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Michael Tawa

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PLACE, COUNTRY, CHOROGRAPHY
Towards a Kinesthetic and Narrative Practice of Place

MICHAEL TAWA

Mainstream practices of place are founded on visual notions of landscape, conveyed through Picturesque engagement with the environment. By contrast, Indigenous experiences of place concern country, not landscape. They are not primarily specular forms of engagement. Rather, they are choreographic—in the sense that they relate to space and place, and choreographic—in the sense that space and place are elaborated kinesthetically through practices of walking and speaking stories associated with country. These kinds of experiences of place—where topography and the body are encountered and gathered through narrative recollection and enunciation—suggest implications for the way the environment is encountered and addressed in architectural design.

Country: Indigenous Experiences of Land

The importance of land to Indigenous identity and narrative is well documented. Land is not 'landscape' but country—a culturally qualified entity conjoining people, land and myth. Country is not an abstract concept or a general category. It is always a specific country, this country—here. Neither is it a semiotic system open to mythological, environmental or cultural interpretation. While it co-relates and is defined by numerous orders of reality—from the mythical to the factual—country represents nothing. Rather, it is the presence that it conveys. It contextualises a remembrance and renewal of cultural lineage and identity. It is also a pedagogical setting, which both places education, and is its proper place. This apprenticeship or initiation into the narration of country is fundamental to Indigenous identity. What it conveys is much different sorts of knowledge as it is different modes of knowing, and different ways of speaking which are proper to specific places and circumstances. This apprenticeship, its techniques, and their spatial implications opens-up a kinesthetic and mnemonic practice of place, in which memory, narrative and pedagogy articulate an ethos of topos, an ethical topography.
The indigenous process of visiting country is important for a number of related reasons. Firstly, to
remember and recollect its various parts—their relationships, configurations and combinations.
Secondly, to confirm familial lineage and cultural links to communities and regions. Thirdly, to care for,
keep and tend to the workings of place as a dynamic setting. Orientation to country, to community,
and to the opportunity of care prepare for an encounter with identity. To remember, to confirm, to care
for. In a sense, these relate the spatiality of a setting to three moments of temporality: to remember a
past, to confirm a present, to care for a future. For an Indigenous perspective, the past is in, and is the
present. It is not transcendent, anterior or remote. Mythic and existential time are present-together. Ancestral events are not unique occurrences located at particular points in time. Consequently, they
can be re-performed and re-presented. The past has not passed, but is immanent as the passing and
the passage of its presencing. A locality is as much situated as situating. Country is certainly topos—that
is, topography, contour and place. But it is also topogenesis, the contouration and genesis of place—
that is, its structure, its register and sovereignty as a region, and its coming-into-being.

Different topographies prompt different modes of engagement. In desert country, intricate details are
more telling than large scale elements. Relationships between elements are more telling than the
singular elements themselves. Relationships may be configurational and material—such as the specific
profile and colour of a dune; but they are more often to do with processes—such as climate or ecology.
More importantly, what is critical is the interconnectedness of these configurations and processes—
processes of difference and differentiation in conjunction—such as specific conjunctions between
landform, climate, hydrology and ecology. These conjunctions are read for their implications. They
point to certain situational dispositions which have a propensity, and which can be used to procure
certain efficacious outcomes. Indigenous readings of country involve a strategic reading and disclosure
of concealed implications. This operates by way of deferral. Implications defer one to the other by way
of an indefinite shuttling across juxtaposed and overlayed patterns. In a sense, this shuttling of
implications does more than describe. It weaves the fabric of a place. It traces, presents and constructs
place by mapping or registering the signs and tracks of intrinsic configurations and processes—traces
left behind, and therefore past, but also carrying a forward promise, and therefore futural.

