

Searching for the in-between: Developing Indigenous holistic approaches to cultural heritage assessment and interpretation

Sarah Yu
Nyamba Buru Yawuru
syu@iinet.net.au

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Abstract: Writing about heritage values is tricky business where Aboriginal cultural heritage is concerned. How might Aboriginal worldviews, cosmologies and epistemologies be incorporated into a discussion and assessment of heritage values that have been defined and codified according to standards originating from the need to protect mostly European built heritage?

In this paper, Sarah Yu revisits her cultural heritage work with the Yawuru native title holders of the area of country in and around Broome, Western Australia, to consider and challenge static notions of heritage (for example, as articulated in the Burra Charter) that relegate heritage into artificial dichotomies such as natural/cultural, or tangible /intangible, or scientific/Aboriginal. Her approach is developed from Yawuru perspectives and worldviews that are holistic, founded in the *Bugarrigarra* (the Dreaming) and which acknowledge the traditional knowledge, rights and cultural responsibilities that people have in relation to looking after their country as a whole, rather than as separated values, as well as shared transcultural values that have emerged from the colonial history of the region.

Yu draws from her recent heritage work in cultural management planning (Yawuru Cultural Management Plan) as well as the curation of a heritage trail (*Jetty to Jetty Trail*) and an exhibition about pearling in Australia (*Lustre: Pearling & Australia*). Applying interpretive skills and thematic approaches, Yu posits an holistic way for assessing heritage values that incorporates the relationships between people and the subject (not object) of value, and the broader country or context of that value. She argues for an holistic approach that looks beyond separated values, and encompasses the 'in-between' relationships of people with the subject (not object) of value.

Recognising *relationships* as a value, Yu argues, is an inclusive way to reimagining and assessing our heritage and reconciles differing worldviews.

Keywords: Aboriginal worldview and cultural heritage; pearling; west Kimberley; significance and the Burra Charter; Yawuru.

I live in a place where in December, as *laja* (the hot season) endures, everyone talks about the weather in anticipation of the arrival of the first rains. Hot, humid and uncomfortable, it is one of the most exciting times of the year and a time of great energy and unpredictability. You never know what will happen.

I live in a place where people say that *jurru*—snakes—are moving around at this time of year, and, if they ‘smell’ strangers, will ‘get up’ as storms and cyclones, with the potential to cause havoc and threaten both people and country. It is a place where strong people from the country can chase those *jurru* away.

Recently, I had a conversation with some Yawuru men, my contemporaries, about a waterspout that was sighted off Gantheaume Point, at the southern end of Broome’s tourist-famous Cable Beach. They immediately commented that it was one of the *jurru* that move around out there, and that this area is considered extremely dangerous. As I was preparing for this paper, I pondered about how many people who visit, or indeed live in, Broome realise that they are immersed in country that is inhabited by snakes who ‘get up’ and move around; who can be both friend and foe; and who, above all, have to be watched and respected? The answer, of course, is not many. From within our rationalist, secularist paradigms, most of us cannot perceive a landscape that is inhabited by *jurru* who possess the power to both protect and destroy; where your life and that of your family may depend on knowing and respecting them and the many other metaphysical phenomena that exist in country; or a country where *rayi* (spirit children) live and are found, where the souls of old people continue to reside, and where people judge their health and the health of their country by their *liyan* (well-being).

In this paper, I discuss the way Yawuru people, the native title holders of the country in and around Broome, have started to share their story of how they see and know their country and history. I draw on my work as curator of four cultural heritage projects that challenge the current commodification and subversion of Broome’s Aboriginal, multicultural and pearling heritage in tourism and mass media expressions in general. I discuss how, through these projects, the Yawuru have created a conceptual framework for the recognition of the significance of their cultural values that is holistic and evolutionary, encompassing metaphysical understandings of the nature of people, their society and the country where they live. This approach challenges static notions of heritage by placing the relationships between people and their country as the central focus to understanding and assessing the significance of Broome’s cultural heritage. It heralds the need for Indigenous voices and culturally holistic perspectives to be heard if the living cultural heritage of Broome is to be understood, protected and promoted.

