



Reading with Reciprocity:
A Feminist Move Towards
Reviewing with Generosity

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Reading with Reciprocity: A Feminist Move Towards Reviewing with Generosity

Mindy Blaise, Jane Merewether, Jo Pollitt

Reading with Reciprocity is an initiative by The Ediths inspired by the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research's (CLEAR) blog post, [#Collabrary: a methodological experiment for reading with reciprocity](#) (2021), which draws on the scholarship of Joe Dumit (2012), Zoe Todd (2016), and Eve Tuck (2017) to learn reading practices that are "humble, generous, and accountable" (CLEAR, 2021). We were interested and impressed with the ways in which this methodological experiment was creating reading practices grounded in a feminist ethic committed to making room for diverse knowledges.

This initiative began by first curating a list of books based on the research interests of the membership and our commitment to privileging different voices. After sending out an expression of interest, we were surprised and humbled at the overwhelming response to the invitation and selected 11 members to take part in *Reading with Reciprocity*. Similar to the care taken in deciding which books to read and review, we also selected members with consideration and intention, including representation of early career, mid-career, and experienced researchers. Because we see the roundtables as part of postgraduate supervision and an expanded form of mentoring, some of the students we supervise were also selected to participate.

Those who took part in *Reading with Reciprocity* were asked to read the (CLEAR) blog post, [#Collabrary: a methodological experiment for reading with reciprocity](#) (2021) and then submit a review that was based on reading a selected text with reciprocity. We hoped that participants would reciprocate the gifts that the authors had given in their writing.

Reimagining how we might read and review these books with care, reciprocity, and generosity ended up not being as easy as we first thought. It is clear that there is such a dominant way of reviewing work that makes being generous to authors so out of the ordinary and unsupported in the academy. We have to do better! *Reading with Reciprocity* is one way that we can do this work, individually and as a community of scholars who are interested in doing academia more kindly and generously.

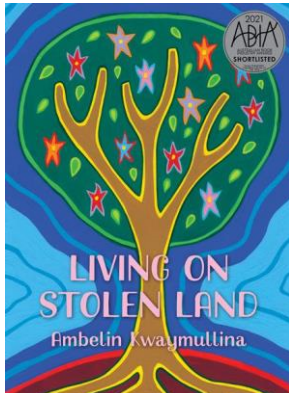
We thank all of the authors for the labour and care they took in writing these books, and are also thankful to The Ediths members who took the time to read and review with such thoughtfulness and generosity that they become a gift to each book author. Thank you for being part of *Reading with Reciprocity* and The Ediths.

In what follows we present the *Reading with Reciprocity* responses. We see this collection as a generative continuation of the original call out for responses and invite you of course, to read with reciprocity.

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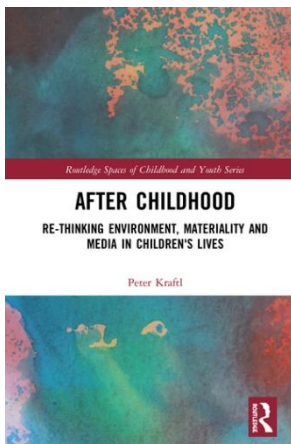
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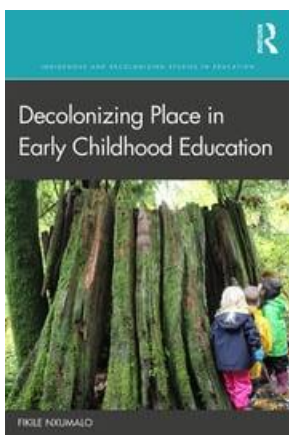
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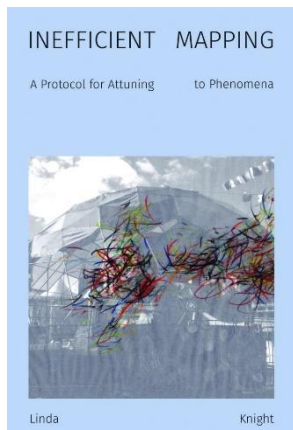
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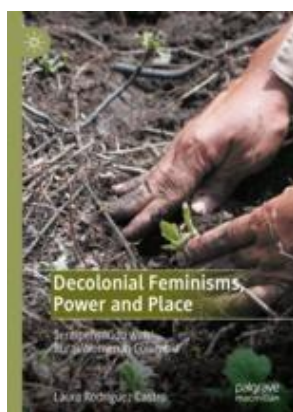
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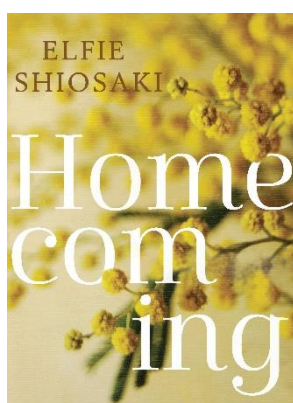
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Living On Stolen Land

by Ambelin Kwaymullina (2020)

<https://www.magabala.com/products/living-on-stolen-land>

Reviewer: Lizzie Maughan

A “close reading” Review of *Living On Stolen Land* by Ambelin Kwaymullina

Upon first opening the book and initially reading, I saw what I considered to be poems. The text under each heading is displayed in stanzas and without punctuation – the kind of grammatical freedom I expect in poetry. It starts with a description of the cover image of a tree, explaining a metaphor, like poetry often does. As I sat alone in my lounge room, I read in my head with a gentle calm voice enjoying the ease of accessibility.

“The leaves and flowers
are all the ideas
growth
possibilities
that will come
out of respectful relationships
and respectful structures
which will endure
For as long as the tree endures
For as long as it is cared for”

As I continued reading, I became aware of my own whiteness and questioned its impact on my reading of the book.

These were not the words of a “a nice white person”, but those of a proud Aboriginal person who’s more than a little fed up with colonialism, capitalism, and the other illnesses brought to their country by white colonisers.

I started again.

The text is not a set of poems, at least not as we are taught in settler-colonial schooling, but more like the words of an impassioned speech at a Survival Day rally.

They are to come booming from a loudspeaker and met with rally cries. For some Aboriginal readers I imagine this is nurturing, confirming and gives language to their life experiences and feelings. However, I can only speak from a Settler’s perspective.

The poetic layout plays a clever trick on the white reader like me. We are drawn in with the gentleness with which we are taught to read poetry, we are being initially met in what feels like our own safe space. There is an ease to our consumption. But then we find ourselves reading hard truths and action is being demanded of us.

Two different worlds now exist
in the same space
and there is no place of innocence for Settlers to stand
Not one location where Settlers do not benefit
do not inherit the benefits
of the violent dispossession
of those who were here before

You are living on stolen land
What can you do about it?

The other very clever aspect to this structure of stanzas is the way that what might be quite a difficult sentence is broken into short phrases. For example, this is a very long and quite complex sentence: “The artificial context arises from the long con of settler-colonialism; from the denigration of Indigenous peoples as ‘less than’ which has formed the dominant environment through which laws, policies, behaviours, [and] attitudes about Indigenous peoples have been shaped for almost all of the existence of the settler-colonial state called Australia.” However, laying it out as Kwaymullina does, breaks it up into its important parts so the reader doesn’t have to, but also so the reader must attend to each part.

Key words such as sovereignty and decolonisation, and important concepts such as Indigenous knowledges and structural bias, have been clearly and simply explained. Explicit calls to action have been made and instructions given to be change-makers, to practice humility, to listen effectively, and to be a good ally. After reading *Living On Stolen Land* there is no room for ignorance.

Who am I?

Living on Stolen Land by Ambelin Kwaymullina (2020) beautifully, yet powerfully, provocatively, and strongly tells the history of Australia's settler and colonial present. Here,

You are on Indigenous lands
Swimming in Indigenous waters
Looking up at Indigenous skies. (p. 3)

these three sentences invited me to pause and reflect on my position and my relations with the land, the water, and the sky. As a Korean Japanese immigrant to Canada who became a Canadian citizen, I am a settler of this Indigenous land. These days many settlers acknowledge the land we live on when we speak or present in front of others to show our respect to the Indigenous people and their land. However, to tell the truth, I do not think we truly see or think about the land, the place, the sky, and the water we encounter as Indigenous. Thus, Kwaymullina's words are strong and sharp, provoking readers to think deeply about our settler-colonial present. Wanting, therefore, to practice reciprocity of thinking about *Living on Stolen Land*, I read with focused attention informed by three reading practices: close reading, generous reading, and archaeological reading (Dumit, 2012).

Close reading

Ambelin Kwaymullina writes the message of her book through poetry. By doing so, her voice is clearly heard and visible, as if she were singing a song of "living on stolen land." When she talks about issues and questions settlers, she speaks directly, either to "settlers" or to "you." When she speaks about her thinking and claims her position as one of the Indigenous people of the land, she uses "we" but never "I." This shows how Indigenous people live holistically and think of themselves as part of a whole.

There is a pattern
made up of many threads
always moving
always changing
as the threads reach out
connect with each other
stretch across dimensions. (p. 21)

On the other hand, pointing to us (settlers) with the word "you" clearly shows that her position and ours (settlers') are different. Kwaymullina's ways of writing make me realize that this book has been written for settlers, who must listen attentively to Indigenous people's voices.

Generous reading

In academia, we as researchers are often asked to read texts critically rather than generously. Maybe by critically reading others' texts we unconsciously posit ourselves as superior to others or signify a hierarchical position between authors and readers. Thus, in the case of this relationship between Kwaymullina and myself, I believe I must read her voice more pedagogically, respectfully, and generously to be able to fully accept her Indigenous voice if I want to understand that "there are things [I] can never know" (p. 26), and that

most of what Settlers know
about Indigenous peoples
is wrong. (p. 33)

This poet's strong voice urges readers to wonder "How wrong are we?" when we, settlers, listen to her words. Furthermore, when we settlers are ready to be affected by Indigenous voices, I believe that we and the Indigenous people could make an in-between space where both voices are heard and live and together, weaving a new pattern of tangled threads.

