and Umbarra Cultural Centre are named after the black duck, while organisations such as the Black Duck Women, and the recently formed Djuwin Women's Lore Council have adopted the black duck as their totem. Representations of the black duck adorn the covers of ATSIC Annual Reports for the region. As you drive into Umbarra Cultural Centre the form of the black duck greets you everywhere. It appears on the lintel of the main gate, on speed advisory signs and parking signs, and on the two Umbarra tour vehicles (see photos 1 & 2, page 85).

It also appears in the middle of the Aboriginal flag flying from the roof of the building, thus making it a regional flag of the Yuin nation,⁹ as well as in paintings on display in the Umbarra shop. In less obvious form, the black duck is embroidered on the shirts of trainees working at the centre, and appears on centre letterhead and Umbarra greeting cards.

Umbarra has become an extremely important element in the formation of identity for contemporary Yuin people. It functions as the main symbol of identity for those people who grew up without knowing their family or language group totem, for those who haven't received a personal totem, and for those whose personal totem is also the black duck. Some people Christine spoke to at Wallaga Lake grew up in assimilationist times when it was dangerous to speak to the old people, or to learn language. These people all share the Yuin black duck 'totem'.

The Umbarra shop displays some artworks by local Aboriginal people. In addition to the greeting cards and paintings mentioned previously, a series of small silk screened squares of cloth hangs as a mural in the shop, and some pottery by Lorraine Kelly is available. There was evidence in some small ceramic pieces by Lorraine Naylor and Rebecca Harrison of a subtle connection with land in the local area. The two women had collected shells from the shores of Wallaga Lake, made moulds from them, and assembled 'shell midden' incense holders (see photo 3, page 86). Ann and Lynn Thomas produce small paintings and book illustrations, though these are not at the moment being marketed from Umbarra.

⁹ The Umbarra Cultural Centre sought permission from the designer of the Aboriginal flag, Harold Thomas, to make this addition for their local area.

An innovative project currently being staged at Umbarra to train young people in woodcarving is also bringing connections with the land and memories of local history into tangible form. The overall project is construction work to protect Aboriginal sites on Morunna Point Headland just to the north of Camel Rock. It is a joint initiative of the Bermagui Parks and Foreshores Committee (BPFC) of Bega Valley Shire Council, the Australia Council, and the Mumbulla Foundation, a local philanthropic foundation, and is supported by the CDEP scheme, Merriman's Lands Council and Umbarra.

The woodcarving project, funded by the Australia Council, began in August 2001 when Robert Fitzclarence, a member of the BPFC, began working on a voluntary basis with a number of local Aboriginal people to coordinate the production of wood panels to decorate a viewing tower on the planned walkway. Jason Campbell, Ian Campbell and Donna Campbell are the CDEP trainees now finishing the project. The project illustrates the memorandum of understanding between Bega Valley Shire Councils and the local Aboriginal Lands Councils of Eden, Bega and Wallaga Lake:

- ◆ to recognise Aboriginal people as traditional occupants of the area;
- ◆ to recognise and respect shared Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history; and
- ◆ to recognise local flora and fauna as the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people. (See photo 4 on page 86)

A number of other local Yuin people produce artworks on a private basis, taking part in local exhibitions. These people, who are largely working in silk screen and acrylic painting, include John Stewart, Roderick Slockie, Val Saunders, Trisha Ellis, Colleen Dixon, and Cheryl Davison.

While the late Guboo Ted Thomas said that he had never needed to intervene to protect the totem of the Yuin nation, Trisha Ellis and other Yuin have recently been involved in planting screens of foliage to prevent black ducks from being killed when walking across roads. Others have put up signs to make people aware that black ducks cross roads at certain points and to take care not to injure them. A walkway and dams have recently been built on Cabowra Land Council land at Moruya to protect wildlife including a family of black ducks.

Beings interacting with tribes or named groups

Dave Tout, a descendant of the Noble family,¹⁰ serves as a genealogist and researcher for the Yuin people. He has identified several groups and 'totems', including:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| ◆ Wadthi-Wadthi (northern group) | lyrebird |
| ◆ Wadthi-Wadthi (southern group) | spotted owl |
| ◆ Yeerimbine (south of Twofold Bay) | killer whale |
| ◆ Wandian (Mount Sassafrass) | eagle |

Beings connected with families or clans

There is evidence of species being connected with families or clans in the past, but these links may not have survived as a strong element of contemporary kinship organisation. Such connections would have determined marriage alliances, adding further layers of depth to relationships between human beings, and guiding social behaviour. A group of 40 year-old people interested in genealogical and kinship matters agreed that people must marry into other groups. In recent times, when Yuin women have married non-Aboriginal men, there has been a greater emphasis on totems being carried on through women to preserve them (see Rose 1990: 28 on the transmission of family names through the mothers in this situation). A few of the local families are known to be connected with certain family species. For example the Brown family has the bellbird as its clan 'totem', and the Mumbulla family takes its name from *murumbul*, the black snake, suggesting that this snake is the family or clan totem (Howitt lists *murumbul* as a brown snake.)

Skin Groups

Three people with whom Christine spoke, a man and two women, mentioned skin groups as an important level of Yuin connection with species of the natural world, particularly in the past. They said that there are a number of skin groups within language groups, and that you are born with a skin name. Skin groups were said to govern social behaviours and interaction, determining those with whom individuals can (and cannot) talk, marry, trade, as well as identifying their natural enemies.¹¹ Many contemporary Yuin, however, are not familiar with this level of the system or their skin totems, and so do not regulate their social behaviour in this way.

Initiation totems and names

¹⁰ According to Dave Tout, King Merriman and Queen Narelle had two brothers who, although unrelated to each other, became known as the Nobles, and founded a family (not listed in Rose's appendix to the Gulaga Report). The brothers used to live on the island in the middle of the Lake. Dave is descended from George Noble (grandfather). Hugo Noble (b. c 1905), probably a brother, was recorded as resident at Wallaga Lake in 1939.

¹¹ Two 50 - 60 year old people with whom Christine spoke, said that they grew up with a similar system of skin groups and skin group totems in northern New South Wales among Biripi and Dhungutti people.

Howitt (1996 [1904]: 133) states that in addition to the totem men inherited through the father, individual Yuin men were given a second totem by a medicine man at their initiations. Some contemporary Wallaga Lake men describe this process not so much as the conferral of a name by an authoritative elder but a discussion between the elder and the initiand about the bird, animal or plant that is spiritually significant to them. Some of these totems can be known by others and appear to be personal totems, while some are secret and may be a modern-day continuation of the 'second totems' described by Howitt. One of the younger men said: 'The only way you can get a totem is through ceremony and through the animal or bird selecting you.'

Some of the women who have gone through spiritual training in the Yuin educational system stated that they have been given new names at different stages of their spiritual learning. According to one of these women, a child's initial name is given by the grandmother. The women spoke of having been given new names at the four levels of this learning. While a name was suggested to these women by an elder, it was up to them to contemplate the name and to decide whether it accorded with their experience and understanding of themselves.

The first and second level names are open and able to be disclosed to others, while the third and fourth level names are secret. These names include the names of plant species, spirit women, and sacred places as well as the word for a female warrior. The names appear to function like initiation the totems discussed by men.

Beings interacting specifically with individuals

Warren Foster, a younger man and the leader of the Gulaga Dancers, described a totem animal or bird as 'what you really are' - a deep-seated spiritual identity which is shared by the human being and the bird or plant or animal. One of the women described her totems as 'friends, spirit guides, and helpers'.

One of the men who is a dancer has the totem of the lyre bird, which is well known for its prowess in dancing and in imitating the calls of other birds. Another man has the totems of the goanna and the willy wagtail. Other personal totems which were mentioned as belonging to local people include: the crow, kookaburra, emperor pigeon, magpie, mopoke owl, bird (general), echidna, yellow belly fish and the black duck. Thus at least four of the totems listed by Howitt survive as either family or individual totems.

This type of connection is documented by Howitt in relation to King Merriman. The Black Duck was connected with the two Kings Merriman.¹² The last Merriman, who died in 1904, was prominent in Yuin affairs as a result of his role as an elder and leader, his recognition by white authorities, and his role as an informant for Alfred Howitt (Merriman's photo is reproduced in many

¹² Stories about King Merriman vary greatly. In addition, it seems almost certain that there were two Merrimans, father and son. King Merriman died in 1904; his father died in about 1850, according to correspondence contained in the Mathews collection (AIAS).

publications, including Wesson 2000: 148).¹³ This latter King Merriman was a Black Duck man. One of his names was Wambara (Umbara), and the small island, which is known as Merriman's Island is called Wambara and has the shape of a duck. A story documented by Roland Robinson and told by Percy Mumbler recounts King Merriman's attempts to defend his country from marauding Victorian Aborigines (Robinson 1958:111-4). In this story the connection between person and animal is treated as an individual relationship. Black ducks warn and advise King Merriman of the danger which threatens (discussed in Rose 1990: 12).

The late Guboo Ted Thomas spoke in April 2002 about his connection with black ducks, and how they welcome him to place. When he travelled over to Western Australia some years ago, he was entering a property there to be greeted by his hosts. A band of black ducks flew overhead, and people said to him. 'Hey Guboo, that's your totem.' Later, when he went up the hill to the house, one duck came up to him, shook itself and welcomed him.

5.2.5. A system of environmental interaction

The Yuin system of mutual caring consists of networks of people and groups who with their species kin, protect and assist each other. People's understanding of species is not isolated knowledge, but rather includes knowledge of the environment, habits, food, and physical needs of the bird, animal, plant or tree involved.

Gulaga was and still is a protection area for all sorts of plants, animals and birds. Historically Najanuga (Little Dromedary) and Barunguba (Montague Island) off the coast functioned as bird sanctuaries (Rose 1990: 67). In the video 'Sites We Want to Keep' the late Guboo Ted Thomas stated that the name Najanuga means 'powerful home'. The significance of Najanuga as a resource site for birds' eggs is documented there as well as by Kelly (1975:4). According to the late Guboo Ted Thomas, birds were protected in the area around Najanuga; only old people gathered eggs from Najanuga, and they always took a limited number. Najanuga is thus one of the original bird sanctuaries of the continent. Women also possess knowledge concerning Najanuga which deepens the understanding provided by Guboo Ted Thomas and which is strictly their own.

We note that Wallaga Lake people, particularly women, have recently been involved by the NPWS in its regular surveys of koala populations in Biamanga and Gulaga National Parks to help in the preservation of south coast koala populations (*Coastal Custodians* 9 May 2001: 9).

¹³ It may be that Merriman was an advocate of a view that the Yuin comprised thirteen different tribes, as Howitt described these Yuin tribes claiming the country from Cape Howe to the Shoalhaven River. More recently, the late Guboo Ted Thomas has stated that Yuin lands extended to the border of Tharawal lands near Campbelltown on the outskirts of Sydney. Sue Wesson, working on records of blanket distributions in the 1830s and local censuses in the 1840s, also describes a multitude of smaller residential units (2000: 134-147).

In addition to protection, there was also collaboration between species. The role played by Aboriginal people in the south coast whaling industry in the nineteenth century is reasonably well known (see Robinson 1989: 33-35, *Coastal Custodians* Nov 2000: 11, an undated information sheet on Killer Whales, and recent research sponsored by NPWS¹⁴). A number of Yuin people participated in the industry by calling killer whales to herd smaller whales in toward shore so that they could be harpooned from ships stationed there. The killer whales were rewarded by being fed the tongues of the harpooned whales. Three people with whom Christine spoke added that Yuin involvement in the whaling industry was an adaptation to the presence of white people as whales are an important animal in Yuin culture which traditionally should not be killed.