Country and Narration

Central to the encounter and engagement with place is the role of narrative. The experience of country
is accompanied by storytelling. Narratives recount ancestral stories or myths, which are beyond living
memory, as well as historical events in long and short term communal and individual memory. In each
case, country is read directly in relation to these stories. Every place is a place where someone has come
from, where something happened, where someone did something, where something was said or
decided. More than that. Places are not contexts or containers for these events. Mythic events, stories
and present-day encounters don't take place in country. Rather, they are the taking place of country
as such—the performance of its own narration. There is no time, before the event, when a place was
empty. Places exist together with the events which situate and locate them within intricate webs of
association. Therefore country is not simply where things happened. It is the happening itself, the event of its eventualising, the advent of its occurrence, the taking place and fashioning of place. This dimension of country is carried by narrative. Country stands at the confluence of stories which convey its status and standing. Place is, before anything else, narrated. Narratives are seldom singular, and seldom have single versions. Stories seldom belong entirely to a single individual or group. Rather, they are shared. Certain parts of stories are identified with, and identify, specific groups or individuals. But since they refer to a complex and shifting set of ecological, cultural and territorial boundaries, falling under the stewardship of different communities, stories in fact overlap. Hence narratives are multiply coded and overlaid. They tell not one story, but the confluence of numerous stories, of different parts of stories, and of numerous versions. In this, they resist a linear or closed reading. In this, too, they invite a resonant listening which attends to difference—to specific and particular variations and idiosyncrasies, rather than to the abstract and generic.

Narratives are not canonised as true for all time, or as told once and for all. They are each time new and indefinitely performed, each in its proper place and at the proper occasion traditionally accorded to it. This praxis of renewal applies to narrative, but also to the domain of art—for example, in the regular maintenance of paintings and objects; to the domain of ritual—for example, in the regular performance of ceremonies; and to spatial practice—for example, in the regular return to, and wandering through country. The identity of an individual or group is not only remembered, through that performative renewal, as something past—it is also constituted and confirmed as present, in the here and now of the performance, as the performance which presents it, and in the performance of the performing itself.

In narrative performance this essentially creative practice is experienced in and as the play of memory and invention, which construes the dimensions of past, present and future. Narration is yarning, spinning yarns, telling stories, weaving histories. Consequently, narrating country is not simply talking about it, but talking it and talking with it—speaking and singing the land, as the populist saying goes. Indigenous narrative is performative. It conjoins knowledge and its performance. In the experience of its performance—the experience of knowledge as performance—knowledge does not precede, succeed, or stand over and above its performance. Knowledge is one with knowing, in a praxis which is its very performance.

Chinese literature provides a useful parallel. In Cao Xueqin’s *The Story of the Stone* (c. 1760), a new garden, and its inspection by a group charged with naming its various structures, is described. Naming does not have a descriptive function, but an allusive and poetic one—that is, naming produces and fabricates. Given in relation to traditional texts of poetry, the best name is one with the most indirect textual allusion, implied by the most intricate and adept sequences of allusion. The inter-textual practice engaged is one of connotative and open deferral, rather than denotative and definitive closure. Its tropes involve play and pun in a shuttling between texts—a peripatetic practice, which plays out...
the poetic tradition as much as it does the spatial organisation of the garden. Moving through the garden is, as the name of the chapter suggests, ‘a test of talent.’ The garden’s various features and structures are given meaning through the narrative, which situates them in relation to a specific poetic tradition, and in terms of a practice of deferral. Visuality and space are subordinated to this praxis of recollection, in which networks of signification and allusion, rather than singular meanings, are fielded. The garden, and its various components and features, become triggers or prompts to that tradition, which is thereby recalled and renewed. But at the same time, the poetic allusions are poetic and performative—they design and construct the garden as the group walks about.

Walking Country
For Indigenous people, the land is marked by various stories of Tjukurpa (law), and the acts of ancestors (Tjukuritja). Tjukurpa is a pattern of relations which registers and binds together people, their country, the plants and animals which populate them, and the protocols and responsibilities associated with their caretaker-ship. Country is therefore a narrated topography—an inter-textual setting available to be read, mapped and enunciated interactively. Indigenous experiences of country contest Picturesque notions of landscape, and the privileged status of visuality. Instead, country is experienced kinesthetically and dialectically, as a resonance or shuttling between body and memory. Walking initiates a remembrance of genealogical, mythical and geographical networks of inheritance and descent, and announces that experience through narration. In practice, these networks weave itineraries of adventure which narrative recollects and presents. In this context, narrative carries or conveys country. It does not merely refer to, register or report on country, but actualises country as an event and advent of narration.

In this walking, moving is not simply moving through. It is also moving with the configurations and processes of place, being aware of and awake to various speeds and shapes of movement, and of various constitutive systems and networks which operate in and as the place. Walking country is therefore a process of reading, in great detail, its current state and condition—its ecology, geology, meteorology, astronomy, and so on. This prepares a caring for country through various adjustments made in terms of cultural and environmental practices, behaviours and protocols necessary for its sustainment—ranging from ceremonial activities, to hunting and gathering, and fire management practices.

