

Chapter Four

Bits and Pieces

'Curiouser and curiouser!'

Lewis Carroll (1968:21)

In Chapter Three I examined relations between various 'groups' within the small 'darug custodian' community. I also investigated various people's social positions - who they are, where they come from, their situation and struggles in the wider Australian society - and how these frameworks relate to being, or negotiating being 'darug custodian'. In other words, I considered the ways in which 'being 'darug custodian' is energised and guided by the conditions of the participant's lives. I also considered the ways in which it seems that a status system is crystallising in a community which is still emerging.

'darug custodians' are sociologically diverse. In this respect, the everyday lives of each member of the group are lived in worlds which are in no sense 'Darug'. Indeed, 'darug custodians' *must* deliberately plan, organise and overtly display their commitment to a 'darug custodian' community. If they do not, competing claims for their attention threaten to over-ride their commitments to each other.

In this chapter I aim to shift my more general analytical approach concerning 'who' constitutes 'darug custodians' to a more personalised and humanistic focus on particular individuals. I present some 'vignettes' of some moments from particular 'darug custodians' lives. These are stories about people with whom I have experienced especially close relationships, relationships which allowed me to observe some details of their lives which are not accessible when considering the

characteristics of larger groups of people. I do this to give the reader a greater sense of the complexities that all 'darug custodians' negotiate not only as members of different communities simultaneously, but as members of different complex social systems which often clash. Whereas Chapter Three focussed on relations between 'darug custodians', this chapter is more concerned with relations between 'darug custodians' and the various other social groups to which they belong. Before I do this, however, I present the reader with a brief over-view of Indigenous peoples' presence in the western suburbs of Sydney.

Living Differently in the 'Same' Places.

Given that 'darug custodians' cannot be thought to be 'racially' or ethnically bound in the terms in which 'we' (Westerners) might understand such categories, what binds them at all? Here in list form are things that do not bind 'darug custodians' together. 'darug custodians' do not share:

- a) One area of western Sydney. Families live in places geographically and socially distant from each other including Penrith, Mount Druitt, Richmond, Windsor, Campbelltown, Oakville, St. Marys, Liverpool and parts of the Blue Mountains. Although these areas are constituted differently from each other socially, they are all low status in relation to other areas of Sydney.
- b) The same church. Although they use the Holy Family Catholic Centre as a place to meet each other and local Indigenous peoples and as a place to conduct certain ceremonies, few 'darug custodians' are parishioners. I only know of four 'darug custodians' (all from the same family) who

regularly worship as part of the 'mainstream' congregation at Holy Family. Although most 'darug custodians' claim to be Catholic, they all either attend different churches, or do not attend at all. All, however, do participate in the same 'darug custodian' religious cult⁶².

- c) The same school. Although all 'darug custodian' children do attend 'darug custodian' 'culture days', however, where they are instructed in traditional cultural practices.
- d) One or even similar work places. However, some community members work on archaeological digs as sub-contractors for the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation.
- e) The same or only one club. Some people play sports such as football and belong to various clubs associated with the teams with which they play. Many belong to RSL⁶³ clubs where they drink and gamble, and which are located where various 'darug custodians' live.
- f) One sport. Different 'darug custodians' play sports such as netball and football.
- g) One kind of 'non-darug custodian' friends. Different 'darug custodians' have

⁶² As I describe in Chapter Seven.

⁶³ *Returned Serviceman's League.*

friends who are neighbours, work mates, school mates, sporting buddies and people they have met and engaged with in the multitude of different social contexts in which they individually move.

There are, however, two crucial sociological indicators which do seem to connect 'darug custodians': 'class' (meaning relatively low status in relation to other members of the dominant society) and if not 'race' or 'colour', then White racism.⁶⁴ Racism is something that all 'darug custodians' experience directly through being discriminated against because they are Aboriginal, or being discriminated against because their spouse and/or children are Aboriginal. Although White and immigrant 'darug custodians' may be from marginally higher status families than Aboriginal 'darug custodians', all are from backgrounds characterised by persistent poverty even though some, such as Kevin, are relatively affluent today. Class (meaning both economic power and social status) is also something that 'darug custodians' typically share with their 'non-darug custodian' neighbours as they live in some of Sydney's most impoverished suburbs. But 'darug custodians' are different from all those 'other' 'non-darug custodian' people with whom they associate and inter-relate daily, for they have distinctive relationships with each other and with what is claimed to be Darug Land.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Census 2001)⁶⁵, New South Wales supports twenty-nine percent or 120,000 people of the total Australian

⁶⁴ Although even this is problematic if middle class White associate members are counted as a category of community members.

⁶⁵ Statistical data presented in this chapter are drawn from the most recent census at the time of writing taken on 30th June, 2001.

population that identifies as Indigenous⁶⁶. This makes New South Wales home to the largest Indigenous population in Australia. Of these 120,000 Indigenous peoples in New South Wales, over thirty percent, or 37,500, live in Sydney. Of that thirty percent, more than 13,000 Indigenous people live in the Blacktown, Campbelltown and Penrith areas (which are all claimed as Darug Land - see maps 1 and 2). This means, statistically, over thirty-four percent of the Indigenous peoples living in Sydney live in the western suburbs of Sydney, making this the largest population of Indigenous peoples in any one specific geographic area in Australia. Of course, this does not mean that western Sydney supports an Indigenous population which is proportionately large compared with the non-Indigenous population of western Sydney. In fact, all states of Australia, other than the Northern Territory⁶⁷, support Indigenous populations which are less than four percent of the total population⁶⁸.

What is significant, however, is that in western Sydney, the largest population of Indigenous people in Australia live in a state of invisibility, compared with other areas of Sydney⁶⁹ (and Australia) where Indigenous populations may in fact be statistically lower in number, yet proportionately more dense, and therefore, more visible.

Some 'darug custodians' live in areas where there are no detectable Aboriginal communities at all and consequently, need to negotiate their everyday lives and their

⁶⁶ Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

⁶⁷ In the Northern Territory it is estimated that more than one in four people (29%) identify as Indigenous.

⁶⁸ In Victoria the Indigenous population comprises only 0.6% of the total population.

⁶⁹ Such as Redfern in Sydney's inner south and La Perouse on the northern side of Botany Bay.

identity as 'darug custodians' within their various and diverse neighbourhoods. All these neighbourhoods are working class and are constituted by both working class White 'settler' populations and significant migrant populations.

Sydney is considerably class bound geographically. Often touted in various government rhetoric, tourist campaigns and business bombast as a 'global' city, such a description does not do justice to the diversity of Sydney's various landscapes and moods⁷⁰. Such a description is not at all accurate when attempting to describe Sydney's western suburbs. The western suburbs of Sydney have traditionally been stigmatised compared to other parts of Sydney due to their working class heritage, the relatively affordable cost of land, and their comparative lack of access to the coast and the city. This has changed in recent years with an influx of 'new aspirationalists', buying their own homes and becoming instant capitalists in the former heartland of Australian socialism. Many of the former inhabitants of what were traditionally working class suburbs have been forced further out to the fringes of the western suburbs where housing is still relatively affordable.

Generally, the further west the suburb in question may be situated, the less 'desirable' as a residential address it is. That is, in real estate terms, the further west the cheaper for housing and property. South Windsor, in Sydney's far west on the Hawkesbury River is an example of such 'inexpensive' and 'undesirable' neighbourhoods and home to one 'darug custodian' family.

Jean, Colin and Family - Doing it Tough in a Rough Neighbourhood.

South Windsor is where Jean, Colin, her Maori partner, her four children by her

⁷⁰ See Fagan and Webber's (1999) critique of the term 'global city' especially in relation to Sydney and its western suburbs.

first husband (who is White) and two Aboriginal foster children live adjacent to White neighbours. There are also a considerable number of Aboriginal families living in the area.

This area, and nearby Richmond, are often characterised by the term, 'rough' suburb. This image of roughness is derived from the visible signs of high levels of unemployment such as apparently indolent youths in public places, graffiti reflecting a generally dissatisfied attitude to life, poorly maintained (and frequently vandalised) public facilities such as bus shelters and public telephone boxes, poorly maintained private residences, broken glass, trashed out, burnt and dumped cars, and a general ambience of lassitude and hopelessness. Jean and Colin's house is a three bedroomed fibro construction adjacent to the main road running from Windsor to Penrith.

The children walk to the nearby primary school and Jean occasionally works for the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation on the archaeological digs the organisation is often commissioned to undertake by state bodies. The family's financial situation improved radically when Colin recently moved into the house with Jean and the children. Colin is a heavy plant operator and earns a regular income working on road construction sites. He came to Australia in the 1980s after what he has described as a 'wild' youth in New Zealand. He still bears the scars and regular bouts of illness caused by injuries sustained in a road accident resulting from a police pursuit.

As I have said, there is a strong relationship between 'darug custodians' and Maori in the western suburbs of Sydney. Alma and other Elders are frequently asked to perform 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies for Maori gatherings and are often included as participants in Maori ceremonial occasions. A group of Maori Elders

recently honoured Alma's involvement in their community with a specially prepared meal and a formal recognition of Darug status as traditional Aboriginal owners. Colin seems to identify strongly with Darug descendants as he claims traditional Maori ownership of land in the northern part of the North Island of New Zealand. He also identifies with the 'darug custodian' community as a non-Aboriginal partner. I asked him during a ceremony what he thought about non-Aboriginal people's participation and he replied:

You know Kristina, I would have thought this was wrong once. I would have thought that this was trespassing or something. But I thought about it. You know my own father is White and there are lots of White people who come to our Marae (meeting house) and sing when we have ceremonies and such.

FN DR062004.

This inclusion of 'others' in Maori tradition was demonstrated when Colin's mother recently died in Sydney. Colin borrowed money so that his mother's body and a large entourage of relatives and friends could return to New Zealand for a traditional funeral⁷¹. Among those travelling as mourners were Jean and her children. Before the body was transported it lay in state for three days at Jean and Colin's house which had been turned into a temporary *Marae* (community meeting house). Jean telephoned me to come to the house immediately and to bring money in an envelope to present to Colin as an offering to help pay for food and the funeral.

My husband and I arrived to find the house transformed. A large table had been set with food in the garage and a team of Maori cooks were entrenched in the

⁷¹ See Sinclair 1990 for an account of funerals as arguably the most important aspect of Maori 'tradition'.

kitchen. There were large numbers of Maori, White and Aboriginal peoples wandering about the house crying. We were told to leave our shoes outside the house and to visit the body which was in a chip board coffin on the floor of a bedroom now cleared of its usual furnishings. Mattresses had been arranged on the floor around the coffin where people sat holding the corpse's hand, stroking her forehead and quietly talking to her. We too were asked to sit down and talk. Various people came and went as we were told stories about Colin's mother's country in New Zealand, about her life and about the various Maori and non-Maori people to whom she was related. At the foot of the coffin were a few photographs of her closest relatives who had passed away before her - her mother, her brother and a beloved aunt. There were no photographs of living relatives. It was as if we were mourning the passing of all these people. Colin later told me that the photographs were also to remind mourners that his mother's spirit was going to join those who passed before her and that she would not be lonely or afraid.

Colin, his siblings and other Maori mourners were not at all concerned that non-Maori were included as participants in this event. 'We' (non-Maori) were coached and encouraged to interact with other participants - including the corpse - according to Maori tradition. Like-wise, Colin's, and all non-Aboriginal community members' participation in 'darug custodian' traditions is not only accepted, but expected as appropriate social behaviour.

Although 'darug custodians' are in the process of creating their own new cultural group, their physical appearance reflects the many different ancestries which have contributed to their contemporary presence. The appearance of Darug descendants, at least to my eyes, varies from looking White, to looking quite black.

Incongruence between the cultural identification of 'Black', and actually looking 'black', and equally, the cultural identification of 'White' is very real within the community⁷².

As a cultural form of identification, all Darug descendants, for example, use the term Black even if they appear to be white. Some Darug descendants may have no other Aboriginal heritage than their Darug ancestry. Others have many different Aboriginal ancestors, some in their parent's generation producing different appearances. These differences in appearance between Darug descendants are paralleled in the various appearances of the wider 'darug custodian' community. All of Jean's biological children, for example, 'look' White, her two foster children 'look' Aboriginal and Colin 'looks' Maori. Jean is soon to deliver Colin's baby who will add a new dimension to the 'look' of 'darug custodians'. It is therefore not possible, at least not for me, to judge the ancestries of 'darug custodians' by physical appearance. Still, these differences in appearance within families, as well as at a community level, make grounds for discrimination and accusations of 'inauthenticity' by critics of the 'darug custodian' project. Jean's fair haired, blue eyed fifteen year old daughter, Samantha, complained:

Nanna come ta school this week an' give 'Welcome' an' mum come too. No-body but me friends, you know Julie an' them, what already knows me believed they was me mum an' nanna before. But now they're all callin' me 'boong' (derogatory term for Aboriginal).

FN JW 032002.

So it seems, from this example, that even if 'Aboriginalness' is 'authenticated' - even if it is exalted, as it is by public schools inviting local people to perform 'Welcome

to Country',⁷³ it can also be derided.

The Trouble with Being Frankie.

Teachers, social services and other government agencies generally know, through various networks of services, which children are identified and identify as Aboriginal regardless of physical appearance. This may not be intended as repressive surveillance, discrimination or racism, and is, in fact, an attempt by the state to redress injustice, poverty and inequality by providing extra services to Aboriginal children and families⁷⁴. Yet, the effects of this knowledge, as Frankie's case demonstrates, can produce the opposite outcome.

Ten year old Frankie, one of Jean's sister's children to an Aboriginal man from Kempsey, had attempted to 'pass' for Indian among his friends at his primary school near Riverstone in Sydney's west. This was despite the fact that Frankie regularly performs as a dancer with the community dance troupe and is an enthusiastic participant in community 'culture days' when children are taught 'traditional' skills, including carving, spear throwing, bush craft and painting.

Frankie was most upset when a teacher made reference to his Aboriginal heritage in class. He could not hold back tears as he told me:

I'm dumb. I'm always sent out to sit on the verandah. I jes' can't do it [school work]. It isn't coz I'm Aboriginal but. All 'em Uncles say Aboriginals is smart. It's jest me. I don't want all them wankers [school mates] thinkin' I'm dumb coz' I'm Aboriginal.

BB 062003.

⁷³ I provide an account of 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies in Chapter Seven.

⁷⁴ See Cowlshaw (1999) on this point.

Frankie clearly does not want to conform to dominant perceptions that 'Aboriginal' equals 'dumb'. He did not want school mates to associate his low academic performance with an Aboriginal identity. This was exemplified a week later when Frankie was suspended from school for fighting a group of White class mates who teased him because of his Aboriginality. His resistant behaviour backfired on him by preventing him equal access to education.

This example of Frankie's defiant behaviour causing him to reinforce the very discrimination that he resists is common among 'drug custodian' children⁷⁵. The frustration that Frankie expresses is common because many Aboriginal children are identified by welfare groups including government departments to be the recipients of extra benefits and services and are, as a result, sometimes identified to other children, teachers and parents as Aboriginal without their knowledge or consent. The networks of observation and surveillance which are supposed to be set up to provide access to extra state resources can thus be seen to also contribute to discriminatory practices.

According to Foucault (1977, 1972, Morris and Patton 1979, Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982), the twentieth century has seen the development of micro-agencies set up for the management of populations and integrated into the overall policies of the contemporary state. The strategies of state power have been devised to subject to observation and regulation such crucial information as birth rate and childbearing age, birth control and genetic coding of progeny; to subject to documentation and control the movement of populations and to supervise health, substance abuse, education, child-rearing and aging. This exercising of biopower is formulated in the terminology of 'rights' - the right to education, to health, to happiness, to life. The

⁷⁵ And adults.

paradox of this formulation, however, is that in order to provide these rights, forces of knowledge/power, and monitoring are activated in ways which can undermine those rights, as commonly occurs in 'darug custodian' families, especially those with children.