There was also collaboration with dolphins. The late Guboo Ted Thomas, on his tape *The Dreamers*, recounted an early memory of his grandfather singing songs, hitting the water with his stick, and dancing on a beach down on the south coast, calling the dolphin to bring fish in to the shore for them to eat. He estimated that he was about 10 years old at the time, which would mean that this incident happened in about 1919. Guboo said that he could still sing the songs, and described another time when a dolphin brought a big bream to shore for him (personal comm.) According to Dave Tout, Percy Mumbulla (died 1991) was also able to sing these songs.¹⁵

Yuin women were also able to communicate with dolphins. There is a story that women from Brou Lake would hit on the water, and speak to the dolphins when they swam up, giving them messages to transmit to men on Montague Island. Dave Tout has a strong memory of seeing Nan [Alice Murray nee Russell] doing this in 1958.

Communication between species provides people with knowledge, and helps them to survive. This communication is a two-way dialogue and it is not limited to birds and animals. Plants also communicate important knowledge in their own way. In the words of Warren Foster:

Plants talk to you. They can tell you things. When the bark is peeling off the trees here, the fish are running. When you go up into the river country, bark peeling means the eels are getting fat. It's how our mother talks to us... when it's time to go up the mountain for the bogong. Different flowers here tell you about diving for different things - abalone.

Taking communication in the other direction, the late Guboo Ted Thomas sang songs in language to the spirits of the trees and the rocks on his tape *The Dreamers*. He said: 'They hear it and they love that song' (personal communication). Mervyn Penrith, Warren Foster and Randall Mumbulla also described their experience of being listened to, comforted and helped by their totems as well as by other parts of the natural world.

¹⁴ Davison Whaling Station Cultural Management Program.

¹⁵ Brian Egloff made tapes in the 1970s of Percy Mumbulla singing the songs and explaining how he called the dolphin. These tapes are now in the AIATSIS archive.

Yuin people have numerous connections with plants. Mervyn Penrith stressed that stones and wood were the first things to be given to the Yuin by the creator. From them come shelter, fire, canoes, clubs, axes and much more. The *bundi* (club) and the *mundubar* (axe) are made from particular woods and are special gifts for men at certain levels of knowledge. Warren Foster explained the importance of trees and plants saying: 'We look on trees as our old people. That's why we don't like people cutting into plants... Everything living has spirit...' Today many Yuin people refuse to cut live trees, and use fallen trees instead.

Knowledge of bush foods is extensive among people living at Wallaga Lake because it is a part of everyday life and the local economy. Formerly children went in groups, without adult supervision, to swim, fish for yabbies, and harvest bush fruits or hunt (Rose 1990: 65). Today, most Wallaga Lake residents, from elderly people to young couples and families continue to hunt and harvest a wide variety of foods from the area, including Gulaga and Wallaga Lake Aboriginal lands: fish, abalone, oysters, mussels, *bimballas* (the Sydney or southern cockle), porcupine, goanna, mutton bird eggs, wattle gum, and fruits such as the *wandana* berry, native cherry, and gooseberries.

A number of Wallaga Lake people have considerable knowledge of traditional medicines. Both men and women harvest a variety of medicines from the bush. Those found furthest away from the towns are said to be the most potent. Women have the right to use medicinal plants from Gulaga. Knowledge of locations and preparation is closely guarded. Information on bush medicines and bush tucker is provided on the Merriman's Local Aboriginal Land Council website.¹⁶

Yuin people grow up with the knowledge that if you are connected with a certain species through your nation, tribe, family or as an individual, your duty is to protect it and its habitat, and in no way to harm or kill it. In return, that bird or plant or animal will help you to survive and will bring knowledge or information to help you. An example of this kind of communication occurred when Christine was sitting with Trisha Ellis and Terri Tout, and a kookaburra called loudly and then flew low over the place where they were sitting. Trisha said that the kookaburra was her sister's totem, and that usually when this happens it means that her sister has been trying to get in touch with her. The next day she reported that her sister had been trying to phone her to let her know she was sick. Underlying these specific instances of interspecies communication are deep-seated bonds of 'mutual life-giving' and the weaving of spiritual connections.

In addition to these levels of specific relationships between connected beings, there are a number of birds, which are believed to bring messages to people. They include the willy-wagtail, the owl, and the koori-tu-ku (grey thrush). While Wallaga Lake people experience the willy wagtail as the bringer of all sorts of information, the owl is generally thought to bring bad news.

Not just plants, animals and birds, but also other parts of the natural world are comprehended within this communicative system. On the *Umbarra Cultural Tours* video, Mervyn Penrith said: 'Kurukai is the wind spirit that Daruma created

¹⁶ www.koori.usyd.edu.au/merrimans/default.html

through some of the birds. He blows up to blow our feelings away. He blows up to blow our thoughts away.'

5.2.6. 'Respect Law'

Respect is a word people mentioned repeatedly in terms of their connection with the natural world. Mervyn Penrith explained it in this way:

~ Darama's creation is all our relations. What we're going through is the respect Law: respect to the elders. Respect to the trees, to the rocks, to the water, to all sacred and significant sites that we have. (Umbarra video 1996.)

According to the information sheet 'The Law Comes from the Mountain':

The Law tells us how to live together and treat one another with respect. It tells us about our links with the Land, our Mother, from whom we are born and to whom we return. It is the Law of our sacred places and of what happened in the Dreamtime.

These strong statements link respect with law, defining a relationship of mutual interaction between the two. Thus, respect is founded in law, and lawful behaviour will be respectful. Equally, respect for law is itself lawful action. Wallaga Lake people spoke of respect in all the contexts discussed in this report: between human beings and country, between humans and other living things, between humans and other humans, between humans and the environments or habitats that support the life of all species, including humans. In addition, respect is enjoined between humans and sacred sites, humans and knowledge, humans and lawful practice. As we understand what people are saying, respect permeates all lawful action, and is itself a necessary element of mutual care.

Members of the Gulaga Dancers spoke of dance and painting up as a way of giving respect and feeling close to the land. In Warren Foster's words:

~ Dance makes us feel part of the land. When we put ochres on it makes us feel part of the earth. We give respect to mother earth for birthing us and for everything she gave us. It's like a whole ceremony before you start...If we've got our totems on, we become part of the totem. The animals come through... Song and dance brings back life to the earth and the things that are in the bush.

He spoke of caressing the earth with his feet, or striking the ground to wake the spirits up. Randall Mumbulla said it this way:

~ It takes you to a different place. You can go back to your ancestors, to reconnect with them. They're the ones that give you the energy to do things. You're going into that Dreaming.

Thus, respect for history and respect for ancestors are also part of 'respect law'. So, too is the process of food gathering. In the words of Trisha Ellis:

The energy that comes through when all the women laugh and sing, that abundance gives the same sort of feeling as painting up and dancing. That energy helps to create abundance for the next time. It's an acknowledgment of the gift you have been given. You give back. If people don't gather the harvest, it dies. And if you don't do it in a respectful way, it dies. It's simple. You only have to ask for what you want, and it'll be there, so long as there is the respect. It's got a lot to do with your attitude.

One of the older women, who chooses not to divulge the identity of her totems to non-Aboriginal people, explained that in her view, non-Aboriginal people have not shown respect for Aboriginal knowledge, and so there is no basis for sharing. She stated that respect is central to the system: it is essential for people to respect their totem, otherwise that plant, animal or bird won't continue to respect and help that person. If you respect your totem, then you have to respect the totems of other people and respect their right to protect them.

5.2.7. Sensitivities in the path toward reconciliation

The history of Aboriginal people of New South Wales in relation to white 'settlers' and agencies has been characterised by physical violence, dispossession of land and resources, cultural suppression, institutionalised surveillance, stolen generations, and a multitude of other breaches of trust. The stories of all this violence are too serious to be summarised in this report. We note, however, that as a result of this history, Yuin people have become extremely protective of their knowledge. The 'Statement of Reconciliation' from the staff of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services acknowledges the pain and the need to move forward with care and respect:

We acknowledge the suffering and injustice that resulted from colonisation and that this continues today for many Aboriginal people. We feel regret and sorrow that the loss of their traditional lands has been a source of enduring pain to Aboriginal people. As people working in a government land management agency, we acknowledge a special responsibility in finding creative and positive ways to move forward together with a shared understanding of the past. (NSW NPWS, 12 March, 2001).

Layers of indigenous knowledge are a vital aspect of New South Wales Aboriginal community life today. Yuin people's law, and non-indigenous people's ethics require that the integrity of knowledge be protected and maintained. Here, as in western NSW, Aboriginal people are in the process of recovery. Yuin people are dynamically reclaiming knowledge of sites, stories, kinship law, language and dance, as well as of integrating this knowledge within themselves after decades of peril. These processes take time, and are on-going.

5.2.8. Recommendations

The message that comes through loud and clear from the study of 'totemism' in Wallaga Lake is 'Respect'. The history of indigenous people throughout NSW, and the history of 'settler' Australians' relationships to sacred places as well as toward the systems of mutual care that underlie indigenous systems of life, all offer evidence of a lack of respect, and often of outright disrespect or destruction on the part of settler society.

Since 1996 with the passage in NSW of the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Aboriginal Ownership) Bill*, NPWS has sought to reverse relationships of domination and disrespect. Respect, however, cannot stop at park boundaries. If NPWS is committed to protecting indigenous values within parks, then there must be ways in which it can support those same values in controversies over land use and management adjacent to parks.

Several contentious issues were discussed in the course of this research, and people asked for assistance on each one: bio piracy, the local council's proposal to install a rifle range at the base of Gulaga, and the state government's proposal to establish a charcoal-burning plant at Narooma.¹⁷

Local elders are concerned about the commercialisation of biological and earth materials from Gulaga by Christine Whitelaw, an evolutionary psychologist. Dr Whitelaw appears to be in ignorance of the legal and ethical implications of marketing 'EarthSpirit Essences' from various sacred sites around Australia, including from Gulaga and Biamanga (see photo 5, page 87). She makes the essences from plants, waters and crystals from Aboriginal sites, some of which are on NPWS lands. Elders are concerned that removal of this material changes the energies at their ancient sites, and that marketing the essences appropriates the role of Aboriginal people for thousands of years as custodians in preserving these places as sacred sites. As Yuin people are so intimately bound up with the physical fabric of these sites (see Ann Thomas' words on the *Umbarra Cultural Tours* video quoted on page 62), this commercialisation is of deep concern to local people.

Recommendation: NPWS to provide greater assistance to people in defending their intellectual and biological resources.

As is evident from this report, the establishment of a rifle range at Gulaga would damage it, the natural species it shelters and ultimately damage the Yuin people. Ann Thomas warned that noise pollution from gunshots would result in stones, and then dirt falling down the mountain, eroding it. She considered that all of the species that have hearing would be affected. They wouldn't be able to rest. The tips of trees, which are often medicinal, would also be affected and weakened. Further felling of trees will only extend the damage done to the mountain in the

¹⁷ A proposal to establish a large residential development on a site at Barling's Beach near Tomakin may also become problematic if the NPWS and local environmental groups are unable to prevent it. According to Trisha Ellis, the site's cultural heritage value is second only to Gulaga due to the presence of middens, ceremonial grounds and a burial ground.

period of gold mining. Other Yuin people pointed out that long term use of the area by motor vehicles would result in pollution, and that the aesthetic value of the site would be lessened. Everyone Christine spoke to agreed that the spiritual value of Gulaga would be weakened if the proposal were to go ahead, but that it could not be destroyed because of the innate power of the Dreaming present within the mountain.

Recommendation: NPWS to provide all possible support for Yuin people in their efforts to control the values of Gulaga in the areas adjacent to Gulaga.