Reading relations

As a Korean-Japanese-Canadian settler of this land, Canada, I read and listen to Indigenous voices both critically and generously, as well as with reciprocity. As a result of reading this book and practicing reciprocity of thinking, when I encounter with Indigenous people's stories, I continuously ask myself, "Who are they?" "How do they live with others?" "Who am I?" "What do I know?" or "What do I not know, yet?" "How am I able to know them much more respectfully and responsibly?" This is not simply because I do not know about or Indigenous peoples, but that their stories and history have been misunderstood for so many years, and still are.

Listening pedagogically is about being thoughtful, serious, and respectful toward others' stories, voices, questions, and answers, without preconceived ideas and knowledge (Rinaldi, 2006). Listening is a bridge to understanding each other. It is easy to say but hard to do, but when people (especially settlers in this case) fully open their minds without judgment or prejudice (Rinaldi, 2006), others' voices are truly heard.

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After Childhood: Re-thinking Environment, Materiality and Media in Children's Lives

by Peter Kraftl (2020)

<https://www.routledge.com/After-Childhood-Re-thinking-Environment-Materiality-and-Media-in-Childrens/Kraftl/p/book/9781138088245>

Reviewer: Corinna Peterken

In this book, *After Childhood: Re-thinking Environment, Materiality and Media in Children's Lives*, Peter Kraftl is traversing and working with and against boundaries of what might count as "childhood studies" as he spans ideas and thinking that connects fields. The global examples, cases, research and complex issues are played with and become propositions and provocations while considering particular communities, contemporary issues, and places. This book provides open ended ways for thinking and doing differently for those who work with children and after childhood to mitigate what are shown to be "potentially traumatic implications" (p.53) for individual children and childhoods if there is no change in how we think about and research childhoods.

The book presents ways that children and childhoods are impacted by geography, class, matter, events, and digital exposure and how to use what traces remain and appear. Kraftl urges action beyond living now in relation with environment, materiality and media that have importance in children's lives now and in the future. As each chapter is opened, Kraftl states the focus of it and then shows how it connects children and childhoods, whether the child is present or not. His ample signals, weavings through, references to other chapters, and examples connect and expand on points. He explains what the chapter is and isn't doing, then ties this to how examples in other chapters apply and aligns these to make the complex work more readable. He then sets up the reader for the next piece and what it contains with the theories outlined and explained in context. This draws the reader through and around with connections made specific to other chapters so the work can be read across, portions returned to and thought with again as we consider deep problems and challenges for society.

The author works with implications of non-representational, feminist new materialist, post-humanist, queer, critical race, speculative-realist and object-oriented ontologies, and generational theories in relation with childhood studies using concepts from these theories and shifting them in useful ways for thinking.

Questions, provocations, possibilities, and challenges are put forward to be worked with to consider what childhoods mean and what 'after childhood' is. Kraftl prompts us to acknowledge that we were children, that children will become adults, and that we need to think about and change what the world will hold for them. This book challenges us to ponder what can or might be done to have a more positive world over the next generations. It is a book that is thinking and speaking back about children/childhood playing a part in what might eventuate for the world. The reader is transported to places/environments and imaginings with the children and after, while noticing (and not noticing) general/specific examples that waft in and out of focus.

Embracing the call to "pay attention to who else is speaking alongside [me]" ([*CLEAR's #Collabrary: a methodological experiment for reading with reciprocity*](#)) while reading this book brings me into awareness that I am with child and childhoods, author and participants, places and things presented throughout the book and also where I am. I notice (and do not notice) the doll, Lego, sculptures made by young people, rubble, matter, social media, silliness and barefoot walking, and at times wonder with Kraftl, "where are the children, precisely?" (p.39). The doll in Chapter 1 pulls my focus and takes me to dolls in my childhood and dolls my children played with, both discarded and kept. A plastic doll from the 60s a friend gifted me was purchased online, like the vintage toys in Chapter 7, and it comes to join this conversation. Also coming into focus are the play materials in classrooms I taught and teach in, those dolls in cupboards and on shelves, waiting for children and in children's lives. What can they say? I wonder how I can use more sustainable materials and what teachers of children can do. Black and white images that evoke are used throughout to show materials and ways to theorize the examples and ideas in the chapter/section. The tonal quality of images, focus and framing are effectively used to draw out thinking about the ideas and the objects presented. With the book and these images that speak to me I wonder...

and

I am wandering,

lost and found...

fast, slow,

retracing

picking through

pages and rubble,

piles of thought

to provoke thinking and more.

I wonder with the book: How might complications in nature, resources, energy, learning, media, toys, being and climate impact child, children and (after)childhood? What am I doing? How can I help or bring about change? What changes need to be made? I notice differently through this reading. Kraftl gives some provocations to change how we think about, research and support lives in and after childhood for a more positive future.

Peter Kraftl's (2020) complex and innovative book, *After Childhood: Re-Thinking Environment, Materiality and Media in Children's Lives*, has much to offer scholars of children and childhood. Its generative experimentations with the word 'after', introduction of new concepts such as 'resource-power', 'pull focus', and the 'arts of (not) noticing', along with novel assessments of established scholarship such as 'nexus-thinking', 'object-orientated ontology' and 'speculative realism', are all considered, as hinted at by the book's title, *After Childhood*, with children and childhood in mind, though not at the centre.

While Kraftl expressly tries to avoid using the term 'decentring' children, because it 'implies an anthropocentrism that *starts-with* the human' (p. 5), he uses several innovative strategies which broaden and complicate understandings of children and childhoods beyond those typically encountered in childhood studies and related fields. In particular, Kraftl uses the inventive technique of allowing children and childhoods to slip in and out of focus, an approach which demands deliberate and simultaneous 'decentring *and* recentring the human subject; scaling up *and* scaling down; speeding up *and* slowing down' (original emphasis, p. 43). This is complex methodological work, and I will leave readers to engage with the book to discover the intricacies of doing such work.

For this review, I want to take up just one of the key concepts that Kraftl introduces – that of *infra-generations* – as I find it is a particularly generative notion to think with. Of course, *infra-generations* cannot be separated out from the other key ideas Kraftl traverses; indeed, it is dependent on them, but by focussing on *infra-generations* here I hope to provide a glimpse into the potential of this book for childhood scholars and beyond.

Cohorts of children and childhood are often considered within specific timeframes referred to as 'generations', but in developing the neologism 'infra-generations', Kraftl radically expands such conventional linear framings of generations that lock groups of children into particular temporalities. Furthermore, and I would argue crucially, by deploying the prefix 'infra', which can loosely be taken to mean 'below' or 'beneath', Kraftl opens a space for thinking generations *beyond* the human, not only across multiple temporalities, but also through space and scale. *Infra-generational* relations, then, involve, enfold, and co-constitute multiple more-than-human processes, objects, critters, phenomena, and spatio-temporalities. Among other things, conceiving generations *infra-generationally* makes room for thinking differently about hyperobjects (Morton, 2013) such as climate change. As Kraftl (p. 16) explains:

earthly processes (like climate change) or material processes (like the biography or degradation of an object) might somehow be conceived as

‘generations’ – if only to afford a much clearer sense of how the temporalities of those processes accompany, produce and suture *human* generations.

Kraftl’s multidimensional reconceptualisation of generations thus moves us away from thinking of generations as discrete groups of *humans* fixed in time and instead allows us to reimagine generations as always becoming and always enmeshed within more-than-human relations. Thus, thinking infra-generationally, contemporary childhoods are inextricably entangled with myriad childhoods that have come before. Furthermore, infra-generations are assemblages of ‘stuff’ (a word Kraftl uses frequently in the book) and processes that are at once human and nonhuman.

This way of thinking generations takes some getting used to, especially when terms such as ‘Generation X’, ‘Millennial’, and ‘Baby Boomer’ are used to describe generations in everyday discourse. But, as Kraftl argues, infra-generationality makes room for imagining objects, phenomena and processes as also generational, which in turn makes it easier to imagine human generations as always already more-than-human. For me, the notion of infra-generations adds to the new materialisms and Extinction Studies scholarship that I think with. New materialisms has done much to show how matter and humans are mutually constituted, while Extinction Studies considers generations beyond discrete cohorts of humans, or, as Extinction Studies scholars Deborah Bird Rose, Thom van Dooren and Matthew Chrulew point out, ‘time, death, and generations are ... inextricably tied together, with and against extinction’ (Rose et al., 2017, p. 10). The beauty of *infra-generations*, and *After Childhood* as a whole, is that children and childhood are brought into these conversations. For a post-human scholar of children and childhood, this is very helpful indeed.

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Decolonizing Place in Early Childhood Education

by Fikile Nxumalo (2019)

<https://www.routledge.com/Decolonizing-Place-in-Early-Childhood-Education/Nxumalo/p/book/9781138384538>

Reviewer: Nina Ginsberg

I vividly remember a primary school excursion to ‘the country’. Our class was standing on a viewing platform when a teacher swept his arm dramatically across the Dandenong Mountain Range before us and declared loudly: “Take a good look, kids. One day, all this will be yours!” Disrupting normative human-centred conceptions of nature that reinforce taken-for-granted grand narratives of child-as-outdoor-steward and inequitable colonial-capitalist exploitation of environments such as this Dandenong memory are at the heart of Assistant Professor Fikile Nxumalo’s 2019 book, [*Decolonizing Place in Early Childhood Education*](#).

In this volume, A/P* Fikile Nxumalo calls for a rethinking of current approaches to childhood environmental education. In keeping with my personal commitment to practise a scholarship of radical generosity and now in writing this piece which is not a book review (critique), but a book response (connection) with reciprocity, I start by naming in full A/P Fikile Nxumalo and providing details of her professional and academic contributions beyond this book, so her well-deserved reputation is known, visible and remembered. A/P Fikile Nxumalo is a Ndwande and Mavuso researcher, educator and pedagogista from eSwantini (Swaziland). Since completing an Early Childhood Education PhD in 2015, she has been teaching-writing-working on issues such as climate justice, early childhood, environmental education, settler colonialism, feminist geographies and anti-blackness. She is currently [Assistant Professor with Curriculum, Teaching and Learning](#) at the University of Toronto and is the Director of the [Childhood Place Pedagogy Lab](#). In this book, [A/P Fikile Nxumalo](#) draws on this wealth of experience and puts to work Indigenous knowledges, Black feminist geographies, and critical posthumanist theories to unsettle place-based curriculum and childhood environmental (justice) education. The book’s overall message is clear: be open to ethical, more-than-human, sociomaterial relationalities and resist (re)inscribing damaging settler-colonial anthropocentrism.

