Being with Country

The performance of people–place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

OURANIA EMMANOUIL
Bachelor of Social Science (Environment), RMIT University
Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary), RMIT University

School of Indigenous Knowledges and Public Policy
Faculty of Law, Education, Business and the Arts
Charles Darwin University

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Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

I, Ourania Emmanouil, declare that this work, Being with Country: the performance of people-place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the performance of people–place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, an ancestral dreaming track in north-western Australia. In 1987 Goolarabooloo Indigenous elder Paddy Roe established the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail with the vision of uniting Indigenous and non-Indigenous people so that ultimately, they would protect and look after the country together. The thesis uses three questions to guide the examination of people-place relationships on the Trail: ‘What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’, ‘What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?’ and ‘What do these relationships tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’

A methodology of ‘working together’ Indigenous and Western knowledge systems directs the response to the thesis questions and incorporates the approaches of storytelling and Actor-Network Theory. Stories told by Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail, in addition to my own ethnographic stories, form the data upon which this thesis is based.

By following the human and non-human actors on the Trail, both during the annual walking of the Trail and during a time of external threat, this thesis finds that ‘country’ (in the Indigenous sense) and stories are powerful actors that do important work on the Trail, especially in establishing and maintaining connections between people and place. Living country, a distinct entity that is familiar to Goolarabooloo people, is becoming visible to and experienced by walkers of the Trail. This thesis also finds that relationships performed on the Trail are enactments of a relational ontology of ‘being with’, whereby people and country are drawn into co-productive acts, including mutual recognition, reciprocity of care and communicative engagement.

Stories told by Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail clearly show that ‘being with’ country transcends cultural boundaries. This finding is not only
significant in terms of Paddy Roe’s vision, but also offers a powerful insight into how non-Indigenous Australians can come to know and participate in mutually beneficial relationships with country. This broader realisation of country, by more than just Indigenous peoples, offers a pathway to reconciliation between non-Indigenous people and the land, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, which is critical to supporting people’s sacred connections with place.
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## Table of Contents

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration iii  
Abstract v  
Acknowledgements vii  
Maps locating the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail xv  

Chapter 1: Introduction 1  
1.1 **Scope of the research** 1  
1.2 **Need for a broader recognition of ‘country’** 2  
1.3 **Background** 4  
1.3.1 A history of Paddy Roe, the Goolarabooloo and the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail 4  
1.3.2 My arrival in ‘country’ 13  
1.3.3 Articulating a research focus 16  
1.4 **Thesis map** 16  

Chapter 2: Literature review 21  
2.1 **Introduction** 21  
2.2 **Categories, metaphors and ‘speaking well’** 23  
2.2.1 Clarifying use of the terms ‘Indigenous’, ‘non-Indigenous’ and ‘settler’ 23  
2.2.2 What about the term ‘postcolonial’? 24  
2.2.3 Negotiating metaphors: a way to keep categories from ‘hardening’ 26  
2.3 **Indigenous perspectives on place and people–place relationships** 27  
2.3.1 Place 28  
2.3.2 Country 29  
2.3.3 Key ontological concepts emerging from Indigenous theory in relation to country 45  
2.4 **Sense of place literature and eco-philosophy perspectives on place and people–place relationships** 46  
2.4.1 Questions of belonging and place connection 47  
2.4.2 Re-imagining human relationships with place and non-human entities 52
2.4.2.1 ‘Being with’ non-human entities 60
2.4.3 Recognising ‘country’ 63
2.5 Working together to look after country 68
2.5.1 ‘Seeing’ and ‘reading’ the land in new, different or shared ways 74
2.5.2 Working together knowledge systems: foundations for a theoretical framework 76

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework and methodology 79

3.1 Introduction 79
3.2 ‘Working together’ multiple knowledge systems 80
3.2.1 A case for ‘working together’ knowledge systems 80
3.2.2 Fostering ontological openness 83
3.2.3 Guiding principles for ‘working together’ knowledge systems 87
3.2.3.1 Relationality 87
3.2.3.2 Performativity 88
3.2.3.3 Generative practice 90
3.2.3.4 Locatedness/situatedness 91
3.3 Actor-Network Theory 92
3.3.1 Origins of ANT 94
3.3.2 Actors and networks 96
3.3.3 A language for following actors and tracing networks of association 99
3.3.4 The precariousness of holding networks together 102
3.3.5 Taking ANT onto the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail 105
3.4 Working with stories 107
3.4.1 Stories: coherence with ANT and the principles of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness 108
3.4.1.1 Relationality 108
3.4.1.2 Performativity 110
3.4.1.3 Generative practice 111
3.4.1.4 Locatedness/situatedness 113
3.4.2 Using stories to ‘work together’ knowledge systems 114
3.5 Gathering stories 115
3.5.1 Going back to Broome: reconnecting with people and place 115
3.5.2 Walking the Trail: ethnography on the move 116
3.5.3 Finding storytellers 119
### 3.5.4 Storytelling on country

#### 3.6 Allowing the stories to ‘flock’: analysis begins

3.6.1 Transcription: a process of translation
3.6.2 Seeing connections: ‘flocking’ the meta-narratives as a form of coding

#### 3.7 Putting Actor-Network Theory to work: analysis continued

3.7.1 Following actors
3.7.2 Watching actor-networks hold together (and fall apart)

#### 3.8 Further perspectives for making sense of the stories

3.9 Going back to the storytellers

#### 3.10 Style, language and orthography

3.10.1 Style
3.10.2 Language and orthography

Chapter 4: Connecting with country

#### 4.1 Introduction

#### 4.2 Paddy’s Dream

4.2.1 ‘How we gonna look after this country?’
4.2.2 Making ‘country’ visible: the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as a cultural bridge

#### 4.3 Creating new connections with country

4.3.1 ‘Opening up’ the country and the possibility of connection
4.3.2 ‘Waking up’ feeling and to new ways of seeing
4.3.3 Liyan: seeing through feeling and attunement

#### 4.4 Hybridity: enacting people–place on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

4.4.1 Shifting identities
4.4.2 Purification and hybridity
4.4.3 Not just a landscape: living country becomes visible

#### 4.5 Summary

Chapter 5: Staying connected

#### 5.1 Introduction

#### 5.2 Story 1: Feeling part of something bigger

5.2.1 Under the baragool tree
5.2.2 Sensing the unseen
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1</td>
<td>What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2</td>
<td>What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.3</td>
<td>What do these relationships tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Significance of the research and key contributions to the academy</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.1</td>
<td>Pathways to connecting with country and reconciliation</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2</td>
<td>Key contributions to the academy</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2.1</td>
<td>Articulating ways to ‘work together’ knowledge systems</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2.2</td>
<td>Taking ANT into new places and generating new insights</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2.3</td>
<td>Showing how non-Indigenous people are coming to recognise place as ‘country’</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>A method for ‘working together’ knowledge systems</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Key insights generated by this research</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4.1</td>
<td>Stories people tell about place reveal their situatedness</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4.2</td>
<td>The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is being performed as an ‘opening’ and a cross-cultural/ontological bridge</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4.3</td>
<td>People on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are ‘being with’ country, to varying degrees</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4.4</td>
<td>Bugarrigarra stories and stories about living country ‘do work’</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4.5</td>
<td>Sustaining people–country connections takes ongoing work</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4.6</td>
<td>Ontological politics are at work on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Finding new actors and networks</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Final words</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References | 295 |

Appendices | 321 |

Appendix 1: Languages, orthography and glossary | 323 |
Appendix 2: Description of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle | 329 |
Appendix 3: Lurujarri Heritage Trail brochure | 331 |
Appendix 4: Permission to undertake research from the Goolarabooloo community | 335 |
Appendix 5: Plain language statement given to potential research participants | 337 |
Appendix 6: Timeline of events related to the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and ‘the Gas’ | 341 |
Appendix 7: Metrology at work – maps that translate Walmadany into ‘the Gas’ network | 349 |
Maps locating the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

Figure 1: Broome, the starting location of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, indicated on a map of Australia. Image source: Google Maps.

Figure 2: Map indicating the starting and ending places of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle Path, in relation to Broome. Image source: Adapted from Google Maps.
Figure 3: Map of the Lurujarri Dreaming (Heritage) Trail and traditional camping places.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Scope of the research

Each year during barrgana1 (cool, dry) season, the Goolarabooloo Indigenous community leads a nine-day walk along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail,2 an ancestral dreaming track that follows the path of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle in the West Kimberley Region of north-western Australia (see Figure 1, Figure 2 & Figure 3). By exploring the performance of relationships along that Trail, this thesis seeks to understand the ontological3 effects that are generated when Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Trail (mostly non-Indigenous people) are situated on the Trail (that is, walking, camping, and telling and listening to stories about place). A relational ontology of ‘being with’ is articulated and proposed, as a way of making visible inter-subjective relationships between people (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and place.

When Goolarabooloo elder Paddy Roe4 OAM established the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in 1987, he did so with the vision of bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to look after the country5 for which he was custodian. Nearly three decades later, Paddy Roe’s family and friends continue to carry on his legacy with hundreds of visitors from Australia and overseas having now walked the Trail.

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1 Refer to Appendix 1 for the glossary of Indigenous words referred to by this thesis, and for an explanation of the languages and orthography used.
2 The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is also commonly referred to as the Lurujarri Heritage Trail. This thesis uses the word ‘Dreaming’ as it makes explicit reference to the creative journeys taken by ancestral beings in creating the country. The walk along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is approximately 80 kilometres in length, but varies according to the exact route taken on each walk.
3 In this thesis, ontology is taken to mean the nature of existence and being, which takes into account categories that structure what is (Fielbleman 1960, p. 219). The term is also used to reference ways of being, and to provoke a questioning of the realities that people enact (Law 2004, p. 162).
4 Deceased.
5 ‘Country’ is a place-based ontological entity that is exists for Indigenous Australians. This concept is defined on page 2 and more properly discussed in Chapter 2 and explored throughout the rest of the thesis.
the cross-cultural walking of the Trail began, no studies have examined Paddy Roe’s vision and the effect of walking the Trail on the ways in which non-Indigenous walkers perceive and relate to place, and furthermore, their willingness to protect ‘country’ as a distinct ontological entity.

This thesis explores Paddy Roe’s vision and the effects of the Trail on walkers through the ethnographic approaches of storytelling and Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Stories shared by Paddy Roe’s descendants, the Goolarabooloo people, and walkers and volunteers on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, about their relationships with ‘place’ or ‘country’, are examined using ANT. Actors that appear in people’s stories are ‘followed’, which enables the tracing of associations between human and non-human actors and makes apparent the ontologies being performed on the Trail.

The use of storytelling and ANT in this research supports the ‘working together’ of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, a methodological approach that is increasingly being adopted in Indigenous-settler research collaborations. This approach is employed to respond to three research questions:

1. What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?
2. What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?
3. What do people’s relationships with place tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?

1.2 Need for a broader recognition of ‘country’

Conflicts over what the land is and how it should be valued have defined Indigenous-settler relations since the first wave of colonisation of Australia’s first peoples and their ancestral estates. At the heart of these conflicts are different ways of conceptualising and relating to the land, and ultimately, divergent ontologies. For the mineral resources industry and governments, the land represents commodities, shareholder profits and mining royalties, while for traditional custodians, it is ‘country’, a multi-dimensional entity with which a person can experience reciprocity, and which they have a responsibility to maintain and enliven. Indigenous custodians,
including the Goolarabooloo people, face ever-increasing pressure to negotiate with governments and the mineral resources industry over the industrialisation of their ancestral lands – often with little say as to whether a development will go ahead – and at the cost of their sacred connections with the land. Such pressure was evident in the recent proposal to build the Browse Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Precinct at Walmadany (James Price Point) on the Song Cycle path.

Now, more than at any other time, the survival of Australia’s first peoples’ sacred connections with country depend upon settler people scrutinising their perceptions of what the land is, and how they are in relationship with it. If through such questioning there is an openness to seeing the land as ‘country’ (agential), then there is an opportunity for reconciliation between settler and Indigenous peoples, and perhaps, to address the ecological crises that characterise what ecological humanities scholars are calling the Anthropocene.6

The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail was founded on the belief that walking the land together would create the necessary relationships and impetus for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to work together to look after country. This vision relies upon people from non-Indigenous backgrounds coming to recognise and experience the land, or place, as a particular entity, that is, as ‘country’. Notions of ‘country’, as articulated by Australia’s first peoples, are central to this thesis and are explored in greater depth in Chapter 2 of this thesis through the writing of Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous scholars collaborating with Indigenous knowledge authorities.7

This thesis is interested in the role that Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies8 play in firstly challenging what eco-philosopher Val Plumwood (2006, p. 123) calls the ‘colonizing gaze’ towards the land, and secondly, in making ‘country’ and the

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6 First coined by Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen, the term Anthropocene is used by scientists and scholars in the ecological humanities to describe the last two centuries of human impact on the Earth, which is significant enough to warrant the naming of a new geological epoch (Rose 2008, p. 81).

7 See pages 29–45.

8 Drawing on The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (2014) epistemology is taken to mean the study of the origin of knowledge and how experience generates knowledge. It is also understood as forms of meaningfulness attributed to being in the world (Verran 1998, p. 254).
potential for people to ‘be with’ country (and other non-human entities), a reality for non-Indigenous walkers of the Trail.

1.3 Background

1.3.1 A history of Paddy Roe, the Goolarabooloo and the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

Paddy Roe was born into the Nyigina tribe on the Roebuck Plains pastoral station east of Broome, just prior to the First World War (Roe 1983, p. i). Fathered by a man of European heritage, Paddy narrowly avoided being killed by his tribe because of his unfamiliar skin colour and later escaped forcible removal from his family to the mission at Beagle Bay (Roe & Bunbury 2008). In a conversation with Bill Bunbury from ABC Radio National, Paddy Roe spoke about his early beginnings in life, and how his mixed heritage enabled him to operate in two very different worlds and act as a cultural bridge for his own people:

When I born in the station, that was in that sheep station, I born in the bush, in the bush. So, when my mother bring me out after she was in the hospital, well, away from the people you know, there, then a lot of people seen me, my colour. They didn’t, you know, different colour, half-cast more better I say. They don’t like to see me with that colour, because I was only one in that tribe, I born with that colour. They was going to kill me, you know … My [tribal] father, full blood father, [Butcher Joe], he was a big man in the tribe, big one, boss, he made a big meeting for these people, my people, or his people too, his people. So he talked, he had a meeting with these fellas, well he said, “This little boy, we all know he’s got different colour, but,” he said, “we gotta leave him, let him grow,” he said, “because soon or later,” he said in a language, you know, “there gonna be a lot more of this come up, lighter people,” which is true too, “so this boy, we gotta leave him, he might come in handy to us” and that’s true too, I did come in handy to them. In my people’s culture side, I came handy on that side and I came handy on European side to

9 Note that Paddy Roe is speaking in Broome English. See Appendix 1 for an explanation of Broome English.
run stations, all station work, on European side. I was very handy man on that side too. Shearing, breaking horses, branding, so I came handy on both sides. Today, I is standing with two things, still (Roe & Bunbury 2008).

Paddy was made a lawman by his Nyigina people; this meant that he was initiated into the Law and culture of his own people, and made responsible for upholding and passing on these traditional laws on. By standing in two worlds, one represented by his people’s Law and culture and the other by European culture, Paddy Roe learned to operate in and connect these two cultures, attributes that would underpin the rest of his life’s work.

Paddy left the Roebuck Plains together with his stolen wife Pegalily (she had been promised to another man) and her young daughter, and sought refuge in the neighbouring countries of the Jukun, Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr peoples along the Lurujarri coast. Here begins the story of how Paddy Roe came to be the principle traditional custodian of the law, culture and countries of the Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr peoples. The arrival of pastoralists, pearlers and missionaries to the Dampier Peninsular from the 1860s, led to the decimation of many traditional owners (Bradshaw & Fry 1989, p. 10), competition over land resources (Burke 2011, p. 101), the blackbirding of local Indigenous people by the pearling industry (Burke 2011, p. 101), and the removal of Indigenous children to the mission at Beagle Bay. The remaining Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr elders, whom Paddy and his family encountered, were faced with the reality that their law and culture would die with them and that their countries would be left without traditional custodians, unless they could find other appropriate people to pass the country onto. They chose Paddy.

The Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr people made Paddy the traditional custodian of their countries through necessity. The handing over of these countries to Paddy, who was from a different country, demonstrates the imperative of country being maintained by
traditional custodians. In the extract below Paddy describes the circumstances through which he was made custodian of the Ngumbal-Jabirrjabirr law, culture and country.

Old people left the country with me. I must look after the country, that’s what the old people told me. Old people didn’t leave it in the writing, but everything in the proper name. Old people no read and write. I no read and write too. It’s no good in writing to me. Bugarregarra [the Dreaming] never write him down anything for people. They been give me the country names: statues, everything what we got there – stones, waterholes, hills, all that country. When they hand this place over to me, they tell me, ‘We not young. You got a lot of childrens coming up. So this is yours, that’s why we teach you this one, the law. You must give the name – country, stones, hills’. I got the name for all them places, all from Bugarregarra (Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 15).

Paddy’s family, starting with his wife and three daughters, proved pivotal in his suitability for the role of custodian. In conversation with anthropologist and collaborator Stephen Muecke (2005), Paddy Roe rendered in greater detail the significance of his family to the Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr elders’ decision to make

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10 Frans Hoogland, Paddy Roe’s student, friend and a member of the Goolarabooloo community, explained that the Ngumbarl and Jabirrjabirr elders shared ceremonies at Wirrar (Barred Creek) and it was in this place, and at Inballal, that Paddy Roe was handed the responsibility to look after their ancestral estates. At the time that Paddy Roe came to the Lurujarri coast, the Jabirrjabirr people stayed mainly north and east of Walmadany and the Ngumbarl people mainly south of Walmadany, at Wirrar and Wirginmirri. The Ngumbarl and Jabirrjabirr shared the same Law and often travelled together.

11 Stephen Muecke (2005, pp. 35–36) grapples with the issue of how to present, in textual form, the oral narratives told to him by Paddy Roe in Aboriginal English, in a way that allows the performativity of Paddy’s storytelling to endure. Muecke’s (2005, p. 36) approach to this dilemma was to develop a typology that emphasises performed speech. He first applied this typology in the text Gularabulu, and later in Reading the Country and also in Textual Spaces: Aboriginality and Cultural Studies. In describing the typology, Muecke (2005) states, ‘the layout of the words on the page is intended to draw attention to the physical nature of the textual production. Each line corresponds to a ‘breath group’, and the dashes at the end of each line indicate the length of the pause’ (pp. 35–36). See Appendix 1 for further explanation of Muecke’s typology.
him custodian of their countries. His three daughters symbolised the beginning of a new big family and community who could take care of the country. Paddy explained that he and his family encountered very few Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr people remaining on country. With their own young people gone from country, finding others to carry on looking after their ancestral estate was of central concern to these elders; the future generations of Paddy’s family offered these elders a possible solution to their harsh predicament. Paddy, in his distinct storytelling style, describes the circumstances leading to his new role as custodian.

‘cos I had three daughters —
three daughters in that country —
between Broome and Minariny —
I had three daughters mine —
and outa that, that’s why the country was left to me —
well the girls really anyway, my daughters —
because they seen something, old people seen something —
…
old woman, old man —
you can see all these people here now’ —
about twenty er twenty old people anyway, might be little over, little less —
but anyway, ‘See we gonta die with no babies, we can’t have any more babies —
no babies, that’s why we tell you this country gonta be yours, you’ve got three daughters,’ they told me —
‘Ooh, I see,’ I said —
[soft voice] ‘Ooh,’ I didn’t take
much notice, ‘cos the girls are still small, my daughters all small yet —
‘You gonta have plenty babies,’ they tell me, old womans tell me —
‘You gonta have plenty baby, we got no baby to take country, take this country, you gonta look after him, with your family — (pp. 95-98).

Aside from the potential to produce a large family, there was a second reason why Paddy and his daughters were considered possible future custodians. Of Paddy’s three daughters, Teresa and Margaret\(^\text{12}\) were conceived on Jabirrjabirr country, each holding a spirit connection with Minariny, a place on the Song Cycle path (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 246). The spiritual connections that Paddy Roe’s descendants hold with this country, form the basis for the stories they share in this research.

In this thesis the name ‘Goolarabooloo’, which translates to ‘the coast where the sun goes down’ (Roe 1983, p. i), is used specifically to refer to the descendants of Paddy Roe. However, it also represents an alliance of people from different language groups along the West Kimberley coast, from One Arm Point to Bidyadanga (Muecke as cited in Dyungayan 2014, p. 8).\(^\text{13}\) Paddy Roe’s use of the name Goolarabooloo for his family reflects his seeking to generate continuity with this alliance (Muecke as cited in Dyungayan 2014, p. 8), as his descendants, now spanning four generations, were born out of this country.

As an entity the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail draws into association the language groups along the coast through practices of law and culture. One way to describe the Trail is as an ancestral dreaming track that follows the Northern Traditions Song Cycle from Minyirr (Gantheum Point) to Bindinganygun (Yellow River). In this research, the

\(^\text{12}\) Deceased.

\(^\text{13}\) Anthropologist Daisy Bates (1913, p. 389) listed the ‘Kularrabulu’ people around Broome in her documenting of the Indigenous tribes of the West Kimberley.
Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, or ‘the Trail’, also refers to the cross-cultural event of walking this entity.

The Northern Tradition Song Cycle, which is followed by the Trail, originates at One Arm Point and travels along the Dampier Peninsula coast to Bidyadanga. In their publication *A Management Report for the Lurujarri Heritage Trail, Broome, Western Australia*, Bradshaw and Fry (1989) describe song cycles, more generally, as manifestations of the creative journeys of ancestral beings, through which ‘stories, ceremonies, laws and rituals are passed between communities’ (p. 7). These stories about the journeys of creative ancestors are invoked through song-poetry to form oral maps of the country. Writing about the Northern Tradition Song Cycle in *Kimberley at the crossroads: the case against the gas plant*, Wilcox (2010) states that ‘a person who knows the songs can travel through the country and stay in a sustaining relationship with it’ (p. 26). He describes the Northern Tradition Song Cycle as an assemblage of ‘Law Grounds and seasonal camping places, along a connected route between water places’ that ‘promote abundance – for humans, turtles, birds, fish and animals’ (Wilcox 2010, p. 26). It is within these traditional seasonal camping places (buri) along the Song Cycle, located at Nununggurrugun, Wirrar, Murdjal, Walmadany and Bindinganygun, that the Goolarabooloo people and visitors sleep, fish, gather bushfoods, eat and rest, while on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

Bradshaw and Fry (1989) highlight the relationship of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail to the larger Northern Tradition Song Cycle entity, emphasising the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the Trail in order to prevent ‘far reaching effects on Aboriginal people throughout the West Kimberley’ (Bradshaw & Fry 1989, p. 7). Wilcox (2010) also makes the point about the interconnectedness of the Song Cycle, saying that ‘If one area is destroyed, the whole is affected’ (p. 27). Responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle is distributed

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14 Refer to Appendix 2 for a fuller description of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle.
amongst the traditional law keepers\textsuperscript{15} of the west coast, incorporating the Jawi, Bardi, Nyulnyul, Nimanburru, Warrwa, Jabirrjabbirr, Ngumbal, Jugun, Yawuru and Karajarri peoples (Wilcox 2010, p. 27).

In establishing the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, Goolarabooloo elder Paddy Roe sought to ensure his family’s continued connection with, care of, and movement through country,\textsuperscript{16} while at the same time, welcoming non-Indigenous people to experience a particular way of journeying through ‘country’. Unpacking the etymology of the name ‘Lurujarri Dreaming Trail’ offers insight into the Trail’s nature and intent. ‘Lurujarri’ refers to the coastal dunes of saltwater country, while ‘Dreaming’ references the creative process through which the country was formed and is enlivened, and finally, ‘Trail’ denotes the movement of ancestors and their descendants through country. The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail might be conceptualised as \textit{buru} (spiritual country, camping places) and \textit{jila} (freshwater springs), connected by the movement of ephemeral beings (including humans) through country. By narrating the Bugarrigarra (the Dreaming) stories encoded in the landscape, Goolarabooloo storytellers offer walkers of the Trail not only an opportunity to trace the movement of the creative ancestors, but also a discursive lens through which to interpret the material manifestations of spirit beings.

Each year the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is walked during \textit{barrgana} season, the time when the nights are cool, the salmon are fat and the humpback whales are migrating.

\textsuperscript{15} It is the role of traditional law keepers to ensure the continuity of traditional Law and culture by passing it on to future generations (Wilcox 2010, p. 26). Wilcox (2010) describes traditional law keepers, also referred to as Law Bosses, as ‘Custodians of a living history, traditional knowledge of the origin and function of things, and stories and skills that derive from centuries of experience in the area. [In the West Kimberley] this body of cultural knowledge is known as “Bugarigaara” [sic], the Dreaming. It is perpetuated within the “song cycle” which recounts the creative journeys of ancestral beings who made the land and its people’ (p. 26).

\textsuperscript{16} In his writing on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, Stuart Cooke (2013) emphasises that ‘no particular site is more important than others; the focus is on walking the trail \textit{through} them’ (pp. 8–9). Anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011) deliberates on the related idea of moving along a trail. He writes that ‘while on the trail one is always somewhere. But every “somewhere” is on the way to somewhere else’ (149), showing that trails connect places and that the movement between each place is equally as important.
north. The nine-day journey begins under a big, old tamarind tree at the Goolarabooloo Hostel in Broome, the same tree under which Paddy Roe spent his later years carving wooden artefacts and sharing his cultural knowledge with researchers. Congregating here to walk the Trail are Goolarabooloo families, university students and lecturers, Broome locals, family and friends of previously walkers, and others who happen to hear about the Trail.

Increasing interest in Trail did not come about by any conventional marketing strategies. Up until more recently, university networks, word of mouth, and an information brochure\(^\text{17}\) helped to attract walkers to the Trail. Information about the Trail became more widely accessible after 2010, when the *Goolarabooloo Lurujarri Dreaming Trail* website\(^\text{18}\) was first published. The successful use of social media in the campaign to stop the construction of the Browse LNG Precinct on the Song Cycle path also had an extraordinary effect in making the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail known to people both across Australia and internationally. This exposure led to the Goolarabooloo community’s inundation with requests from people to walk the Trail. While there were around 30 visitors walking the Trail in the year 2000, over 60 visitors walked the Trail in 2012. In 2013 interest in the Trail was so great that the Goolarabooloo organised four walks along the Trail to enable over 100 people to experience the country; this was at a time when the Goolarabooloo’s continued ability to walk the Trail was under threat, due to the proposed industrial development at Walmadany.

An ethos of sharing the country and caring for it together embodied Paddy’s initiation of the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. This vision of mutual is evocatively captured in Paddy’s words, ‘spoken’ through the following texts:

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\(^{17}\) Refer to Appendix 3. The Lurujarri Heritage Trail was part of a Heritage Trails network in Western Australia, which was initially tied to the 1988 Bicentennial Commemorative Program.

\(^{18}\) [www.goolarabooloo.org.au](http://www.goolarabooloo.org.au)
This is why this heritage trail I got. You know I was thinking about how we can come together and this [Trail] is the only way we can come together to look after the country (*Rush to Riches*, 2010).

we must live together —
no matter who comes in —
no matter who comes in, white
man, black man, green man all, all
sorts, the people, we should be all
one —
in this part of the country anyway —
I’m talkin’ about this Broome
country — (Roe as cited in Muecke 2005, p. 91).

Now today, we climbing up. We climbing up from the ground, with the European people too, because on our own we won’t be able to look after the country (Roe and Hoogland 1999, pp. 28-29).

We must be good friends (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 79).

Paddy’s ienic qualities continued to define his work in uniting people from different cultures and led to him being awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 1990. In 1994 he passed on the role of principle custodian for the country to his grandson J. R.,\(^\text{19}\) and after many decades of reconciliatory work, Paddy Roe passed away on 5 July 2001.

At the time of writing this thesis (2013-2016), the Native Title for the Ngumbal-Jabirrjabirr country was yet to be determined. A number of Native Title claims have been lodged for Ngumbal-Jabirrjabirr country over the past 21 years, with the Gooloarabooloo families lodging their first application in 1994. This claim was later expanded to include the Jabirrjabirr people and became known as the Goolarooabooloo-Jabirrjabirr (GJJ) Native Title claim group. In 2013, following

\(^{19}\) Deceased. Out of cultural respect, this person is not named.
irreconcilable differences between the Goolarabooloo and Jabirrjabirr Native Title claimants pertaining to the proposed Browse LNG Precinct at Walmadany (James Price Point), the group split into two separate claim groups. The Goolarabooloo families, who maintained their unequivocal opposition to the development of the Browse LNG Precinct on the Song Cycle path, were no longer able to work productively with many of the Jabirrjabirr people, who supported the proposed Browse LNG project. This break down in relationships led to separate Native Title claims being lodged with the Federal Court of Australia. In 2015, the Federal Court of Australia heard evidence from the Jabirrjabirr Native Title claimants, with the Goolarabooloo families due to give their evidence on country in March 2016.

1.3.2 My arrival in ‘country’

The seeds for this research were sown a decade and a half ago, when as an undergraduate student I first walked the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail with the Goolarabooloo community. Far from the Kimberley coast, my introduction to the Trail happened at RMIT University in Melbourne, through photos and stories shared by past student walkers and a Lurujarri Dreaming Trail brochure. While the brochure described the creative journeys of ancestral beings from Bugarrigarra (the Dreaming), stories told by students emphasised the ‘transformative’ experience of walking ‘country’ with ‘the family’ (Paddy’s family) as ‘one mob’. My lecturer Judy Rogers presented a cautioning voice, encouraging us future Trail walkers to be critical of the aesthetic tourist imagery of Broome and utopian stories about ‘walking the land with Aboriginal people’.

Judy introduced me to new writers and hence, new perspectives, including Deborah Bird Rose, Marcia Langton and William Cronon, who called into question the Western notion of ‘wilderness’ that erases Indigenous people from place and renders invisible the people–place relationships that inhere reciprocity and enlivenment. Next came the perspectives of Paddy Roe, Stephen Muecke and Krim Benterrak whose 1984 text Reading the Country forged new ground in questioning the politics of place on the Roebuck Plains east of Broome, through three distinct ‘readings’ of

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20 Refer to Appendix 3.
Finally, through their book chapter *Black and white, a trail to understanding* Paddy Roe and his friend Frans Hoogland (1999) introduced me to a new concept of place, ‘living country’, and the word ‘liyan’ (feeling), a new way of talking about relationships with place. This conceptual language offered me a portal to a new understanding of place.

In walking the Trail, I was one in a continuum of students to carry on RMIT’s long-standing relationship with the Goolarabooloo community, initiated through the friendship of Paddy Roe and Landscape Architecture academic Jim Sinatra. During my first (2000) and subsequent journeys along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in 2007 and 2011, and through further time spent in country with Goolarabooloo families in 2001, I formed important relationships with people and country, which allowed this research to take form years later. While this thesis is not an auto-ethnographic account of my relationships with people and place, the impetus for this research emerged from these connections, and a scholarly interest in how people–place relationships are formed and sustained. By positioning myself as a generative participant21 in the research, I acknowledge the role that my relationships with human (and non-human) actors play in the stories that are told, and the need to take seriously relational accountability.

This doctoral research was initiated at a time when the Goolarabooloo people, their friends, people from Broome and a growing list of supporters both nationally and internationally, were campaigning to protect the country from the proposed construction of the Browse LNG Precinct at Walmadany (James Price Point).

I arrived in Broome during the *barrgana* season of 2011, to a sea of ‘No Gas’ protest signs adorning people’s fences. ‘The Gas’, as the proposed development was colloquially named, had also arrived in town. I had returned to Broome to volunteer as a helper on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and on my second day on country, found myself off the Trail, joining a large assembly of people at the Manariny Road community blockade. Traditional custodians and supporters had gathered before first light to holdfast a community blockade that had endured for many months, halting

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21 Refer to Chapter 3, page 113 for an explanation of the term ‘generative participant’.
the movement of land clearing equipment onto the Song Cycle path. That day, the community blockade at the Manariny Road corner was forcibly breached by police, allowing remnant vegetation on country to be cleared without legal permits and without the consent of traditional custodians. It was during this day, which later became known as ‘Black Tuesday’, that I first came across Article 25 from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (see Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Invoking the rights of Indigenous people at the Manariny Road blockade on ‘Black Tuesday’. Source: Author.](image)

Although I was some months away from realising my thesis topic, the mandate for my research was set on this day. The imminent threat to the Goolarabooloo people’s material and spiritual connections with country from industrial development that they unequivocally opposed, amplified the need for stories about people-place connections to find listeners who might help to protect what was at stake. However, it was not just the Goolarabooloo and other Indigenous people on the Dampier Peninsula who were expressing their sense of love and connection for country during this time. At the same time, many past walkers of the Trail were returning to Broome to support the Goolarabooloo community in their campaign to protect the Song Cycle. The passion behind non-Indigenous people’s public statements of love for country and their support of the Goolarabooloo people highlighted for me that any
research into people’s relationships with place on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail needed to be inclusive of the stories of non-Indigenous people.

1.3.3 Articulating a research focus

In studying the performance of people–place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, this research seeks to understand what happens when Goolarabooloo people share their ontologies and epistemologies with other walkers of the Trail, who are mostly non-Indigenous. This thesis examines stories told by Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Trail, to learn about the relationships with place that people enact as they walk, camp, tell and listen to stories on the Trail.

1.4 Thesis map

Chapter 2 is a literature review from a number of fields: Indigenous theory on metaphysics and place, Australian sense of place and eco-philosophy literature, and writing that crosses the boundaries of Indigenous and Western cultures in a bid to encourage a greater shared understanding about place as ‘country’.