I am particularly interested in what an artist friend called ‘the in-between spaces’ⁱ of the historical narrative: the in-between spaces of the relationships that occurred as the historical narrative unfolded, which, for the most part, have remained undocumented and unrecorded except perhaps in the few oral histories of the regionⁱⁱ and the new writings of emerging Indigenous writers.ⁱⁱⁱ These new writings provide an alternative to the settler-colonial bias of most western histories of the Kimberley’s and Broome’s pearling history in particular. Their personal accounts recognise the realities of the colonial encounter from an Aboriginal worldview founded in the relationships people have with their country, families and working life. In the cultural projects that I have worked on with the Yawuru, I endeavor to reveal the relationships that emerge (friendships, connections and shared experiences) from these cultural encounters, and how recognition of these relationships can assist in a new way of identifying and assessing cultural heritage values. In this approach, I am inspired by the work of Eduardo Galeano (2010) and Japanese/Australian historian Minori Hokari (2011) who urge us to pay attention to the non-secular, holistic understandings of history and the colonial encounter of the Indigenous peoples of the country.

The town of Broome and Roebuck Bay, lying in an area of country called Minyirr (also called Rubibi), are steeped in cultural story and songlines. There are many sites—water sources, resources areas, hunting places, sacred areas—of cultural significance that attest to the presence of the Yawuru people and their rich traditions of the *Bugarrigarra*. As Patrick Dodson (2012), a senior Yawuru lawman, explains:

For the Yawuru people ... our history begins with *Bugarrigarra* what most westerners romantically call ... the Dreamtime! The *Bugarrigarra* encompasses the time well before western philosophy, religion and laws reached our lands. The *Bugarrigarra* is associated with events that created our world, deep at the beginning of time yet it transcends time and space to inform and give meaning to contemporary Yawuru life ... it is the spiritual force that shapes our cultural values and practices, our relationship with our country and the responsibilities and obligations that we have to each other as Yawuru people.

In the 1880s, Broome was the first town to be established in the remote corner of northwest Australia after the pearlers who had been sailing up the coast from Cossack discovered the vast pearlshell beds of the large *Pinctada maxima* (the mollusc that produces the most sought-after nacre and pearls) in Roebuck. For the pearlers, the future townsite on the edge of Dampier Creek was the only safe haven on this stretch of the coast with a good supply of fresh water. By the early 1900s, the small supply town had attracted the grandiose title of the “pearling capital of the world.”^{iv} Whilst bearing the brunt of the many phases of colonial contact and occupation of the northwest, Broome’s growth and character was synonymous with the pearling story of the north which saw an influx of indentured workers from Asia throughout the twentieth century. Truly transcultural, Broome became a town like no other in Australia.

As the rest of Australia, a Federated nation since 1901, became entrenched in controlling Asian migration,^v Broome pearlers continued to seek exemptions to allow their skilled, and cheap, crews to stay. Inevitably, despite restrictions, Broome’s local community grew to become a rich, culturally mixed community of people descended from the regional Aboriginal groups and those

who came to work in the pearling industry—Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, ‘Malay,’^{vi} Koepanger (Timorese) and Torres Strait Islanders as well as the Europeans. Broome’s transcultural community was heavily regulated by various government acts designed to prevent the mixing of races and to control virtually all aspects of their lives. They had little freedom to choose where they lived, who they married, where they sat at the local cinema, or which hospital or school they attended. Most limiting was their right to being considered citizens of Australia. In this legislative context, people managed, as best they could, to circumvent these limitations and develop their own rich cultural life that absorbed elements from each of the cultural groups, resulting in ‘mixed’ families who shared a distinctive Broome-style creole, cuisine, music, social activities^{vii} and cultural celebrations.^{viii}

As a result of the pearling industry, which waxed and waned according to the vagaries of the world pearlshell market, the coastal country of the Yawuru (and other ‘Saltwater’ people of the northwest) was inundated with pearlshells as they came to shore to source local knowledge about pearlshell beds, get supplies of water and wood for their boats, and ‘liaise’ with local women. Generally, the pearlshellers had little regard for the nature of the Aboriginal peoples and their cultural and practical understandings of their country. However, in the treacherous coastal sea country of vast ten-metre tides and strong currents of the northwest coast, local Aboriginal knowledge of the sea and the location of pearlshell beds, their navigational skills and their ability to hunt and supplement the limited diets of the crew with fresh food would have been invaluable to the pearling fleets.