In terms of spatial practice, country is not experienced through passive survey, but through an engaged walking which traces particular itineraries. In desert country, this engagement involves constantly shifting perspectives of displacement, and partial angles of view framed against the tilted edges of undulating terrain and intermittent vegetation. The prospect is never complete, panoptic or totalising. There is no build-up to a generalised monumental configuration, vista, or moment of survey. Any visual sense of the whole is eluded and constantly deferred by attending to the multiple registers and resonances produced between various elements and their settings. Rather than desegregating, this multiplicity achieves consistency and alignment the longer country is walked and traversed.
The rhythms of walking play-out a negotiation of position and trajectory. They affect the pace and disposition of movement and experience. The direction, density and viscosity of movement change according to the body’s relationship to the contours, and the trail being followed. Space pulses between dilation and contraction. It fields networks of spatial dynamics, experienced in terms of relative speed and shape of movement, rather than in terms of proportion and geometric configurations. In this temporal and gestural pulsational practice, landscape and body are assimilated to a choreography which traverses space, but which also performs it. Choreography—a praxis of corporeal movement, is allied to chorography—a praxis of spatial articulation. In this place-specific kinesthetics, country motivates and shapes the experience. But the experience also functions as a way of construing and actualising country—of recreating and remembering it, of orchestrating and reconstituting its fractal parts.

The experience is always one of moving in-between, throughout, and with the land—rather than from, towards or against a destination. The journey is always an itinerary—an enumeration of places traversed along the way, a geography and genealogy of place, a conjunction of familial lineage and topography. Filiation and affiliation, filius and topos—or ethos and topos, since ethos means ‘distinctive character,’ ‘manner’ or ‘custom.’ Walking country articulates a topographical ethics, an ethics of place. Social and cultural interaction and negotiation—in other words, social practices—are analogous to the relational character of environmental systems and processes. Strategies of negotiation and deferral are common to both settings, and one can speak of parallel dynamics in both community and environment. Hence ethos and topos conjoin in an ethics of place—one’s mode of being in a place, being placed and being place. One’s affiliation to country is therefore always performed as an affiliation to a way of walking and a way of speaking—that is, to a distinctive style, which identifies that practice in terms of a distinctive community and its distinctive region. One’s position and trajectory, one’s orientation, one’s comportment and disposition, one’s narrative voice—these are always given and understood in relation to another’s, and therefore in terms of a shuttling-between these singular others who gather and disperse in communities of difference.

This manner of walking country implies particular spatial experiences and practices, which play out an ongoing mapping of place, and engage numerous levels simultaneously within an interactive and discursive community.

To summarise, these spatial practices:

• are founded on nearness, proximity, and intricate engagement with country;
• do not stress visuality, but a narrated kinesthetics involving the body and memory;
• play-out numerous trajectories and itineraries of travel which criss-cross the land;
• articulate a pulsational and gestural experience—that is, one concerned with the times and speeds of movement, rather than with form or geometry;
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- aim to open-up an interconnected and detailed reading of the numerous registers and processes of place;
- are specific to different places, and entail distinctive practices responding to these differences;
- conjoin myth, narrative and space within a disposition of care and sustainment.

**Visuality, Landscape and Space**

According to Denis Cosgrove, 'landscape' is an idea whose lineage is traceable, through 18th century notions of the Picturesque in painting and garden design, to the political functions of rational and mathematical ordering in perspectival Renaissance space. The illusion of unchanging objectivity, conveyed by high vantage points and disembodied aerial views, privileges the outlook of a single subject and alienated spectator. Consequently, landscape becomes "the view of the outsider, a term of order and control, whether that control is technical, political or intellectual." It "remains at root the creation of the outsider, a signifier of power and dominion over nature, and through nature over other men."\(^1\)

The 18th century idea of the Sublime\(^2\)—allied to the late Renaissance and Baroque idea of *terribilita*—and more particularly its 19th century democratized form as the Romantic Sublime, emerged to contest the advent of the positive sciences and of industrial capitalism. It did this by positing the illusion of a moral order, seeking to harmonize the insignificant individual with an unspoiled natural wilderness of epic scale.\(^3\) Of the settlement of the American West, Cosgrove writes:

> The idea of romantic landscape had invested scenes of wild grandeur with a special significance. They were held by many to be places which declared the great forces of nature, the hand of the creator. In them humans could commune directly with God and feel the unity of Divine purpose and human insignificance. In the context of a religious tradition which stressed individual salvation, the idea of sublime wilderness offered a powerful opportunity for transcendence, a way of appropriating America as a distinctive experience unavailable in Europe. It gave to primeval America, particularly the vast western expanses of mountain, forest and desert, a particular moral force.\(^4\)

Cosgrove's reading of the Picturesque and the Sublime implies a number of quite different spatial practices to those outlined for a kinesiotics of place. A corresponding list of characteristics may be ventured.