The literature review begins by highlighting the agency of categories, which recognise particular ontologies and epistemologies over others. By questioning the category ‘place’, the thesis seeks to open up an ontological debate about how people attribute meaning to this term and the relationships that they perform with ‘place’ based on this meaning.

While examining different and divergent ideas about ‘place’ from ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Western’ perspectives, the literature review also identifies a movement towards the convergence of these perspectives, as represented in eco-philosophy and sense of place literature. Greater acceptance within Western place literature of the notion of distributed agency (the agency of not only the human, but also the non-human world) and the Indigenous notion of ‘country’, is explored as a pathway to this convergence. The invitations of Indigenous Australian elders to non-Indigenous Australians to
walk, care for and protect the country with their people, is explored as another pathway for cultivating shared understandings of place.

Chapter 3 addresses methodological issues, centered on ontological openness, arising from the literature review, and outlines the theoretical framework and method of this thesis. A research methodology of ‘working together’ knowledge systems is adopted, in acknowledgement that multiple knowledge systems are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. This methodology is built upon four key themes that are identified in the Indigenous metaphysics literature, and also resonate with sense of place and eco-philosophy perspectives: relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness. Representing ways of ‘working together’ knowledge systems, these themes are used as guiding research principles and as criteria with which to select appropriate ethnographic research methods.

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and storytelling are employed as ways of ‘working together’ knowledge systems, due to their inherence of the four research principles. These approaches are used to gather stories shared by research participants walking the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail on country (with a few exceptions), write ethnographic stories through participant observation, and follow actors (human and non-human entities) that appear in these stories. Once actors have been identified and followed, insights from ANT, Indigenous theory, eco-philosophy and other minor fields of literature, are drawn upon to make sense of how people–place relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

My walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in 2012 and 2013, and four months spent living on country between June 2012 and July 2013, inform the writing of ethnographic stories for this thesis.

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis present ethnographies, incorporating stories and accounts from research participants, which explore the performance of people–

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22 In this thesis, the term ‘stories’ refers to both stories and accounts. Although a slight distinction is made between the two terms, they are treated as roughly synonymous. ‘Accounts’ is more often used to refer to reflections and commentaries made by research participants in their storytelling, while ‘stories’ is used to signal the telling of events and experiences.
place\textsuperscript{23} relationships and ontologies on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, and the work that stories do in the performance of these relationships.

Chapter 4 begins with Paddy Roe who is a key actor in the research, and his vision to protect the country for which he was custodian, in perpetuity. A key aspect of Paddy’s vision was for non-Indigenous people to work alongside his family in caring for and protecting country, which he sought to bring to fruition through the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Drawing upon the stories and accounts of Goolarabooloo people, their close friends and walkers and volunteers on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, this chapter applies the ANT method of ‘following actors’ to trace the connections that are being formed between walkers of the Trail and place. Following actors also reveals various ‘translations’ (ways that actors interact) that lead to non-Indigenous walkers of the Trail recognising the land in ways that are consistent with a Goolarabooloo/Indigenous view of the world, demonstrating that the Trail functions as a cultural (ontological and epistemological) bridge. With new connections between people and place being formed, and place being recognised as ‘country’, a pathway to Paddy’s vision of protecting the country becomes visible.

Whereas Chapter 4 examines how connections are formed between people and place, Chapter 5 asks how people–place connections are maintained on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. This chapter comprises of four ethnographic narratives, incorporating stories and accounts from research participants: Feeling part of something bigger; The power of story; Country keeps bringing you back; and Threat to what is sacred. Each story draws upon the insights of ANT to describe the means through which people’s connections with place are holding together and/or threatening to fall apart. Bruno Latour’s ideas on strong and weak ties, and the cost of holding networks together, and John Law’s concept of network architecture, are amongst some of the ANT understandings about the durability of networks that are drawn upon in this chapter. Responding to Latour’s encouragement to be led to networks by controversy, a number of challenges and threats to people–place

\textsuperscript{23} This thesis uses an en-dash between people and place (e.g. people–place), and people and country (e.g. people–country) to signify a relationship between these entities.
connections, the Trail and the entire Song Cycle, are identified. A change in storytelling practices on the Trail and the proposal to build the Browse LNG Precinct (‘the Gas’) at Walmadany on the Song Cycle path, are revealed as two such controversies.

Chapter 6 explores the reciprocal and co-productive aspects of people’s ongoing relationships with country. This chapter takes into account the experiences of Goolarabooloo people and a small group of non-Indigenous walkers of and volunteers on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. This latter group of research participants were also supporters of the ‘No Gas’ campaign and spent extended periods of time living on country with the Goolarabooloo community. Helen Verran’s notion of ‘ontic work’ is drawn upon to examine how these walkers of the Trail are negotiating new realities and coming to ‘be with’ country.

As in Chapter 5, the stories of research participants are incorporated into ethnographic narratives, this time, to articulate a relational ontology of ‘being with’ which people are performing in their relationships with country. Characteristics of ‘being with’ are identified through the stories and accounts shared by research participants earlier in the thesis, and through further stories presented in this chapter, including: *The women and the mamara*, and *Country gave me that dream*. In addition, Freya Mathews’ writing on ontopoetics is used in conjunction with Indigenous metaphysical theories and Theory U to articulate the ‘being with’ explored by this thesis.

In presenting the conclusions of this thesis, Chapter 7 responds directly to the three questions posed by this research, exposing the types of people–place relationships and ontologies that are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, and the importance of stories in creating and maintaining these connections. This chapter reflects on the capacity of people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to recognise, connect and experience reciprocity with ‘country’, to recognise a relational ontology of ‘being with’, which transcends cultural boundaries.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

‘Place’ and ‘people–place’ relationships have been theorised by scholars in a broad range of fields, including history, geography, geopolitics, social ecology, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, eco-philosophy (more broadly the eco-humanities), Indigenous studies, psychology and others disciplines. Focusing on perspectives that emanate from Indigenous philosophy, eco-philosophy and Australian sense of place literature, the literature chosen for this thesis examines the ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have enacted their relationship with place.

Contested perspectives of place have underpinned the relationships of Indigenous and settler peoples since the European colonisation of First Peoples and their ancestral lands on the Australian continent (Wilson & Ellender 2002). Underlying these divergent understandings are contrasting values systems and metaphysics. On the one hand there is an Indigenous paradigm that defines existence and knowing in relational terms, and on the other a Western, Euro-centric worldview that divides the world into separate domains, including ‘culture’ and ‘nature’, and produces knowledge in positivist terms. It is this sensitivity of the contrasting values systems that has informed the choice of literature in this review.

The first body of literature examined in this review is Indigenous literature about place and people–place relationships. Theoretical perspectives that elucidate Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies in relation to ‘place’, more specifically, the Indigenous notion of ‘country’, are presented from Indigenous scholars, and

24 Walton and Christie (1994, p. 68) recognise that for Indigenous people, ‘literature’ can mean much more than just printed text, including ‘everything in our environment which can be read: the weather, the calendar plants, the paintings and dances, books, magazines, and video’. Whilst I acknowledge this definition of literature, for the purposes of this review, I examine perspectives that are presented in text-based literature only.
Indigenous philosophers who are working in collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics while living on their ancestral estates.

The second body of literature analysed in this review incorporates the writing of Australian sense of place and eco-philosophy scholars, who are seeking to learn from Indigenous Australian ontologies and epistemologies. Eco-philosopher Freya Mathews (2002) cites the motivation for this learning as an attempt to move beyond ‘the dualistic grip of western thought that has provided endless templates for domination’ (p. 3), so that the schism between Indigenous and Western metaphysics might be bridged and Indigenous metaphysics more greatly valued. The intent of this thesis is to contribute to this learning and to the process of bridging Indigenous and Western metaphysics. Examination of the literature from within the aforementioned fields centres on three key themes: questions of belonging and place connection, re-imagining human relationships with place and non-human entities, and, recognising ‘country’ (in the Indigenous sense of the term).

The final body of literature to be examined within this chapter incorporates stories from Indigenous elders who are calling for non-Indigenous Australians to develop a greater sensitivity to, and connect with, the land, so that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can together care for and protect the land.

Actor-Network Theory (ANT), otherwise referred to as material semiotics, is another field of literature that is central to the theoretical framework of this thesis, and is reviewed in Chapter 3 along with other methodological literature.

Before exploring Indigenous constructions of place and people’s relationships with place, it is first necessary to draw attention to the frames of reference, the categories, used in this conducting this review and writing the thesis more broadly, as these have great bearing on how Indigenous knowledges are apprehended and presented. If this thesis is to take seriously what Mathews articulates as ‘the dualistic grip of

25 By this, I mean Indigenous elders and people who are held in high esteem by their own people for carrying forward their knowledge traditions. Such work by Indigenous elders (both philosophical and practical) is critical in ensuring the cultural survival of their people and the maintenance of people’s relationships with country.
western of western thought’, with its domination over Indigenous knowledges, then
the work to address this imbalance needs to begin here. Anthropologist and ANT
proponent Bruno Latour (2013, p. 59) offers a pertinent first step towards working
with multiple knowledge systems, without subsuming Indigenous ways of being and
knowing into a Western conceptual framework, when he calls for ‘speaking well’.

2.2 Categories, metaphors and ‘speaking well’

Latour (2013, p. 59), in An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the
Moderns, writes about the need to ‘discover the right category’ in order to ‘speak
well’ about something. From a material semiotics perspective, categories can be
powerful actors that do the work of reflecting the worlds they represent. Moreover,
their capacity to make particular people and their worlds visible can at the same time
render others invisible. If this thesis is to ‘speak well’ and avoid preferencing
categories that make apparent only certain people and their realities, then close
attention must be paid to the categories that emerge from particular worlds. The
meanings attributed to terms such as ‘place’, ‘people’, ‘Indigenous’, ‘non-
Indigenous’ and ‘settler’ all have potential to be highly contested, particularly when
they are discussed in essentialist terms. While these terms are employed in the
discussion of literature and throughout the thesis, recognition is given to the
multiplicity of meanings associated with each of these terms and the fluidity of these
understandings.

2.2.1 Clarifying use of the terms ‘Indigenous’, ‘non-Indigenous’ and ‘settler’

Representing identity in singular or generalist terms can be problematic on a number
of fronts. There are arguments against essentialism (Anderson 2005) and counter-
arguments to anti-essentialist positions (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p. 32) in relation to
writing about ‘Indigenous’ identity. In this thesis the terms ‘Indigenous’, ‘non-
Indigenous’ and ‘settler’ peoples are used with a critical understanding of these
underlying issues. Wherever possible, ‘Indigenous’ people are named by the cultural
identity with which they themselves identify, and which may include their language
groups or ancestral homelands. The terms ‘non-Indigenous’ and ‘settler peoples’
refer to the descendants of people who occupied Australia (Rose 2004, p. 2) and also subsequent peoples who have migrated to Australia and their descendants who represent more than just a Western European diaspora. Despite a reluctance to use these terms, Chilisa (2012, p. 13) points out that they can carry useful meanings that help to explore the knowledge systems, values, beliefs and metaphysics that are performed by different groups of people, for instance, ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Western/Euro-centric’ ontologies and epistemologies. Use of the terms Western and Euro-centric seeks to acknowledge the pervasive and ongoing influence and supremacy of the knowledge systems, values and cultures of the initial colonisers within an Australian context.

2.2.2 What about the term ‘postcolonial’?

Does the questioning of dominant Western categories that are used to name and describe people and place make this thesis a contribution to postcolonial literature? If so, how is ‘postcolonial’ defined in this thesis?

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) relate to postcolonialism as a political and cultural movement that disputes histories and ideologies inherited from colonial states, and which opens a space for insurgent knowledges to surface. In a similar vein, Pennycook (2001) cites that postcolonial perspectives aim to disrupt the assumptions of Western researchers and intellectuals that they may know all there is to know about Indigenous peoples, based on fleeting interactions with small representative groups. From these perspectives, a key aspect of postcolonialism and decolonising methodologies is that they mark the emergence of critical Indigenous pedagogies, which challenge the representation of Indigenous peoples and philosophies by non-Indigenous (‘colonising’) others.

Moves to decolonise the academy have coincided with an increasing number of Indigenous peoples ‘speaking back’, ‘researching back’ and ‘writing back’ (Smith 2012; Pihama 1997, p. 11). Greater recognition by academic institutions of the historical privileging of Western knowledge systems and the subjugation of Indigenous peoples and their knowledges, has created a context in which there is
greater acceptance of Indigenous paradigms as theory (Smith 2012). However, there is ongoing debate over the use of the term ‘postcolonial’, particularly by Māori and other Indigenous scholars (Mahuika 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2003; Pihama 1997; Smith 2012), signaling a need to be critical when applying this term. Sheilagh Walker (as cited in Pihama 1997, p. 9) argues that much postcolonial literature still espouses and imposes a Western centered theoretical framework on Indigenous peoples. Supporting Walker’s position, Leonie Pihama (1997) contends that as long as postcolonial discourse continues to frame Indigenous peoples and their knowledges using Western terms and categories, forms of colonisation continue to be perpetuated. Writing in the context of Australian society, Geonpul academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2003, p. 30) asserts that the ongoing presence of a dominant white settler population in Australia means that notions of ‘postcolonial’ are founded upon whiteness.

Spoonley (1995) offers a divergent perspective, adopting the use of the term postcolonial
to mark a critical engagement with colonialism, not claim that colonialism has been overturned ... post-colonialism is used here to signal a project by those who want to critique and replace the institutions and practices of colonialism (p. 49).

The approach taken in this literature review is to use the term ‘decolonising’, as it places emphasis on process, without creating a false impression of the transcendence of colonialism in all of its various forms. This thesis contributes to the process of decolonising the academy by allowing Indigenous people to speak for themselves and in their own terms and categories.

This thesis adopts another decolonising approach by allowing Indigenous categories to challenge dominant Western categories and pre-existing assumptions about how the world ‘is’, particularly in relation to people–place relationships.
2.2.3 Negotiating metaphors: a way to keep categories from ‘hardening’

Over the past two decades, a growing number of Indigenous writers have worked to build a broader understanding of Indigenous ontological and epistemological categories with their non-Indigenous collaborators and readers. Several notable examples come from Yolŋu-Balanda\textsuperscript{26} collaborations in northeast Arnhem Land, where educators have employed Yolŋu metaphors to do important bridging work between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, the gaŋma metaphor\textsuperscript{27} being one such example (Marika, Yunupingu, Marika-Mununggiritj & Muller 2009; Marika 1999; Marika-Mununggiritj & Christie 1995).

Helen Verran (1998), a ‘Balanda’ philosopher and collaborator with Yolŋu philosophers, draws attention to the agency of categories in how they can shape the ways people see, read, speak and relate to human, non-human others and place. In her essay \textit{Re-imagining land ownership in Australia}, Verran (1998) advocates the negotiation of metaphors/categories as a means of preventing categories from becoming entrenched and invisible. She writes that metaphors can ‘provide the possibilities for imagining new categories, and for reworking old categories in new ways’ (pp. 241-242).

Over four decades earlier, in his 1953 essay \textit{The Dreaming}, Australian anthropologist W. E. H. Stanner (2009) advocated that non-Indigenous Australians should learn to ‘think black’ and avoid ‘imposing Western categories of understanding’ on their Indigenous counterparts by ‘seeking to conceive of things’ through Indigenous categories (p. 58). He called into question the Western ‘modern’

\textsuperscript{26} Balanda is a term used by Yolŋu Indigenous people in the north-east Arnhem Land region of Australia to refer to a white person who is of European heritage.

\textsuperscript{27} Gaŋma is a metaphor that describes the rich and fertile confluence of freshwater from the land and saltwater from the sea in an estuary. Collaborating Yolŋu-Balanda educators have used this metaphor to depict the coming together of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems in productive ways that respect the values of both way of knowing the world. While gaŋma is an attractive metaphor that holds rich meaning for theorising people from different cultures learning and working together, it is grounded in the collaborations of peoples working together in northeast Arnhem Land and is respectfully left to continue on working in that context.
tendency to apply dualistic frames of reference to the world, in particular, when seeking to comprehend Indigenous realities, which leads to the suppression of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Writing about multiple knowledge systems, both in this literature review and throughout this thesis, requires thinking through different conceptual frameworks and a willingness to negotiate categories, which as Verran (1998, p. 241) states, are at risk of ‘hardening’ if they do not continue to be negotiated. Although the category ‘place’ appears in both Indigenous and Western literature, it can be imbued with very different meanings. In the analysis of literature that follows, the terms ‘place’ and ‘people–place relationships’ are used as starting points, until more appropriate categories (or metaphors) are identified, which reflect the ontologies and epistemologies that are being enacted.

2.3 Indigenous perspectives on place and people–place relationships

With so much historical writing about Indigenous peoples having been done by Western researchers, what qualifies as an ‘Indigenous perspective’ or ‘Indigenous philosophical literature’ in this review? Indigenous philosophical literature is taken to mean writing by Indigenous people that presents ontologies and epistemologies that are associated with Indigenous metaphysics, and which might also critique Western metaphysics as ‘other’. Indigenous perspectives emanate from both Indigenous literature and texts created by Indigenous people in collaboration with non-Indigenous people, specifically where an Indigenous knowledge system frames the concepts presented in the text. In other instances, literature from non-Indigenous writers is drawn upon to comment on the ontological and epistemological dominance of a Western knowledge framework.

The metaphysical understandings revealed through Indigenous perspectives on place and people–place relationships, are closely considered for their potential to critique Western notions of place and human relationships with place, and inform the theoretical framework of this thesis, including the analysis of stories in subsequent chapters of this thesis.
2.3.1 Place

In reading Indigenous literature, regardless of whether it calls itself ‘place-based’ or not, one quickly becomes aware that ‘place’ – both in terms of being situated and in terms of the agency of place – permeates stories about identity, sense of being and ways of knowing.

Kombu Merri woman Mary Graham (2009) identifies the centrality of ‘place’ to an Indigenous reality, upholding it as an ontological category that underpins knowing:

From an Indigenous point of view, [place] is the fundamental existential quantifier: it informs us of where we are at any time, thereby at the same time informing us of who we are’ (Graham 2009, p. 75).

Graham (2009) further emphasises the importance of place to an Indigenous worldview, comparing this to a Cartesian influenced concept of place, one that inheres an exterior and interior habitat:

Place, as an Aboriginal category, implies that there is no division between the observing mind and anything else: there is no “external world” to inhabit. There are distinctions between the physical and the spiritual, but these aspects of existence continually interpenetrate each other (p. 76).

As an Indigenous category, place can signify unity and situatedness while also making reference to identities. Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984), who also suggest ‘place’ as a powerful Indigenous category, assert that is has the potential to displace other dominant categories, including ‘the individual, the Family, Order, Democracy, Freedom and Authority’ (p. 13). The primacy of place as an ontological category becomes evident through these few literary references. Yet, in continuing to read Indigenous literature it does not take long for another powerful category, ‘country’, to surface.
In similar terms to Graham (2009), Amberline Kwaymullina (2008), Indigenous writer from the Bailgu and Njamal peoples of the Pilbara, highlights the ontological significance of country, stating:

Country is not simply a geographical space. It is the whole of reality, a living story that forms and informs all existence. Country is alive, and more than alive – it is life itself (p. 9).

Kwaymullina shows that country is something more than a place in which to be situated, or dwell; just as Graham (2009, p. 75) describes place as the ‘fundamental existential quantifier’ that informs knowing, Kwaymullina also relates to country as an ontological category that ‘informs all existence’.

Using the term ‘country’ to write about Indigenous ‘place’ perspectives, is akin to what Latour calls ‘speaking well’, as ‘country’ is a category that is prevalent in Indigenous Australian literature.

2.3.2 Country

Yolŋu woman Laklak Burarrwanga, a Datiwuy and Rirratjingu Elder from the Bawaka homelands, illustrates the idea that country is more than a spatial concept. In the text Welcome to my Country, produced by Burarrwanga, her family and academics Wright, Suchet-Pearson and Lloyd, Burarrwanga describes country as a totality of many things, including multiple layers of meaning:

It incorporates people, animals, plants, water and land. But Country is more than just people and things, it is also what connects them to each other and to multiple spiritual and symbolic realms. It relates to laws, custom, movement, song, knowledges, relationships, histories, presents, futures and spirits. Country can be talked to, it can be known, it can communicate, feel and take action. Country for us is alive with story, Law, power, and kinship relations that join not only people to each other but link people, ancestors, place, animals, rocks, plants, stories and songs within land and sea. So you see,
knowledge about Country is important because it’s about how and where you fit in the world and how you connect to others and to place (Burarrwanga, Ganambarr, Ganambarr-Stubbs, Ganambarr, Maymuru, Wright, Suchet-Pearson & Lloyd 2013, p. 128).

The relational ties that bind ‘people, ancestors, place, animals, rocks, plants, stories and songs within land and sea’ mean that to be in country is akin to being with a multiplicity of other entities, both human and non-human.

In the text Nourishing Terrain, commissioned by the Australian Heritage Commission, anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose (1996) draws upon her decades of work in collaboration with the Yarralin, Yuin and other Indigenous peoples to describe country as a place that is ‘lived in and lived with’ (p. 7). Rose’s use of the preposition ‘with’ in this context is significant as it reveals something about a person’s orientation to country. Although he writes from within a more general context as compared to Rose, Latour (2013) makes an important contribution to unpacking the significance of prepositions, in terms of their ability to frame how entities are orientated towards each other. Referring here to prepositions, Latour (2013) states:

William James, from whom I am borrowing this expression, asserts that there exists in the world no domain of “with,” “after,” or “between” as there exists a domain of chairs, heat, microbes, doormats, or cats. And yet each of these prepositions plays a decisive role in the understanding of what is to follow, by offering the type of relation needed to grasp the experience of the world in question (emphasis added, p. 57).

To live ‘with’ country is a different proposition to living ‘on’ country. It suggests inter-subjectivity and a relationship that is punctuated by reciprocity. Rose (1996) also takes to making grammatical reference, this time to elucidate how people are ‘with’ country:

Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a
person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is not a generalised or undifferentiated type of place, such as one might indicate with terms like ‘spending a day in the country’ or ‘going up the country’. Rather, country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart’s ease’ (p. 7).

Country may not be limited to a spatial category in the sense that it is a ‘generalised or undifferentiated type of place’ (Rose 1996, p. 7), but it does important spatial work by locating and relating people and non-human entities to each other, the land and the cosmos. To speak about one’s country is to locate oneself. To be ‘with’ country is akin to being with family: country feels, recognises, responds to and is in relationship with its people. The use of metaphor to describe people’s connections with country offers a deeper sense of these lived experiences. Gumbaynggirr elder Tony Perkins, together with Margaret Somerville (2010), describe this connection as the ‘intertwining of self, people and place in personal identity’ (p. 190).

The premise that country is ‘a living entity’ with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life’ (Rose 1996, p. 7), disrupts notions that ‘place’ or ‘the land’ is merely ‘living’ in a biotic sense. The multi-vocal text *Heartsick for Country: stories of love, spirit and creation* (ed. Morgan, Mia & Kwaymullina 2008), compiles stories from Indigenous Australian writers about the meanings they attribute to country, including consciousness and agency. In the chapter, *Country is lonely*, Bardi/Indjarbandi woman Dawn Bessarab (2008) recalls a story elders in the Mowanjum community in Derby shared with her uncle.29 The

28 The Macquarie Dictionary (1985) defines the term entity as ‘something that has a real existence; a thing’. Wilson and Ellender (2002) approach the term ‘living entity’ as ‘a living dynamic phenomenon that interacts with other bodies and with which others in turn interact. The intrinsic value then placed upon a living entity is different from the way in which a commodity is viewed’ (p. 56).

29 Following cultural protocol, Bessarab does not name her uncle as he passed away close to the time of her writing the referenced text.
following passage, spoken in Aboriginal English by the elders at Mowanjum, describes the impact on country when its people are no longer present:

Dat country im lonely, is people dey all gone, no one dere to look after im anymore, so dat country im lonely, im sad, dat why dat water bin dry up, ee missing ees people (Bessarab 2008, p. 46).

In her explanation of the story, Bessarab (2008, p. 46) ties the feelings of sadness, loneliness and longing experienced by country to the spirits of the ancestors residing within country. Not only is agency distributed beyond the human, but so too is the capacity to feel emotions. The story shared with Bessarab also serves to illustrate the disruption to people’s relationships with country, caused by a displacement from their ancestral homelands and the subsequent impacts on country: when country is without its people, the water holes dry up.

The interdependence that inheres in relationships between people and country, otherwise expressed as relationality (Ford 2010; Graham 2009; Martin 2003; Rose 2000; Stewart-Harawira 2012; Wilson 2008), or reciprocity of care (Brearley & Hamm 2009; Ford 2010; Rose 2000; Rose 1996; San Roque 2009; Stewart-Harawira 2012), is integral to the performance of an Indigenous ontology. In reference to her work with the Yarralin people in the Victoria River district in the Northern Territory, Rose (2000, p. 108) notes that reciprocity of care in people–country relationships develops over time, through the taking on of responsibilities and the deepening of one’s knowledge. Ongoing work is required by people to stay in nurturing relationships with country.

The concept of ‘holding’ country is a recurrent theme in the writing of Indigenous custodians (Turner 2010, p. 20; Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 18). In their use of this metaphor, Paddy Roe and Frans Hoogland (1999) point towards the responsibility of people to maintain the aliveness of country by being there, in and with country.

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30 See Appendix 1 for an explanation of Aboriginal English.
This is living country. We’ve got to hold that one, maintain it. In order to keep it alive, you have to experience it, you have to get the feeling for it, and when you get the feeling for it and are reading the country, you can help to keep it alive … You might pick up a rock and that rock has been used by people for thousands of years. Thousands of hands have rubbed that rock, and now he holds the stories. The rock, he speaks to you because there has been direct communication between that rock and people (emphasis in original, p. 18).

Roe and Hoogland emphasise that country is living and that keeping country ‘alive’ is an outcome of a person’s responsiveness to country. Forms of embodied engagement with ‘living’ country, ‘feeling’, ‘reading’ and ‘direct communication’, crucially rely upon the agency of ‘living’ country, whereby country can communicate with people through the memories of past acts performed by ancestors, which are embedded in the land. According to Roe and Hoogland, being physically present on and with ‘living’ country enables direct communication and supports the maintenance of the country.

 Paramount to the ‘aliveness’ of country is a person’s presence, as demonstrated by the story shared by the Mowanjam elders (Bessarab 2008), in which the waterholes dried up because the country’s people were no longer present. Roe and Hoogland (1999, p. 30) also tie the ‘aliveness’ of country to people being situated in and with country, using the concept of ‘living country’ to encapsulate this understanding:

[Living country is] where the land is whole and complete; where the interaction between people and land is alive through law and culture; where the spirit of the land is ‘standing up’, and ‘vibrant’ (p. 30).

‘Living country’, as described by Roe and Hoogland, relies upon active, situated relationships between people and country for country to maintain its vibrancy. This idea is in contrast to a Western notion of managing ‘wilderness’, whereby practices keep people out of places to allow the land and ecosystems to be ‘pristine’. Such view is not only foreign to an Indigenous conception of country, it is a form of erasure and symbolic of Indigenous peoples’ displacement and removal from their
ancestral lands (Cronon 1996; Langton 1998; Rose 1996). Through this view of ‘wilderness’, people and their reciprocal relationships with country cease to exist.\textsuperscript{31}

Writing on the issue of relationships of reciprocal care, Rose (2000) draws into focus the necessity for people and country to stay connected:

Humans were created for each country, and human groups hold the view that they are an extremely important part in the life of their country. A fundamental proposition in the Vic River Law and society is that the living things of a country take care of their own. All living things are held to have an interest in the life of the country because their own life is dependent on the life of their country. This interdependence leads to another fundamental proposition: those who destroy their country destroy themselves (pp. 153-154).

The imperative for Indigenous peoples to ‘hold’ their country becomes clear when the interdependent relationships that bind them to country become visible. The benefit of being in relationship with country – walking, camping, fishing, hunting, performing ceremonies, burning off, telling the stories and singing the song poetry of country – is that it is mutually life-giving to both people and country (Rose 2004, p. 173).

Unlike the notion of ‘wilderness’ that celebrates land being devoid of people, for Indigenous peoples, land is without its people – ‘wild’ country – carries a very different meaning. The Yarralin people, with whom Rose (2004, p. 4) worked, define ‘wild country’ by distinguishing it from ‘quiet country’. Quiet country is ‘the country in which all the care of generations of people is evident to those who know how to see it’ (Rose 2004, p. 4), while in contrast, wild country is country that is ‘degrading and failing’. According to the Yarralin, ‘Wild people (colonisers) make wild country’ (Rose 2004, p. 4). The Yarralin use of the phrase ‘quiet country’ resonates

\textsuperscript{31} Debate over the use of the term ‘wilderness’ to describe place is an example of ‘ontological politics’ at work, which Helen Verran (2007) describes as the ways in which we ‘make explicit our metaphysical commitments and so interrupt and create possibilities for considering re-rendering our worlds’ (p. 36).
with Roe and Hoogland’s description of ‘living country’. Holding the country and keeping it ‘quiet’ requires living custodians to keep following the footsteps of their ancestors and to keep making new tracks (Rose 2004, p. 176).

The displacement of Indigenous peoples from their countries leads to questions over how Indigenous peoples are supposed to ‘hold’ country and maintain these vital relationships. Kwaymullina (2008) identifies an issue at the very crux of the matter of ‘holding’ country: the relative visibility or invisibility of Indigenous peoples’ connections with country:

We all struggle in our different ways to care for country, to hold up the connections between all life that is our life, in a world where those connections are so often unseen and unheard (emphasis added, p. 8).

Kwaymullina alludes to the relative intangibility of Indigenous spiritual values and connections with country for non-Indigenous peoples; the very people who hold positions of decision-making power relating to land use and funding arrangements with Indigenous communities living on their ancestral estates. The link that Kwaymullina draws between the relative tangibility of these people–country connections and the ability of Indigenous peoples to continue to enact their responsibilities towards country, highlights the importance of such connections becoming visible for not only Indigenous peoples.

The ways in which Indigenous people see and make meaning about country, and share this meaning with non-Indigenous people, is of central importance to this thesis.

In their text Reading the Country (1984), Paddy Roe and his collaborators, Krim Benterrak and Stephen Muecke, acknowledge the politics inherent in recognising particular forms of meaning in place. They state:

Words like ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ must continue to be theorized and worked upon with a method which makes these seemingly innocent words carry the responsibility they deserve (p. 13).
'Seeing' and ‘reading’ are important words for writing about people and place. What a person sees and how they read meaning in place reflects the ontologies that they perform.

Presented as one of three ‘readings’ of place in *Reading the Country*, Roe’s oral narratives about the Roebuck Plains make apparent his situatedness in country and his connections with specific non-human entities, powers and stories. Roe makes explicit his own metaphysical commitments, through the sharing of stories that reveal the meaning he attributes to place, with the intention of affecting the sensibility of the reader. As Roe stated in his earlier text with Muecke, *Gularabulu* (1983), he shares his stories about country with others, including ‘white people’, so that ‘they might be able to see us better than before’ (p. i). Roe’s instigation of the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail was another attempt at increasing the tangibility of his country for others, so that they might recognise the cultural importance of country (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 15), which includes Bugarrigarra.

Referred to as ‘the Dreaming’ by a Western knowledge system, Bugarrigarra is foundational to Roe’s relationship with his country and holds much meaning for other Indigenous peoples on the Dampier Peninsula in the West Kimberley region. When Roe speaks about Bugarrigarra in *Reading the Country*, he invokes his *jila* (spring) country out on the Roebuck Plains and the *yungurugu* (Rainbow Snake) which lives there: a spirit being that emerged from Bugarrigarra, which can make cyclones and heavy rain. Paddy belongs to, has responsibilities for, and is located

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32 The other two ‘readings’ of the Roebuck Plains presented in *Reading the Country* are Benterrak’s paintings and Muecke’s nomadic writing of place.

33 Paddy Roe’s sharing of Bugarrigarra stories in his own terms (and rendered in the distinct speech-like typology created by Muecke) is a powerful response to the historic mistreatment of Indigenous stories, whereby ‘Aboriginal oral stories were used by white writers to create “Aboriginal myths in English” designed as “short and pointless narratives” for non-Aboriginal children (Hodge & Mishra 1990, p.77). In the shift from vernacular to English, the stories were often simplified, stripped of cultural context and sometimes not even attributed to Aboriginal authors’ (Walton & Christie 1994, pp. 70–71).
within this country and its stories. Rose (2000) calls this being situated in a ‘human/geographical/Dreaming space’ (p. 110). In this next passage from the story ‘Making Rain’ in Reading the Country, Paddy Roe explains to Muecke and Benterrak how Bugarrigarra still works: people are doing important work to keep it going:

Yeah, well - -
these things we use from bugarrigarra -
bugarrigarra bin put the way.

For my       for people you know how to use these things because these things have been really somebody walking’ ‘round before but they bin turn into those sorta things.

But we have stories for them     how we can make these things work     but we never seen nobody     before (Laugh)     but we must have only stories you know     how can we make these things work (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 78).36

Paddy and his descendants may not have been alive to see their creative ancestors walking around and creating the country, however, the Bugarrigarra stories about these beings inform them about the inscription of meaning in the land through the transmogrification of spirit beings into material forms in the country, and importantly, instruct them on how to ‘make these things work’. The stories tell them how to read the country.

34 In the text Gularabulu, spoken by Paddy Roe and transcribed by Stephen Muecke (1983), Muecke develops a distinct typology with the aim of capturing Roe’s storytelling speech, which is in Aboriginal (Broome) English. Muecke also uses this typology in the text Reading the Country. For explanation of how to read this typology see Appendix 1.
35 There are instances in quoted texts where the word Bugarrigarra is not capitalised by the author.
Knowing country is akin to knowing the stories about its creation and how to perform the tasks of ongoing creation and renewal. To this end, Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) argue:

There is no basis for seeing the dreaming as a mythological past (as in “dreamtime”) while it is alive as a way of talking. Paddy Roe, for instance, constantly talks about the bugarrigarra as story, as song, as power he controls and as things to do with particular places. To talk bugarrigarra about these places is to talk about “spirits” one cannot see, about the “rainbow snake” rising up out of springs: it is to talk in a special way which disrupts the uniformity of everyday language (emphasis in original, p. 14).