Many, if not most, 'darug custodian' children spend significant periods of time away from school. Such periods are for disciplinary reasons imposed by the school system, as well as for countless other 'cultural' reasons. Leanda, for example, is ill most school days, although often well on week-ends. School, according to her mother, is such an alien environment that it makes Leanda physically ill⁷⁶.

Many 'darug custodian' children (and, I suspect, many 'non-darug custodian' children in most of the suburbs where 'darug custodians' live) struggle with the effects of parental substance abuse. Hopelessness and lethargy connected with lives of poverty, unemployment and discrimination seem both cause and effect of substance abuse among 'darug custodians' and their various neighbours. This means that the inability of some parents to wake up and function on school mornings may be understood as a 'cultural' reason for their children not to attend school at all. The power of school authorities to maintain minimum attendance can be subverted by some 'darug custodian' children by claiming that they are principal carers of ill parents. But this introduces yet another level of surveillance into these homes in the form of the *Department of Community Services (DOCS)*, which has the power to remove children deemed to be 'at risk' in their home environment and place them in foster care. Most 'darug custodian' children have become very aware of these dangers and have devised ways of minimally attending school without attracting further attention

⁷⁶ See Fletcher's (1989) history of state policies concerning the education of Aboriginal children and the effects of culturally inappropriate practices on Aboriginal children's bodies.

from state agencies. In this way, they comply with state strategies of power while simultaneously resisting them.

Alma and Kevin - Looking After People and Country.

No 'darug custodians' live in suburbs or neighbourhoods which might be described as affluent. However a few 'darug custodians' may be described as 'financially secure'. For example, after retirement Kevin and Alma have their own home and car, and have enough financial resources to support not only themselves, but various other community members when in need. Indeed, Kevin and Alma are possibly the most outstanding example of financially secure 'darug custodians'. This is not, however, because Kevin comes from a wealthy background.

Kevin was one of ten children born in the 1930s to an impoverished English immigrant father, who, according to Kevin, was escaping criminal proceedings against him in England, and a White settler Australian mother. Kevin's stories of growing up during the depression in a large family are nearly always inspired by the desire to compare his experiences with those of Aboriginal community members. His stories of needing to walk great distances without shoes, of 'living off the land' because the family was too poor to purchase food, and discrimination against his family by those better off, do, on the surface, sound quite similar to many Aboriginal peoples' stories. Of course, Kevin's situation of impoverishment stemmed from very different social circumstances than those of Aboriginal peoples. Still, Kevin claims a life-long identification with Aboriginal people based not only on his impoverished background, but later on his experiences as Alma's spouse and as father and grandfather to their children who identify as Aboriginal.

Kevin and Alma were only teenagers when they met and ran away together in

the 1950s. They headed north from Sydney to the New South Wales-Queensland border where they lived with an Aboriginal community on the Tweed River. They made money cutting cane and picking fruit and vegetables, and they shared what they had with others in that community. Kevin told me that he always preferred associating with Aboriginal people rather than with White people:

Ya know where ya stand with Aboriginal people. They don't judge ya like Whitefullas. The rules are simple. Ya do th' right thing an' they'll do the right thing.

FNAW082001.

When I asked Kevin how his family felt about his long association with Aboriginal people he said:

Ya know me mum wasn't happy when she found out me and Alma got married. She was worried what other people would say. But years later she said that Alma is the best daughter-in-law that she had. And she was too. Alma was the hardest working, the best mother.

FNAW082001.

Kevin and Alma took any job they could find until they started a family and decided to return to Sydney. In the meantime, Kevin had trained as a drainer and had saved scrupulously. He and Alma bought their first truck and established their business in the late 1960s, and through life-long habits of hard work, frugal living and careful saving they were able to retire in 2000.

Alma and Kevin were planning their retirement when I first met them in 1996. They had lived at Kellyville for more than thirty years, now in a house on five acres of

land also accommodating Kevin's interstate trucking business which he had built up with Alma. For many of those years Kellyville would have been rural and stigmatised as an 'outer western suburb'. When I first visited them, however, their land was one of the few acreages left amidst the vast, gentrified suburban development that has recently grown, transforming the area from an 'outer western suburb' into part of the more prestigious 'Hills District'. Alma and Kevin have since moved from Kellyville due to the increasing cost of local council rates, Kevin's retirement from the trucking business and a general disappointment in witnessing the transformation of their familiar open environment into a crowded suburban sprawl. They have now made a new home at Oakville, further west towards Windsor at the foot of the Blue Mountains.

On my first visit to the Kellyville house, I was surprised to find myself driving among sheds containing petrol bowzers, heavy equipment and a number of oversized inter-state trucks. The land was dry and dusty, the dam was low and the few gum trees about the place looked stressed. I had driven through the gates from suburbia into what seemed like an out-back truck stop.

Soon I arrived at a pleasant white weatherboard house, quite unlike the neo-Georgian mansions being built on small blocks of land on the other sides of the fences. It was the house where Alma and Kevin raised six children and numerous foster children.

The overwhelming impression given by the inside of Alma's home at Kellyville, like the house in Oakville, is of extreme, if not obsessive neatness and cleanliness. It was sparsely furnished allowing only the necessities of tables and chairs, cupboards, beds, dressers and shelving to clutter spaces which were clearly cleaned with precision and a regularity that is foreign in my own home.

One entered the house through the back door and via the kitchen which was warm and friendly despite its almost clinical cleanliness. The kitchen and the adjoining living room were the main focus of the house. The kitchen was where most visitors would sit and have tea, while the living room was used by the extended family, mostly for watching television. Both rooms were clearly for social gatherings where people could talk, interact and know what each other were doing, and it was not possible to sit in either room without a full view of the other.

Rarely have I visited either of Alma and Kevin's homes without other visitors already present and others arriving in a constant stream throughout my visit. Many 'darug custodians' are unemployed or are employed part-time and visit Kevin and Alma to pass the time, paint, or talk about community 'business'⁷⁷. The homes have often provided a temporary retreat, shelter or company for other Aboriginal peoples who may have been homeless or on an extensive visit.

I remember one very long term visitor named 'Boss', a Ngiyampaa man from Nyngan in western New South Wales, contentedly sitting at the kitchen table at Kellyville painting with Alma and some of Alma's children while we chatted, drank tea and regularly stepped outside for a 'rolly'⁷⁸. Boss came to visit Alma and Kevin for a few days and stayed for ten years. He later moved into a shed at Alma and Kevin's new house at Oakville before moving back to his own country. Boss continues to maintain constant contact, however, and is often to be found back in 'his' shed with

⁷⁷ By no means are *all* 'darug custodians' unemployed. As well as being gainfully employed as truck drivers, shop assistants, office workers and various other non-professional occupations, some are teachers and police officers. The Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation also employs 'darug custodians' as labour at archaeological digs when government authorities are required to conduct archaeological surveys of sites for land development.

⁷⁸ A hand rolled cigarette.

his two dogs when least expected. Kevin has often rung me to say Boss has 'turned up out of the blue' and I should get over to see him before he 'takes off' again.

Alma and Kevin can now afford to live on acreage, but even if they needed to make considerably more financial sacrifices to continue to live there they told me that would always be their choice. A large block of land is difficult and expensive for elderly people to maintain, but it provides a level of privacy that suburban blocks do not. This means that the many Aboriginal visitors who arrive at Kevin and Alma's door can move about with a relatively low level of visibility and potential surveillance by their White neighbours.

Non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians'.

The relationships, practices and identity of all non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' within the 'darug custodian' community confounds the kind of logic which makes binary separations between the categories 'Aboriginal' and 'non-Aboriginal'. Most non-Aboriginal community members, like Kevin and Colin are partners of Aboriginal community members and they are predominantly male. Non-Aboriginal aunts, mothers and grandmothers are fewer in the 'darug custodian' community than non-Aboriginal uncles, fathers and grandfathers which may be due to relatively higher death rates of Aboriginal men. It may also be an effect of social mores in White dominated society which makes it more acceptable for White men to marry Black women than it is for White women to marry Black men.

Non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' authority is constantly challenged and contested by other non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people both inside and outside of the community. Non-Aboriginal 'darug custodian' Elders, for example, may be taken to task on their authority to speak or act for Aboriginal people. This frequently occurs

when Kevin attends meetings representing Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation with Shire Councils, Land Councils and other government bodies. On the other hand, he is sought out as a representative of the community or of individual Aboriginal people in certain situations by Aboriginal community members. Kevin is often the first person called, for instance, when an Aboriginal person is in trouble with the police. Yet, regardless of the fact that Kevin's status is sometimes questioned, even within the community, Aboriginal 'darug custodians' frequently demand that important Elders such as Kevin be treated with respect by 'non-darug custodians'. Younger non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' such as Colin are also defended as community members. However, both Kevin and Colin experience challenges to their identity, 'authenticity' and authority from within and outside the 'darug custodian' community.

All 'darug custodians' experience frequent hostilities of various kinds from outside the community from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups and individuals. It is, however, most often left to White non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' to negotiate outcomes of these sorts of hostilities and to reach agreements. Even when state agencies and different Indigenous groups demand that Darug descendant 'darug custodians' represent themselves in these negotiations, White Elders are often present and actively involved in negotiations. This has occurred even when such involvement has been expressly disallowed by non-Aboriginal authorities. An example of this occurred during negotiations between the state of NSW and Darug descendants over co-management of a public reserve. Invitations to hearings of the proposal were extended exclusively to Darug descendants, yet, Alma and other leaders insisted that both Kevin and I be present. When we arrived at the meeting, it was agreed by both state representatives and Darug Tribal members that my

presence was acceptable as a White researcher. Tribal representatives agreed that my documentation of the proceedings was acceptable and desirable. This, however, was not the case for Kevin. When Kevin arrived at the hearing, his inclusion was questioned by Tribal people, but when White authorities began to query Kevin's role in the proceedings, 'darug custodian' Darug descendants threatened to walk out if he was excluded. The White authorities involved were quick to apologise and accept Kevin's presence. So there is at once a certainty and recognition of the authority of some non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' and a deep suspicion and concern that something is not quite 'right' about 'darug custodians' generally. This is presumably because those dealing with the community often do not recognise the 'Aboriginality' of people such as Kevin.

Senior male non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' with financial resources such as Kevin, provide important material support for the 'darug custodian' community. They generally provide income for families, community activities and development that Aboriginal peoples and Black non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' such as Colin, often have difficulty raising themselves. Kevin, for example, buys all of the artwork produced by 'darug custodian' artists, frames the works, and on-sells them, recovering only his costs so that artists can be paid for their work on a regular basis.

The role of these non-Aboriginal Elders, however, is far more complicated than mere community resources. Many non-Aboriginal 'darug custodian' Elders, such as Kevin, are treated and behave as Aboriginal people. They are enculturated to such an extent that dealing with the state and other non-Aboriginal people can sometimes be as difficult for them as it is for Aboriginal people. It is not only Aboriginal people who experience difficulties in their power relations with the state for many non-

Aboriginal 'darug custodians' are not equipped to take on the tasks that fall to them. Literacy skills, for example, are not always well developed among this group of people, and their understanding of power relationships is often based on their own positions of relative powerlessness. Yet, I have never witnessed an instance when a non-Aboriginal Uncle, when asked, did not do whatever they could to deal with a situation on behalf of the community or an individual 'darug custodian'.

Such dedicated participation in an Aboriginal community comes at an extraordinarily high price, including exposure to ridicule and humiliation from Black and White alike. I have personally experienced the effects of some of these disciplinary measures to maintain separations between 'Aboriginal' and 'non-Aboriginal' and can testify to their power. Threats have been made against my person for defending 'darug custodian' 'authenticity' to other Aboriginal people. Some people regard my defence of 'darug custodian' culture as lies and I have been threatened with law suits as a consequence. My sons and I have been spat at by White youths when we sat with some 'darug custodian' dancers dressed in loin cloths at a performance in Parramatta. One White ex-friend told me, when I complained about such treatment, that 'if you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas'. Many White 'friends' of many years standing no longer maintain contact with me. These are some of my experiences of the consequences of 'boundary crossing'. Of course, as a middle class White woman my experiences do not and cannot compare with the life-long, intense and extreme prejudice and violence that all 'darug custodians' endure in their relationships with many White people and some Black people.

Different Kinds of Neighbours, Different Kinds of Surveillance.

Surveillance by White neighbours is quite a different kind of relation - and an

entirely unwelcome one for most 'darug custodians' - from the welcome presence and fellowship that some Aboriginal neighbours provide⁷⁹. This is particularly clear in the case of Sandy who lives in a *Housing Commission*⁸⁰ town house at Mount Druitt where all the neighbours are Aboriginal. A Murri woman, Sandy originally came to Sydney from Walgett, in the north-west of New South Wales with her sixteen year old daughter, Carmen, by first her husband, her twelve year old son by another partner, and her eight year old son by her second husband. At forty, Sandy established a relationship with Carl, a twenty-two year old Darug descendant with two infant sons who also lived with them until Sandy and Carl's recent split. Sandy suffers from a mental illness and struggles to maintain relationships and remain employed. She currently works as an Aboriginal liaison officer in a public service department part-time. Her average income, including child support from ex-partners is \$AUD17,000 per year.

Carl was unemployed until he recently went to gaol. Sandy's daughter, Carmen, was also unemployed until she gave birth to a baby girl in March of 2004. Carmen, her baby and her partner, Sam, now live with Sandy, Fran, a Dhan-gadi woman from Armidale (inland from Kempsey on the New South Wales mid-north coast) and Sandy's two boys in the three bed-roomed town-house.

Although poor, fragile and struggling herself, Sandy is an active supporter of others in the Mount Druitt Aboriginal community. Aboriginal neighbours frequently come to her home to borrow food, money, clothes and other essentials from her. When I asked her if she found such generosity a burden she replied:

⁷⁹ I say more about 'witnessing' and Aboriginal social relations in Chapter Seven.

⁸⁰ A Federally funded, means tested subsidised housing scheme for less affluent Australians.

This's what bein' Aboriginal is all 'bout sista girl.
No-one goes hungry when somebody's got food.
I share when I've got food in the fridge and I know
that it'll be there when I need it from somebody else.
FN LB062002.

Sandy's faith in her neighbours seems to be mostly justified. There have been times, however, especially after her acrimonious split from Carl, when some people in the Mount Druitt community sided with Carl against her, and some readjustment of alliances and relationships needed to be negotiated. Sandy received unanimous support from the 'darug custodian' community, however. This was largely because Carl, as a young Darug descendant, had been the embodiment of a hopeful future for many 'darug custodians'. Carl regularly participated in public dance performances, played didgeridoo with panache and visited local primary schools teaching children about Darug Culture. Although 'darug custodians' were sympathetic concerning the circumstances of Carl's incarceration there was a general sense that Carl had failed the community after his release. He ceased participation in community events and the dance troupe disbanded as a result⁸¹. As Murray, a young Darug descendant man put it to me:

Stupid bloody bugger. 'E's jest feelin' sorry for hisself.
That's all 'e thinks 'bout is hisself.
FNBK 062002.

It appears that incarceration, stress and the financial and cultural burden it causes families and community are forgivable. *Choosing* not to fulfil one's cultural

⁸¹ Although it has recently made a come-back.

responsibilities is not.