Within the Picturesque, these spatial practices:
- are founded on distant and external engagement with country;
- stress a visuality of survey that is pictographic and cinematic, yet dependent on a fixed and immobile single perspectival point of view;
• involve hierarchical sequences of movement, with singular, homogenous and orthogonal textures of grids and axes, which are used as modes of control over both the body politic and the land;
• emphasise geometric and fixed patterns of order, in which temporal and processual elements are subservient to spatial patterns and stasis;
• aim to construct uni-dimensional and totalising schema, which privilege singular and immutable over multiple and transforming readings;
• are generic across different places, and entail uniform practices with no substantive response to distinctive specificity;
• conjoin myth, narrative and space within a disposition of abstraction, and of the subjugation of place to idealised meta-narratives and motifs such as transcendence and immanence, monumentality, the epic and the tragic.

Visuality and the Limits of Western Epistemology

In Western epistemology, visuality—associated with the metaphor of light—is the privileged mode of apprehending and understanding truth.25 The word 'theory' is from Greek theōra, 'speculation,' and theōmaī, 'I see.' Theorēin is 'to look at,' 'behold,' 'view'; theoros is a 'spectator,' and theôrema, a 'spectacle.' Martin Heidegger reads 'theory' as theōn-borōn, from theō—'the outward look or aspect in which something shows itself'; and borō—'to look attentively at something, look it over, view it closely.' Hence 'theory' would mean 'to look attentively on the outward appearance wherein what presences becomes visible and, through such sight—seeing—to linger with it.' In short, 'theory' is a 'beholding that watches over truth.'26 Likewise, the word 'idea,' from Greek eidos, derives from the etymological root id-, 'to see.' And the act of knowledge, eidenai, is the act of an eyewitness—'one who has seen.' As Giorgio Agamben has put it, this supremacy of vision in epistemology conditions authenticity as what is 'present before the look.'27

Etymology yields additional meanings. The Greek the-, cognate with the Indogermanic root D(H)E, means 'to bind,' 'put in place,' 'set up,' 'establish.' Theo-, allied to the root DEW, means 'what is brilliant,' 'what shines'—and by extension, 'what is divine, heavenly.'28 Further, knowledge is not simply associated with seeing, but with seeing clearly. In Classical poetics and aesthetics, clarity is a function of representational or mimetic accuracy. A clear figure of speech or thought, a clear configuration or shape, is one in which the essence or idea (eidos) shines through, or radiates. 'One who knows' (Greek gnōmon) is also 'one who articulates' (gōnu), 'one who joins and connects.' A more significant alliance is that between knowledge (gnōsis) and existence, coming to be, arising, becoming assembled (ginomai).29 Hence 'to know' is 'to see clearly,' and 'to see clearly' is 'to know.' With clarity, we understand what shines-through and shows itself articulated and conjoined. This clarity of articulation then becomes a measure of truthful and unconcealed existence. As a function of articulation and relief—or, as we would now say, 'sharp focus,' and 'high definition'—clarity lets something be seen as foreground, over and against a background. Something standing out and separating itself from a
surrounding context. Something, in other words, in which the identification of parts is privileged—or at least the distinct rendering of their edges—rather than the ambiguity and undecidability of their limits.  

Consider, for example, the common image of Uluru—the entire monolith in long profile against the flat horizon and plain of Uluru—Kata Tjuta National Park. The rock is usually photographed at sunrise or sunset, its contour clear and sharp, its surface a homogenous orange-red against a matt blue sky. The image is an elevation—an orthographic representation whose dumb simplicity, flat colour-field abstraction, and severe shadow and colour contrast, renders it effortlessly diagrammatic and iconic. The motif is widespread, and has become emblematic in film, the press and advertising.