Bugarrigarra is performed and keeps performing through the actions of ephemeral beings. A further distinction made by Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) that Bugarrigarra is an ongoing process ‘of seeing, of knowing, and a set of practices… [which] depends on people living in the country, travelling through it and naming it, constantly making new stories and songs’ (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 14), challenges the temporal bias in Western thinking which has largely limited the Dreaming to the period of time when ancestral beings created people and the land.

Another well-known writer who challenged previous Western interpretations of the Dreaming, and sought to better understand it from an Indigenous metaphysic, was anthropologist W. E. H. Stanner. Writing most of his influential work from the early 1950s to the early 1970s, Stanner’s issue with Westerner researchers using a questioning mode of inquiry to learn about the Dreaming is eloquently captured in the following passage:

Scholars familiar with the Aborigines have usually had one impressive experience in common: to be taken by Aboriginal friends to places in the wilds and there shown something—tree, rocky outcrop, cranny, pool— with formality, pride and love. Conversations follow rather like this: ‘There is my Dreaming [place]. My father showed me this place when I was a little boy. His father showed him’. What had his father said? ‘He said, your Dreaming is there; you want to look after this place’ … What did the father do there? ‘He
used to come here every year with the old men, the wise men; they used to do something here [hit, rub, break off pieces, brush with green leaves, sing]; that way they made the [totem] come on, come back, jump up, spread out.’ How did that happen? What is it that is in the place? ‘We do not know. Something is there. Like my spirit [soul, shadow, invisible counterpart]; like my brother [father, father’s father, mate, friend, helper]; like my Dreaming [naming the totem entity]’. Will he think more? What else did his father say? That there was something in the Dreaming place? The dark eyes turn and look intent, puzzled, searching. ‘My father did not say. He said this: ‘My boy, look! Your Dreaming is there; it is a big thing; you never let it go; all Dreamings come from there; your spirit is there’. Does the white man now understand? The blackfellow, earnest, friendly, makes a last effort. ‘Old man, you listen! Something is there; we do not know what; something ... like engine, like power, plenty of power; it does hard work; it pushes (emphasis added, Stanner 1979, p. 135).

For the Indigenous man in Stanner’s story, it is clear that something in country, associated with the Dreaming, is doing ‘hard work’. Although the Indigenous man meets his Western inquirer’s questions about the Dreaming with contemporary metaphors – ‘like engine, like power, plenty of power; it does hard work; it pushes’ – this did not guarantee a mutual understanding about what the Dreaming is or does. The mode of inquiry pursued by the Western inquirer highlights the limitations of trying to understand an Indigenous knowledge system by merely seeking to ‘fit’ discrete pieces of information into a pre-existing set of fixed categories that ‘already know’ how the world ‘is’.

In his essay The Dreaming, originally published in 1953, Stanner (2009) employs his own terms in an attempt to communicate his sense of the Dreaming and Dreaming stories to a broader academic audience: a philosophy (p. 62), a cosmogony and cosmology (pp. 60-61), ‘a poetic key to Reality’ (p. 61), and ‘everywhen’ (p. 61). Despite the attempts of Stanner’s and other Western academics to describe ‘the Dreaming’, its representation in another knowledge system is limited by the ability of the metaphor to bridge understanding. However, it is not just Western writers that
are employing metaphors to generate a deeper understanding of what ‘the Dreaming’ 
is or does.

In the text he co-authored with photographer Jutta Malnic, *Yorro Yorro: Aboriginal 
Creation and the Renewal of Nature*, Ngarinyin lawman and Kimberley elder David 
Mowaljarlai OAM uses the name *Yorro Yorro* to refer to ‘the divine movement of 
eternally ongoing Creation, the renewal of Life’ (Mowaljarlai & Malnic 1993, p. 
196). Just as Paddy Roe invokes Bugarrigarra as a performative and generative ‘set 
of practices’ dependent on people actively participating with country, Mowaljarlai 
too enrolls himself into the generative practices that support process of perpetual 
creation and renewal.37 Both elders reveal a co-productive engagement between 
living beings and ancestors, through the performance of creative processes, which 
might be identified as ceremony, storytelling, song, and even burning country. Rose 
(2004) refers to such processes as an inter-subjective reciprocity, a ‘bringing forth 
the life of the world’ (p. 173).

Oral storytelling is a well-documented example of a generative practice that enables 
Indigenous peoples to work towards the enlivenment of country and maintain their 
knowledge traditions, ontologies, and ethical practices (Chilisa 2012, p. 139; Christie 
2005, p. 61; Kwaymullina et al. 2012, n.p.). Kwaymullina, Collins-Gearing, 
Kwaymullina and Pushman (2012) emphasise the ontological dimension of 
storytelling in Indigenous practice, stating:

Through storytelling the world is created and recreated: in the values and 
worldviews stories offer, in the patterns of thinking and knowing that 
listening and reading place in our spirits and minds, in the stories we tell and 
live (n.p.).

37 In building a case for his concept of ‘meshwork’, anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011) contends that 
Indigenous peoples are united by an animist ontology, ‘a way of being that is alive and open to a 
world in continuous birth’, whereby ‘beings do not propel themselves across a ready-made world but 
rather issue forth through a world-in-formation, along the lines of their relationships’ (p. 63). Such 
ontology relies upon a person’s participation and collaboration with humans and non-humans to 
constantly create/perform/renew the world.
Invocation of the creative acts of ancestors through storytelling maintains connections between ephemeral and ancestral beings and is a means through which the aliveness of the world is continued (Mowlajarlai & Malnic 1993, p. 194; Turner 2010, p. 46).

Knowing one’s stories is critical to being an active agent in processes of co-creation. Turner (2010, p. 46) states that a person knows their story by living inside this story, revealing both country and stories as places and meaning structures within which people dwell. To live in one’s country is to be emplaced in story. However, forms of inscription within country, which derive from the creative acts of ancestors, including moral codes, require nuanced forms of ‘reading’ country for this meaning to be understood.

In 1987, the same year that Paddy Roe initiated the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, he spoke with Ray Aitchison from the National Library of Australia. In the passage below, transcribed from a recording of this conversation, Roe offers an example of his reading of country:

Well dreamtime, we call ‘im, I don’t know, I don’t know what dreamtime means in English, I don’t know too whether is the right name, but in ours it’s from Bugarrigarra. Bugarrigarra, these people, they bin walking round in this new world, they bin somebody walking round, that’s Bugarrigarra we call ‘him, in the new world.

Lotta things we learn, everything dreamtime, what is it, we got to look after these things in the dreamtime, might be statues, stone, stone, hills, springs, everything, ‘cause, they been somebody and these and stone, you know, living person, but they turn in the stone, they didn’t want to live like a human being, so they turn into stone and the statues are standing today, a rock, no, no tree, rocks and springs, well that’s only it’s different again, that’s a snake, rainbow snake you know, cyclone might be lightning might be, all these sort of things in that one.
That’s the story, yeah, oh it’s true! Oh this is true! Oh this is true. In dreamtime. I’ll show you the track too, the man, the track of the man, it’s still there (Roe 1987).

Roe’s ability to read the material evidence of the ancestors leads him to assure Aitchison that Bugarrigarra stories are real. Aitchison’s responses to Roe over the course of the interview (not transcribed here) reveal a very different approach to these Bugarrigarra stories, one that Stanner (2009, p. 58) critiques as the relegation and fixing of the Dreaming to a long-ago past. Roe’s opening statement about ‘dreamtime’ – ‘I don’t know too whether is the right name, but in ours it’s from Bugarrigarra’ – reveals an awareness of misunderstandings caused when names carrying certain meaning from one culture are used to describe the concepts from another. As stated by Muecke in Reading the Country, ‘not even the wildest European imagination could produce Paddy Roe’s reading of the country: the words are just not there’ (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 13). Perhaps the limitations of the English language to render visible the realities of Paddy Roe might be overcome through the re-negotiation of Western categories and metaphors that are used to describe what is.

Turner (2010), who speaks here about her Altyerrenge (Traditional Country) stories, echoes concern over misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the ontologies performed by Dreaming stories:

We didn’t realise that by putting it like that, “in the Dreamtime, that’s how that happened”, that warlperles [white people] would see our Traditional Stories as just like their own fairy stories that begin “once upon a time”. But they’re not like that … It’s not a dream, like a fairytale dream, it’s a Traditional Story, and that is in us … Altyerrenge doesn’t mean the olden days, it means always was, and nowadays as well (emphasis in original, p. 48).

Turner’s (2010) juxtaposition of the views of her own people with the perceptions of warlperles (white people) about the nature and life of Dreaming stories and ‘the Dreamtime’, points to two very different understandings: an Indigenous view that
people are still situated within their Dreaming and that stories carry forward histories and tradition, and a foreign perspective according to which the Dreaming is attached to the long-ago past and more akin to ‘myths and legends’.

These accounts from Indigenous elders demonstrate that stories are integral to a person’s situatedness within their Dreamings, histories and traditions; stories are lived in and ‘read’ through seeing the meaning inscribed into country by creative ancestors. The agency of stories, their capacity to ‘do work’, is evident in their capacity to emplace people within country and offer them forms of meaning with which to understand and relate to country and appropriately with other people.

Gaagudju elder Bill Neidjie, born at Alawanydajawany on the East Alligator River, made an important contribution to Indigenous Australian literature in 1989 with the publication *Story About Feeling*. In this text, documented in Aboriginal English, Neidjie (1989, p. 1) describes more ‘work’ that stories ‘do’, including helping people to feel, and the agency of stories to listen:

```
This story e can listen
careful
and how you want to feel on your feeling
This story e coming right through your body
e go right down foot and head
fingernail and blood... through the heart
and e can feel it because e’ll come right through.
```

Indigenous theory related to country suggests that there is even more work that stories perform. Stories travel through and map country, connecting distant countries and peoples (Somerville & Perkins 2010, p. 210; Turner 2010, p. 20). As stories pass from one country to another, the custodians of that country become the tellers of that ‘chapter’ in the story (Turner 2010, p. 57). The movement of stories through country traces the walking trails made by ancestral beings as they journeyed through the land.
Such ‘Dreaming’ pathways, and the song-poetry\textsuperscript{38} that is sung to invoke them, have frequently been referred to in the literature over the past 25 years as song cycles (Bradley 2010; Dyungayan 2014; Harrison & McConchie 2009 p. 34; Keogh 1990; Morphy 1991, p. 237; Mowaljarlai & Malnic 1993, p. 166; Rose 2004, p. 173; Somerville & Perkins 2010).

Writing about the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, along which the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is walked, poet and eco-humanities writer Stuart Cooke (2010) explains what a song cycle is and describes the responsibilities that traditional custodians need to perform, to maintain the integrity of these entities and their relationships with country:

[The] song cycle itself is a collection of poetic fragments that are performed in conjunction with music and dance. It follows a path because the poems don’t all belong to one place. You have to move through country as you sing them. Whitefellas don’t see any of this; it’s strict men’s business that’s too sacred for the tourists to see. Still, if you pay enough attention to what [Paddy Roe’s] family tell you, what you can discover about the song cycle is that it is vital to the land’s survival. The deep power of this poetry is ancestral: the first creation beings came from the ocean and sung the land into existence; the words of their songs have been handed down through the generations. To sing them, therefore, is to sing the land into fresh being.

Song cycles are not created and left to be; ongoing work is required by the living to maintain their aliveness through the performance of invocational song. Just as stories do work, so too does the language that constitutes the song-poetry and stories. Teacher, linguist and long-time Yolŋu collaborator Michael Christie (2007), who in writing about a Yolŋu language habitat, brings into focus the perspective that country and language are bound in relationship:

\textsuperscript{38} Not all song-poetry originates from the Dreaming. Cooke (as cited in Dyungayan 2014, p. 11) writes that some song-poems are ‘younger’ than others that come from the Dreaming, and are a collaboration between living people and spirits, whereby spirits communicate song-poems to living people through dreams.
Neither the shapes of the world or the shapes of its languages are ontologically prior. They are coextensive and co-constitutive. This is a striking metaphysics when we compare it to a view of language as representing an objective pre-existing reality, which generally underpins our European philosophy of language (pp. 57-58).

This co-constitutive view of language and the world highlights the importance of traditional custodians continuing to sing the poetry of a song cycle and tell the story of ancestral creators; if the stories and songs stop being invoked, so too does the meaning that constructs these realities.

2.3.3 Key ontological concepts emerging from Indigenous theory in relation to country

Country, Dreaming and story are powerful ontological categories that inform the realities experienced by Indigenous Australians, including people’s meaning structures, situatedness, identities, relationships with human and non-human entities and responsibilities towards the ongoing-ness of country. In reviewing the above literature, four key interrelated concepts emerge as critical to Indigenous understandings of place as ‘country’ and the enactment of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies: 1) relationality, 2) performativity, 3) generative practice, and 4) locatedness/situatedness. Each of these concepts contributes, in some way, to the relationships that Indigenous peoples perform with country.

The interrelatedness of these concepts is again evident in this account of Indigenous knowledge production, from Christie (2006):

Aboriginal knowledge everywhere comes out of the routine practices of life and makes those practices possible. It is not naturally commodified like laboratory knowledge. Aboriginal knowledge is responsive, active, and constantly renewed and reconfigured. It is eco-logical. … It should be understood more as something that you do than as something that you have, knowing how rather than knowing that. Ensuring the successful transmission
of knowledge traditions into the future generations has more to do with you people learning how to construct, rehearse, perform, and celebrate their shared knowledge collectively and respectfully, than it has to do with specific content, such as place names and species names and facts about their usefulness. This is not to deny the significance of what Aboriginal people know, it is just to emphasise its performativity (p. 79).

Moreover, the recurrence of these principles in the literature implies a significance that has to be reflected in the theoretical framework and methodology of this thesis, and is addressed in Chapter 3.

2.4 Sense of place literature and eco-philosophy perspectives on place and people–place relationships

Sense of place literature and eco-philosophy are two further streams of interrelated literature that have made major contributions to the academy’s understanding of the situatedness of the human in ‘place’, and human relationships with non-human entities. Originally focused on the perspectives of non-Indigenous settler peoples, both fields of literature have grown to recognise, grapple with and incorporate Indigenous perspectives on ‘place’, making them contested discourses. Australian sense of place writers John Cameron and Craig San Roque (2002) emphasise a need to acknowledge these contested meanings, stating:

The interaction between Aboriginal and Western senses of place must start from the recognition that Aboriginal people have a completely different conception of the relationship between consciousness and place than most Western people (Cameron & San Roque 2002, p. 77).

In the comprehensive sense of place text Changing places: re-imagining Australia, which he edited, John Cameron (2003) defines sense of place as, ‘The way in which people experience and feel the enfolded meanings, activities and landscapes that occur around them’ (p. 3). He asserts that disparate understandings of people–place relationships between Indigenous and Western cultures are a central concern of
contemporary sense of place conversations in Australia. Over the past three decades eco-philosophy literature has not only come to recognise the legitimacy of Indigenous understandings in relation to place, but through the notable contributions of David Bennett (1983), Deborah Bird Rose (1988; 2004), Freya Mathews (2002; 2003) and Val Plumwood (2007a), has drawn upon Indigenous philosophies and ethical systems to interrogate Western conceptions of place and people–place relationships.

The discussion that follows highlights aspects of the literature that inform the theoretical framework of the thesis, and identifies opportunities for further contribution to these fields of scholarship by this thesis. Structured as three key ‘conversations’ that emerge from the examined fields: 1) questions of belonging and place connection, 2) re-imagining human relationships with place and non-human entities, and, 3) recognising ‘country’, this chapter also makes observations about the presence/absence of the four interrelated ‘principles’ of relationality, locatedness/situatedness, generative practice and performativity, in the examined literature.

2.4.1 Questions of belonging and place connection

From as early as the 1940’s Elyne Mitchell, Australian author of *Soil and Civilisation, Images in Water* and the fictional work *The Silver Brumby*, wrote of the moral imperative for settler peoples in Australia to foster a connection with the land. Over the course of her writing career, Mitchell sought to expose the impacts of the human-induced degradation of ecological communities, and was inspired by Indigenous practices of invoking place and place connections through story and song (Mitchell 1989, p. 142).

Despite calls from Mitchell and others elsewhere (Leopold 1949) for settler peoples to develop place connections for the protection of ecological communities and place, underlying questions about the legitimacy of settler people and their descendants to belong to, or in place, have punctuated sense of place literature in Australia (Bonyhady & Griffiths 2002, p. 9).
Cameron (2003, p. 5) acknowledges the centrality of Indigenous perspectives to contemporary discussions about sense of place, but also points out that this was not the case three decades earlier. The articulation of a ‘white settler’ consciousness only began to emerge in Australian place writing with Judith Wright’s (1965) *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*. In the intervening decades, writers such as Read (2000), Somerville (1999) and Miller (2003) have more explicitly addressed their sense of place connection as ‘settler’ people.

In *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership*, Peter Read (2000) tackles the legitimacy of his own belonging to the places in which he grew up, including the sandstone country north of Sydney in NSW. Read (2000) begins by questioning, ‘Do I have the right to belong in this soul-country?’ (p. 9) and progressively articulates how he and other non-Indigenous Australians might belong to the land, without appropriating an Aboriginal spirituality. Read (2000) concludes:

> Leave the spirits to the people who made them or were made by them. Let the rest of us find the confidence in our own physical and spiritual belonging in this land, respectful of Aboriginality but not necessarily close to it. Let’s intuit our own attachments to country independently of Aboriginals. We can belong on the landscape, in the landscape, or irrelevently to the landscape. We don’t all have to belong to each other. To understand that is a step to belonging (p. 204).

Read acknowledges spiritual connections between Indigenous Australians and the land, yet cautions against the appropriation of an Indigenous spirituality by non-Indigenous others as a solution to a yearning to belong. In avoiding claims of cooption and speaking for others, Read does not address the potential role that Indigenous peoples might play, if they choose to, in supporting non-Indigenous Australians to create a sense of belonging and connection with the land.

Belonging and displacement are drawn into close association by Read (2000) who claims a double displacement; the dispossession from homelands experienced by Indigenous Australians at the hands of colonial powers, and the dispossession of
settler Australians from their ancestry. In a similar vein to Read, Margaret Somerville (1999) shares her lament over her displacement as a white Australian woman in *Body/Landscape Journals*. She deliberates her in-betweeness; not living in the place of her ancestors, and faced with the truth of her ancestors’ role in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands:

This story is a kind of promise of connection that is lost. It represents all the loss, and for me, a generational cycle of erasure and repression of connection to place. In Australia, there is a double displacement: no Celtic indigenous to return to and, as a third generation migrant, I still bear the burden of guilt for the loss of indigenous here. So there is no choice, I have to flesh out a connection to place here because it is the only place I can; I have to make sense of that (emphasis in original, Somerville 1999, p. 6).

In response to her sense of displacement, Somerville uses metaphor to draw attention to her embodied engagement with place and in doing so, defines a space within the sense of place literature, which grounds people–place connections in human and earthly bodies.

In her theorising on the concept of belonging, Linn Miller (2003) critiques narratives, such as those presented by Read and Somerville, which address doubts over the right to belong in place, or connect with the land. She explores the socio-political implications of the questions ‘How legitimate are settler claims to belonging to this land? How accurate are those protagonists – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – who deny the very possibility of such belonging?’ (p. 216). Without explicitly identifying whom, Miller (2003) writes about a ‘politically correct’ contingent of Australian writers, who are

sceptical about their right to a sense of belonging in this country and are ambivalent about their non-Indigenous status. Among these thinkers some suggest that the existential angst and guilt felt by many non-Indigenous Australians at this time is the natural consequence of a postcolonial consciousness, and, further, that such feelings are not only warranted, but redemptive. Others in this group share more extreme views and espouse the
attitude that non-Indigenous peoples, unlike Aboriginal Australians, will never be entitled to make authentic claims of belonging to this land (p. 216).

Miller’s critique highlights the complexity of discussing belonging, particularly in a climate of neo-colonialism, which compounds the ongoing intergenerational effects of historical colonisation (Dodson 2007). With no truth and reconciliation process that faces these issues head-on, healing dialogue between Indigenous and settler descendants about living in, working and caring together for country has not yet been fully realised in Australia.

Re-mythologising people–place connections arises as a major theme in the literature, as members of the dominant colonising culture seek to re-situate themselves in place. This re-situating is also referred to in sense of place literature as re-emplacement (Casey 1993; Mathews 2005; Read 2000). Many place writers recognise the potential for narratives to embody and re-emplace people in the land (Blades 2015; Casey 1993; Gruenewald 2003; Read 2000; Somerville 1999; Somerville, Power & de Carteret 2009; Ward 2011), and use such narratives to situate themselves at ‘home’ on this continent.

Following in the genre of authors such as Henry David Thoreau, Maya Ward (2011) shares the story of her pilgrimage on the Wurundjeri songline along the Yarra River with three friends. The group begin their journey at the mouth of the Birrarung (river of mists; Yarra River) at Port Phillip Bay and walk the length of the river up to its headwaters. Ward interweaves Indigenous, industrial and more recent histories of peoples’ relationships with Birrarung into her diary of the journey. What resonates from Ward’s writing is a spiritual yearning to connect with place and locate herself in ‘home.’ Although she does not explicitly call her work performative in the text, Ward later said, ‘I felt, somehow, as if I were being performed, as if I were playing a predetermined part in something so much bigger than I could have imagined’. 39 Ward’s narrative of emplacement is joined by the writings of other non-Indigenous authors who also seek to redefine their experience of place through a recognition of

39 Personal communication (27/12/2015).
Indigenous presence and absence in the land and through a relationship of ‘being with’ place (Lloyd 2005; Moriarty 2012; Somerville 1999).

The agency of narratives to transform people–place relationships is a central tenet of pedagogies of place writer David Gruenewald (2003). Concerned with the deconstruction of dominant colonial narratives of place that ‘deny our connection to earthly phenomena [and] construct places as objects or sites on a map to be economically exploited’ (Gruenewald 2003, p. 624), Gruenwald asserts that all people are connected to ‘earthly phenomena’ and that the telling of narratives can inform a person’s learning about place. From a pedagogies of place perspective, walking the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail might be seen as an opportunity for ‘place learning that derives from a deep, an embodied sense of connection’ (Somerville, Power & de Carteret 2009, p. 9), which might support the emergence of

a different ontology, an ontology of self becoming-other in the space between self and the natural world, composed of humans and non-human others, animate and inanimate; animals and plants, weather, rocks, trees (p. 9).

A perspective that allows for narratives to be employed as catalysts for ontological shifts will have an important bearing on this thesis. It gives rise to the question: ‘What work are stories doing in the performance of relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’

Somerville, Power and de Carteret (2009) offer further stimulus on the subject of stories and place connection, maintaining that:

Specific local places offer a material and metaphysical in-between space for the intersection of multiple and contested stories. This is especially significant in the relationship between indigenous and other subjugated knowledges, and Western academic thought (p. 9).

The message here, in terms of adopting a decolonising approach, is to allow stories about place and the realities they reflect to be multiple.
2.4.2 Re-imagining human relationships with place and non-human entities

North American place writer Edward Casey (1993) stresses the need to keep theorising place and people–place relationships. Such theorising is a central feature of sense of place and eco-philosophy literature in Australia, where narratives, poetry and philosophical discussions aim to question what eco-philosopher Kate Rigby (2003) calls, ‘the aesthetic objectification of nature as landscape’ (p. 111) and David Trigger (1997, pp. 163-164) refers to as the commodification of ‘place’ and ‘nature’ into a ‘natural resource’. Such narratives also propose a re-situating of humans in relation to place and with non-human entities. Similarly, to the Indigenous perspectives examined in section 2.3, situatedness is defining Western people’s relationships with place, but as seen later in this section, proximity is being performed in quite different ways.

Emerging from Australia and North America in the 1960s in response to human-induced ecological crises, eco-philosophy initially set out to challenge the ethical and metaphysical dimensions of Western culture’s relationship with non-human others/selves, ecological systems and the land. Building upon the foundations created by writers such as Aldo Leopold (1949) and Rachel Carson (1962), Australian philosophers Val and Richard Routley (later becoming Val Plumwood and Richard Sylvan) were instrumental in founding the eco-philosophy movement in Australia and elsewhere, and were soon followed by others who added weight to this nascent discipline (Godfrey-Smith 1979; Næss 1973; White 1967). The extension of ethics and intrinsic rights to include non-human selves was ballast to the re-framing of utilitarian and anthropocentric values and Cartesian metaphysics which had shaped the Western world’s relationship with non-human others since the scientific revolution and more recently, in response to the Euro-centric mindset of the land as commodity – something that could be ‘bought, sold, exchanged, manipulated, altered and exploited’ (Wilson & Ellender 2002, p. 56) – which had been imposed upon Indigenous peoples and their countries since colonisation.
Whilst in the last decade, the ecological humanities\textsuperscript{40} have subsumed eco-philosophy (to some extent), this thesis focuses specifically on the contributions of eco-philosophical thought to conceptions of people and place.

Prominent Australian eco-philosopher Freya Mathews made an important contribution to the emerging field with her publication \textit{The Ecological Self}, published in 1991. Her critique of atomism\textsuperscript{41} and its underpinning of continental philosophy fueled questions about the capacity of continental philosophy to respond to a human-induced ecological crisis. Describing atomism as ‘the unquestioned metaphysical framework for both ordinary thinking and for classical science’ (1991, p. 10), the key aim of this text was to ‘unravel the major normative implications of the conventional atomistic cosmology as it informs western consciousness’ (p. 14) by exploring the philosophical implications of an alternative, monist metaphysical framework. Mathews (1991) highlighted the importance of cosmologies, in their ability to orient and define for a group of people ‘the place of humankind in the cosmic scheme of things’ (p. 12). In short, Mathews’ (1991) key argument was that cosmologies perform critical work in locating and situating people, who share that cosmology, ‘in relation to the rest of creation’ (p. 12).

To a large extent, the task of ‘re-situating the human’ relies upon re-conceptualising what ‘place’ (or ‘nature’) is, and with how it can be engaged. Deborah Bird Rose (2003) contrasts Indigenous and Western concepts of place to make a point about the ontological assumptions that underpin each of these notions:

Much of the contemporary theorizing about place builds on a preconception that place is a \textit{cultural} artefact … In contrast, Aboriginal Australians do not take this kind of human-centred view of place. They hold place to be the product of the lives of \textit{many living things}, including \textit{extraordinary beings} and \textit{nonhuman beings} (emphasis added, p. 166).

\textsuperscript{40}The ecological (eco-) humanities encompasses both science and humanities disciplines to respond to the Anthropocene, and in the words of Rose, van Dooren, Chrulaw, Kearnes and O’Gorman (2012) focuses on ‘rethinking the ontological exceptionality of the human’ (p. 2).

\textsuperscript{41}Note that the words ‘reductionism’ and ‘positivism’ have become synonymous with atomism in much of the eco-philosophy literature.
Rose’s quote alludes to an ontological question that is important to both eco-philosophy and Actor-Network Theory writers: what constitutes ‘culture’ and ‘nature’? The task of interrogating these ontological categories is central to Val Plumwood’s (1993) book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, which draws attention to the ‘hyperseparation’ of ‘humans’ and ‘nature’, and continues in her later work, where she describes ‘nature’ as being ‘largely thought of as the nonhuman sphere in contrast with the truly or ideally human (identified with reason)’ (Plumwood 2002, p. 8). Taking this conversation into the context of decolonising people–place relationships, Plumwood (2002) writes:

The sphere of ‘nature’ has in the past been taken to include less ideal or more primitive forms of the human, including women and supposedly ‘backward’ or ‘primitive’ people taken to exemplify an earlier and more animal stage of human development. Their supposed deficit in rationality invites rational conquest and re-ordering by those taken to best exemplify reason, namely elite white males of European descent and culture. ‘Nature’ then encompasses the underside of rationalist dualisms which oppose reason to nature, mind to body, emotional female to rational male, human to animal, and so on (pp. 8-9).

Dualism is only one of several critical ontological issues that Plumwood identifies in relation to people–place relationships; another is disenchantment. In her later writing, Plumwood (2007a, pp. 18-19) argues that instrumental culture has in effect, stripped the non-human world and its entities of affective agency. According to Plumwood (2007a), an appropriate response to this instrumental culture given the current global ecological crises would be ‘ethical and philosophical theories that legitimate a rich intentionality for as wide as possible a range of non-human actors and descriptors’ (pp. 18-19). Put in other terms, Plumwood calls for the ‘reclamation’ and ‘recovery’ of distributed agency amongst human and non-human entities.

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42 An examination of Actor-Network Theory’s approach to the categories ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ can be found in Chapter 4, pages 165–166. More generally, explanation of ANT’s refusal to make *a priori* assumptions about categories can be found in Chapter 3, on pages 96 and 97.
Looking beyond Cartesian metaphysics to articulate alternate ways of being in and with, and knowing the world, is a central premise of eco-philosophy writing and also has come to influence writers in other disciplines. Lous Heshusius (1994, p. 19) names the Cartesian separation of mind and matter as a root cause of alienated and disenchanted consciousness, and in contrast, advocates for the development of an enchanted and participatory consciousness. About the latter consciousness, she writes that it is ‘not “about” something or someone … [but rather, akin] to “being with” something or someone’ (p.19).

According to Heshusius (1994), before the primacy of Cartesian thought in Western philosophy, ‘the very act of participation [direct, somatic, psychic, and emotional] was knowing’ (emphasis in original, p. 16). Clark (2002, p. 83) draws attention to the displacement of somatic knowing, which she describes as ‘knowing through a sense of connectedness’, through the ‘primacy of reason’ and the notion of objectivity. Where somatic knowing and knowing through connection work to lessen the distance between the knower and that which is known, reason and objectivity produce distance.

Where and how people situate themselves, both physically and in metaphysical terms, determines how they know the world. Hence, discussions about situatedness form a key entry point into examining the ontologies and epistemologies that are performed by people in relation to place. In her text Reports from a wild country: ethics for decolonisation, eco-humanities scholar and anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose (2004, p. 9) considers ‘structures and processes of distance’ that drive the behaviours of ‘Whitefellas’.

Situatedness poses significant challenges for our New World societies. [It affects] our immersion in concepts of disconnection, our future-orientation [and] our seeming indifference to the losses that colonisation entail (Rose 2004, p. 8).

She invokes the words of John Roth to call for a system of ethics that is not ‘a closed system, but a way of living … in openness to the vulnerability of other [humans and
non-humans]’ (Roth as cited in Rose 2004, p. 8), to redress the aforementioned performance of distance.

Euro-centric systems of understanding, developed in and tied to places on the other side of the world, continue to impose upon this continent categories that structure the world through distance (Rose 2004, p. 39). As pointed out by Kombu Merri academic Mary Graham (2009), the dominant Western mode of knowledge acquisition ‘precedes place … [it] both defines and supersedes place’ (p. 71). From Graham’s perspective, Western forms of knowing do not allow for categories to emerge from place and in turn, cannot encourage a process of emplacement. Cooke (2010) further elucidates the ramifications of knowing and being in place through the performance of distance and Roe and Hoogland (1999), who cite distance as a key mechanism through which place is consumed as a resource. Frans Hoogland,⁴³ who helped Paddy Roe to initiate the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, illustrates this later point, stating:

Our culture, European, Anglo-Saxon culture, we not living with the land. We living from it. We taking from it all the time. We don’t give back to it. But traditional people give back to it, look after it. By living there they maintain it. We dig it out (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 22).

Hoogland draws contrast between a European utilitarian construct of, and relationship with ‘the land’ on the one hand, and on the other, an ethos of care and reciprocity in the approaches of traditional custodians. His comparison highlights the different types of relationships that tend to be performed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and the land. However, as sense of place writer Peter Bishop (2003, p. 104) points out, such observations can easily turn into stereotypes that are reductive and dismissive, and ignore divergent performances of people–place relationships. By heading Bishop’s cautioning, this thesis seeks to avoid making assumptions about which ‘types of people’ relate to the land (place, country) in particular ways.

⁴³ Note that Hoogland is not speaking here in Standard Australian English.
The reimagining of what place is, beyond anthropocentric terms, has accompanied efforts to re-situate the human, both in place and in relation to non-human others in eco-philosophy and sense of place literature. Concepts of animateness (Bennett 1983; Cameron & San Roque 2002; Ingold 2011; Kelly 2013; Kelly 2011; Mathews 2002; Mathews 2003; Mathews 2007; Mathews 2009; Tacey 2009) enchantment (Berman 1981; Kelly 2013; Mathews 2009; Mathews 2007; Mathews 2005; Mathews 2003; Tacey 2009) and genius loci (Rigby 2003; Rigby 1998) are drawn upon, from their pre-enlightenment Western traditional roots to more recent interpretations and Indigenous philosophies, to inform discussions about the distribution of agency beyond the human realm.

Through her text *For love of matter: a contemporary panpsychism*, Mathews (2003) theorises the notions of enchantment and communicative presence in the world to develop a contemporary panpsychist view, whereby inter-subjective encounters between human and other-than-human entities constitute a ‘dialogical modality’. Drawing on the etymology of the word, Mathews (2003) defines enchantment as being ‘wrapped in chant or song or incantation’ (p. 18) and goes on to apply it to place, stating:

A land or place is enchanted if it has been called up, its subjectivity rendered responsive to self by self’s invocation of it. Similar expressions exist in indigenous parlance: in Aboriginal English, for instance, one speaks of “singing up” country, awakening it to the presence of its people (p. 18).