However, a colonial bias is reflected in the many popular histories of the industry (Idreiss, 1984; Edwards 1983) in which there is little reference to the presence of the many Aboriginal people who worked on the boats or in the foreshore lay-up camps that dotted the coast and towns, and in whose traditional country the fleets were working.^{ix} Similar to their physical habitation on the fringes of the industry and the town, Aboriginal people were marginalised in the storytelling of the pearling industry, appearing mostly as statistics in the pearling masters’ ledgers. And yet in the personal histories of most local Broome families, there is a connection to the pearling industry. Bart Pigram,^x a Yawuru curator and tour guide, outlined his family’s diverse connections to pearling:

I am Yawuru and also of Jabirrabirr descent, and grew up in Broome. Our old people along the northwest coast used *guwan* (pearlshell) long before the arrival of European settlers and have continued their traditions to this day.

Since the pearlshellers came there has always been someone from my family working in the industry, including myself. We discovered that my great, great, great grandfather William Bryan was a blackbirdler who took a Jabirrabirr woman and had a child, who is my ancestor in the Dampier Peninsula.

This is my heritage and part of Australia’s pearling story. It is etched in the land and we should know and respect these stories, the people and where they came from.^{xi}

As the pearling industry based on the collection of shell waned (primarily because of the introduction of plastics) and the cultured pearl industry rose, Broome began to lose its pearling identity. Broome is currently marketed as a 'beach destination' with now-iconic depictions of camels walking along Cable Beach as the sun sets over the Indian Ocean. Visitors would be hard-pressed to realise that they had entered the traditional lands of the Yawuru people, or that the site where the camel trips commence is a turtle-dreaming site, and the rocks that they trample over are considered sacred. Close by there are other sites that mark the beginning of a songline that crosses the continent, an old ceremony ground and other gender-restricted areas that the Yawuru are trying to keep protected. These culturally significant sites are now being contested with various coastal development proposals^{xiii} and the demands of a growing resource industry based on extraction of natural gas.^{xiii}

My first project with Nyamba Buru Yawuru (hereafter NBY) was called *Opening the Common Gate: Challenging Boundaries in Broome*, a small interpretive exhibition to honour the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum in which the Australian nation voted to include Aboriginal people in the census and to establish a federal government department to govern their affairs. To the nation, the referendum marked a watershed of constitutional change, signaling the end of a bleak history that denied Aboriginal people equal citizenship rights. However, whilst the rest of Australia had voted for political change, Western Australia had the highest 'no' vote. In Broome, few remember the referendum, and only a small percentage of the population voted.

A local symbol of the denial of citizenship rights to Aboriginal people in Broome was the 'Common Gate'—a fence and three gridded gates—that marked the municipal boundary of the township of Broome. In the words of a senior Broome local woman, the Common Gate was there to keep the "cattle and the full-bloods out of town."^{xiv} Under the terms of the *1905 Aborigines Act*, the fence physically signified that 'full-blood' and unemployed Aboriginal people could not enter the town without an employer's permit, and there was a curfew imposed between sunset and sunrise. In the town whose lifeblood was the growing pearling industry, one of the aims of the government-sanctioned curfew was to keep Aboriginal people separate from indentured Asian labourers. Combined with the denial of other civil rights such as citizenship, the right to vote, the right to choose your partner in marriage, and the right to bring up your children, the Common Gate was a symbol of the state of injustices against Aboriginal people at that time. In the exhibition, the Common Gate became a metaphor for all the discriminating boundaries that divided the town, and a vehicle to express local understandings of assimilation, citizenship, identity and discrimination.

Despite its racist origins, the Common Gate continues to be remembered with affection and is integral to nostalgia. I have always been amazed at the goodwill of many of the older people as they recounted stories of poverty, deprivation of rights and even atrocity. I was challenged how to tell this history in a way that captured their spirit of generosity and good spirit whilst acknowledging the pain and heartache. I turned to voice rather than written historical narrative and began to record their story and avoid a diatribe against those injustices. Whilst the Common Gate defined the township of Broome as a place where 'life' was controlled and regulated, the attachment to country was paramount as the stories spilled out into the open country (the allegedly wild/primitive country) beyond the town that was equally home to the Aboriginal people. This was where they hunted and fished and continued their ceremonies.