But the sought-after photographic clarity of Uluru is used to picture otherness. ‘Other-worldliness,’ certainly, but also otherness as a sign of the metaphysical, mysterious and arcane Other. This signification is critical for the commodification of Australia as Other. The Other among other international tourist destinations. The Other for the other 90% of non-indigenous urbanised and suburbanised Australians—all looking for exotic adventure, or noumenal encounters, or funds with which to construct national identity and social exchange.

In spite of all evidence to the contrary—of radical and extreme environmental and cultural diversity for example—the image obstinately represents Uluru as the Australian continent’s geographical ‘red’ or ‘dead centre,’ and the ‘spiritual centre’ and dwelling place of the Aboriginal people. As daily evidenced in the media, the symbol of Australia is no longer the sheep, but Ayers Rock.

What does this image convey of the status and function of Uluru? The extreme limit of the specular is destined to what Jean Baudrillard has called the ‘precession of simulacra.’ Under Baudrillard’s ‘logic of signification’—the status and function of Uluru must shift from a functional logic of use value and economic logic of exchange value, to a logic of symbolic exchange and sign value; from a radiation of surplus meanings to a catastrophic implosion of meaning; from a set of “signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing.” In this era of simulation and dissimulation, the ‘logic of the code,’ and the ‘structure of consumption and signification,’ would destine Uluru no longer to the status of a commodity, but to that of a brand name: the saturated and empty form proffered by advertising.

An extreme parody: The Leyland Brothers Tourist World, 3000 km south-east of Uluru, on the north coast of New South Wales—a sprayed concrete scaled replica of Ayers Rock, its cavernous interior harbouring a petrol station, souvenir shop, cafeteria, toilets, and an ‘Aboriginal Gallery.’ Here, though, climbing is strictly prohibited.

Under these conditions, what kind of experience remains to the tourist? Surely the iconic remainder and residual protagonist of an entire tradition and practice of modernity—of economic, religious, cultural, national, technological, and aesthetic colonialism and appropriation of otherness. “You’ll never never know if you never never go.” This persistent media sound bite, advertising tourism to the Northern Territory, reworks the fictional Never-Never, concocted by Mrs. Aeneas Gunn in her 1907 novel—a place:
... away Behind the Back of Beyond, in the Land of the Never-Never; in that elusive land with an elusive name—a land of dangers and hardships and privations yet loved as few lands are loved—a land that bewitches her people with strange spells and mysteries, until they call sweet bitter and bitter sweet. Called the Never-Never, the Maluka loved to say, because they, who have lived in it and loved it Never-Never voluntarily leave it. Sadly enough, there are too many who Never-Never do leave it. Others—the unfitted—will tell you that it is so called because they who succeed in getting out of it swear they will Never-Never return to it. But we who have lived in it, and loved it, and left it, know that our hearts can Never-Never rest away from it. 58

Towards an Ethics of Place
In the media press kit released by the custodians of Uluru—Kata Tjuta National Park, there is a curious request for maintaining "respectful representation" in professional film and photography. Detailed guidelines restrict photography to panoramas which "do not include any specific sites of cultural significance." At Uluru, the entire north-eastern face is excluded from photography, as are a number of sacred sites right around the base. Similar prohibitions apply to nearby Kata Tjuta (Mt Olga).

The prohibitions at Uluru are instructive. Excluded from photographic capture are sites of specific cultural significance, including both individual parts of the rock, and the entire north-eastern face, which is replete with such sites. The objection seems to refer to a kind of visibility which separates specific sites from their overall context by the framing and isolating function of the camera. 59 Respectful representation is tied to preserving an overall contextual fabric for the individual secret and sacred sites. Maintaining panoramic distance allows the blurring of recognisable detail, and prevents a breach of this protocol. Alternatively—and this is preferred by traditional owners—visitors can join a guided tour which, by taking control of the detail, and by framing the experience through an accompanying narrative, backgrounds and informs the visual experience by locating it within a cultural context of signification. This prevents an isolated reading of parts, and conveys a measure of their interdependence and interconnectedness.