My first ‘agential cut’ (Barad, 2007) was to select this book as a deliberate political and scholarly move to engage with more diverse indigenous and black perspectives. I approached reading and writing this book response differently by evoking the spirit of posthumanisms and reading with reciprocity. I wanted to read more deeply - and with generosity and creativity. This was a rare pleasure to do – and something I will make more time to do again. It felt a little nerve-wracking at first (taking so

much time!), then it felt delicious (making so much time!). I gave myself permission to *read with relish* – as you would a beloved novel – diving wholeheartedly into the wor(l)ds of the book, sitting with the ideas, imagining the people and moments described, investing in the backstories and seeing where the author takes you.

This book adds to growing calls for scholarship to be more [‘non-extractive and care-driven’](#) by providing a compelling and timely provocation for *why* and *how* to engage with decolonial practices. Academic readers [trained in various traditional reading practices](#) will appreciate the cogent structure of this book which moves purposefully from outlining the context, theoretical underpinnings and ‘data’ approaches into a series of ‘framings’ (chapters), each of which is set in a different natural environment (forest, mountain, community garden and other locations). Each framing explores the central complexities-in-practice of refiguring presences, geotheorising and testify-witnessing to problematise children, learning, spaces/places, absences, (micro)politics and relationality using concrete everyday examples. The final chapter powerfully details environmental racism and the significant lack of black and Indigenous worldviews within place-based discourses and practice. With transdisciplinary applications, this book is a must-read entry point for people interested in how raced, classed, gendered and colonized bodies are valued, storied and affected.

I set myself a challenge in line with [Prof. Lauren Berlant* and Prof. Kathleen Stewart’s *Hundreds* \(2019\)](#) to summarise the decolonial tensions raised in the book in 100 words. Here it is:

Not answering, but asking about ethical, responsive, accountable attention to caring relations. Past-present histories. Resisting Euro-Western normative practices of erasure. (Re)storying place-based learning, storied place and place stories. Witnessing practices. Refiguring presences. Responding to more-than-human encounters with forests, trails, tree stumps and hollows while walking, lingering, touching and noticing. Reframing settler-colonial orientations. Worlding wetlands, waste, racoons, rocks, vegetables, worms, moss, apple trees, bees and mountain deforestation. Digging deeper into ecological testifying-witnessing possibilities. Geotheorising children’s geo-colonial inheritances with geontological interruptions to rethink extractive practices. Grappling with Black Anthropocene, Black Outdoors, Black Un-belongings, Black Feminist geographies and Indigenous experiences. Decolonising situated ‘doings’.

A key strength of this book is the diverse philosophical pool of women that have been brought into discussions. Some Feminist New Materialists are criticised for not adequately acknowledging preceding contributions of other ontologies or social movements: an example is [Prof. Annette Gough and A/P Hillary Whitehouse’s \(2020\) claims of ‘eco-amnesia’](#). Without fuss or fanfare, A/P Fikile Nxumalo expertly diffuses such tensions by thoughtfully and seamlessly synthesising a range of perspectives, with a particular focus on attributing non-Europeans (Anderson &

Christen, 2019) with fidelity and confidence – something many readers can learn from. Doing so gives recognition for diverse past-present experiences, theorisations, disciplines and approaches without reinscribing strict delineation or fixity of Western-focused ontological categorisation. Such scholarship embraces plurality, decolonises attribution, enriches discussions and redresses ontological or geographical limitations. Impressive also is the relational analytical-practical detail A/P Fikile Nxumalo achieves - stand out of which is the mushroom (re)figuring of meaning-making attunements of: seeing, testifying, witnessing, testifying-witnessing, engaged witnessing, geotheorising, and geontological orientations.

For this reading, I did a few things differently. For example, to disrupt habitual, extractive reading practices of starting at the beginning and reading logically 'forward' and flicking to (what I considered) 'the most important part/s', after reading the first three chapters for orientation, I read the framings (Chapters 4-7) deliberately out of order to slow down and watch what I-reader-researcher was doing and to break linear deconstructive expectations. I also 'performed' reading this book as 'situated reading-doing' – that is, I read aloud each framing, while sitting on the ground, in an outdoor environment similar to the ecology I was reading about. I read out *Restoring Garden Relations* beside a frog pond in my backyard garden. I took my time reading the content aloud to the vegetables, birds, compost, baskets, bees, neighbours, fruit trees, sunshine, lizards, fences, worms, stones and native stripey marsh frogs: a more-than-human, (re)iterative entanglement of (re)storying bodies, situated reciprocity, and slow scholarship. On another day, I read *Unsettling Forest Encounters* while walking, sitting and encountering [Bunya Mountain rainforests trails](#).

Furthermore, I did not do this reading-doing alone – I reached out to others. I met with some Traditional Custodians and Indigenous Elders of the land I am visiting-working on to disrupt my settler-colonial perspectives and to explore how, as an educator-researcher, I might contribute to spaces and places that resist damaging social and environmental racism. I discussed the messy implications of decolonising educational places with colleagues and other PhDers, and in particular with my father, [Dr Sam Ginsberg](#), who is a child Ecopsychologist of over 35 years glocal experience and social activist, but new to posthumanisms. I took his enthusiastic curiosity to engage with 'challenging starting points' (Blackman, 2019) as an encouraging sign for future transdisciplinary uptake, allyship and action. Talking about decoloniality tested the limits of the family kettle: we drank endless cups of tea while discussing what it means to 'read outside' - ontologically, symbolically, methodologically and literally – and what *doing* reading outside *does*.

Interestingly, both Dr Sam and I admitted to initially wanting more concrete examples from the book: *more* ideas *we* could apply as teachers. This expectation is a shadow habit of traditional academic reading – we wanted the book to 'do the work' for us: Tell us (Fikile) what we (readers) can take (from your) ideas and apply to (our) classrooms. That is not reading with reciprocity. So, we changed our

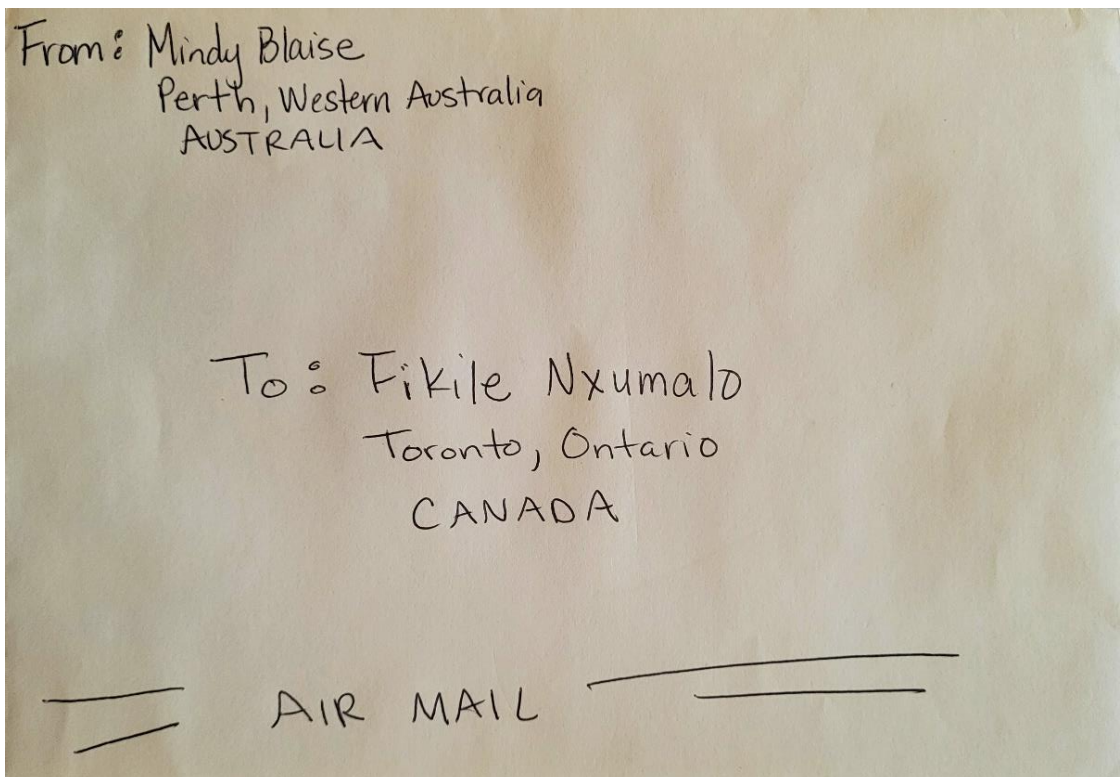
approach from *what* to *how* - and came up with our own classroom examples to trial – as a positive reading-doing move to *build on*, not *take from* the book. I am currently incubating the activities we discussed with a new class - and I will share what emerges with people who are interested, on my blog [Bicycles Create Change](#) and with Fikile via email. Sharing [#collabrary](#) experiences such as these helps manifest the much-needed shifts required to move beyond current clinical, educational and social traditions of extractivism and insular scholarship towards a more collaborative and ethical ‘radical relationality’(Recollect, 2016).

This book insists on meaningful decolonial learning-research that draws together past-present knowledge-practices and accountability for relationships, choices, selections, resources, topics, contexts, methods, analysis, and means of information sharing (Wilson, 2008). It reminds us that colonialism is ongoing and not something of the past. Although inchoate, some of the reading-writing approaches described here helped this reader move more mindfully towards enacting decolonial learning-research. In a time of social dissonance and mounting environmental degradation, engagement with Black, Indigenous, posthumanist and feminist approaches is imperative if we are to (re)image a more generative future for all.