What emerged as a constant thread in these accounts was the strong attachment to place, in which the sense of home, of 'our town,' of being in country, and of living a life that was in tune with the cycle of seasonal change, was rich, regardless of how physically poor the families might be. It was through this connection, and the connection between families, that the local community survived and thrived within such repression of their human rights.

Although the exhibition opened nearly ten years ago, the panels of *Opening the Common Gate* continue to be displayed in the NBY offices, and are regularly used by schools and community groups. This longevity is perhaps due to one of the positive outcomes of the exhibition. It allowed the local community to reclaim their history and culture by increasing awareness of their struggles for identity in a cross-cultural world where rights and survival had to be constantly negotiated. The exhibition offers a bridge between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of Broome to develop a permanent relationship built on understanding, acceptance and appreciation of their values and view of the world.

The attachment to place, the way people live in their country, and this connection being a source of pride and identity, even in the face of adversity and trauma, is a theme that I have carried through my cultural heritage work. The relationship between people and their home country is central to the cultural heritage of Yawuru people and of Broome.

In 2009 I began my second project for NBY based on the idea of an interpretive walking trail along the foreshore of Roebuck Bay, from the town's oldest jetty (Streeter Jetty) to the site of the Old Jetty at Town Beach, called the *Jetty to Jetty Trail*^{xv}. By then, Broome's multicultural pearling heritage had mostly disappeared with only a few remnants of the built heritage remaining. As the town had turned its focus to creating a 'beach' destination for tourists, offering camel rides on the beach, the story of old Broome, and the connection to waters and tidal flats of Roebuck Bay, was lost. Access to and views of the water were limited and the vibrant pearling story of Broome was only reflected in the local museums and the Broome cemetery.

Travelling along a trail of thirteen sites, the project aimed to turn people's gaze back to the foreshore, to see and know its beauty and history. The bay lies in the heart of Yawuru country, and is where people hunted, set their fish traps and provided food for their countrymen. The surrounding dunes, laden with middens, are testament to the longevity of occupation. The intertidal mud flats were home to pearling fleets, lined with foreshore camps, shell-sorting sheds, the bustling jetties and the luggers, either floating or laid-up, often draped in their hessian coverings, all moving to the tides and rhythms of the bay. The stories unfold and are delivered by the Jetty to Jetty App,^{xvi} with layered stories from local people embedded in sounds of the country and strands of Broome music.

Jetty to Jetty is a story that reveals the cultural life of how people live in the country, underlying the presence of the pearling industry that dominated life along the foreshore of Roebuck Bay. It tells of a cultural life that is the foundation upon which all the other aspects of life are built. People still hold on to traditional stories and names of country. They continue to fish and hunt according to the seasons and the ebb and flow of the monthly and annual cycle of tides. They still have strong

communities in which many of the Asian indentured pearling workers were welcomed. In doing so, they created a Broome 'local community,' of blended cultural identity with its own lingo, food and shared cultural traditions. These features are now expressed in their own forms of storytelling such as the music of the Pigram Brothers, tourism events such as Goolarri Media's Taste of Broome, and Jimmy Chi's musicals such as *Bran Nue Dae* (now a film) and *Corrugation Road*.^{xvii} This was also a dominant theme in the *Jetty to Jetty* project. As Lulga Francis Djiagween (Yawuru RNTBC, 2016), the Yawuru PBC chairman, explains:

Although we lived on the reserves and town camps, we considered ourselves rich as we roamed the foreshore with our spears and played amongst the old pearling luggers ... We grew up eating curries, playing music, and speaking all kinds of languages. Broome was a rich melting pot of cultures, very different from the rest of Australia ... By sharing these experiences, we hope to engage your hearts and minds, as you walk the foreshore of my childhood.^{xviii}

Whilst most of the Broome pearling masters have long gone, it is through these stories and memories of a shared past that revolved around pearling that Yawuru, along with other 'locals,' can now reclaim not only their right to look after the pearlshell country—a right that had been taken away—but also to make the history of pearling their own. In a white-dominated industry that evolved through the era of the Common Gate, and in the similarly biased historical accounts of the industry, the Aboriginal contribution was always downplayed. However, as the pearlers came into their country and into their lives, so pearling became a part of the emerging local culture, and its legacy continues today as the storytellers assert their agency in this oppressive history.