Invocation, through ‘singing up’ country, storytelling or other forms of creative expression, might be considered a generative practice, in the sense that it is participatory and co-creative, when the agency of the non-human world is considered as a reality. For example, in her doctoral thesis *Shoulder to the Wind: A lyrical evocation of the Bogong High Plains*, Noelene Kelly (2013) writes about ‘singing up’ the country as a form of attunement to country, which produces particular outcomes; it ‘raises, amplifies, the songs that are present within country, increasing the vitality of all that is incorporated into the land’ (p. 262). She goes on to write that a relational view of people-place ‘assumes forms of intentionality and agency’ (p. 276). In her thesis, Kelly explores the generative potential of her own eco-poetics.
writing as a means of invoking and performing her relationships with place, in the Bogong High Plains.44

In another example of inter-subjective relationality, Mathews (2003) refers to the Dreaming stories of Indigenous Australians to demonstrate how this notion is embedded in Indigenous metaphysics:

[In these stories] ancestor beings first appear in human form, but in the course of their travels across the land are metamorphosed into nonhuman creatures and landforms. These stories may be seen as systematically reiterating the message that the land and all its animate inhabitants and inanimate features partake of the same essential subjectivity that informs human being (pp. 80-81).

Even though Mathews does not base her notion of panpsychism on Indigenous metaphysics, it is evident from her many references to Indigenous philosophy that she is seeking to respectfully create bridges between eco-philosophy and Indigenous metaphysics. For example, a relational ontology is fundamental to both an Indigenous understanding of people–country and also underpins the notion of encounter presented by Mathews. Here she describes encounter as an inter-subjective mode of ‘being with’ the world:

To encounter an other is to approach it as another subject with whom it is possible to have a relationship (in something like the interpersonal sense rather than in a purely formal sense) and from whom it is possible to elicit a response (Mathews 2003, p. 77).

The inter-subjectivity described by Mathews (2003) in her definition of encounter expands beyond the human realm to include non-human entities. In doing so, Mathews’ notion of encounter resonates with descriptions of people–country relationships presented in the Indigenous literature in section 2.3.

44 The Bogong High Plains are located in the north-east of Victoria in Australia.
Mathews (2003) further defines encounter by drawing distinctions between encounter and ‘knowing’ as modes of being. In doing so, she contributes an additional perspective to aforementioned critiques on dominant Western forms of knowing. Mathews refrains here from spelling out the impacts of the subjugation of encounter as a mode of ‘being with’ the world, instead she offers a sense of what is possible through its reclamation:

Our modern goal, of knowing the world, has taken the place of an earlier goal, namely encountering it … it is through encountering the world, making contact with its subjectival dimensions, that we shall actually acquire this sense of spiritual kinship, which will in turn provide the basis for a respectful and sympathetic attitude (Mathews 2003, pp. 77-79).

For Mathews, spiritual connections between humans and non-human others are to be realised not through ‘knowing’, in the reasoning and objectivist sense, but through an openness to encountering the world. Acknowledging the challenges and obstacles of embracing such disposition to the world, Mathews poses a number of questions salient to this thesis:

How are we, in our present cultures of disenchantment, to understand encounter with the non-human world? What forms of response might we expect from nonhuman subjects? Is it perhaps not too difficult to imagine the responsiveness of fully sentient beings to our overtures. But the barely sentient, or altogether nonsentient? How might encounter with plants, for instance, be imagined?’ (Mathews 2003, p. 81).

Despite, and perhaps in response to the ‘present cultures of disenchantment’ that Mathews cites, this thesis seeks to explore how people, including those who frame their being in and knowing of the world through Western metaphysics, recognise and engage with non-human actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. However, Mathews’ questions still stand. As if offering a response to these, in particular, the question about how encounter with the non-human world might be understood, writer of phenomenology David Abram (1996) states:
It is only at the scale of our direct, sensory interactions with the land around us that we can appropriately notice and respond to the immediate needs of the living world (emphasis in original, p. 268).

As with Mathews’ description of encounter, Abram’s (1996, p. 268) articulation of an ‘intimate reciprocity’ between people and the land resonates with Indigenous relational modes of ‘being with’ and ‘knowing with’ country.

2.4.2.1 ‘Being with’ non-human entities

It is important to recognise that the notions of ‘being with’ that are articulated by Abram and Mathews do not altogether resonate with the concept of ‘Being-with’ presented in continental philosophy, in particular, by philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Originally published in 1927, Heidegger’s magnum opus *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)* maintains that there is no existence without connection. Heidegger (2010) presents ‘Being-with’ (*Mitsein*) as a distinguishing ontological feature of humanness, which is underpinned by the view that humans are ‘always already’ with others in their being-in-the-world, regardless of whether they are in company or alone; human existence is given by one's relationships, whether or not a person is presently engaged in those relationships. Unlike the understanding of ‘being with’ presented by Abram, Mathews and in Indigenous philosophy, Heidegger’s ‘Being-with’ only extends to ‘others of its kind’ (Heidegger 2010); Heidegger does not afford ‘Being-with’ to interspecies or inter-entity relationships.

Environmental phenomenologist Simon P. James (2009) calls into question Heidegger’s conception of ‘Being-with’, stating:

Heidegger fails to follow up the implications of his own reasoning, supposing instead that the token other one is ‘with (i.e., ‘with’ in an existentially fundamental sense) are all of a certain (human) type. For Heidegger, a being-with animals is not possible. Why exactly is Heidegger unwilling to admit the possibility of an interspecies being-with? Is such a relation unthinkable in the
context of his account of *Mitsein*? Or could that account be extended to encompass our relations with non-human others? (p. 40).

James (2009) presents a less anthropocentric account of inter-subjectivity than Heidegger, expanding the application of ‘Being-with’ beyond the realm of human–human relationships. Although James uses the term ‘interspecies’ to accept an idea of ‘Being-with’ that Heidegger rejects, he only applies this term to human relationships with non-human animals. Like Heidegger, James too falls short of extending this ontology to inter-entity relations; for example, according to James’ reckoning, a person could not ‘be with’ entities that are not animals (e.g. particular places, trees and ancestors).

This thesis seeks to explore the performance of a relational ontology of ‘being with’ that goes beyond the limitations of Heidegger’s and James’ conceptions. Hence, the foundations offered by Mathews, Abram and Indigenous philosophers offer more appropriate starting points for exploring the encounters between human and non-human entities on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

This prompts me to question the potential implications of people of Western origin recognising agency within the land/place. Kelly (2013) suggests:

> At this moment in human and planetary history, when the ecological ravages already in train are set to intensify, recognition of the agency of the material world occasions unprecedented degrees of protection and activism, of change and ingenuity, of generosity and sacrifice, particularly from those of us in highly developed Western nations (p. 277).

The ontological focus of this thesis is in part encouraged by the view presented by Kelly (2013), but also Cameron (2003), who states that there are

many pointers to a way of being in place that is based on loving attention to what is; a willingness to let go of mental and visual preconceptions and dream into a mutual relationship with country in the manner of the poet and the artist. The stories that might emerge from such a way of being in place
might then form the basis of a more mutually respectful dialogue with Aboriginal people about what it means to inhabit this continent in the new millennium (p. 12).

It follows that stories shared by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, about their sense of being in relation to ‘country’ or ‘place’, may well contribute to shared understandings about the importance of being ‘connected’ with country/place and non-human entities.

Building upon her earlier writing about the communicative engagement that inheres in inter-subjective encounters between human and non-human entities, Mathews (2007) coined the term ontopoetics: the premise that there is a poetic structure of reality, within which, the world has ‘a capacity and inclination to create and share meaning with us’ (Mathews 2009, p. 2).

Denying it theory status, Mathews (2009) instead refers to ontopoetics as a descriptor of

the communicative engagement of self with world and world with self [where] engagement can take many forms … What is common to the different instances is that they involve interactions between self and world that are not merely causal but meaningful … in each instance this meaningfulness emanates not merely from our side but from the world’s side as well: the world is not restricted to cause-and-effect interactions with us but is capable of engaging with us in recognizably meaningful ways (p. 1).

Much like Indigenous metaphysics literature, ontopoetics, as a form of expression, works to make apparent particular types of engagement between humans and non-human entities, including relationships imbued with mutual recognition, communicative engagement and reciprocity. For this reason, ontopoetics holds the potential to connect an evolving Western metaphysics with Indigenous metaphysical understandings (Emmanouil 2015, p. 46).
As an approach, ontopoetics traces back to ancient belief systems that are founded upon assumptions that the world is enchanted and responsive. It goes beyond a panpsychist view that the world is psycho-active, by implying that there is a generative and co-creative exchange between people and the world (Mathews 2009, p. 2). The term also seeds the potential for people to invoke this psycho-active dimension, or what others might refer to as aliveness and recognition. Mathews (2009, pp. 2-6) introduced the term ontopoetics to the ecological humanities to stimulate discourses on the agency and poetic structure of the world. She justified the need for the term, citing the absence of acceptable frames of reference in Western philosophy that could accommodate people’s inter-subjective encounters with the non-human world.

In addition to Mathews, and writing in the area of cross-cultural research, Wright, Lloyd, Suchet-Pearson, Burarrwanga, Tofa, and Bawaka (2012, p. 51) also emphasise the ontological limitations of attempting to describe human connections with the land and the agency of country, merely through Western categories. Acknowledging these limitations, this thesis seeks to contribute to what Wright et al. (2012, p. 51) call the ‘ontological opening’ of Western research methodologies, by drawing upon both Indigenous and Western categories to describe the agency of non-human entities and country.

2.4.3 Recognising ‘country’

Indigenous knowledges are increasingly being recognised by the ecological humanities as an important set of perspectives for influencing the re-imagining of human relationships with non-human others. Early writers in this area include David Bennett (1983), who wrote Some aspects of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal notions of responsibility to non-human animals and Deborah Bird Rose who authored Exploring an Aboriginal Land Ethic in 1988 and later, Sacred Site, Ancestral Clearing, and Environmental Ethics (2001).
In the essay *The Struggle for Environmental Philosophy in Australia*, Val Plumwood (1999) levelled criticism at mainstream academic philosophy, citing the need for settler philosophy in Australia to consider ‘other ways to think about the land than those legitimated by western reductionism and rationalism’ (p. 157), including expanding its scope to recognise the land and Indigenous people’s philosophies. In addition to other writers (Bennett 1983; Rose 1988; Rose 2001; Rose 2004; Mathews 2003), Plumwood (2007b, n.p.) advocates the study of Indigenous philosophies and ethical systems as a means by which to challenge ‘the conceptual blockages that keep our [Western] minds closed to options for change’ and for their potential to offer ‘alternatives to western modernity’.

Posing the question, ‘Can Indigenous ecological knowledge contribute to major debates in Western science and philosophy?’ in her essay *An Indigenous Philosophical Ecology: Situating the Human*, Rose (2005) contends that Indigenous ecological knowledge can indeed provide a ‘philosophical ecology’ that can ‘speak with’ eco-philosophy (p. 294).

By looking to Indigenous philosophy, Australian eco-philosophers have been able to question Western, Euro-centric categories in a way that destabilises these metaphysical structures, which since their imposition on Indigenous peoples and their countries, have ‘provided endless templates for domination’ (Mathews 2002, p. 3).

Plumwood (2002) builds upon previous examinations of the hegemony of Euro-centric colonial systems in her essay *Decolonising Relationships with Nature* to take into account the concurrent impacts of colonisation on Indigenous people, and the land and nonhuman entities that they are entrusted to care for. Plumwood (2006, p. 123) identifies at the heart of this hegemony a detached ‘colonising gaze’, to which she attributes the production of the land as ‘passive, visually captured, something to distance from, survey and subdue’. She calls into question the term ‘landscape’, which is all-pervasive in sense of place literature, asserting that ‘to describe the land as a “landscape” is to privilege the visual over other, more rounded and embodied ways of knowing the land, for example, by walking over it, or by smelling and tasting its life, from the perspective of predator or prey’ (Plumwood 2006, p. 123).
Like other eco-philosophers, Plumwood was searching for categories that would enable herself and others to ‘speak well’ about place and people-place relationships.

A notable example of Australian eco-philosophy scholars grappling with ontological categories, in particular the Indigenous Australian notion of ‘country’, came in the 2002 issue of PAN Journal, Coming into Country. Contributions to this journal reflected more broadly the attempts of non-Indigenous Australians to try to realise the meaning of country, both for Indigenous people and for themselves.

Mathews (2002), the editor of Coming into Country, highlights the importance of taking seriously categories from Indigenous knowledge systems as a way of evolving Western metaphysics, writing,

> In the category of country then, elements of mentality – sentience, agency, intentionality – are inextricable from materiality. In this sense, country represents an alternative to the dualised concept of nature that prevails in the modern west (p. 3).

This looking towards the philosophy of ‘country’ to expand Western knowledge systems is not restricted to eco-philosophy; such moves are also taking place in cultural geographies, where the Indigenous notion of ‘country’ is informing non-Indigenous understandings of place (Wright et al. 2012, p. 54). Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) made early comment about the need to promote a shift in ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ to recognise country.

> A new sensitivity is being demanded of people’s perception of the environment. This sensitivity is not to be achieved through mutual encouragement to be ‘more human’ or ‘caring’ with what we already have, but through seeing the ‘already there’ in a quite different way (p. 13).

For Mathews (2002, pp. 3-4), the vision of non-Indigenous Australians ‘coming into country’ heralds greater recognition of Indigenous people’s obligations towards the land, a realisation that the land is filled with non-human agents, and the overcoming of dualism to explore ‘new metaphysical terrain’. On this point, she concludes:
To the extent that we are alive to the ecological call, we are all, to some
degree, becoming sensitive to the resonances of “coming into country” now
(Mathews 2002, p. 4).

Contributing authors to the PAN issue *Coming into Country*, John Cameron and
Craig San Roque (2002) use a dialogical approach to reflect upon what ‘coming into
country’ meant for a group of people at a sense of place colloquium near Alice
Springs in 1997. San Roque describes people’s ‘coming into country’ as an
attunement to place that involves ‘decoding the communications from country’
(Cameron & San Roque 2002, p. 79). By continuing the exploration of how people
recognise and render meaningful forms of communicative engagement with country,
this thesis aims to further develop eco-philosophical understandings of the
contemporary enactment of people–place/country relationships.

Additional scope for contributing new knowledge to the field is identified by Kelly
(2013) who articulates in the conclusion of her doctoral thesis the rich potential to
explore ‘the degree to which Aboriginal cosmogonies impact settler imaginative
constructions of this land and of their embodied experience within it … A related
inquiry might take up Debbie Rose’s view that the concept of ‘country’ is Aboriginal
Australia’s ‘greatest gift to the world’ and consider postcolonial forms of belonging
that cross both nature/culture and Aboriginal/settler divides (Rose as cited in
Mathews 2002, p. 3)” (p. 275). While these themes have in part been addressed in the
writing of Australian sense of place authors and scholars, significant scope exists to
more fully investigate non-Indigenous people’s ‘coming into country’.

Ros Moriarty (2012) addresses the capacity for cross-cultural engagement in place to
support the ontological opening that Mathews suggests in her text *Listening to
engagement with place and Indigenous culture*. Birrell questions the means through
which non-Indigenous people, of which she is one, can create intimate relationships
with place, asking, ‘[i]s there a new sensibility that connects us with place, more
informed by Indigenous ways of being?’ (p. 6). The focus of Birrell’s research is the
sharing of Indigenous ontologies by Yuin elder Max Dulumunmun Harrison with
non-Indigenous peoples, on his ancestral lands at Guluga Mountain. In the conclusion of her thesis, Birrell (2006) affirms that a new sensibility is possible:

Of course, we whites can have our minds opened, can see the world as through Aboriginal eyes. And in that opening, we have the knowledge of what it means for Aboriginal people in their relationships with places of sacredness, as well as developing our own relationships with sacred places (p. 410).

Birrell’s research demonstrates a growing openness of non-Indigenous Australians to experience and understand ‘country’ in the Indigenous sense, and also flags sites of cross-cultural exchange as fertile places for exploring the influence of Indigenous ontologies on the ways that non-Indigenous people experience and relate to place as ‘country’, a distinct ontological entity and particular way of seeing and relating to place that recognises place and the non-human entities within place as having agency.

As ways of talking about people–place/country relationships, the four interrelated ‘principles’ of relationality, performativity, locatedness/situatedness and generative practice, hold relevance to both Indigenous and Western ontologies, but not necessarily in the same terms. The sense of place and eco-philosophy literature examined, mounts a significant critique of enduring colonial and contemporary Western Euro-centric situatedness/locatedness in relation to place. This literature seeks to articulate a movement to re-situate the human in relation to non-human entities and place, away from hegemonic control and ontologies that produce distance between people and place, and towards an emplacement in ‘country’ and through inter-subjective encounters with non-human entities that inhere communicative engagement, mutual recognition and reciprocity of care. Such forms of ‘being with’ place are essentially relational and demonstrate the ‘principle’ of relationality.

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45 This thesis recognises that not all people–place relationships involve people seeing and relating to place as ‘country’, hence, the distinction.
Drawing on Indigenous notions of generative practice (e.g. ‘singing up’ country), sense of place and eco-philosophy writers are attempting to understand the generative potential of their own practices that invoke their relationships with place. The concept and practice of ontopoetics, most fully articulated by Freya Mathews, is one such example of this. While the ‘principle’ of performativity inheres in the generative practices described in the literature examined, it is not explicitly addressed as a key aspect of a relational ontology in these fields of literature. There is however, significant enough resonance between the four ‘principles’ identified and both Indigenous, and sense of place and eco-philosophy literature to warrant the further exploration of these ‘principles’ in relation to the theoretical framework of this thesis. A discussion of this potential continues in Chapter 3.

2.5 Working together to look after country

Another less defined body of literature centres on calls from Indigenous elders and people for non-Indigenous Australians to recognise, connect with, care for and protect ‘country’.

In The Guardian article, What if Aboriginal people helped all Australians to connect to country?, Indigenous man from far north Queensland Charlie Jia poses a question that resonates with the longing for place connection and belonging voiced by non-Indigenous Australian writers:

If we, as Aboriginal people, see it in our hearts to recognise the connection every person has to the land, the customs, the culture, the history about the people of their birthplace then what greater sense of belonging and identity would this create? (Jia 2015, n.p.).

Jia’s question is a prompt for readers to imagine the possibility of more Australians creating or realising a connection with country. Indigenous elders and peoples in many traditional lands across Australia have taken on a role of supporting non-Indigenous people to create or realise their connections with country. A select number of cases exemplifying this are examined in this review.
For the past four decades, Yuin elder Max Dulumunmun Harrison has invited people to walk his country with him, including onto the sacred Gulaga Mountain. In her doctoral thesis, Carol Birrell (2006) presents Harrison’s central motivation for sharing his culture: to encourage non-Indigenous people to connect spiritually with the land. Harrison states:

See, we’ve all got to walk the land together, as I always say, breathe the same air, use the same water, so the more that non-Indigenous people go into the depths of spiritual connection to the land, they can look at Aboriginal sites through white eyes and walk out of some of those places with black minds. And that to me is a form of reconciliation, you know, of the full understanding’ (Birrell 2006, pp. 110-111).

Harrison’s view, that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can foster a spiritual relationship with the land, indirectly responds to concerns over the right of settler descendants to ‘belong’ to place, and links this process of connecting with the land to reconciliation. In Elders: wisdom from Australia’s Indigenous elders (McConchie 2003), Harrison expands on his notion of reconciliation – that it is first a process of non-Indigenous people spiritually connecting with the land – and uses it to amplify the relevance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians walking the land together:

I take this word reconciliation and I use it to reconcile people back to Mother Earth, so that they can walk this land together and heal one another because she’s the one that gives birth to everything we see around us, everything we need to survive … If we can reconcile with the Mother, then we can breathe the air and walk together in harmony. Every part of this land is sacred: this teaching is the most important part of our survival. It’s our home, we live here together. This is reconciliation, to look each other in the eye and know this equally (emphasis in original, McConchie 2003, pp. 1–2).
Again in Birrell (2006):

If we don’t share just that little bit of sacredness with people, we can never let ‘em think black. We gotta do the best we can and form that relationship of walkin’ the land together and reconciling back with Mother Earth. Reconcile with the land that’s given you everything. And that’s what I try to teach people, that’s what I say when I’m takin’ them onto the land... to show them how to look after the mother (p. 411).

The invitation extended by Harrison to non-Indigenous people to walk the land together, reconcile with, and care for the land and to learn to ‘think black’, does not exist in isolation. Literary accounts from other Indigenous writers and elders working in collaboration with scholars reveal a similar intent to Harrison; a call to settler descendants to relate to the land in new or different ways. Kwaymullina (2008) argues:

We must repair and regrow the relationships between peoples and peoples and people and country that have been damaged by dispossession … if this ancient land is to survive, then all who now make their homes here must learn to see the land as a living, connected being, to realise we are all part of something so much greater than ourselves (p. 19).

Through Kwaymullina’s urging of all Australians, not just Indigenous people, to ‘see the land as a living, connected being’ that people are part of, emerges an important metaphor for the visibility of the agency of the land and people’s connectedness with it. Kwaymullina’s statement intends that the land is not merely ‘living’ in a biotic sense; it echoes the view that agency is distributed amongst humans and non-humans, as expressed by other writers (Bessarab 2008; Roe & Hoogland 1999; Rose 1996; Wright et al. 2012). It is an actor imbued with ‘livingness’, able to be connected with and to encompass those entities that live within it. For Kwaymullina, ‘seeing’ the land as ‘a living, connected being’ is the realisation that she hopes non-Indigenous Australians can share with the first peoples of this continent. Yet, Kwaymullina does not suggest what the stimulus for ‘seeing’ the land as agential might be; this is territory that is explored by this thesis. Questions about how people
‘see’ the land are essentially ontological. ‘Seeing’ or forms of recognition are inextricably tied to how people attribute meaning and perform reality, and in turn, lead to decisions about what should be valued and how. Following the lead of Kwaymullina, this thesis is concerned with how people on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are reconciling perspectives on what the land is and how it should be valued.

A critical point made by Indigenous writers on the topic of people–place connections is that connections are a means through which country can be looked after in perpetuity. Kwaymullina (2008) explicitly extends an invitation for people of different heritage associations to all ‘work together for country’ (p. 16). Motivated by a similar intention, Goolarabooloo elder and custodian Paddy Roe initiated the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Explaining his aim to protect the country, Roe states:

I want to look after this country, I’m thinking now. I’m sitting down under the tamarind tree over there at my place, thinking what I gonna do about the country. How we can look after this country? … I think I must do something. I must bring somebody to look after the country, I said to meself … All right, I said, better I get European people to help look after the country, because they’re the people who got English … I must get somebody with the English that can turn things around to the government (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 17).

Roe’s motivation to work with non-Indigenous people implicitly references the pressures faced by his own and other Indigenous communities living on their ancestral lands; a pressure to negotiate and potentially enter into unwanted relationships with governments and development proponents (Muecke 2010; Ruiz Wall 2010). Fundamentally, Roe also sought to promote a ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ of the land from an Indigenous cultural perspective; he wanted people to see the land as ‘living country’ (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 18).

Anthropologist David Trigger (1997) presents a way of ‘seeing’ the land which contrasts with Paddy Roe's vision, in his essay Mining, Landscape and the Culture of Development in Australia; the land as translated into the form of a large aerial
photograph, and ‘read’ by an iron ore mine general manager in the Pilbara region of Western Australia:

I see a town of 6000 people, I see a natural resource, I see the endeavours of many people. I see a significant hole in the ground for Australia. There are still 900 million tonnes of ore there. It’s going to have a value for the next 30 years that will help a lot of people maintain the standard of living they’re accustomed to (pp. 163–164).

The forms of meaning that emerge from the iron ore general manager’s reading of the land are in stark contrast to how Roe wished walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail to see and relate to the land; not through translated representations of country (aerial photographs), holes in the ground or a resource to be exploited, but as an entity with which people could be in direct communication and relationship (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 18).

Since the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail was initiated in 1987, Paddy Roe and his family have encouraged people to walk together and learn about the cultural importance of the land from a local Indigenous perspective, and to feel a connection with and foster a custodial ethic towards the land. Over the intervening decades, many hundreds of people from diverse cultural backgrounds have joined the Goolarabooloo people on this journey. The sheer scale of and intent underlying this project prompt the question, what impact has the sharing of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies in place had on people’s relationship with the land and their willingness to care and protect it?

Although researchers have written about the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail from a range of perspectives – including (but not limited to) the archaeological investigation of Indigenous sites along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail (Bradshaw & Fry 1989), analysis of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as an example of Indigenous cultural tourism (Healy 1999), and more recently, a personal account of walking the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail from a hermeneutic phenomenology perspective (Blades 2015) – the impacts of the sharing of Indigenous ways of being and knowing on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, in terms of non-Indigenous walker’s relationship with the land and
their willingness to care and protect the land, have not yet been explored and thus, offer investigative scope for this thesis.

MacGill, Mathews, Trevorrow, Abdulla and Rankine (2012) share another notable example of Indigenous elders building relationships with non-Indigenous people by sharing their knowledges, cultural values, histories and land ethic of care, in their writing about Camp Coorong. Established and operated by the Ngarrindjeri people on their ancestral lands at the mouth of the Murray River, Camp Coorong implements a ‘pedagogies of place’ approach, including storytelling and walking the land, to engage non-Indigenous people with local epistemologies. The Ngarrindjeri’s approach of creating a ‘zone of cultural contestation’ seeks to prompt learners at Camp Coorong to critically reflect upon their identities and ways of seeing and knowing the world, including through drawing attention to the agency of non-human actors (MacGill et al. 2012). This example draws into focus the potential for ontological disjuncture when people have their worldview challenged by experiencing an alternate ontology and epistemology, through experiential learning on country.

Two other well-established examples of cross-cultural sharing facilitated by Yolŋu people come from northeast Arnhem Land in northern Australia. The first, which has been little written about, but experienced first-hand by this author, is the Arnhem Weaving workshops, established by Yolŋu elders Marathuwarr and Bambalarray in 2003, in the Mäpuru homelands. The second is the Bawaka Cultural Experience, operated by Laklak Burarrwanga and her family in the Bawaka homelands. Other than an income generation stream for her and her family, Burarrwanga created the Bawaka Cultural Experience as an opportunity for local non-Indigenous people, tourists, academics, policy makers and government staff to experientially learn about Yolŋu values, cultural practices and knowledge (Wright et al. 2012, p. 40). Through Burarrwanga and her family’s collaboration with academics Wright, Lloyd and Suchet-Pearson, methodologies that advocate relationality and co-creating knowledge with non-human actors in country, have garnered greater recognition by the academy, in particular, within the field of cultural geography. Such approaches are further explored in the methodology chapter of this thesis.
A final example of an ‘invitation’ from an Indigenous elder for non-Indigenous people to accept an Indigenous view of caring for the land comes through anthropologist and eco-humanities scholar Deborah Bird Rose (2004), who writes about her engagement with Yolŋu elder David Burrumarra. Burrumarra expresses the view that the human and ecological rights embodied in his traditional röm (law) should extend to all Australians. Referring here to Burrumarra, Rose (2004) states:

His vision was inclusive, and at the same time powerfully provocative. It fills us with questions, and arouses a desirous curiosity: what does one do in response to his request for us to learn the land and to learn the practices of care, to work properly for ourselves and our country? If we were to accept his view of the ‘real’ human rights, how would we implement them in our own lives, communities and country?’ (p. 179).

Rose’s questions stimulate further unanswered questions about what would it mean for people–place/country connections and country if more Australians enacted ‘practices of care’ that reflect Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies towards ‘country’.

Invitations extended by Indigenous elders to non-Indigenous people to recognise, connect with and care for country offer an opportunity for people–country connections to be more broadly realised. As Yuin elder Max Dulumunmun Harrison states, the formation of such connections by non-Indigenous people is a practical form of reconciliation between non-Indigenous people and the land. In terms of this thesis, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail presents a valuable site for exploring the impact of Paddy Roe’s vision to engage non-Indigenous people in recognising, connecting with and protecting ‘country’.

2.5.1 ‘Seeing’ and ‘reading’ the land in new, different or shared ways

What will we birth here, in this ancient southern land? The land which my grandmother once told me she saw in a dream as a place where everything lived and nothing died. A place far older than she or anyone knew. A place
where too many people were still walking around blind. A place of much power and many secrets, if only you had the eyes to see the awe and wonder of it all (Morgan 2008, p. 287).

The invitation extended by a number of Indigenous people and elders, including the lament from Sally Morgan in the quote above for non-Indigenous people to ‘see’ the land in new, different or shared ways, raises the ontological question of how a shift in ‘seeing’ the land (from inert to a living entity) might be facilitated in the context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. In addition, how might a shift in ‘seeing’ the land influence how a person relates to the land? These questions offer fertile ground on which to locate this thesis.

Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984, p. 13) contribute to this thesis through their insistence upon continuing to theorise the terms ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’. Furthermore, they make a critical point about the necessity of recognising ‘other’ and multiple ‘readings’ of place. The potential impacts of addressing the historical marginalisation and suppression of ‘other’ place ‘readings’, including Indigenous perspectives, through new ways of ‘seeing’ (for non-Indigenous people), cannot be overestimated; acts of developing greater ontological awareness have the capacity to transform relationships between Australia’s first peoples and settler descendants. As Cox (1996) argues:

The ontologies people work with derive from their historical experience and in turn become embedded in the world they construct (p. 145).

This is taken to mean that an ontology becomes embedded in the world the ontology constructs, creating a circular understanding and explanation of the world. By situating this research in a cross-cultural (and an ontologically plural) context, this thesis aims to capture the ruptures that might emerge when one’s ontological assumptions are brought into question; those moments when the aforementioned ‘circular’ reality is interrupted and a person ‘sees’ the reality that they are performing, and potentially, glimpses the possibility of another. In the case of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, it is likely that non-Indigenous walkers have never, or rarely, encountered non-Western ways of performing the world. They may not even
realise that they are performing a worldview that is not shared by others. Māori scholar Makere Stewart-Harawira (2005) stresses the significance of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, in terms of their capacity to help reconceptualise ‘being in the world and in the development of radical pedagogies of hope’ (p. 154). While MacGill et al. (2012), Wright et al. (2012) and Birrell (2006) begin to explore the territory that Stewart-Harawira describes, the full import of potential ontological shifts (including ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ place) in a cross-cultural context are yet to be realised.

2.5.2 Working together knowledge systems: foundations for a theoretical framework

The literature addressed in this review demonstrates that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems tend to produce different ‘readings’ of the land and human relationships with place; however, attempts have been and continue to be made to create more shared understandings of place, that is country in the Indigenous context. This thesis seeks to continue this bridging work by looking at how people, both Goolarabooloo (Indigenous) and mostly non-Indigenous walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, are connecting with country along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. By examining these people–place connections, the ontologies being performed on the Trail become a chief focus of the research, and it is anticipated that ‘country’ will be an important actor on the Trail.

During the cross-cultural walking of the Trail, Goolarabooloo people share with walkers stories about country. Perspectives presented by both Indigenous and Western writers highlight the important work that stories do in helping people to be emplaced.

A key methodological question emerges from this chapter about how one might write about distributed agency and inter-subjective encounters between human and non-human entities. If ontological limitations imposed by Western categories are to be addressed in this thesis, an ‘ontologically open’ methodology (Wright et al. 2012, p. 51) is essential. Such issues are explicitly addressed in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3 addresses how the four interrelated ‘principles’ of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness (first identified in the Indigenous literature examined, and resonating to some extent with sense of place and eco-philosophy literature) will be incorporated into a theoretical framework that respects Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies without appropriating them.
Chapter 3: Theoretical framework and methodology

To describe the real is always an ethically charged act (Law 2009, p. 155).

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 develops the theoretical framework of the thesis and outlines the research design and method by responding to issues and opportunities identified in the literature review.

This thesis explores how Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail (most of whom are non-Indigenous) relate to ‘place’ or ‘country’ along the Trail. The literature review brought into focus ontological distinctions between how Indigenous and Western Euro-centric knowledge systems and the metaphysics they enact shape the ways in which people relate to place, including how people ‘see’ and ‘read’ particular places and non-human entities. Even though these distinctions are not taken on as \textit{a priori} assumptions about how particular groups of people perform the world, they are anticipated as ‘likelihoods’ that need to be taken into consideration when shaping the methodology and research practice. This raises an ontological question, as to how an ethnographer may work ethically and productively with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, when there are likely to be multiple knowledges systems and ontologies at play. As Law (2009, p. 155) infers in the opening quote of the chapter, acknowledging certain realities and ignoring others is an ethically, and therefore politically, charged act.

The first section of this chapter responds to this question by outlining a methodology of \textit{‘working together’ knowledge systems} that encourages epistemological pluralism and ontological openness. Four interrelated principles underpin this methodology: relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness. While these principles emerge as powerful ontological themes from the Indigenous
literature reviewed in Chapter 2, they are also present, to a different extent, in sense of place and eco-philosophy literature.

The second section of this chapter presents Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as a way of performing ethnographic research that aligns with the four principles identified above, and is ontologically open to the agency of non-human entities. By avoiding the re-interpretation of knowledges through a Western cultural lens, ANT offers a decolonising research method, as demonstrated by other Australian ANT writers (Christie & Verran 2010; Nicholls 2009; Verran 1998).

The final section of this chapter presents a research design of working with stories, incorporating storytelling, participant observation and ANT research methods. This research design is applied to respond to the following research questions:

1. What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?
2. What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?
3. What do people’s relationships with place tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?

However, before addressing these questions, it is important to demonstrate how ‘working together’ knowledge systems is an appropriate methodological response to the aforementioned ontological question that stems from the literature review: how can an ethnographer work ethically and productively with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, when there are likely to be multiple knowledges systems and ontologies at play?