** In this writing, [I continue exploring how to make female academic contributions more visible and valued](#). Here, I give the first and surname for all female scholars cited to unsettle the absolute supremacy of phallogentric lineage and privilege of NOT citing by (father/husband) surname only. I also deliberately include the current academic position of female scholars cited to highlight their authority, seniority and expertise achieved. The execution might be clunky, but it’s the subversive re(in)citing endeavour that’s most interesting.*

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Dear Fikile,

I just wanted to send you a quick thank you for the scholarship that you do in early childhood education. Reading your book, Decolonizing Place in Early Childhood Education, has been a joy. I've been familiar with your work for a long time, and it is exciting to see how your ideas have come together in this book. This book has so much to offer the field and me.

I was particularly drawn to Chapter 6, Geotheorizing place relations, because of the ways in which you show me how grappling looks and feels with mountain and mountain-child relations, ^{and how this is} ~~as~~ a possibility towards acknowledging children as a geological force. Considering children as a geological force is not easy to do,

but the examples you share make it a possibility.

One of the most important aspects of this work is the idea that not everything happens in the encounters! More work is required thinking, questioning, following an idea, researching, making connections, turning ideas over, revisiting field notes, bringing not-fully formed ideas to teachers and others, and thinking-with current events.

Thank you for showing me (and the field) ways to engage with ideas and mountain-child encounters that interrupt business as usual. The geontological interruptions and resonances that your scholarship offers help deepen my own understandings of what postdevelopmental pedagogies can offer the field.

Thanks again Fikile

for this work!
I can't wait to see what's next -
Mich

I begin this review with a slight disclaimer – that is to say that I exist on the edges of the research and methodologies associated with this text and the studies the author draws from in her work with young children and place-based education. As part of my engagement with *The Ediths*, I enjoy the challenge of reading outside my comfort zone and the rigour of the discussions that extend from them, but I have not directly engaged with research that utilises these ideas, theories, and ways of thinking. Not because I don't want to, but because my research until now has been more traditional in approaches and conclusions. As a result, I come to this review with naivety causing me to second guess what I am drawing from while interacting with the text.

Much of the reading of this text took place within the South-West Boojarah Region that is home to the Wardandi and Bibulmun/Piblemen Noongar peoples (<https://www.noongarculture.org.au/south-west-boojarah/>). The remaining reading and review were completed on Wadjuk Noongar land where I live and work. The South-West Boojarah Region - the area now known as Hamelin Bay - is an annual camping destination for my family where the sting rays still come to the shore and the cliffs provide protection to the campground from the coastal wind. As the connection to land and place are critical elements within this manuscript, it seemed appropriate to acknowledge the land that provided the space for the reading to be done.

In this text, Fikile Nxumalo provides questions, challenges practices, and provokes thinking about place through multiple lenses as she provides examples from research with young children and educators across sites in what is now called British Columbia, Canada. "The book is intended as an interruption to the erasures and omissions of environmental education with young children" (p. 1) through case study examples from multiple sites as part of a larger study. The goal is to unsettle current practices in environmental early childhood education to explore existing entanglements between children and nature and the political, colonial, anti-black and anthropogenic inheritances that are impossible to separate within these interactions.

I found this text challenging to read. Not only because the language is something I am not ingrained with but because I need to really *read* rather than *skim read* which in a way was great as that was the purpose of the reading with reciprocity. I enjoy the challenge of thinking differently and this book required me (and was intended) to stretch my thinking and imagine all the previous work I have done with children differently. As an early childhood teacher, I was never a theme planner or one who had 30 versions of the same piece of artwork, but I was one who looked for answers to questions and tried to assist children in solving problems that they were encountering. Not through giving the answer but guiding and scaffolding to a

conclusion. I admit that at times during the reading I still struggled with the constant questioning and wondered if there is a time where you stop asking questions and look at solutions. I wonder if the children needed an answer to the regrowth processes within the forest and the moss growing in the stumps (Chapter 4); or to explore how gardening was used by Aboriginal peoples and that these processes can be adapted to the modern world (Chapter 5); or to find out why the bees were dying within the gardens of the setting (Chapter 7). Perhaps this is partly due to my ingrained Euro-Western thinking, and this aligns with the challenge to think differently that is presented in the text.

In applying the *Ways of Reading* I found that providing the close reading suits my current understanding. I did find threads of coherent strands (constructive) throughout the manuscript and can identify strengths of the text (generous) but have decided to focus on the methodology and structure as these provided clarity and connection to my thinking and learning.

Methodology

Nxumalo's research was undertaken as part of a four-year Investigating Quality (IQ) Project in which she interacted with 23 educators and approximately 200 children across several centres that she spent time in each week. During these visits Fikile participated in practice and gathered multi-modal observations of everyday moments within and outside the centres. Her work engaged the educators in critically reflective discussions and practices and included the completion of pedagogical narrations as a form of documentation of the children's learning that were critical to the methodology for assessment, reflection, and inquiry. Fikile also facilitated learning circles among the educator teams and the engagement included the introduction of texts to challenge the thinking of the educators she worked with.

In the research, Nxumalo utilised methodologies of *practices of witnessing* and *refiguring presences* "to attend to settler colonial formations in everyday place encounters in early childhood education" (p. 7). The practice of witnessing (Chapter 2) encourages deeper attention to what is. being observed to apply a theoretical lens to notice the multiplicities present. These include recognising political truths, doubts and tensions that are present and rather than glossing over these, the educator, researcher, or reader should situate themselves within the possibilities. This witnessing is applied to the notion of refiguring presences (Chapter 3) that challenged educators, and the reader. To interrupt settler colonial perspectives and be uncomfortable in the previously untold stories of place. Rather than viewing the children as innocent in nature, the refiguring tackled the issues of colonialism. Place was not just a scene for children to learn within but was storied to examine relations with Indigenous cultures and histories as well as more-than-human others across the different case study sites.

Structure

Each chapter examines a different context within which to examine decolonial land education with young children and reiterates the possibilities “as a way to creatively grapple with...the doubts...and silences” (p. 39) that interactions with children in place can bring up. The repeated use of the witnessing practices and the challenge to refigure presence across multiple contexts allows these ideas to be reinforced and embedded into thinking practices throughout the text. Each chapter is “concerned with situating early childhood land education within the real-world, anthropogenically damaged places in which children live” (p. 20).

Using these underlying theoretical frames across a range of contexts, Nxumalo is able to extend on individual theoretical groundings in relation to alternate situations and examples. This reinforces the arguments but does not become repetitive as the context, topics and challenges addressed are different and relate with alternate elements of nature.

The reading of the text raises questions and causes discomfort as is the intention.

What I am left wondering, however, is:

How can educators with varied qualifications and experience be encouraged and supported to think and interact in these ways?

If children can be the ones to share these understandings with the wider audience through their documented learning? And

How can these learnings be applied in practical ways to encourage awareness and change within the wider audience?

Inefficient Mapping: A Protocol for Attuning to Phenomena

By Linda Knight (2021)

<https://punctumbooks.com/titles/inefficient-mapping-a-protocol-for-attuning-to-phenomena/>

Reviewer: Malvika Agarwal

Linda Knight's subversive account on mapping practices paves a brilliant path for academics to engage with the messiness of the research.

Inefficient Mapping: A Protocol for Attuning to Phenomena, first published in 2021, is precisely as Knight says a "book... designed to be taken out on mapping expeditions to be referred to, consulted with, and experimented with by those who are familiar or new to mapping" (p.3). Knight proposes a methodology by which researchers may engage in non-reductive mapping, which also notices the immanent and non-categorizable. She proposes methods for mapping that produce a fuller account of phenomena, which also acknowledges and is transparent about the chaos of life. Knight proposes inefficient mapping as a speculative and event-oriented practice that does not impose or control movements within research but opts to notice what is typically ignored in experimental research. Inefficient mapping is unlike a western method of mapping, as it does not opt for denaturing schemata of interest from that which is entangled with it.

Knight takes us on an ethical wayfinding journey and writes how inefficient mapping emerges as a protocol for attuning to phenomena in research. Her work like its name's sake describes the laborious nature of inefficient mapping. Where laboring is a way by which ethics of care are enacted in the act of mapping. Her work resists urgency to produce for the sake of satisfying anthropocentric tendencies. Whereby the Anthropocene is characterized by the capitalistic and colonial ways that saturate the epoch's achievements. The resistances come in from mapping the liveliness of things instead of producing static archival accounts of a subject. Generated thus are endless possibilities. Interestingly, it is the same instinctive tendency to extract that comes up against, as Knight calls them. As I read Knight's chaomaps and her writing, I find myself fixated and laboring to understand the non-representational marks. I realized instinctively my thoughts want to see representational logic within her maps however, due Knight's methodological approach to the maps produced out of inefficient mapping only exposes and poses questions for me to consider of the contexts and situations mapped.

Knight's book contributes an accessible protocol for experimental and non-representational ways of engaging research. This book proposes a robust and well-explained research methodology that adds to the rising field of new research

ontologies that respond to neoliberal research culture and the growing precarity of our worlds. Knight's book does not pander to the production model that insidiously takes reign of movements in our every day, because it is not concerned with ease nor assembly line way of producing research data. Knight's book is deeply aware of the many estuaries an ethical research protocol may break into if the movements do not remain mindful of the breaks in logic that derail the theoretical flow of entanglements between the research project and the larger context at all times. And when the project does break into estuaries, inefficient mapping remains mindful to acknowledge the changes within the theoretical flow with its materialities.

Inefficient mapping adds to the emerging field of non-representational ways by which research is taken up. Knight's work is essential for those who may be engaging in research and acknowledge that method is not neutral, or those that perceive tools as apparatus that co-create the phenomena being recorded, and researchers who wish to explore data as tentative and question data validity and conservatism.

