

The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives: Memory in the Blood

NATALIE HARKIN

Yunggoorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research
Flinders University

Approaching the Archive

It is the fever in the archive after all, the same fever that drives the hoarding (the holding) which might drive an attempt to touch something of the event. To feel this drive to touch is to be haunted by a possibility of something beyond (before, within) the archive. It is here that we contemplate whether or not that which we were approaching is actually approaching us. (Hawkes 206)

I remember . . . it was twelve years ago. My cousin and I approached SA Link-Up on behalf of my Nanna in search of a missing-narrative and the possibility of answers beyond what we knew. She had important questions about her childhood and removal from her family and community; and important questions about the State-orchestrated domestic-placements and movements of her mother, the beloved spectral-matriarch of our family.

There was paperwork and interviews, and within a few months our Link-Up Case Worker presented us with an almost two-inch-thick, ring-bound file; the unexpected shock-representation of Nanna's life recorded under the Aboriginal Protection Board and the State Children's Welfare Department, between the years 1938 to 1947. My cousin and I sat facing each other in quiet disbelief. Records in hand, our Case Worker took us through the files. She began with codes of confidentiality regarding the blanked out sections, then prepared us for the already-vetted and tagged pages deemed 'most sensitive,' all the while counseling us to deal with the inevitable affect.

*I sit between almost 200 pages
file-note archives
a portion of Nanna's life
under State control
with tight throat my heart pumps
memory-in-the-blood
I catch my breath—sharp
and hold it.*

I remember . . . the level of surveillance was overwhelming. Claustrophobic. We needed air and tea. We opened the office door and tried to breathe. Shaken by the sheer volume of material, thick and weighty, solely about Nanna, I read the words: *Committed to Institution till 18 years, Charged 'Destitute,'* I shook my head in disbelief, thinking . . . *but she belonged with her family and community who mourned her . . . she was taken against her will, it's not what her mother or grandparents wanted.*

I slid the files to Nanna across the dining table in the pulsating-heart of her home where everything happened: *her kitchen.* I repeated our Case Worker's words and highlighted what was deemed 'most sensitive,' despite the potency of the entire document. *I remember . . .*

I remember the impact of reading handwritten letters from both Nanna and my great grandmother to the Department or the Protection Board.

*I turn the pages and there she is
perfect old-school cursive
so familiar
never-before-spoken-of letters
all formal-pleading-polite
to Inspectors, State-Ladies, Protectors
yearning for
Mother. Home. Justice.
in every page
yearning.*

Within 24 hours this material-archive had been transformed with her shock, shame and rage. She ripped out 25 of the 188 pages; *all references to a particular reformatory institution, gone . . . all references to acts of absconding, gone . . . all references to psych reports and her behavior, gone.* To me, this act of tearing, of record-expulsion, exposed so much . . . the institutionalised abuse and control, the strict ‘domestic training,’ a life-lived under threat and punishment, and her failed attempts to find home reported officiously as serial ‘abscondings.’ Trauma. Separation. Shame. State issued dog-tags. Exempted from family, country and birth-right identity: for the record, no longer Aboriginal.

Dear Madam [Half-Caste Quadroon],

I have the pleasure in advising that the Aborigines Protection Board has granted UNCONDITIONAL EXEMPTION to you and the members of your [Quadroon-Octoroon] family, from the provisions of the Aborigines Act.

You are now regarded in law as citizens of the ordinary white community, and I trust you will do your best to justify the confidence reposed in you by the Board.

Yours faithfully,

*Secretary,
ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD
29th May, 1941*

Her State-filed-life was replete with lies and colonial-construct misrepresentations essentialising everyone she loved. She was rarely named, but was quite simply *their Girl: their State-Child-half-caste-quadroon-octoroon-true-to-type-of-her-own-kind-native-liar-nice-type-obedient-on-probation-difficult-tidy-looking-most-polite-well-spoken-careless-destitute-inmate-consorter.*

With strained voice Nanna refuted their claims and vicious accusations. Fixated on their descriptions and labels, and with repressed-forgotten memories resurfacing, she read her life with feverish-passion and intensity. She phoned sisters-cousins-friends who knew. She buried the shredded-file at the bottom of her wardrobe. Tried once again to forget.

I remember . . . my hunger for our missing narrative was whetted, strong. I was in constant contact . . . I wanted to talk . . . I asked too many questions. She growled me and I cried and raged at the injustice of it all. At the same time I was in awe of her strength and resilience given the weight of all she carried. I desperately wanted to carry some of it for her, lighten her load, honour her. This ring-bound-file chronicled in part one woman's journey under policies of protection and assimilation, but it was not the sum of my beloved Nanna . . . just one twisted version of her life through the brutal colonial-lens of the State.