3.2 ‘Working together’ multiple knowledge systems

3.2.1 A case for ‘working together’ knowledge systems

This methodology takes seriously Deborah Bird Rose’s (2003) assertion that Indigenous ‘cultures of connectivity cannot be adequately apprehended through a cosmology of atomism’ (p. 164). Rose’s statement alerts the ethnographer to the
issues inherent in being a non-Indigenous researcher, located in a Western knowledge framework, working with Indigenous people and their knowledge systems. Priorities of this research are to avoid the subjugation and distortion of Indigenous knowledges caused by the interpretation of these knowledges using a atomistic lens, and to refrain from the appropriation of Indigenous knowledges and cosmologies.

In a post-Mabo Ruling\textsuperscript{46} era, when Australian institutions were just beginning to translate the legal recognition of native title, Helen Verran (1998) pointed to a critical need for pastoralists, and non-Indigenous Australians more broadly, to ‘find ways to work modern ways of knowing (largely originating in colonising European traditions) together with the very different knowledge traditions of indigenous Australians’ (p. 238).

Verran’s call for non-Indigenous Australians to engage meaningfully with Indigenous knowledge systems and the realities they produce is still as important today as it was in 1998, particularly when working in cross-cultural contexts.

Verran’s (1998) essay \textit{Re-Imagining Land Ownership In Australia}, poses the question of ‘How and where to begin’ the process of recognising Indigenous forms of knowledge production, when the modern condition suffers from an epistemological blindness to systems of knowledge that fall outside of Western scientific frameworks. Verran urges both pastoralists, and a much broader Australian public to consider processes that could be employed to not only recognise, but value and engage with Indigenous knowledges and ways of ‘doing’ the world. Drawing on her earlier writing with David Turnbull (see Watson-Verran & Turnbull 1995),\textsuperscript{47} Verran (1998) articulates a critical response to the ontological politics that fuel

\textsuperscript{46} The 1992 Mabo Ruling by the High Court of Australia overturned the legal doctrine of \textit{Terra Nullius}, which the British imposed when the British Crown colonised the Australian continent. Verran (1998, p. 238) contends that not only did the Mabo Ruling institutionally recognise Native Title of First Australians, but that it also recognised their knowledge traditions.

\textsuperscript{47} In their book chapter \textit{Science and other Indigenous Knowledge Systems} Verran-Watson and Turnbull (1995) discuss the use of the Yolŋu metaphors \textit{gagement} and \textit{milngurr} by Yolŋu people to negotiate knowledge production through multiple knowledge frameworks.
debates over land use, and advocates the ‘mixing’ of epistemologies and ontologies. The crux of Verran’s proposal for ‘working together’ knowledge systems is the negotiation of ‘ontic and epistemic commitments’, in a way that requires both knowledge systems to integrate ‘something of the other’ (Watson-Verran & Turnbull 1995, p. 134). Verran (1998, p. 254) defines ontic commitments as forms of meaningfulness practiced in the enactment of people’s realities, and epistemic commitments as explanations of the origins of this meaningfulness. At the heart of ‘working together’ knowledge systems is the negotiation of the ontological categories and metaphors that people use to describe what there is and how it is known; a becoming receptive to the ‘possibilities for imagining new categories and for reworking old categories in new ways’ (Verran 1998, pp. 241–242).

A second aspect of Verran’s methodology for ‘working together’ knowledge systems is the employment of a relational material semiotics approach; otherwise known as Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Material semiotics draws attention to the heterogeneous entities, actions and methods that allow all knowledge systems to function, and highlights ‘the locatedness of all knowing and knowledge making’ (Verran 1998, p. 237).

Verran’s methodology for ‘working together’ knowledge systems – negotiating ‘ontic and epistemic commitments’, and adopting an Actor-Network Theory approach – underpins this thesis and is further developed in this chapter. At the same time, the four interrelated principles identified in Chapter 2: relatiornality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness are shown to be consistent with and supportive of ‘working together’ knowledge systems.

Before these principles and Actor-Network Theory are elaborated, the capacity of Western modes of knowledge production to recognise and be ‘ontologically open’ to Indigenous modes of knowledge production is discussed.
3.2.2 Fostering ontological openness

‘Working together’ knowledge systems both encourages and requires epistemological pluralism and ontological openness; what Verran (1998, p. 254) calls ‘negotiating ontic and epistemic imaginaries’. Watson-Verran and Chambers (1989) argue that enacting these principles is not without its challenges, citing the limited ability of the Western intellectual tradition to recognise non-Western modes of knowledge production. Without becoming discouraged by such challenges, an immediate hurdle that a Western researcher must confront is their notion of reality and reality production: Are realities fixed or generative, singular or multiple?

How a researcher selects a methodology can say much about their response to this question. For example, do they choose a methodology based on the ontologies, or ‘realities’ that can be detected by that particular set of theories and methods? Alternatively, do they recognise the implications of the idea that, as Actor-Network Theory writer John Law (2004), puts it:

Realities are not explained by practices and beliefs but are instead produced in them (emphasis added, p. 59).

Michael Christie (2007, pp. 57–58) illustrates the disparity between such approaches by identifying the ontological ‘goods’ that theories and methods have a tendency to produce: Western Euro-centric languages and their metaphysics tend to generate ‘an objective pre-existing reality’, in comparison to an Indigenous metaphysics through which language (song and story) and the world co-produce reality. The insight here is that research methods, because of the metaphysics that they perform, are far from innocent; not only do they detect, but they also help to produce and amplify a particular reality (Law 2004, p. 116).

The types of ontological ‘goods’ or effects that this thesis seeks to avoid generating include fixity, and, assumptions about dualisms and a single ‘reality’. Following Law’s logic that realities are generated by practices and beliefs, an intention to avoid the effects just listed would require the use of an alternate set of research practices to Western reductionism. Hence, the adoption of the principles of relationality,
performativity, locatedness and generative practice in ‘working together’ knowledges systems, is an intentional move to be inclusive of potential other ways of ‘doing’ the world and circumvent the interpretation and representation of found knowledges through a reductivist lens. These principles are shortly described in greater depth, but for now, the concept of ‘ontological openness’ requires further explanation.

Entering into dialogue with unfamiliar knowledge systems can pose challenges. However, openness to doing so can also be highly productive. Writing on this subject and in a cross-cultural context, Deborah Bird Rose (2004) points out:

Openness is risky because one does not know the outcome. To be open is to hold one’s self available to others: one takes risks and is vulnerable. But this is also a fertile stance: one’s own ground can become destabilised. In open dialogue one holds one’s self available to be surprised, to be challenged, and to be changed (p. 22).

In response to the ontological questions posed in this thesis, both methodological and personal ontological openness are called for. Wright, Lloyd, Suchet-Pearson, Burrwanga, Tofa and Bawaka Country (2012), and Verran (2007), all offer insights into how researchers from a Western knowledge tradition might perform such an ontological openness.

Firstly, Verran (2007) uses the term ‘ontics’ to describe,

A politics of rendering our metaphysical commitments visible, often by telling stories, but also in other sorts of embodied performance. Doing ontics is doing a politics that is continually straining towards doing another sort of politics—ontological politics where we discuss if and how we might make explicit our metaphysical commitments and so interrupt and create possibilities for considering re-rendering our worlds; articulating alternative metaphysical commitments and doing things differently’ (p. 36).
Verran (2007) goes on to explain how she performed ‘ontics’ in the cross-cultural context of a Nigerian classroom with Yoruba children learning mathematics:

I learned to investigate learning in a way that would allow me to remain in the actual here-and-now openly negotiating my metaphysical commitments with the humans and non-humans I was committed to going on with … In cross-cultural situations at least this necessarily involves learning to do metaphysics on the run (Verran 2007, p. 39).

To do ‘ontic work’, as Verran describes it, is to be located/situated and aware of one’s relationality, while performing/generating one’s metaphysics (represented by categories and metaphors) as fluid/negotiated (as opposed to fixed). In this way, the practice of ontics illustrates how the four methodological principles pertinent to this thesis, interrelate as a cohesive approach.

Without calling it ‘ontic work’, academics Sarah Wright, Kate Lloyd and Sandie Suchet-Pearson write about the ontological and epistemological shifts that preceded their recognition and connection with more-than-human worlds (country), during their cross-cultural work with Laklak Burarrwanga, a Datiwuy and Rirratjingu Elder from the Bawaka homelands (Wright et al. 2012, p. 40). Writing from a cultural geography perspective, Wright et al. (2012) highlight the need for ontological opening on behalf of both the researcher and the research methodologies, so that Indigenous ways of knowing and being, including the distributed agency that inheres in country, can be recognised and experienced by people from non-Indigenous backgrounds.

David Mowaljarlai and Jutta Malnic (1993) share another instance of ontological opening experienced in a cross-cultural context in their book *Yorro Yorro: Aboriginal Creation and the Renewal of Nature*. Mowaljarlai and Malnic render visible the deep learning that is possible through Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaborations on country. In one particular instance, Malnic, a woman of Western heritage, reveals a moment when she becomes aware of the shifts she must allow, to ‘see’ the world that Mowaljarlai is sharing with her:
In the darkness I scrawl some words into my notebook. In the morning they hang there like a magician’s rope, coming from nowhere, not touching ground, a reminder that I had understood *something* during the night - but what? The words read: “You can only see with your eyes closed. Be patient” (Mowaljarlai & Malnic 1993, p. 87).

A critical factor that Malnic and Wright et al. (2012) identify in relation to their own ontological shifts is being ‘there’, in country. The ontological openness these authors describe is not bound to theory; it is enacted with particular *people*, through particular *practices*, in particular *places*. In this research, Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Trail performed ontics, whilst walking and telling stories on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

Several authors write about the ontological openness that develops when Indigenous and non-Indigenous people walk the country together. In relation to walking, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail co-ordinator Frans Hoogland describes the reality that the Goolarabooloo people hope walkers of the Trail will comprehend.

People are introduced to the song cycle through direct experience of walking and being with it, *trying to understand the living quality of that country*. That has to be experienced. It’s very hard to grasp that out of reading books or through people talking. It’s a very personal experience (emphasis added, Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 27).

Understanding the livingness of country, through the direct experience of being with and walking the country, might also be described, as is done by Canadian writer Pamela Banting (2013), as ‘being and knowing … intelligence and cognition’ through walking the land (p. 428). While Hoogland draws attention to the personal experience of walking the country, Mowaljarlai (Mowaljarlai & Malnic 1993) points out both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can experience learning through walking the country together:

*We walked together over many places and areas, travelled long distances around. Every day we were learning. We got closer and we were*
understanding it more – the country. It came to us. Di-di-di-di-di-di – that’s travelling across large spaces, talking, listening, all that. That’s learning to understand (p. xiii).

Practices on country that generate understanding about what the country ‘is’ and what it ‘does’, including walking and listening, are ontic performances; these performances enrol people, places, and as Wright et al. (2012) emphasise, non-human entities in country. The capacity for this research methodology to acknowledge the performance of multiple ontologies, and accommodate both human and non-human actors, relies upon enacting practices and principles that promote this ontological openness.

3.2.3 Guiding principles for ‘working together’ knowledge systems

The methodological principles of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness offer a means of enacting both epistemological pluralism and ontological openness. This section outlines a working definition and discussion of each principle, and demonstrates their interrelatedness. Explanation of how each of the principles is incorporated into the research design is reserved for section 3.4.

3.2.3.1 Relationality

In Chapter 2, the review of Indigenous literature related to place or ‘country’ and Indigenous metaphysics identified relationships as central to Indigenous concepts of identity, place/country, interconnectedness, and more broadly, being and knowing. This focus on relationships and interconnectedness can also be understood as relationality.

Māori scholar Makere Stewart-Harawira (2012) identifies relationality as a core principle, belief and way of knowing that is shared by Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies around the world, which she says, ‘exhibit a profound understanding of the deep interconnectedness of being’ (p. 3). As a key principle for ‘working
together’ knowledge systems, relationality acknowledges that relationships are fundamental; all entities are profoundly interconnected whether they are conscious of this or not.

Writing from a postcolonial Indigenous research perspective, Opaskwayak Cree researcher Shawn Wilson (2008) uses the principle of relationality to acknowledge the human and non-human actors that collectively perform Indigenous knowledge production. Writing in a cross-cultural research context, Wright et al. (2012) also recognise the role of non-humans, stating, ‘Our research depends on and is constituted by a range of actors that extends far beyond the human collaborators’ (p. 56).

Relationality, understood in terms of the relationships between not only humans, but also human and non-human entities, is a fundamental principle for guiding knowledge production in contexts where Indigenous peoples are performing their ontologies and epistemologies. Ignoring non-human entities in the defining of this principle is akin to performing ontological politics that in effect, makes Indigenous realities invisible.

In addition to acknowledging the interconnectedness of entities, the principle and practice of relationality is also used by Wilson (2008, p. 74) to challenge the idea that scholars are separate from their intellectual work. Where Wilson (2008, p. 73) emphasises the centrality of relationality and relational accountability to an Indigenous ontology, epistemology, research theory and practices, this thesis recognises that relationality is also vitally important when ‘working together’ Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, particularly in terms of relational accountability to Indigenous knowledge authorities.

3.2.3.2 Performativity

Chapter 2 identified performativity as another thread running through the literature on Indigenous metaphysics. Interpreted as a principle for ‘working together’ knowledge in this research, performativity is taken to mean that everything (realities,
people, places, ideas, stories, relationships, objects, identities) is performed into existence. For this reason, performativity is inherently generative.

It is important to note that the term performativity has also been applied across a number of contexts outside of Indigenous metaphysics and ANT and is subject to a great deal of theoretical debate. Of particular relevance to this thesis are the ideas of feminist philosophers Judith Butler and Kathryn Pyne Addelson whose notions of performativity challenge positivist, a priori constructions of reality. In articulating her theory of gender performativity, Butler (1988) emphasises the phenomenological and social aspects, the ‘lived reality’, of gender identity. Whilst this thesis does not examine performativity in the same context as Butler, the idea that performativity can draw focus to ‘lived realities’ is a valuable one, particularly in relation to the performance of Indigenous ontologies. Without calling them such, Addelson (1994) also draws attention to performativity and lived realities, emphasising the emergence of realities through collective action. Christie (2014) offers a valuable link back to Indigenous ontologies through his application of Addelson’s (1994) notion of collective action; Christie uses collective action as a framework to analyse and discuss the methodologies enacted by Yolŋu researchers on Elcho Island who were working with their communities on a proposal for a community garden. Both Addelson (1994, p. xi), and in turn Christie (2014), question and reject the role of researchers as ‘detached knowers’ or judging observers; researchers, willing or not, are part of a performed and unfolding collective action; the realities that emerge are lived.

Viewing the world through a performative (and thus generative) lens leads one to focus on the effects (the realities) that emerge through the inter-action of entities, including through the performance of particular practices and beliefs. For example, Paddy Roe’s ongoing performance of Bugarrigarra, as a set of practices and beliefs, assured his continued co-creation of and participation in Bugarrigarra. In his co-production of this particular reality, Paddy maintained his responsibilities towards country and worked to keep order in the world (including the continued care and enlivenment of country and people) by collaborating with non-human entities in country (the jila and the yungurugu).
If all activity is seen as performative and hence generative (co-productive), what realities might be produced in writing this thesis? To write a thesis applying *a priori* mandates about what exists would surely produce a very different thesis from one that allows realities to emerge through co-productive action, including the performance of human and non-human actors. Ontological politics is being performed (consciously or not) regardless of which path is taken.

Although performativity is a particular ontological stance, it nevertheless allows an ethnographer to encounter, recognise and work alongside other ontologies, which is vital to a methodology of ‘working together’ knowledge systems.

3.2.3.3 *Generative practice*

Identified in many instances in Chapter 2 in association with performativity, generative practice refers specifically to practices that are aware of, or designed to make people aware of performativity.

In the literature review, examples of generative practice were drawn from Kimberley elders Paddy Roe (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984) and David Mowaljarlai (Mowaljarlai & Malnic 1993), who named practices such as ceremony, storytelling, song and burning country. When performed, these particular generative practices work towards desired effects: the renewal and enlivenment of country and people.

Research might also be called a generative practice; it too must demonstrate that it is aware of, and designed to make people aware of performativity.

In the collaborative essay *Writing difference differently*, Karen Fisher (Fisher et al. 2015, p. 19) agrees that research is not merely a descriptive tool, but a practice with the potential to ‘enact possibilities’. Fisher and her co-authors explore writing as a generative and performative practice, whereby stories are actors that ‘emphasise the ontological politics of engaging with and representing the relational, the messy, the spontaneous, the unpredictable, the non-human and bodily experiences’ (Fisher et al. 2015, p. 18).
Writing is not the only generative practice that is adopted in this research, so too are storytelling, walking, observing and listening. The effects generated by these are explored further into the chapter.

3.2.3.4 Locatedness/situatedness

Identified as the fourth prevalent theme in the literature on Indigenous metaphysics, locatedness/situatedness is taken to mean where one is located in relation to place. This principle is viewed as critical to informing a person’s being in/with and knowing of/with the world.⁴⁸

Stories presented in the review of Indigenous literature emphasise the ontological significance of a person being situated in their country, Dreamings and stories; to be situated in one’s country/Dreamings/stories is akin to being with and knowing with other entities (human and non-human).

Liya-Dhälinymirr elder and educator Yinija Guyula illustrates how being situated in and with country is central to the forms knowledge production that he and his Yolŋu students engage in. To highlight the importance of this situatedness, Guyula cites the presence and agency of country, stating:

> We’re learning out there under a tree, we’re learning out there in the bush walking around, the trees are always communicating with you. The hills, the land, the air are always communicating, teaching you (as cited in Christie 2010a, p. 12).

The pedagogy outlined by Guyula relies upon being located in and with country, making possible a person’s communicative engagement with country and the non-human world. His view disrupts assumptions made by some Western forms of

⁴⁸Mary Graham (2009) offers a pertinent description of ‘knowing with’ the world in her statement that ‘the world reveals itself to us and to itself – we don’t “discover” anything’ (p. 76).
knowledge production that only human actors are responsible for creating knowledge.

The situatedness of knowledge production is pivotal to Indigenous metaphysics, yet, as a concept, it is also fundamental to material semiotics (Watson-Verran & Turnbull 1995) and contemporary Western place-based theories, making it a suitable principle for ‘working together’ knowledge systems. This research preferences forms of knowledge production that are based upon being situated in and with place, allowing place and non-human entities within place to be collaborators in the research.

The principles of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness run deep in Indigenous metaphysics and support a ‘working together’ of knowledge systems. Therefore, the methodology pursued in this research must work with and not against these principles. It must allow the researcher to watch what is being performed and generated, and be open to finding that different knowledge systems may be at play.

As sections 3.3 and 3.4 demonstrate, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and working with stories were apposite choices.

3.3 Actor-Network Theory

This section demonstrates the centrality of all four principles (relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness) to Actor-Network Theory (ANT), and in doing so, highlights the resonance between ANT and Indigenous ontologies. It also unpacks ANT, in terms of what it is and does, and the contribution that it makes to the theoretical framework of this thesis. As for the potential limitations of ANT and its adequacy in doing ethnographic work with

49 While the synergies between ANT and Indigenous knowledge production, and the potential for using ANT as a methodology for ‘working together’ knowledge systems, have already been recognised by a cohort of Australian ANT writers based at Charles Darwin University (Christie & Verran 2010; Nicholls 2009; Nicholls 2013; Verran 1998; Verran & Christie 2013), this thesis applies these four principles to further develop a method for ‘working together’ knowledge systems.
Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, these questions are responded to in Chapter 7.50

ANT began as an ethnographic approach to sociotechnical analysis that emerged out of Science and Technology Studies (STS) in the late 1970s and early 1980’s, through the work of anthropologist Bruno Latour and sociologists Michele Callon and John Law. It is largely recognised as an anti-essentialist movement (Crawford 2004, p. 1), which John Law (1999, p. 4) describes as a ‘relational materiality’ and,

a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities, and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. It assumes that nothing has reality or form outside the enactment of those relations. Its studies explore and characterize the webs and the practices that carry them. Like other material-semiotic approaches, the actor network approach thus describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, “nature,” ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements (emphasis added, Law 2009, p. 141).

In his description of ANT, Law (2009) identifies and draws links between all four principles that underpin this method: relationality, performativity/enactment, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness (note the underlined terms in the quote above). Framed in ANT terms, relationships are performed by actors through particular activities and in particular situations/locations, generating particular effects.

There are key distinctions between the way ANT writers and other workers in the social sciences use the term ‘the social’. While this word is usually assumed to exclude non-human actors, ANT explicitly approaches ‘the social’ in heterogeneous terms by assuming the agency of both human and non-human entities. Moreover,

50 See page 273.
where most writers in the social sciences are generally concerned with motivations and causes (the ‘why’) of ‘the social’, ANT’s approach delves into the process of the social (the ‘how’) (Law 2009, p. 148). The refusal of ANT to offer foundational explanations about what ‘is’ make it less of a theory and more of an approach that promotes particular tools, sensibilities and analytical methods that can be applied to localised situations (Law 2009, p. 150). ANT’s situatedness in the local means that describing it solely in theoretical terms limits the possibilities for understanding what it can do; empirical case studies carry much greater value for grasping how ANT can be applied and the insights that are produced from the application of its tools. Hence, the subsequent explanation of how ANT is applied in this thesis is couched, as much as is possible, in terms of previous studies.

3.3.1 Origins of ANT

Bruno Latour and Steven Woolgar’s (1979) ethnography Laboratory Life examined the social underpinnings of knowledge production in the scientific laboratory and created a foundation for the ANT ‘origin stories’ authored separately by Latour, Callon and Law. These case studies established the key premises, metaphors and interventions that make ANT a recognisable (if not wholly uniform) approach. In the intervening decades, ethnographers across a range of disciplines, including technology and design, education, public health, architecture and geography, have applied ANT to generate insights about the ways in which relationships between heterogeneous entities (humans, non-human animals, material objects, texts, organisations, plants, machines, scale and size and countless others) come together, hold their associations and quite often, fall apart.

ANT ‘origin stories’, such as Michele Callon’s (1986a) text, Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay, offer a contextualised means through which to unpack the key terms and methods of ANT.

In Callon’s (1986a) aforementioned study, he watched and followed a cast of heterogeneous entities including scientists, fishermen, scallops, larvae, currents,
scientific reports and scallop collectors, to examine the attempted recovery of the collapsed scallop fishery at St. Brieuc Bay in France. In identifying the key entities that were all acting in some way (demonstrating some type of agency), and which he named ‘actors’, Callon was able to trace their associations and gain insights into how these relationships were creating possibilities for success and failure in the local scallop fishing industry. Callon adopted the methods of identifying, observing and following actors, to reveal how associations between actors were forming: fishermen were making unlikely alliances with research scientists and the scallop larvae were attaching to experimental collectors. However, the success of the scallop regeneration project was contingent upon all of these associations holding together, which they did not; the project, as defined by the scientists, failed. Callon made clear the precarious nature of these unions when he revealed that the fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay had plundered the recovering scallop stocks one Christmas Eve.

ANT presents an ontologically open method for doing ethnography; its non-discriminatory approach to both human and non-human entities requires the ethnographer to look closely for the ‘observable traces’ (Latour 2005, p. 53) that are left by actors, ‘no matter how vague’ the actor might be (Latour 2005, p. 53).

As demonstrated by Callon’s scallop fisheries ethnography and the stories of many other ANT writers who diligently followed actors that left ‘observable traces’ (Callon 1986b, Laet & Mol 2000; Latour 1988; Nicholls 2009), ANT is, in the words of Latour (1999),

A way for the social scientists to access sites, a method and not a theory, a way to travel from one spot to the next, from one field site to the next (pp. 20-21).

The movement of ANT from one place to the next, through the action of following actors and their traces, means that ANT takes after Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of nomadology (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). ANT has ‘travelled’ to many different places and been used to follow a huge diversity of actors and map their associations with one another: Callon (1986a) followed scallops, scientists, fishermen, tides and experimental technologies in St Briuec Bay; Latour (1988) traced the associations
mapped out by the French scientist Louis Pasteur as he fought to convince the scientific establishment, farmers, industrialists and politicians of the reality of ‘microbes’ and ‘disease’; Laet and Mol (2000) watched the Zimbabwe Bush Pump perform as it was installed in numerous villages across Zimbabwean, providing safe water and good health; Mol (2002) journeyed into the health system to follow atherosclerosis in an examination of Western medicine’s approach to the body and disease; and Nicholls (2009) took to following the social life of computers in the community of Ramingining in north-eastern Arnhem Land. 51

Up until this thesis, ANT has not been applied to an ancestral dreaming trail. By doing so, this research follows the observable traces left by a number of heterogeneous actors (including people, places and country) on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and watches as they form connections, hold together and fall apart.

3.3.2 Actors and networks

Put in the simplest of terms, ANT uses the word ‘actors’ to refer to human or non-human entities that do work. A more nuanced understanding of ‘actors’ can be gleaned through the four principles that underpin this research methodology.

In defining the ANT term ‘actor’, Law (1999) highlights the principles of performativity and relationality, stating that actors are ‘performed in, by, and through [their] relations’ (emphasis in original, Law 1999, p. 4). When understood in terms of relationality, ‘performances are actually and always a co-constitution’ (Nicholls 2009, p. 86). This idea, as expressed by Anthea Nicholls, builds upon the notion articulated by Madeline Akrich (1992) that entities are ‘brought into being by a process of reciprocal definition’ (p. 222). Actors are never defined or understood in isolation from other actors or through a priori assumptions; they are who/what they are performing in the context of a particular set of relationships.

51 Ramingining is located in north-east Arnhem Land, approximately 500 kilometres east of Darwin in the Northern Territory, Australia. The Yolngu people, more specifically, the Djadiwitjibi clan, are the traditional owners of the land on which the township is built (Nicholls 2009, p. 2).
Generative practice and situatedness/locatedness are also useful ideas for understanding actors. The situatedness of ANT case studies means that ‘realities’ that emerge from the interactions of actors in one location cannot be extrapolated into generalisations that will ‘hold together’ in other places; for one, the actors in each place may well be different, as are the ways in which they configure and the effects of their interactions. Even if there are actors that move from place to place, like Laet and Mol’s Zimbabwe Bush Pump, (2000), it cannot be assumed that they will perform in the same way in each new settings. While generalisations about actors may not carry very far (perhaps only to the boundaries of a village or trail), an important insight that Laet and Mol (2000) offer to ANT is that actors can ‘be fluid without losing their agency … Effective actors need not stand out as solid statues but may fluidly dissolve into whatever it is they help achieve’ (p. 227).

By demonstrating that the Zimbabwe Bush Pump was capable of adapting to local environments, communities with varying skill sets and local materials that were required for installation and unforeseen breakages, Laet and Mol (2000) show that the Bush Pump is a ‘fluid’ actor; it can vary over time and place, but still be recognisable.

The Zimbabwe Bush Pump may be an actor, but it is also part of an actor-network; if it is to provide clean water and good health, it cannot act alone: ‘For the Bush Pump, “being itself” means that it is continuous with a number of others’ (Laet and Mol 2000, p. 231). The ‘network’ reference in the term ‘actor-network’ aims to highlight the associations that must hold together in order for a certain outcome (or effect) to be achieved. In the case of the Bush Pump, hydraulic forces, level, nuts and bolts, the pump stand and casing, health indicators, community members who install, operate and repair the pump, and the local nganga (spiritual person and local water diviner), must all play (or perform) their part to ensure the pump’s success as a ‘technology that provides not just water but also health’ (Laet & Mol 2000, p. 231).

Applying Law’s (2004) tenet that ‘enactments produce reality’ (p. 162), it takes the performance of all of these actors to make the Zimbabwe Bush Pump ‘work’ in each village; if just one actor stops performing as it is expected to (or goes missing, breaks

52 Note that networks are always actor-networks, as actors constitute them.
or is forgotten), then the expectation that the Bush Pump will provide water and health, cannot be guaranteed.

The actors listed in association with the Bush Pump are not all visible, nor is it anticipated that all of the actors encountered on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail will be obvious. Even if there are actors that might predictably appear on the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail – Goolarabooloo people, campfires, swags, visiting trail walkers, traditional camping places, Dreaming stories and invoked ancestral spirits – which are all too often classified as ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’, Latour, Callon and Law urge the ethnographer to suspend making *a priori* assumptions about what an actor is and does based on ontological categories. To this end, Law (1999) states that entities (or actors) are ‘produced in relations’ (p. 4), in that they, take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities. In this scheme of things entities have no inherent qualities: essentialist divisions are thrown on the bonfire of the dualisms … it is not, in this semiotic world-view, that there are *no* divisions. It is rather that such divisions or distinctions are understood as *effects or outcomes*. They are not given in the order of things (emphasis in original, p. 3).

Law’s insistence on effect, rather than cause, reflects ANT’s focus on the outcomes of interactions between actors, including the formation of particular associations or networks.

Although ANT studies examine specific networks in terms of specific actors and the work they do, there are of course observations that hold across the different ANT case studies, and metaphors borrowed from other writers, that offer some generalised understandings about what actor-networks are and what they can do.⁵³ For example, Law (2009, p. 145) likens ‘networks’, in the ANT sense, to Deleuze and Guattari’s

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⁵³ Although networks are localised, this does not say anything about size or extent. As Fenwick and Edwards (2010) put it, they can ‘keep expanding to extend across broad spaces, long distances or time periods’ (p. 3).
concept of the rhizome and *agencement* (assemblage in French). Other metaphors, such as the ‘web’, have confused rather than clarified the ANT notion of networks. In a bid to distinguish the ANT ‘network’ the ‘web’ metaphor, Latour (2005, p. 143) highlights the ‘doing’, ‘the work, and the movement, and the flow’ and the ‘acting’ of networks; hence the term *actor-network*. Net-*works* act, they do *work*, and subsequently, generate effects.

Latour (1999) also gravitates towards Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the rhizome as a more apt metaphor for the ANT concept of ‘network’, as it ‘clearly [means] a series of *transformations*—translations, transductions’ (p. 15). It is through the specific language that ANT deploys, including the term ‘translation’, that actors and networks can be more fully understood.

3.3.3 A language for following actors and tracing networks of association

ANT proposes three principles by which an ethnographer should abide when following actors: agnosticism, generalised symmetry and free association. Drawing on Crawford (2004, p. 2),

- Agnosticism insists on the surrendering of *a priori* assumptions about ‘the nature of networks, causal conditions, or the accuracy of actant’s accounts’, instead preferencing ‘impartiality’ and ‘unprivileged’ descriptions;
- Generalised symmetry requires ‘employing a single explanatory frame’ for all actors, regardless of whether they are human or non-human; and
- Free association maintains that any distinctions, including dualisms, categories and identities, are all effects generated by actors interacting, rather than being causal in nature (Crawford 2004, p. 2).

Aside from the terminology employed to denote these principles, ANT has co-opted other words into its toolbox and developed its own language to describe how actor-networks form. These terms can best be understood in the context of ANT’s key objective, which is,
To understand precisely how ... things come together – and manage to hold together, however temporarily – to form associations that produce agency and other effects: for example, ideas, identities, rules, routines, policies, instruments and reforms (Fenwick & Edwards 2010, p. 3).

ANT writers employ the term **translation** to name what actors *do* and how they interact, including how they come together and hold together.

The metaphor ‘translation’, initially adopted from Serres (1974) by ANT writer Callon (1986a) and then further developed by other ANT writers, is used to ‘think about how things come to be and how they change’ (Fenwick and Edwards 2010, p. 5). In his later work, and offering a more theoretical definition, Latour (2005) characterises translation as ‘a connection’ and ‘a relation that … induces two [actors or entities] into coexisting’ (p. 108).

Callon (1986a, pp. 203–214) identifies four specific processes or phases of translation – problematisation, obligatory passage points, interessement and enrolment – in his ethnography about the precarious state of the scallop fisheries at St. Brieuc Bay. Callon illustrates **problematisation** through the actions of the scientists, who attempt to trial an experimental aquaculture technology to recover the dwindling scallop population. The scientists perform the process of problematisation by first posing a question, ‘How do scallops anchor?’ Through this question, and the scientific reports they subsequently author on this subject and have verified by the global scientific community, the scientists ‘determined a set of actors’ and ‘defined their identities in such a way as to establish themselves as [pivotal to] the network of relations they were building’ (Callon 1986a, p. 204). According to Callon (1986a, p. 204), the process of problematisation – posing a critical question, determining a set of actors and making one’s self indispensable – is a common first phase in the formation of a network.

As will be seen in Chapter 4 (p. 136), the term problematisation becomes useful for exploring which actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are framing particular problems in particular ways, leading to the defining of roles for other actors.
**Enrolment** is the term used to refer to this process of defining roles. For example, in the case of St. Brieuc Bay, it was the scientists who enrolled the fisherman into the scallop restoration project, which led to the fishermen establishing a direct relationship with the scallop larvae and becoming ‘conservers’ of the scallop population (Callon 1986a, p. 5). Successful networks, which hold together, involve successful enrolments; this too, becomes a useful term for following actors on the Lurujarri Trail.

ANT is not solely interested in the action of networks, but also how ethnographers engage with these networks; towards this latter interest, ‘following actors’ has become ANT’s mantra (Latour 2005, p. 108). Following actors requires an ethnographer to keep moving with actors that are involved in translations with other actors, generating traceable actions; it is in following actors and their traces that a ‘network’ of associations can be recognised. Law (1991) warns that there is a cost involved in doing such work, stating:

> If we follow the actors we pay a price. This is because it becomes difficult to sustain any kind of critical distance from them. We take on their categories. We see the world through their eyes (emphasis in original, p. 11).

However, the ontological limitation that Law sees might also be embraced. The process of following actors could in fact address the issues identified in the literature review around which categories to use when writing about people and place. In allowing actors themselves to do the naming of categories, *a priori* assumptions about categories might be avoided and instead enable me to ‘speak well’ about people and place, as Latour encourages. Hence, what Law considers a cost might actually be a benefit.