Knight provides numerous visual examples throughout the book and has organized the chapters systematically and successfully achieves its intentions to be a document that one can take with them to engage in inefficiently map phenomena. The writing is also successful at being accessible to everyone at differing levels of artistic proficiency, this is because the cartographer is not required to specialize in art and drawing. Instead, the approach asks the cartographers to attune to the non-representation and affective energies. What is produced is a messy mapping and not images created for aesthetic value.

I offer the following figure that emerges from a reciprocal reading of Knight's work. These are gestural marks layered with notes from the margins of the document. This figure is an attempt at mapping the corporeal affects that are there as I attempt to understand and make sense of Knight's writing. The grey-black border on the figure denotes everything else that is happening which I come in and out of as I read Knight's work. The coming in and out of reading is noted by the marks that sweep across the page and end up on the black border. How I ignore everything else but the text I am reading, is noted by the saturation of grey and black marks layered on the center of the page. It shows the stillness and lack of movement as I get absorbed into Knight's writing. The repetitive short patterns on the top left of the page denote moments of distraction and breaks between reading or reading without understanding. There is so much more going on but I offer this intermittent mapping of my reading as part of the book review.

Linda Knight's (2021) *Inefficient Mapping: A Protocol for Attuning to Phenomena* is an emerging methodological ontological space that experiments with non-representational theories. The mapping methodology presented, counters colonial ordering of the world with posthuman readings and prompts a rethinking of my own research practice. Central to mapping inefficiently is Karen Barad's (2007) concept of phenomena and becoming attuned to the richness and complexity of what is happening during an event. Knight (2021) proposes understandings emerge through "physicality/materiality and non-representational components such as affects, the sensorial, the cultural, the historical and the political" (p. 73). These thick dimensionalities are mapped inefficiently, or unrealistically, through abstract gestural scratches, yet somehow they make our world more visible.

Until recently, I hadn't considered that maps could be political, colonial or partial. My western education presented maps as representations of reality and accurate historical records. Knight's (2021) *Inefficient Mapping* confronts these assumptions and challenges me to see mapping as a method for attuning to the unseen and for seeking relationality. At first glance, this inefficient way of mapping appears random and child-like, but when viewed as speculative readings that critique fixing, ordering and segmenting, I perceive these maps as sensual energies in motion.

Partial Perspectives

Western maps are accepted as objective, static and truthful. But as specific readings of the earth, they are partial perspectives and involve violence at some level. Knight (2021) maintains the world became organised through colonialism and war, but important to my own research, she also contends the dominance of western mapping practices have influenced our understanding of relationality. The author suggests "space is not just a surface on which human life takes place" (p. 75) and warns not to reduce the more-than-human to atmosphere, backdrop or Other. The challenge, according to Knight (2021) is to ensure "mapping centralises rights and responsibilities, citizenship, custodianship and Indigenous sovereignty and relations with place." (p. 75).

How to map inefficiently?

Knight (2021) asserts that she arrived at inefficient mapping through visually tracing sensations and affects in phenomena. These included investigations into "citizenship, cities and the strange, chimeric, biospeculative human, insect, weather, animal, refuse, bio-matter, cultural, and historic urban citizens that populate cities now and in the future." (p. 38). To map inefficiently the researcher, or human cartographer, makes a commitment to decentralise themselves in the space or event (Knight, 2021). As changes and movements occur beyond the scale and speed of the human gaze, Knight (2021) proposes to "forego easily digestible schematics of infographics" (p. 15). Instead she uses marks, lines and tracings that convey the

chaos of activity and complexity in real-world events, in what she refers to as *Chaosgraphics*.

Inefficient mapping or wayfinding firstly requires a place. Once chosen, Knight (2021) recommends taking the time to research and get to know this place beyond your specific research area. This can be cultural, political, historical, colonial, Indigenous, environmental information, but this is important as it extends on how a place ethically becomes more familiar. This also brings about care when navigating, as the information remains foregrounded whilst mapping.

What can I learn from this text about how to go about my own research?

My own research requires building relations with/in a National Park area recently affected by bushfire. In response to Knight's inefficient mapping, firstly I tracked my own movements. Tracking your position, movement, speed and elevation is a common function in fitness and child safety apps on mobile phones and devices. Most mobile phones continuously track and send your location data to your mobile service provider. I installed a fitness app, recorded my visits to the park and extracted the data as vector files (see figures 1 and 2). These maps of my own movement were then placed over aerial photos of the landscape using images sourced from Google Earth (figure 3).

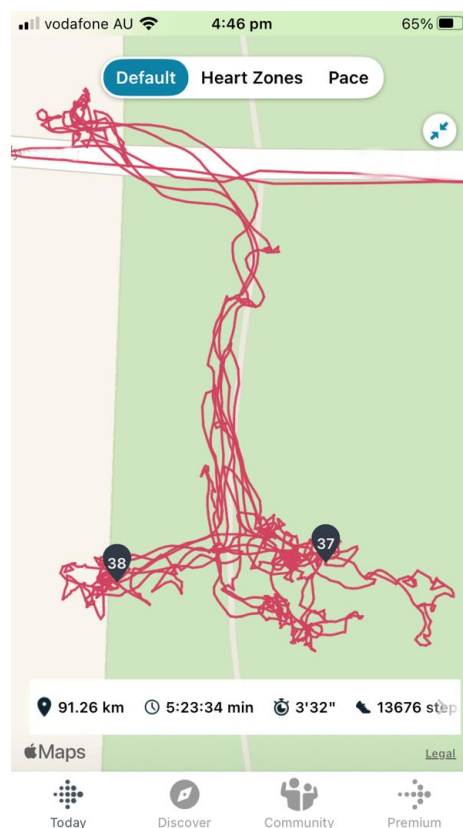


Figure 1. Movement tracking on a mobile phone application

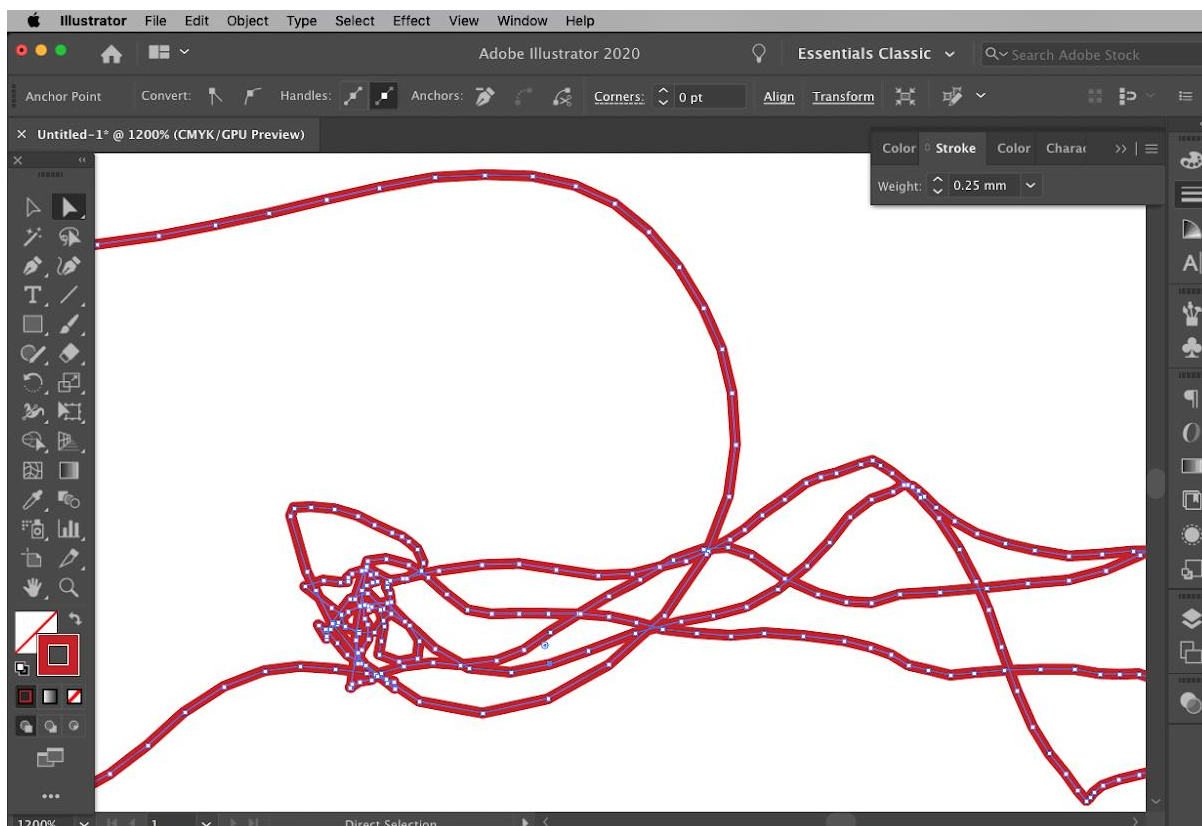


Figure 2. My tracks as vector pathways show how movements were translated and recorded as a series of straight lines.