Yuin people felt that the establishment of a wood processing and metallurgical carbon plant would pollute the water, damage the air, plants and animals, further damage Aboriginal sites in the area, and contribute to changing the nature of the area from a tourism to an industrial landscape.

Recommendation 1: NPWS to provide all possible support for Yuin people in their efforts to sustain the ecological and social systems within which the parks are situated.

In addition to these specific issues, the Wallaga Lake research indicates that there is a need for NPWS to publicise more widely the significant shifts that are taking place within the organisation since the 1996 Aboriginal Ownership Bill. A number of issues that people raised with Christine are clearly part of current NPWS policy and practice, but as yet are not adequately perceived as such at the community level. We note that Linda Baulch and Pauline Dunne are preparing, or have prepared, an information package for Aboriginal organisations, Shire Councils and other Government Departments (Coastal Custodians 2001: 6). We have not had an opportunity to examine this package, but we suggest that more work may be called for. Our main recommendation is for videos that explicitly link reconciliation and the rapidly changing status of Aboriginal people in relation to NPWS:

- ◆ **Recommendation 1:** NPWS commission a video incorporating both the reconciliation message and the current standard of policy and practice. An interesting way to proceed would be to take each major section of the 'Statement of reconciliation' and show what NPWS is actually doing to give practical meaning to its assertions. If each major point were demonstrated drawing on examples from different areas around the state, the video would provide a good account of the range of NPWS work, and would become an important information sharing vehicle across regions as well as between NPWS and communities.
- ◆ **Recommendation 2:** A second video, aimed at non-Aboriginal park visitors, introducing them to local Aboriginal concepts of respect for land, animals and plants could be commissioned. Such a video could be used both within NPWS parks, and as a part of wider NPWS media programs to educate non-Aboriginal people about the role of respect and reciprocity in NSW Aboriginal people's relationship with land and natural species.¹⁸ Such a video

¹⁸ The Australian Heritage Commission produced a series like this a few years ago. They still seem to be needed.

could be marketed both through NPWS and through local tourist information centres.¹⁹

Apart from issues within the region, other concerns exist. One concern is that handback arrangements negotiated on a park by park basis may result in unequal treatment. On the other hand, as each park and each area is different, local negotiations are essential.

Guidelines for best practice must include:

- ◆ Sensitivity to local difference must be balanced by over all equity.
- ◆ As a general rule, gender equity is essential not only for legal but for cultural reasons.
- ◆ All groups in the community must be involved.

This concern goes together with the Yuin people's perceived need for a series of protocols to guide NPWS cooperation with Aboriginal communities in joint management situations, and in relation to Aboriginal use of all NPWS lands. One of the problems is how protocols can be locally sensitive and still be broadly equitable so that no one can complain of unequal treatment. A set of draft protocols articulated from a Yuin perspective is offered in Appendix B.

¹⁹ We have not had the opportunity to view Tony English's video on bush tucker and bush medicines. It may be an appropriate model.



Photos 1 and 2: The black duck at Umbarra Cultural Centre, Wallaga Lake

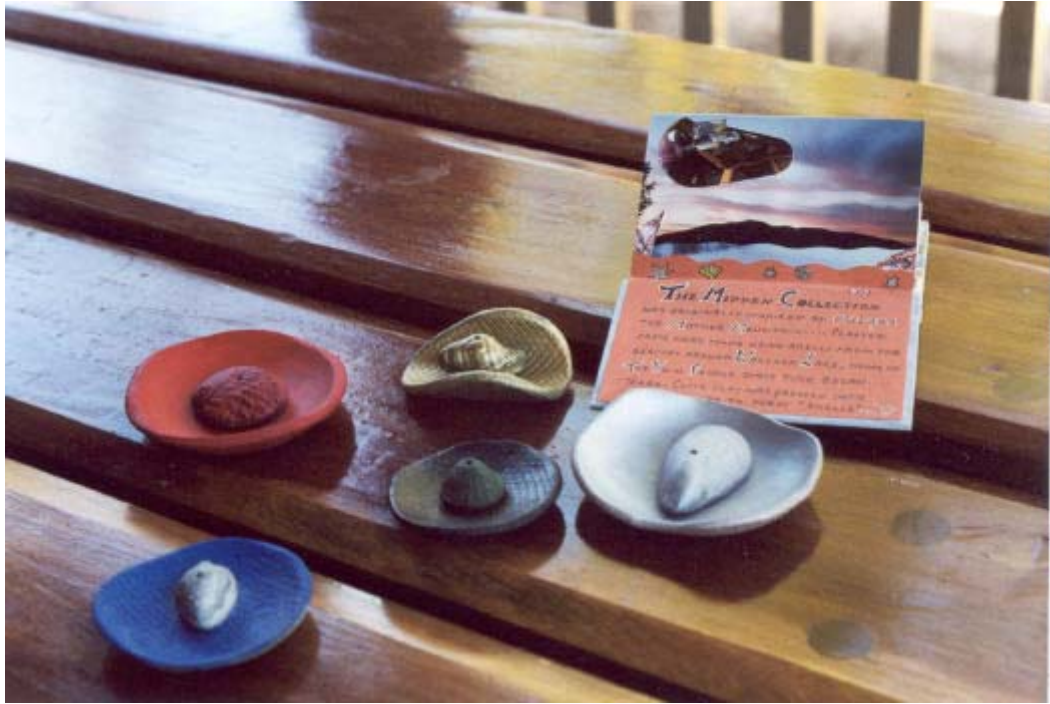


Photo 3: Shell midden incense holders

Photo 4: Relief wood carving panels by Robert Fitzclarence and Jason Campbell

5.3 WESTERN NSW: CONNECTIVITY IN THE LIVING WORLD

Debbie Rose & Diana James with Steve Meredith, Phil Sullivan and Brad Steadman

The main research for this part of the study was carried out in conjunction with a project being undertaken by NPWS personnel at the Manara Hills north west of Ivanhoe on the Mt Manara pastoral station. The project is part of the NSW NPWS Cobar Peneplain (Wangaaypuwan) Rock Art Project, which itself is part of the NSW NPWS Cobar Peneplain Project. The specific objectives of the Manara Hills project were to audit the condition of the rock art sites there and to undertake conservation measures as required. We were invited to join the group and to carry out our research with them while they were carrying out their research into the sites (see photo 1, page 53).

The Manara Hills research group included Phil Sullivan (ASO, Bourke), Steve Meredith (ASO, Griffith), ‘Brother’ Harris (cook), David Lambert (CHD, Rock Art Conservator), and Rebecca Ogden-Brunell (technical officer). Brad Steadman (Brewarrina) was part of the group as an NPWS consultant, and we were joined by Tamsin Donaldson, a linguist who has worked with Ngiyampaa language for many years. Badger Bates (Senior ASO, Broken Hill) had planned to attend, but was unable to do so. Whilst in Ivanhoe we visited the local elder, Mrs Myrtle McCormack and met some of her family.

In this report we rely primarily on the instruction we received from the three Ngiyampaa men, Phil Sullivan, Steve Meredith, and Brad Steadman. The term ‘man’ is used by Debbie and Diana, and is not necessarily claimed as a social position by the men themselves.

5.3.1. Strong Law

The Ngiyampaa men demonstrated commitment to what we would call strong law. We became aware of this commitment first in the context of the rock art.²⁰ We asked Phil about the meaning of some of the paintings and he said that he did not know, and that furthermore, he would not speculate or indulge in guesswork. One of many ways in which he showed his respect for the site and the art was to refrain from imposing meanings that did not have their basis in knowledge handed down from the old people. According to Tamsin Donaldson, the previous generation took exactly this commitment to knowledge, and she stated that Jeremy Beckett had advised her that the generation before that had taken exactly the same commitment. Thus, Ngiyampaa tradition, documented by outsiders across three generations, is commitment to strong law that refrains from inventing things.

The commitment to strong law was demonstrated in many contexts, including respect for the elderly, gender respect amongst persons, and respect for gendered

²⁰ Some scholars have questioned whether the term ‘art’ is appropriate in these contexts, since the images are usually more significant than the term ‘art’ tends to suggest.

places. It forms the basis of some of the recommendations to NPWS, as we will discuss in our conclusion. It is accompanied by active work to recover knowledge that has been fragmented under the violent impacts of colonisation.

Steve Meredith described the long-term project that he and the other Aboriginal sites offices are engaged in as one of recovery and care. Their priorities are to recover knowledge of ceremonial sites (rock art, bora grounds and others), and to recover the oral histories, genealogies, and languages. The goal is not archival; the point of recovery is to reconnect knowledge, people, and places, and to sustain an on-going system of care. Strong law, as we came to understand it in the Ngiyampaa context thus includes:

- ◆ Adherence to tradition
- ◆ Recovery and reintegration of fragmented knowledge
- ◆ Integration of past and present, people and place, into a system of living care.

5.3.2. 'Totem'

As discussed above, the term 'totem' is not indigenous to Australia. The Ngiyampaa men were deeply dissatisfied with the terms 'totem', 'totemic', and 'totemism'. The term 'totem' sounded foreign to them, as indeed it is. The term 'totemic' sounded weirdly foreign to them, and the term 'totemism' sounded offensive. Phil compared it to the term 'satanism'. As an 'ism' word, it conjures images of ideologies, or of strange and ugly practices. Neither set of images rests well with their own sense of connection with the world around them. We hope that more satisfactory expressions will be found.

As noted earlier, the terms 'totem' and 'totemism' convey three main meanings in NSW and elsewhere.

- ◆ The first is an identity meaning – the 'totem' is a non-human species or phenomenon that stands for, or represents, the group.
- ◆ The second is a relationship meaning – the 'totem' and the person or group share their physical substance, and share a kin relatedness.
- ◆ The third is a worldview meaning – the relationships are embedded in a view of the world in which connectedness is the foundation of all life.

In western NSW we found that the first meaning – identity symbolism – is of lesser significance. We did not encounter groups that defined themselves by an animal or other 'totem' to the extent that has been described in the Wallaga Lake study (section 5.2).

In contrast, the second meaning – relationship – is well known, and is strongly connected with the third meaning – world view. The indigenous term for 'totem' varies from language to language, and as we were working primarily with Ngiyampaa people, we were taught about *tingah*. This term means 'meat' or flesh. Brad Steadman explained that *tingah* means meat in three senses: the animal while it's alive, the meat being cooked, and the meat you're related to. The old people all knew their *tingah*, and meat relationships regulated marriage. *Tingah* is passed on through the generations by women, so children are the same

meat as their mother. The hard impacts of colonisation damaged this system. The loss of population and the restrictions on people's freedom combined to reduce severely the role of *tingah* in regulating marriages. At this time, people are re-learning some of this knowledge through working out the genealogies.

Tamsin Donaldson, the linguist, explained that the suffix 'pala' indicates a 'meat' relationship. Thus the term for emu without the suffix refers to the animal, and the same term with 'pala' suffix refers to the 'totem' relationship, or the animal in its kinship relationship. One of the *tingah* is especially pertinent to our later discussion. The 'black duck' or 'duck' meat is *kalimpala* – water meat people

Customs concerning eating one's own meat are variable. Continuity is expressed primarily in the sense of one's own meat being one's own family. The kinship connection between people and the 'natural' world carries on.

In recovering knowledge of *tingah*, the Ngiyampaa men were not suggesting a return to the old ways. Phil spoke about his *tingah* – yellowbelly (golden perch). In his words:

The story of the yellowbelly is that it must always swim up river. The gills will fill with water if he swims downstream, and he'll drown. Like the emu and the kangaroo, they cannot run or hop backwards. The moral is never to look back. Always swim upstream.

