MINORITY GROUPS – THEORETICAL CONTEXT:

Mapping Aboriginality

by Victor Hart

Victor Hart is an officer in the Oodgeroo Unit at QUT. The interpretation of Queensland's cultural landscapes and their associated history have tended to centre around Anglo-Celtic colonization and subsequent development where the use of land and primary resources have been the focus of history. There is another reading of Queensland's landscapes derived from groups whose perspective has tended to be marginalised. These groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants, and the indentured South Sea Islanders (ASSI). In the Contested Terrains study, each of these groups is considered. Their histories have been explored in a number of studies, in particular the work of Henry Reynolds (1987,1998), Bill Thorpe (1996), James Jupp (1988), Wadley & King (1993) and a number of studies on the Australian South Sea Islanders including the new research by Lincoln Hayes (1999). In this study, three overviews, seen from the Aboriginal perspective, the migrants' perspective and the ASSI perspective, have been used. Existing histories have been reviewed and thematic analyses have been developed within seven chronological eras, all of which will assist in understanding the resulting cultural landscape. This is fully explained in the report on the Thematic History for the Contested Terrains study edited by Dr Jean Sim. The importance of understanding Aboriginal cultural landscapes is central to any interpretation of the contemporary cultural landscapes of Queensland. The following proposal for *Mapping Aboriginality* by Victor Hart from the Oodgeroo Unit at QUT discusses the theory associated with the interpretation of Aboriginal landscapes.

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Introduction

In writing this I am acutely aware that much of the existing and correlative legislation on Native Title is in limbo and therefore I cannot predicate as far as I would have wished with this chapter in terms of expressing a fully blown application of rights to land for Indigenous people. However, I feel there still exists an opportunity to at least engage in discussion, put forward ideas on how best to organise and map Indigenous cultural heritage in Queensland in positive and productive ways in which Indigenous landscape knowledge may be retrieved, taught and applied across a broad spectrum of professional practices. Questions relating to how and why Aboriginal peoples assert ownership or connection to land still continues in this post-Mabo, post-Wik Australian society and will continue with or without questions of legality.

What is important to understand is that while this legal framework has allowed for an explosion of landscape knowledge that in many cases had lain 'neutered' for many years within many generation of Indigenous peoples, the context in which this knowledge was extracted has also limited its expression. From my own perspective it seems that while Aboriginal people were at last able to assert their knowledge of land and landscapes, the context for this important knowledge was limited. While we are able to make proclamations and indicate meanings about ourselves and our connections to land, the scope of ready application of this knowledge remained locked away because of its legal disposition. In this context, its ability to create understanding between Indigenous people and others is lost.

The well-known framework of legal jurisdiction, the need for expert evidence, research, archival and other, as positivist ideals have imposed a burden of proof on Aboriginal people. This has meant many knowledge systems have been severely and violently damaged. Intervention using an ameliorative approach to mapping Indigenous knowledge systems, namely an approach that gives back a sense of knowledge governance, is urgently required.

Having said this, I feel that central to understanding land ownership and connection, it seems appropriate that I begin by discussing how the nature of knowledge ownership and connection has been disrupted historically and contemporaneously before examining ways forward. If the historical narrative of Mabo ushered in a 'new' Australian history that disarmed to some extent the romantic historical narratives of peaceful white settlement, it also resurrected the noble savage myths through which Aboriginal claims to land could and have been disputed. Mapping of Aboriginality is not signalling new procedures in land identification- at least not for Aboriginal people.

The creation of Aboriginal reserves or the designation of boundaries around towns and cities such as Brisbane, explicitly mapped out Aboriginal access and thereby establishing the limits of white designated landscapes. Many rural towns have well known landscape markers such as parks and streets where 'blacks' resided (inclusive and excluded space) or were prohibited from (again inclusive and exclusive space). Landscapes for Aboriginal people therefore have considerable significance according to Aboriginal traditions and cultures, as well as having significant unanimity about how sites are marked out indicating race relations. These sites similarly take on symbolic proportions over generations. For instance, Mango Lane, a well-known road in the centre of Palm Island Aboriginal community was a restricted road for Aboriginal people to walk through. Many streets in Inala, a south side suburb of Brisbane well known for its high population of Aboriginal and Islander people, are definitive markers for generations of these people that reach back well into the 1940s and beyond.

As with all cultures, the traditions and customs of Aboriginal people did not remain static and were contingent on their proximity to the social forces and environments around them. While peripheral articulations such as language may have undergone dramatic if not forced change, much of the core philosophies of customs and tradition remain intact.

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Aboriginal landscapes can therefore be sites of collective resistance where inclusion and unity was fostered as well as being pre-designated and planned areas for containing or excluding the 'black' presence. However, I feel these sites should not be considered a geographically determined or frozen, that is, that they are not sites of racism or exclusion. These are social phenomena that occur on all landscapes at any given time across the length and breadth of Australian and to suggest otherwise would be quite naive. Alternatively there must be awareness of how landscape architecture, town planning and other supportive professions and disciplines have helped to "construct" and maintain racism, (neo) colonialism, exploitation, and many other not so very admirable realities by accepting that sites can be socially transformative sites by their very design, redesign or management. The imperative is to define accurately the inter-subjective nature of landscapes and how knowledge is applied -between Aboriginal peoples themselves and others.