While ANT is concerned with how networks are created, it is also concerned with how networks succeed or fail. The means by which networks hold together forms the focus of this next section.
3.3.4 The precariousness of holding networks together

Networks are precarious. As stated by Law (2009), ‘all elements [in a network] need to play their part moment by moment or it all comes unstuck’ (p. 146). It is during instances when networks become ‘unstuck’, or when they are challenged, that they are the most interesting to ANT writers.

Callon’s (1986a) account of the dwindling scallop fisheries in St. Brieuc Bay, France, is a study of network vulnerability and the events that may cause a particular network to fail. He describes the situation at St. Brieuc Bay as:

A veritable battle … being fought. Currents and visitors are only some of the forces, which are opposed to the alliances, which the researchers wish to forge with the scallops (Callon 1986a, p. 212).

In the end, it is the betrayal by the fishermen and their covert re-entry into the protected scallop larvae grounds that spells the end of the tenuous accord between the fishermen, scallops and scientists. Of course, betrayals do not just ‘happen’ spontaneously. Other actors were involved, enrolling the fishermen, strengthening certain links and weakening others.

It is not only tenuous situations, such as those described by Callon, which can lead to network failures. Mol (2010) explains that apparently stable networks can also fail, citing Madeline Akrich’s case study of the introduction of a gasogene burner (used to provide electricity) in a Costa Rican village:

These were first designed in Scandinavia to burn wood chips, and then adapted to burn the stalks of corn in Costa Rica. They worked. Until a bug discovered the stored stalks (who could have known? Never before had stalks been stored) and started to feast on them. Thus the network fell apart – and the burners, lacking fuels, were no longer able to burn. They failed (p. 258).

With the absence of just one critical actor, fuel for the gasogene burners, through the arrival of another unexpected actor, the stalk eating bug, an entire network failed.
Aside from generating controversies that attract attention to networks, challenges to networks and network failures are also the best time to see what holds (or held) them together. Both Latour and Law make important contributions to understanding how networks endure.

Latour (1987) describes the durability of networks in terms of strong and weak links. Weak links can lead to network failures, as demonstrated in the cases of the gasogene burner in Costa Rican village and the partnership between the scientists, fishermen and scallops in St. Brieuc Bay. However, Latour (1987, p. 4) argues that the ‘careful plaiting of weak ties’, along with ‘dissemination [and] heterogeneity’, can also lead to networks that endure. The greater the number of links within a network, the harder it is to bring down the whole network, and the more costly (Latour 1987).

Building upon Latour’s idea of cost, Nicholls (2009) adds that it is during times of contention that ‘you see how networks are assembled and at what cost’ (p. 215). When the endurance of a network is threatened, people

look for stronger and more resistant allies, and in order to do so, they may end up mobilizing the most heterogeneous and distant elements, thus mapping for themselves, for their opponents, and for the observers, what they value most, what they are most dearly attached to (Latour 1987, p. 205).

If controversy provides an impetus for people to reveal ‘what they value most’ and to what they are connected, then paying close attention to contentious issues can lead to valuable insights about the ties that hold a network together and enable it to endure.

Law (2009) is also interested in what holds networks together. He uses the metaphor of network architecture to discuss the material, discursive and strategic contributions to network durability.

Materials, both their individual strength and arrangement, can lead to the durability of a network. As an example of this, Law (2009) cites the strength of a prison wall
and its contribution to the functioning of a prison network. No matter how strong a prison wall may seem, ‘knotted bedsheets or the sheer passage of time will subvert’ even the strongest wall, demonstrating that ‘in the end it is the configuration of the web that produces durability. Stability does not inhere in materials themselves’ (Law 2009, p. 148).

Law (2009, pp. 148–149) asserts that deliberate strategies can also support the durability of networks. Determining what strategies are at work and attributing these strategies to a source, are important steps towards understanding how networks endure. From an ANT position, teleology is not bound only to human intentions. Law (2009, pp. 148–149) writes about the expansion of the Portuguese maritime network and the work that was done by the winds and currents in the South Atlantic, which were (mostly) reliable according to seasonal patterns, enabling the Portuguese mariners to pursue their own strategies (a royal policy, the creation a system of celestial navigation and domination of the spice trade).

Discourses are another aspect of network architecture that can help networks to endure. By defining ‘conditions of possibility’ within networks, discourses can create or inhibit particular arrangements (Law 2009, p. 149). Law (2009) uses his ethnography of a scientific laboratory to illustrate this. He identifies a number of discourses being performed by the managers of the laboratory (e.g. enterprise, bureaucracy, problem solving, and charisma) and describes how these discourses generate particular ‘conditions of possibility’ within the laboratory. For example, as a discourse, ‘enterprise’ created ‘self-reliant individualism and demands for performance, organizational cost centers, and management accountancy systems’ (Law 2009, p. 149). It is through defining ‘conditions of possibility’ and more importantly, excluding or discouraging other conditions that discourses contribute to the durability of a network.
3.3.5 Taking ANT onto the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

The account of ANT offered thus far makes clear its resonance with the principles of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness, and through this, a further resonance with Indigenous forms of knowledge production.

The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is a performance of people and place, through which multiple knowledge systems are enacted. Without pre-empting specific actors that will become apparent and thus followed, it is anticipated that Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies will be significant in performances of people and place on the Trail.

Several writers have taken ANT and its developments into networks where Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies are powerful actors. Two notable examples come from Helen Verran (1998) and Anthea Nicholls (2009).

Verran (1998) used ANT to trace enactments of land ownership in Australia by pastoralists and Indigenous Australians and to question the ontological categories that inform people’s relationships with land. Following an ethnographic process, Nicholls (2009) took ANT into the Yolŋu township of Ramingining to explore the life of the computer amongst the powerful actors of gurrutu (the Yolŋu kinship system), moiety and online banking.

As the focus of this ethnographic study, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail incorporates Indigenous knowledge systems and realities, which perform alongside Western cultural influences. Phrased in ANT terms, the Trail is a vibrant assemblage of entities: Goolarabooloo community members, Trail walkers, red pindan cliffs, beaches of white sand, a certain proximity to town, ancient grinding stones in old camping places, trucks carting gear and supplies, tents, swags and campfires to name just a few human and non-human entities. While most of these entities are easy to identify, owing to their material form, there are likely to be entities that are less palpable and trickier to name for some of the research participants involved. John Law (2004, p. 6) describes such entities as things that are elusive and slippery. A
commitment to working with such actors is encouraged by Fenwick and Edwards (2010) who state:

> Whether an object [or entity] is more or less abstract … is not the point. The key feature is that it is identified, has reality, in particular networks of historical, cultural, behavioural relations that make it visible (p. 18).

ANT is ontologically open and responsive to both human and non-human, material and non-material entities that perform people–place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

Walking the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail together with an assemblage of heterogeneous entities, is one means by which actors can be identified and followed. The stories of research participants offer another entry point into the Trail. Yet, stories are not only ‘places’ in which to follow actors and map their associations; they too are actors that perform. Law (2009) comments on the agency of stories, stating:

> It is never the case that [stories] simply describe. They too enact realities and versions of the better and the worse, the right and the wrong, the appealing and the unappealing. There is no innocence. The good is being done as well as the epistemological and the ontological (p. 154).

The stories and accounts research participants shared, as with the ethnographic stories that are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, are actors that ‘do work’ in this thesis. As stated in Chapter 1, this thesis uses the term ‘stories’ to refer to both stories and accounts. ‘Accounts’ is more often used to refer to reflections and commentaries made by research participants in their storytelling, while ‘stories’ is used to signal the telling of events and experiences. Despite this slight distinction, the two terms are treated as roughly synonymous, with both forms inhering agency. Just as Latour (2013) followed the scientific texts produced by scientists at the Salk Institute and wrote about their agency to produce particular types of knowledge and

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54 See page 17 (fn 22).
‘truths’, ethnographies, stories and accounts shared by research participants in this thesis, are examined for their agency.

In conclusion, ANT presents an appropriate methodology for ‘working together’ knowledge systems, because it is open to and does not preclude the principles of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness. From an ANT perspective, relationships are paramount; all actors do is relate to, and affect one another through translations. Performativity is another fundamental tenet of ANT; what exists is performed. As a generative practice, ANT is aware of and makes visible performativity as a particular ontological stance. Furthermore, performances are situated in place, with place itself. Place is always an actor, the task of this thesis is to find out whether it is a significant actor on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. In summary, ANT tells us that you cannot get away from the generative relationships between actors as they perform in place.

The following section outlines the research design of the thesis, which incorporates storytelling and ANT approaches to ethnography, and explains the congruence of these approaches with the four research principles, making them appropriate methods for ‘working together’ knowledge systems.

3.4 Working with stories

A research design of ‘working with stories’ is adopted by this thesis to respond to questions about people–place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. This approach constitutes the sharing of stories in place by participants in the research (Goolarabooloo people and walkers/volunteers on the Trail), the writing of ethnographic stories about people and place on the Trail, and using ANT to follow actors that appear in people’s stories about people and place.

Coherence with ANT and the four research principles defined earlier, and a capacity for this design to ‘work together’ knowledge systems, underpins this choice of research methods.
3.4.1 Stories: coherence with ANT and the principles of relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness

Stories are familiar to ANT, in that they are a means through which to communicate the insights gleaned from ‘following actors’, and because they too can be interesting actors worthy of following. Stories and storytelling performances also inhere the four principles used to guide the choice of research method: relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness. What follows is an explanation of how these four principles are embedded in the research design of working with stories, with reference to literature from ANT, Indigenous philosophy and other supporting fields.

3.4.1.1 Relationality

Stories are about relationships. They are able to make and maintain links between actors. They can also sever links. When they are performed, they create a new set of relationships and interactions, which means that every telling of a story is a new performance.

Stories about people and place are inherently relational, so too is the act of telling stories. People’s relationships with each other and with place are integral to the stories that emerge in the research space (Wright et al. 2012, p. 40). The relational importance of storytelling and its implications are described by Mucina (2011), who states that storytelling ‘is about engaging our relational selves’ and that ‘to know our relational selves is to be curious about our interconnectedness’ (p. 3). By inviting Goolarabooloo people and walkers/volunteers on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail to share their stories about their relationships with places on the Trail, they are not only being called to tell stories about these relationships, but to enact their relationships with place.

Stories are a means of knowing through connections with place. When taking into consideration the view that the locus of knowledge is held in a person’s connections with place (Wilson 2008, p. 73), stories do not solely originate from a person (in the
individualist sense) but emerge through a person as an expression of their relationship with place. From this perspective, which is also shared by Wright et al. (2012, p. 39), knowledge generated through the telling of stories on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is a collaboration between human and non-human entities, and represents a ‘more-than-human methodology’ (Wright et al. 2012, p. 39).

*Storytelling draws into relationship many actors, including a teller, a listener and place.* Archibald (2008, p. 373) acknowledges the relationships that are created between the storyteller, listener and place, in a storytelling performance, and highlights that the interplay between each of these actors influences the types of stories that are generated. As a listener of the stories shared in this research, my relationships with the research participants (as storytellers) and the places along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, come to bear on the performance of each story.

*Stories are discourses that can block relationships or lead to distance being performed between people and place.* The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail travels through places with contested meanings, including Walmadany (James Price Point). Hence, it is anticipated that not all stories encountered in this research will be performances of people–place connections. As discourses, stories might also be used to sever or prevent particular relationships from forming and making particular realities (and sets of relationships) visible, while rendering others invisible. The ways in which people perform their proximity to place through the stories they tell says much about their relationship to place, whether they be relationships of care and intimacy or dominance and exploitation.

The explicit focus on relationality in this research design, lends itself towards garnering responses for the research questions: ‘What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’ and ‘What do people’s relationships with place tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’
3.4.1.2 Performativity

Stories are performances that tell about other performances. They are full of actors, both explicit and implicit, and when they are performed a whole set of actors joins those in the story.

Stories are performances that make visible other performances. Understood in this way, stories told on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are not mere recollections or representations of an experience, they are enactments of a person’s relationship, and past performances with place (Christie 2005; Brewster 1992).

Storytelling sees actors (even those that are implicit) being ‘performed in, by, and through [their] relations’ (Law 1999, p. 4). Although many actors named in the stories told on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail might be easy to recognise, it is fair to anticipate that others will be less conspicuous or recognisable. Nevertheless, many actors, because of their performed relations (associations) with other actors and the traces they leave, become visible to some degree.

Verran (2010) offers an example of the way in which the role of the learner/listener is performed in a cross-cultural storytelling, playing ‘a crucial part [in these] narrative performances … actively contribut[ing] to the re-making of places and themselves’ (p. 88). Just as a listener is ‘performed in, by, and through [their] relations’ (Law 1999, p. 4), so too is the teller of the story and the actors that are invoked through this very act. When stories are performed a whole set of actors are enrolled into the story.

Stories, once performed and translated into written forms, are not rendered into inert or ‘fixed’ representations, they keep performing. Challenging the notion that written stories are passive, Verran and Winthereik (2012, p. 40) argue that ethnographic stories are inherently performative, generative and agential, working their own relations. Rather than ‘fix’ or ‘harden’ reality, stories translated into written forms keep performing through their new material assemblages, drawing in a completely new set of actors, and generating more, new or different effects from previous story performances.
Stories can be followed as they translate from one ‘form’ (assemblage) to the next. Stephen Muecke (as cited in Dyungayan 2014) traces the multiple translations/performances of stories (in the form of song-poetry) on the Northern Tradition Song Cycle:

From a spirit being to Dyungayan to Paddy Roe and Butcher Joe, to Ray Keogh to Stuart Cooke; from Nyikina to Broome English to Australian English; from oral production supplemented with gestures and sand drawings via tape recorders and notebooks to alphabetic script printed on paper … translation is emphatically never about reducing the number of mediations, nor facilitating the transfer of meaning (p. 8).

Nor is translation a cause for stopping stories from continuing to perform. Stories, once performed, find ways through material and non-material, human and non-human configurations, to keep performing, or as Stuart Cooke (2013, p. 245) states, they find ways to ‘keep moving’. Adopting a performative, generative and agential view of oral and written stories enables this thesis to respond to the second thesis question: ‘What work are stories doing in the performance of relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’

3.4.1.3 Generative practice

Telling stories is a generative practice. It makes people aware of the performative nature of this act and the actors that are being performed. As generative acts, things emerge out of story performances, including meanings or realities and connections or disconnections.

As a generative practice, telling stories makes people aware of the relationships they perform. Relationships that are enacted through storytelling are not merely remembered, but created and re-created (Kwaymullina et al. 2012). If, as suggested by Kwaymullina et al. (2012), storytelling functions as a form of poiesis, then employed as a research method, storytelling performs important generative work. As
people share their stories about their relationships with place, these relationships are renewed and reinforced.

*Deep listening to stories, and other non-human and human actors, is a generative practice.* Writing in the context of cross-cultural research, Brearley and Hamm (2009) advocate the practice of deep listening as a means of entering into, and becoming aware of an emergent and co-productive space with people and place. In addition to storytelling, deep listening is another generative practice that forms part of a working with stories approach to research. Likened to *dadirri* (Stockton 1995; Ungunmerr 2003) and presencing (Scharmer 2009), deep listening can be described as:

A way of learning, working and being together. It is informed by the concepts of community and reciprocity. In means listening with a sense of responsibilities to the stories that are told. It also means listening and observing the self as well … It draws on every sense and every part of our being. It can happen in silence. It takes time (Brearley 2010, p. 13).

As a generative practice and research methodology, deep listening intensifies: it leads to greater presence and more awareness. It also lends itself to a ‘working together’ of knowledge systems by offering a practice for the performance of respect-*full* relationships with people and place (Brearley and Hamm 2009, p. 50).

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55 Quoted in Stockton (1995), Ngangiwumirr elder Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann says about *dadirri*, ‘[it] recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us … When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the river bank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening. Through the years we have listened to our stories. They are told and sung, over and over, as the seasons go by … Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and wait’ (p. 179).

56 Developed and used as a research methodology by the Koori Cohort of Researchers at RMIT University, deep listening presents a way of being together in collective action that both respects Indigenous ontologies and offers a means to reframe ‘how we learn, how we come to know and what we value as knowledge’ (Brearley & Hamm 2009, p. 50).
In the text *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges*, Otto Scharmer (2009) uses the term ‘presencing’ to articulate deep listening as a process of sensing and ‘the ability of individuals and collective entities to link directly with their highest future potential’ (p. 52). He goes on to write that ‘when [people] are able to do this, they begin to operate from a more generative and more authentic presence in the moment – in the now’ (Scharmer 2009, p. 52). Although Scharmer draws upon management discourse to frame his explanation of presencing, there is strong resonance between what he describes and the stories of Indigenous Australian elders on the generative practices they enact to co-create reality with other entities in country. For this reason, interest is taken in Theory U perspectives, to explore (in a minor way) what they might have to say about the relationships being performed between people and place on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

*In listening ‘with’ and writing stories ‘with’, an ethnographer can perform the role of ‘generative participant’*. Philosopher and writer in feminist ethics Kathryn Pyne Addelson (1994) distinguishes the role of the researcher as ‘generative participant’ (who participates in collective action and is able to intervene in issues), from that of the ‘judging observer’ (who through a humanist lens, creates artificial divisions between themselves and the world). By acknowledging myself as a generative participant, an actor in the research, I am performing (walking, listening, transcribing and writing) *with* multiple assemblages of human and non-human actors.

3.4.1.4 Locatedness/situatedness

Stories inherently involve *locations* (places), but they are also performed in locations. They can be removed, of course, and new locations become new actors in their re-performance, as for example, in a thesis.

*Stories performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are situated, both in the sense that they are about locations/place, and performed in and with place*. Hence, place is a fundamental actor in the stories that are enacted, both when people are on the Trail or away from it. Gathering stories (wherever possible) while being ‘there’, on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, is a deliberate strategy that aims to make place physically
present for each research participant. By situating storytelling performances with research participants on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, this research pays attention to the enactment of relationships between human and non-human entities in place, allowing for country to ‘speak’ to and through people in their storytelling.

3.4.2 Using stories to ‘work together’ knowledge systems

Although nuanced, stories and storytelling practices are universal to both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, offering ways of working these together. The view that stories are foundational to Western and Indigenous knowledge systems is being increasingly recognised by the academy through the use and validation of narrative-based research approaches (Archibald 2008). Indigenous researchers such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) advocate storytelling as an Indigenous research method and a decolonising approach to research. This thesis employs storytelling in a deliberate attempt to mitigate, or at the very least minimise, issues around the ontological and epistemological dominance of positivist (Western) research approaches.

Choosing to work with stories was also influenced by a need to access rich, qualitative data about human relationships with place. Christie (2010b) highlights epistemological issues that arise when questioning is used as a method of inquiry, suggesting that questions ‘imply that the world is made of facts, not stories’ (p. 72). He argues, as does this thesis, that there is a richness in stories and storytelling that might not be elicited through fact-finding.

When deliberating over whether to employ the use of interviews in the research method, I was also concerned about the categories employed in questioning; might questions, which inhere particular ontic categories, lead a research participant to respond in particular ways and to particular realities? Working with stories was an intentional response to this apprehension, as storytelling would allow research participants to choose their own (ontic) categories and reveal something about how they relate to and perform the world, and hence, offer insight into the secondary research: What do people’s relationships with place tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?
In her ANT ethnography mapping the social life of the computer in the Yolŋu township of Ramingining, Nicholls (2009, p. 40) identifies another tricky aspect of employing the Western mode of interviewing with Indigenous research participants. After an informal interview a research participant asked, ‘Is that the answer you are looking for?’ highlighting for Nicholls the impression that participants may have that there is a ‘correct’ or ‘preferable’ response to a question. As storytellers, research participants would be able to maintain control over the epistemological and ontological frames that guide their knowing and knowledge production.

In summary, an approach of ‘working with stories’ is employed by this thesis to explore people’s relationships with places along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, as it is consistent with ANT, the four research principles identified and more broadly, supports a methodology of ‘working together’ knowledge systems.

3.5 Gathering stories

This chapter now turns to a description of how a method incorporating stories and ANT was used to carry out the research.

3.5.1 Going back to Broome: reconnecting with people and place

Since first walking the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as an undergraduate student in the year 2000, I have been drawn back to the Lurujarri coast on many occasions; walking and volunteering on the Trail and camping along the coast with Goolarabooloo families. The friendships I developed with members of the Goolarabooloo enabled me to approach the community with a request to undertake this research as a trusted friend. This foundation also created the grounds for the relational accountability that has underpinned my ethical approach to the research.

I sought formal permission to undertake research with the Goolarabooloo people on their country from Goolarabooloo men and senior bosses for the Northern Tradition
Song Cycle: J. R. (deceased), Richard Hunter and Phillip Roe. The Human Research Ethics Committee at Charles Darwin University subsequently granted ethical clearance of the research.

My return to Broome and the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in 2011 to scope out this research was unlike any other previously visit. The proposal to construct the Browse LNG processing plant on the path of the Trail and song cycle was at the forefront of people’s minds and the subject of most conversations. The physical presence of machinery on country during the annual walking of the Trail was not only disconcerting, but also disturbing. Despite an optimism and hope for the future, a heaviness and fatigue from years of campaigning for Native Title and to protect country from the proposed LNG development was taking a heavy toll on the Goolarabooloo community.

I was mindful that people’s time and energy were consumed by the ongoing ‘No Gas’ campaign and that participating in my research project may not be a high priority. I also observed a fatigue amongst senior members of the Goolarabooloo community from having spoken with many national and international journalists and filmmakers to try to communicate the urgency of their fight to protect their country from impending development. Considering these factors, I extended an invitation for Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail to share stories about their relationships with country, with the hope that the experience of sharing these stories would affirm and increase the visible of people’s connections with place to others.

3.5.2 Walking the Trail: ethnography on the move

I returned to walk the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in July 2012 during the season of barrgana (cool dry season), the time of year when the south-easterly winds blow across the country, the salmon are fat and the bush onions are plentiful. This time I arrived as an ‘ethnographer’. I walked the 90-kilometre journey with more than 60 other Trail walkers and many members of the Goolarabooloo community. It was the

57 See Appendix 4 for permission to undertake research from the Goolarabooloo community.
25th anniversary of the Trail and the largest single group of walkers up to then. News about the threat to the Song Cycle had spread far and wide, leading to many people from across Australia and the world coming to experience the Trail and share their solidarity with the Goolarabooloo community.

We gathered on the first day of the Trail beneath the old tamarind tree where Paddy Roe would carve wooden artefacts at the Goolarabooloo Hostel in Broome. From here, our large group wound its way through the streets of Broome to the coast and on to emanation sites and traditional camping and fishing places along the Song Cycle path. Goolarabooloo senior lawman and storyteller for the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, Richard Hunter shared stories from Bugarrigarra at significant places along the Trail, helping myself and other walkers to ‘map out’ the creative journey of the ancestors through the country. We began walking in the cool hours of the morning, rested under the shade of fresh water paperbarks in the hot hours of the day and cooked, ate and slept by campfires.

Over the course of walking, camping, fishing and lying out under the Milky Way on the Trail, the textures, colours, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of country were ingrained into my flesh and memory. I employed ‘traditional’ tools of ethnography – a field journal, audio recording device and digital camera – to record my observations of people and place/country and auto-ethnographic reflections. Beyond using material tools to record my observations, my own body was an invaluable inscription device for mapping my sensorial engagement with country.

I became cognisant of my embodied experiences of country largely through the process of writing, or ‘blogging’, in my research blog Being with Country. As an emerging research method, blogging is utilised by many arts-based researchers with various intent (Runte 2008). I adopted a reflexive (Pillow 2003, p. 178) and auto-ethnographic (Ellis 2004, p. 35) approach to blogging to help me critique my ‘situatedness of self’ in relation to the research (Spry as cited in Jones 2005, p. 765). Through this approach I was able to become aware of how my own experiences on country were influencing the stories and actors that I was following in the research.

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58 www.beingwithcountry.net
The blog also became a forum through which I could share my research with the research participants, my doctoral supervisors, people within the academy and people interested in people–place relationships.

Fostering an auto-ethnographic research practice enabled me to clearly position myself as a generative participant in collective action (Addelson 1994), which included walking the Trail, camping and sharing food with other walkers and Goolarabooloo families, going foraging for bushfoods, listening to Bugarrigarra stories shared by Goolarabooloo storytellers and going fishing. Although I did not recognise this at the time, being a generative participant and ethnographer on the Trail would enable me to be part of powerful storytelling performances with research participants, as we shared some of the experiences that were invoked in the storytelling.

By 2013, the annual walking of the Trail had been expanded from one to four journeys over the barrgana season, due to a rapidly increasing number of people requesting to walk the Trail with the Goolarabooloo. I returned to Broome for a six-week period between June – July 2013, walking the Trail on two occasions and continuing my ethnographic data collection. Again, I used a field journal and took photographs of people and country to document observational insights into how people were connecting with country. I also continued my auto-ethnographic journaling practice.

Knowing when to put down pen and paper and be present in the action as an observer or participant, was the biggest challenge for me in the ethnographic process. I often felt like ‘the action’ was happening somewhere else. Walking the Trail on three occasions helped to quell my anxiety that I would not have ‘enough’ or ‘the right kind of’ ethnographic data. Adopting a reflexive writing practice through the creation of a research blog also helped me to realise that I had more than enough data to write a thesis about people–place/country relationships on the Trail.
3.5.3 Finding storytellers

In addition to gathering ethnographic stories, I used my walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in 2012 and 2013 as an opportunity to speak with Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Trail about my research project and to invite people to participate in the project. Purposive sampling was used to identify potential research participants, who included Goolarabooloo people, people who were members of the extended Goolarabooloo community (including non-Indigenous people), Trail walkers (including people who had previously walked the Trail and first-time walkers) and volunteers on the Trail. I chose purposive sampling so that I had a diversity of research participants, some of whom were walking the Trail for the first time and others who had spent extended periods on country. With my sampling, I also had to bear in mind that not all first time walkers of the Trail would have the time to synthesise and articulate their sense of being on the Trail, particularly if I recorded their stories in situ. Gathering the stories of people who had spent longer lengths of time on country, as well as first-time Trail walkers, offered me a means of collecting rich data about people–place connections being performed on the Trail. The majority of the people who were involved in the research knew the country well, either because, a) they had cultural connections with the land; b) they had walked the Trail on multiple occasions or had a long-term involvement with the Trail; or c) they were living on country and participating in the Kimberley No Gas campaign.

Invitations to participate in the research often emerged out of my informal conversations with people while walking the Trail. All of the people who were invited to participate in the research were adults. There were 18 participants in the research, with the following characteristics of the research collective:

- Ten women and eight men
- Six Goolarabooloo, Indigenous participants
- Twelve non-Indigenous participants
- Three first-time walkers of the Trail
- Five volunteers on the Trail, two of which had previously walked the Trail on at least one occasion.
The process of enrolling participants in the research involved sharing with people the aim of my research (that I was interested in learning more about people’s relationships with place/country along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail), the method that I was to employ (a storytelling-based approach) and explaining that their level of involvement could vary depending on the time and energy they chose to input into the project. If people were interested in learning more about the project, I provided them with a plain language statement and consent form and verbally explained the content and purpose of these forms. I let participants know that they could withdraw from the research at any point in time if they so wished and that if they did, they could request that I not use their stories in the research. On the consent form, I also stated that I would come back to participants with their stories to make sure that they were happy for me to use this material in my research.

I offered research participants the option of having their name and cultural identity published along with their stories, which all participants chose to do. Goolarabooloo participants are identified by given and surname in the thesis and through their relationship with Paddy Roe, past Goolarabooloo custodian and the founder of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Non-Indigenous participants are identified by first name only.

The backgrounds of the research participants is varied and deserves some explanation so that the relationships between participants, whom are known to each other, can be made apparent. Goolarabooloo research participants include elder Teresa Roe, (Paddy Roe’s daughter), and her sons and senior law bosses for the Northern Tradition Phillip Roe and Richard Hunter. Phillip Roe is a songman for the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, and Richard Hunter is a storyteller for the Song Cycle. Also participating in the research were Goolarabooloo storytellers Terence Hunter Jnr. and Brian Councillor (Paddy Roe’s great-grandsons) and organiser on the Trail Kathleen Hunter (Paddy Roe’s granddaughter).

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59 See Appendix 5.
Initiated into the law and culture of the Song Cycle, Frans Hoogland is a member of the Goolarabooloo community. He became a close friend and student of Paddy Roe in the 1980s and lives in the Millibinyarri community alongside Goolarabooloo families and friends. He plays a key support role in the organising and running of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

Jeanné Browne is another member of the extended Goolarabooloo community. She spent considerable time learning on country with Paddy Roe before his passing, documenting through drawing the six seasons and plant uses of species growing along the Lurujarri coast. Jeanné lives at Millibinyarri for part of each year and plays a key support role in the organising and running of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and supporting the Goolarabooloo people in their protection of the Song Cycle.

Don and Luke are also members of the extended Goolarabooloo community. Don supported Paddy in establishing the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and lived for several decades at Millibinyarri. Luke came to be part of this community in the early 2000’s and lived on the Buckley Plains, along the Trail and Song Cycle paths, working closely with the Goolarabooloo people in their campaign to protect the Song Cycle.

Several other research participants first came to walk the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as university students and returned to walk and volunteer on the Trail. Bernadette spent several years living in the Millibinyarri community and worked closely with Goolarabooloo families to create the animated documentary *Lurujarri Dreaming*. She is involved in ongoing cultural arts projects within the Goolarabooloo community and has volunteered on the Trail several times since first walking it. Emma is another university student, who after walking the Trail returned the following year as a volunteer.

Dallas, Angela and Adriana are the three first-time walkers of the Trail. Dallas is a writer who walked the Trail and wrote about his experience for *Australian Geographic*. Angela walked the Trail out of personal interest and subsequently established a relationship between the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Goolarabooloo. Adriana was a university student walking the Trail as part of her undergraduate studies.
The final group of research participants came to walk the Trail after becoming involved in the Kimberley No Gas Campaign with the Goolarabooloo people. Prior to walking the Trail as volunteers, Sharyn, Tegan and Karlien had all spent several months or years living in traditional camping places along the path of the Trail with Goolarabooloo people.

With the exception of the first-time walkers, I was present on the Trail with all of the research participants, on at least two walks of the Trail.

3.5.4 Storytelling on country

Stories and accounts shared by research participants on country (where possible) form the primary data considered in this thesis. Many of the stories gathered were shared by research participants while walking the Trail or at traditional camping places along the Song Cycle path, either during or after the walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in 2013. Stories were also gathered between September – November in 2012 during which time I was living in a bush camp at Millibinyarri. Located on the Song Cycle path 13 kilometres north of Broome, Millibinyarri is home to several of the research participants and was a prominent location where stories were shared for this research project. In a few circumstances where it was not possible to speak with research participants on country, stories were shared in Broome and further afield in Melbourne and Bendigo, Victoria. One conversation took place via Skype when it was not possible to speak to the research participant in person.

Each of the storytelling performances was unique and adaptive to the circumstances that presented themselves, including the location, the storyteller’s relationship to that place and myself, the people present, the season and actors in country that were present. On most occasions, my time with participants would begin as a conversation about their sense of relationship with country, and became a storytelling performance when the participant felt compelled to share a story about a particular place or event. I sometimes initiated our conversation with a broad question, including ‘Would you like to share a story about your relationship to any places along the Trail?’ or ‘Can
you tell me about your relationship with a particular place in country?’ Even though I was conscious of keeping this experience unstructured, there were other questions that emerged out of conversation or stories, which when asked, facilitated a deepening of the stories shared. On other occasions, the storytelling began as an extension of a prior conversation or event that both the research participant and I had collectively experienced on the Trail. I spoke with 14 research participants on one occasion, and four research participants on 2–4 occasions.

In most circumstances, it was only the storyteller and I who were present during a storytelling performance. However, there were instances where the storyteller’s family or friends were also present. There was often a strong sense of place/country being present in the storytelling and this became apparent through the call of birds, the arrival of a wind or tidal change or the passing through of a snake that would punctuate a participant’s storytelling.

Stories were recorded using an audio recording device, unless a participant requested that this not occur. In these circumstances, I recorded their stories through written notes, including some direct quotes and drawings.

3.6 Allowing the stories to ‘flock’: analysis begins

3.6.1 Transcription: a process of translation

I began the process of translating people’s stories from audio recording to transcription at Charles Darwin University in Darwin. Transcribing the many hours of recordings was an incredibly long, yet unexpectedly joyful experience. Each recording evoked for me a strong sense of people and place and made clear in my mind that I was not merely transcribing audio into text, but translating stories from one performance to the next. My task as an ethnographer was becoming clearer; I needed to allow for the performativity, relationality, locatedness and generative force of each story to be carried into the thesis.
Reassurance that I was translating these stories successfully (from oral form to text) came when I shared the story transcripts with research participants. I returned to Broome in November 2013 and was present with many of the Goolarabooloo participants when they read over these transcripts. I allowed time for people to consider the stories that they had shared and to ask questions. I also read transcripts to participants who were unable to read over the transcript themselves. Transcripts were posted in circumstances where I was unable personally to go through these with the research participants.

In response to this opportunity to read or hear the transcripts, almost all of the research participants felt a strong sense of having their relationships with country affirmed and made visible. Many commented that before this experience, they had never really put into words their sense of relationship with place, but now that they had, they were more aware of their connections and carried this awareness with them when they were in country. The translation of oral stories into text was a demonstration of the generative nature of storytelling.

3.6.2 Seeing connections: ‘flocking’ the meta-narratives as a form of coding

The initial stages of data analysis involved immersing myself in the stories through the transcribing of the audio recordings followed by close reading of the transcripts. Throughout this time of immersion in the stories and my ethnographic notes, I maintained my reflexive journaling practice (Altrichter & Holly 2005), continuing my hand-written journal and research blog.