Learning about one's *tingah* is therefore not a matter of seeking to recreate the past. It is a form of recovery that will enable people to engage in the work of re-connecting and looking after in the contemporary world. Not only a living tradition, *tingah* relationships are a contemporary guide to action.

For Phil, looking after is the most serious issue concerning *tingah* today:

Having a 'totem' is much deeper: it's about looking after everything. Everything that's associated with the animal, like the yellowbelly, I have to look after the fish, the water, the reeds - everything to do with that fish.

5.3.3. **Worldview**

The third meaning of 'totem' – worldview – is widespread and of deep and enduring significance to the people we spoke with. Our understanding is that their views are shared widely across the region. We will discuss this worldview in detail, as it pulls together many of the points already raised.

Elkin's (1938: 133) definition of the Australian Aboriginal worldview is 'a view of nature and life, of the universe and man, which ... unites them with nature's activities and species' in bonds 'of mutual life-giving' (discussed in section 3.3). The Ngiyampaa men agreed that this was a good definition. Their discussions amplified it and deepened it, demonstrating, without necessarily intending to,

how a good definition may still only scratch the surface.²¹ Their explanations work with four interconnecting concepts: respect, complexity, creation and connection.

Respect:

The Ngiyampaa men used this term frequently, and they used it in a variety of contexts. One context, discussed above, is between people and place, and people's refusal to speculate about meanings beyond what they have been taught. Another is between people and their elders; another is between people and their 'totemic' species; another is between the past and the present. Respect, as we came to understand it, is not something that can be defined in any facile way. It is a quality within the person, a knowledge of self and other, and of connection (below). Phil was particularly adamant that respect dwells within, but becomes known when it is acted upon. Thus, in addition to the inward quality, there is outward action that demonstrates the person's respect. Outward action defines the person, and brings the person into relationships marked by the respect they show.

Respect, then, is also a matter of knowledge – of knowing the connections so that one knows the many contexts in which respect is due, and knowing how to look after things so that one can fulfil one's role in life. Phil explained respect in this way:

It's something you do, I can't show you how to do it, it's the way you live. Respect is a spiritual practice.

Complexity

Phil's statement that one needs to know the connections in order to behave respectfully in all the proper contexts hints at the concept of complexity. Our understanding of the Ngiyampaa men is that they are saying that complexity consists of layers of meaning, multiplicities of connections, and a holistic ecology in which living things and their connections keep on sustaining each other. The process of mutual life giving depends on connections that return to each other and that support each other.

The concept of complexity is burdened with a history of cross-cultural encounters in which more often than not Aboriginal people and their knowledge were thought to be 'simple'. The men's emphasis on complexity was not a reaction to stereotypes, however. In section 3.1 Brad Steadman and I discussed the simplistic approach to difference that has characterised past research. In contrast, complexity is part of Ngiyampaa tradition. It is at the same time convergent with the turn western science has taken. When western science and social science worked with mechanistic models of reality, complexity simply referred to the number of parts or number of variables. With the new western non-linear models of reality, complexity can be seen as patterns of connection such that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This new science offers a much better ground

²¹ Nor do I intend to suggest that this report does a great deal more than scratch the surface.

for cross-cultural understanding, as it is compatible with Ngiyampaa and other Aboriginal people's concepts of complexity.

Creation

All that exists does so because of creation, according to Phil. In one way or another, then, creation is all that exists. Phil spoke of creation in terms of both Biame and God, and we asked him if Biame and God were different:

Biame and God are the same, completely the same. They're both about spiritual connection, and spiritual life. Everything we see is part of creation, it's here with us all the time.

Steve offered another term – *Mooka* – for Creators. Phil used the term *Muda*, also meaning creation. The term is reasonably equivalent to the terms 'Dreaming' or 'Dreamtime ancestor', used in other parts of the country. *Muda* are specific creator / ancestors whose presence continues in the world today through their creation work, both in the species they created and in the landforms where they continue to exist.²²

The created world exists not only because it is, but also because life is sustained or looked after. Phil and Steve each spoke of the earth in this context. To quote Steve:

Like us, the earth is our mother, we come out of her then go back. She's mother to us all, we're all here together now. We've got to look after her together. She was here before us, created by the ancestors, and she'll be here after us. We've all got to learn to look after her.

Thus within the created world both origin and continuity matter. Looking after places, species, people and knowledge is deeply respectful of creation. Knowledge of creation demands an understanding of reciprocity: that humans too are looked after.

Connection

Brad told us that the method of dividing things into separate spheres is fundamentally wrong. The way to understand anything is in its relationships. Relationships are connective. An example is the web of connections within which the Manara Hills are situated. 'Totem' connections are Eaglehawk (wedge-tailed eagle) and Crow, with Eaglehawk being situated at the North-East end of the hills and Crow at the south-west end of the hills. A story of their interactions connects the Hills with other sites across Ngiyampaa and Barkandji country (see also Tindale 1939).

Ngiyampaa and Paakantji (Barkandji) people come together in these Hills, with Ngiyampaa coming in from the east and Paakantji coming in from the west. Members of both groups have rights and responsibilities here, and experience a sense of connection when being there. For Phil, whose primary responsibilities at

²² See also J. Mathews (1994:2, 16-18, and J. Beckett (1958: 92).

this time are at Gundabooka, the connections between Gundabooka and Manara are manifest: the paintings at Gundabooka are connected with these here at Manara through the evidence of the paintings themselves, as well as by language, family names, and the knowledge of feeling comfortable here.

The rock art endures, and thus holds the past on the rocks in forms accessible to people today. Phil was explicit in saying that he considered that some of the handprints and stencils were his ancestors. They would have travelled here, and they would have pressed their hands against the rocks along with the many others. There is connection across the generations of people who belong here, and that connection is vividly present in visual form.

Another deep aspect of connection is the Rainbow Serpent, known as *Wawi*. This creator being is associated with water, and thus is connective across and beneath landforms. Steve told a short version of the story:

This country was made by the ancestors. *Wawi* the Rainbow Serpent came up through the springs, he came from Nakabo springs, Ngilyitri country. Wherever he travelled he left ochre to show where he had been. The springs were entry and exit points. He came out of the earth, travelled along its surface, and then went back to the earth. *Wawi* travels, and is still there. We know he's still there.

Brad also linked *Wawi* with flowing water, both surface rivers and underground water, as part of the designed or created world:

The *Wawi* was known to rivers, and areas where he came out of the ground were rockholes and springs. Which was the connection through the travelling of *Wawi* through surface rivers and underground water.

This world view speaks to and from a world in which connections are sustained through time and place, across species and landforms, and between creation and daily life. In Phil's view, connection is a powerful form of knowledge. He said: 'Connection is a form of knowledge. You have to earn it.'

5.3.4. Spirituality

Spirituality is another concept that is not susceptible to a dictionary-type definition. The four main concepts – respect, complexity, creation, and connection – come together in spiritual practices. It may be best to think of spirituality as action rather than as a thing. Phil guided us toward this view when he told us that respect is a spiritual practice.

Spiritual practice is not confined to humans. Any orientation toward connection and respect confirms the relationships. On our arrival at Mt Manara on the first visit, the eaglehawks were out in force. One stood on the high stone outcrop

beside the road watching us, and others circled overhead. The Ngiyampaa men said the eaglehawks were showing welcome and respect.

Phil's discussion of respect leads to another aspect of spiritual practice. He spoke of the motion from inside the person to outside in the world. We were interested in the concept of motion, and in the idea of qualities moving from inside to outside. We wondered if motion goes in other directions, and we asked him if, for example, a place might affect, or get inside, a person. He asserted that this happens, and he described some of the techniques he uses at Gundabooka to assist people to interiorise their experience of the site.

Brad expanded this point. He said 'Mt Manara, like Gundabooka and Wattagoona, Byrock and Caronga Peak, they engage you through their presence.'

We were interested to know if visitors to Parks claimed to experience an engagement with place. In the absence of an Aboriginal guide, and relying totally on interpretive materials and the place itself, would it be possible for strangers to experience engagement with the presence of a place? The visitors' book at Mt Grenfell provided some answers. We examined the first and last pages, and a random selection of pages in between. When we realised we were seeing only positive comments, we read consistently for a few pages to see if any negative comments showed up. We found only positive comments, and we read many, many statements about the effects of the place on people. The following is a representative sample:

- ◆ So pleased this has been revealed.
- ◆ Inspirational, serene, a place to find the sacred in the presence.
- ◆ I weep for the people of this land – their loss of their land and their culture, and pray we will learn to respect and live together. And say 'sorry' please!
- ◆ The land tells us to live in peace & harmony not only with the land but with each other. 'We are all related.'
- ◆ Wonderful. The space and the quiet were what I needed. A great place to take time out and think about what is really important.
- ◆ This is such a peaceful place. You can feel the ancient timeless beauty. Our wish is that the first white people had have stopped, watched, and learned. I think we all would have been a lot better off. We hold this in high respect.

Along with the experience of place, many people also conveyed their respect for the care that has gone into this Park:

- ◆ Thank you to all the Waangaypuwa people for sharing your beautiful place with us. May you soon be successful in your hand back negotiations with NPWS; (written in early April 2002)
- ◆ The peace and energy in this place is so evident. It is now so good we care for places like this. Well done, National Parks. ☺
- ◆ Very special place! Thanks to those who created it and those who are looking after it.

One conclusion we draw from these comments is that NPWS, through its Aboriginal cultural heritage endeavour, is promoting opportunities for new spiritual practices to come into being.

The opportunities that NPWS is providing are not confined to non-indigenous people. We read a number of comments written by people who identified themselves as indigenous. A few samples indicate the quality of experience for indigenous people:

- ◆ Beautiful, inspiring. One land, our land. (Gamilaroi)
- ◆ May the land and its culture live on. With much respect and love – Feeling Blessed ♥ (Redfern)

5.3.5. Resilience

As discussed in section 4, colonising society predicted, and in many instances sought to hasten, the demise of Aboriginal people and their culture. Early ethnographers sought to document sets of ‘facts’ while the opportunity existed. R. H. Mathews, for example, compiled extensive lists of Ngiyampaa ‘totems’ including those linked to moieties, sections, and family or clan groups (Mathews 1904: 207-214). His fascination was with the systematic linkages within and between totemically-defined groups; almost nothing was said of the underlying world view, the system of values, and the action that gave life to the worldview and values. Because of his expansive information in one area, and his silence in other areas, it is not possible to develop an understanding of dynamic continuities based solely on the Mathews baseline. On that baseline losses predominate.

Ngiyampaa people’s adherence to strong law indicates another baseline: knowledge of the sacred geography. Howard Creamer (1976: 4) predicted that Aboriginal sites ‘will ultimately play a part in reviving Aboriginal consciousness and promoting a renaissance of Aboriginality in Australia’. NPWS has played a strong role in assisting the documentation of the knowledge that underlies contemporary resilience.

Another aspect of strong law and resilience is continuity of worldview and values. Phil explained that the connections, and the knowledge of connections, have survived the many losses brought about through colonisation. In conjunction with respect, they will continue to do so:

We may forget our meat, we may lose our language, even the rock art may fade but we will never lose what's inside our hearts – our spiritual connection to country. The outward things may pass but the respect, the thing inside, will last. We respect our animals and our land.

That's what I call our last line of defence. The last line of defence is respect, we're moving so far away from how our old people did things.

5.3.6. Reconciliation out of Fragmentation

The Ngiyampaa men discussed four areas in which western thought and practice have created false divisions. There may be others that they did not happen to mention in our conversations, and we are not claiming to offer an exhaustive list. Their current endeavour is to recover and enhance the connections that were damaged by these divisions, and their work with NPWS is directed toward this reparative work. They do not see recovery as a strictly Aboriginal project. Rather, it includes us all.