Accordingly, and from the outset it seems appropriate to first bring some of the more implicit issues relating to Indigenous peoples that are known and hence may be included within a schematic topography of cultural landscapes in Queensland.

Challenging Concepts of Frozen Aboriginal Culture

The High Court in 1992, the Mabo case, emphasised the importance that, from the international perspective, "*the common law should neither be nor be seen to be frozen in an age of racial discrimination*". Cognisant of the expression of this ethical obligation, the discussion here examines to some extent the status of the cultural landscape mapping property rights of Indigenous Australians and the reforms required in current approaches to landscape mapping generally. This is discussed first by exploring some general premises surrounding how Aboriginality continues to be constructed in 'frozen' ways and its application in landscape planning.

While the myth of *terra nullius* has been legally abandoned, its epistemological foundations remain firmly entrenched in how indigenous ownership and connection to land is designed within landscape planning and other related disciplines. Cultural landscape narratives are not passive entities but are active and organic sites of contestation. As Edward Said contends, *"ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied.* (Said, 1991:5)

The conventions of *terra nullius* mapping are perhaps unavoidable in terms of the existing regimes that have developed over the past two hundred or so years. The difficulty of implying an Aboriginal existence on landscapes, where the social and cultural discourse is underpinned by notions of 'extinction', is of course problematic, but not overwhelmingly impossible.

Nevertheless, it is sadly ironic that while the new contemporary landscape discourse [from my own limited readings] talks excitedly about heterogeneity and the decentring of normative ways in which landscapes are explained by declaring breakthroughs that allow recognition of *Otherness*. The discourse still directs its critical voice primarily to a specialised audience, which continues to share a common language rooted in the very master narratives it claims to challenge.

If postmodernist approaches to landscape theory and practice are to have a transformative impact, then a critical break with the notion of "authority" as "mastery over" must not simply be a rhetorical device. As well, it must be reflected in how the outcomes of landscape planning allow for an organic and living process by which all participate in meaningful ways. For Indigenous people this has always been the case.

Working Towards a Conceptual Framework for Indigenous Landscape Knowledge Mapping

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All cultures have developed a means of knowledge mapping. Bearing this in mind, Indigenous landscape knowledge is simply the means of handling this knowledge so that it may be applied and transferred within and between generations, to enable survival and sustain an Indigenous way of life. Where that way of life has altered for Indigenous people throughout the past 210 years of white colonisation, knowledge of land continues to be a means by which indigenous people locate themselves socially, culturally and politically as unique citizens of Australia, Queensland or their regional and local geographical affiliations.

A conceptual framework for Indigenous landscapes must therefore take full consideration of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have retained or are rediscovering their locality, their presence on their land and on the land of others. Moreover, the means by which this knowledge is produced and reproduced, arbitrarily distributed, or formally requested by a number of social forces or events, plays an important role on how one eventually finds a concrete definition of what could be called an Indigenous landscape. If Aboriginality is the end product of the inter-subjective relations between whites and Aborigines, then we must decide the nature of the inter-subjectivity; that is, what are the meanings being produced between these relations and how can they be best recorded, accessed and therefore applied over short and longer durations of time?

Morris (1995) points out one example of a site where the meanings being produced reflect these relations between Indigenous peoples and others. In a preamble to his essay titled " *Frontier Colonialism and the Culture of Terror"* which examined the internal irreconcilableness of colonial power in understanding Aboriginal/European relations, Morris identified how these

> …point to the presence of an internal instability of power, (real or imagined), as a pervasive feature of colonialism. I hope to not only restore some sense of the internal instability of colonial power, but also to recover a sense of the social chaos that resulted from British imperialism and the conflict it unleashed . (Morris, 1995:74-75).

This internal instability or point of 'contestation' also reveals the datum points or ruptures by which one may perhaps explore Aboriginality as an inter-subjective rather than an objective phenomenon, residing outside the processes by which land and meaning are produced as inter-relational.

Thus the fundamental thesis of my argument is that the social chaos, whether imported or spontaneous, was based on essentialist notions of 'whiteness' where the need for self-definition between themselves and Indigenous people became paramount. The Aboriginal presence, *the noble and nomadic savage, the unused land*, was appropriated and commodified within this dialectic as a means of consolidating, appeasing and regenerating narratives of white landscape conceptualisations.

The *'outback'* was/is as much an Aboriginal invention as it was a mythical white exploration of consciousness and land. The Torres Straits is not just a geographical determination but also a place where explicit meanings are made about being a Torres Strait Islander. These are signifiers of exclusivity and inclusivity for important reasons. Just as Island cultures and concepts of land and seascape develop as unique systems of meaning in relative isolation, so too do cultures on 'mainlands' develop within a sense of isolation from the wider landscape. The roads leading out of small country towns are just as imbibing as the water that surrounds island cultures. The meanings attached to them can mean very different things to different people and for different reasons. History no doubt plays a role in how these meanings come about.