Foucault, Prisons and Techniques of the Self.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault uses prisons as his principal example of the ways in which Western disciplinary techniques have changed over a relatively short period of time. But, as Foucault (1977:23) stresses, prisons are only one example of the many different strategies of changing power relations in the West. Schools, factories, hospitals, and as I demonstrate below, missions, welfare systems, and in turn, families, communities and the self demonstrate how the circuitry of power is 'hard-wired' into every aspect of society. Power cannot be understood as merely repressive. Foucault (in Morris and Patton 1979:36) insists that:

If power was never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe that we should manage to obey it? What gives power its hold, what makes it acceptable is quite simply the fact that it does not simply weigh like a force which says no, but that it runs through and produces things, it induces pleasure, it forms knowledge [savoir], it produces discourse; it must be considered as a productive network which runs through the entire social body much more than as a negative instance whose function is repressive.

I show below, how, in the case of 'drug custodians', such productive power relations are manifested today in every aspect of their existence. Foucault (1977) presents his argument that Western society's attitudes toward discipline and power relations have changed historically, by examining how these relations are embodied in forms of state disciplinary punishment over the last two hundred years. Before moving on to concentrating on some specific forms and effects of modern disciplinary technologies on 'drug custodian' subjects, I will briefly recapitulate Foucault's main points about internalised surveillance. I relate these tactics to assumptions concerning the objectification of bodies and the kinds of identities which emerge from

such objectification. I want to consider the differences between the kinds of subjectivities represented by different kinds of punishment and discipline. I do this so that I can later show how different kinds of 'darug custodian' subjects have emerged in the present.

The kind of disciplinary power Foucault analyses has been evolving since the 18th century. It is no longer public spectacle, but performed behind the high walls, locked gates and rigorously compartmentalised internal walls of the prison. Punishment is no longer inscribed externally on the body as it was previously through torture and dismemberment, but through exercise, supervision and training. The apparatus of control, which was ultimately aimed at producing 'docile bodies' was one of total, continual and systematic surveillance as exemplified in the structure of the panopticon (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:152). In that form of building prisoners assume that they are *always* under surveillance because they cannot see whether the guard is present or not. The constant *potential* presence of the guards leads the prisoner to internalise their own surveillance and self-supervise their own behaviours.

As I said, Foucault stressed that prisons are only one example of how these 'technologies of the self' operate to produce the modern subject. I will demonstrate below how they infiltrate every aspect of society and are resisted in different ways by different people to produce new 'selves'.

Home as a Kind of Prison.

Sixty-seven year old Uncle Bob lives in a *Housing Commission* house at Lethbridge Park, between Mount Druitt and Penrith in western Sydney. He is surrounded by White, Aboriginal and South-Sea Islander neighbours. Uncle Bob moved to Lethbridge Park from La Perouse with his three White, mentally disabled

foster children⁸² after his wife's death some years ago. Uncle Bob struggles both financially and physically to bring up the children, who are now all teenagers. The *Department of Community Services (DOCS)* often threatens to remove the children from his care after observing the dishevelled state of the house and Uncle Bob's exhausted demeanor. Yet, Uncle Bob has raised the children from babies and has so far managed to resist *DOCS'* efforts to relocate them.

A visit to Uncle Bob's house is a challenge to the sensibilities of most visitors. It is difficult not to notice the holes in the walls, the broken windows and the quite extraordinary untidiness that does not allow one to find a seat without moving things around. These characteristics are not unusual in many 'darug custodian' homes, but it is the behaviour of Uncle Bob's children which has many visitors looking at their watches. The children seem happy and loving toward him. But, they fight amongst themselves with such a degree of physical violence that one fears for their safety.

The violence of the children's 'play' has meant that it is difficult to find an intact window pane, or plaster wall panel anywhere in the house. Uncle Bob told me that White neighbours frequently complain about the state of the house to the *Housing*

⁸² Fostering children, Black and White seems common in the 'darug custodian' community. Kevin and Alma have regularly fostered children. Alma's elder daughter has fostered more than seven as well as mothered her own two over the years that I have known her. When I first met one of Alma's sisters she was fostering a young Aboriginal boy even though she was in her late fifties. When I have asked various 'darug custodian' foster parents if there may be any political reasons for fostering children such as some kind of reversal of the 'stolen children' scenario, they have laughed at the suggestion. *DOCs* do, however, post media releases calling specifically for Aboriginal foster parents. This advertising is often couched in 'emergency' terms, claiming that a critical shortage of 'culturally appropriate' placements for Aboriginal foster children exists. This kind of call to help the powerless, the rejected and the damaged by embracing them in the community seems to particularly appeal to aspects of 'darug custodian' sociability. This may, in fact, be a more general form of Aboriginal sociability and points to a need for more research.

Aboriginal people understand. They know how hard it is.
They know they can't talk neither. Them Kanakas [South Sea
Islanders] they's good people ya know? They don't say nothin'.
The Whites jest want us outta here. It doesn't matter what the
reason is, if it wasn't the kids it'd be somethin' else. They jest
don't want Aboriginal people livin' next door. That's my guess.
FNUG 062002.

Housework and the Disciplining of Aboriginal Women.

Damaged houses and untidiness are quite common in many 'darug custodian' houses, especially *Housing Commission* houses⁸³, but are only one side of the coin. In fact, the kind of excessive cleanliness and tidiness that I described in Alma's home is especially common among Darug descendant 'darug custodians'. Both Alma's daughters maintain their homes to a standard that is exceptional. Alma herself was brought up by her mother to maintain a house of irreproachable cleanliness and tidiness because of her terror of 'Welfare Ladies'. 'Welfare Ladies' were representatives of the *Aborigines' Welfare Board*, established to replace the earlier *New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board*. Their role was to regularly inspect the homes of Aboriginal families to judge their cleanliness and tidiness. It was within the power of these women, should an Aboriginal home be deemed 'substandard', to remove the children of that family to an institution. Barry Morris (1988, 1989) argues that the intense level of surveillance maintained to monitor the house-keeping standards of individual Aboriginal women on Aboriginal stations and reserves was a state project aimed at establishing internalised self-monitoring in the Foucauldian

⁸³ This may indicate resistance to imposed state standards of conduct or a different set of values to White people yet cannot be generalised to all 'darug custodians'.

sense I described above. Koepping (1977:173) also offers an account of the ways in which Aboriginal inmates of Cherbourg mission in Queensland internalised imposed values of cleanliness, orderliness and respect for authority. Fletcher (1989) demonstrates how these values were used to discipline Aboriginal children through various state education initiatives. These authors show how, after a prolonged period of draconian surveillance and discipline administered by outside agents, including 'Welfare Ladies', station managers, ministers of religion and pastoralists, Aboriginal peoples, and particularly women in this case, became self-disciplined and conditioned to continue the behaviours without 'outside' surveillance. Rather, as in the case of the prisoner in the cell of the panopticon, *regardless* of the presence of any 'outside' surveillance. This can be seen, in the case of Alma and her daughters, to be transmitted over generations without the on-going, direct discipline of 'Welfare Ladies'.

Alma's father, an English immigrant who worked on New South Wales railways provided his Aboriginal wife and large family of four boys and three girls including Alma, with homes of greatly varying standards. One was a large weatherboard house with eight bedrooms at Narellan in Sydney's south-west. Alma's Darug descendant mother, Myra May kept it, as she did all of their abodes, in perfect order. Alma told me that the cleanliness and tidiness of the house manifested the level of fear that her mother experienced. Alma's mother taught her children that keeping the house spotless was all that she felt was in her power to fend off the *Welfare Board*. Some of the homes were tents on the side of the railway line. It can only be imagined how difficult it must have been for Alma's mother to maintain such a structure to the standards demanded by 'Welfare Ladies' and how stressful it must

have been to do so.

Alma has told me many stories over the years remembering the bags of flour and pink striped grey blankets provided by the *Aborigines' Protection Board*, the white gloved fingers run along the furniture, hiding under the bed, and the big black cars containing 'Welfare Ladies' that regularly came to her childhood homes as a normal part of growing up. She thought at the time that all Australian children lived through these things and that we were all shaped by these experiences. Alma says she now knows that these memories are part of her identity and that they have shaped her being and those of other Aboriginal peoples who have gone before her. She knows that these experiences have also shaped the ways that she has raised her own children and grandchildren and that these experiences of the world are specifically Aboriginal.

Neat (Compliant) and Messy (Resistant) House-keepers: Two Sides of the Same Coin.

Many Aboriginal 'darug custodians' who are not Darug descendants do not reproduce this ingrained behaviour. In fact, many women, rather than keep houses of mind boggling cleanliness and tidiness keep houses of equally impressive messiness. In my experience there is no middle ground.

Of the approximately one hundred and fifty adult 'darug custodians' I could identify in January, 2003, about seventy had come to Sydney from country towns where they had lived as fringe dwellers. For example, Mary and her five children came from Brewarrina where they had lived in a shanty town aptly nick-named 'Dodge City'. 'Dodge City', or 'Dodge' was established by the federal Labor government in the 1970s when Brewarrina Mission was closed. Mary often tells stories about the kind of

regimented cleanliness imposed on the women 'inmates' of the mission.

Mary recalls 'Dodge' in ambivalent and contradictory terms. On the one hand, she has described it as a disgrace⁸⁴ and a testament to the failure of the Australian state to adequately provide for Aboriginal peoples after the dissolution of missions. Authors including Morris (1989), Goodall (1996), Sutton (2001) and Cowlishaw (2002) provide accounts of the ways in which the Australian state abandoned those who had been incarcerated on missions and reserves after those inmates had become totally disciplined to the rigid authority provided by the administrators of those reserves. Many of these Aboriginal peoples were so dependent on the various social and material infrastructures provided in missions by the state and church that they were unable to operate on their own when reserves and missions were dismantled in the mid 1970's. On the other hand, Mary speaks of the freedom that 'Dodge' provided in contrast to the mission. A major theme in her stories is always how, in contrast to the high level of surveillance maintained at Brewarrina Mission, no-one could do anything about the standard to which her family's houses were maintained after they moved to 'Dodge'. This is now also the case at Mount Druitt. Indeed, it seems that for some 'darug custodians' keeping a messy house is a form of resistance (cf. Cowlishaw's 1999, 2003 accounts of such forms of opposition in a remote community and in country towns).

Conclusion

For all their sociological, physical and geographic differences 'darug custodians' are engaged in a project of becoming a distinct group: a 'we'. They are

⁸⁴ 'Dodge' is typical of the shanty towns provided by the state in other towns after the closure of missions. Its jerry built houses have been reduced to states of total and partial demolition due to former mission inhabitants' lack of skills, income and infrastructure.

creating themselves from historical scratch, sometimes side-lining their differences and focussing on their common project of creating a community which can be a positive alternative to the racism, prejudice and alienation that most 'darug custodians' experience as low status members of the dominant society. But as well as this, the internal differences between members are emphasised in ways that amplify 'darug custodian' identity as custodians of Darug culture and land. There is an internal celebratory 'opposition' that can be activated which provides a constant celebratory audience for Darug descendants. This energises 'darug custodian' social organisation which allows all community members to share in relationships with Darug land, ancestors and heritage to some extent.

All 'darug custodians' experience alienation from the wider Australian society for different reasons: Darug descendants because they are unrecognised, powerless Aboriginal people who claim traditional ownership of Sydney; White spouses of Darug who are not only in low status positions in White society, but who are stigmatised because they are married to Aboriginal partners and are the parents and grandparents of Aboriginal children; Maori because they are 'threatening' Black 'outsiders' to 'mainstream' Australian society; non-Darug Aboriginal people because they are also Black 'outsiders', but 'threatening' to 'us' (the dominant society) for reasons similar to Darug descendants: they have a prior claim to Australia.

As I explore in the following chapters, 'darug custodians' work at their community by doing things together. They have made 'darug custodian' community into such a powerful value that it over-rides many disparities. This, of course, is true of just about any community - church, mosque or temples are good examples - where members dampen and over-ride strong class and status inequalities among members. What is different about 'darug custodians' is that this is done while also emphasising

the internal Darug descendant/non Darug descendant divide which paradoxically, binds the community together as custodians of Darug culture.

In Chapter Five I demonstrate how intensely 'darug custodians' must work, not only on making articulations of their collective identity, but on making a space for such expressions in a world which is already dominated by other cultural groups.



a) Choosing wood for a coolamon.



b) Artifacts displayed for sale.



c) A design by Leanne Mulgo Wright which is used on artifacts, fridge magnets, jewellery and paintings.

Chapter Five

Space Painting or Painting Space.

'I want a clean cup,' interrupted the Hatter. 'Let's all move one place on.' He moved on as he spoke, and the Dormouse followed him: the March Hare moved into the Dormouse's place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Hare. The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change; and Alice was a good deal worse off than before, as the March Hare had just upset the milk-jug into his plate.'

Lewis Carroll (1968:81)

Although this chapter concerns the manufacture of art, it also presents a way of conceptualising space. Most anthropologists do not need to describe the ways in which the subjects of their projects make space for themselves in the world. Space - geographic, community, cultural - is an assumed, given, stable factor - or at least, it has been historically. However, much recent anthropology concerns marginalised groups living within or on the edges of a dominant society where space can no longer be taken for granted. The past humanistic concern with social well-being connected with a sense of 'rootedness' and being-in-place has turned to a call for attention to the harsher conditions of the 'unrooted', 'uprooted' and the displaced (Richardson 1984:66, Clifford 1997). Recent interpretive frameworks of place have included theorisations of social identities of people living in conditions of exile, displacement, disputed borders, and diasporas, as well as the struggles of Indigenous peoples and cultural minorities whose less powerful presence within hegemonic nation states was previously largely over-looked (Feld and Basso 1996:4, Appadurai 1988; Rodman 1992; Gupta and Ferguson 1992a). These identities are now frequently conceptualised as the inhabitants of contested places which are inflected with local and global power relations (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1988; Deleuze and Guattari

1986; Kapferer 1988; Rosaldo 1988; Gupta and Ferguson 1992b). In other words, much recent anthropological work recognises that just as people have been forced as well as freed to create new cultural spaces so too have they been both coercively and creatively positioned to make and remake themselves.

Recent ethnographic accounts of the ways in which people dwell have enriched our understanding of space as lived in deeply meaningful ways. Keith Basso's (1996) account of travelling and sitting in country whilst being told stories by Western Apache, for example, reveals how space is not meaningful in itself, but that different peoples can make different claims - attribute different stories - to the 'same' space.

My own approach finds 'darug custodian' expressions of identity and history in such cultural forms as stories, paintings, dances and ceremonies. However, I argue that 'darug custodian' identity and history can never be expressed outside of the terms already put in place by the identities and histories of the dominant society. I demonstrate how 'darug custodian' art production - and other cultural practices - can be understood as generative of a form of cultural space. This is absolutely crucial for a group of people who do not 'have' a space of their own in *any* sense. Because 'darug custodians' do not occupy one bounded geographical space they need other ways of making space, and in turn, making themselves visible and recognisable as 'darug custodians'. I show how 'darug custodians' use material objects which constitute what is claimed as 'Darug Country' such as ochre, scraps of wood, off-cuts of plastic and shards of glass, to produce art works which provide a space⁸⁵ in which to articulate 'darug custodian' identity. All 'darug custodians' collect materials, know and tell particular stories connected to certain materials, and use paintings and

⁸⁵ I use de Certeau (1984) below to conceptualise 'space', rather than a 'gap' or emptiness, as a 'place' which is used and worked.

artifacts to re-tell stories. It is only Darug descendants, however who actually paint and sell Darug Art. In this way, the 'authenticity' of all 'darug custodians' is protected.