Each of these divisions is an opportunity for re-connection, and each forms the basis for some of the recommendations to follow.

Time

Anglo-Australians have been socialised to an idea that Aboriginal culture is dead or dying, and that in many parts of the country Aboriginal life existed only in the past. The Ngiyampaa men spoke of loss, but also emphasised the strong continuities between themselves and the old people. As Phil put it: 'It didn't all stop in 1788'. In the context of reconciliation, it is important for non-Aboriginal people to recognise the continuities, to revisit the past and learn our shared history, and to work collaboratively toward more respectful futures.

Race

One aspect of this issue concerns Anglo-Australians' classifications of Aboriginal people. Brad spoke of how degrees of 'blood' were used in the past to divide Aboriginal people into discrete groups ('full bloods', etc). These divisions were harmful and arbitrary, and to the extent that they continue, they may still do harm.

Another aspect, perhaps more pertinent today, concerns inter-cultural or inter-racial relations. When Phil spoke of how the yellowbelly only swims upstream, he also acknowledged that there is much in the past that has yet to be dealt with adequately:

That's the message of the yellowbelly, to survive we must never look back. It's important for you and me to revisit the past together and learn from it. But we cannot go back, we must just learn and move on. We must all, black and white, look back together and learn. It's part of both of our histories.

In looking toward the future, issues of looking after and showing respect are not confined to any one group. As Steve said, 'She was here before us, created by the ancestors, and she'll be here after us. We've all got to learn to look after her.'

Ontology

For several millenia western culture has posited a fundamental divide between (human) culture and (animal) nature. The main idea has been that humanity is fundamentally different from and superior to the rest of the world (whether created, or evolved, or both). The Ngiyampaa men hold that people and the world are fundamentally connected. The idea that ‘meat’ (*tingah*) is family neatly indicates how inappropriate this divide is from an indigenous perspective. These men point out that the NPWS division between natural and cultural heritage perpetuates this false divide. It is well known that NPWS did not invent these categories, and the Cobar Penneplain Project and other NPWS projects are actively seeking a more holistic approach. In the view of the Ngiyampaa men, more could and should be done to bring people into ‘natural heritage’ management and to bring the ‘natural’ world into ‘cultural heritage’ management.

Phil put it this way:

~ The ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ heritage of National Parks is not separate. This is an artificial white-fella separation. They are still boxing the whole into sections, we need to integrate management into a holistic view of the landscape.

Territory

Much of the discussion about territories revolved around early ethnographers’ failed attempts to make sense of the relationships between people, languages, and territories. It became clear that a broader context is involved. If one thinks of ethnographic lines on maps demarcating ‘tribal territories’, it is instructive to contrast these all or nothing lines with the kind of subtle distinctions of people and landforms that Ngiyampaa people make. Brad is especially concerned to note that in his country around Brewarrina where there are descendants from places such as Gundabooka, Byrock, and also people from Boorooma and Sandy Camp, ‘Ngemba’ is the most commonly known and used term with which people identify. Ngemba is the name used for the group and area, as Ngiyampaa is used for the group name and area in the following statement. These terms fit with a broader and more detailed landscape:

~ Around Cobar the soil is red and the people are heavier in the tongue. These are stone people ‘Karulkiyalu’ – the northern group. Moving through country you can notice subtle differences in terrain, trees, vegetation, animals - these are like the changes in the people and their languages. The country and the Ngiyampaa people change together. This subtlety is reflected between riverlanders and the following examples of drylanders.
~ Around Ivanhoe the country is sandy soils and the people are lighter in the tongue.
~ Pilaarrkiyalu: these are the Belah tree people of the eastern group.
~ Nhiilyikiyalu: these are the Nilya tree people of the western group.
~ Kalyarliyalung: these are the Lachlan River people to the furthest south.

From the Bogan riverland north toward Brewarinna and east toward Walgett, there are the Wayilwan speakers. They contrast with the dry hinterland Wangaaypuwan speakers. The subtlety between these Wayilwan speakers and the hinterland Wangaaypuwan speakers is based on these latter names reflecting the sameness of the ‘no having’ naming system which is also used to show their difference.²³

Brad works with an epistemology founded in the contrasts between same and different (discussed in section 3.1). He defines these as two parallel tracks, neither of which can be understood without the other. In relation to country he said:

To move through country and feel the subtle changes you need to keep referencing between the two, same and different. Movement between the two brings greater understanding, like dialogue between people.

According to Phil, these landscape divisions are extremely significant: ‘The blood thing has now gone. But people relate to their tree or stone country still.’

5.3.7. Creation and Connectivity

One powerful form of connection is creation stories (termed ‘Dreaming tracks’ in the Cobar Penepain Project Information Sheet No. 5). As noted above, the Rainbow Serpent *Wawi* is a creating and connecting being whose water action inscribes flow direction and flood pulses, and links surface and subsurface waters. In addition, *Wawi* is past, present and future, and exists in many places. The significance of the Rainbow Serpent has long been appreciated by anthropologists; Radcliffe-Brown (1930a: 343) stated the Rainbow Serpent story was perhaps ‘the most important of the mythology and that fuller knowledge of this is important to any attempt we may make to understand the Australian conception of nature.’ We will briefly explore some of the possibilities of taking a *Wawi* approach to integrating nature, culture, landscapes, waterways, peoples, and time, and will return to this issue in section 6.3.

Ngiyampaa Ngurampa, home country of the Ngiyampaa people, stretches across the horizon east of the Manara Hills (see photo 2, page 111). Steve Meredith pointed towards Nakarbo Station out east and said:

Wawi comes from there. Old Geordie’s mob used to live there. Old Geordie Murray was a ‘clever man’, recognised as a healer over much of this country. He spoke both languages, telling the stories of the Rainbow Serpent - *Ngatji* in Paakantji and *Wawi* in Ngiyampaa. This country, the Manara Hills, was at the end of one country and the start of the other’s country. It was land held in common by both tribes. Like in the First World War they called

²³ Spellings of these terms are provided by Brad Steadman.

the ground between lines ‘no man’s land’, well here we call the land between our countries ‘everybody’s land.’

In Ngiyampaa country *Wawi* came from the east and travelled underground coming up in a spring in the Manara Range. Here he had a fight with Robin Red Breast. He lost that fight and so remains stuck in the rockhole, unable to get out past a high rock face. *Wawi* rises out of the ground and returns again as the water in the rockhole rises and falls (see also Johnson et al. 1981). The Ngiyampaa men state that since the station sank a bore, the water no longer rises and falls as it used to do.

Wawi has left tracks in the ochre pits, and guards the waterholes. Its travels link Ngiyampaa country to Kamilaroi and U’alarai country in the north. The Mirigana bend in the Barwon River said to be a home to *Wawi* (J. Mathews 1994: 138-9), as is the Boobera Lagoon near Goondiwindi (ibid: 146) and there are many others.

The Rainbow Serpent travels through Ngiyampaa country and on into Paakantji country where it is known as *Ngatji*. In the Living Desert Sculpture Park near Broken Hill, Badger Bates (Senior ASO) has created a sculpture of *Ngatji*’s journey through his country.

Ngatji created many sites along the Darling River between Wilcannia and Menindee. South of Bakora where the river varies between 30 and 50 meters in width, the *Ngatji* watercourse and waterhole are located some distance out from the river in the red sandhills and plain. Concerning a site in the Darling River known as *Ngatji* waterhole, Elsie Jones told NPWS officer Howard Creamer in 1978:

This *Ngadji* is supposed to have travelled from the north to this particular place. You could trace where he went by the willow trees, the water-bushes. *Ngadji* made the channels along the rivers and he dug out around where it was soft, making islands and pools. He’s supposed to have made these great big holes in the river. (Jones in Creamer 1978: 51)

Ngatji also created another significant site upstream on the Darling River, at a place called Barndu Bend. Here the ground was hard at the waterhole so *Ngatji* stopped and came to the surface. Elsie Jones told a story that links the many birds, animals and fish of the river with *Ngatji*:

There’s an emu in the story and also a fish which travelled along this channel underground. This was *barndu*, a cod. The *Ngadji* is always called the father of the fish and if you go along to get some fish you’d have to talk to *Ngadji* to let the fish come out. Along comes the crow who sees this fish in *Ngadji*’s waterhole so when the water level fell, *Waku* [crow] stole the fish and kept it in his own pool along the river. The river wasn’t like it is now, this is where the *Ulu* comes in, the kingfisher. They build their nests in the sand. They’re very important birds to the old people. (Jones in Creamer 1978: 51)

Jeremy Beckett (1958) recorded Rainbow Snake stories in the North-West corner. He too was taught that this being had created the water system of the region, including the lakes and rivers. According to the late George Dutton:

That's why the river Darling is like a snake's track, where they travelled along and bored a channel to make a river. They bored out lakes: they coiled around and scooped out the sand into sand hills. And they made channels to drain into the lakes such as creeks. To make the water run this way and they rose up. Now this was done right through the Australian land. (in: Beckett 1958: p. 106)

Beckett's teachers said that the Rainbow Snake lived in every permanent waterhole (as is said in many parts of Australia), and that it would not harm people who belonged there, but would attack strangers (ibid: 97).

The point of these *Wawi* stories is to show how respect, connectivity, mutual life-giving, creation, continuity, and life in the existing world of change are entangled with Dreaming and 'totem' stories. Along with the integrative aspects of *Wawi* and other 'totem' creators, it must be pointed out that in this colonising era of social, cultural, ontological, and ecological fragmentation, *Wawi* stories overcome the major divisions identified by Ngiyampaa men. *Wawi* exists both then and now (integrating time); *Wawi* created rivers and underground waters (and thus is integral to all life, indigenous and non-indigenous, human, animal and plant); *Wawi* connects landscapes, landforms and waterways as well as connecting peoples (thus going right across and through territorial divides).

5.3.8. Recommendations

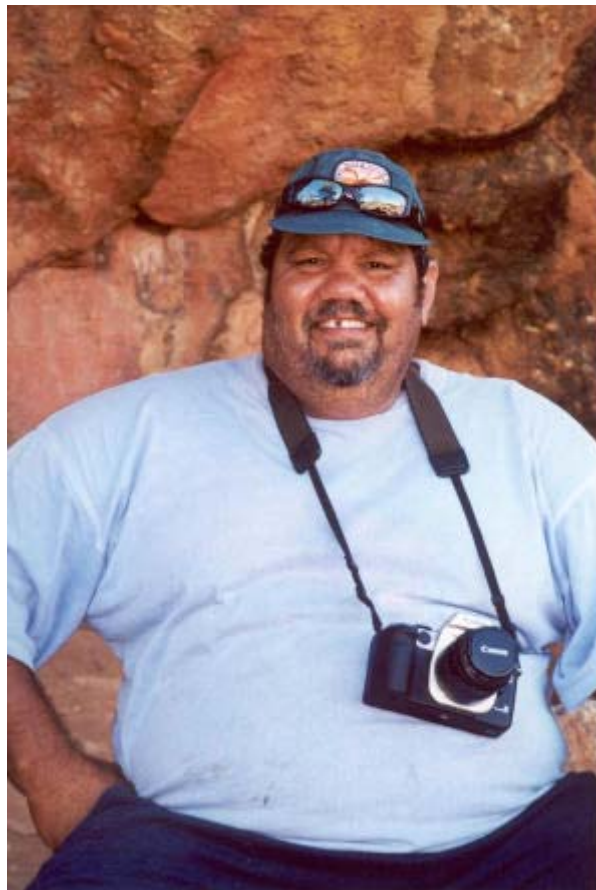
We offer two sets of recommendations arising from this research. The first set is driven entirely by the Ngiyampaa men. The second is proposed by the research team, and is developed in section 6.3.