These two modes of experiencing Uluru have aesthetic, but also ethical registers. With the first, Uluru is represented as a continuous entity, whose parts are subservient to a monolithic and singular profile. With the second, Uluru is presented as a series of distinct and discontinuous parts, which constantly defer any sense of a 'greater' whole. So, on the one hand, Uluru is unconditionally given, or sacrificed, to the instantaneous universalising gaze and spectacle of panoramic photography. But at the same time, its distinct parts are conditionally preserved and concealed from view. What is unconditionally given is its solely visual unity—its image or gestalt 60—and consequently the right to its indefinite reproduction and dissimulation. What is withheld, however, is its distinctive multiplicity, and the recognisable singularities of its fractal parts whose meanings remain subject to cultural protocol and propriety of access.
For numerous reasons, the traditional owners at Uluru (*Anangu*) would also prefer visitors not to climb the rock. The rate of accidental death is high; the marked track happens to follow the main mythic trail; its location along the ridge means that surfaces are now seriously eroded. There are other, possibly less pragmatic reasons. To climb is to subject the land to survey, prospect and control. It is always to dominate, to conquer, to place oneself above, to generalise, to abstract, to erase difference. But like the definitive souvenir and photograph, it is also a measure of possession, conclusion and closure. This is precisely why *Anangu* counter with this:

"He should get another lens—see straight inside"—that is, the preferred regime of engagement is framed by community, and contextualised by a narrative which opens-up place and attends to its differentiated and discontinuous parts. The other lens "sees straight inside"—that is, it doesn't see Uluru as surface, but as presence: the presence of the cosmogonic serpent *Kuniya*, whose work Uluru presents.

Consequently, *Anangu* promote a pedagogical experience of place:

We want tourists to learn about our place, to listen to us *Anangu*, not just to look at the sunset and climb on the *puli* (Uluru).

This pedagogy—quite aside from the generosity of its gesture—is not concerned with explication. Uluru is not a representation of something which needs hermeneutic analysis, interpretation or exegesis. Rather, this pedagogy is concerned with *showing*. Showing in the sense that something shown also shows itself, and shows itself showing—what Jean-Luc Nancy would call its *monstration*: its demonstration as taking-place. This taking place of place is precisely what a pedagogical community would prepare. A politics contesting regimes of apprehension and perception that do not afford the kinds of negotiated and intricate practices necessary to a mutual sustainment of country and community. A pedagogy of resistance, contesting regimes that seek and deliver clear-cut, seamless and closed versions of what must always remain open. Open to the negotiated development and renewal of place, to be sure; but also indefinitely open to its taking-place, its performance and its arrival.

Finally, none of this is any way a question of authenticity, directed to a more inclusive or purer aesthetic truth, or to an encounter with the real Uluru, or with a genuine Aboriginal culture. Nor would it be directed to a restitution of what Cosgrove has called the "unalienated, insider's apprehension of the land—of the nature and sense of place." Rather, this pedagogy—this pedagogical community, since the practice of that community would necessarily be pedagogical, and its pedagogical practices would
necessarily be in community—this pedagogy would concern itself with contextualising the aportia, or impasse, of this epoch of information, virtuality, dissimulation and consumption. Not its overthrow, denial or erasure, but its ex-termination and transcendance, or trans-ascendance—that is, the liminal exposure of both its conditional terms, and the terms of its conditions.

Notes

1 The interpretation of Indigenous spatial practices in this paper is informed by personal experiences with the Nganyayjarra communities around Patjarr and Warburton Ranges, Gibson Desert, Western Australia, during a series of ongoing student and community projects, which first began in 1998. See http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/exhibits/BARCH/ngaanyarrijarra/


3 See Stephen Muecke’s essay “Reading This Book,” in Reading the Country, p. 14: “There is no basis for seeing the dreaming as a mythological past (as in “dreamtime”) while it is alive as a way of talking. Paddy Roe, for instance, constantly talks about the burarrigarra as story, as song, as a power he controls and as things to do with particular places. To talk burarrigarra about these places is to talk about “spirits” one cannot see, about the “rainbow snake” rising up out of springs: it is to talk in a special way which disrupts the uniformity of everyday language.”


7 Jacques Derrida provokes this thinking of the past as futural in terms of the 'ineluctable': what announces itself as ineluctable seems in some way to have already happened, to have happened before happening, to be always in a past, in advance of the event," see “Introduction: Desistance,” in Lacoue-Labarthe, Typographie, Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics, translated by Christopher Fysk, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 7. Derrida develops Heidegger’s survey of time concepts in Aristotle, and articulates its three ‘structural moments’—past, present and future—in relation to the ‘futural.’ See Martin Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, translated by Albert Hofstadter, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988, pp. 229 ff, and especially pp. 265-268: “The Dasein understands itself by way of its own most peculiar capacity to be, of which it is expectant. In thus comporting towards its own most peculiar capacity to be, it is ahead of itself. Expecting a possibility, I come from this possibility toward that which I myself am. The Dasein, expecting its ability to be, comes toward itself. In this coming-toward-itself, expectant of a possibility, the Dasein is futural in an originary sense... That which the Dasein has already been in each instance, its [past as being been-ness] belongs concomitantly to its future. This having-been-ness, understood primarily, precisely does not mean that the Dasein no longer in fact is; just the contrary, the Dasein is precisely in fact what it was.”