As I show throughout my thesis, 'darug custodians' use many different strategies to produce new spaces in which to make their articulations. These strategies are crucial to 'darug custodian' because the 'darug custodian' world is always already occupied with many different other kinds of peoples and things. Unless 'darug custodians' *make* spaces in which they can be seen and heard, they cannot find a place in which they can exist as 'darug custodians'. In other words, 'darug custodians' must always compete with others in actively claiming a place of their own by making that place their own through collective practice.

de Certeau differentiates between 'place' and 'space' in important ways. In a nutshell, according to de Certeau, place is made by the way space is used by a particular people. This makes place fundamentally unstable and 'open' to constantly being remade. Place is represented space. It is made more stable by a particular people by being mapped, signed and otherwise marked as 'belonging' to that cultural group for specific purposes. According to de Certeau (1984:117) place is *made* through representation. Place is mapped as belonging to a particular set of ideas or principles which 'belong' to a particular culture or people. That is, a *place* exists according to the ways in which it is made, represented and used by the people who claim that particular space as a designated place. Sydney, for example, is claimed by the Australian state as part of the Australian nation. It is marked on maps as a State Capital. It is signposted on highways in large print with a capital 'S'. Sydney is spoken about, at home and overseas, possibly more than the official Australian Capital city, Canberra, as an important symbol of Australian modernity, progress and

economic development. Sydney, in other words, is represented, in various dominant discourses, as an important symbol of many of the values of the Australian nation.

Yet, the ways in which places are represented cannot be static. The ways in which a place is represented depends on how that place is used by the living, changing and competing groups of people who inhabit it. In other words, space is constantly being turned into place by the practice of those using that place in particular ways. de Certeau (1984) uses the example of a city street to demonstrate how the embodiment of movement allows for meaningful engagement with others. I elaborate de Certeau's example here. A street empty of human bodies, is still marked and represented as a place to walk (footpath and signs such as 'keep to the pavement'), drive and park cars (such as paved road and parking bays, meters, 'no parking' signs) and perhaps a place to eat (including tables, chairs, umbrellas, signs advertising food and coffee). These representations of what a street should be used for, however, are only meaningful if people use the space of the street in the ways in which it is represented. If people choose to drive down the footpath and walk down the street for example, the street is used or practised differently from the way in which it is originally represented. Space is three dimensional physical distance in which movements can occur. 'Place' is such space 'transformed' in people's understandings and actions by cultural meanings (representations).

Yet, although he never says so, de Certeau's conceptualisation depends on an assumption that space is neutral and pre-exists people, and that if it is already occupied, then it is occupied through a kind of docile embodiment which is unproblematically colonised by the embodied practices of others. The very crux of the problems of visibility and recognition for 'darug custodian' is that their place has been

colonised by 'us'. Sydney is already inhabited and already practised as 'another' place - not a 'darug custodian' place. 'darug custodians' need to constantly re-work and re-make the space that they use (practise) because 'our' practices and representations are already predominant. 'We' (the dominant White society) have already represented, mapped, signed and made Sydney 'ours'. 'darug custodian' representations of place (or any representations which are other than the Australian state's for that matter) are not generally tolerated, are never permanent.

Yet, regardless of the overwhelmingly dominant discourses of modernity that the state makes of the city of Sydney, and discourses that place all Aboriginal peoples somewhere other than the city, 'darug custodians' and Sydney go hand in hand. *Sydney is Darug Land*. The development, experience and living of relationships with Darug Land and Darug people is at the centre of 'darug custodian' identity. 'darug custodian' identity rests on a profound relationship between Darug descendants, Sydney and those who now live in Sydney.

How, specifically, can people who have been written out of state stories tell their own stories? I consider this question by examining some specific and different 'darug custodian' practices including walking in Darug Country, collecting materials for art production, and the production and sale of artworks.

A Baptism of Smoke.

'darug custodians' are Aboriginal peoples who inhabit urban spaces which are almost all claimed as 'state place', 'church place', 'shopping place' or some other kind of 'non-darug custodian' place. This means that 'darug custodians' must negotiate an 'imposed order' (de Certeau 1984) of spatial 'maps' - representations - of places as state place, church place or some other kind of place. This is not done by mere

compliance or what amounts to the kind of (almost) unconscious embodiment that constitutes the everyday. Rather, it is done through specific cultural practices which are conscious, directed and worked on.

A poignant example of such 'darug custodian' practices emerged when I attended the baptism of three 'darug custodian' babies at Holy Family Catholic Centre at Laverton. In the place represented as 'Catholic place', 'darug custodians' conducted a ceremony based on Aboriginal symbolisms. A smoking ceremony was conducted. Uncle Charlie, a very senior Dhan-gadi descendant 'darug custodian' man originally from the north coast of New South Wales performed the ceremony. He set up a rusty old forty-four gallon drum outside the Catholic Centre, lit a fire in it and placed fresh, green gum leaves over the top of the fire. The smoke billowed out of the drum as those attending the ceremony lined up and walked, single file through the smoke. Uncle Charlie instructed people to remain silent, to pause and to turn around in the smoke so that it could perform its function of purifying and transforming people and the space where the ceremony was held. Uncle Charlie told people as they walked through the smoke that the smoke was dispelling evil spirits and making the space 'clean' for an Aboriginal ceremony. In other words, as a particular kind of visible, airborne 'stuff', smoke is instantly transforming and unable to be escaped. It is both material and yet ephemeral, changing a place, what is possible to be done there, and the people who inhabit it.

Water from the various rivers with which the children's families were associated was collected and used in the ceremony, not to anoint the babies heads as is more common in 'our' (Christian) baptisms, but to symbolically realise the links of the children to particular places. This was done by pouring the water from separate containers into one container and then spilling the combined water onto and into

Darug Land. It was explained by one of the babies' grandmothers that all the different waters with which the babies' families are associated come together here, on Darug Land where the families now participate in custodianship of the land with Darug people.

Headbands woven in the colours of the Aboriginal flag of black, red and yellow were placed on the children. While a Catholic priest⁸⁶ silently looked on, a ceremony celebrating the bounty of the dominant ancestor figure in 'darug custodian' ceremonial life, *Baiame*⁸⁷, took place in the garden of the Catholic centre⁸⁸. The Aboriginal part of the ceremony took about one and a quarter hours to complete. Finally, the priest delivered a five minute sermon, traced the sign of the crucifix onto the babies' heads, and pronounced them Christian. Christianity did not have the final say, however. After the formal ceremonies were completed Uncle Charlie found some more gum leaves to put on the fire. Smoke billowed over everyone and everything to the extent that it was impossible to see. Smoke had performed another transformation of place, what it was possible to do in that place, and the people who were acting in that place. In short, Uncle Charlie's smoke symbolically 'engulfed' the Catholic rites. None of the Aboriginal people present objected or asked Uncle Charlie what he was doing. When I asked him if everything was alright he replied:

Don't you worry 'bout me daughter. I know what I'm doin'.

⁸⁶ That the 'officiating' priest was Father Eugene Stockton, well known archaeologist and long time supporter of Aboriginal peoples, probably facilitated the dominance of the 'darug custodian' ceremony over the Catholic proceedings.

⁸⁷ I offer a more detailed account of ceremonial practices related to the cult of *Baiame* in Chapter Eight.

⁸⁸ The Church apparently drew the line at having the ceremony conducted in the Church itself.

This smoke's gonna chase away all them bad spirits. The Catholic Church's got a lot ta answer for. It's them what called 'em up ya know? It's them what settled bad memories 'ere.

FNWM0704.

It seems that the evil spirits that the smoking ceremony was said to dispel were in some way considered, at least by Uncle Charlie, to emanate from the Catholic Church or perhaps from its practices in relation to Aboriginal peoples. This, of course, begged the question as to why the Aboriginal 'darug custodian' families concerned chose to baptise their children in the Catholic Church at all. When I asked one of the baby's mothers about this she replied.

'Cause we're Catholic Aunty.

FNYB0704.

I say more in Chapter Eight about the possible reasons why 'darug custodians' need to both *be* Catholic and engage in practices related to the cult of *Baiame*. The work of Stanner (1965), Bird Rose (1991) and Merlan (1998) offer some very convincing arguments and examples concerning the ability of more 'traditional' Aboriginal systems of belief and ritual than those of 'darug custodians' to incorporate alien systems into their own. I want to argue here, however, that in the city, in modernity, 'darug custodians' do not incorporate Christianity into their own belief system, but use Catholic places - like the Holy Family Catholic Centre - in ways different to 'non-darug custodian' Catholics, to create a space in which to say something specifically about themselves. In other words, at the Christening in question, 'darug custodians' transformed a Catholic place into a space in which they

were able to make representations of themselves by themselves. Thus, in de Certeau's terms, they were able to create a new place, albeit momentarily.

What Kind of Place Is This?

The city, following de Certeau (1984), Simmel (1971), Debord (1994) and Morris (1998) can be understood as the quintessential site of the capitalist project and where state surveillance operates to its fullest potential. This conceptualisation owes a great deal to Foucault's concept of power. Power, for Foucault (1978:93), is to be understood as operating at every level of society. In other words, state surveillance, state knowledge and state discipline operate not only at the level of 'governance', but in personal relationships and even at the level of the subject, itself a product of discourse and disciplined practice. These relations of power reach a historic zenith in the modern city where consumption takes on new forms and is always developing new technologies to facilitate more and more consumption (Benjamin 1978:147). New technologies of consumption, such as ever more elaborate displays and spectacles, also demand increasing surveillance of consumers in various forms. Authors including Brah (1997), Crawford (1992) and Reekie (1993) demonstrate how market research aims to ever improve profiles of consumers, and to simultaneously develop ever more elaborate technologies - such as video surveillance cameras, electronic tagging systems, store detectives - to limit or contain theft. These are some of many possible examples of the ways in which state ideologies of capitalism are converted into strategies of surveillance of citizens. Many urban theorists including Debord (1995), Brah (1997), Morris (1998) and Crawford (1992), utilise Foucault's (1977) argument that as Western society has developed, so too, have technologies for greater and greater surveillance, including self surveillance through the internalisation

of self-discipline of individuals.

The city, however, is not only thought to be a site of high surveillance. The city also provides opportunities for various peoples to use spaces in their own ways. Because it is always developing, always changing, always moving towards greater and more efficient forms of consumption, the city may be understood as the ultimate sign of civilisation⁸⁹. Considering that many discourses represent Aboriginal peoples as the binary opposite of civilised, it might be said that the city could be thought to be the antithesis of Aboriginal place. The city might be considered, by some, to be the last place to find 'authentic' Aboriginal peoples reproducing 'authentic' Aboriginal culture. Yet, no matter how the city is theorised and represented by various strategies of state power, it is the way that people *use* spaces which make some places habitable in the ways that the state plans and represents, and allows other places to be used in ways which may be subversive or otherwise different to state plans and representations. The city may, in fact, be a *most* likely place for Aboriginal peoples to practice 'authentic' forms of culture without constant surveillance.

'darug custodian' Spaces are always Messy Places.

I would like here, to follow Elizabeth Wilson (1991:83) in quoting Claude Levi-Strauss's description of New York in 1941. Levi-Strauss' poetics illuminate aspects of New York's social, cultural and physical being in ways which can help to draw analogies with the contradictions that Sydney in 2005 appears to exhibit⁹⁰. Rather than a huge modern metropolis, New York seemed to Levi-Strauss (1941), 'an immense horizontal and vertical disorder attributable to some spontaneous upheaval

⁸⁹ See Elizabeth Povinelli's (2000) account of Aboriginal peoples' participation in consumerism.

⁹⁰ At least in my experience of it.

of the urban crust rather than to the deliberate plans of builders'. This kind of assumed closeness to nature is ruptured by objects, signs and the detritus of the past and present. Like a palimpsest, tiers of material from various eras erupted through the surface of the present. The matter of 1941 New York's modernity was rent with residue from the past. Curiosity shops, old cottages and gardens huddled between skyscrapers.

Sydney's urban, social and cultural fabric is similarly rent, with its own, particular gaps, holes and stories. The western suburbs - Parramatta in particular - seem to me, to exhibit precisely the kind of 'enchantment' that Levi-Strauss describes. The layers of Parramatta's social and cultural archaeology are worn particularly thin in some places. The high rise apartments, multi-levelled shopping malls, government offices and fancy hotels erupt from the space which is also marked with grand colonial mansions which now accommodate restaurants or doctor's and lawyer's rooms; colonial cottages are now inhabited by shoppers and browsers; and brass plaques monumentalise moments from 'our' history on buildings, beside roads, on trees and tomb stones.

A walk through the streets of Parramatta with 'darug custodians', reveals more than a colonial history lesson, however, and is much more than a casual encounter with modernity. 'darug custodians' are enthusiastic participants in capitalism, both as consumers and as producers. The ways in which they participate in capitalism as producers, however, is revealing of how they make Parramatta their own place in ways quite different to 'ours'. Obtaining the necessary materials for the manufacture of 'darug custodian' artwork as consumer goods, requires a walk into what is for me, unfamiliar territory. That is, a walk with 'darug custodians' to collect materials for artwork requires the transformation of Parramatta from a place which is variously

represented as 'colonial seat of power', 'modern shopping mall' and 'place of *past* significance to Aboriginal people' (among other things) to a *space* which is used to tell 'darug custodian' stories.

A walk with many 'darug custodians' - especially in what is claimed as 'Darug Country'- as Parramatta is - very often includes foraging for materials for the manufacture of paintings, jewellery and other artifacts which are later sold as commodities. Pieces of wood, gum nuts and ochre as well as broken pieces of coloured glass, chips from ceramic tiles and 'convict bricks'⁹¹ are collected along with a commentary on why these things are important for various tasks and how they will be used. 'darug custodians' use these objects to tell stories. Not all of these objects are successfully connected to memory, however, and some things remain illegible - a trace or mark of forgotten or illegible histories. A walk with 'darug custodians' through Parramatta produces countless examples of these 'story objects' which represent the unending struggle over meaning that characterises the (multi/inter) cultural space that 'darug custodians' must always inhabit.

Old dirt tracks going nowhere, old tin cans, the remains of a fire, abandoned buildings, pieces of wood which are part of a larger, forgotten tool, all these are silent objects which appear on our walks. They are simply there - traces of a history of contact between Darug descendants and non-Darug descendants - which has been forgotten by 'us' and may be appropriated by 'darug custodians' for their own purposes. These purposes may include constructing stories concerning the past and on-going inter-relationships between Darug descendants and non-Darug descendant 'darug custodians'. As Walter Benjamin (1986) insists, it is the small, the frivolous,

⁹¹ Bricks hand-made by convicts in the nineteenth century from local clay and fired at low temperatures. Many such bricks display the finger prints of their makers.

the wasted objects - the rubbish of Western culture - that witness a history that is silent in dominant discourses.

These pieces of 'our' rubbish have been theorised by Gilles Deleuze (1989), in a film context, as what he describes as 'radioactive fossils'. These objects were 'unearthed' and explained to me by 'darug custodians'. Broken pieces of glass, old bits of wire, scratches and scars on wood are attributed 'darug custodian' meaning and are revealed to contain 'darug custodian' stories. I would argue that Deleuze's conceptualisation of these objects as 'radioactive fossils' is as fitting for these actual material things as it is for cinematic images. For Deleuze, the fossil - an object from another time, another place, often another culture - embodies a history, but one that can never be completely revealed. The fossil is silent, dead, inert - yet radiates with meaning and history. Radiation is poisoning, invisible and insidious. It maims and kills. It is dangerous and threatens to escape. It also threatens to tell stories that we may not want to hear, may not be ready to hear, or which may still be happening and are therefore evermore threatening. In short, radioactive fossils are dangerous and unpredictable. Radioactive fossils embody a past which is incommensurable with the present that the object inhabits.