*I touch her handwriting
feel her finger-tips
hear her 'husky voice' described in
Inspector reports
their object
their imperial-fascination
this beautiful woman
—my Nanna
bold and cheeky
generous and soft.*

I remember aching to touch something, anything more of our recorded past to understand this journey and the particular impacts of colonialism on my family. Contact with the archive roused a yearning so deep, I just wanted to find and deconstruct it all. Derrida describes something similar; an *Archive Fever*:

It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive . . . it is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement. (91)

I longed to go right back to that beginning place . . . to those first colonial-recordings of my family, to the frontier-violence-contact-zone, and trace my blood from there. I gathered what I could. The hoarding had begun. All haunted by what was neither visible nor invisible, neither present nor absent in the flesh (Derrida, in Rivera 2), I needed what was beyond the so-called-official record, to enter those hidden in-between places full of mystery, pain and possibility; to peel back layers of memory and flesh and liberate our stories and skin, particularly for the women in my family. I wanted to move beyond the healing-place and confront the generations of silencing and racial-sexual oppression head-on. And, drawn to de-colonial and black-feminist writers, I yearned for and toward that space to destabilise and subvert the white-supremacist 'archons' (Derrida 2) who had wielded great power and who had persisted in dominant, violent, colonising narratives of us; that space where my critical Aboriginal-sovereign-woman's voice might be heard.

I remember . . . I remember Nanna mocked my flag-flying rage . . . she laughed heartily at the stupidity of Governments past and present, and repeated her mantra-familiar 'you gotta keep laughing Nats, coz if you start crying, you'll never stop.' Forget the exhuming, exorcising or learning-to-live-with ghosts. It appeared she preferred to leave the dead buried, deep in the core of her. She was such a mixture of things, a walking-talking paradox with a pseudo-reverence for manifestations of the State I personally loathed; with a love-hate addiction to all-night-radio-conservative-shock-jocks, and a staunch follower of all that was 'Royal

Family' right to the very depths of her 'Queen's-portrait-biscuit-tin.' 'You know what,' she'd say all-wistful, 'they said I looked a bit like the Queen of England when I was young.' 'Well maybe,' I'd say, 'but you were browner and more beautiful and I don't reckon she could roast spuds or fry squid like you!'

Sometimes I longed for her gutsy humour and her generous spirit that forgave the past as simply that, and to lay it all to rest. She continued to dance through her routine-domesticity and I learned to be patient. We let the dust settle for a while, and pretended to forget what lay buried at the bottom of her wardrobe. But dust lingers and the spectres of the archive do not rest. The original questions to Link-Up remained unanswered, the gaps in our story widened with burgeoning paper-trails that would just slip away . . . and through a 'spectropoetics of the archive' (Demos; Grumberg; Hariss; Rivera) I maintained my flag-flying rage and yearned . . . my archive fever.

(Re)Mapping the Archive

This paper explores stories of re-mapping the archives through art and poetic-prose, using ideas of haunting through 'memory in the blood.' Our family archives are like maps that haunt and guide us toward paths past-travelled and directions unknown. We travel through these archives that offer up new stories and collections of data, and a brutal surveillance is exposed at the hands of the State. We gain insight into intimate conversations, letters, behaviours and movements, juxtaposed with categorisations of people, places, landscapes and objects. These records are our memories and lives; material, visceral, flesh and blood. The State wounds and our records bleed. I travel through my own Nanna's records and recognise that we have never lived outside the State, and this very act of recognition continues the wounding. State acts of surveillance, recording and archiving had the power to place our family stories in the public domain, or obliterate stories within a broader history of erasure; filed away, silent and hidden until bidden. But our bodies too are archives where memories, stories, and lived experiences are stored, etched and anchored in our bloodlines deep. They ground our creativity in what become personal and political acts of remembering, identity making and speaking back to the State. Detective-like methods allow us to creatively re-map events and landscapes, piece together lives fragmented and heal our wounds.