My reflexive writing practices supported my transition into the analysis phase of the research. Making sense of the data involved becoming aware of the connections that were emerging between people’s stories and accounts. I applied an *a posteriori* approach to categorising so that confluences, or places where the stories ‘flocked’ together (e.g. around a sacred tree, a particular feeling, or event), became the meta-narratives that were used to structure the presentation of stories and written analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This form of data coding shares some similarities with Grounded Theory, in that I allowed the meta-narratives and themes for analysis to
emerge out of the data and I minimised any preconceived ideas about what may emerge in the research data. I coded large sections of transcript using themes and organising ideas that were largely based on the concepts and language arising from the participants’ stories and utilised an Excel spread-sheet to document this process.

Themes and meta-narratives identified through the initial analysis of stories included:

- *Liyan* (feeling, intuition, connection)
- ‘Tuning in’ to country: through the act of walking; country communicating with people; sensing the *liyan* (feeling) of each place
- Somatic knowing
- ‘Reading’ the meaning in country
- Being in relationship with country
- *Bugarrigarra*
- Shifts in perception, worldview and ways of being: ‘opening’ and ‘waking’ up
- Feeling connected and ‘merging’ with country
- Country as teacher
- Feeling recognised by country
- Paddy Roe’s vision and influence
- The spirit and agency of country
- Separation between people and place
- The agency of stories and acts of storytelling
- Dreams and visions on country
- Threats to country
- Protecting and looking after country.

The next stage of analysis involved working with stories that resonated most strongly with these themes and meta-narratives.
3.7 Putting Actor-Network Theory to work: analysis continued

Using ANT to continue my work enabled me to approach the stories of research participants as performances and potential actors, rather than inert texts. For example, the research participants’ stories were undergoing multiple translations; from embodied experience, to oral story, to audio recording, to transcript and into this thesis. From one form to the next, I related to these experiences as translations, rather than representations.

3.7.1 Following actors

An ANT approach to ethnography was used to direct the subsequent analysis of stories. Instead of observing people in country, I was now working with translations of their accounts of interactions with country and my own ethnographic accounts. Storytellers, including myself, were naming human and non-human, material and immaterial actors on the Trail (albeit sometimes with difficulty), allowing me to do as Latour (1987) instructed and start ‘following actors’.

The method of following actors formed the basis of the ANT approach used in chapter 4. Each story shared by a storyteller rendered visible associations between human actors and actors in country, including spirit trees, ancestors, places, gendered places, spirit children and Bugarrigarra stories to name a few. This was not easy work. As urged by ANT writers such as Latour, Callon and Law, I had to suspend a priori assumptions about what an actor was or did based on any ontological categories, including ‘human’ and ‘non-human’. To do this work well, I approached each story with an open mind and willingness to follow any of the actors that were made visible, even tricky actors that resisted naming, yet, were revealed to be doing important work on the Trail.

I adhered to the ANT principles of free association, generalised symmetry and agnosticism when following the actors. In short, I had to ensure that I was:
1. Allowing distinctions between entities, including dualisms, categories and identities, to emerge out of the interactions between entities, rather than applying these as causal factors (free association).

2. Applying the same terms and interventions to all actors (generalised symmetry). Hence, Goolarabooloo people, walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, Bugarrigarrarra stories, camping places, ancestral spirits and spirit trees were all examined using a single explanatory frame.

3. ‘Abandoning a priori assumptions about the nature of networks, causal conditions, or the accuracy of actant’s accounts’ (Crawford 2004, p. 2) (agnosticism). Just as actors are allowed to emerge through their productive interactions, so too are networks and their effects. The stories and accounts shared by research participants were not interrogated through a pre-existing notion of ‘reality’ or ‘truth’. Instead of truths or realities being described by beliefs and practices, they were seen as products of those beliefs and practices (Law 2004, p. 59).

What happened when I began to follow the actors? I soon found that in my following I was seeing actors associate in both expected and unexpected ways. Although I was familiar with the stories I was working with, this method was revealing new insights about the ways in which people and place/country were making connections. Following the actors became a way of mapping the associations between actors and led me to see the formation of people–place/country actor-networks on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

As we have seen, ANT describes the interaction between entities in an actor-network, as translations. Callon (1986) states that it is during translation that the ‘identity of actors and the possibility of interaction … are negotiated’ (p. 6). By examining how actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail were interacting – engaging in translations – I was able to gain insights into the Trail as an actor-network and more specifically, understand how connections between people and country were forming, being renewed or threatening to fall apart. Just as Latour (1987, p. 205) predicted, by studying actor-networks I was able to discern what each actor was connected to and what was most valued.
3.7.2 Watching actor-networks hold together (and fall apart)

In Chapter 5, ethnographic stories are interwoven with stories and accounts from the research participants to explore how people are maintaining relationships with place/country, even in the face of significant challenges. Relating to the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as an actor-network, I examined the work that actors were doing to hold together this network.

Law, Callon and Latour all argue that if actor-networks endure, it is not by chance; holding networks together is precarious work for the actors involved. It is the controversy that comes when networks are struggling to hold together that the ANT writers cherish, as it offers them rich opportunities for observing the connections between actors. Worth re-stating for its pertinence to this explanation, Latour (1987) contends that it is during times of contention that people:

look for stronger and more resistant allies, and in order to do so, they may end up mobilizing the most heterogeneous and distant elements, thus mapping for themselves, for their opponents, and for the observers, what they value most, what they are most dearly attached to (p. 205).

Following Latour, I used controversy (as identified in the stories) as my starting point for exploring strong and weak links between actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and in rival networks. Doing so led me to insights into what these actors ‘value most, what they are most dearly attached to’ (Latour 1987, p. 205).

I also applied Law’s (2009, p. 148) concept of ‘network architecture’ to investigate the material arrangements that were producing durability within actor-networks on the Trail. Law (2009, p. 148) identifies three interplaying aspects of network architecture: materiality, strategy and discourse. These elements were used to explore the ways in which the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, as a people–place network, was enduring. A significant rival network, the proposed Browse LNG Precinct at Walmadany, was also examined for its ability to hold together and for its impact on the durability of people–place connections on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.
3.8 Further perspectives for making sense of the stories

In addition to employing ANT, I also drew upon insights gleaned from Indigenous perspectives and contemporary panpsychism to make further sense of the stories presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in relation to the thesis questions. Stemming from Indigenous- and eco-philosophy, specific ontological concepts identified and discussed in Chapter 2, informed the discussion of stories in these chapters. Key concepts included, the agency of country, inter-subjectivity, feeling, and the mutual recognition, reciprocity and communicative engagement between people and entities in country. Although these ideas offered important perspectives for considering the stories that emerged through the research, they were not applied as *a priori* assumptions about the nature of actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Instead, concepts were introduced after actors and their interactions had been identified and named in the stories.

3.9 Going back to the storytellers

As stated above, conversation/story transcripts were shared with participants to ensure that they were happy with me using their stories in the thesis. After drafting Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I shared this writing with the Goolarabooloo community and research participants to make sure that they were happy with the way I had presented their stories and to check for accuracy. Verbal feedback offered by the Goolarabooloo community was then integrated into the thesis.

3.10 Style, language and orthography

3.10.1 Style

A combination of third and first person is used in writing the thesis. I employ first person in instances where I wish to write myself into a story, to perform what Verran and Christie (2013, p. 53) call ‘the ethnographer in flesh and text’, and highlight my role as generative participant in the research process. Third person is used in all other instances. The style of ethnographic writing adopted in the thesis may be unfamiliar
to those who are unacquainted with ANT literature. The emphasis in my writing of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 is largely descriptive and focused upon the actors that appear on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, the networks they form and associate within and the capacity of these networks to hold together. I employ ANT terminology in writing and making sense of these descriptive observations. It is common for ANT writers to phrase their texts using second person as an intentional strategy to enrol the reader in the performance of the text, however, this approach has not been applied in the thesis. Also in terms of style, I use an en-dash in the terms people–place and people–country to represent a relationship between the entities in each term.

3.10.2 Language and orthography

Where local Indigenous language words are referred to in stories, they are italicised and an English translation offered directly after the language term in parentheses in the first instance. A definition is also given if a previously stated word is being used to carry a different meaning. Footnotes are also used to provide more information about Indigenous term. Indigenous words that are proper nouns are not italicised, but are capitalised. A glossary of the Indigenous terms used in the thesis is provided in Appendix 1.

The Indigenous language words and concepts presented in this thesis originate from a number of local languages that are spoken in the Broome area and on the Dampier Peninsula, including, Bardi, Jabirrjabirr, Ngumbal, Nyulnyul, Jugun and Yawuru. These languages are part of the Nyulnyulan family of languages (McGregor 2004; Muecke & Lowe as cited in Kelly 2016; Nekes & Worms 2006). In addition to these languages, Broome English (a derivative of Aboriginal Australian English), is spoken by the Goolarabooloo research participants. Other participants in the research speak in Standard Australian English, or forms of ‘broken’ English that reflect their non-English speaking backgrounds.

Many Indigenous language groups are revising early orthographies developed by linguists and missionaries to better suit their language revival programs (McGregor 2004, p. 22). Stephen Muecke and Pat Lowe (as cited in Kelly 2016) also offer a
more recent orthography, the *Proposed Goolarabooloo Spelling System/Pronunciation Guide and Place Names*, which this thesis adopts. Explanations of local Indigenous languages and the orthography used by this thesis are provided in Appendix 1.
Chapter 4: Connecting with country

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the stories shared by members of the Goolarabooloo community and walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. The stories are rich enactments of people’s relationship with place and offer fertile ground for exploring the particular ways in which people perceive place and their relationship to it. Using a two-pronged approach this chapter explores the research question: ‘What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’ The first approach analyses the stories and accounts of research participants using the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) method of ‘following actors’. The second approach draws upon theoretical perspectives from Indigenous philosophy and eco-philosophy to discuss these stories and accounts, in acknowledgement of the performance of multiple knowledge systems on the Trail.

The chapter begins by invoking the words of former Goolarabooloo custodian Paddy Roe OAM, who established the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Paddy, his descendants and friends explain his motivations for initiating the Trail, and in doing so create a context for the relationships that – are enacting with place on the Trail. These stories, together with subsequent stories and accounts, make apparent an assemblage of human and non-human actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.60

‘Following’ the actors that are identified through the storytelling leads to insights about the work that actors do, as well as with whom or what they associate. Interesting things happen when human and non-human actors meet, including processes of translation (in the ANT sense) that enable people–place connections to

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60 According to Actor-Network Theory (ANT), an actor is any entity that has agency and does work, human or non-human. See Chapter 3, pages 96–98 for further explanation.
form and networks to develop. A set of three questions guides the process of following the actors:

1. Who and what are the actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?
2. What are they doing?
3. What networks of association are being enacted?

The ANT principles of free association, generalised symmetry and agnosticism are enacted in this chapter, and in subsequent chapters, to avoid making a priori assumptions about ‘the nature of’ entities, including people and place or country on the Trail, and causal factors that lead to events. This enables the observation of translations in which the identities of heterogeneous actors are negotiated, including the identities of Goolarabooloo people and others walking the Trail. The storytellers’ use of metaphors signal that translations are taking place; shifts that transform the ways in which they see, speak about and relate to country.

4.2 Paddy’s Dream

A dream means something on that Land, wherever it is. It’s not just a dream, it’s a true thing they see it, if you’re in that Land – it’s like a vision (Turner 2010, p. 52).

In 1987, Paddy Roe instigated the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. His dream and vision, in the same sense that Turner identifies in the quote above, was to look after the country for which he was custodian. One of the ways in which he did so was to bring together people from both Indigenous and non-

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61 ANT uses the term translation to highlight the particular ways in which actors affect each other. See Chapter 3, pages 100–101 for further explanation. Network is another term used in ANT and is broadly described as a heterogeneous assemblage of human and non-human actors. See Chapter 3, pages 96–99 for further explanation.

62 ANT is inherently performative and is concerned not with the nature of actors, but with how they perform in association with other actors. See pages 96 and 97 for further explanation.

63 See page 99 for further explanation of the ANT principles free association, generalised symmetry and agnosticism.
Indigenous heritages to walk the Northern Tradition Song Cycle path. Paddy’s edict, ‘I am walking on my dream’, performs through the text *Reading the Country* which he co-authored with Benterrak and Muecke (1984), but it also continues to have agency through the oral stories told by his Goolarabooloo descendants, friends and the broader Lurujarri Dreaming Trail community. Paddy’s family and friends invoke this declaration to demonstrate Paddy’s ability to manifest his vision: he sent out a Dream⁶⁴ to protect country, initiated the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as a way of bringing people onto his country to share his people’s culture and ways of understanding the country, and thus, experienced living the Dream he had sent out. He was walking on his Dream. Moreover, as this chapter reveals, he managed to enrol others to walk this Dream with him.

4.2.1 ‘How we gonna look after this country?’

Although Paddy passed away in 2001, his legacy is ever-present to his family. Brian, Paddy’s great-grandson, says about his great-grandfather, ‘One man’s vision, is all our vision. We’ll just keep going.’

In his pursuit of this Dream, one of the first and most important things Paddy did was to form productive working relationships with researchers, pushing his words into new places – reports, books and theses – and into geographic places far from the Song Cycle path, ensuring that he would continue to speak after his passing.⁶⁵

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⁶⁴ From this instance forth, the capitalised word ‘Dream’ is use to specifically refer to the vision that Paddy Roe sent out to ensure that the country for which he was custodian, was looked after in perpetuity.

⁶⁵ Literary works that Paddy co-authored and contributed to include *Gularabulu: Stories from the West Kimberley* with Stephen Muecke (1983), *Reading the Country* with Stephen Muecke and Krim Benterrak (1984), ‘Black and white, a trail to understanding’ in *Listen to the People, Listen to the Land* with Frans Hoogland (1999). He also contributed to the doctoral research of Stephen Muecke (1981) and Ray Keogh (1990) and to many archaeological surveys, ethno-botanical documents and land management reports.
Paddy highlighted the dilemma faced by himself and his people in asking, ‘How we gonna look after this country?’:

I want to look after this country, I’m thinking now. I’m sitting down under the tamarind tree over there at my place, thinking what I gonna do about the country. How we can look after this country? All right, I said, This is no good! How we gonna look after this country? I think I must do something. I must bring somebody to look after the country, I said to meself. I can’t get the Aboriginal people to come out. They come out, but they like the town. All right, I said, better I get European people to help look after the country, because they’re the people who got English. Anybody come, with the high English, well I can’t say this language. I must get somebody with the English that can turn things around to the government. That was one of my ideas, one man and this tree talking. But the tamarind tree never give me any answer.

What made me bring the European people more closer was because I seen what they doing in other counties. Well, I never seen it but I hear. But in this country, country’s laying belly up for anybody. Not like this fighting for country, no–land’s waiting for people. Country want to be safe too. Somebody gotta look after it because he gonna be destroyed by somebody.

The first man I found to help is this man, Frans. Well that’s what I was thinking. I can’t look after this country with my people [alone], so I bring this man and I been teaching him to look after the country, because I want to save the country (Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 17–18).

In stating his motivation for developing closer ties with people from European heritages, Paddy introduces a long-term friend and his student, Frans Hoogland. As co-ordinator of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, Frans describes the impetus for

66 Michele Callon (1986a) asserts that ‘A single question … is enough to involve a whole series of actors by establishing their identities and the links between them’ (p. 205). Paddy’s question is no exception.
Paddy’s Dream in the context of a growing Broome population and increasing development interests. 

It was going to be a big town so he had to get a dream together. [Paddy] had to get something together in order to counteract that process, to get help from everybody else to make people aware and that’s basically when he sent the Dream out so we can collectively, all together, walk on it. That is the proper way, you send it out.

Much is at stake here, for Paddy, his people, the country and for this thesis. If the language and insights of ANT are going to help answer the questions this thesis poses, then it has to start here. Paddy can see that his Dream needs to be equally as big and powerful as a big town. Big towns are huge networks, drawing on their myriad connections with other big towns, and in turn, all of their networks. His aim was to make people aware so that they could in turn collectively walk on the Dream, as they walked the Trail. Paddy had great faith in the process of sending out a Dream and those other processes (such as feeling, opening up and waking up, which are introduced shortly) and actors (his descendants, the land, ancestors, spirits) would support him and in turn enrol others in that Dream.

Further background to Fran’s relationship with Paddy is offered in the documentary ‘Millennium’ (1992). Filmed sitting in the sand, Paddy explains the changes that occurred on country with the arrival of European culture: ‘Law, that’s Bugarrigarra, law. I think English say dreamtime, but we say Bugarrigarra, law. [Paddy draws a horizontal line in the sand in front of where he sits and points to the line] This is Bugarrigarra, that’s the old people. [Paddy draws a second horizontal line in the sand above the first and points to that line] And this is the European people, came after … Now when all the people born in this country [Paddy points to the bottom line], they moved their camp [Paddy draws a third line in the sand between the first and second and points to the line just drawn] they went here, because they didn’t want to live how we lived, with the law and everything. Our people went off and shift their camp in the middle … We let them go through, that’s alright. To learn about the English and more about schooling and all that, you know, European ways. But they never come back to us, we been waiting too long. So one day come somebody, walk from here [Paddy points to the top line and draws a line connecting the top and bottom lines], he come right up from here. Somebody with English. Well I can say his name too, Fran. He’s here with us, now, today, in the bottom. He’s a bottom man.’ In calling Frans a ‘bottom man’ Paddy means a man on the ground who belongs to Paddy’s people’s law and culture.
Paddy’s Dream surfaces as the first moment of translation, what Michele Callon (1986a, pp. 203–204) refers to as problematisation,68 the process through which an actor, in this case Paddy, attempts to frame a problem and related entities in particular ways. Paddy’s role as a custodian of traditional law and culture was to look after country. In responding to his own question, “How we gonna look after this country?” Paddy determined a set of human actors (Goolarabooloo and European people) and defined their roles (caretakers and protectors of country) as a means of building associations between people and country. However, for Paddy’s Dream to come to fruition, these roles must be accepted and strong connections, not just associations, need to be formed and maintained between people and country.

The stories and accounts shared thus far offer some response to the first thesis question posed. Paddy Roe promoted particular types of relationships on the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail; relationships between people and country that would lead to the care and protection of country.

4.2.2 Making ‘country’ visible: the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail as a cultural bridge

Paddy recognised that if people from European, or more broadly, non-Indigenous heritages, were going to connect with country and potentially help care for and protect country, then it was crucial that aspects of the country become visible (present, known and experienced) for these people.

In the early 1990’s Paddy invited Jeanné, an artist and botanist, to document the mayi (bushfoods, monsoonal vine thicket)69 present along the Trail, an ongoing project that she continues today. Having become a student of Paddy Roe, long-term friend of the Goolarabooloo and volunteer on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, Jeanné spoke at

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68 As defined by ANT writer Michel Callon (1986a, pp. 203–204), problematisation is one of ‘four moments’ or phases of a process referred to as translation, where translation is the process of forming a network.

69 Mayi refers to plant-based bush foods and the monsoonal vine thicket ecological community in which many of the bush foods are found along the Dampier Peninsula.
length about the ways in which Paddy revealed his country to both herself and others.

Paddy knew his role as a traditional custodian was to look after the country and the law and culture and make sure that people, his mob, stayed engaged with that. Also that the country, law and cultural body of knowledge that he had been entrusted with, got passed on in good shape to whoever took over from him. He was a very canny old man, he could perceive that the world, or the Broome context, was a changing place and that more and more whitefellas were moving in. His family were living on an interface with the Western culture that was English-speaking and didn’t have the cultural practices or the concept of stewardship or caring for country to the degree that his people did.

He was keen to try and foster some sort of empathy with the people who were now living here and who were born here, hoping to teach them because he could see that that needed to happen with so many more people from elsewhere coming to live together. That was something fundamental that he needed to try and promote. And [he set up] the walking trail, the Lurujarri Trail, with the concept of sharing culture, fostering understanding, [showing] people traditional, sustainable ways of living and hunting and utilising the bush tucker, or timbers in the best, proper way. And also to stay in relationship with the country, because unlike in the West where our most valued areas are conceived as pristine with no human footprint, the country up here that is without human relationship, where there’s nobody there to look after it or burn it regularly to keep it quiet or to sing the songs to it, that becomes very wild, scary country. So it’s the opposite of the way that Western people aspire to paradise. Country that had no people within it would be country that the local people here would be very scared to enter.

There’s the notion that you need to be taken into country that’s not your own by someone who is from there who can be the intermediary between the country and you and introduce you to the
country. Not just showing you things but so that the country itself will come to know you, as a reciprocal thing and recognise your smell and offer you the nurturing that it offers its people, whether it’s water that isn’t brackish or fruits that are available. Being taught or observing how the locals go about hunting and fishing and what they look for. Tuning into the seasons of different food sources available, the places to avoid, being initiated into some of the stories of what’s gone on here in the past as a sort of cultural bridge.

Jeanné offers a synopsis of Paddy’s Dream by focusing on his aim (people developing empathy with the country), his method (teaching people to stay in relationship with the country, walking together and being guided by intermediaries) and through this, enabling the Trail to act as a cultural bridge.

The insights and vocabulary of ANT can be drawn upon to meet the actors that Jeanné has summoned (Paddy, ancestors, past custodians, and future generations), watch, and follow them as they do work. Paddy’s role as ‘traditional custodian’ leads to a great network of ancestors, past custodians and future generations of custodians. However, this is not the only network actors are enacting in this place. Broome is a changing place, a town that is getting bigger with more ‘whitefellas’ coming to live there. As a network, this growing town has connections with other places, people and networks and the agency to pull the network that already exists (linked to traditional custodianship of country) in a different direction. Jeanné refers to Broome as an interface where different things (country, custodianship and Western culture) meet and interact; cultures are not passively living side by side. 70 Paddy himself stated the importance of working with people from other cultures, saying ‘better I get European people to help look after the country, because they’re the people who got English … that can turn things around to the government’ (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 17).

70 The Indigenous peoples of the Kimberley coast have a long history of encounter and interaction with people connected to other cultures, including the Kupang-based trepangers who travelled to the Kimberley coast from the 18th century until the early 20th century. The large commercial pearling industry, that was established in Broome in the 1880’s, also meant that people living along the coast engaged with people and networks that extended into south-east Asia and as far north as China and Japan (Reece 2014).
Note what is being done here; in identifying and beginning to follow the actors, the word ‘traditional’ led to the great network of ancestors and country, and the mere mention of a ‘big town’ led to the pull of the Western world and its influence. There is more following to be done.

Jeanné introduces and critiques contrasting notions of the land: what some Westerners might call ‘pristine’ when it is without ‘human footprint’, Indigenous people would refer to as ‘wild scary country’. In her writing with the Yarralin people Deborah Bird Rose (2004, p. 4) makes a similar comparison, whereby country that is degraded and abandoned is referred to as ‘wild country’, and country that is cared for and lived in is called ‘quiet country’. In the contrast that Jeanné draws, local people sing to country and perform acts to appease it; Paddy has taught Jeanné that people must stay in relationship with and be present in the country. Another parallel between Jeanné’s account and Rose’s (2000, p. 109) writing is the idea that the country will come to know and recognise a person when they are there, in country, with the help of intermediaries (custodians of a place).

Despite the growing influence of Western culture in Broome, Paddy has faith that his Dream can be equally as powerful as the big town. Jeanné’s reference to empathy alludes to Paddy’s faith in the process; country too will play its part in affecting people. Country is working to enrol people into Paddy’s Dream by coming to recognise and know them, enabling there to be a reciprocity of care between people and country. Just like the ANT writers, Jeanné is working towards symmetry in the way that she speaks about the land and people; reciprocity of care affords agency not only to people but also country.

Jeanné’s précis of Paddy’s Dream identified many actors important to this thesis, including traditional custodians, the ancestors, culture (both Traditional and Western), whitefellas, big towns, scary and wild country, water (brackish or otherwise), bush tucker, the walkers and the Trail itself (that is beginning to emerge

Fenwick and Edwards (2010) define generalised symmetry as ‘The insistence upon treating human and non-human entities the same way, looking at their performances and linkages rather than distinguishing them according to some a priori essentialized features’ (p. 9).
as a complex network performed by these and many more actors). Finally, in using the term ‘intermediary’ Jeanné draws attention to important work being done by the Goolarabooloo people in linking ‘whitefellas’ (connected to Western networks) with country. In taking on this role, they are hoping that the land, and the walkers of the Trail will respond in certain ways. Jeanné also uses the term ‘cultural bridge’ to refer to this work. Recall Paddy’s own mixed heritage\textsuperscript{72} and the reconciliatory work he did throughout his life; he too acted as a positive link at the interface of these Indigenous and Western networks.

Another actor on the Trail speaks about the Trail as a cultural bridge. Phillip Roe, grandson of Paddy Roe, senior law boss and songman for the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, highlights his grandfather’s role in bringing together people from different cultural backgrounds and the ethos of equality that underpinned his actions. Here Phillip calls Paddy Lulu,\textsuperscript{73} a kinship name and term of endearment used by his family.

What Lulu did is to reach out, get black and white people working together, reconciliation. That was his main goal. He did it quite well and was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for what he did. It’s also a learning curve here for these younger generations, our grandchildren. The Trail brings a lot of good feeling among family and visitors. Everybody’s mixing, black and white, that’s what his goal was, to get white and black people to walk arm in arm, instead of being hateful and [using] racial things against each other. He felt that everybody’s equal. We’re all humans, don’t care what’s the colour of our skin, but underneath our skin we all bleed red blood.

While black and white identities are invoked in Phillip’s statement about Paddy (Lulu) and the Trail, the emphasis here is on humanness: ‘we all bleed red blood’. Skin colour and racial identity may be rendered visible, but it cannot be assumed, nor predicted, how they may perform on the Trail. ANT teaches the ethnographer to watch out for and follow actors, leaving aside \textit{a priori} assumptions about who and

\textsuperscript{72} Refer to Chapter 1, pages 4–8 for a brief history on the life of Paddy Roe.

\textsuperscript{73} Lulu means grandfather.
what the actors are and what ‘that kind’ of actor might be expected to do. The ANT
writers caution against the assumptions present in dichotomies like human/non-
human, social/technical, and black/white. However, they never pretend that actors
may not perform such dichotomies. Phillip recognises how the performance of black
and white identities influenced Paddy and inspired him to reach across this divide, to
lessen it, through the agency of the Trail.

Thus far, stories and accounts from Paddy, Brian, Frans, Jeanné and Phillip, along
with insights from ANT, have brought to light a number of the actors on the Trail,
including Paddy’s vision of uniting people to protect country. The Trail emerges as a
cultural bridge, a means to bring together people from ‘black’ and ‘white’
backgrounds and an opportunity for Indigenous perceptions of country to become
‘visible’ to people of non-Indigenous heritages, so that country can be present,
known and experienced. While the first steps have been revealed as to how Paddy
might enrol people in his Dream, there is still more following to be done so that the
processes through which people are forming connections with country can be
illuminated.

4.3 Creating new connections with country

Already the storytellers have employed the metaphors ‘cultural bridge’ and
‘visibility’ to describe important work that is happening on the Trail. In this section,
storytellers draw upon more metaphors, this time to signal the processes of
translation that are leading to the formation of connections between people and
country.

4.3.1 ‘Opening up’ the country and the possibility of connection

Emerging from several of my conversations with Frans was the idea that Paddy
‘opened up’ the country to make it ‘visible’: present and known to, and experienced
by people. Here Frans contextualises this opening up in terms of Broome’s changing
landscape and Paddy’s concerns about how to protect country:
He was always like any proper lawman of high degree, you’re always looking a long way ahead. One of his main worries, and the people of his day main worries, was how is [Broome] going to develop in the future and how can we be part of it. He realised with his own people that there weren’t enough people to hold [the country] tight. Opening up the Trail and the country, to get everybody else involved in it, was a tactical manoeuvre. Get more people who then become aware of the importance, beauty and cultural aspect of the land, who could help to look after the country.

Paddy’s aim was to keep holding tight the country. He employed a clear strategy – a ‘tactical manoeuvre’ – to make this happen: open up the country, including the Trail, encourage more people to become aware of the significance of the land and hope that they too would look after the country. I asked Frans, what he and Paddy meant by ‘opening up’ the country? He explained that in opening up the country Paddy made it ‘show itself’. Aspects of country became visible, accessible to and experienced by non-Indigenous people, including knowledge associated with Bugarrigarra (the Dreaming)\(^{74}\) and the Song Cycle. Paddy assured the country, ‘this is good people coming,’ so that everything would be ‘standing up’, ‘standing out’ and welcoming, so that liyan (feeling, intuition)\(^{75}\) could be heightened. Frans concluded by saying that Paddy opened up the country so that the country could see and recognise new people as its own, so that they would be safe and protected, as were the Indigenous people of that country.

Visibility is a powerful metaphor that holds great currency in understanding Paddy’s Dream and the processes through which walkers of the Trail might become connected with country. In the book *Reading the Country*, Paddy and his collaborators Muecke and Benterrak (1984) take seriously the metaphor of ‘seeing’, emphasising that

\(^{74}\) The Goolarabooloo people and other Indigenous peoples of the West Kimberley refer to their cosmology, including creation in the long-ago past and ongoing process of co-creation, as Bugarrigarra. See Chapter 2, pages 36–38 for an explanation of Bugarrigarra from Paddy Roe.

\(^{75}\) Roe and Hoogland (1999, p. 21) talk about liyan as ‘feeling’ and a receptivity that connects and holds them in relation to other life and country. Liyan is followed further on in the chapter.
words like “seeing” and “reading” must continue to be theorized and worked upon with a method which makes these seemingly innocent words carry the responsibility they deserve (p. 13).

In another text Paddy co-authored with Frans, *Black and white, a trail to understanding*, they encourage a collective ‘we’ to

learn to *see* again, learn to walk, to feel all of these things again. This is why the Lurujarri trail is so important … [it] will get us to listen, to start walking slowly and to teach people. We have to learn to see everything again (emphasis added, Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 27).

Paddy and Frans stress the importance of the Trail in its ability to get people to ‘see’, ‘listen’ and ‘feel’ - not as a new experience, but as a remembering of how to be in the world.

Frans explained that Paddy’s intention was for walkers of the Trail to experience reciprocity with country and begin to understand the importance of keeping the law, culture and the three ‘birthplaces’ of the Song Cycle alive.76 Paddy took people walking the way his ancestors had walked the country since ‘the beginning’. In his teachings, Paddy showed walkers of the Trail different places and explained their purpose (men’s, women’s and emanation sites), all the while highlighting the interconnections between entities in country. Yet, Paddy was reluctant when first telling the story of the spirits who metamorphosed into the first people, the *ngadjayi* (creator spirit beings);77 it was a ‘very big story’ that he and the other law-keepers of the Song Cycle wanted to keep quiet. However, with a big town emerging and many more people coming, the cost of making this story public was deemed necessary.

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76 The three ‘birthplaces’ (emanation sites) along the Northern Traditions Song Cycle are Dabardabagun, Bilingur and Nununggurrugun, and are encountered during the walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

77 The *ngadjayi* are the ancestral creator spirit beings that came out of Bugarrigarra to become the first people and shape the landscape.
Frans finished his story by sharing a tenet that was at the heart of Paddy’s teachings: ‘We are all participants of the Bugarrigarra process; everyone can have a personal experience of Bugarrigarra by being with and walking this country.’

By ‘opening up’ the country, and encouraging people to walk the Trail and ‘be with’ country, Paddy promised access to his Dream and Bugarrigarra – a tremendous network connected to all types of entities on country. Note, Bugarrigarra is not enacted as a fixed period of creation in the long-ago past; it is spoken about as a process. Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) offer a more detailed description of Bugarrigarra as an ongoing process, describing it as ‘seeing … knowing, and a set of practices… [which] depends on people living in the country, travelling through it and naming it, constantly making new stories and songs’ (p. 14).

There is more ‘opening’ happening on the Trail, this time as experienced by Trail walkers. Bernadette, a friend of the Goolarabooloo community, walker and volunteer on the Trail, describes the sense of ‘opening’ she experienced the first time she walked the Trail.

Gradually, as we went along, just feeling that opening, the opening of everyone to each other, which was really beautiful and moving through these different landscapes and spaces. But the night time was always the most beautiful time, everyone sitting around talking, eating and playing music together and also swimming at the beach with all the kids in the water, that was beautiful.

Bernadette describes ‘opening’ as a gradual, feeling-based process that unfolded with her movement through country. Opening is associated with communal acts of dwelling (talking, eating, playing music and swimming) and with strong positive feelings. Embedded in Bernadette’s reflection is an awareness of not just her own, but a collective ‘opening’. A network of associations is taking form. The reciprocity

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78 Elsewhere Frans states, ‘Trail is the opening, it’s the entrance into this world. It is opened up by the traditional people, for all of us to come together and get that experience which traditional people have had since the beginning of that process’ (Emmanouil 2015, p. 42).
of this opening is enabling new connections to form amongst Trail walkers, and between the walkers and the ‘landscapes’. Moreover, Bernadette’s metaphoric use of ‘opening’ to talk about the making of connections (walkers of the Trail had to be ‘open’ for new connections to be created) implies something significant, something that people put hope in. Perhaps a belief that the links between these people and other networks would be so powerful they would endure, and be productive in the face of external threats.

This is also implied by Emma, another Trail walker and volunteer, who speaks about ‘opening up’ as an effect of walking the Trail. She uses the metaphor of an opening door to signal that things are coming out of the shadows; note, an open door allows hidden things to become visible, including people’s connections with place. Recounting her experiences of walking of the Trail, she draws attention to her sense of self, which extends out to encompass the land.

I think it opened up some deeper connection and deeper knowledge about the way I want my life to be. I always felt really connected to the land and I always wanted to live very close to the land. My connectivity to the land always felt very strong since I was really little.