According to Deleuze, the important thing about these objects, these 'radioactive fossils', is that they contain history within themselves. They are excavated from another place and another culture disrupting the plane of the present time, place, culture. During our walk in Parramatta the present culture is constituted by both the Australian state and 'darug custodian' culture. This became most pronounced when we came to Parramatta Park. Parramatta Park contains, and is itself, a monument to the first Government House at Parramatta and celebrates a colonial moment when the seat of colonial power was in Parramatta. But, this

historical significance is secondary to Parramatta Park's present significance as a state place which is represented as 'place of past and on-going colonial government'. These representations take the form of signs and plaques commemorating various colonial figures and their deeds at particular times. They also take the form of formal roads; a weir on the river; highly decorative Victorian cast iron gates; band rotundas; and of course, the Georgian mansion known as Old Government House. It was a site in Parramatta Park, however, that is not marked, that has no signs or plaques, that 'darug custodians' pointed out to me as a Darug ceremonial site. Janie, a young 'darug custodian' woman, explained to me that 'darug custodians' know that this is where the important site is because Auntie June, a very senior woman whose father was Darug and whose mother was Gundungarra⁹², witnessed a ceremony here when she was a little girl in the early 1920s.

The objects that 'darug custodians' 'turned up' during the course of our walk around the ceremonial site - the bits of broken bottles, the scraps of barbed wire, broken bricks, old tin cans etc. - in Deleuze's terms, are 'our' fossils, 'stubborn survivors from another place and time that spill their contents into the present (1989:98). Deleuze describes these things in terms of their compacted history as objects in which:

The present itself exists only as an infinitely contracted past which is constituted at the extreme point of the already-there.

The 'infinitely contracted past' that Deleuze refers to are these 'fossilised'

92

A neighbouring 'language group' to Darug according to Kohen (1993). See map 2.

recollection objects. Fossils are meaningful because they are the indexical⁹³ traces of an object that once existed. The plant or animal has long since decomposed, but its trace - the actual physical details of its prior existence - is perfectly preserved by virtue of its physical contact with lava, clay, ash or other moulding and preserving material.

The objects that 'darug custodians' unearthed on our walk around the ceremonial site were disconnected from their pasts, yet radiated their power to affect the present. Some of these fossils tell stories. Janie pointed to what appeared to be a pile of stones, bricks and other 'builder's rubbish' explaining:

That there's a ken [caim]. That's th' spot where Aunty June saw them ancestors. They built them kens all over th' place. Them old fullas [ancestors] made them [caims] ta show us th' way to ceremony grounds. This 'ere shows us th' end o' the trail. This 'ere's where it 'appened.

JTFN230101

Yet, not all 'fossils' are successfully connected to memory, and the object remains illegible - a fossil trace of forgotten or illegible histories (Marks 2000:82). Janie, who is always unsure of her origins, picked up an opalescent⁹⁴ shard of glass from an old glass bottle and told me that:

This bit of bottle was 'ere long time. Was here when them old Darug fullas had ceremony I reckon. It could tell a few stories I bet. If it could talk.

⁹³ An index points to the thing to which it is referring - just as a weathervane indicates the direction and strength of the wind for example. Following Peirce (in Buchler 1955).

⁹⁴ Glass becomes opalescent over a prolonged period of time in contact with water, usually while buried in the earth.

These 'radioactive fossils', these recollection objects, disrupt the Australian state narrative of Parramatta Park as site of uncontested and on-going colonialism because 'darug custodians' ascribe counter narratives concerning on-going Darug presence and 'darug custodian' custodianship of country to them. The 'bit of bottle' 'saw' ceremony performed at a place that the Australian state claims as a site of colonial power, not of Aboriginal spirituality. Whatever forgotten or partially remembered stories these objects contain, because of their presence at the site of a Darug ceremonial ground, 'darug custodians' claim them as testament to the existence of a Darug past in that place. That Darug past is now significant to all 'darug custodians' because it 'authenticates' Darug descendants as prior owners of country and grounds the custodial relationships between Darug descendants, other 'darug custodians' and the land.

'darug custodians' create a 'darug custodian' present on our walks in Parramatta Park by recognising Parramatta Park, not only as 'past seat of colonial government', but as 'site of Darug ceremonial ground'. This 'darug custodian' present is also disrupted by the appearance of 'our stuff' (that belonging to the dominant culture). These objects - piles of rocks, convict bricks, pieces of old barbed wire, old tin cans - appear, not just as possible witnesses to past Darug ceremonies, but as 'fossils' of a history of contact which has been forgotten or suppressed by 'us'. This history of contact is appropriated and given significance as current, dynamic and on-going by 'darug custodians'.

Although these objects are the artifacts, the ruins, the rubbish left by 'our' wasted projects. 'darug custodians' gather them up and use them in different ways to

tell their own stories. As Janie turned the shard of bottle over in her hands and looked through the swirling colours of the opalescent glass, she asserted that White denial of Darug survival and a history of contact between Sydney Aboriginal people and Whites is disputed by the presence of the bottle in this place because:

Whitefullas say Darug are all gone. They reckon that they was the first o' us (Aboriginal people) to go. This's a old one this bottle. This bit o' bottle was 'ere at ceremony. Maybe a whitefulla brought it. Maybe a Darug man brought it from a whitefulla. I dunno. But it had to come from a whitefulla an' it had ta have bin at ceremony.

FN 02#3.

But, it is not only 'our rubbish' which 'darug custodians' translate into different stories. Arjun Appadurai (1986:42-44) has considered the ways in which objects are implicated in processes of cultural translation and mistranslation, but rather than consider the 'rubbish' that I have so far considered here, he concentrates on commodities. Appadurai's concern is with continuities and discontinuities in knowledge between producer and consumer. There may be no knowledge gap between 'darug custodians' and other cultures when it comes to the local movement of a tube of toothpaste or the transnational movement of television sets, for instance, where proximity in one case and standardisation in the other produce shared knowledge between producer and consumer. But some objects, such as 'darug custodian' artifacts - jewellery, fridge magnets, boomerangs - which are made from 'bits and pieces' found on Darug Land as I discuss below, may encode suppressed historical, personal and cultural meaning and produce large knowledge gaps between 'darug custodians' and the consumers of these objects.

The Movement of Objects.

Appadurai (1986) complicates a Marxist notion of commodity by appreciating that objects move in and out of commodity status through their movements, over their lifetimes. In cross-cultural movement or exchange, objects move in and out of commodity status. A religious object in one culture for example, may become a commodity in another. According to Appadurai (1986:14-17), the chances of an object changing status increases with every inter-cultural relation. The 'same' object can be attributed identities that vary from religious icon, gift, commodity or rubbish in their travels through different cultures. During their travels, 'things' collect different identities and knowledge, objects become unique and develop biographies (Kopytoff 1986:67). Objects are like maps of their movements, they may imbibe, embody or express something of this movement. They may somehow contain and reflect aspects of the peoples who produced, owned and have come into contact with them, and their different meanings as they move and change (Marks 2000:96-7).

A very common example of this kind of commodity and the inter-cultural translations and mistranslations that can occur is evident in 'darug custodian' artifacts and art works. 'darug custodians' regularly sell artifacts and art works manufactured by Darug descendants in art markets of various kinds. It is *only* Darug descendant art that is sold as Darug art⁹⁵. Although 'darug custodians' who are not Darug descendants may participate in collecting materials, telling and hearing stories related to objects and art works, attending stalls which sell art works, and even manufacturing their own works. The art markets at which these works are sold include those promoting 'Aboriginal culture' during National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

⁹⁵ Despite the protests of others who claim that there is no such thing as Darug art.

Week (NAIDOC); during 'Survival', convened consecutively with Australia Day⁹⁶ on 26th January each year to commemorate the negative aspects of colonisation. As well as such Aboriginal markets as those cited above, 'darug custodians' also actively seek inclusion at more mainstream market venues such as those held to raise funds for schools, kindergartens and various charities. In addition to these direct forms of selling objects from 'darug custodians' to 'non-darug custodians', some 'darug custodian' artists, both Darug descendant and non-Darug descendant, exhibit their work in private galleries and in tourist galleries⁹⁷.

On one occasion, I happened to be at a 'darug custodian' art stall at a fund raising day at Cumberland State Forest at Pennant Hills in Sydney's north-west. My role on that day was to merely keep 'darug custodians' company while they attended the stall. The stall took the form of a number of large, wooden trestle tables, covered in fabric which exhibited an Aboriginal design. That is, the fabric was decorated in symbols which were delineated in dots, possibly the most recognisable sign of 'authentic' Aboriginal art since its emergence in the Central Desert in the 1970s. The general effect of the stall was that it signified Aboriginality. In other words, it was flagged to consumers that the stall sold Aboriginal things.

Over the fabric covered trestles 'darug custodians' had arranged a colourful display of their various works (see graphics (b) and (c)). These works included small, framed 'dot paintings' mostly featuring the images of animals native to Darug Lands; fridge magnets, in the shape of animal images detailed in colourful dots; carved

⁹⁶ Australian national holiday commemorating the arrival of the First British Fleet in Sydney harbour in 1788. 'Survival' is the Aboriginal response and alternative celebration to such an event.

⁹⁷ Many of these 'tourist galleries' demand that 'darug custodians' attach a written 'story' describing the 'meaning' of the painting as a condition of the painting's inclusion in the exhibition.

wooden artifacts including boomerangs; coolamons⁹⁸ and didgeridoos.

Some of the paint used in the manufacture of these objects contains white ochre from Darug Land. I argue that the use of this paint transforms these objects into a kind of 'radioactive fossil'. This is an extension of the interpretation, developed from Deleuze. 'darug custodian' ochre is made from crushed pieces of white clay from river and creek beds on Darug Land (for further discussion, see Chapters Five and Seven. White ochre is quite literally Darug Land; it is material stuff of country. It is not a 'radioactive fossil' in the sense described above - it is not made from 'our' rubbish or waste. Rather it is simply itself a fossil. It is a remnant, a material trace of Darug ancestral land, literally.

The significance of fossil traces of Darug Country in 'storytelling objects', that is, in artifacts and art works is not, however, generally explained to the consumers of these items. Early in my fieldwork, 'darug custodians' more often attempted to explain the significance of the presence of some physical 'storytelling object' from Darug Land to potential consumers of their products.

One popular 'darug custodian' product, for example, are river stones from Euroka Clearing in the Blue Mountains which are painted with various bird and animal designs using dots. Euroka Clearing, as I explain in Chapter Seven, is a modern ceremonial site. That these stones come from this particular place and that the designs are 'darug custodian' designs featuring various species which can be found at Euroka Clearing is very significant to 'darug custodians'. Many times, in the early days of my fieldwork, I heard various 'darug custodians' attempting to explain the significance of these objects to White customers. It certainly seemed to me that many

⁹⁸ A 'traditional' wooden container for carrying objects (see graphic (f)). Coolamons are used ceremonially by 'darug custodians' to carry babies at Aboriginal Christenings.

of these potential buyers appeared to be either unimpressed, or just did not 'get it'. On one occasion I witnessed Alma's proud explanation to a White woman concerning a stone and a design that came from 'Alma's Country' and 'Alma's People' (I have also many times witnessed non-Darug descendant 'darug custodians' attempting such explanations). An appropriate response to such a 'story' would be to ask further questions, to show interest, to engage with the storyteller. This 'explanation' was an opportunity for the woman to establish a relationship with Alma; to recognise and appreciate her claims to identity. It was most disappointing to witness the woman's response which amounted to nothing more than the minimum that politeness demanded, which was, in fact, a rather pathetic 'oh' (FN 200103). When I asked a senior man why 'darug custodians' have largely abandoned telling White consumers about such things I was told:

Them fullas don't believe us anyhoo. Save ya breath I say.

FN. UG. 200103.

In my experience, the general response from potential consumers to explanations *offered* by 'darug custodians' is largely unenthusiastic. There have always, however, been customers who *demand* another kind of narrative. While I was casually chatting with Alma at the Cumberland State Forest stall, a number of 'non-darug custodian' customers browsed through the items on display. After a while, a middle aged White woman approached Alma and me with a fridge magnet that she had chosen and a ten dollar bank note, the price marked on the item. The magnet was made from the off-cuts of magnetised plastic used industrially by 'us'. The scrap plastic was salvaged by 'darug custodians' and cut into the shape of a turtle which

was 'picked out' in green and white dots. Turtle images, as I explain in detail in Chapter Eight, are also important symbols of contemporary 'darug custodian' identity, and are reproduced in many different forms (see graphics (c), (g), (k), (l) and (m)). 'darug custodian' fridge magnets are 'radioactive fossils' proper in that they are made from 'our' industrial waste and transformed with white ochre to become significant 'darug custodian' objects. They embody a history of contact which continues into the present. To my surprise, rather than handing the money and the magnet to Alma to complete the transaction, the woman held onto both objects and asked:

What is the story that goes with this?

Fieldnotes 01/3/PHSF

Alma patiently and politely told the customer that the turtle is a 'family totem'⁹⁹ and is special to Darug people. The customer, however, was clearly not satisfied with Alma's narrative. After Alma's explanation, the customer asked:

But what about the Dreamtime story? Doesn't it have a Dreamtime story? What about these other things? [Other items for sale] Which ones have Dreamtime stories?

Fieldnotes 01/3/PHSF

Alma tried to explain that the animals and other images on the 'darug

⁹⁹ 'darug custodians' do call this emblem a 'totem'. The concept of totemism has had very bad press in anthropology since Levi-Strauss' (1964) convincing critique of the term. Levi-Strauss argued that functionalist scholars such as Frazer (1910) and Durkheim (1915) mistook totemism as a problem of identities in content, when, according to Levi-Strauss, it is really a problem of identities in form. For Levi-Strauss it is not the possible identities between say kangaroos and Clan X or between, say, possums and Clan Z that makes a society totemist (as Frazer and Durheim believed), but that the difference between kangaroos and possums is similar to the difference between Clan X and Clan Z. Totemism is widely taken to be deceptive as a concept of general applicability and consequently misleading to employ (cf. Hiatt 1969; Ingold 1998; Kessler 1971).

custodian' consumer objects were, just that, animals and other images¹⁰⁰. Alma showed the customer that the Darug Language name for many of the images was printed on the object and told her that the objects were significant to Darug people, but were not *Dreaming* 'stories'. Alma was not able to explain that as 'radioactive fossils', or recollection objects, these articles *contained* 'stories' indexically, but not stories that are always capable of being told - especially in contexts like this. Alma then made the mistake of telling the customer that Darug people do paint 'story paintings', but that these paintings were not for sale at market stalls. The woman immediately put the fridge magnet down and pocketed her ten dollars. She took one of Alma's business cards so that she might one day look at 'story paintings', but she was never heard of again.

I asked Alma if many customers wanted to know what 'darug custodian' consumer objects 'mean':

Jest about all of them. Sometimes I feel like makin' up a story jest to make 'em happy. But why should I? If they want a fridge magnet, they should buy a fridge magnet, if they want a story, they should buy a book.
01/3/PHSF.

Clearly, 'darug custodian' ideas about the meaning of the consumer objects they sell is somewhat different to consumer's ideas about these things. The hugely successful Aboriginal art market has quite ingeniously used White assumptions about Aboriginal spirituality to sell Aboriginal art. Many accounts of Aboriginal art make reference to this history including von Sturmer (1989), Myers (1995), Watson (1997),

¹⁰⁰See Jennifer Biddle's (1991) account of White buyer's demands of 'stories' to attach to Aboriginal paintings as 'authentication' in a Central Desert context and her more recent work with Kathleen Petyarre concerning why this practice may be ceasing (Biddle 2003).