In 2011 the Yawuru articulated their approach to land and sea management in a seminal cultural management plan *Walyjala-jala buru jayida jarringgun buru Nyamba Yawuru ngan-ga mirlimirli* Planning for the Future: Yawuru Cultural Management Plan (hereafter YCMP), which I produced with the Yawuru cultural heritage group. This plan underpins the joint management plans for the Yawuru Conservation Estate which is being established as a condition of the Indigenous Land Use Agreements entered into by the State of Western Australia after the success of the Rubibi Native Title claim in 2006. If the *Opening the Common Gate* exhibition was about boundaries of exclusion, the YCMP is about boundaries of inclusion. Developed in response to the need to ensure the joint management of their estate, the YCMP expressed the Yawuru's aspiration of reclaiming their country, their culture, their knowledge and identity. It created a new way to map their country that had been subsumed into the geography of a nation state. It provided the platform for the Yawuru to identify their cultural values, and to enshrine the Yawuru's agency in protecting and managing those values.

The central vision of the plan is *Mabu liyan, mabu buru, mabu ngarrangunil* (good feeling, healthy country, strong community) which expresses the need for Yawuru to always maintain a balance between change and preserving the past. The four primary values of the YCMP include the understanding of the *Bugarrigarra* as the foundation and as a living cultural space; the body of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge; the rights of the Yawuru people to be in and enjoy their country; and the inherent responsibility that they carry to manage and look after their country. Together they propose a non-linear, non-secular, holistic approach to heritage management based

on the interconnections between PLACE (the environment), OBJECT (the resources and features of the country) and the PEOPLE, who have the rights in, and responsibility for, looking after the country and all that it is made of.

In winning the 2012 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects national medal, the judges said:

The published Yawuru Cultural Management Plan expresses past, present and future; it offers discussions about Culture, Country, Community and *liyan* (wellbeing) that transcend other reports of this kind, that record and map values. This Cultural Management Plan will and should respectfully drive conservation plans, land management decisions and design activities in marine and terrestrial areas Australia-wide, such is its generous and visionary approach.

It is more than a conversation, more than a listening and recording, more than walking and seeing the land; it is all of these things, but most importantly, it is none of these, but the land and its people.^{xix}

Finally, the fourth project I developed in regards to the pearling history of the region began in 2014 when I was asked by the Western Australian Museum to curate an exhibition about pearling in northern Australia. *Lustre: Pearling & Australia* opened in 2016 and is now travelling to major Australian museum venues. The exhibition celebrates the pearling heritage of northern Australia, weaving together Aboriginal and European histories, to present a continuing 20,000-year-old heritage story^{xx} about the ongoing harvest and use of the pearlshell and, more recently, its bounty, pearls. In particular, the exhibition acknowledges the respect for and use of pearlshell by Aboriginal groups who celebrate the lustrous virtues of the pearlshell as adornment and whilst the exhibition reveals the darker side of pearling, it also relates wonderful stories about the pearlshell and the pearls they produce, the relationships between the people of pearling, the country where shell is found and the industry that emerged from them. It respects Indigenous people's role as cultural custodians of pearlshell and pearshell country, and highlights the value of the northern Australian pearling story, including appreciation of world's best pearling beds, as significant national and world heritage. In particular, the exhibition acknowledges and explores the use of pearlshell by Aboriginal groups who honour the lustrous virtues of the pearlshell which they use: as adornment to signify status; in ceremonies, such as the grand rain-making ceremonies of the desert regions; as powerful objects used for spiritual protection and sorcery; and as a valuable trade item that was passed through exchange networks that traversed most of the Australian continent (see Akerman and Stanton 1994). By situating the pearling story in the context of Aboriginal Australia, we created a new perspective of pearling history whereby a deeper understanding of the cultural fabric of our current society and the values of our pearling heritage is achieved.