Blood on the Record

My family's records provide a chilling and intimate snapshot of lives lived under extraordinary surveillance from the 1920s to the 1950s. A closer look at Aboriginal Affairs history in South Australia confirms this story is not particularly special, but in fact represents a general pattern of forced movement and displacement from lands, of child removal and of high levels of surveillance historically and typically experienced by Aboriginal people in this State. Reports from the *Board of Anthropological Research* based on Norman Tindale's anthropological expeditions, read alongside Aboriginal Affairs legislation between 1844 and 1939 and *Aborigines Protection Board Annual Reports* spanning a century, revealed a great unfolding narrative. This narrative, represented as truth in public discourse and informing the foundations of public policy, was inscribed and articulated as *the Aboriginal problem*. But these reports revealed something else that was both visceral-reality and created-imagined fantasy; something that anchored and centred and pulsed to and from the heart of it all. And that was *blood*. The revered and repulsed colonial obsession, written into the record. *Flowing. Stirring. Spilling. Dripping. Mixing. Blood.* Aboriginal blood and white blood. Full-blood and mixed-blood. Half-caste and quarter-caste. Quadroon and octoroon. Sub-human and fully-

human. The racialised assumptions underpinning a so-called real and true Aboriginality became absolute on the colonial blood-dilution-scale, and reinforced the actions of government. *Blood everywhere . . . everywhere blood on the record.*

As I read these official reports and documents juxtaposed with my family's personal files from the archives, I was struck by the detail in the method and the thinking. The transparency of the self-imposed circular logic, written and re-written into itself, and anchored in blood-quantum dilution, was breathtaking. *Blood everywhere . . . everywhere blood on the record.* Yet there was, and always remains, something else again . . .

Archival-Poetics

History lies dormant until bidden. In this state of not-dead those stories most silent can prove tenacious, holding onto terrain, whether place or people, waiting for the opportunity to be revisited, communicated, revived.
(Gough in SASA 7)

A *spectropoetics of the archive* can examine ways in which the past still haunts us and maintains its influence on the present, and particularly how the layers of meaning in events or texts, previously consigned to history's shadows, can be exposed through creative means (Grumberg). Literary studies has, in effect, taken the word 'archive' from the archive, from a specific material and procedural context, into its own discursive sphere (Slocombe and Hill). Literary practice and the arts offer a space to interrogate the racialised-archive and its role in forming national consciousness and identity. This includes methods to creatively address issues of knowledge production as it intersects with colonialism; new ways to critically unsettle linear modes of history-making which claim the ability to recover the past objectively, wholly and completely, via the archive (Grumberg; Harris; Manoff; Ravenscroft).

By interrogating our family archives from many angles and perspectives we can expose the State's attempts to bury traumatic episodes of history which, without some kind of healing and reckoning, will inevitably return to haunt. Developing a spectropoetics refuses to accept a cultural amnesia, one of irresponsibility to the past. This work allows us to consider ways to live more justly with the past, oppose the ongoing violence of neo-colonialisms, and theorise future responsibilities to history (Demos 2011).

Throughout my life, I have learnt how to piece the mysteries together with gathered facts from historical records that have been revealed through anthropological, historical, and family research. I can only now feel I can tell the story of our family revealing the voices of loved ones who never, ever told a story that they felt was too shameful to tell. (Wright 10)

By investigating the gaps, voids and ghosts in my own Aboriginal family story, I am inspired by writer Alexis Wright's '*learning to imagine*' what was stolen and what was never explained (10), and artist Julie Gough's detective-like search for alternative and visual means of representation, reworking the past '*between the lines*,' and searching for the underbelly of meaning in historical records (SASA; Gough). Gough's work also emerges from very personal considerations of the place of memory, forgetting, loss, denial and the potency of the past within her own family (iv). She describes her methodology as 'detection':

Indigenous crime scenes are often reflected in stories of forced removal from our lands. Metaphorically, psychologically and physically distanced from the land, some Aboriginal people find themselves viewing their ‘country’ as a crime scene. (70)

I am also inspired by artist Judy Watson’s journey through heritage as she learns from the ground up, poetically integrating body, emotion and country in her work. She ‘mines and sifts the physical, emotional, historical and personal elements of her own and Australia’s story, both past and present. She is an artist/archaeologist, bringing things to the surface for a glimpse of light, sometimes concealing with layers those things too painful or raw to expose’ (Watson and Martin-Chew 19). Artist *r e a* also creates works using her body through the physical and conceptual landscape to represent the continuing lack of visibility of Indigenous identity (*r e a*, in Nicholls).

Hokowhitu thankfully reminds us that atrocities of colonisation must not be our defining point. We have existential agency and we can choose to materialise beyond such embodied and genealogical pain; we can choose to live beyond the genealogical scarring inflicted by colonisation. To do so, we need to be present in sites that disrupt colonial narratives beyond the old disciplines of knowledge production, and this includes the archives. *Resistance*. We can transcend and subvert (108). *Time to write!*

Memory in the Blood

Where do we go when we yearn for something beyond actual memory, beyond knowledge of our actual being; when we suspect, realise or recognise that there is more to us than what we remember of our own experience? Kiowa-Comanche Native American author Scott Momaday believes we have to go back before our time, into our heritage, into the blood memory, into our ancestry. That is where the information we need exists, *to find our true identity* (Momaday, in Schubell 203).