Michaels (1994), Morphy (1977), Johnson (1994, 1996) and Biddle (2003, 1999, 1996, 1991). As I discuss further in Chapter Six, until the early 1970s, Aboriginal art was almost completely ignored or undervalued. This was largely because, as peoples who were considered to be 'primitive', Aboriginal artists were not considered capable of producing work with 'meaning'. One of the primary marketing techniques of White art advisors was to promote Aboriginal art as asserting a mystical significance documenting associated *Dreaming* 'stories'. In some ways these stories, as my example of the customer at Cumberland State Forest shows, have become almost more important to collectors than the paintings themselves. This has been a major contribution to the popularity of Aboriginal art globally. It also, however, is misleading to consumers of Aboriginal art and artifacts who now seem to figure that *all* Aboriginal cultural products should come with a *Dreaming* story attached - even a fridge magnet. That consumers have been educated to expect *all* Aboriginal art to possess mystical qualities and be somehow connected to *Dreaming* stories is also unfair to many Aboriginal artists. Aboriginal artists, like Alma, who do not necessarily (or always) paint 'story paintings' are often put in positions, like that described above, where they need to defend the 'authenticity' of their work due to misinformed consumers. It is frustrating when White consumers appear to resist any explanations of the object's significance offered by 'darug custodians' themselves. This is made all the more frustrating when the objects that 'darug custodians' sell are significant as vessels which embody unspoken histories of contact between 'darug custodians' and 'non-darug custodians'. These objects are material embodiments of 'darug custodian' place as it has been transformed from 'state place', through the acts involved in making the object and the in of 'radioactive fossils'. The acts involved in manufacturing these

'recollection objects' transform state place (as Parramatta Park) into space for the articulation of 'darug custodian' identity. And, in so doing, creating (however temporarily) 'darug custodian' place. These expressions are then represented in 'darug custodian' art objects as 'radioactive fossils'; silent but certain witnesses to another version of space, of history, of identity.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to characterise some of the ways that 'darug custodians' inhabit 'our' place, 'our' city so as to make it 'theirs'. I explain how places which are represented as state place, church place, or some other kind of place, are constantly turned into 'darug custodian' places through the ways in which they use that place as a space. The peoples who make these transformations cannot be totally disciplined and controlled by the state. People's behaviour - their movements, actions and practices - have the potential to subvert state representations of place. Through their relationships with Darug descendants, 'darug custodians' are able to claim a special relationship with Darug country. They do this by privileging Darug descendants and their connection with Darug ancestors whose spirits inhabit the land. Their relationships allow for non Darug descendants to claim a custodial relationship with Darug land and heritage.

One of the many ways that 'darug custodians' reclaim their subjugated histories - or, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1984) terms, reterritorialise - is in the particular way they walk, collecting materials for their art works and producing their own 'spatial stories' (de Certeau 1984). 'darug custodians' re-trace a (darug custodian) history of contact in their walks, picking up the marks, the little pieces of rubbish that 'our' official history has forgotten. 'darug custodians' give 'our' objects,

our rubbish, new meanings that they later incorporate into their various cultural products as art work so that other 'darug custodians' and 'non-darug custodians' might come across these objects. 'darug custodians' use 'our' objects and rubbish to produce 'darug custodian' objects as consumer goods which embody particular 'darug custodian' meanings. These meanings may or may not be accessible to consumers. This creates opportunities for 'inter-cultural' translations and mistranslations, both of which, as this chapter reveals, can prove to be not only illuminating, but productive of 'darug custodian' identity.

As well as needing to be constantly made and re-made, 'darug custodian' identity must also, always be negotiated with a history of contact which is still happening. That is, the historic conditions of colonisation are reproduced in all relationships between 'darug custodians' and 'non-darug custodians'. In Chapter Seven, I consider how these relations were played out as part of 'darug custodians' participation in a Centenary of Federation pageant in 2001. As I demonstrate, their dance performance provided more than entertainment as their own countering narrative to the colonial one hi-jacked proceedings. This raises the paradox that 'darug custodian' performances which allow counter-colonial public discourse, so valuable in shaping and energising 'darug custodian' identity, are encouraged and facilitated by the 'colonial' state itself. I further elaborate this paradox in Chapter Seven in the context of 'Welcome to Country' speeches.



d) 'darug custodians' dancing at Parramatta during NAIDOC Week 2001.



e) Ochre ready for mixing.



f) A 'darug custodian' painted up after dance performance.

Chapter Six

Bunda Bunya Miumba (Thundering Kangaroos): Dancing Up A Storm.

Then they let go of Alice's hands, and stood looking at her for a minute: there was a rather awkward pause as Alice didn't know how to begin a conversation with people she had just been dancing with. 'It would never do to say 'How d'ye do? now.' She said to herself: 'we seem to have got beyond that, somehow!'

Lewis Carroll (1963:187)

As is evident from my analyses in Chapters Two, Three, Four, Five and Six, it is no simple matter to clearly, or even unambiguously identify 'darug custodians'. It is only through tenacious and conspicuous projects designed to express collective identity that their difference becomes discernable. Because the community is fragmented geographically and socially, these projects of identity making often require elaborate planning. This chapter concerns such a planned expression of 'darug custodianness' in the form of an Aboriginal dance performance.

Many anthropological analyses of dance performance tend to consider the dancing body as an 'unreadable' text rather than as a signifying practice (Gilbert 1992:135)¹⁰¹. The resulting decontextualisation of movement and accent on 'an understanding of the universal, 'natural' dimensions of the performer's work' (Hastrup 1998:29), can not allow for an appreciation of the possibilities for Indigenous dance to play out political relationships with other performers and with the audience.

Some recent anthropological analyses, including those of Ram (2000), Macgowan (2000) and Tamasari (2000), however, have focused on dance as politics

¹⁰¹Historically anthropology has been involved in a protracted debate concerning performance as either social drama or cultural meaning see, for example, Turner (1967, 1969, 1974,1975), Sahlins (1995) and Geertz (1973).

of theatre or spectacle¹⁰². This approach has produced some important insights, especially in the context of Indigenous dance performances which are specifically choreographed for engagements with the state¹⁰³ such as the one described in this chapter.

The performance perspective that I adopt in analysing 'darug custodian' dance is drawn from Franca Tamisari's (2000) approach in accounting for meaning in Yolngu dance. Tamisari insists that meaning resides 'between' the steps of Yolngu dancers. The 'betweenness' that Tamisari refers to is not only connected to Yolngu spiritual beliefs concerning the foot prints of ancestors, but relationships between the dancers, and between the dancers, the musicians and the audience. Tamisari is concerned to shift attention from a textual type analysis of the referential meaning of dance steps to the inter-subjective relations and empathetic space that dance creates and articulates between performers and other participants. Tamisari's approach concerns intercorporeality¹⁰⁴ and how embodied empathy produced through dance allows for meaningful engagements with others. It is the relationships between 'darug custodians' and between 'darug custodians' and their audience during a particular ceremony that I want to examine here. I argue that regardless of any judgments regarding the 'authenticity' or otherwise of 'darug custodian' dance, that 'darug custodian' dance performances create a communicative space in which 'darug

¹⁰² See Beeman (1993:370) for a full account of why this gap exists in anthropology. Part of the reason, according to Beeman is that performance is not recognised as its own discipline.

¹⁰³ Fiona Macgowan (2000) also makes this point.

¹⁰⁴ Conceptualisations of intercorporeality are fundamental to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body (1964, 1968: 130-155). See also Dufrenne (1966:137-226) who offers a lineage of the concept and Husserl (1977: 89-157). Recent feminist approaches to notions of intercorporeality and affectivity such as Weiss' (1999) are developed in the work of Tamisari (2000), Biddle (1999, 2000, 2001a, 2002, 2003), Diprose and Ferrell (1991) and Gatens (1996).

custodian' sentiments, perspectives and narratives can be articulated.

I argue throughout my thesis that place is produced by space being used (or practised) by living, moving, phenomenological bodies (de Certeau 1984). This conceptualisation owes a great deal to the work of Maurice Merleau Ponty (1964:162), who argues that it is through the 'working actual body ... an intertwining of vision and movement' that the body engages in a constituent experience of place.' It is through sensuous engagement with other bodies, objects and things that bodies *make* places by moving about in them and in relation to them. Embodiment, as Weiss (1999:5) argues, is never a private affair, but one which always, already relies on other bodies and things which act in similar ways, and with which they interact. This interaction can have profound and revealing effects on the participants.

Tamisari (2000:274) argues that dance provides 'an encounter at a level of intensity which opens the way to an ever deepening involvement with others'. The effects of this 'ever deepening involvement with others' is particularly well illustrated in Kalpana Ram's (2000) account of classical Indian dance as it is performed in diasporic contexts. Ram (2000:265) considers the 'magical force' of classical Indian dance in being able to embody a particular kind of Indian spirituality and tradition which operates through drawing on the memories and identities of performers and audience. Ram recounts her own experience of responding, regardless of her intellectual training, to this 'magical' effect when witnessing her own, then seven year old daughter's performance of classical Indian dance. This effect allowed Ram and other diasporic Indian parents to temporarily forget the assimilationist counter-socialisation their daughters receive from the dominant Australian society and the anxiety that this entails.

This chapter is concerned with one example how 'darug custodians' challenge dominant historical discourses through dance. I describe and analyse the ways in which they 'invaded' a space which had been reserved for state representations of nationhood during the 2001 centenary of Federation¹⁰⁵ celebrations. I am concerned with how the 'poetic politics'¹⁰⁶ of 'darug custodian' dance present and re-present 'darug custodian' sentiment as a performative politics and how those sentiments as politics are communicated to a 'darug custodian' and 'non-darug custodian' audience.

Bunda Bunya Miumba.

The 'darug custodian' dance troupe *Bunda Bunya Miumba*¹⁰⁷ were invited by the Australian National Trust to perform a *Ngalaringi Nangami Dyraralang (Dreaming)* dance at a pageant celebrating the Centenary of Federation in 2001. *Bunda Bunya Miumba* is constituted exclusively by Aboriginal dancers, although not all are Darug descendants. Non-Aboriginal 'darug custodians' are not allowed to participate in public performances of Aboriginal dance so as to preserve 'authenticity' as an Aboriginal dance troupe for commercial reasons. However, although non-Aboriginal people do not participate in the public dance performances of *Bunda Bunya Miumba*, they do participate in 'private' dance performances at community ceremonies and social occasions. They also participate in preparing the dancers for public performance and as audience members. Importantly, most, but not all *Bunda Bunya Miumba* performers are children. When I asked one of the adult leaders of the troupe

¹⁰⁵ In 1901 the then six separate Australian colonial states federated into the Commonwealth of Australia.

¹⁰⁶ Macgowan (2000).

¹⁰⁷ Said, by 'darug custodians', to mean 'thundering kangaroo' in a conflation of three different south-eastern Aboriginal languages, Darug, Murawari and Dhan- Gadi.

why this was the case she replied:

This is th' best way o' teachin' culture. The kids learn best by doin'. But it's also good for whitefullas ta see that our kulcha's alive - that it's got a future with th' kids.

FNLB 230101.

So it seems that by publicly teaching children culture the joint goals of cultural reproduction and making a public spectacle of that cultural reproduction are achieved.

The National Trust had produced a pageant which was to be performed at Old Government House at Parramatta in Sydney's west. The audience for this occasion was constituted by invited guests including White dignitaries such as the Mayor of Parramatta and members of state and Federal Parliament as well as the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relatives of the performers.

The performance was held in the portico, on the front steps and on the front lawn of the colonial mansion known as Old Government House at Parramatta. Old Government House is the oldest public building in Australia and is saturated with (different and competing) significance for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Australia.

Parramatta was selected in 1788 by the first Governor of New South Wales, Arthur Phillip, as the site for the new seat of British government of the new colony when it was apparent that Sydney Cove was not suitably fertile to sustain European farming practices after the first year of colonisation. Governor Phillip built a small house on this site which was improved by his successor, Governor Hunter and extended by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1815 to much the same proportions seen today. Unbeknownst to the organisers, but certainly known to 'darug custodians', competition for this site as a significant place between Darug descendants and the

Australian state already had a long history. The grounds of Old Government House contain a site that a very senior Darug descendant remembers attending as a small child while Darug men, including her father, engaged in ceremony. As I explained in Chapter Six, 'darug custodians' today claim this site as that of an historic *bora ring*. Old Government House is built adjacent to it.

The pageant, performed by members of the National Trust, consisted of a number of 'moments' from the history of colonisation. Performers representing various governors and other influential colonial White people such as Governor and Mrs. Macquarie, pastoralists, Elizabeth and John MacArthur, Governor Hunter, Reverend Samuel Marsden, architect, Francis Greenway and a contingent of the 'Rum Corps' featured as the primary storytellers of the history of settlement of Parramatta. There was one small segment of the total performance dedicated to Macquarie's experimental Native Institute, where predominantly Darug people were subjected to similar 'civilising' and 'Christianising' strategies repeated in various colonial contexts during the pageant. Significantly, many of the 'darug custodian' people invited to dance were direct descendants of arguably, the most 'successful' product of the Native Institute, Maria Locke, the daughter of Yarramundi, a *koradji*¹⁰⁸, or 'clever man' of the Boorooberongal clan of Darug. In fact, my friend, Alma Jones, is a fourth generation grand daughter of Maria Locke.

Maria was the first student enrolled at the Native Institute as a gesture of goodwill between her father, Yarramundi and Governor Lachlan Macquarie (Brook and Kohen 1991). Maria was awarded first prize in a state competition in religion and went on to marry convict, Robert Locke, who was indentured to Maria. Maria was

¹⁰⁸ *Koradji* is a Darug Language word which means sorcerer, healer, shaman - with superior knowledge of the supernatural (Saggers and Gray 1991:27).

awarded a land grant by Macquarie in her own name and inherited land that had been granted to her brother Colebee in return for his services in leading White explorers over the Blue Mountains in 1813 (Brook and Kohen 1991, Kohen 1993).

Rehearsing the Thunder.

During preliminary planning discussions, I was told by 'darug custodians' that the National Trust had suggested to Sally and Darren, managers of the dance troupe, *Bunda Bunya Miumba*, that a *Dreaming* dance representing Aboriginal inhabitants of Sydney before the arrival of Whites was most appropriate to begin the pageant. After much discussion amongst themselves, the inference that Sally, Darren and a number of 'darug custodian' Elders came to, was that the organisers wanted to represent Sydney, prior to British invasion, as a site of primordality and pure primitivity. In other words, 'darug custodians' told me, they thought that the National Trust version of colonial development wanted to reproduce colonial historical narratives which equate Aboriginality with a primal state of nature. Sally appeared to find this a personal challenge. During an interview with me she implied that the *Dreaming* performance she and Darren had choreographed may provide National Trust organisers with more than they bargained for :

them fullas think that we [Aboriginal peoples] was animals before they got 'ere. They don' know nothink. I reckon we better jes' teach 'em somethink 'bout *Dyaralang* (abbreviation 'darug custodian' term for *Dreaming*).

LS 2001011.

Sally, Darren and a group of Elders decided that *Bunda Bunya Miumba* would perform a version of *Baiame's Dance* which was, as Sally and Darren explained to the organisers, a dance performance of a 'traditional' creation story.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ I say more about the *Baiame* cult in Chapter Eight.