A central theme of the exhibition is the universal attraction of human beings to the lustrous qualities of nacre.^{xxi} However, it is in the Aboriginal story that the exhibition explores the deep cultural appreciation of pearlshell. Through stories and art, *guwan* (pearlshell) is transformed into *riji* (engraved shell), an object of beauty and spiritual power, embodying country and life forces. *Guwan*, *riji* and *binjibinji* (smaller pieces of shell) become vehicles for telling the story of the country, including historical events and understandings. And they are given to young men to mark

their transition to manhood, worn in ceremony and used in many parts of Australia for rainmaking, love magic and other powerful determinations. Aubrey Tigan Galiwa (dec.) (Yu and Brisbout 2011, pp. 9, 38), an internationally renowned *riji* carver, explains the transformational process for him as an artist and Mayala lawman with cultural responsibility for passing on the story of his country:

When I make this *riji* I think of everything out in the ocean—the loo [tidal currents],
the spout, the waves, the tides, the whirlpools, the land and under the water.
All got their own spirit ...
When I carve pearl shell I feel good and strong.
When I carve the old designs that I saw my father making,
I feel connected to my father and grandfather and to my country.
They come to me in dreams and tell me what to do, what to carve.
This is my inspiration. (Yu and Brisbout 2011, p. 38)

By combining Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, the exhibition looks beyond pearlshell and pearls as trophies to be acquired and sold, and presents the intricate web of connectedness between the shell, its habitat, and the people who harvest and applaud its values.

Finally, *Lustre* asks the audience to assume responsibility, alongside the cultural custodians of the pearlshell county and the current pearlers in the northwest, to ‘look after’ the country where the shell is found, and to honour the story of pearling in Australia. In respect to this, the Australian government in its listing of the West Kimberley in 2011 (Australian Heritage Database 2011) did include some values associated with the pearling story—the pearlshell beds; the Aboriginal trade of shell; the Beagle Bay church; as well as the intangible values of the Shinju Matsuri Festival. However, the listing fell far short of recognising, as we (Akerman, Skyring and Yu 2010) had urged them to do, the use and significance of pearlshell as part of a living culture in which the shell, and its associated art, embodies a relationship of people and their country.

Collectively, the four cultural projects presented above, ranging from land management planning, to exhibitions and tourism projects, represent the cultural heritage of country, community and the Yawuru’s historical struggles for recognition, rights and respect. The *Opening the Common Gate* exhibition reveals the racial barriers that governed people’s lives in the diverse multi-cultural community of Broome, but which people lived around, and eventually overcame. The *Jetty to Jetty Trail* creates a conversation between the local, culturally diverse community and visitors to the region, so that there can be shared understandings of the values of Roebuck Bay and the Aboriginal and Asian contribution to Broome’s pearling industry. The YCMP is pivotal in identifying a new model for assessing heritage significance in a holistic way that reflects an Indigenous worldview that connects people and country in a non-secular space. Finally, *Lustre: Pearling & Australia* celebrates the unique 20,000-year-old pearling story of northern Australia, which has yet to be fully recognised as significant to the nation’s heritage.

These projects articulate Aboriginal cultural values and provide an alternative view of the heritage values of the region, and how they should be managed and protected. It is a view that extends beyond the usual tenets of assessing and articulating heritage significance focusing on PLACE

rather than PEOPLE. The seminal document of international heritage assessment is the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 2013). In the Burra Charter, the first taxonomical division is between the natural and the cultural significance of a place. The *cultural* is further divided into “aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations” (Australia, ICOMOS 2013, p. 2). Whilst the responses to the Charter are increasingly sensitive to the cultural significance, both tangible and intangible values of a place, they do not necessarily embrace the relationship of people to the heritage place. Similar to most heritage and environmental planning documents, the Burra Charter relegates this relationship as a management issue, rather than being a core value of a heritage plan. In the cultural heritage work at NBY, we focus on the relationships of people and country, rather than isolating natural, social, scientific or aesthetic values of the country. The cultural meanings, and by extension the values, of a place *must* include the relationship of that place to the people who carry the story for that place. In this way, we present a holistic worldview that encompasses the cultural and the natural, the physical and the metaphysical, and focuses on the well-being of a society as a key outcome. This approach allows for the recognition of rights, acknowledgement of responsibility, and implies a use, and enjoyment, of the cultural asset by those who carry those rights and responsibilities.