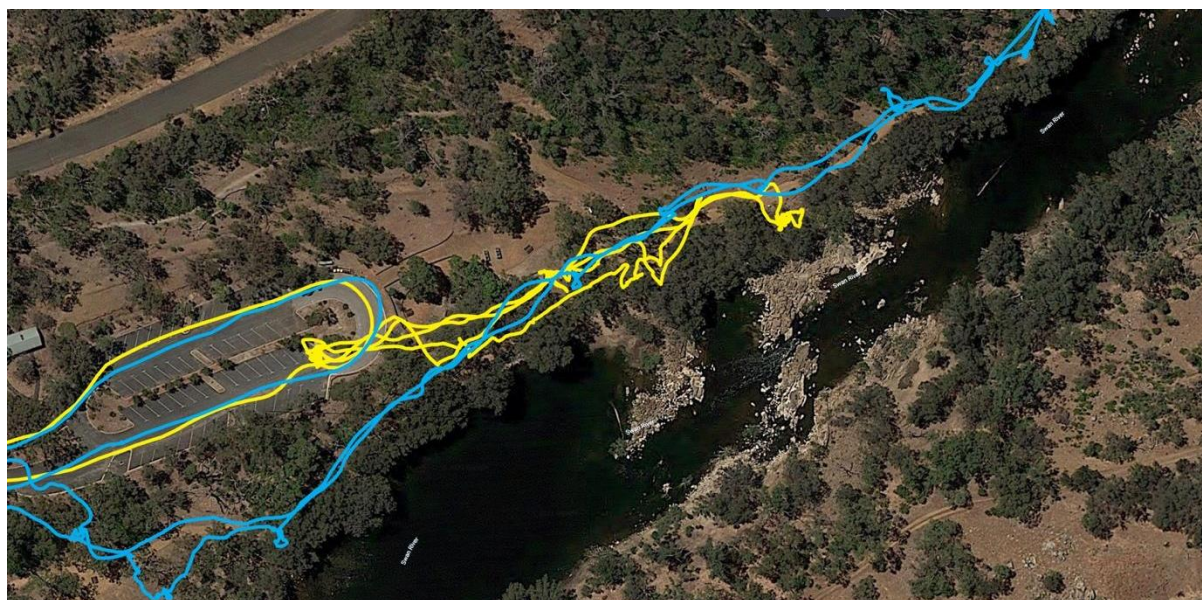


Figure 3. My tracks on Google Earth images.

The first thing I noticed is the Google Earth images were taken prior to the February 2021 bushfire and before the record rainfalls that followed and resulted in very high water levels in the Swan River. Neither of which can be seen in these images. This place is very different now. The layers of my movements and attempt to *map efficiently* results in combinations of three different times and places, making these maps also inefficient and partial. Secondly, during these walks, my phone showed no mobile phone reception, interestingly satellites were still able to track my movements in detail. And lastly, sites visited regularly such as that shown in figure 1, reveal repeated patterns that reflect relations with the more-than-human in this place, not seen in these maps. This prompts questioning of what is mapped? And, how do I re-centre myself in this research to pay more attention to the more-than-human?

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Reviewer: **Jo Pollitt**

Through acts, practices, thoughts, and speculations experimental methods are generating new ontological connections between interrelationalities, phenomena, matter, and meaning by maintaining the complexity and detail of those relations. (58)

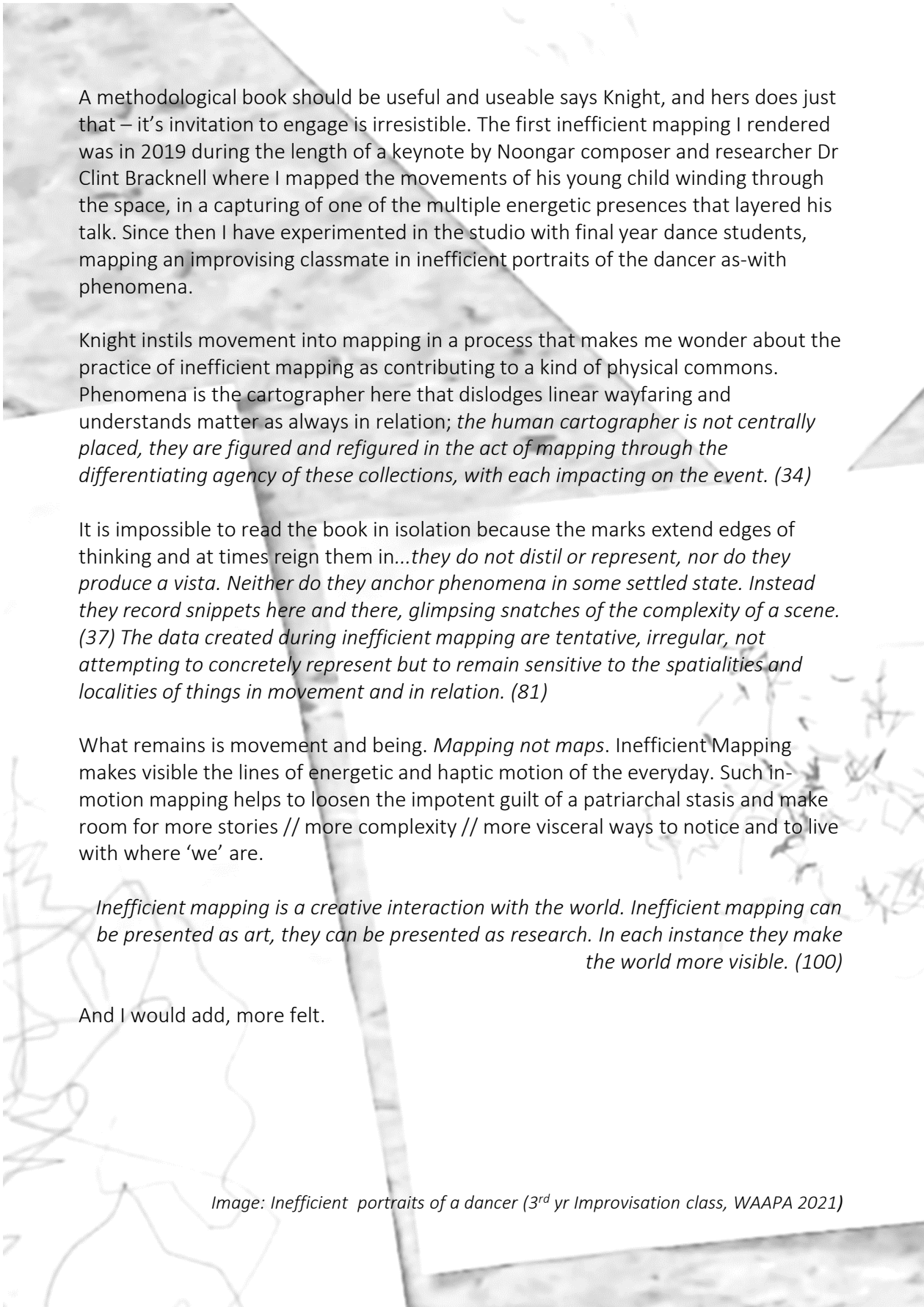
I read Linda Knight's work on inefficient mapping in overlap. As a chaosgraph. Layer over layer over layer; *performative, corporeal, moving, creative (85)*. Book, videos, inefficient mappings, social media remnants, images. This artist scholar is a collective. Her bodies of work are generative and make room for making. This work is an invitation. For response. For taking up and extending the practice.

Inefficient mapping is an embodied practice of noticing and mapping phenomena while not looking at the surface being marked. This practice of feeling rather than looking directly at the mark-making as it emerges demands contending with one's own body in an immediate cartographic collaboration with bodies of place, *quivering*.

I include quotations from Knight in italics as repetitions and reiterations of other ways of *reading the world*. This kind of reading is dispersed and collective, accumulated through many bodies of attention in a webbed and spacious chaos. A multiplicitous network that reiterates the partiality of mapping and ignites thinking with a different kind of monogamy and connection to place. One that is distributed and prised with stories pressing through the closeted and definitive tracks of colonial logics. Knight invites us to think of inefficient mapping as a kind of countermapping practice forged in intentional cartographic unfixing in a *political, ethical, gestural commitment to thinking differently about reading the world. (91)*

Inefficient mapping enacts an embodied poetics through a practice of *attuning to affect and sensation of phenomena. (71)* Each mark made in the images throughout the book bring place to the fore as partial and chaotic renderings that ignite thinking with ways of seeing and documenting in; *a hybrid arts practice, partly visually marking snippets of phenomena, partly theorising on the world, partly speculating on futures and pasts, partly and curiously touching the tenses and registers of the space. (52)* The sophistication of Knight's own practice of mark-making-mapping is dancery in its attention and makes evident the rigour of attention and attunement required in improvisation.

The foregrounding of the corporeal undermines the human/nature binary that underwrites histories of western mapping, celebrates the long histories of corporeal Indigenous mapping practices, and attends to the politics of interpretive and semiotic documentation (11)



A methodological book should be useful and useable says Knight, and hers does just that – it's invitation to engage is irresistible. The first inefficient mapping I rendered was in 2019 during the length of a keynote by Noongar composer and researcher Dr Clint Bracknell where I mapped the movements of his young child winding through the space, in a capturing of one of the multiple energetic presences that layered his talk. Since then I have experimented in the studio with final year dance students, mapping an improvising classmate in inefficient portraits of the dancer as-with phenomena.

Knight instils movement into mapping in a process that makes me wonder about the practice of inefficient mapping as contributing to a kind of physical commons. Phenomena is the cartographer here that dislodges linear wayfaring and understands matter as always in relation; *the human cartographer is not centrally placed, they are figured and refigured in the act of mapping through the differentiating agency of these collections, with each impacting on the event.* (34)

It is impossible to read the book in isolation because the marks extend edges of thinking and at times reign them in...*they do not distil or represent, nor do they produce a vista. Neither do they anchor phenomena in some settled state. Instead they record snippets here and there, glimpsing snatches of the complexity of a scene.* (37) *The data created during inefficient mapping are tentative, irregular, not attempting to concretely represent but to remain sensitive to the spatialities and localities of things in movement and in relation.* (81)

What remains is movement and being. *Mapping not maps.* Inefficient Mapping makes visible the lines of energetic and haptic motion of the everyday. Such in-motion mapping helps to loosen the impotent guilt of a patriarchal stasis and make room for more stories // more complexity // more visceral ways to notice and to live with where 'we' are.

Inefficient mapping is a creative interaction with the world. Inefficient mapping can be presented as art, they can be presented as research. In each instance they make the world more visible. (100)

And I would add, more felt.