Sally told me that National Trust organisers fed back to her that they were delighted with the rehearsals. During rehearsals, the dance began with dancers, mostly children, 'sleeping' on the large front lawn of Old Government House. The children were 'painted up' in white ochre, and dressed in suitably primitive garb of loin cloths with a modest piece of fabric tied around the girl's chests. Some draped flowing cloths of coloured fabric around their bodies. *Baiame*, as performed by Darren, entered the performance area to the sound of clap-sticks and performed convincingly primitive magical activities which resulted in the previously sleeping landscape being transformed into bird and animal people. This transformation was acted out by the dancers who responded to '*Baiame's*' magic by changing their performance from static, rock-like poses to actions which mimicked the movements of various birds and animals.

The *Baiame* creation story in dance, as performed by *Bunda Bunya Miumba* in rehearsals, was the kind of Aboriginal creation story that White people have become used to seeing and hearing as representative of genuine Aboriginality. This has largely come about as a result of marketing techniques for the hugely successful Aboriginal art market. As I discussed in Chapter Six, until the early 1970's Aboriginal art was almost completely ignored or undervalued as not only primitive, but as primal, that is, without meaning at all, indicative of a culture at an elementary level of evolution. One of the most successful marketing techniques devised by White art dealers and White advisors to Aboriginal art movements, such as the famous *Papunya Tula*, was to promote Aboriginal art as documentation of *Dreaming* stories, asserting a religious significance of the art. Playing on White assumptions that 'real' Aboriginal people not only 'had' *Dreaming*, but could represent their 'authenticity' as

paintings supported the market in 'authentic' Aboriginal art. In turn, the marketing of *Dreaming* - meaning 'authentic Aboriginal art' - had the effect of making Aboriginal art which is not a *Dreaming* painting 'inauthentic'. Aboriginal dance, and just about any Aboriginal cultural production, now has been linked into this inseparable equation of *Dreaming* equals 'authenticity'. In other words, according to this discourse any given Aboriginal thing needs to be connected to a '*Dreaming*' story to qualify as 'authentically' Aboriginal.

Consequently, it is difficult to conceptualise Aboriginal dance in any other way than as *Dreaming* - or based on *Dreaming*. Part of this problem stems from the fact that the body of literature relating to traditional Aboriginal dance is inseparable from the literature concerning religion because dance is a central feature of many 'traditional' Aboriginal religious ceremonies. Works including those of Bird Rose (2000), Henry (2000) and Wild (1987) connect dance inextricably to religion and myth.

It was, therefore, no wonder that National Trust organisers of the pageant were delighted with *Bunda Bunya Miumba's* decision to perform a dance which they claimed was a *Dreaming* dance. The *Bunda Bunya Miumba* performance of *Baiame's* dance represented what White people have come to believe 'authentic' 'Aboriginality' looks like. There was, however, only one small problem. Not all *Bunda Bunya Miumba* performers carried that primary signifier of 'true' Aboriginality. Not all the dancers had visibly black skin¹¹⁰. Even those who carried the physical characteristics of 'Aboriginality' such as black skin and particular kinds of bodily features did not exhibit the very black skin that typically characterises 'real' Aboriginal people. In fact, the dancers were neither visibly black, nor were they a uniform colour. They all had

¹¹⁰ As opposed to Black culture.

differing coloured hair, eyes and skin. Some Aboriginal people, including some in the dance troupe, have blonde hair. Some Aboriginal dancer's skin was so white that the white ochre markings on them were barely detectable.

Fortunately the organisers were sensitive enough, or educated enough¹¹¹ - or even possibly confused enough and thus silenced - not to object to the visible whiteness¹¹² of some Aboriginal 'darug custodians'. I would argue, however, that the 'authenticity' of the actual 'darug custodian' performers was secondary to the representation of 'authentic' Aboriginal dance to the National Trust organisers. I do not think that the organisers consciously considered this, but from their actions it can be assumed that, for them, this was a performance of Aboriginal dance representing *pre-contact* Aboriginal occupation of Sydney. It was a representation of people who no longer exist. If the dancers themselves did not look 'authentic', then the inference is that there *are no longer* any 'authentic' traditional owners in Sydney. But, during rehearsals, the 'authentic' Aboriginality represented by *Bunda Bunya Miumba* matched the primal, primitive representations of 'Aboriginality' reproduced by White colonial history and contemporary White discourse. It mattered that *Baiame's Dance* looked like an 'authentic', traditional and primitive '*Dreaming Dance*' because this part of the pageant was 'about' representing a primeval moment *just before* contact with Whites.

¹¹¹ A few anthropologists such as Beckett (1958), Reay (1964) and Barwick (1964) gave early notice that 'Aboriginality' was not becoming extinct through 'miscegenation'. Aboriginal activists in Australia have engaged in various campaigns to educate Whites regarding the intact 'Aboriginality' of many white skinned Aboriginal peoples since the early 1970's. The literature touching on this is vast and includes such works as Morgan (1987), Dodson (1994), Gilbert (1994) and Moreton-Robinson (2000). Much of the literature concerning the Stolen Generation(s) and life histories relating to the removal of children make the point that skin colour is not a definitive marker of 'Aboriginality'.

¹¹² 'whiteness' of skin colour as opposed to Whiteness of cultural heritage.

I have no doubt that 'darug custodians' were entirely aware of the attitudes and sentiments of the National Trust organisers. Sally and Darren were concerned at least four months before the scheduled date of the performance about the advisability of 'darug custodians' participating in the pageant at all. Sally, in particular, felt personally offended by what she took as an attitude which was disrespectful of Aboriginal peoples generally and of her in particular. Both Sally and Darren voiced their concerns to a number of Elders, one of whom was Alma. Alma shared her thoughts about the proceedings with me on a number of occasions as we were travelling together in the central desert at the time and had many more opportunities than we usually do to talk various things over. As I discuss in Chapter Seven, Alma and many 'darug custodian' Elders are committed to making and taking opportunities for 'darug custodian' voices to be heard. She clearly saw the performance of this dance as no exception when she told me:

The young ones can be too proud sometimes.
If someone gives us a chance we've got to take it.
We got a chance to say somethink here. We gotta
take it.

EW FNCD200011.

Yet, it is easy to understand some 'darug custodians' reticence when dealing with White authority figures. The National Trust organisers embodied their White history in all their dealings with 'darug custodians'. The colonial relationship between Darug Ancestors and British invaders to be represented in the pageant, was, in fact, reproduced in the relationship between 'darug custodian' dancers and National Trust organisers when White taken-for-granted values, assumptions and philosophies dominated rehearsals. National Trust organisers, for example, dictated time

schedules, delineated performance areas and generally imposed many ideas about how the *Bunda Bunya Miumba* performance should proceed.

I would argue, however, that in this case, the performance of *Baiame's Dance* was performance of a 'story' that 'darug custodians' had created in response to the expectations of the National Trust organisers. It was *not* a 'darug custodian' dance, nor was the story that the dancers performed important to 'darug custodians'. The creation story, that the National Trust expected - and got - was a spoof, a way of being allowed access to a space in which the real 'darug custodian story' could later be told.

'Painting Up'.

Some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents of *Bunda Bunya Miumba* dancers as well as the dancers themselves began to experience something of the feel of the performance before the event began. A large number of helpers, including myself, were needed to 'paint up' the dancers for their performance.

Large plastic tubs, already filled with a paste made from pounded white ochre¹¹³ and water, were placed near the dressing rooms at the rear of Old Government House. Although other aspects of performer's costumes vary, every dancer in each of the many 'darug custodian' dance performances that I have witnessed has always been 'painted up' in white ochre. This suggests to me that white ochre may possess some kind of ceremonial potency or significance. No amount of interrogation on my part, or attempted elucidation on the part of various 'darug custodians' has provided a more comprehensive explanation of white ochre's properties than that it is absolutely necessary for dancers to be 'painted up' in it.

¹¹³ Otherwise known as 'pipe clay'. I have never seen 'darug custodians' 'paint up' in any other colour ochre.

Sally, for example, explained it to me thus:

Sally: Yep. Gotta be white ochre. Jes' doesn't work otherwise. Told ya before, lots o' times, that this is modern Aboriginal dance? Yep, well, it's gotta have white ochre.

Kristina: What would happen if ya didn't have white ochre or if ya used a different colour?

Sally: Ya wouldn't be allowed t' dance.

Kristina: Why not?

Sally: Because it wouldn't be right. Everythin' would come out all wrong.

Kristina: What the dance?

Sally: Yep. *Everythin'* would be wrong.

FN200111.

Darug descendant 'darug custodians' may have forgotten the significance of white ochre, or they may never have known. They may be in the process of figuring out ochre's significance, or it may be one of the things that I have no right to know¹¹⁴. If they do know, then they do not teach other 'darug custodians' its significance in the open way that other forms of knowledge are generally circulated. What is important is that the use of a particular kind of ochre means that the dance performance is not just a dance performance in a secular sense of performance. This dance was a political statement concerning prior ownership of land. But, as well as this, it was a performance in which past traditions are embodied by the performers, even if those

¹¹⁴ 'darug custodians', and most Aboriginal peoples', in my experience, are rarely direct in telling White people that certain knowledge is privileged. Rather than directly telling me that something is not appropriate knowledge for me, people often avoid talking about the topic, or say that someone else might be able to help. I have come to learn that a certain mood of reticence, 'stiff' bodily comportment and facial 'scowling' generally means that I will never get a straight answer to that particular enquiry.

traditions are only partially remembered.

I remind the reader here that not all 'darug custodians' are Darug descendants, or even Aboriginal. Some 'darug custodians' are White, and some are migrants from other places. All the dancers on this occasion were Aboriginal, but this is not always the case. Non-Aboriginal people often participate in dance, especially at 'private' ceremonies. What makes this ethnography problematic is that, technically, dancing, painting up with ochre, musical and certain other traditions associated with dancing are not necessarily the traditions of the performers. They do not 'belong' to White, Maori, or Aboriginal 'darug custodians' who are not Darug descendants. Technically, these traditions belong to Darug descendants only, they are not part of other peoples' cultural heritages. Yet, the dancers and those who prepare the dancer's bodies in painting up in ochre, with 'darug custodian' marks, in hearing certain songs, know that they now embody *Darug* traditions. These people know that their claim to these traditions is established and affirmed by their relationships with darug descendants and Darug land. As Sally, who comes from Walgett in north-western New South Wales says:

I'm a Murawari woman. Me kids are Murris and Murawari.
We knows our kulcha, we knows our place. But we're 'here
now. Sydney is such a cold place for Aboriginal people. We can't
Remember our own kulcha so good 'ere. But the traditional owners
look after us. They teach us how to live on this land. Different stories.
I'm a Murawari woman, but I'm a custodian of Darug land and kulcha.

VDO LaPar 2002.

John, the White partner of a Darug descendant put it this way:

I reckon I'm as Aboriginal as anybody 'ere. Me kids, me missus. I seen both worlds an' I know which one I choose. I reckon Darug people need us whitefullas in the community but. I don't reckon they'd survive without us to help 'em, look after 'em, protect 'em. Ya know what I mean. You've seen the way Whites and Blacks treat 'em. But ya know? I reckon I'd 'ave a hard time gettin' on without Darug kulcha meself now. I reckon I would.

AWFN 032003.

This, as I argue in the thesis Introduction, is one of the most challenging things that make 'darug custodian' identity difficult for 'us' to conceptualise. It is not, as John's statement emphasises, just a case of Darug descendant 'darug custodians' 'giving', endowing or sharing *Darug* traditions, but more a case of all the different constituents of 'darug custodian' culture *producing* a new culture which is negotiated between participants and what may be known about past traditions. This negotiation includes, indeed, is predicated upon non-Darug descendants performing Darug traditions.

Darug descendant 'darug custodians' may have lost or forgotten many pre-colonial performative traditions. They may attribute new or different meanings to those traditions which remain and negotiate these with non-Darug descendant community members. We do know, from post and pre-contact Darug art sites, that white ochre was used to 'paint up' Darug Ancestor's bodies. 'We', both 'darug custodians' and members of the dominant society, know, from White records such as those of Howit (1904), Mathews (1898, 1904) and Mathews and Everitt (1900)¹¹⁵, that Sydney Aboriginal peoples were still 'painting up' with white ochre for ceremony into the twentieth century. No-one knows the details of the pre-contact traditions and the

¹¹⁵ As well as from the testimony of living Darug descendant eye witnesses.

struggles and politics that 'painting up' effected. It is, however, a fairly safe bet that early post-contact Darug Ancestors used 'painting up' with white ochre as a form of identity articulation which drew on those unknown traditions. Even taking into account a significant period of hiatus when the performance of such Aboriginal practices was banned by the Australian state, it seems to me highly likely that 'darug custodians' draw on those 'same' 'traditions' today when they 'paint up' with white ochre for a dance performance.

Individual 'darug custodian' dancers do not have particular designs which reflect specific *Dreamings* or ancestral marks. The marks that are made on dancer's bodies are generally prescribed and are much the 'same'¹¹⁶ for each dancer. Those who do the 'painting up' are taught by Elders to place their whole hand into the bucket of cool, slimy ochre and to imprint the shape of their hand on the dancer's body. Four prints are made on the chest and stomach, four on the dancer's back and two on each thigh. 'Stripes' are made on the dancer's arms and legs. Unlike hand-prints, stripes are arbitrary and it depends on the discretion of the person doing the 'painting up' how many there are, how thick, and how much space there is between them. Dancer's hair is coated with ochre. The dancer's face is decorated in stripes and hand prints made by simultaneously touching the dancer's cheeks with ochre covered open palms (see graphic (f)).

The ochre is collected from a special ceremonial site in the Lower Blue Mountains where 'darug custodians' currently conduct ceremonies¹¹⁷. It is brought

¹¹⁶ Although these marks are prescribed, they do not appear to be exactly the same on every dancer because of the different sizes of dancer's bodies, the different colours of dancer's skin and the different sizes of the painter's hands.

¹¹⁷ I describe one of these ceremonies in Chapter Eight.

from this particular place on Darug Land and mixed with water at the site of the dance performance. One bucket of ochre is used simultaneously by several of those engaged in 'painting up', so that the hands of the painters are connected by the ochre and by touching each other in the ochre. The ochre, of course, is literally Darug Land. Not only is the ochre sourced from a contemporary ceremonial site, and drawn out of that land, but it is constitutive of Darug Land. White ochre is taken out of Darug Land and 'put' onto 'darug custodian' bodies, and only 'darug custodian bodies, linking them in intimate and visceral ways.

Hands are also significant for 'darug custodians'. Many surviving pre-contact Darug art sites around Sydney are dominated by representations of hands, made by placing hands on the rock ledge and blowing liquid red ochre¹¹⁸ over them as stencils. These hands, therefore, are traces of the hands of the various (now long dead) people who placed their living hands on that exact place. Thus, they are more than representations. They do not just 'stand for' the existence of those whose hands are represented, but they are the exact trace in literal place which mark the prior existence of Darug ancestors. 'darug custodians' can and do place their own hands inside the negative image left by Darug ancestors; the red ochre surrounding, even enfolding in the form of an embrace, their own living hands.

Whenever we have visited such sites together, my friend Alma always places her hand over the 'blank' image left by the stencil of the ancestor's hand and she has pointed out to me that many of the ancestor's hand prints have the same permanently 'crooked' little fingers that her own hands exhibit. Alma links her own physical presence with that of Darug Ancestors through the 'likeness' of her living hands to the

¹¹⁸ Red ochre is not currently used by 'darug custodians' in any capacity.

outlines of theirs. By placing 'positive' ochre marks of hands on living 'darug custodian' bodies, 'darug custodians' are in a sense filling the absence of 'Darug Ancestors' with their own presence¹¹⁹.