Ngiyampaa Site Officers' recommendations:

- ◆ National Parks need to recognise that to Indigenous people the 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage is not separate. This is an artificial 'whitefella' separation. They are still boxing the whole into sections, they need to integrate management into a holistic view of the living landscape.
- ◆ NPWS need to integrate the old knowledge of land management into the new.
- ◆ There should be a traditional 'Welcome to Country' sign at all park entrances.
- ◆ NPWS research directions need to be driven from the ground up.
- ◆ NPWS research priorities could incorporate the objectives of Aboriginal communities today whose land is managed by National Parks. Steve Meredith explained: 'As an Aboriginal Heritage Officer our priority is to support the objectives of our communities through our work with NPWS'.
- ◆ Head Office Cultural Heritage Research Unit of NPWS could support officers by setting research agendas in consultation with field officers.

Research team's recommendations:

We endorse all of the above recommendations. To them we add some practical steps that could be taken to implement a holistic landscape / waterways approach that will assist NSW in fulfilling its challenging role in the 21st century. In section 6.3 we expand the idea of an integrative project that will overcome numerous divisions, including the arbitrary division between parks and other forms of land tenure, and will communicate with the public.



Photos 1 and 2: Phil Sullivan in the Manara Hills; Phil Sullivan and Steve Meredith; behind them is the country through which *Wawi* travelled

6. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this section is to summarise the information presented here, and to draw out some of the implications for NPWS policy and practice. We conclude with a concrete proposal that ties together the big issues into a deceptively straightforward venture into connectivity and social change.

6.1 IMPLICATIONS OF TOTEMS

The literature and the case studies demonstrate that there are three main dimensions to ‘totems’:

- ◆ An identity meaning
- ◆ A relationship meaning
- ◆ A worldview meaning

Each dimension of meaning leads to different opportunities for NPWS.

Identity

The identity aspect is probably already quite well managed, as it can only be a local issue. As visitors to parks, we felt that more explanations of the logos would have been helpful. The Mutawintji logo, for example, with its macropod and stars, seemed to imply meaning, but we were unable to locate an explanation. Is the macropod a yellow-footed rock wallaby, and if so, is that because the creature is endangered, or are there additional meanings? What is the local significance, if any, of the reference to the seven sisters?

It is possible that the local Aboriginal people do not want anything to be said about their logo, in which case the silence is perfectly justified. As an identity issue, however, there is a general expectation that identity totems have as their purpose to represent the group, and therefore the communication works best if enough information is offered to ensure that the message is received.

This comment is linked to a more general comment: the brochures for parks are woefully out of sync with current NPWS policy and practice in relation to reconciliation. For the most part they offer bland and repetitive information. **A great deal of improvement could be achieved at relatively little cost.**

Relationships

This dimension of totems can be addressed in two main ways. The first concerns relations among humans – the identification of groups through totems, and the consequent regulation of marriage and other relationships. This dimension is being recovered in both case study areas. **NPWS support for the Aboriginal heritage programs assists in these forms of recuperative work and should continue.**

The other dimension is the relationship of mutual life-giving between a person or group and a ‘natural’ species. **NPWS is already active in this dimension, so the primary implication is to keep up the good work.** In this dimension it is to be expected that NPWS support will be sought for protection of species and their habitats if and when they come under threat. Greater communication between the work in ‘natural’ heritage and in ‘cultural’ heritage is indicated, and more opportunities for local groups to be involved in natural heritage work is indicated.

Worldview and Action

This dimension of totemism encompasses the connectivities between humans and other parts of the living world. It encompasses the sacred sites, the ‘natural’ systems such as waterways (Rainbow Serpents and other water beings, as well as habitats for totems, and subsistence sites). It is founded in a fundamental ontology of mutual life-giving, and asserts that respect for self and other is integral to the unfolding of life in relationships of mutual care. Respect, in this system of philosophy and action, is as pervasive as are the connectivities, and ‘other’ refers to all parts of the living world.

This dimension of ‘totemism’ offers the greatest challenge to NPWS, and at the same time offers the greatest opportunities for NPWS to assume a prominent role in leading Australia toward more ecologically aware consciousness and toward more sustainable long-term inhabitation of this country.

6.2 ECOLOGY AND WORLDVIEW

Many of the day to day issues that this worldview poses for NPWS are addressed in NPWS statement of reconciliation, in the recommendations arising from the case studies, and the NPWS’s own research projects. For example, many of the points one would think to raise in the first instance link cultural and natural ‘categories’ into unified issues of care and responsibility. NPWS is already pursuing strategies that do exactly this kind of work. The ‘Aboriginal heritage and salinity project’ is an excellent case in point.

While the ‘totemic’ worldview, and its ideal practices rest on respect and understanding of connection, we note that it is not now possible to act in accordance with indigenous law in all contexts – for example, how does one take care of a riverine environment that is rapidly being degraded by regulation and irrigation? But setting aside the areas of impossibility, it is clear that NPWS controls some of the most significant contexts in which the worldview of kinship and connectivity can be realised. In today’s world, this worldview works against fragmentation, seeking to enshrine more holistic views of humans and nature, of places across regions, and of the continuities embedded in the unfolding of life in the temporal world.

In the inter-cultural domain of the general public, the big issues are:

- ◆ Ontological: how to overcome the damaging effects of the nature/culture divide?
- ◆ Ecological: How to overcome practices that fragment landscapes and peoples?
- ◆ Social: How to take NPWS’s emerging knowledge and practice of landscape-based reconciliation into other government departments, and more broadly into general social knowledge?²⁴

We will discuss each of these issues in brief as background to our proposal for an integrative project directed toward the public.

Nature / Culture

The separation and differentiation between nature and culture is one of the causes of our current environmental problems, and stands in the way of holistic approaches to biodiversity conservation, cultural diversity, and sustainable inhabitation of Australian ecosystems. The logic of this assertion is that insofar as humans see themselves to be outside of the natural systems that support all life, and insofar as they seek to dominate those systems, or require those systems to conform to human demands, problems not only arise, but amplify into ever greater problems.

As we have seen, this false division runs through many many contexts of western life and thought. It pervaded the debates about totemism, and became one of the 19th century standards by which others could be differentiated from ‘us’: we have transcended nature, they are still enmeshed within it, the argument ran. It pervades the educational system, separating ‘arts’ from ‘sciences’, and it pervades our systems of land and resource management. The distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ heritage, legally articulated in the Burra Charter and other international agreements, also pervades NPWS in the form of different branches of heritage. This divide is part of, and partly responsible for, the broader issues of fragmentation discussed below.

²⁴ This question was explicitly raised by Badger Bates at the Blackheath meeting on May 7, 2002.

The research project into ‘totems’ was brilliantly conceived to by-pass or overcome this distinction, and the research attests overwhelmingly to indigenous people’s rejection of this distinction.

Ecology / Fragmentation

As is well known, habitat fragmentation is now identified as a major factor endangering species and, ultimately, whole ecosystems. Indigenous concepts of connectivity work against fragmentation in all its forms, environmental and social. As researchers, we were struck as well by the arbitrary territorial divisions that mark parks off from the surrounding landscape.

Fragmentation in all its forms contributes to loss of overall ecological and social integrity. NPWS is paradoxically situated in respect to fragmentation. Not only are there the internal divides (nature / culture) of which NPWS is well aware, but there is also the larger issue of park boundaries. NPWS’s paradoxical situation is that it is legally authorised only to manage parks, but every real world issue it encounters moves across these arbitrary tenures.

We believe that **NPWS has an opportunity to develop a more integrated landscape consciousness for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians, drawing on indigenous peoples’ concepts of connectivity.** This issue arose in the context of particular threats to ecosystem / ‘totemic’ integrity in the Wallaga Lake study, and must surely be arising all over the state.

Social Change

Our proposal works toward changing public knowledge, attitudes, values, and (one hopes) practices. It is offered in the knowledge that a great deal of social change in the last 50 years or so has been driven by grass roots demands for social, political and environmental change. This is to say that social change is accomplished not only by influencing the powerful, but equally if not more significantly by influencing the general public to the point where change is demanded through the democratic system. Battling socially powerful, intransigent and entrenched interest groups would be completely pointless were it not for the fact that societies do change. Power structures shift, ideas sometimes move through people and social groups with the speed of bullets, and the best practice of today may become tomorrow’s undesirable or even criminal activity.

Parks are a major site at which the general public encounters, and is offered opportunities to think seriously and enjoyably about, major ecological, philosophical and spiritual matters. The visitors’ book at Mt Grenfell shows that that parks influence people’s thinking. Therefore it is reasonable to assert that **NPWS controls a major site where social change occurs and can be guided and encouraged.**

NPWS is now experiencing the transforming effects of deeper and more reciprocal Aboriginal involvement. The question, then, is **how to translate the revolutionary changes occurring within NPWS into programs** that reach out

beyond the boundaries of parks, and beyond the boundaries of parks personnel to intersect with the general public in ways that will facilitate social change?

6.3 TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE PROJECT

We note at the outset that NPWS has made an enormous commitment to reconciliation. Thus far, in our view, this commitment is not well publicised. The possibilities for changing the way Australians think about and interact with environments is enormous. We offer this proposal in the belief that NPWS has the potential to take a leading role in Australian society in the 21st century. The reconciliation NPWS has effected with Aboriginal people is impressive. The care of species and ecosystems is impressive. The focus on place and multiplex meanings of place is impressive.

In this section we outline the parameters of a project that builds on totemic worldview, and integrates the big issues and challenges. Our proposal is consistent with the approach taken in the Cobar Peneplain Project.

Our proposal is for a project that produces tourist-friendly information that develops connectivities across whole landscapes. We propose a pilot project, which could be assessed and adapted for other regions. For the pilot, we propose using the arbitrary straight line of the Barrier Highway, treating it not as road to be travelled as quickly as possible but rather as a field of motion along which travelers (especially tourists) can learn to appreciate the holistic and historicised ecology which the highway bisects.

We propose that NPWS develop a booklet that could be purchased at a reasonable price in tourist information centres throughout the region, as well as at NPWS offices. The booklet would be both a guide to the social and natural landscape, and a guide to *Wawi* travels in that region. It would include information on all the parks along the way – including Mutawintji, Mt Grenfell and (with a slight detour to the north) Gundabooka.

We envision the Rainbow Serpent as the guiding connectivity. *Wawi* is just one of several big travelling stories that make and shape the human ecologies of the western district. A focus on *Wawi* and water links ‘totems’ (*kalimpala* or water ‘meat’, yellowbelly and other water-related creation ancestors) with creation and connection, and involves one of the most contested ‘resources’ in NSW today. This focus links ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ values across landforms and land tenures and can promote more holistic conceptions about Australian landscapes. A *Wawi* focus will also press people to develop a water ‘conscience’ that will enhance sustainable inhabitation of the world’s driest inhabited continent.²⁵

The booklet would provide information linked to distances (from towns, travelling in either direction) and clearly visible landmarks so that people could read it whilst travelling the Barrier Highway. It would guide travellers in the following ways (and this list is just an indication of some of the possibilities):

²⁵ Joe Powell (1989: 13) uses the term water ‘conscience’.

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- ◆ Indicate the creation stories that also travel in the areas
 - ◆ Point out features that define country and people within the Aboriginal scheme of ecological belonging. Thus, stands of Belah and Nilya trees could be pointed out, as could changes in soil type.
 - ◆ Indicate approximately where the country of one mob finishes off and another mob takes over.
 - ◆ Offer information on the wildlife likely to be seen in the area (this would include brief histories of introduced domesticated animals, ferals such as foxes, and would discuss native animals, many of which also have cultural significance).
 - ◆ Tell some of the stories of the Darling and other rivers where the road crosses or runs adjacent to them.
 - ◆ Provide information on current changes in land and water, and current efforts to ameliorate environmental damage.