9 And as narrated, 'place' is, before anything else, feigned. Cf. Greek plasso, plassein = to mould, model, fashion, shape, fabricate, configure; to imagine, feign, simulate, fiction. Here, place enters into the regime of poiesis, in which mimesis and representation play a critical role. See Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*, p. 96.


11 See Berndt, *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology*, pp. 5-6, 8-10; and Layton, "Relating to the Country in the Western Desert," p. 222. Stanislaus Fung, in his work on *Yuan ye*, the 17th century Chinese treatise on gardens, has distinguished between the 'fresh' and the 'new' in notions of renewal. See his "Self, Scene and Action: The Final Chapter of Yuan ye," paper presented at the conference of the Association of Art Historians in the University of Exeter in April, 1998. The idea is explicit in Cao Xueqin, *The Story of the Stone*, translated by David Hawkes, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986, p. 328: "to recall old things is better than to invent new ones; and to recut an ancient text is better than to engrave a modern."

12 Significantly, the words 'garden,' 'yarn' and 'yard' are related through the Indogermanic etymological roots +KHA,+GHA = interval, space, abyss (Greek: chora; and chaos, gape, court, orchard); +GAR = cause, make ready, perform (gear); +GHF.R = grasp, hold, contain, enclose (gird, chord); +QER = to make (create, grow, increase); +QERT = to bind together. A yarn is a thread for weaving, and a story or tale told—but in every sense of these associated meanings, country is a garden: a chora or space of performance, a creative setting girt and bound by the choreographic and gestural function of narrative. Corresponding relations are also found in the Sanscrit word sutra—which means both 'line' or 'thread,' and 'book,' 'leaf' or 'story.' In Hinduism, sutra is associated with breath and sound. The sutratma is an axial breath-thread, there are sutras or sacred books, and one of the four roles of an architect is sutragrabin—which means a 'measurer,' literally a 'stretcher of threads,' 'one who opens,' and by inference, a weaver.


15 Used here in the sense of Greek poiesis, from poiein, meaning to make, produce, create, articulate, versify. For the productive and cosmogenic character of the Name and naming, see my 'Sound, Music and Architecture, a Study of the Relationship Between Sound, Number, Space and Time in Sacred Music and Architecture According to the Vedic, Pythagorean and Platonic Traditions,' unpublished thesis, Sydney: UNSW, 1991, pp. 15-64.

16 I owe this term to Stanislaus Fung, who develops the performative thinking at work in *Yuan ye* in relation to garden design—particularly the motif of 'borrowing views,' which articulates a visual, spatial and experiential deferral, paralleling the textual deferral of allusions in the narrative. See his "Self, Scene and Action: The Final Chapter of Yuan ye." Fung himself borrows the term from Wu Kuang-ming, *On Chinese Body Thinking: A Cultural Hermeneutic*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997.


20 Muecke, borrowing the term from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, refers these practices to "nomadology," the study of nomadism." See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, translated by Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, and Bentzler, Muecke and Roe, Reading the Country, p. 15.


22 "Holy fear, gloom and majesty, seriousness, infinity, exaltation, vastness and grandeur: these are the adjectives of the sublime," Cosgrove, Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape, p. 226.

23 Cosgrove, Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape, pp. 226-234. This contestation was not without contradiction: "in its very critique romanticism acted in certain respects as a justification of the new order by mystifying the nature of the social relations against which it protested. Romantics accepted the detailed observational techniques of the emerging natural sciences, but employed the findings within a pre-postivist mode of reasoning, leading to metaphysical rather than strictly materialistic explanation," p. 231.

24 Cosgrove, Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape, p. 185.

25 Rene Guenon has noted that sedentary societies employ spatial metaphors normally associated with sight, and express themselves through spatial arts such as sculpture and architecture, while nomadic societies employ temporal metaphors normally associated with hearing, and express themselves through temporal arts such as music and dance. See The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times, translated by Lord Northbourne, London: 1953, Chapter 23, "Time Changed into Space."