The term ‘memory in the blood’ or ‘blood memory’ was first coined by Momaday in his award-winning novel *House Made of Dawn* in 1969; a literary journey into his Kiowa past through the ‘memory in the blood’ of his ancestors (Kilpatrick; Owens; Perreault). Blood memory is now considered the most recognisable trope used in American Indian literature; one that blurs the distinctions between racial/cultural identity (blood) and reclaiming and reimagining histories through narrative (memory) (Allen).

Blood memory is a process which identifies a relationship to individual and collective heritage and to one’s family and ancestors, written through landscape and the body: where the claiming of communal memory juxtaposed with current individual memory is a necessity; where future memory is embodied through lineage and passed on in literature . . . a sifting of one’s Indigenous roots through generational storytelling (Kilpatrick 91; Perreault 200–01). The relationship between past-present-future is not linear nor limiting, as we are already the re-telling of the past, always transforming it, and our stories are without end (Dodson 40; Heiss and van Toorn).

Aboriginalities of today are regenerations and transformations of the spirit of the past, not literal duplications of the past; we recreate Aboriginality in the context of all our experiences, including our pre-colonial practices, our oppression, and our political struggles.

Our memories are our flesh, our voices, our ways of seeing . . . (Dodson 40).

Jackie Huggins describes something similar: Indigenous *narrative memory* held in stories and life experience is an organic process and a collective activity; like a map of possibilities of existence upon which people can draw to make sense of their lives (Huggins). Huggins also identifies genealogy, family story and connection to home and country as critical to the construction and revival of individual and collective memory for Indigenous people (Huggins). Momaday speaks of many journeys in one, where racial memories, the stories of the old people, leap across generations. It is not a dying thing, but remarkably vital, and unending (40). Deeply influenced by Momaday's work, Choctaw-Cherokee writer Louis Owens calls it *blood trails*; what is traced back toward a sense of where we come from and who we are (Kilpatrick 92; Owens). Owens ponders this concept of blood memory and our impulse to remember and retell the stories of our parents and grandparents, and concludes that for many of us there are enormous gaps; voids that cannot be filled. He speaks of the missing grandmothers, and grandfathers, and the results of our retelling as 'mixed-message' that stir in the blood (Owens 151).

Momaday's *memory in the blood*, however, is not about genetic or biological determinism, notions of fixed identity or timeless essences, but can be understood as an evocative synonym for culture, reconstructed and reimagined on the record (Huang 188; Su). Here, the body (blood) serves as a metaphor for the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and heritage, through individual and collective memory, particularly in the face of enormous loss; this includes common understandings of landscapes, distinct cultural knowledges and diverse histories (Huang 188).

This understanding of blood-memory connects us intimately to country and place. Judy Watson's personal journey, explored in her art, is largely influenced by her grandmother's stories, memories and experiences and overwriting them with vignettes of her own (Watson and Martin-Chew 14); being on country with her grandmother was essential to this process. Like Owens and Watson, Alexis Wright also reflects on the influence of her grandmother on her writing: '*She was our memory. She was what "not forgetting" was all about*' (Wright 10). Momaday inscribes such a meaning to his writing, stating the 'long possession of the landscape . . . can be understood in those terms as something that has come down in the blood for generations' (46).

Allen expanded the trope 'blood-memory' as the *blood-memory-land complex* which names the three primary and interrelated sites of struggle (15–16). He captures a fluidity and an interdependent 'circular logic' which enables writers to define an enduring indigenous identity ('blood') in terms of narratives of connection to specific lands ('land'), and to use narratives of connection to specific lands ('memory') to again assert an enduring identity ('blood') (Allen 220). However, given the history of intense dislocation and removal from lands and communities, such an assertion of enduring identity does not flow easily. Here, blood memory is often a site of mourning and melancholy, particularly when documenting the struggle and the journey toward an identity steeped in deep settler colonialisms.

Blood Memory as Narrative Tactic

*I listen and hear those words
a hundred years away*

*that is my Grandmother's
Mother's country*

*it seeps down through blood
and memory
and soaks
into the ground.*

(Watson and Martin-Chew 141)

Blood memory has achieved the status of literary trope because of the way it can respond to this collective loss. It can be understood as both a way of thinking and a literary-method framed and underpinned by a series of ‘narrative tactics’ (Allen) that can achieve many things: writing back to the State’s colonial discourses and fixed imaginings on blood, race and identity; and contributing to larger narratives of history through constructing and reconstructing personal narratives. This writing back to colonial discourses on blood can expose the very essentialism embodied in State-constructed ideas of indigenous blood-quantum identity, thereby disrupting the racial economy, or the fixed stability of bloodlines which determines Indigenous blood as the abject contaminating threat to white colonial genetic purity (Huang 173).