In considering the revisionist history of late, the *'frontier'* was not just about a land takeover, it was also about producing a landscape logic or ideology of meaning that rationalised and supported the development of a binary-opposition. In this case, impending *'civilisation'* and a

receding *'primitivity'* was easily rationalised as nation building on both a macro and micro scale. The *frontier* as an ideological underpinning to land use is just as relevant today as a nationalist land concept was two hundred years ago.

Resolving 'Landscapes' (the aesthetics of mapping) and 'Land-Rights' (a political, cultural and legal assertion of ownership) also represents a binary oppositional expression. In this case, geo-sciences are used in an attempt to make sense of a colonial identity while simultaneously and retrospectively musing over how Aboriginal peoples define their sense of belonging to land and culture and how these interests may become incorporated into the national schema.

As such, non-Indigenous landscape interpretations attempting to accommodate Aboriginal interests in land are caught in a minefield of conceptual authorisation where they may be authorising adversarial interests in land, history and ownership as uncontested, contested or laying dormant. Much of the native title interests in Queensland are, of course, extinguished by other land tenure systems. Nevertheless, the interests of Aboriginal people, as articulated through their tradition and customs, continue to be of great importance to stakeholders. Claims to land, no matter how contentious, are nonetheless assertions of difference.

While the rhetoric of diversity in postmodernist approaches to landscape theory is apparent and embraces the sentiment of the multi-cultural aesthetic (like a 'Benneton' poster) the actual genre is based on an insistent conformity and complacency. This is defined by an aesthetic particularity and difference inter-subjectively moderated by the overriding means by which land is being defined by the State in the first instance.

In therefore attempting to truly examine Indigenous relations to and between landscape, culture and power in a variety of historical and geographical settings, landscape planners and other professions must be aware that those who have gone before them have left indelible patterns and processes which can be recognised. Awareness that difference is an *ascribed* and *prescribed* aesthetic is of obvious importance to how one begins to work with the materials of landscape interpretation.

The Scientism that postmodernist/ postcolonial approaches refute nevertheless reinvests itself in the end product, where there are limits imposed on the scope of inter-subjective application of landscape interpretations. The needs of Indigenous people are identified but a *uniformity* of participation is emphasised at any given moment, rather than an inter-textual modality that works with the rhythms of Indigenous communities and their knowledge systems.

From an Indigenous perspective, the conceptual and theoretical application of landscape interpretative theory and notions of land must begin to create a reflectivity within the outcome that is both within the process and the end product. It cannot set out to track down diversity if its conceptual understanding sets parameters on how this diversity may invest in itself.

As Indigenous cultures have been now forced to evolve and adopt a technological format for storing and accessing knowledge through libraries, formal education, professions/ disciplines, data bases and various media, there is a clear danger that these will supplant myths, rituals and learning about country from one's direct experience and immediate community. This danger includes the ability to access such knowledge as a dynamic process. Account must be taken at the outset as to how to manage and cope with the growth and diversity of Indigenous landscape knowledge in ways that are complimentary to how this knowledge plays an active role in the day-to-day lives of Aboriginal peoples.

When Indigenous landscape knowledge was primarily handled in an oral fashion, Indigenous cultures remained relatively static in order to sustain the essential Indigenous landscape knowledge base. The scope and means by which Indigenous landscape knowledge (ILK) continues to utilise oral modes of governance does not mean that it remains static. What has

remained central is the means by which land can be spoken <u>for</u>, as against how land can be spoken <u>about</u>. Mapping Indigenous landscapes present an opportunity to activate and apply this system of landscape knowledge in new and dynamic ways.

Accordingly, there is now a growing awareness among Indigenous peoples that their predecessors have bequeathed to our present day cultures a system of Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping which is an ongoing process of revelation, guided by customs and traditions, both old and new. Many Indigenous communities have also unearthed rich and lively caches of landscape knowledge where place and time and connection are primary, not secondary, to how Indigenous peoples identify themselves through kin and land and how they identify others.

Stemming from this awareness is the recognition that the real foundation of any sustainable cultural expression of our Indiginality is a sustainable Indigenous landscape knowledge base where technologically sustainable processes are complementary to other methods by which knowledge is stored. There is also recognition that there are a number of perspectives on how a sustainable Indigenous landscape knowledge base may be best achieved.

Mapping Indigenous Landscape Knowledge

The present system of Indigenous landscape knowledge differs according to internal and external social, cultural and political forces within Indigenous communities. Yet to a large extent, professional application of this knowledge base of Indigenous landscape continues to be dependent on disciplinary research, such as anthropology, as a means by which access to accurate information can fulfil various purposes while remaining acutely arcane.

For many Indigenous peoples and communities, Indigenous landscape knowledge and the reliance or dependency on current or past ethnographical studies [analogs] has also meant that the means of reproducing 'knowledge of land landscapes' leaves little or no active participation beyond the definitive nature that these studies produce. This is particularly the case in terms of how evidence for land claims under various legislation is being sought.