Having so marked themselves, the dancers were ready to perform for the National Trust and the audience.

When *Thundering Kangaroos* Rained on the National Trust's Pageant.

The re-enactment of Australian colonisation was not, however, the only thing achieved by *Baiame's Dance* at Parliament House that day in 2001. The actual performance of *Baiame's Dance* was performed as it was in rehearsal. I do not want my reader to mistake my analysis as an attempt to denigrate practices related to the cult of *Baiame* as meaningless. I argue that the *story* represented in the performance of *Baiame's Dance* that day was a watered down spoof, which was a strategy to gain access to a space which allowed for 'darug custodian' stories to be told in opposition to state stories simultaneously being told. Yet, the story concerning *Baiame*, and the claims to country that the dance performance made were only some of the things that were happening as dance that day. Not only was the dance a political statement, but, as I have indicated from the ways in which the performance was prepared for, it was also an act of affective communication. It was, however, equally an embodiment of partially remembered narrative and performance traditions. But, as I demonstrate below, perhaps the most important aspect of the performance was to contest a suppressed version of history.

As I have discussed, although similarly 'painted up' with white ochre markings, the dancers' bodies were diverse. Different sizes, different colours, different genders

¹¹⁹ This is the effect, stencil or x-ray that Tracy Moffatt (1987) explores with shadows in her film, *Nice Coloured Girls*. Darlene Johnson (1996) also does this in her film *Two Bob Mermaid*.

and different ages were all performing together in a way different from that documented in literature pertaining to traditional Aboriginal dance - especially in the anthropological literature¹²⁰. Literature describing traditional Aboriginal dance often reports the segregation of genders and age groups conforming to restrictions on knowledge according to age, gender and hereditary rights. 'darug custodians' have no such restrictions on knowledge¹²¹. The kind of specific knowledge produced, reproduced and represented by 'darug custodians' is freely circulated, negotiated and developed within the community, although only certain people are authorised to speak of it. This may be largely because the Aboriginal people constituting the community have been dispossessed of their hereditary knowledge to more or less equally devastating extents. It is a general attitude constantly communicated within the community that survival of contemporary collective identity depends on free circulation of knowledge.

I suspect that the diversity of skin, hair and eye colour of 'darug custodian' bodies in the performance of *Baime's Dance* was particularly effective as a strategy for shocking the audience into understanding that what they were witnessing was a challenge to their thinking rather than a familiar Aboriginal myth. Most of the dancers - Darug descendant and non-Darug descendant 'darug custodians' alike - were impossible to identify visibly as Aboriginal from their colouring. The dancers rendered the allocation of 'racial' marking by skin colour impossible.

¹²⁰ Such works as Berndt (1951), Elkin (1950), Bird Rose (2000), Henry (2000) and Magowan (2000), Tamisari (2000,1998) in describing so called 'traditional' Aboriginal dance forms, are marked by their abundance of discussion of similar body types. It is assumed from this literature, that 'real' Aboriginal dancers all have a similar 'authentic' appearance.

¹²¹ Although 'darug custodians' do have rules which attempt to control authority to speak which are becoming increasingly systematic as I claim in Chapter Seven.

The dancers asserted their claims to be Indigenous through aspects of their movement, the marks on their skin, their costumes and music produced by didgeridoo and clap sticks. Some aspects of the dance were clearly mimetic attempts to reproduce representations of 'Aboriginality' as seen performed by traditional Aboriginal dancers, or in movies and television commercials. The kinds of 'jerky' leg, arm and head movements imitating animals and birds, which were used by some 'darug custodian' dancers were 'typical' of the kinds of representations of Aboriginal dance which originate from Central Desert, Arnhem Land, the Kimberley and other areas of Australia where Aboriginal peoples are thought to reproduce more traditional styles of Aboriginal dance. Yet, other dance movements appeared to be improvised, melding different Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal styles. Some dancers, including Darren, performing the role of *Baiame*, maintained his 'jerky' movements, ground stamping traditional dance style throughout most of the performance. Other dancers, however, performed their movements with a fluidity reminiscent of jazz ballet. Some dancers remained stationary and moved only the top half of their bodies, changing from bird-like arm/wing flapping to fluid, snake-like writhing.

Like other contemporary Aboriginal dance companies such as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dance Theatre*, *Bangarra Dance Company* and *Narog Dance Company*, *Bunda Bunya Miumba* presented a kind of Aboriginal dance style which might be described as a fusion of different kinds of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal styles. All these Aboriginal dance troupes, however, represent their contemporary 'Aboriginality' through *all* of the styles that they perform. *Bangarra*, for example, do not limit themselves only to 'Aboriginal' dance styles at all. Regardless of the style of dance steps, *Bangarra* succeed to present performances which, none-the-

less, tell unambiguously 'Aboriginal stories' using Aboriginal bodies, costumes, themes, music and narratives.

Bunda Bunya Miumba similarly used different coloured, sized and gendered bodies which were constantly moving and changing. The 'same' dancer changed form constantly from what may have been representations of inanimate objects such as rocks, mountains or rivers to birds, animals and people. The same dancer would 'change colours' by draping themselves with different coloured fabric in order to symbolise the changing forms the dancer was portraying.

In rehearsal, the National Trust organisers choreographed the Aboriginal performance to end when a troupe of 'Rum Corps' entered the space firing muskets. As rehearsed, dancers, dressed in loin cloths, decorated in feathers, fur, string, flowing fabric and painted up in suitably primitive style took off at the sight of the 'Red Coats'. According to the National Trust script, this was meant to symbolise the demise of primitivity as represented by the dancers in the face of civilisation represented by the 'Red Coats'.

The dominant historical narrative that Aboriginal people were 'pacified' and dispersed soon after invasion supported the firing of muskets and dispersal of dancers as Western theatrical tropes which were supposed to make it clear to the audience that the Aboriginal dance was over and the pageant proper was to begin. But the dance experience and the experience of participating as an audience of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples subverted this. 'We' - the audience - were probably meant to have heard no more from those who were sadly no more. The audience had not recovered from the confusing effects and affects of the dance, and were stunned into silence as much from the shock of the dance as from the firing of

the musket.

After the musket fire and the entrance of the 'Rum Corps' in their red uniforms, a man dressed in eighteenth century garb, replete with powdered wig, velvet knickerbockers and frilled shirt, came through the front door of the Old Government House and introduced himself as Governor Arthur Phillip. John, a White 'darug custodian' of Irish convict descent turned to me at this point and said:

'Ere comes trouble. My mob shoulda joined forces
with Darug in th' beginnin' and this wouldn't be 'appenin'.
FNAW022001.

I digress from Parramatta to use an example from another occasion to show the significance of the Irish-Darug connection. As is common among White 'darug custodians', John takes any opportunity to distinguish his identity from that of the dominant White society in order to demonstrate his belonging to and support of 'darug custodians'. It is particularly common for those of Irish descent to distinguish themselves from English invaders. In March, 2003 Alma and a number of Elders were invited by representatives of Sydney's Irish community and the Irish government to perform 'Welcome to Country' and otherwise participate in the re-enactment of the 'Battle of Vinegar Hill' at Rouse Hill in Sydney's west. It was the two hundredth anniversary of the battle which was the culmination of an uprising of Irish political prisoners sent as convicts to New South Wales who attempted to march on Parramatta from Castle Hill in 1803. They were mown down by English soldiers and their leader placed in a gibbet at the cross roads in Castle Hill in Sydney's north-west (Hughes 1987:89). Below is a transcript, made by me from video footage of part of Alma's speech:

The Irish convicts were only armed with farm tools and didn't stand a chance against the English soldiers. They wanted to march on Parramatta and take a ship so they could go back to Ireland. They had been forcefully removed and forced, against their will, to join the English in the illegal and immoral invasion of Darug country...At the time of the Irish uprising against the English my Darug ancestors were led by Pemulwuy in war against the invaders. It took years and the advantage of the introduction of men on horses to Darug country before Pemulwuy and his warriors were run down. I can't help wonderin' what might have happened if Darug and the Irish had joined forces.

VDOBVH 032003.

This speech was greeted with great enthusiasm, not only by Irish descendant 'darug custodians', but by the predominantly White Irish audience.

I return to the event in Parramatta: after his entrance, 'Governor Phillip' made his way to a microphone in the portico at the top of a flight of sandstone steps leading to the door of the beautiful Georgian mansion. Of course, the building in its present form, did not exist during the term of the real Governor Phillip¹²², yet, for me at least, the effect of this representation of 'Governor Phillip', his placement at the top the steps, and his proprietary, patriarchal demeanor was one of authority and ownership. 'Governor Phillip' clearly acted as if this place *belonged* to him. The unsubtle implication was that a state of rude, uncivilised nature abounded in Sydney for thousands of years while Aboriginal people practised their culture here. This state was immediately transformed into the height of Georgian civilisation, firstly by the violence of musket fire, and then by the symbolism of Old Government House and the person of 'Governor Phillip' himself.

Yet, 'darug custodians' kept interrupting the proceedings and I became

¹²² 'Government House' in Phillip's time was a slab hut.

increasingly concerned that the theatrical Governor Phillip would retaliate by calling the 'Red Coats' when voices speaking Darug Language began calling from the shrubbery, and a parade of 'darug custodian' dancers appeared moaning, groaning, holding their stomachs, their heads, their hearts and then 'dying' on the lawn of Old Government House. 'Governor Phillip', did indeed, begin to lose his concentration in delivering his speech concerning his mission to establish a new British colony and to treat Aboriginal inhabitants according to British justice and fairness. His words became laboured as 'darug custodians' began to 'die' beneath him.

'Governor Phillip's' speech and the 'darug custodian' performance was difficult to watch, for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audience members. We have all been conditioned to respect certain conventions of behaviour during Western performances, and to respect authority. That many of us - Black and White - recognised the protest being played out before us as entirely valid made it no easier to watch. The antics of 'darug custodian' performers affected the audience's behaviour in ways that suggested that the audience were being made to feel as uncomfortable by the 'darug custodian' performer's acts as they were by 'Governor Phillip's' arrogant speech.

Stifled giggles, soft murmurs, puzzled expressions, emanated from the audience as many shifted in their seats. As 'Governor Phillip' exited back into Old Government House, I, for one, felt relieved when 'darug custodians' 'rose from the dead' and disappeared into the shrubs followed by spirited applause. There certainly seemed to be a general sense of relief that both 'Governor Phillip's' and 'darug custodians' performances appeared to be over.

With dismay I anticipated the speeches of the rest of the cast of 'founding

mothers and fathers', fearing a series of uninterrupted self-congratulating monologues celebrating colonisation. Yet, I thought that 'darug custodians' had made their point that British colonisation of Australia had come at huge cost to Indigenous peoples and that that cost is still being paid by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. 'darug custodians' revealed British 'justice and fairness' to be an ass. I was, therefore, not anticipating any further counter-discourse to that of the 'founding mothers and fathers' by 'darug custodians' when 'Francis Greenway', colonial architect, appeared on the portico and began to proclaim his satisfaction with the beauty of his designs. 'Dying' 'darug custodians' returned to the lawn as 'Francis', resplendent in his powdered wig, velvet knicker-bockers, lace blouse and buckled shoes watched on. The 'painted up', loin clothed bodies of 'darug custodians' writhed and moaned loudly, clutching their stomachs on the grass at his feet. They also reappeared when 'Governor Lachlan Macquarie', colonial Protestant minister and physician 'Samuel Marsden', and graziers 'John and Elizabeth Macarthur' began their speeches on pastoral development. As the 'speeches of progress' continued against the noisy editorial of 'darug custodians', the pageant became, for me, almost impossible to watch. It was programmed to take only one hour, but seemed interminable. It was clear from the tension, comments and restlessness of other audience members that I was not alone in my distress. One Aboriginal man near me complained to a woman beside him:

Gawd Lorrie, I dunno if I can take too much more o' this. It's embarrassin'.

Field notes 2/01 Parr.

Whether or not 'darug custodians' made those performing the roles of 'founding mothers and fathers' embarrassed, they clearly made them uncomfortable, as the actors' stuttering and distracted glances indicated. Whether the actors were troubled simply by being interrupted, or whether some were affected by the protest itself is impossible to say, but clearly, the White people reproducing the colonial narrative of 'progress' were made to feel awkward. And all of 'us' Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audience members were made nervous by witnessing the discomfort of the White colonists being challenged by the counter-narrative of 'darug custodians'. This shared discomfort encouraged an empathy with Aboriginal peoples that is all too rare for most Whites. Sally told me after the performance:

Feelin' uncomfortable in our own country is what bein' Aboriginal is all about.
It don't do no harm for Whitefulla's to get a taste o' it.

Fieldnotes 02/01 Parr.

Sally explained to me that the 'darug custodian' performance was symbolic of Aboriginal peoples' continued existence in Sydney in various colours, shapes and sizes. Musket fire, 'Rum Corps' and British 'progress' were not enough to disperse them. Yet, the 'dead' and 'dying' bodies also marked a tragedy still in progress. The 'darug custodian' bodies littering the front lawn of Old Government House while the White narratives of 'progress' continued were visual reminders that the symbolic struggle for control of representation is on-going and pervasive. It was impossible to ignore the 'darug custodian' representation of past and present disaster and to hear only the White narratives of progress and civilisation. The dance had not ended when the 'Red-Coats' fired their muskets. The struggle carried on after the first onslaught of colonisation and it continues in the present.

'Dead' bodies remained on the lawn until some National Trust organisers discretely escorted them out of sight. The audience did not know how to respond. A few people gingerly began to applaud but it was not taken up by the others. It was not until a final 'thank you and goodnight' speech was made by a National Trust representative that the audience broke into relieved applause.

I was sitting alone, reflecting on the afternoon's events before packing up my camera equipment when Darren sat down beside me. Winking, he gave me a wicked smile as he asked me quietly:

Whadaya reckon? Do ya reckon them fullas [White organisers] know what they [dancers] doin', or do ya reckon they [White organisers] jes' think we're pests?

BP/NB#3 200111.

Such, indeed, being the question of the moment.

Conclusion.

At the Centenary of Federation pageant at Parramatta Park, National Trust organisers expected 'darug custodians' to be unproblematically included in a state narrative of dispossession, colonisation, civilisation and progress. This 'story' is based on an unproblematic assumption that the Aboriginal traditional owners of Sydney were and are 'one people' sharing a common origin that can be traced with a genealogy. 'darug custodians' used their 'inclusion' in this 'story' as an opportunity to stage a counter-discourse of their own. They did this not only by presenting a different version of the colonial myth, but by problematising their identity using their 'new' ideas, rituals and symbols of 'darug custodian' identity to represent themselves. Darug descendants did not limit participation in the pageant exclusively to Darug

dancers. Although non-Darug descendants did not engage in the public dance performance they were included in the ritual preparations for the performance. Their relationship with Darug descendants and Darug land was represented in this way.

This chapter has shown that 'darug custodian' stories are necessarily messy. They have no space where they can make themselves without other stories, people and things already being there - without 'other people's things' interjecting. This chapter shows that to make themselves seen and heard, 'darug custodians' also always need to interject the stories of others. 'darug custodian' ways of doing this are many and varied. In Chapter Seven I present an account of how 'darug custodians' can make their voices heard in a language that nobody - not even themselves - can understand.



g) 'Welcome to Country' performed by two Darug descendant 'darug custodian' women Elders. Note the small turtle brooches worn on speakers' lapels.



h) 'Welcome to Country' performed by 'darug custodian' women Elders at the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the meeting between Governor Phillip and their ancestor, Yarramundi in 1791.