Whilst I appreciate that there may be more than one cultural view of a place, a new model and a new language needs to be developed to represent Indigenous worldviews. This should be based on the understandings of, responsibility to and care for a place—in which the cultural life of a place, and the relationships of people to that place, are the central focus (Yawuru RNTBC 2016). Such a model is inclusive of a worldview in which place and society are joined. In the opening quote of this paper, Patrick Dodson explains that, for the Yawuru, this relationship is embodied in the *Bugarrigarra*, inadequately translated in to English as ‘the Dreaming’. This is the metaphysical phenomenon that W.E.H. Stanner (2009) profoundly called “the everywhen” as it exists as a past-present-future continuum, through which the Yawuru people constantly negotiate their world.

Through each of our projects, we have invoked Yawuru understandings of *Bugarrigarra* to capture the depth of the cultural significance of place (country), of historical encounters such as pearling, and of the roles that people and government have played in the evolution of the story that has made Broome, and Yawuru country and people what they are today. We also seek to expose the *in-between* spaces of cultural contact and cultural values, where people (of all cultures) connect and relate to one another, and to the country. By exploring these (in-between) spaces, our aim is to create a new language of understanding across cultures. A language that can then be translated into good action, that is, action that is articulated well and enables the future planning for the region to be respectful and embracing of the culture and relationship to country of the Aboriginal people of this area.

I finish with a quote from Yawuru elder and statesman Patrick Dodson (2012), who speaks not only of his Yawuru people but for all those who live in Australia:

Our connectivity with our local communities and its values and our landscapes are central to our wellbeing and happiness ... Where I come from, the Country of the Yawuru in northern Western Australia, the term we use to describe the interconnectedness between a sense of personal self with the wider community and the

natural landscape is called *liyan* ... It is universal to the world's Indigenous people ... Yawuru people's connection to country and joy of celebrating our culture and society is fundamental to having good *liyan*. When we feel disrespected or abused our *liyan* represents life which can be disjointed, unintelligible and unattractive. This can be corrosive for both the individual and the community if not reconciled ... This is one of many values we share, as is our struggle to nurture and assert them within a world where Western philosophic thought underpinning modernity dominates us ... Our challenge is to extricate ourselves from this framework and into one of our own making based upon our wisdom, values and practices.

Thus, our aim should be to create good *liyan*, for the country and the people of the north, and in so doing, develop the best model for the protection of the rich heritage of the country with the people who live there. The theme of this journal special issue is reimagining Australia. In response to this theme, I want to reimagine an Australia where there is respect and recognition for Indigenous peoples and their persistent worldviews; where the histories of the colonial encounter are no longer hidden; where Country can be seen as cultural, living spaces or entities in which that history has occurred and where *jurru* exist and our spirit children can be found; where the cultural divide is crossed so that OTHER worldviews can be respected and recognised as our shared cultural heritage. I believe that it is these 'holistic' perspectives of Country and the people who live in it—in which we are ALL held accountable and carry a shared responsibility to look after things—that will lead to a sense of balance, and is the key to our survival and having *mabu liyan* (well-being) with the world we live in.

Galiya mabu

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Sarah Yu lives in Broome Western Australia and works for Nyamba Buru Yawuru the business arm of the Yawuru native title holding group. Sarah has most recently curated the successful *Lustre: Pearlina & Australia* exhibition (in an NBY-WA Museum partnership), training two Yawuru emerging curators). She has lived in the West Kimberley for over 40 years, working as an anthropologist, curator and heritage consultant focusing on relationships between people and their connections to country. She has curated, collaborating with artists and writers, the Jetty to Jetty Heritage Trail (2016) *Opening the Common Gate* exhibition, to honour the 1967 Referendum (2007); she produced the Award winning Yawuru Cultural Management Plan (2011) - AILA National Medal 2012 - winner. She is currently enrolled as a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Heidelberg University as part of the research group The Transcultural Heritage of Northwest Australia: Dynamics and Resistances.

ⁱ From the funeral booklet "Farewell, Pamela Diane Lofts, 9 August 1949 – 4 July, 2012," written by Russell Goldflam: "Pam liked to enter an in-between zone of challenge and possibility. The in-between-ness of this country was a lifelong stimulus and delight for her. She also included the in-between zones of thought and feeling, where change, loss and uncertainty unsettle you, provoking you to listen closely, think differently, and find a way through. She talked about 'being-with' things, and each other, to find a way through change. To use the analogy of being in country, she thought that though she might never 'belong' here, nevertheless she could connect, and remain connected."