Image: Inefficient portraits of a dancer (3rd yr Improvisation class, WAAPA 2021)

Decolonial Feminisms, Power and Place: Sentipensando with Rural Women in Colombia

by Laura Rodriguez Castro (2021)

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030594398#aboutAuthors>

Reviewer: Sayuri Amemiya

Situated in the political, geographical and socio-historical context of rural Columbia in the peace accord period, *Decolonial Feminisms, Power and Place* advances marginalized women's lived experience knowledge. Constructing alternate presences of the rural Columbian women is a project towards deconstructing colonial power and challenging the coloniality of feminist actions and ideas. The book invites readers to critically engage with our own positionality and our relations to colonial power and feminist work.

Laura Rodriguez Castro proposes to challenge and change the positioning of rural Columbian women as poor victims of historical and ongoing violence in the country. The rural women experience multitudes of violence as a result of their gender, ethnicity and geographical location. The complexities and intersectionality of violence are interwoven with embodied and emplaced forms of the women's resistance in the book. The women's homes, for example, are geographically exposed to armed forces and permeated with patriarchal inequalities but are also places of negotiation and collaboration. . In the author's engagement with the rural women, their homes and the surrounding lands are where violence is confronted and knowledge is produced.

The rural women's relationship with the land is conceptualized with the concept of *territorio cuerpo-tierra* or *territory body-land*. The women enact resistance in and with their body-land territories from negotiating domestic labour with their husbands to enterprises founded on kin and neighbourhood relations. In the author's interviews with women social leaders, it emerges that global organizations and locally rooted organizations have different goals regarding women's access to land. This discrepancy reinforces the book's argument that mainstream feminisms' colonial agendas do not serve the rural Columbian women. The author urges the incorporation of the rural women's body-land territories into political discussions as an essential part of the project to "dismantle the coloniality of power" (p. 144).

I read the book's project to dismantle colonial power with attention to its creative and ethical possibilities through Braidotti's (2011) critical theory of affirmation. While the words such as *dismantling* and *unlearning* emphasize the deconstructive aspect of the project, they also convey the author's unrelenting commitment to creating change. Rodriguez Castro advances the rural women's place-based knowledge and

collective defiance over the narrative of suffering. The rural women are illustrated as those who, as a result of living through pain, are in the “privileged knowing position” to engender ethical transformation (Braidotti, 2011, p. 345). Through the engagement with the rural women, the author generates two decolonial epistemic concepts that invite our ethical actions.

In her participatory approach to producing decolonial knowledge, Rodriguez Castro introduces *sentipensar*. *Sentipensar* is *feeling-thinking* that deconstructs the divides between feeling and thinking, and knowing and researching, that are imposed by the Western epistemological traditions. It is a creation of a decolonial epistemic and methodological position that constructs the alternate presences of the rural Columbian women as knowledge holders. In articulating and enacting feeling-thinking with the women, the author is prompted to engage with an epistemic project of positioning herself.

Rodriguez Castro employs *unlearning* as a critical feminist reflexive practice of positioning the researcher. Unlearning as a decolonial reflexivity holds us accountable to various learnings each of us carries that are intertwined with our ancestries. The author grapples with her race, ethnicity, class and the associated power and privilege in relation to the women she engages with. She also extends her reflexivity to her positionality as an immigrant in the context of Australian academia and its implications with the Western epistemologies. Being accountable with a commitment to decolonial feminisms means being cognizant of our own complacency in the systems that reproduce and reinforce colonial power.

The book presents us with unlearning and *sentipensar* as instruments to challenge colonial power and hold ourselves accountable in the process. It acknowledges the rural Columbian women’s critical position to enact decolonial transformation without denying the pain they live through. Privileging their place-based knowledge and remembering their pain in our collective memory can engender ethical actions (Braidotti, 2011). Rodriguez Castro’s feeling-thinking with the women inscribes in my memory the pain but also resistance of the rural women I now remember. It holds me accountable to reflect on my own positionality and to question and challenge colonial implications in my commitment to feminist work.

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How to unlearn what we know and unthink the system: Contextualised
Communitarian Economies, Feminine Solidarity, Body-land and Territorial Agonism.

Laura Rodríguez Castro's 2021 debut book *Decolonial Feminisms, Power and Place: Sentipensando with Rural Women in Colombia* is a prolific contribution to the ontologies of the Global South stemming from her collective engagement with diverse rural community groups in Colombia, detailing her experience amongst living with the Campesina women in her homeland. In the wake of Colombian governmental post-peace accord period with the Revolutionary Armed Forces People's Army (FARC-EP) the extractive legacies and violent acts that endure now-a-days are typically driven by rogue actors motivated by greed or utter poverty. Perpetuated by activities such as illegal tree felling of the Putumayo Southern Colombian Amazon, or tactical murders of local community leaders acting to protect sacred realms financed by a various array of obfuscated hosts, all of which, conferring to Castro, are a result of the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP).

As a consequence, her fieldwork details how the persistent body-land, social and ecological violence preserves 'the marginalisation of the majority of women's voices and experiences'. To alleviate this Castro articulates the knowledges and practices of the Campesina women describing their emancipatory potentials. By concentrating on the bodies and materials she encounters, as visceral sites where the ethical, political and intersectional agonism manifests, the reader is brought closer to deep-seated political endeavours that strive to combat the inferences of the CMP which relentlessly presume that regulated frameworks can be marshalled to account for all the others.

By placing her body on the line, Castro's situated ethnography consciously makes her presence perceptible, questioning her 'positionality with a focus on race, ethnicity and class, which are often ignored in colonial feminist work' by drawing upon 'participatory feeling-thinking' case studies through: in-depth interviews; groups interviews during rituals of eating; photographic documentation including walking in distinctive periods to discover light intimately known as 'veredear'. The bold, structurally transformative, insurgent accounts of Campesina women, their 'resistance and re-existence', these communities recognise dominant and inherited strategies and support each other to shed them. Castro bears testimony to the sway that grassroots progressive feminism has in transfiguring and creating alternative foundations for those most marginalised in the absence of deep structural change. Thorough reflections on the necessity for more situated feminist futures, to contend how and why not become ensnared in the undercurrents of CMP terrains.

Castro interrogates the contradictions of the plural worlds within which she dwells, now as a privileged Latino researcher based in Australia, attending to these practices

have importance for reflexive feminist solidarity, it allows us, as a community of feminist researchers, to appreciate what languages are expended, acquiring how decisions are made by whom, and what outcomes they enable, that constitute agonistic 'Sentipensando and Unlearning'.

The salience of Castro's case studies that recount her experiences in rural communities of women who are reconnecting with homebrewed knowledge. As they strive to untangle from essentialist divisions and gain autonomy from the undeniable sources of income provided by the stream of spiritual tourists whose cultural misappropriations persists and endures. Think: hip 'gringos' who parachute in to live with the Sharman's of the Colombian Andes for a divine cleanse, probably after stint of super yacht labour for the 1%ers. Or other throngs of cashed up youth who are commonly witnessed to be traveling through South America after completion of extreme military service (conceivably enacting massacres of their own civilian neighbours) need of an extended backpacking trip. Many come seeking redemption through Ayahuasca purification ceremonies, but in reality are maintaining CMP and the south as a site of gross economic disparity in relation to the prosperity of the Global North.

Articulating the contemporary global challenge of inequity for Colombia and beyond, this book proves just how powerful candid feminist scholarship can be. Castro's commitment to nurturing an ethics of care rooted in social justice dismantles received 'ideas of liberation ...forged in the process of identifying' exchanging these traditional customs to instead foster a more situated awareness. It requires generosity and a profound compulsion for feminist scholars to equivocally think 'beyond gender, to a world of possibility' (Nicholas 2021). Navigating over (and across) notional feminist waves and 'e-bile' (Jane 2016) audaciously Castro advances beyond these obstacles, addressing decolonial feminism 'not as a concrete theory, but as a process that is alive, emphasising the openness of identities and the entanglement of ways of thinking'. It is rare to read a scholar who embodies such a strong combination of theoretical depth, methodological rigor, and promise to radical transformative women led socio-cultural practice. The work is a momentous contribution anchored in epistemic analysis that questions self-proclaimed radical feminist NGOs guided by the creed of colonial virtue signalling.

Addressing all the nuances yielded by the book – exceed the bounds of this review– however, the prospect I am left with is the capacity for grassroots women's movements and other peripheral agents to contribute to compelling innovations and nuanced understandings, through mediating, interpreting through 'Sentipensando and Unlearning', a place where transdisciplinary knowledges may flourish. Most importantly, it is Castro's courage and integrity that offers nascent pathways for what it means to be a feminist in the 21st Century, is to be dedicated to a situated process of improvisation in order to constantly be in a weave of infinite configurations with cosmographic relations that requires constant underscoring and alteration. Readers will discover how the self-determined practices of Campesina

women in Colombia are central to expanding global anti-capitalist struggles around care, nourishing and inspiring hope in what is seeded, so these polyphonic existences can continue to take root and thrive.

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Homecoming

by Elfie Shiosaki (2021)

<https://www.magabala.com/collections/elfie-shiosaki>

Reviewer: Paea Leach

Writing from Wurundjeri and Woi Wurrung lands, Regional Victoria.

A.

I settle with *Homecoming* quietly each night and read it twice in a row over a week, without a break. I simply close the book and begin again. I fall asleep with it on my chest. This feels important, because it is as much a poem and heart yearning, as it is evidence of resistance, and an unpicking of histories documented by white hands and hearts.

Somehow, Helene Cixous comes to mind:
*"my text is written in white and black, in milk and night" **.

I read in silence and fall asleep with the three words that demark each section of the book turning in me: Resist, Survive, Renew.

I wake with these three words in the night. I drift with them and know that I cannot know the gravitas and resonant arrhythmias of embodied histories of being Black (woman) in Australia – ‘then’ (early 1900s) and, still, in this ‘now’. Impossible to know what it is to be stood on a table and put on display, spoken of as not there and declared

“how clean (I was)

for an Aboriginal” (p 75).

I will not know this in my body.

I read with empathy and sorrow and despair and quiet ache: ‘The Past is a Second Heartbeat’ she says (p 122).

I read with empathy and sorrow and disgust: ‘Records of Slavery’ (p 37) and a healing grandmother whose touch was refused by white people in hospital.