According to Owens (in Kilpatrick) memory produces the continuity that makes a culture and gives us a place (4). Re-imagining history and contributing to communal memory through research, and active remembering, recollection, recuperation and recasting knowledge or refining relationships to knowledge, can strengthen one’s sense of self and identity. Stories are like maps and our imagination is central here: ‘. . . blood trails that we follow back toward a sense of where we come from and who we are’ (Kilpatrick 92).

As a literary tool, blood memory can bring a world from nothing into existence. A hauntology (Derrida 1995) of sorts, it is a way of writing and recreating into the past for the record, where new stories infuse meaning to the present (Su; Teuton). Blood memory explored through an *epistemology of haunting* (Gordon; Van Wagenan) makes sense to me. It is a way of theorising that which is silent, hidden or absent but is nevertheless acutely present and felt, and has the potential to further add to the Indigenous studies movement and inform restorative ways of honouring and remembering into the future.

Haunting (the) Colonial Archive

Absence is rife in historical records—the version of those colonised or documented is historically not recorded and is nonexistent through regular channels of research. Similarly, I no longer see the historical record as factual, rather it is a ledger leaking attitudes which often reveal more than scrawled names and dates—these are the details which bring meaning to my work. (Gough 64)

We are presently haunted by what has been excluded in the colonial record (Durrant; Gunew; Gordon; Hawkes; O’Reilly). I am interested in the disruptive-transformative affects of archival haunting; the interrogation of what is remembered and what is not known; the recovery of the forgotten and the revelation of the act of forgetting; and what transpires in our attempts to disrupt what Toni Morrison refers to as ‘national amnesia’ (Angelo in Durrant 116), the State’s desire to forget the colonial histories of injustice that nevertheless determine contemporary life (Durrant 116–17). Toni Morrison’s work is important here as Hart considers this national forgetting as an active form of collective memory and ‘understood as

the hegemonic . . . experiential “script” that is learned, embodied, and passed on as the cultural record of “normal” (Bold, in Hart 13). We need to respond, as Wright says, as an ethical responsibility to expose our raw pain and write our many truths (12–13); to unveil what Kim Scott calls ‘Australia’s continuing neurosis,’ and what Tony Birch (‘Promise Not to Tell’), calls Australia’s ‘*public secret*,’ as a story of domestic violence (1).

Birch (‘The Invisible Fire’) reminds us that those who are intent on obliterating Indigenous memory continue to privilege particular and unproblematic colonial representations of the past. Such representations deny the realities of persistent attempts to dispossess Indigenous people and advocate assimilation (108). There is thus a real danger in the archiving process as a literal reconstruction and recording of history from particular colonial perspectives (LaCapra, in Manoff 14). The records gathered on Nanna’s life embody this archiving process; the archons responsible for surveillance and documentation revered on every page:

*The Aborigines Protection Board,
The Protector, Mission Superintendants, Secretary,
The Welfare Board, Children’s Welfare Department,
Boarding-Out-Officer, Senior Probation Officer, Inspector,
‘State Ladies,’ Matron, Deputy-Director-of-Rationing, Police, Doctor,
Psychologist, School Teacher, Academic, Scientific Expert, Anthropologist.*

These supposed agents of protection and integrity determined what data was important, relevant and interesting for the record. Such collated-surveillance directly determined our family’s fate, including forced movements from lands between mission stations and communities, child removal, institutionalisation and domestic placements. My family-story is not atypical. It is widely cited that Indigenous Australians are the most researched of Indigenous peoples globally (Banks 11; Martin 203) and the volume of records based on observations and surveillance reports I’ve had partial access to, attests to such claims.

The primary-source-archive is central to representations of history, which, for example, fuel contemporary public debate surrounding the legitimacy and extent of frontier-violence, massacres and child removal, and effectively strips us of our agency. These *history-as-battleground* debates are played out largely between white historians; they are politically and ideologically driven, are centred on empirical-data and continue to omit Indigenous voices (Birch, ‘The Invisible Fire’). In fact, ‘this present day ‘culture war’ does not involve Indigenous people beyond objectification’ (108). The *modus operandi* of *silence and forgetting* in the consignment of the archive rebreeds these silences (Derrida 7). It frames what is consigned to the archive as a unified-whole and suppresses what is left out; discards it; denies its existence, so it is consigned to the world of oblivion. As a depository of memory, the archive is thus simultaneously related to the process of forgetting that which operates in silence; what Derrida terms, the ‘violence of the archive’ (Mansour 43).