Such evidence has raised issues surrounding the questionable effectiveness in dealing with many of the complex problems relating to environment and culture, land and land ownership where contestation through overlapping conceptual orders expresses incompatibles. Mining and other industrial landscapes and Aboriginal land interests provide one example of this paradox. This is not surprising once the nature and context of how these conceptual understandings, as a culture of inheritance, are considered. The collective Indigenous landscape knowledge base, until recently, was relatively limited in breadth and depth, in terms of how it could articulate itself outside of the confines of western ideas of geographical determinism or administrative domination.

Because Aboriginal cultures were and are considered as a largely homogeneous and political entity, the means by which heterogeneity can be argued must be attended to in any new landscape interpretations. Recognition must be given to Aboriginal culture being unique to any given situation or place and hierarchical within relatively static social orders, thereby impeding democratic access to, and dissemination of, Indigenous landscape knowledge.

From an historical perspective, the secularisation of Indigenous landscape knowledge within micro and macro cultures is a notion, which has only started to take root. Problems and issues surrounding how Indigenous peoples and communities define their connections to land in empirical and imperial ways remain confined within one or several western disciplines where land was transformed into geographic theory.

Today, a common awareness of the need to develop more appropriate Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping tools is evident in the entire culture and communications sector. The

staggering growth in the use of computer soft and hard ware and a broad interest in the information highways of tomorrow are early indicators of this interest. The present system of Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping is placing an increasing strain on the logical positivist desire to name and qualitatively define *Aboriginality.*

The intention of the Indigenous landscape knowledge-mapping model presented here will hopefully increase the sustainability of a collective Indigenous landscape knowledge base. This raises the question about whether there is a need to completely discard our present system? It would be far more useful to first understand the basic characteristics that promote the adaptive and self-organising behaviour of Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping systems.

This is a definitive model that does not set out to capture, from the outset, Indigenous landscape knowledge of country. Such a process will merely reinvent the same 'relic' approach consistent with archaeological and anthropological [analog] studies of the past, confining Indigenous cultures as both the 'full stop and sentence' within a totalising process. Instead, the model looks at or attempts to begin a process by which Indigenous landscape knowledge becomes apparent in the informal and formal context of landscape interpretations and management.

Following a general practice of 'application' rather than 'interrogation', current models fail to consider what it might mean to move theory from something called 'cultural studies' serving the interests of something called 'cultural geography'. Instead, the emphasis here is creating a process of simultaneous interrogation and application that provides scope for self-definition.

An Indigenous Landscape Knowledge Mapping Model

The model that will be discussed attempts to reconcile aspects of Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping, which presently exist, with those that need to be developed. First, however, a brief description of the envisioned Indigenous landscapes knowledge mapping process. The process that I tentatively propose consists of four contiguous spaces: *Field, Tenor, Mode and Context of Situation* adapted from the work of M. A. K. Halliday (1985). This, I argue is merely one model of many that could be adopted but nevertheless one that attempts to put forward a schematic approach which addresses the limitations of current landscape interpretative practice, much of which may have met its shelf-life or may not have existed at all.

The *Field, Tenor, Mode, and Context of Situation* discourse spaces represent the media within which Indigenous people communicate with one another. In the absence of explicitly designed technology, this would, of course, be reduced to oral conversation, but in fact, it includes a vast array of available means for social and cultural action. The significance of the *Field Space* to any Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping system is its role in sharing awareness of significant opportunities, issues and problems as it relates to how the economy of landscape knowledge reproduces itself.

Once these have been identified and the intent of their resolution is clear, the information, which enables resolution, can be assembled. Herein exists the very dynamic by which knowledge of land manifests itself covertly and overtly as knowledge, and importantly as a process by which Aboriginality is identified as landscape-based.

Some of the more explicit sites of *Context of Situation Space* manifestations in the current Indigenous demography are listed:
- Land Councils and other Indigenous community organisations and councils,
- Formal and informal educational settings,
- Family/kin relations, Elders,

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- The Arts, visual and performing,
- Cultural events, national, regional and local,
- Ceremonies including funerals, weddings,
- Hunting and gathering practices (which includes information hunting and gathering),
- *Traditional* song and dance,
- *Contemporary* song and dance.

Bearing in mind that these are broad but not exhaustive contexts (there are many non-specific or popularised sites), I want to now examine and explain the three components that make up the *Context of Situation Space* and how they may be able to be applied to any of the above social or cultural functions.

Field-Space

Field-Space represents the rationale supporting the intent of a resolution to a problem or issue relating to Indigenous landscape knowledge. According to Halliday's linguistic paradigm, *Field- Space* refers to *'what is happening, the nature of the social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component?* (Halliday, 1985:12) This can mean any given social or cultural context where Indigenous people may find themselves defining their intent; that is, why we are here!

Tenor-Space

Who is taking part, their status and roles? *Tenor-Space* deals with the assembly of information used to establish measures of, or perspectives on, the problem or issue. These measures and perspectives, both qualitative and quantitative, foster common understandings of Indigenous land associations between and within Indigenous communities and the wider social and political settings. In order to resolve complex problems and issues, a large number of fields or constructs is required.

This is evident in present-day issues such as the environment and Indigenous rights, and the required constructs to deal with these involve a wide range of disciplines. The legal constructs or the burden of proof on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems is of course one of the more recent applications of an external construct where knowledge is encapsulated within litigation or a propensity for litigation over land and landscapes.