At its best, the booklet would be accompanied by a tape that people could while driving. The tape would have some stories told by good local storytellers. It would be good to include non-indigenous as well as indigenous story-teller. Music would also work well. For example, Dougie Young's 'Land Where the Crow Flies Backwards' would make a great introduction to Paakantji country.

It would take some time to develop this project, as it requires research, cooperation, and collaboration. A first and modest step would be to improve the brochures associated with parks in this region. Phil spoke of the connections between parks and places like the Manara Hills. This kind of connectivity is absent in the brochures. Each treats the park it discusses as a separate entity. In addition, the information is bland and repetitive. First step recommendations include the following:

- ◆ Signage and brochures more explicitly to link each park with other parks in the region.
- ◆ Signage and brochures more explicitly to link parks with surrounding country.
- ◆ Brochures (in particular) to be more informative, and more attentive to Aboriginal people's presence.

To sum up the recommendations arising from this study, we believe that NPWS NSW is taking a leading role in social and environmental reconciliation, and we believe that this role is increasingly needed as Australia enters a new century and new millennium. We believe that greater funding is required, and that one way to enhance funding options is to publicise the role of NPWS in leading Australia's efforts toward a more just and environmentally conscious society.

NPWS is uniquely positioned to overcome a large range of fragmentations, and to bring indigenous and non-indigenous people together in the interests of a shared and inhabitable future.

6.4 CO-CARING

As the consequences of disturbing ecological systems becomes clearer to present day Australian society, so does the desirability of understanding the culture of the Aborigines who managed to live in equilibrium with their natural environment for so long. (NSW:NPWS *Aboriginal Sites in NSW* 1979, brochure)

There are profound lessons in this statement for dialogue toward cross-cultural co-management. These lessons resonate with those offered by many of the indigenous people who participated in this project. They offer hope for all Australians.

Steve Meredith called for reconciliation:

She's mother to us all, we're all here together now. We've got to look after her together. She was here before us, created by the ancestors, and she'll be here after us. We've all got to learn to look after her.

Brad Steadman articulated the issue of living in the unfolding time of the real world:

We have to know our history; there were so many qualities of honesty, and honourable people. But we are not those old people. We are people of our generation. We look back with admiration, and hope to have some of those qualities, which help us to remain true to our time. We have to acknowledge the complexities of our generation – our status and our connections.

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Worsley, P. 1967 'Groote Eylandt Totemism and *Le Totemisme aujourd'hui*, in *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*, E. Leach, ed, pp. 141-60, Tavistock, London.

Undated, anonymous rhoneo'd sheets c 1980:

- 'Killer Whales'
- 'The Law comes from the Mountain'
- 'The Significance of Gulaga'

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

General Recommendations

1. This research reveals that there is a great deal of difference as well as much common ground across NSW. If NPWS wants a complete analysis of totemism in NSW, more work will have to be done. Further work could be commissioned, or people in local areas could be invited to submit their accounts to be included within a full study.
2. Greater involvement of NPWS Aboriginal personnel in future research.

Wallaga Lake Recommendations

3. Greater assistance in defence of intellectual and biological resources.
4. Greater assistance in defending parks against damage emanating from adjacent areas.
5. Consider staffing requirements, given need for more defence against development threats.
6. Commission videos to communicate more fully the enhanced role of NPWS in empowering Indigenous people and in working toward reconciliation.
7. Protocols for co-management to ensure local flexibility and over-all equity.

Ngiyampaa Recommendations

8. Greater recognition that 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage is not separate.
9. Better integration of old and new knowledge of land management.
10. Traditional 'Welcome to Country' signs to be placed at all part entrances.
11. Research directions to be better integrated between field and head office.

Researchers' Recommendations

12. NPWS to take a greater leadership role in facilitating social change in relation to environmental issues.
13. Greater integration of Indigenous perspectives into park brochures and signage.
14. Develop pilot project for outreach to public: Barrier Highway / *Wawi* project.

APPENDIX B

DRAFT PROTOCOLS FOR JOINT MANAGEMENT OF NPWS LANDS HANDED BACK TO THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

Proposed by Yuin people

1. Primary Aboriginal right to use traditional lands for cultural purposes

As traditional owners and the local Aboriginal community have a primary right to use NPWS handback lands for food and resource gathering, cultural connection and teaching purposes, the question of fees for Aboriginal use of NPWS lands should be carefully considered by the Service. It is recommended that Aboriginal people should not have to pay fees for using the land for ceremonial purposes.

Some people suggested that Aboriginal people should not have to pay entrance fees for walking or camping on NPWS lands, while others felt that there would need to be restrictions on access for camping, the locations in which this is permitted, and distinctions made between recreational and cultural usage of the land. Issues around local community access to parks, and the question of individuals travelling to other areas of the state further complicate the issue, making it more manageable to limit free access to parks to requests by elders for groups to make cultural and ceremonial uses of the land.

2. Intellectual property over traditional knowledge of sites and totemic relations

Aboriginal control of signage is required, with periodic reviews to ensure signage is in keeping with current views on what is appropriate to be shared with the public.

In accordance with international guidelines being developed by UNESCO, Aboriginal people need to retain control over their traditional knowledge of land, and the use of plant, animal and bird species especially in relation to the development of commercial uses of them.

It is recommended that the NPWS offer assistance to communities dealing with bio-piracy, for example the contemporary taking of elixirs from plants and the removal of stones including crystals from Gulaga (or other NPWS Aboriginal lands), for commercial profit.

3. Research partnerships with Aboriginal people

Greater involvement of Aboriginal people in 'natural' heritage research carried out by NPWS, including controlled burning programs or other culturally appropriate activities.

4. Damage to land caused by non-Aboriginal use

Many areas of Aboriginal land and sacred sites have been damaged by non-Aboriginal populations and government agencies. Repair of this damage should be among the priorities of NPWS and its joint management committees in planning future management of these lands. In cases where damage was caused by another government agency, inter-agency discussion of best practice for repair, and in-kind contributions from other agencies would facilitate repair work and enhance reconciliation outside of NPWS.

5. Cultural sensitivity in the workplace

Aboriginal rangers and other Aboriginal officers should not have to engage in culturally inappropriate activities, or to go into areas from which they are traditionally restricted. Gender, age and seniority are important factors in this.

**6. Alcohol and drugs should be carefully controlled in NPWS parks.
People don't drink or take drugs in churches and shouldn't drink at sacred sites.**

APPENDIX C

Qualifications of the Research Team: Short Curricula Vitae

Name

Deborah Bird Rose

Address

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200
02 6125 0584; fax: 02 6248 0054
Email: deborah.rose@anu.edu.au

Degrees

1984 Ph.D. Anthropology. Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA (USA).
1977 M.A. Anthropology. Bryn Mawr College
1973 B.A. Anthropology (honors and distinction).
University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

Summary:

Dr Rose is a Senior Fellow in the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, ANU, Canberra. She has worked extensively in the field of land rights, and has carried out research in the NT, WA, and NSW. She publishes widely in Australia, the UK, and the USA, writing in the fields of anthropology, history, philosophy, and religious studies. Her work in both academic and practical domains is directed toward social and environmental justice.

Professional Memberships, Advisory and Leadership Positions:

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Fellow
American Anthropological Association, Member
Australian Anthropological Society, Fellow
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Member
Editorial Board, *Aboriginal History*

Publications

Books and major reports:

In press: *Country of the Heart: An Indigenous Australian Homeland*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

-
- 2000
Dingo Makes Us Human; Life and land in an Australian Aboriginal Culture. New in Paperback, Cambridge University Press. Winner of the 1992/3 Stanner Prize.
- 1998
Tracking Knowledge in North Australian Landscapes; studies in indigenous and settler knowledge systems, edited with Anne Clarke, NARU, Darwin.
- 1996
Nourishing Terrains; Australian Aboriginal views of Landscape and Wilderness, Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.
- 1995
Country in Flames; Proceedings of the 1994 symposium on biodiversity and fire in North Australia. Biodiversity Unit, Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories and the North Australia Research Unit, The Australian National University, Canberra and Darwin.
- 1992
Dingo Makes Us Human; Life and land in an Australian Aboriginal Culture. Cambridge University Press. First printing.
- 1991
Hidden Histories. Black Stories from Victoria River Downs, Humbert River, and Wave Hill stations, North Australia. Aboriginal Studies Press. Winner of the 1991 Jessie Litchfield Award for Literature.
- 1988
The Shape of the Dreaming. The cultural significance of Victoria River rock art, co-authored with Darrell Lewis. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.
- 1988
Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions; Ethnographic and Historical Studies, co-edited with Tony Swain, Australian Association for the Study of Religions, Bedford Park, SA.

Recent Chapters in Books

Forthcoming,

How do we know? Oral Histories', in *Frontier Conflict*, Stephen Foster, ed, National Museum of Australia.

Forthcoming,

'The Redemptive Frontier: A Long Road to Nowhere', in *Dislocating the Frontier: Essaying the Mystique of the Outback*, edited with Richard Davis, submitted to Melbourne University Press.

- Forthcoming,
‘Reflections on the use of Historical Evidence in the Yorta Yorta Case’, in G. Boeck and M. Paul, eds, *Native Title and History*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- 2001
‘The saga of Captain Cook: remembrance and morality’, in B. Attwood and F. Magowan, eds, *Telling Stories: Indigenous history and memory in Australia and New Zealand*, pp 61-79, Allan & Unwin, Sydney.
- 2001
‘The Silence and Power of Women’, in P. Brock, ed, *Words and Silences: Aboriginal Women, Land and Power*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 92-116.
- 2001
‘Sacred Site, Ancestral Clearing, and Environmental Ethics’ in A. Rumsey & J. Wiener, eds, *Emplaced Myth: Space, Narrative, and Knowledge in Aboriginal Australia and Papua New Guinea Societies*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu., pp. 99-119.
- 2000
‘Signs of life on a barbarous frontier: intercultural encounters in North Australia’, in R. Torrence and A. Clarke, *The Archaeology of Difference: Negotiation cross-cultural engagements in Oceania*, Routledge, London.
- 2000
‘The Power of Place’ in S. Kleinert & M. Neale, eds, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, pp. 40-5, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- 2000
‘Writing Place’ in A. Curthoys and A. McGrath, eds, *Writing Histories: Imagination and Narration*, pp. 64-74, Monash Publications in History, Department of History, Australian National University.
- 2000
‘Tropical Hundreds: Monoculturalism & Colonisation’, in J. Docker and G. Fischer, eds, *Race, Colour, Identity: Constructing the Multicultural Subject in Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 59-78, Stauffenberg Verlag (Tubingen) and UNSW Press (Sydney).
- 1999
‘Indigenous Ecologies and an Ethic of Connection’ in N. Low, ed, *Global Ethics for the 21st Century*, pp. 175-86, Routledge, London.
- 1999
‘Hard Times, An Australian Study’ in K. Neumann, N .Thomas, & H. Ericksen, eds. *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, pp. 2-19, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney.