There is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation. (Derrida 4)

The State’s archives are clearly not neutral or innocent sites and this democratisation to which Derrida refers is critical. The process to access Aboriginal records in this current political

climate can be difficult: many records are yet to be logged onto the system, and those that are deemed by the State as too sensitive are blocked for release as a contemporary form of gate-keeping (Raynes 2009). In tracing her family records across the continent, Bayet-Charlton laments:

Within the largest collection of Aboriginal-related material in the southern hemisphere, no, in the world, I am marooned. The white anthropologist who collected the material of my family, of my ancestors, has greater right of access than I do. It is his work. It is his information. I am dispossessed of it. Another gate has been locked. I wonder how many other people have come into this great institute, this wonderful cornucopia of information, and gone away empty-handed. (157)

The archive is at odds with itself, functioning through a paradoxical logic. It is both sacred space *and* colonial object; it drives us to both recover *and* preserve the past; it protects *and* patrols, regulates *and* represses. On the one hand it is a history of conservation, on the other hand a history of loss (Rivera 3; Voss and Werner 1999). Despite their limitations, interest in the archive is growing as we cling to records and objects in the hope of somehow connecting to a past we can never fully know (Manoff 17). The research focus from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject is shifting (Stoler), and the colonial archive is now being interrogated more thoroughly, particularly by Indigenous people who refuse to be removed from the written record or face a future without an identity (Birch, 'The Invisible Fire' 111–12). *Time to write.*

Speak Loud, Speak Unsettling Things and Be Dangerous . . . (Johnson 53)

As an Aboriginal woman living through policies of protection and assimilation, my Nanna rightly refused the racialised-archives' claims to knowledge and its written record of her life. She dismissed it, then she emotionally shut down for some time. Her pain was palpable, externalised through a physical shredding of her records and hiding the torn pages at the bottom of her wardrobe. And through my own archive-fever I was compelled to resist, subvert and write. Bunda's reminder that 'writing by Indigenous people is a sovereign act' (75) gives me strength, and Gough's words, 'the slippery path of re-enactment is fragile in terms of ethical responsibility towards previous generations unable to present their own case' (SASA 7), remind me to tread gently, and, importantly, to respect the paths I need not travel.

I am in and of the archive, I am my grandmother's grand-daughter, her trace is (literally) in my blood, my flesh, my bones, my spirit. But her trace is also written. It is on record. It is a record of many sorts and speaks in multiple ways. I am in the company of others who labour creatively as visual artists, poets, writers, intellectuals, and who labour creatively in the everyday-mundane. We are haunted and we haunt. We write to create, to survive, and to revolutionise; we write to haunt and we ache because we refuse to leave the past alone. We aim to disrupt the State's founding order of things, to disrupt 'patriarchal white sovereignty' (Moreton-Robinson), white heteronormativity, and the colonial-continuum of history. We dig up the archives and project them to reclaim places and voices, to invoke memory-in-our-blood, to reveal what is missing in all the gaps, cracks and in-between silences we can find (Watson and Martin-Chew 84).

As Derrida says of talking to ghosts, we need to grant them the right to a hospitable memory out of a concern for justice. But they are more than ghosts to accommodate, they are our

ancestors. Bayet-Charlton (240) writes her journey through the archives through a love letter to her children:

I've thrown off some of the boundaries I thought were my identity. I've kept all the memories I could find.

We come from a land of rivers and dust, of markings made by people of clay. Only the forms and the names change.

Your mother is not here though. I am of the dispossessed. So are you. We are another generation removed from our land, from our Dreaming. Yet we walk on this continent and we remember while rivers and dust flow in our blood.

No one can define who we are but ourselves.

The colour of your ancestors' clay has faded, but see your hair shine in our sun.

Through my archival-poetics I attempt a new telling, a *re-memory* (Ravenscroft 5), inspired by those who critically-creatively engage the archives in their work. As Wright says, we search 'for the corners of the soul where joy can be found . . . our words are weapons, our books are time bombs, already breaking down the many barriers on their way across the world' (19). Writing is indeed one of the most powerful tools of protest which can allow us to transcend, to live passionately, imaginatively and creatively beyond embodied and genealogical pain.