Mode-Space

Mode-Space takes the constructs and manipulates them in attempting to resolve the problem or issue. This is where participants are expecting to ascertain what the knowledge can do for them within a given situation. *Mode Space* discourse refers to what part the language is playing, what is it that the participants expect the language to do for them in a given situation. It is the symbolic organisation of the language being used. The means of operationalizing constructs may involve digital approaches such as computer simulation models, or analog processes such as policy development and legislation. These may be invoked either individually or as some combined, hybrid process, depending on the nature of the problem or issue.

The role of *Mode Space* is as a translator of intent and rationale into a particular resolution of a problem or issue. Practically, it identifies explicit linkages between constructs, which are in turn linked to dialogue.

Reconciling: the Context of Situation-Space

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Reconciling is the role of the *Context of Situation Space*. It determines the adequacy of a resolution to a problem or issue, through a discriminating synthesis of its intent, supporting rationale and operational approach. This is sometimes referred to as the "so what" of the particular resolution strategy employed. The better the fit of a resolution with reality, the more likely the resolution strategy will be employed again under similar circumstances. Appropriate resolution strategies form strong conventions within a culture.

Robust resolution strategies within the synthetic space of a culture are often found in its social, economic, political, and technological institutions. Access to this reconciling space, however, is typically restricted to dialogue with outside 'experts' and their existing or intended landscape interpretation. As implicit and as difficult as it may be presently to access this reconciling space, it has the potential to become explicit and accessible to all Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping regimes.

It remains significant in therefore maintaining a concise critique of an Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping process by performing an interpretative role, and providing experiential feedback. What this simply means is that one must become aware that knowledge, not just landscapes, are sites of contestation between Aboriginal people, just as they are for other people.

An Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping cycle will nearly always involve these 'four' contiguous spaces, and most problems and issues will require a large number of iterations. The process is also typically non-monotonic within and between cycles, unless the problem or issue is straightforward. Emphasis, in terms of focus within one, or less than all, of the spaces can also be expected, depending on the nature of the Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping process (i.e. Intra-Indigenous or multi-disciplinary). On the other hand, hybrid processes resulting from matings between a number of narrowly focused processes may begin to define trans-disciplinary Indigenous landscape knowledge.

The Indigenous landscape knowledge maps, which result, should ideally contain a record of all such interactions to enable independent validation and androgogy. But before any of this can be expected to occur, there is some need to understand what would drive the Indigenous landscape knowledge-mapping model being proposed here.

Indigenous Landscape Knowledge Mapping Drivers

Implicit in this model is willingness on the part of individuals to share, or bring to market. Over the past 211 years, non-Indigenous positivist researchers have expected 'Indigenous landscape knowledge' of culture to be accessible to them. The politics of Indigenous landscape knowledge about landscapes, however, has traditionally been circumscribed by customs and traditions. Today they are being modified, asserted, and to a certain extent commodified as information.

Cultural consideration has always existed to some extent, but this has largely been a process where responsibility to prove 'Indigenous landscape knowledge' of land is coupled with no other productive outcome other than a validation to a perceived external authority. For some time the 'internal dissonance of colonialism' has artefactualised Aboriginal connections to landscapes. This has been accommodated into secularist and nationalist narratives as either remnants of the past, or *terra nullius* conceptual orders where they are simply omitted as non-existent or subservient to another overriding conceptual order.

What would induce individuals to volunteer the recording of Indigenous landscape mapping processes for storage and access in a public domain environment, or even within their particular private enterprise? *I am suggesting that some form of tagging, analogous to genetic*

coding, is needed which allows for the tracing of Indigenous landscape knowledge to its source(s).

This means existing knowledge may have to be archived, possibly as a living museum, and then made accessible to Indigenous peoples and communities as a starting point. In short, it must become a viable part of Indigenous knowledge systems by first positioning itself as accessible and useable. It must be also be compatible to existing and projected needs.

Such knowledge systems may also be combined with a system of accounting for citations, royalties, etc. that is built into the genealogy of every Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping process. *Otherwise, real experts will not develop explicit Indigenous landscape knowledge maps within a digital culture, instead, they will continue to navigate their implicit Indigenous landscape knowledge maps within an analog culture.* This does not mean that all Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping processes will operate within the public domain. Many Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping processes will likely remain confined to special projects where specific land interests are identified, in private enterprises, public institutions, and disciplines, with no intention of permitting public access beyond a superficial level.

As well, there is little to suggest from recent experience that co-operation within these bodies will come easily for a variety of political and legal reasons. The status quo in Indigenous landscape knowledge based organisations remains largely dependent on knowing what others do not. Nevertheless, a viable Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping process could encourage a broad-based participation across oral, analog and digital cultures.

Having provided a conceptual model or schema for an Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping process, it becomes apparent that not all of the enabling technologies to invoke such a process exist. At this time, rather than deal with any specific tools, which will be required, a generic set of characteristics for a sustainable Indigenous landscape-knowledge mapping process are explored to identify vital features that may then be considered.