29 From the Indogermanic root GEN(KEN) = to generate, produce; cf. Sanskrit: jan = to beget (begin); Greek/ Latin: genos/genes = race, kin (genesis, generate, cosmogony, gender, generic, general, generous); Greek: geneus = parent, seed; ginomai = to cause to be, to become, arise, be assembled; L: gnoscere = to know (gnostic, gnomon); Greek/Latin: genu/genu = articulation, joint, knee, corner; genus = innate (genuine) nature or power of productivity.

30 Or, according to another aesthetic—simultaneously Platonic and Modernist—rather than the subordination of those parts to a whole, which constitutes their essential, causal or archetypal unity.


32 For the advocacy, in the early 20th century, of high contrast and harsh lighting to identify a distinctive Australian photographic style, and by implication, a distinctive Australian landscape, see Anne-Marie Willis, Picturing Australia, a History of Photography, North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1988, p. 145.

33 See Jean Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, translated by Charles Levin, Telos Press, 1981, pp. 74-5: "every group or individual experiences a vital pressure to produce themselves meaningfully in a system of exchange and relationships... The origin of meaning is never found in the relation between a subject... and an object produced for rational ends—that is, properly, the economic relation, rationalised in terms of choice and calculation. It is to be found, rather, in difference, systematizable in terms of a code...—a differential structure that establishes the social relation, and not the subject a such."


36 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, pp. 1-42, and pp. 82-3: "McLuhan’s formula, *the medium is the message*, which is the key formula of the era of simulation (the medium is the message—the sender is the receiver—the circularity of all poles—the end of panoptic and perspectival space—such is the alpha and omega of our modernity), this very formula must be imagined at its limit where, after all the contents and messages have been volatilised in the medium, it is the medium itself that is volatilised as such.... Finally, *the medium is the message* not only signifies the end of the message, but also the end of the medium... The fact of this implosion of contents, of the absorption of meaning, of the evanescence of the medium itself... may seem catastrophic and desperate. But this is only the case in light of the idealism that dominates out whole view of information. We all live by a passionate idealism of meaning and of communication, by an idealism of communication through meaning, and from this perspective, it is truly *the catastrophe of meaning* that lies in wait for us:"

37 Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, p. 93.

38 *We of the Never-Never*, London: Hutchinson & Co, 1914, pp. xi-xii: "And All of Us, and many of this company, shared each other’s lives for one bright, sunny year, away Behind the Back of Beyond, in the Land of the Never-Never, in that elusive land with an elusive name—a land of dangers and hardships and privations yet loved as few lands are loved—a land that bewitches her people with strange spells and mysteries, until they call sweet bitter and bitter sweet. Called the never-Never, the Maluka loved to say, because they, who have lived in it and loved it Never-Never voluntarily leave it. Sadly enough, there are too many who Never-Never do leave it. Others—the unfitted—will tell you that it is so called because they who succeed in getting out of it swear they will Never-Never return to it. But we who have lived in it, and loved it, and left it, know that our hearts can Never-Never rest away from it."

39 Writing of the ‘gaze,’ Heidegger distinguishes between a looking “which makes presence possible... (and) at the same time shelters and hides something undisclosed,” and “the look of a being that advances by calculating, i.e., by conquering, outwitting and attacking... the look of the predatory animal: glaring,... by means of which beings are, so to say, impaled and become in this way first and foremost objects of conquest,” see *Parmenides*, pp. 107-8. On the look,’ and the ‘face,’ see my “In(side)out. The Face That Turns Towards and Looks: Chartres Cathedral 1989,” at >http://www.altx.com.au<

40 According to Lacoue-Labarthe, *Gestalt*, along with Greek *eidos* (the archetypal and immutable idea or form) infers a ‘seeing’—albeit an ontological seeing, rather than an aesthetic or ‘subjectal’ seeing, forming part Western ontology since Descartes and Hegel. See *Typography*, p. 54: “The concept of Gestalt... retains within itself, insofar as the figure is accessible only in a seeing... the essential element of the “optical,” “eidetic,” or “theoretical” overdetermination that is constraining throughout the whole of Western Ontological discourse.”


42 Tony Tjamiwa, in Burgess, *Uluru National Park Cultural Centre*.

43 This way of conceiving signification is radically dependent on mimetic notions of representation holding sway in Western ontology since Plato. See Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography*.