I do not read to name what is not here for there is enough absence in these pages – mothers, children, land, fathers, agency. Irreversible slaying.

I read into the intimacy of Elfie Shiosaki's family story and deeply reflect (again,
again) on the

Madness

of the

Whole
(pause)

Enterprise.

The force of an

Empire

Ignorant
to

insidious destructions of the details of peoples lives and hearts: the thoughtless
quotidian destruction IT was reeking.

Daily yes.

Repeatedly yes.

Resist, Survive, Renew: the placing of the three frame the meta narrative and carry
me through. Potent, truncated informants of context, politics, culture, resistance,
colour, activism and love.

B.

I am a Māori Australian woman, considering my own lineage, rupture and silenced
chaos. I choose to meet and be-with Homecoming as a woman, an artist, a mother,
a Māori whose culture was trained out of her.

On some level I understand.

On many I cannot.

The pain

The stories

The fragments.

It is a responsibility to read Homecoming.
I am aware of my ineptitudes as I write back to it.

C.

Homecoming operates as multiple stories in one, a lesson and a truth telling. Generations of Elfie Shiosaki's family attempt to hold onto love country family children, and, to resist what is set upon them. Forced to "live displacement" (ix), indeed to embody the logistical and socio-political reality of displacement along a jutting timeline of losing and finding, we come to share a sense of not being, ever, on country for long enough –

Dis

placed.

Shiosaki integrates recontextualised archival material, personal story, interview, testimony, poetic imagining. By doing so she weaves the reader into the timeless time of this book. The fragments themselves are like *bidi* (tracks) that act to both displace and embrace the reader in a shifting membrane of proximity and distance, depending (perhaps) if you identify as white or black while doing the reading. This methodology of composing reflects the ways Shiosaki believes her grandmothers, and her mother, navigate(d) between worlds that were and are so very different. I connect this choice to Shiosaki's own embodied experience, revealed through her poems, poetic recollections and dreamings, of knowing herself as a composition of records, oral histories, penned resistance and bodily recollection: flesh felt fragments and ethereal connections.

The choreographed, elastic-like gaps between words and paragraphs – short, long, irregular, unexpected – and half pages left unwritten upon, offer time for the words that are present to move through (my) body. Space, like silence, is loud. In each section words are not arranged as a poetic cascade. Instead, they are scribed deliberately and spatially and in this way they do the work of establishing a cadence or a wider time, rather than parading as clever aesthetic somethings. The gaps seem necessary to breathe.

The cadence and the spaces also seem to have the effect of revealing the almost unbelievable, but more truthful, history; the history we 'did not learn at school'. What is prescient and clear, also not taught at school, is the potency of shared resistance and actions taken by individuals and family clans to challenge the Empire. It is this resistance that shifts the book from defining First Nations stories as ones whose primary currency is loss, to a meta-story that is loss *as well as* resistance, fighting, political pushing back. It is found in the letters of William Harris, pleading for the return of his children; as well, his letters to newspapers outlining the impossibility of the situation Indigenous peoples are in due to colonisation (or invasion). And in testimony given by Mary Harris to the 1934 Moseley commission: 'Her Manifesto' (p 119) a clear call for recognition and equality.

*Six generations
and
twelve women's feet down-pace these pages.*

*In an era where women everywhere are marching,
and fury and visibility and equality are paramount,
I hear this cry as a series, a cycle begun long ago.*

The story of Koorlang drifts between everything else. This story has a different body, texture and sensing. In the spirit of *Renew* (part 3), we follow Koorlang sensing her world, and it is with her that we end the reading-weaving-listening that is Homecoming. There is renewal and potential, after everything. And if the book is somehow a history, in one hundred and fifty pages, of the time before white colonisation – a dreaming, whispering, inhabiting of land and place – until now, the final act where she tilts her head back and baptises herself so that her “unburdened body sank deeper into the well, until its banks gently cradled her in loving arms” (p137), is an image that speaks to potential *beyond* this now.

I hear Shiosaki's fragments and stories interfold across my own narrow body. I see images of doorways and children and grasslands and lights in the night. I see grandmothers, Aboriginal men gone to war and given nothing on return – accumulative heart strings snapping. I see invisibility, the enduring imprint of that. Again, I feel strength as I feel destruction. I feel my own grandmothers, all Māori women, diminished not defeated: unexpected rivals in power games orchestrated largely by white men's systems.

I think on the importance of Repetition. On listening and un-knowing: the importance of falling into broken histories. We have heard many stories, and yet, we have heard not enough. Repetition is important; like an etching, the lines must be scratched again and again on a resistant surface, so we ask and see, with each intimate telling and painful rendering, each strike across a surface – *What happened here? What happened here.*

I close the book for the second time and am left with women, healing hands, water the colour of emu eggs and star littered skies.

The pulse of potent possibility.

*Christiane Makward and Helene Cixous, *Interview with Helene Cixous*, SubStance, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Vol. 5, No. 13 (1976), pp. 19- 37 (20 pages).
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3684336>

Sitting and Thinking Alongside

Elfie Shiosaki's book *Homecoming* brings together a collection of stories that span across four generations of Noongar women. The stories are shared in the form of historical letters, transcripts of oral storytelling and Shiosaki's own written prose. My review of *Homecoming* attends to reciprocity as a way of thinking that "requires us to pay attention to who else is speaking alongside us" (Liboiron, 2020, p. 98).

In this review, I sit excerpts from *Homecoming* alongside excerpts from a blog post (see <https://encounteringplace.com/2021/09/01/rain-and-bracken-fern-encounters/>) that I wrote about a walking event involving a group of six and seven year old children, their teachers and myself. This walk took place on Noongar Country in Boorloo, or what is now commonly referred to as Perth, Western Australia. Situated in early childhood education, my research is place-based and involves regularly walking-with Noongar Country and children. A blog is crafted after each walk and is used as a way to draw attention to relations within place-children common worlds (Latour, 2004).

In early childhood education, it is typical to pay attention to the easy and innocent, while ignoring more difficult relations. This is especially true for place-based education in Australia. Histories of colonial invasion and violence are typically kept well hidden and replaced with innocent accounts of children learning in and with nature. However, if a reciprocity of thinking is intended to draw our attention to the webs of relations in which we are all entangled, then it becomes necessary to also examine our own relations with complex and contested histories of place.

In revisiting my original blog post, I bring Shiosakis' stories of a Noongar child's relations with rain, place, wind and soil into conversation with present day rain-place-wind-soil-child(ren) stories that emerged from this particular walking event. This process opens up spaces for sitting and thinking alongside the histories made visible by Shiosaki in her book *Homecoming*. It is intended that by first noticing, then following and tracing the threads that connect past with present, we might open up alternative spaces for re-imagining different ways of being in relation with place.

Note: The added text from *Homecoming* (Shiosaki, 2021) is shown in italics.

Blog 6: 9th August 2021

This is the sixth blog in a series of a 10-week inquiry into the Place Stories emerging from Place-children encounters during Bush School. At Bush School, we walk-with

Gabbiljee, the watery place at the end of Derbarl Yerrigan. Gabbiljee, now known as Bull Creek, is situated on Noongar Country in Boorloo, Western Australia. A collection of poems by Noongar author Ambelin Kwaymullina (2020) continues to be a constant companion to the walks.

Encountering Rain

Djilba sky is grey, ominous.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16HSx9XGLOb8HPbaj8JJOSDlUVATikwT-/view?usp=s_haring

Wind and rain intermingle with screams, laughter, bodies, skin, tongues.

The westerly caressed her face, its swirling hands soothing her like it would a child. It carried her away from the Indian Ocean and over the Darling Ranges, to dream her childhood.

This old world. A loving world. A woman's world. A world where the bond between mothers and children were never broken. (Shiosaki, 2021; p. 127)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZzUCGMXththZ2tEtwuftMszYQbJGQSZ/view?usp=s_haring

Blowing in from the west, rain seemingly ushers us towards our destination.

*once there was a big wind big rain
knocked down everyone's makeshift camps
everybody got wet headed for the racecourse big sheltered sheds
it was a terrible experience
all cold and shivering* (Shiosaki, 2021; p. 78)

Sky, rain, wind quieten. Rest.

We encounter rain in different ways.



seeping through branch



pooled in hollow leaf



mixed with soil and hands

Koorlang was too small to know this game. All she knew was that she must be so still, so quiet . . . The policeman called out, “just a gin¹”. Koorlang pressed her small cheek deeper into the sandy clay soil. (Shiosaki, 2021; p 71)

¹ Gin is a highly offensive term used to describe an Aboriginal



filling a creek

*water just rolled down that big creek
people couldn't get across to buy food
until the water subsided (Shiosaki, 2021; p. 78)*

Rain invites us into relation in many different ways.

The sunlight of tomorrow will warm the surface of the water, make her molecules speed up and move so rapidly that, tightly packed and vibrating against each other, she will escape into vapour, leaving behind the salt from the tributary. She will then fall from the clouds, out of the afternoon sky . . . returning colour to her mother's boodja, the place she belongs to. (Shiosaki, 2021; p. 17)

Sitting alongside

The practice of sitting the blog alongside *Homecoming* makes visible the difficult and contested histories that have shaped and continue to shape both present and future Place in Australia. In early childhood education, these stories are typically ignored or replaced by histories that lend themselves to quick fixes that feed into saviour models of responses to environmental crises. As a white settler-descendant early childhood educator working in Australia, sitting alongside *Homecoming* challenges the colonial narrative that has permeated all aspects of my training and practice. It reminds me that place-based education in Australia occupies a space that has never been ceded. It takes the focus away from examining Place-child(ren) relations as innocent and always joyful by bringing to light stories that allude to displacement and discomfort. Whilst the practice of sitting alongside does not offer up simple answers to how place-based education might be approached differently, what it does do is provide a more honest account of Place pasts and presents. Sitting alongside *Homecoming* demands that Noongar histories are resituated within Place-child(ren) stories, making otherwise responses to place-based education impossible to ignore.

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