AN APPROACH TO INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE: Acquisition, Transfer and Application in Landscape Interpretations

Knowledge Acquisition

Since the advent of Mabo and the need for Aboriginal people to 'authenticate' their connections to land through legal and other processes, the great upheaval that this has caused has not yet been measured. Nor has it been understood in terms of how Indigenous peoples find their knowledge being measured against the gamut of 'white' intelligentsia whose 'knowledge' is the result of over one hundred years of research into Aboriginal lifestyles and cultures. This includes the more recent studies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections to land and seas.

The intelligentsia can be seen as pivotal to some the critical issues facing Indigenous landscape knowledge acquisition and mapping. The real threat is that past studies do not necessarily recognise Indigenous landscapes knowledge. This is evident in the application, mode of storage and use where the knowledge is not integrated into existing projections and planning processes.

Concerns about Knowledge Acquisition

Key concerns must be recognised if a successful application of Indigenous Landscape Knowledge Mapping is to occur. The concerns relate to the following issues:

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- There are now major structural changes occurring in our economy and social institutions, where there is a need to have explicit identification of Indigenous landscape knowledge and its relationship to economies and cultures.
- As a 'legalised' culture that emphasises if not assumes a totalising gaze upon cultures, Indigenous people are generating increasing amounts of information but are losing the ability to manage, interpret and act on relevant information applied to themselves and to other Indigenous peoples.
- Static disciplinary boundaries and institutional frameworks where Indigenous landscapes and ownership are at stake has created impediments to the development of critical Indigenous landscape knowledge and creative approaches needed to solve complex problems with and between Indigenous peoples.
- There is an increased need to access extra-disciplinary Indigenous landscape knowledge and to engage in meaningful trans-disciplinary activities that would support Indigenous claims to land, for example, botanists and environmental scientists.
- We need to build more dynamic forms of dialogue and interaction that share Indigenous landscape knowledge and experience in participatory models of interpretation.
- There is always a threat of reduction in the amount of capital available for creative initiatives that would respond to the issues identified above so models should incorporate processes that are sustainable.
- This task will require the ability to understand that the Indigenous landscape knowledge base, on which landscape planning is dependent, will need to build on or transform Indigenous landscape knowledge to meet changing Indigenous needs.

Knowledge Transfer

The fundamental task we need to engage in is to develop techniques for the documentation, acquisition, and transfer of Indigenous landscape knowledge. Again, for lack of better terminology I refer to this concept as 'Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping'. I believe we need to develop 'Indigenous landscape knowledge maps' to understand existing disciplinary Indigenous landscape knowledge base, to better navigate in a changing cultural terrain and to build a format for explicit Indigenous landscape knowledge representation that can be transferred and transformed into a basis for trans-disciplinary problem solving. Of course to talk of 'Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping' is easy, however, to produce a comprehensive and useful framework for Indigenous landscape knowledge mapping requires a strong yet flexible conceptual foundation to steer through the obvious complexities involved.

To start this process we first need a working definition of Indigenous landscape knowledge. Strangely enough this is the first stumbling block, if one checks enough texts one finds a lack of research if not great reluctance to define Indigenous landscape knowledge beyond the anthropological studies or legislative frameworks motivated by salvaging or directing approaches to understanding 'remnant' of 'real' Aboriginal cultures. Despite this, the majority of Indigenous Australians continue to emphasise, as part of their individual and groups identity, intimate connections to land that may or may not be considered 'traditional'.

The lack of substantial studies on Aboriginal cultures and land knowledge in urban areas presents one primary example of the gulf that exists in terms of readily applying a conceptual model for landscapes. Cowlishaw (1992:28) makes an important and helpful observation in an appraisal of past and current anthropological failings by pointing out that the dangers inherent in attempting to ameliorate this problem. The problem exists around "*Affirming that there are still 'traditional' elements in 'urban' communities.* [This] *plays into the reasoning of those who would judge Aboriginal authenticity in positivist terms*".

Application in Landscape Interpretations

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It is here within the machinery and methodology of authentication that the perplexing puzzle of creating ways to recognise difference becomes a stumbling block. This applies to all who are asked to interpret landscapes using conceptual tools within the ambit of 'traditional' and 'cultural' Aboriginality, because the fundamental understanding of these is themselves inappropriately used. Whether urban cultures are traditional or not seems a ridiculous question, particularly if one considers the word 'traditional' appears to be unproblematic when used to describe non-Aboriginal cultures in Australia. Hence there is no uniformity of application! Why?

While one could easily blame the lack of urban anthropological studies about Aboriginal cultures, this does not solve the problem or provide a solution, it only scapegoats. The relics embedded in words and ideas we use to describe Aboriginal peoples precede the days when the study of the Australian race became the study of the Aboriginal culture. In any case, I consider Indigenous landscape knowledge to be a kind of continuum in which the strength of Indigenous landscape knowledge is based on a sliding scale from belief, to justification, to verification.

Like navigating any piece of geography with a map, you have a purpose in mind, you believe the map is relatively good (that's why you are using it), you probably have an argument or justification for that belief (you trust its source) and you can verify the map in the field and judge its usefulness to the task at hand. If the concepts of authentication are being used, then look towards its destination in terms of its mode, tenor and field.