As I read the *Board of Anthropological Research* expedition reports, our family records from the *SA Museum, State Aboriginal Records* and *SA Link-Up*, I am transported. I am with my family at the hands of the scientists being measured, bled, poked and prodded as their object of fascination-titillation-subjugation. I am standing before Inspector-'State-Ladies' and Probation Officers being inspected, watched from shadows, and shamed in the great Australian assimilation-experiment. But most importantly, I am with my Nanna singing Patsy Cline and walking around Point Pearce Mission Station as she proudly shows me the cottage she grew up in, the hall that her beloved grandfather built, the church and old school she attended, the beaches she fished from and the cemetery she mourned in. I am with her as she speaks with deep-love admiration for her mother, her brothers-sisters-cousins-grandparents and whole community of aunties and uncles who sustained her with a life-time of strength, stories and memories that fill my heart. Here, I also reflect on the words of Chamorro anti-colonial-activist-poet and scholar Craig Santos Perez, originally from Guam, honouring *taotaomo'na*, his spirit ancestors:

while my ancestors did live breathe love die *before*
 contact *before*
 colonialism *before*
 history
 taotaomo'na also exist
 in time *in*
 our histories remembered forgotten
 in our bodies homes words *in*
 every breath *in*

relation to my own body by wave of the page' and [we]
 will continue *after in*
 all *afters* (Perez 13)

In loving tribute to his own grandmother, Perez distills threads of belonging so profound he reminds me, this memory in my blood *is* my belonging *to continue in after in all afters*. So with the language of the archives in hand, and with my ancestors and the spirit of my Nanna beside me, I am compelled. *Speak-up, speak unsettling things and write . . .*

Ode to the Board of Anthropological Research

She's not your hybrid- 'between-world'—wonder nor your noble-wretched-girl not your savage Australian-nigger waiting to die, she was never 'destitute' from Mother-love and she won't let you see her cry—you will never know her fully. Tilt her chin up-slightly to the right and shoot her body once again down the barrel of your camera drag her image through your lens—you will never know her fully. Make her draw fish on a chalk-board test her reading and her sums and teach her time with the clanging-mission-bell, you think she's making progress clawing back from native-hell—but you will never know her fully. Teach her to scrub and mop and sew remove her three times from her lands document her features and bleed-her till she bends then examine her brown-body through your microscopic lens—but you will never know her fully. You can frame her you can name her through your science stake your claim but you will never stop her thinking for her mind you cannot tame, her sacred truth her choices we'll recover I'll reclaim—no you will never know her fully, never know us—never know, you will never know her fully never know.

WORKS CITED

- Allen, Chadwick. *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.
- Banks, Gary. 'Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in Australia'. Address to the Second OECD World Forum on 'Statistics, Knowledge and Policy,' *Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies*. Istanbul, Turkey, 27–30 June 2007.
- Bayet-Charlton, Fabienne. *Finding Ullagundahi Island*. Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002.
- Birch, Tony. 'The Invisible Fire: Indigenous Sovereignty, History and Responsibility'. *Sovereign Subjects, Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*. Ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Allen & Unwin, 2007. 105–17.
- . 'Promise Not to Tell: Interrogating Colonialism's Worst (or Best) Kept Secrets'. Paper presented at *First Person: International Digital Storytelling Conference*. ACMI Plenary session, 4 February 2006. www.acmi.net.au
- Bunda, Tracey. 'The Sovereign Aboriginal Woman'. *Sovereign Subjects, Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*. Ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2007. 75–85.
- Demos, T.J. 'Sven Augustijnen Spectropoetics'. Brussels: ASA Publishers, 2011.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever, a Freudian Impression*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995.
- Dodson, Michael. 'The End in the Beginning: Re(de)finding Aboriginality'. *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*. Ed. Michelle Grossman. Melbourne UP, 2003. 25–42.
- Durrant, Sam. *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning: J. M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, and Toni Morrison*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2004.