ⁱⁱ For example, Wendy Lowenstein's (1969) recordings of Paddy Djaigween, Paddy Roe and Thomas Edgar.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, Sally Bin Demin (2007); Betty Lockyer (2009); and Edie Wright (2001).

^{iv} Western Australian Department of Fisheries, *The History of Pearlina in Western Australia*.

^v One of the first Acts of the Federated parliament was the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, designed to restrict Asian migration to Australia.

^{vi} The term 'Malay' is a diminishment of an ethnically diverse community, who originate from Malaysia and surrounding islands, and who share common cultural traits (McGann 1988, p. 4; Martinez and Vickers 2015, p. 9)

^{vii} The annual races, dances, lugger picnics and the daily chiffa (a Chinese gambling game similar to lotto).

^{viii} The Chinese festival of the Dead—Hung Seng, the Japanese Obon festival, and the Malaysian Merdeka.

^{ix} Legal recognition of this relationship of the Saltwater peoples of the north to their Saltwater country has only been recognised in the last 10 years as Yawuru (Rubibi) (2006), Bardi and Jawi (2005), Karajarri (2004), Worrorra and Wunambal–Dambimangari (2011) peoples won their native title through the Federal Court of Australia.

^x Bart Pigram oral history, *Lustre* exhibition collection, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Broome, 2015.

^{xi} See the Welcome exhibition panels for *Lustre: Pearlring & Australia*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, 2015, <http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/lustre-online-text-panels/welcome>.

^{xii} For example, expansion of the Broome jetty, proposed marinas, coastal revetment projects, new boat launching facilities as well as gas hubs and processing plants.

^{xiii} For example, the proposal by Woodside to establish a natural gas LNG hub at James Price Point, north of Broome (Wergin 2016).

^{xiv} Lexie Tang Wei, *Opening the Common Gate Oral History collection*, 2007.

^{xv} I work collaboratively within NBY, training emerging curators and working with consultant artists and other experts to create the final product. Whilst the curatorial intent is my work, the final product is a collaborative effort with my colleagues.

^{xvi} See the Jetty to Jetty App from the Apple and Google store or go to www.j2jbroome.com.au.

^{xvii} *Bran Nue Dae* was a very successful musical written by Jimmy Chi, and performed with many local actors, musicians and dancers. It opened in 1988 in Perth and toured to other Australian cities for nearly 5 years. In 2009 it was made into a film and was opened in Broome's historic open-air cinema, Sun Pictures. In the Jetty to Jetty sound app, Jimmy Edgar and Stephen 'Baamba' Albert, who both performed in the original *Bran Nue Dae*, laugh at how as kids they always came to the 'pictures' and now, as adults, they were seeing their own names up in lights.

^{xviii} See the foreword of Yawuru RNTBC, 2016 *Walking Jetty To Jetty*, Stories of Broome, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Broome.

^{xix} See the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects website

http://www.aila.org.au/imis_prod/AILAWeb/Chapters/WA/2012_WA_Award_Winners.aspx

^{xx} The earliest evidence of pearlshell use comes from Koolan Island where a small fragment of *Pinctada sp* was identified in a layer dated to around 26,500 years ago and Widgingarri where a fragment of pearlshell was dated to around 22,000 years. At this time the sea stand was near its lowest and the Widgingarri shelter was over 200 k.m. from the coast (O'Connor, 1999).

^{xxi} In universal mythologies, pearls and pearlshell are powerful objects, often associated with the moon and water, and with wisdom. For example, the Chinese depict dragons (similar beings to Aboriginal rainbow serpents) that follow the 'pearl of wisdom.' Gnostics believed that a serpent held the wisdom of the world in a pearl. Melanesians of the Solomon Islands inlay pearlshell in larger wooden funeral vessels, where the iridescence invokes the shadows, or spirits, of the deceased. In the Highlands of New Guinea, pearlshell is a currency for bride price. The Greeks

believed pearls to be tears from the gods and that wearing pearls stopped brides from crying and facilitated marital bliss.