From this example we can see that the quality of Indigenous landscape knowledge we are interested in is highly contingent on the user's intent, conceptual understanding, and use of meanings that are yet to be determined by those for whom they intend to design the process. The map can always be re-drawn for accessibility or to satisfy needs in a given context.

The Indigenous landscape knowledge we are referring to is not all encompassing and neither is it so specific that belief, justification or verification is so highly subjective as to be useless to other persons. The Indigenous landscape knowledge I am interested in must be transferable and accessible to others in a way that makes its context, structure, and use explicit. I call this type of Indigenous landscape knowledge 'material Indigenous landscape knowledge.'

Interpretative Models of Indigenous Landscape Knowledge Mapping.

From the position of this discussion, I am not interested in creating person-independent structures of Indigenous landscape knowledge formulation. Instead, I am interested in the development of a representational strategy that allows us to document through 'natural' and 'formal' (analog, oral and digital) language systems, namely, Indigenous landscape knowledge strategies to given problems in given *contexts of situations*. This includes, one, the creation of separated objects (things); two, the operational definition of a construct (e.g., the use of a thermometer to measure temperature, to create an observable); and three, a complex rule of correspondence that links 'observables' and properties to things (it gives an object the properties of the observables in a logical relationship, e.g., that certain objects have mass, temperature, size, etc.). Such observations draw from Newtonian mechanics that defined laws that were considered universal for objects, defined by the same observables.

This process is seen as a way of establishing domains that direct the connection of observables by laws or theories. The lesson to be learned from science is this *"When examining phenomena as yet unilluminated by science with in a certain domain of experience, look for suitable observables, then search for a law that connects them."* Indigenous knowledge systems will not always have suitable observables, but they will almost always have a law that allows for an understanding of connections.

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Indigenous landscape knowledge is therefore *"The property of validated and accepted theories that are spiritually and culturally appropriate connected constructs having useful linkages with protocol experience via rules of correspondence."*

In this model as we move from the right to the left we develop more and more linkages and more complicated constructs, a kind of nested structure in which the sciences develop cumulative Indigenous landscape knowledge on the basis of prior Indigenous landscape knowledge. The development of increasingly abstracted and independent constructs creates further and further distance from the boundary of everyday human experience.

There are some generally accepted guiding principles used in interpretative studies, which can be used in a model for interpreting Indigenous landscape knowledge. These are: simplicity (look for the most simple set of constructs); extensibility (select theories which extend or build upon existing constructs); connection (look for theories which connect previous constructs); logical fertility (the consequences of the connections are clear as to what new can be explained or done and what cannot); stability of interpretation (the interpretation applies in a variety of contexts, universality), causality (the relationship between cause and effect can be demonstrated) and elegance (the aesthetic dimension).

These principles are not rigidly defined but may help guide the interpreter through relevant constructions of theories and Indigenous landscape knowledge. Historically this approach has yielded some powerful practical Indigenous landscape knowledge but has failed to transform the material and conceptual basis of Indigenous landscape knowledge. Strict adherence to these principles, however, has often lead to reductionist types of thinking. Reductionism in this context means that there is a fundamental belief in the unlimited extensibility of a single theory to explain just about everything in a logical and coherent manner. What must be born in mind is that every act of representation involves a positioning of the self, not just the application of theory. Each act of representation is an act of self-representation.

Even in scientific landscape knowledge, reductionist approaches are not necessarily effective or appropriate descriptions for social, biological, aesthetic or ethical fields of endeavour. I suggest that different domains of Indigenous landscape knowledge will demand different ways to describe cause and effect. In other words there is not one rational approach and one method of interpretation of the world. It seems that those concerned with human behaviour and inner experiences have the ability to arrange information in ways that increase organisation and lower entropy; an idea that directly contradicts traditional physical laws.

Purpose, creativity and the search for meaning are critical aspects of what constitutes the reality of human activity. One of the tasks facing us is to develop adequate languages for describing the domain of human and social-cultural experience. This needs to include ways of expressing and operationalizing the sensory, spiritual and mythical dimensions of the way people or groups operate. This is particularly pertinent to Indigenous peoples.

Traditional scientific method has usually sought for more formal, objective and universal constructs in relation to context, e.g. essentially gravity works in the same way everywhere. The notion of context in the planning fields, however, is as described above, more situated in the specific and unique relations (for example purpose and meaning) that occur in a 'place': a limited and specific, temporal domain of experience. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the temporal domain of experience may represent a vast array of texualities influenced by the past, present and even memories of the future but are much more transportable across time and space and 'place' and can mean both the physical and even existential.

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This suggests that an understanding of the purpose, meaning and position of experience and Indigenous landscape knowledge will be critical if useful approaches to Indigenous landscape knowledge formulation are to be developed in a range of fields.

It means that to include Indigenous landscape knowledge in a variety of contexts will require a flexible, positioned, heuristic, phenomenological and hermeneutic approach. These are important points to consider if we are to conceive of a possible, or let us say, a different approach to mapping Indigenous landscape knowledge in more creative and useful ways.