- Johnson, Eva. 'On the line and The black pen'. *Word, On Being a (Woman) Writer*. Ed. Jocelyn Burrell. New York: Feminist Press, City U of New York, 2004. 49–54.
- Gunew, Sneja. *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms*. London: Routledge, 2003
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007.
- Gough, Julie. 'Transforming Histories: The Visual Disclosure of Contentious Pasts'. Thesis, PhD (Fine Arts) by Research. University of Tasmania, 2001.
- Grumberg, Karen. 'Of Sons and (M)others: The Spectropoetics of Exile in Autobiographical Writing by Amos Oz and Albert Cohen'. *Prooftexts* 30.2 (2010): 373.
- Hariss, Dave (Harris and Associates). 'Reading Guide to Derrida'. 4 September 2012 <http://www.arasite.org/derrida.htm>.
- Hart, L.K. 'Against Hauntology and Historicide: Urban Indigeneity in the White Imagining'. 2006. <http://julieshiels.com.au/public-space/Hauntology-and-Historicide.pdf>
- Hawkes, Martine. 'Filtering Ash: Approaching Genocide in the Archives'. PhD thesis, School of Communication, International Studies and Languages, U of South Australia, 2010.
- Heiss, Anita, and Penny van Toorn, eds. 'Stories Without End'. *Southerly* 62.2 (2002).
- Hokowhitu, Brendan. 'Indigenous Existentialism and the Body'. *Critical Indigenous Studies, Cultural Studies Review* 15.2 (2009): 101–18.
- Huang, Hsinya. 'Blood/Memory in N. Scott Momaday's *The Names: A Memoir* and Linda Hogan's *The Woman Who Watches over the World: A Native Memoir*'. *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 32.1 (2006): 171–95.
- Huggins, Jackie. Keynote Address, Deadly Directions AIATSIS Library Conference, Canberra, 2–3 August 2005.
- Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn, ed. *Louis Owens: Literary Reflections on His Life and Work*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2004.
- Manoff, Marlene. 'Theories of the Archive from Across Disciplines'. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4.1. (2004): 9–25.
- Martin, Karen. 'Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing: A Theoretical Framework and Methods for Indigenous Re-search and Indigenist Research'. *Journal of Australian Studies* 76 (2003): 203–14.
- Mansour, Wisam. 'The Violence of the Archive'. *English Language Notes* 45.1 (2007).
- Moreton-Robinson, A. 'The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty: The High Court and the Yorta Yorta Decision'. *Borderlands e-journal* 3.2 (2004). http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2_2004/moreton_possessive.htm
- Nicholls, Christine. 'PolesApart'. BREENSPACE catalogue essay, 2009. http://www.breenspace.com/exhibitions/r-e-a-polesapart/002.rea_breenspace_09.jpg.php
- O'Riley, Michael. 'Postcolonial Haunting: Anxiety, Affect, and the Situated Encounter'. *Postcolonial Text* 3.4 (2007).
- Owens, Louis. *Mixedblood Messages, Literature, Film, Family, Place*. Norman: Red River Books, U of Oklahoma P, 1998.
- Perez, Craig Santos. *from unincorporated territory [saina]*. California: Omnidawn Publishing, 2008.
- Perreault, Jeanne. 'Memory Alive: An Inquiry into the Uses of Memory by Marilyn Dumont, Jeanette Armstrong, Louise Halfe, and Joy Harjo'. *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*. Eds. Cheryl Suzack, Shari Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault and Jean Barman. Canada: U of British Columbia P, 2010. 199–217.

- Ravenscroft, Alison. 'Anxieties of Dispossession: Whiteness, History, and Australia's War in Viet Nam'. *Whitening Race, Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. Ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies P, 2005. 3–16.
- Raynes, Cameron. *The Last Protector: The Illegal Removal of Aboriginal Children from their Parents in South Australia*. South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2009.
- Rivera, John-Michael. 'The Archive as Specter'. *English Language Notes* 45.1 (2007).
- Scott, Kim. 'Australia's Continuing Neurosis: Identity, Race and History'. Alfred Deakin Lecture, 14 May 2001. <http://archive.is/CzH2t>
- Schubnell, Matthias, ed. 'Conversations with N. Scott Momaday'. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1997.
- Slocombe, Will and Jennie Hill. 'Archive-Text: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue'. *English Language Notes* 45.1 (2007).
- South Australian School of Art (SASA). 'The Ranger'. Exhibition catalogue. Cur. and Ed. Mary Knights. U of South Australia, October 2007.
- Stoler, Ann. 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance'. *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87–109.
- Su, John. 'Ghosts of Essentialism: Racial Memory as Epistemological Claim'. *American Literature* 81.2 (2009): 361–86.
- Teuton, Sean. 'Native Literature, Native Art, and How There Might Be "Memory in the Blood"'. Academic paper presented at *Essentially Indigenous? Contemporary Native Arts Symposium*. U of Wisconsin, 2011.
- Voss, Paul and Marta Werner. 'Toward a Poetics of the Archive: Introduction'. *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 32.1 (1999).
- Watson, Judy and Louise Martin-Chew. *Blood Language*. Melbourne: Miegunyah P, 2009.
- Wright, Alexis. 'Politics of Writing'. *Southerly* 62.2 (2002): 10–20.
- Van Wagenan, Aimee. 'An Epistemology of Haunting: A Review Essay'. *Critical Sociology* 30.2 (2004): 287–98.