-
- 1999
'Does Cultural Survival have a Gender? Indigenous Women and Development in Australia' in T. Fenster, ed, pp. 140-52, *Gender, Planning and Human Rights*, Routledge, London.
- 1998
'Consciousness and Responsibility in an Australian Aboriginal Religion' in *Traditional Aboriginal Society, A Reader*, W. Edwards, ed, second edition (first published 1987), pp.239-51. Macmillan Company, Melbourne.
- 1998
'White People on Sacred Ground', in *Becoming Australia*, R. Nile & M. Patterson, eds, pp. 47-58, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia.
- 1998
'Ned Kelly Died for my Sins' in *Religious Business, Essays on Australian Aboriginal Spirituality*, M. Charlesworth, ed, pp. 103-119, Cambridge University Press. (Reprint)
- 1997
'Dark times and excluded bodies in the colonisation of Australia,' in G. Gray and C. Winter, eds, *The Resurgence of Racism. Hanson, Howard and the Race Debate*, pp 97-116, Monash Publications in History, Monash University.
- 1997
'Australia Felix Rules Ok', in G. Cowlshaw and B. Morris, eds, *Race Matters; Indigenous Australians and 'My' society*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, pp. 121-38.
- 1996
'Rupture and the Ethics of Care in Colonised Space' in T. Bonyhady & T. Griffith, eds, *Prehistory to Politics — John Mulvaney, the humanities and the public intellectual*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, pp. 190-215.
- 1996
'The public, the private and secret across cultural difference', in J. Finlayson & A. Jackson-Nakano, eds, *Heritage and Native Title: Anthropological and Legal Perspectives*, pp. 113-28, Native Title Research Unit, AIATSIS, Canberra.
- 1996
'Histories and Rituals: Land Claims in the Territory' in *In the Age of Mabo, History, Aborigines and Australia*, B. Attwood (ed), pp. 35-53, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Recent Refereed Articles

2000

'Aboriginal Life and Death in Australian Nationhood', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 25, pp 148-162.

2001

'Love and Reconciliation in the Forest', Hawke Institute Working Paper.
www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au/institute/working.htm

2001

'Decolonising the discourse of environmental knowledge in settler societies', *The UTS Review*, 7, 2, 43-58,

2001

Review Essay: 'Settler colonialism and the transformation of anthropology', *Post-colonial Studies*, Vol 4, No 2, 251-261.

2000

'To Dance with Time: A Victoria River Aboriginal Study', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, Special Issue 12, 11:3, pp. 287-296.

1999

'Social Justice, Ecological Justice, Reconciliation', in L. Manderson, ed, *Reconciliation -- Voices from the Academy*, Occasional Papers of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, No. 2, pp. 30-39.

1999

'Taking Notice', *Worldviews; Environment, Culture, Religion*, 3: 97-103, (Special edition, 'Ecological Worldviews, Australian Perspectives', F. Mathews, editor.)

1998

'Signs of Life on a Barbarous Frontier: Inter cultural Encounters in North Australia' *Humanities Research*, 2, 17-36.

1996

'Land Rights and Deep Colonising: The Erasure of Women' *Aboriginal Law Bulletin*, 3, 85, 6-13.

1996

'Indigenous Customary Law and the Courts: Post-Modern Ethics and Legal Pluralism', Discussion Paper No. 2, North Australia Research Unit, Darwin.

Guest Editorship

Cultural Survival Quarterly, summer 2002: 'Nurturing the Sacred in Aboriginal Australia', co-editing this volume with Ian Macintosh.

Consultancies / Commissioned Research

Numerous consultancies with the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, The Northern Land Council, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, the Kimberley Land Council, The Australian Heritage Commission and others.

Name

Diana James

Degrees

- B.A. - Anthropology & Education
Macquarie University, Sydney.
- Diploma of Education – TESL
Sydney Teachers College
- Pitjantjatjara Language – Advanced
Institute of Aboriginal Development

Current position:

Phd Candidate – Australian National University
Centre for Resource and Environmental studies

Cultural Tourism Consultant:

- Desert Tracks Pty Ltd.- Pitjantjatjara Tour company.
- Indigenous Tourism Course, Tourism BA.-research
&development.
University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury- Tourism
Academic Group, Faculty Environmental Management &
Agriculture

Relevant Work History

2000 – 1988

Manager of Desert Tracks Pty Ltd
Pitjantjatjara Cultural Tours

1997

Consultant - Northern Territory Tourist Commission and
ATSIC - Research, report, workbook and video -
“Impacts of Tourism on Aboriginal Communities.”

1987 –86

Lecturer, Aboriginal Studies, Prahran College, Melbourne,

1982 -1980

Coordinator, NPY Women’s Council, Pipalyatjara, S.A.

1980

Lecturer, Institute for Aboriginal Development, Alice Springs

1980

D.A.A.Field Officer, Pitjantjatjara Communities.

1979 –1978

Bilingual Teacher, Docker River, NT, Teaching Service

1976-75

Arts Coordinator, Adult Educator. Fregon, S.A.

Anthropological Consultant / Researcher

1997 – 96

ATSIC, National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Tourism Strategy - Research: Impacts of Tourism on Aboriginal Communities.

1993

Pitjantjatjara Council Report
Board of Mineral Resources, anthropological clearance for National mapping of the Mt Davies Region, South Australia.

1992

Pitjantjatjara Council Report
Seismic Line Clearance, Women's sites in Wataru area, Pitjantjatjara Lands South Australia.

VIDEO & FILM: Production / Anthropological Consultant

BBC Film Productions at Angatja

'Ray Mears World of Survival', BBC Bristol

1998

Research, interpretation and on site production assistance.
Post production anthropological clearance for AP.

ATSIC & NT Tourist Commission

1997-96

'Strong Business, Strong Culture, Strong Country': Managing Tourism in Aboriginal Communities.' Co-produced by NT tourist Commission & CAMMA

CAMMA productions (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association.)

1996

Nganampa Anwernekenhe; Series 9 Ep 10; Desert Tracks 1997
Series 9 Ep 12 Ngintaka, 1997

Independent Film Productions; 'Women of the Earth',

1995 – 92

Co-production by Women of the Earth/ Rising Tide Films, 1996

Cousteau Society & National Geographic

"Australia, Continent of Dreams" 2 part.

1989

Anthropological consultant, Field assistance & interpretation.

Publications

James, Diana

Strong Business, Strong Culture, Strong Country- Managing
Tourism on Aboriginal Communities, (Workbook)
ATSIC & NT Tourist Commission, Alice Springs, 1997

James, Diana

“Desert Tracks -Pitjantjatjara Tours”, In: ‘Australia For Women’,
Susan Hawthorne & Renate Klein (Eds), Spinifex, Melbourne, 1994,
pp330-335

James, Diana

Aboriginal Arts and Crafts of Central Australia, DESART,
Alice Springs, 1993

James, Diana & Nganyinytja

“Women and Land Rights: The Pitjantjatjara Claims”
In: We Are Bosses Ourselves, Fay Gale (Ed) Australian Institute
of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1983

James, Diana

“Angatja: A Community Arts Project “. In: Community and The
Arts, Vivienne Binns (Ed), Pluto Press, NSW, 1991, pp 105-117.

James, Diana

‘Pitjantjatjara Women and pine Gap’
‘Nganyinytja’s Story’, “Nganyinytja -ANZAAS Women’s Conference
1980” (translations) In: Minyma Tjuta Tjunguringkula Kunpuringanyi -
Women Growing Strong Together.NYP Women’s Council, Alice Springs,
1990

Name

Christine Watson

Academic Qualifications:

1996

Master of Arts by Research in Anthropology, on Balgo women's contemporary painting and its relation to traditional media, The Australian National University

1985

Diploma of Museum Studies, The University of Sydney

1983

Bachelor of Arts, The Australian National University

1973

Bachelor of Arts (Hons), The University of Sydney

Present appointment

PhD candidate, Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, ANU

Previous appointments

2001

Visiting Fellow, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU; Tutor in the Culture and Person course, Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU

2000

Convenor of the Aboriginal Central Australia course (half-time Senior Lecturer in first semester) at Macquarie University; tutor in Aborigines and Australian Society course at ANU (second semester)

1999

Associate Editor, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, ANU

May - July 1997

Consultant to Morven Estate, Virginia, US, to organise a Balgo painting commission for the Kluge-Ruhe Collection of Aboriginal art

Nov 1996 - Feb 1997

Research Assistant, Native Title Research Unit, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra

1996

Co-curated two exhibitions for The Australian National University

June 1992 - January 1996

MA Candidate, Archaeology and Anthropology Department, ANU

Aug 1989 - April 1992

Gallery Manager and Curator, Coo-ee Aboriginal Art, Sydney

May 1988 - Aug 1989

Part-time Co-ordinator, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative, Sydney

July 1986 - July 1989

Part-time gallery assistant, Coo-ee Aboriginal Art, Sydney, and free-lance exhibition organiser and catalogue designer.

Jan 1974 - Jan 1985

Clerk, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra, with two years' leave without pay to study.

Selected Exhibitions

1996

Co-curated 'Researching Relations: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art from the Collections of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology and the Jabal Centre' as part of the ANU's 50th Anniversary celebrations.

1996

Co-curated 'Guddhabungan: A Festival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Film' for the Jabal Centre's contribution to the ANU's 50th anniversary.

1987

Co-curated 'Aboriginal Australian Views in Print and Poster', with Koori artist Jeffrey Samuels, for the Print Council of Australia Gallery, Melbourne. The exhibition toured Australia and the Commonwealth Institute, London, over 1987/88.

1986

Co-curated two early landmark exhibitions of urban Aboriginal art, 'Urban Koories', Workshop Arts Centre, Willoughby, NSW.

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

Watson, C. (in press) *'Piercing the Ground: Balgo women's image making and relationship to country'*. Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Watson, C. 1996. *Kuruwarri*, the Generative Force:

Balgo women's contemporary painting and its relation to traditional media, (Masters Thesis) Canberra: The Australian National University.

Selected Articles

2002

'Experiences in the Field: Negotiating between selves'. In R Dalziell (ed) *Selves Crossing Cultures: Autobiography and globalisation*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing.

2000

'Ngantalarra, on the Nankarra Nankarra Dreaming Track' *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

2000

'Writing on Walls: reflections of rock art in 'urban' Aboriginal art' *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

1999

'Touching the Land: Towards an aesthetic of Balgo contemporary painting'. In H. Morphy and M. Smith-Boles (eds) *Art from the Land: Dialogues with the Kluge-Ruhe Collection of Australian Aboriginal Art*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.

1997

'Eubena Nampitjin: Animating landforms, enlivening the palette' In H. Morphy, (Ed) *In Time (Out of Place)* exhibition catalogue, Oxford: Museum of Modern Art.

1997

Re-embodying Sand Drawing and Re-evaluating the Status of the Camp: The practice and iconography of women's sand drawing in Balgo, W.A. In *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 8 (1), 104-24.

1997

Eubena Nampitjin and Wimmitji Tjapangarti. In A Brody (Ed) *Stories: Eleven Aboriginal Artists. Works from the Holmes a Court Collection*. Roseville: Craftsman House. (Updated version of 1995 article).

1990

'The Bicentenary and Beyond - recent developments in Aboriginal Printmaking'. In *Artlink*, Special Double Issue on Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art, Vol 10, 1 & 2, pp 70-72.

1976

Aboriginal Children and the Care of the State in Victoria, Research Paper No 1, Canberra: Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Scholarly Exhibition Catalogues

1996

with Frederick, U., Keen, I., Hodson, A. *Researching Relations: the Aboriginal Art Collections of the Archaeology and Anthropology Department and the Jabal Centre*, Canberra: ANU Publications.

1987

with Samuels, J. *Aboriginal Australian Views in Print and Poster* Melbourne: Print Council of Australia.

1987

with Newstead, A. *Dalkuna Mnuuway Nhe Rom* (Keeping your Traditional Way). Sydney: Coe-ee Aboriginal Art.

1986

with Raffel, S. *Urban Koories - Two Exhibitions of Urban Aboriginal Art*, Willoughby, NSW: Workshop Arts Centre.