Improving Current Strategies

Important Questions

1. Don't we already have sufficient strategies for including Indigenous landscape knowledge representation and organisation?
The simple answer is yes and no. Making Indigenous landscape knowledge available to a wide variety of users in a wide variety of situations is a central activity in cultures where the transfer of Indigenous landscape knowledge and the development of new Indigenous landscape knowledge is seen as critical to the survival of cultures themselves. A number of institutions such as schools, universities and other social structures (for example the family or professions) have as one of their main concerns the identification and transfer of knowledge that better organises how they themselves operate and how they are perceived to operate by 'outsiders'. Indigenous access to landscape knowledge, understanding the means by which it is produced and reproduced and applied is no different. In fact, if we look around us we can see that there are a number of existing techniques for representing, structuring and transferring Indigenous landscape knowledge to others such as; conversations, books, images, diagrams, films, music, etc.

If we think of the field of landscape interpretations and planning we can see that its methods and processes have in fact evolved around the subterranean use and integration of multiple domains of Indigenous landscape knowledge (science, engineering, art, psychology, etc.). This includes the organisation of this Indigenous landscape knowledge through multiple representational approaches (drawing, speaking, quantifying, writing, etc.) about Australia landscapes.

2. How do we evaluate approaches to Indigenous landscape knowledge organisation?
By beginning to explore some of the strengths or limitations of traditional methods by which Indigenous landscape knowledge frameworks are developed and by evaluating them against a number of critical questions. For example:
- Are they compatible with the landscape planner's entry level of Indigenous landscape knowledge and context?
- Are they well organised, simple and easy to use?
- Do they allow for multiple levels of complexity to be described?
- Do they fit well with Indigenous landscape knowledge structures, methods procedures and representations needed?
- Does the planner document the approaches and explain the processes being used?
- Do they point to other sources of information?
- Are the approaches easy to exchange and share with other users?
- Can they be accessed when needed?

Using these criteria we can look at a number of representation strategies such as books or maps or data bases and determine, at least in an intuitive way, if they are appropriate to a required Indigenous landscape knowledge environment.

3.What are the additional characteristics of indigenous landscape knowledge organisation that are needed in the planning process?

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From my own research it seems clear that in landscape planning there is a strong preoccupation not only with the products of work but with the process in which that work is produced. If one examines the historical processes by which this country was colonised, it becomes clear that the process largely excluded the presence of Indigenous peoples. I think it would be fair to say that many landscape architects feel that design/planning process is at least as significant if not more important that the final products used to represent the process.

How Indigenous peoples are included within this process can be initiated by using a variety of methods that utilise the digital, the oral or the analog or combinations thereof. How one becomes aware of the extent of the exclusion of Indigenous people and to what extent this has become a normative and accepted practice will no doubt provide indications on the problems relating to design/planning practice.

There seems to be an ever-present desire by most groups, professional and non-professional, to understand, participate in and direct the execution of design/planning. I believe we are seeing a shift in emphasis where the process-product relationship is being changed to reflect a situation where the *product is the process*. This is particularly so if one examines the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy where pastoralists, Aborigines and Greens agreed on developing a *product* based on principles of an ongoing cycle of negotiating co-habitation, not a stalwart adherence to a restrictive codification of boundaries, social and environmental.

4. Other Questions

I would also suggest that the 'products' that are now valued most are processes that allow continual development and evaluation by the user(s) considering new information and changing contexts. If this is so we need to add the following questions to the critical evaluation of the characteristics that become part of mechanisms for defining where Indigenous landscape knowledge exists and what are the inter-actional capacities.

- Can it support interaction and shared dialogue?
- Can it access and make new information available to Indigenous peoples and others over time?
- Can users inter-activity vary the assumptions of approaches and test for implications?
- Can it support interpretive methods needed to assist others in navigating the approach and process?

What these four new questions imply is that there is a need in interpretation and planning to develop a more interactive (time and process oriented), multi-representational, approach that allows for the shared development of Indigenous landscape knowledge with other stakeholders. Ideally we would like to be able to deal with the interpretation/planning process at a speed as fast as intuition needs to question, explore and test ideas. The Indigenous landscape knowledge environments we need have to develop in ways that can facilitate the translation of Indigenous landscape knowledge into accessible forms. Such forms need to be relevant to complex problems in trans-disciplinary contexts for a wide variety of users, all with different entry levels of Indigenous landscape knowledge- for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous users.

The Shape of Indigenous Landscape Knowledge Maps

Indigenous landscape knowledge map should be in my mind an interactive, open system for dialogue that defines, organises and builds on the intuitive, structured and procedural Indigenous landscape-knowledge used to explore and solve problems. It exposes the processes (not necessarily the sources) of Indigenous landscape knowledge formulation that leads to proposed solutions. Indigenous landscape knowledge maps are trying to capture and makes accessible to others the experience, methods, processes and judgments used by Indigenous persons or groups about a given intent. It is an active technique for making contextual Indigenous landscape knowledge representable, explicit and transferable to others. Of intrinsic importance, it provides an opportunity to re-negotiate the past, present and the

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future through a process that is based on mutual understandings on landscape-rights being born out of creative interaction. Not all interactions will be comfortable; not all interactions will be uncomfortable. Contestation is, after all, an ongoing creative process, not a fixed aesthetic outcome.

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