The Trail is opening that [connection] up for people and I think that’s what is needed, opening that door for people to change the way they live and to start to look at nature, the planet and the universe as part of themselves and not humans being superior, but as one big connected thing, together. I think that’s what Trail does, it opens up that knowledge of connectivity with the universe and who we are as people.

The metaphor ‘opening up’ signifies that translations are taking place, whereby new levels of awareness and understanding are becoming apparent to people. Emma can see that walking the Trail can result in deeper connections between people and the land, and enable people to perceive that they are part of an extended network, including the whole universe, of which she finds herself a part. The Trail is making these connections present, known, and experienced.
There is symmetry in what is ‘opening up’ on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Jeanné and Frans expressed that country is opening up for people, while Bernadette and Emma reflected that they too opened up to country and other Trail walkers. In the process, country and people alike are becoming visible to each other, indicating that both are contributing to the fruition of Paddy’s Dream, that people and country will connect to keep the country safe.

4.3.2 ‘Waking up’ feeling and to new ways of seeing

New actors, including metaphors, continue to appear through the stories and accounts shared by the storytellers, shedding further light on the ways in which people and country are forming relationships on the Trail. The Trail expands from being a cultural bridge that links two cultural networks, and a place where country and people are opening up, to being an agent that can ‘wake up’ people to moral questions of how to live, including seeing and reading the country in new ways. In this following account from Frans, he introduces a new actor, rayi (spirits, inner spirit), and illustrates how different types of rayi are waking up entities and being woken up themselves.

Western civilisation came here late, so [the country] is still alive as a full spirit world. But the light and the noise will deplete it and the spirits will wander away from that. But in the meantime, the spirit might just try to wake up a whole lot of people. A lot of things have been woken up already, things that people didn’t see before, it’s all standing up now.

79 The Goolarabooloo differentiate rayi (spirits) from the ngadjayi (creator spirit beings), in that all entities are said to have rayi (inner spirit), as their spirit form preceded their materiality. Ngadjayi refers specifically to the spirit beings that began the creative process. The method employed in this thesis is to avoid discriminating against entities that appear in people’s accounts. The task here is not to question what are these spirits? Where did they come from? Or, are they real? Rather, what do these accounts and named entities tell us about what people believe and ‘how they picture the world’ (Law 2004, p. 102)? As Law (2004) states, ‘Our own judgements about reality are irrelevant’ (p. 102). Just as with any entity that appears and becomes an actor, the method of this thesis is to observe and follow, taking note of the associations between actors and the effects of these encounters.
[The Trail] wakes up rayi in us again and we wonder, which way did we go? I think it wakes up something deep inside us, which asks that question, where are we traveling? How are we going to live? Especially for young people now in their early 18, 19, 20’s.

As soon as you start to get connected to and realise how alive and multi-dimensional this country is, how much more it can give us, that is beneficial for our being human and contentedness, we wake up. And the Trail is only one little bit of the waking up process.

And the dream is that all those sites, song cycles, get connected, that we can walk this country and get feeling completely. Reading it, understanding it, being it and becoming part of it and then have no more drama wherever we go because we don’t feel lonely, we are with everything.

While the Western world is active, its late arrival to this place means that the spirit world has not been completely dismantled; it is still present, alive, holding together and doing the work of waking people up, including their rayi (inner spirit). Frans indicates that there is symmetry in the waking up, not only people, but also things in country are ‘waking up’. Frans indicates that there is symmetry in the waking up, not only people, but things in country are also being awoken (we are not told by what or whom). More metaphors for visibility emerge, this time in relation to things in country ‘standing up’ through the ‘waking up’ process.

Frans offers more answers to the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter: What are the actors on the Lurjarri Dreaming Trail and what are they doing? The country, a living, multi-dimensional and giving entity that includes ‘a full spirit world’, is ‘waking up’ people’s spirits, and provoking them to question how to live and to ‘see’ the country in new or different ways. In referring to the vast network of song cycles that criss-cross the Australian continent, Frans reveals that ‘waking up’ is connected to another big dream: that song cycles across the country become

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80 See Chapter 2, pages 8–9 and 44–45, and Appendix 2 for further descriptions of song cycles.
(re)connected and that people will walk them again, ‘feeling’, ‘reading’, ‘understanding’, ‘being with’ and ‘becoming part of’ everything. This dream aims to make song cycles present, known and experienced, but for whom? Frans does not specify or discriminate; he speaks collectively, implying that this dream applies to everybody.

There is yet more that the walkers of the Trail can ‘wake up’ to and hence, learn to ‘read’, ‘feel’ and ‘understand’. Although Frans does not call it animateness, there is something ever-present in the land which is ‘there’ (below the surface) all of the time, even if people are not yet aware of it.

It’s there everyday you walk out of your house. When you walk into a native area of bush, it’s there. And how do you relate to it? If you don’t relate to it, well then you’re on that platform world. When you fall through that platform world then all of a sudden you’re somewhere there. If you take your time to sit quiet, then everything all of a sudden says hello to you.

Here is an example of what John Law (2004, p. 2) describes as a reality that is elusive and slippery. Law (2004, p. 2) questions whether it is possible to know such realities, and if ‘knowing’ is the most suitable metaphor for generating understanding. Frans’ approach to comprehending this reality is to employ more metaphors to make these new, or unfamiliar worlds visible. Becoming quiet and allowing one’s self to go ‘beneath the surface’ enable communicative engagement with ‘everything’ in the non-human world. Frans approach is similar to the work of eco-philosopher, Freya Mathews (2003), stressing that the possibility of communicative engagement demands that the physical world is imbued with subjectivity and self-presence. Like Frans, Mathews (2007) also draws attention to a hidden or inner aspect of the world, stating that, ‘to find the world hidden within the world is to experience it nondualistically … as an opening of the ordinary world

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81 In relation to subjectivity and self-presence, Mathews (2003) asserts that, ‘all of reality has a subjectival dimension… [that is] matter, and all physical existence, is imbued with an inner principle that can be described in terms of subjectivity. Subjectivity is that field of self-presence out of which awareness springs’ (p. 73).
into poetic significance’ (emphasis added, p. 9). People on the Trail may not be crossing over a physical threshold, but some are transcending something – dualism. Going ‘beneath the surface’ is a metaphor for experiencing the world non-dualistically and of feeling connected. Through the ‘opening’ of the ‘ordinary world’ poiesis, action that transforms and continues the world, becomes apparent. According to Frans’ and Mathews’ approaches, a Trail walker’s inter-subjective encounters with the non-human world have the potential to be revelatory; as poiesis becomes visible, so do signs of a non-Western scientific cosmology that attributes agency to non-biotic aspects of country.

This next account from Frans makes further reference to two aspects of the world: one that is visible to walkers of the Trail (the physical) and another (the spirit) that can become known, present or experienced as it reveals itself, through a new actor, liyan.

The visible and the invisible world are one and the same, the trouble is we can’t see the invisible one. You can see the trees and the ocean and the beach, but we don’t really see the spiritual entity. Daytime it is always a little bit weak, but sundown time the spirit world starts waking up. It’s funny how we never see the other world, only one world.

Some of us can feel it and some by accident might see it. Everybody can feel it a bit through intuition, liyan, that there is something there. I mean if you always out in the bush, and we’re on the Song Cycle system, then definitely this country is going to check us out. The spirits will come in dreams, try you out, teach you.

You have to wake ‘em up more, that feeling, the seeing, the feeling, the seeing. Then we get more aware and we can feel.

It is as though Frans is taking heed of Benterrak, Muecke and Roe’s (1984, p. 13) call to continue the work of theorising ‘seemingly innocent’ words like ‘seeing’. The tangibility of the physical world affords trees, oceans and the beach their visibility; however, the spiritual (intangible) aspect remains hidden until it ‘wakes up’, or
people become aware of it (recall the earlier reference to the influence of the Western network, which was making the spirit world invisible). The Song Cycle system has the agency to investigate people who walk the country. Spirits from country are visiting and teaching people through dreams.

According to Frans, even if the spirit world goes unseen, people can feel that something is ‘there’ through their liyan (intuition). He emphasises becoming ‘more’ aware, so that the ‘feeling’ can become ‘seeing’. What walkers of the Trail feel and see has the potential to change them. The feeling and seeing walker is a different entity, altered by what they sense. Hence, both feeling and seeing are translations, products of awareness that are generated through the ‘waking up’ process.

Paddy and Frans write about the implications of these translations, stating that they go beyond the Song Cycle path:

Some people might come through [on the Trail] and have a great time and go on with their personal journey of life, not worry about this particular piece of land. But at least they have woken up to something in themselves that might be beneficial to them and to the land everywhere else they go to. If you get triggered off here to see one time, you will see everywhere. You won’t lose it (Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 27).

Far from temporary, Paddy and Frans suggest that the translations walkers undergo on the Trail are enduring, including ‘waking up’ an awareness that might be of value, not just to themselves but also to country.

Kimberley elder David Mowaljarlai presents another Indigenous perspective that resonates with that proffered by Roe and Hoogland. In his co-authored text with Jutta Malnic, David Mowaljarlai (1993) describes the encounters that emerge when a person awakens to the agency of country:

Your vision has opened and you start learning now. When you touch them, all things [in country] talk to you, give you their story. It makes you really surprised. You feel you want to get deeper, so you start moving around and
stamp your feet – to come closer and to recognise what you are seeing. You understand that your mind has been opened to all those things because you are seeing them; because your presence and their presence meet together and you recognise each other. These things recognise you. They give their wisdom and their understanding to you when you come close to them (pp. 53-54).

The kind of ‘vision’ or ‘seeing’ that Mowaljarlai refers to is not limited to the phenomenon of literal sight; it is also a somatic recognition of the agency within country. ‘Seeing’ this agency is a step towards mutual recognition and communicative engagement between people and country. If the Trail is performed as a cultural bridge, then the agency and multi-dimensional aspects of country are becoming visible (present, known and experienced) through the processes of ‘opening up’ and ‘waking up’, of becoming aware. Connection with country and successful enrolment into Paddy’s Dream relies upon people ‘seeing’ and relating to country in particular ways, and as pointed out by Jeanné in this next account, learning to ‘read’ the country in particular ways with the help of intermediaries.

It’s such spectacularly beautiful country. Walking through middens and having stories shared with you by Richard Hunter gives you some insight into the cultural heritage of the place. It really transforms your whole frame of looking at things that you probably wouldn’t ever have picked up on had you just been there alone. Travelling with someone who has that subtlety of reading country, you start being able to read where the water courses lie, what trees occur, where there’s water, where to look for the fruits, or different presences of birds or insects, things that you wouldn’t know. The longer you spend anywhere and the more familiar you become with anything, the more subtle your awareness of it becomes and you start to see what’s common and what’s characteristic and familiar and what’s unusual or what sticks out that’s not very common. You start tuning into wind and breeze and where the shade is and the sounds around you and I think you become a more sensory person in the bush.
A new intermediary appears – Richard Hunter, Paddy Roe’s grandson, Goolarabooloo senior lawman and storyteller for the Northern Tradition Song Cycle – making the country visible and transforming how walkers of the Trail see the country. Through Richard’s storytelling people begin to ‘read’ (see meaning) in the country and in turn, know things about the country (where to find water and fruits, what the presence of certain birds and insects means and what is unusual in the landscape). Richard builds on the work that Paddy did to open up the country; he uses stories to amplify the visibility of country. In doing so, he demonstrates the agency to make (hidden) relationships between entities in country visible.

Jeanné’s account also offers an example of the process of enrolment, in the ANT sense. By walking and listening to Richard tell stories on the Trail, a walker has the opportunity to ‘become a more sensory person in the bush’. This disposition, and perhaps identity, underpins the particular ways of ‘reading’ the country that Richard, other Goolarabooloo people and Jeanné advocate.

We have been following actors and observing translations on the Trail, watching walkers becoming connected with country in new ways, listening as they talk about the processes of ‘opening up’ and ‘waking up’, but they also speak about feeling.

4.3.3 Liyan: seeing through feeling and attunement

‘Feeling’ is a complex actor that appears in many stories and accounts in the research and as such, deserves further attention. The only way to distinguish the enactment of feeling on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail from the multiple performances of feeling that might be encountered elsewhere, is through the situated stories and accounts shared by the storytellers in this research. In turn, tracing the associations between actors, even abstract actors such as ‘feeling’, enables them to become better known and their connections apparent.

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82 Recall that enrolment, as defined by Callon (1986a), is a process of translation that involves the defining of roles.
To begin with, Jeanné continues her discussion of the translational process of ‘waking up’, this time in relation to ‘feeling’. By following the connection between the two concepts, she arrives at another actor that we have already been met in passing, *liyan*. *Liyan*, it turns out, is pivotal to the formation and maintenance of people–place connections on the Trail. Jeanné states:

> Waking up feeling was something Paddy used to talk about often. Your stomach energy, Goolarabooloo call it *liyan*, is your sense and feeling for things. It’s not in your head, it’s more of a gut feeling. When travelling together, walking through bush, people wouldn’t talk much, they would just walk in a line so that they could feel the energy field of the person in front. That’s a very distinct concept that the local people do experience and talk about, your intuitive awareness of the energy around you and your connection to other things. It’s not something that anyone in the West talks about very often, but it’s definitely something that the people here do talk about, the linkages between the group and the sense of when something’s wrong, or the sense of animals alerting you to something being wrong, or being open to the country to be the messenger.

Notice that there is something here that Jeanné is calling various things: a feeling, *liyan*, connectedness, a sense (of danger and other things), openness, intuitive awareness, and gut feeling. This elusive actor that people in ‘the West’ do not often talk about, is articulated and spoken about by the Goolarabooloo; it is named – *liyan* – and in doing so, it too is made (more) visible.

Jeanné is sure about what *liyan* is – one’s ‘sense and feeling for things’ – and likens it to ‘stomach energy’, ‘gut feeling’ and ‘intuitive awareness’. She also tells us who and what *liyan* associates with (Paddy, the Goolarabooloo, energy fields, groups, individuals and country), what work it does (connects people to other things, links people in a group and opens people up to communicative engagement with country) and how it is used (to walk through country in a certain way, connect to other things and sense danger). However, there are also clear signals about what *liyan* is not associated with – ‘the head’. Jeanné is not the only storyteller in the research to
speak about the importance of liyan; Paddy and Frans impress the significance of this actor, stating:

Everything is based on that feeling le-an, seeing through that feeling (Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 21).\(^{83}\)

Gaagudju elder Bill Neidjie (2002, p. 72) also notably writes about the significance of feeling in relation to one’s relationship with country:

I feel with my body, with my blood.
Feeling all these trees, all this country.
When this wind blow you can feel it.
Same for country,
You feel it.
You can look,
But feeling...that make you.

For Neidjie, feeling is sensorial, but it goes deeper than the skin; it is an act that enrolls the whole body. Feeling is constitutive and essential to meeting country’s presence.

Storytellers in the research are verbalising and articulating, to varying degrees, their embodied experiences of feeling, or liyan. But for most, this is no easy task. This is evident through a grasping at metaphors in an attempt to explain their sense of what liyan is and what it does. To this end, John Law (2004) suggests that metaphors are

a way of pointing to and articulating a sense of the world as an unformed but generative flux of forces and relations that work to produce particular realities (pp. 6-7).

Liyan continues to appear under different names. Illustrating the work of Law (2004), Tegan, a friend of the Goolarabooloo people and a volunteer and walker on

\(^{83}\) Le-an and liyan are the same entity, written in different orthographies.
the Trail, puts to use a new metaphor ‘linkage to the earth’ to describe her sense of *liyan*.

> When I breathe in I can feel this physical thing inside my chest, like some sort of linkage to the earth and to everything that’s growing on it. I see it in my head as being red dirt, but it’s so much more than that.

Tegan’s experience is deeply somatic, but not everything can be articulated. Even though she has a vision of what her connection to the earth may look like (like Jeanné she uses the term ‘linkage’), it is only partial. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that ‘conceptual metaphor is what makes abstract thought possible’ that it is ‘the very means by which we are able to make sense of our experience’ (p. 129). Metaphor allows Tegan to stretch out of a place constrained by not having the language to reflect her experience of country into a sense of what is possible: that she is connected to the earth. Metaphors ‘do work’ by carrying forward meaning and in this case, Tegan’s sense of connection to country. Part of country, even if it is only a ‘link’, exists inside of her.

Metaphors continue to be employed by the storytellers when speaking about *liyan*. In this next account from Frans, he uses the metaphor ‘drowning’ to demonstrate how *liyan* is a crucial part of bridging separations between people and country.

> You have to drown in it, become it, get connected through *liyan* to everything: trees, plants, the country itself. Everything in life got that feeling, the ground, trees, every area got different feeling. If you get connected to it, you’re still you, but you have become an integral part of everything. And when you have that, you don’t look at the separation of things. A rock is still a rock, but you’re not classifying it anymore. You connect through your feeling to everything.

> We are part of everything already, but we separate ourselves. You want to drown in it. You want to become that. You want to feel that. You want to be alive in that, but how? The mind it interferes. The mind wants to regulate it, give it a name. If you become part of that
[oneness] then your relationship becomes different. Then it is not just the mind giving it a name, then it’s your feeling connected to the feeling of that. It’s got to be an experience. When we all of a sudden get one experience of everything, that there’s nothing that isn’t alive, then we can see again. Then we can see the path in front of us. Then we can relate again.

Frans is saying that liyan is an important kind of feeling, and like Jeanné, reiterates that it does significant work by connecting people to ‘everything’ in country. However, he goes one step further and talks about how. In speaking about liyan, Frans describes a process of translation, through which people are connecting with other actors, becoming integrated into new networks, feeling a sense of oneness and seeing in new ways or ways that have been forgotten. To be able to feel through liyan is to ‘relate again’ to country. Otherwise expressed as feeling, liyan is symmetrical: everything has feeling, including people, trees, the ground and different places. Frans explains how mutuality is enacted between people and country, ‘it’s your feeling connected to the feeling of that’.

Jeanné, Frans and Tegan’s introduction of liyan as a complex actor that is central to Paddy’s Dream and people’s connections with country, beckons for it to be recognised in more of its manifestations, and examined closely for the work it does on the Trail.

Distinctions emerge as to who on the Trail is recognising and listening to their liyan. What Trail walkers might question, Paddy’s family and community know to be real. In the documentary Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World (1992), Frans sends a clear signal that a person’s liyan must not be ignored:

Liyan is like your intuition [but] how often do we listen to it? Now for the traditional people, that liyan … never get pushed away, that’s the first and last voice.

Liyan is firmly embedded in the networks within which the Goolarabooloo and many of their friends operate. In this next account, Tegan shows that she is overcoming
doubts over whether her liyan is real. She also demonstrates that once liyan is heard and acknowledged, it is ignored at a cost. Referring to liyan as intuition and feeling, Tegan states:

Slowly over time, I noticed within myself being able to feel my own intuition more. At first I could feel it, but I just didn’t realise that’s what it was. I would just go with what my mind thought and wouldn’t listen to the feelings because I guess that’s what we can be used to doing, just ignoring that. The feelings were stronger up here [on country], of this intuition and this guidance from the inside. Often when I [ignored them] something would go wrong, a car would break down, I wouldn’t enjoy myself or there would be a problem, time and time again. I picked up on that and realised that those are real feelings, they’re actually real intuition, whether they’re coming from the power of this place or yourself.

[I like] being here [on country], in a place where you can hear your intuition and have the space, time and natural awareness to take that on. You’re not overstimulated by city life. I’ve been using that more and more and have been much more connected with my feelings since being here. Connection to the land comes with being connected to your own feelings and understanding that as well. I’d never experienced that before being here.

Tegan affirms country as another important actor associated with liyan; it affords her things (space, time and natural awareness) that enable her to listen to her liyan. Country is compared with another big network – the city – which does the opposite, it overwhelms. For Tegan being on country amplifies liyan, it speaks more clearly, it can be heard. Tegan reveals that awareness of her own feelings is closely tied to her connection to the land; the more she uses her liyan, the more connected she becomes to her feelings, other people and the land. She comes to accept her liyan as real. About liyan, Glowczewski (1998) writes:

Once [you] start listening to [your] liyan, things become different, as if new connections were suddenly showing between all aspects of [your] life …
When you become receptive to your liyan everything seems to gain new meanings because you become aware of your connections (p. 1).

In grappling over whether her liyan is real and can be trusted, and through becoming aware of her connections with the land, Tegan begins to expose ontological work that she and other are performing on the Trail.

Unlike the hesitation expressed by Tegan, Brian says that not only is liyan real, it works. Country provides him and his family with food, as long as he has a good feeling in his liyan:

Country supply us, make family happy. I don't know how it works. Good feeling in your liyan. We'll never starve in this place.

It does not matter to Brian how liyan works, he just knows that it works because there is proof when he catches fish, stingray, turtle or goanna. Brian resists reducing liyan to a singularity despite its naming, and describes it also as something that he feels ‘through the ground’.

The complexities of liyan continue to unfold. Brian performs liyan as a place within the body that can perceive feeling, and feeling that he (and perhaps other animals too) can sense through country. Resonating with Frans’ earlier account that each place has its own liyan, including plants and trees, Brian describes liyan as a means through which people can connect their ‘feeling’ to the ‘feeling’ in country. This description leads to speculations as to whether liyan is a form of attunement.

ANT writer Annemarie Mol (2010) contributes to this speculation in her writing about the attunement of actors to each other:

Actors do not and cannot act alone: they afford each other their existence and their capabilities. This calls up an activity that resembles giving, while the term attuning stresses that receiving also involves activity. If an actor attunes to actors and entities around it, it attunes itself. Thus it becomes more sensitive and better capable of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling. But nobody
and nothing can attune itself to “the world” all alone. The world “itself” is involved in the process. In order to get attuned to, for instance, good food, in order to learn to taste it and appreciate it, a person needs the collaboration of such food (p. 265).

At a minimum, a person on the Trail needs the collaboration of country to be safe, fed and watered, yet, as demonstrated later in this chapter and thesis, a person’s collaboration with country might extend beyond these immediate material requirements. Mol employs the terms ‘giving’ and ‘receiving’ in explaining the mutuality of attunement. Feelings that people perceive in place, which may be referred to as liyan, are an effect of two actors – people and place – working in collaboration to attune to each other. On page 140, Jeanné is quoted as saying, ‘the country itself will come to know you, as a reciprocal thing and recognise your smell and offer you the nurturing that it offers its people’ and Frans makes this further contribution:

> Everything in country has liyan, feeling, and its own purpose. It’s hidden, but it comes alive when you’re with it.

According to Frans, the enlivenment of country and liyan is tied to the presence of people on country, suggesting that an attunement between people and place produces particular effects.

Paying close attention to liyan and the actors it associates with on the Trail has led to valuable insights about this complex actor. Storytellers’ use of metaphors to describe what liyan is and what it does (without turning it into a singularity), demonstrated that, as with the Trail, metaphors are doing important bridging work. In turn, these metaphors made visible processes of translation that are leading to the formation of people–place connections, and more specifically, people–country connections, whereby place is recognised as ‘country’.

As an example of conceptual language used on the Trail by Goolarabooloo people, their friends and volunteers, the term liyan has the potential to make particular ways of understanding and performing the world visible to people who are walking the
Trail for the first time. For example, to develop an understanding and recognisable experience of liyan is to enter into a relationship with ‘country’ (a multi-dimensional and agential entity) that is characterised by mutual recognition, reciprocity and communicative engagement. With new worlds and ways of ‘doing’ the world becoming visible, there are growing signs that ontological shifts are accompanying the formation of connections between people and country.

The storytellers in this research use the word liyan in varying ways to describe their relationships with country. As an expression of these relationships, liyan is performed in different ways – care, attunement, aliveness, presence, collaboration and reciprocity – offering further response to the first thesis question: ‘What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’

4.4 Hybridity: enacting people–place on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

Thus far, this chapter has identified and followed a number of actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, including Paddy’s Dream. By following the actors named by the storytellers in this research, processes of translation, such as ‘opening up’, ‘waking up’ and the work of liyan, have also been identified. Importantly, these processes are leading to the formation of new people–place connections on the Trail. Through these translations, country – a multi-dimensional and agential entity – is becoming present to, and known and experienced by non-Indigenous walkers on the Trail. At the same time, identities are transforming as non-Indigenous walkers of the Trail recognise that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

4.4.1 Shifting identities

Callon (1986a) argues that identities are negotiated between actors, that they are ‘formed and adjusted during action’ (p. 207). In this next account, Jeanné depicts the action though which she and other walkers of the Trail are re-negotiating their identities.
Over the first few days [of the Trail] people become quieter as they're walking, because there's just so much to take in. You can get away from all those phenomena that are town-based that keep you in your logic brain. You can get more into your intuitive awareness. I find that when I'm walking I sort of merge more with the place I'm in and I lose a sense of my own edges. Over time you become part of the whole thrum of everything that's in there, interacting together. You become one more element of that and that's something I love about living in the bush, you lose the sense of separation from where you are. You're just one little element within the whole gamut of everything and nothing is more significant that anything else. It's all important. It's all integrated and buzzing together.

You get away from that sense of separation that you are encouraged to have as a person, an ego, or an identity in the city. That really evolves over the course of the nine days of the Trail, the sense of identity of the groups as one mob, one being, one community. People lose the sense of their separateness and are much more engaged in the things they share together, whether it's meals, the stuff they see when they're out there, or the conversations they have. I think they become more integrated, more in the mode of seeing the links between each other or, being aware of everyone. You're not around mirrors, your mobile phone's gone flat, you're away from all those accoutrements that encourage you to keep seeing yourself as an individual or as a separate entity. And once you get free of a lot of that you've got nothing to hide behind or nothing to be distracted by and you're just there. It's just you and you're just there.

Jeanné and other walkers of the Trail are breaking away from, or needing to abandon at least some of their relationships with old networks ('town'), in order to see new connections, conceive of new identities and become part of new networks ('the Trail'). Jeanné illustrates how identities are fluid and shifting. Walkers of the Trail are busy performing a double-movement: getting ‘away from’, ‘free of’ and ‘losing’ associations with ‘town’ (and its actors), while ‘becoming’, getting ‘more into’ and ‘merging with’ the Trail (country and community).
Cars, streets, traffic lights, mirrors and mobile phones are part of the big town network working to keep people ‘separated’ and in their ‘logic brain’. However, Jeanné holds that people can distance themselves from these actors when on the Trail. For now, these actors do not intrude into the Trail network; they are confined to the big town or rendered ineffective on the Trail (mobile phones through a lack of electricity). Being on the Trail creates distance from this rival network, reducing the ability of accoutrements that come from the big town to isolate human actors. There is a promise that walkers can ‘get free’ of the big town if and when they liberate themselves from distractions and things associated with this network. The result is a possibility of being present, ‘you’re just there’.

Callon (1986a, p. 207) says that entities, including identities, are always being assembled (re-made) in the present, through different sets of associations. Jeanné has already begun to describe how in gaining distance from old networks (intentionally or coincidentally) old ties are weakening. She then goes on to explain how new associations and identities are forming: Trail walkers are becoming ‘more integrated’ and ‘one more element’ of everything. The work of various actors on the Trail (not always named) is translating identities that are tied to the big town, notions of individualism, isolation, separation and the ego, into identities that are based on new and different connections. Walkers are ‘merging’ with country and are being enrolled into a collective identity (one mob, one being, one community) through their shared experiences (walking, meals, conversations). The process of merging does not happen overnight; Jeanné says that it is an evolution over the course of the nine days and requires letting go of a sense of separation.

The renegotiating of identities also marks a shift away from dualistic subject-object relationships. Walking the Trail is lessening hard divisions between people and country. As merging occurs what constitutes ‘people’ and ‘country’ comes into question. Perhaps Jeanné is attempting to articulate a hybrid identity akin to people–
country.\footnote{Note that the use of the hyphen in ‘people–country’ in this instance is different from previous instances. Here it is specifically used to indicate a hybrid entity that transcends dualistic notions of ‘people’ and ‘place’.} Although writing in a different context,\footnote{Ruppert (2012) writes about identity categories in relation to the creation of census categories in Canada.} Ruppert (2012) describes the performance of hybridity in relation to identity, as a moment when ‘individuals [attempt to] assert new identification categories as a rupture and indicator of the divergence between the formal and informal categories and when new kinds of people or social beings start to emerge’ (p. 42). Jeanné may not be identifying formal/informal categories for new identities that are emerging on the Trail, but she is pointing towards the rupture of old formal categories of ‘people’ and ‘place’, which are defined in dualistic terms.

4.4.2 Purification and hybridity

Perhaps without realising it, Jeanné and the other storytellers are analysing particular processes of performing the world. Jeanné is not simply tracing the identity shifts of (some) Trail walkers. In recognising the dualism that inheres in many Western networks and the merging of people–country on the Trail, she is referring to what Latour (1993) calls purification and hybridity.

These processes of translation are enabling actors on the Trail (Goolarabooloo people, walkers, ancestors, spirits, camping places and water to name a few) to form what Latour (1993, pp. 10–11) calls ‘hybrids’ or ‘networks’. These hybrids, or networks as they have been referred to thus far in this chapter, are heterogeneous assemblages of ‘social’ and ‘natural’ entities (Latour 1993, pp. 10–11); they are akin to people–place/country networks.

In contrast, processes of purification create and maintain the separation of ‘social’ (human) and ‘natural’ (non-human) categories (Latour 1993, p. 10). Verran (1998) points out that in perpetuating ontological distinctions between human and non-human entities, purification:
keeps sorting things into ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, work that must be invisibly carried on to sustain the schema … [However, this schema] ‘blows out’ and becomes visible at the end of the twentieth century, especially to those involved in social studies of science and technology (p. 239).

Verran (1998) and Latour (1993, p. 10) associate purification with the ‘modern constitution’ and Western networks. Seeking to draw contrast between the ‘modern constitution’ and Indigenous Australian metaphysics, Law (2004, p. 133) claims that the ‘patterns of dualist separation’ that are present in these Western networks, are ‘almost entirely absent’ from Indigenous Australian cosmologies.

Processes of translation and purification, each of which reflects a distinct way of performing the world, are not only becoming visible to ‘those involved in social studies of science and technology’ (Verran 1998, p. 239), but also to walkers of the Trail. Both Jeanné and Emma demonstrated awareness of the separation of people from place in Western networks, and articulated the need for creating new categories by which to live. Writing in relation to Native Title in Australia, Verran (1998) argues that different and shared metaphors for ‘imagining new categories, and for reworking old categories in new ways’ (pp. 241-2) need to be conceptualised by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, in order to recognise ‘the myriad hybrid assemblages with which we constitute our worlds’ (p. 253). A denial of these hybrids, in the case of this thesis people–place, is to lapse into purification, to keep hardening the ‘social’ and ‘natural’ ontic categories (Verran 1998, p. 253). By renegotiating the ontological categories with which they see and relate to the world, non-Indigenous walkers of the Trail are taking seriously alternative, in this case Indigenous, ways of seeing and performing the world.

There is no one single way of performing the world. Everyone and everything is enacting the world in some way, either through processes of translation (enrolling entities and assembling networks/hybrids), purification (maintaining divisions), or both. Walkers of the Trail are performing a double act: they are becoming critical of how they are performing the world and are forming new ontological distinctions that recognise complex people–place networks associated with the Trail.
4.4.3 Not just a landscape: living country becomes visible

Adriana, a university student and first-time walker of the Trail, elucidates the transition she experienced in her conceptualisation of, and relationship with the land while on the Trail. The ontological categories ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ make way for new categories that are congruent with Adriana’s experience of ‘country’, affirming for her, the potential for country to be living, agential and relational. Here she talks about the transition that she observed in herself and others on the Trail.

I felt a shift. At the beginning it was just a buzz because everyone, especially my university group, didn’t know each other. Then throughout the middle I think a lot of people started feeling more meditative with themselves. I noticed people just sitting with themselves, having a [quiet] moment, which they may never get to do in the city. By the last night, everyone went to their peak where they were really feeling connected with everything around them. We’ve been able to come to the realisation that this isn’t just a one-off thing, it’s going to happen again. I know I’ll still have this connection.

I have a strong awareness [but] I haven’t been able to pinpoint what that feeling is. It’s like you are here in this present moment and you have nothing else to think about except being here. A lot of people here I’ve spoken to have this feeling that the land is no longer just a landscape, but has become a living entity for them, but they can’t describe in words what that actual feeling is. [For me] it’s the recognition that it’s not just a landscape anymore, it’s living. It’s a part of me and I’m also part of that cycle. [The Trail] is about reconnecting, not only with the people you walk with, but reconnecting with the land … sleeping on the beach, seeing the stars every night. It’s about placing a higher value on that.

Adriana makes multiple references to feeling in order to demonstrate her awareness that something significant was happening while she was on the Trail. Through walking the Trail and becoming present, Adriana perceives a shift in her place in the
world and to what she is connected. She is doing ontological work, making critical distinctions between how she previously and now relates to entities. The land is ‘not just a landscape anymore’; it is seen, and related to, as a ‘living entity’. Although she does not state it explicitly, Adriana’s distinction serves to critique the ‘out-thereness’ and subject-object dualism that inheres in some unquestioned conceptions of ‘landscape’.\(^{86}\) A change in her use of conceptual language, from the land as ‘landscape’ to ‘living entity’, demonstrates that Adriana (and potentially other walkers of the Trail as she suggests) is engaged in what Verran (1998) calls the re-imagining of ontic categories. She begins to recognise the hybrid assemblage people–place through palpable means and imagery that reflect the metaphors of co-constitution and merging with the land: ‘it’s a part of me and I’m also part of that cycle’. Adriana’s account affirms that people walking the Trail are imagining ‘new categories and [reworking] old categories in new ways’ (Verran 1998, pp. 241–242). By identifying herself in close connection with country (merging with it), and in shifting away from subject-object dualisms, Adriana is acknowledging people–country as an ontological category and is showing signs of ‘being with’, rather than merely being ‘on’ country.

Adriana’s statement also makes an important observation about other walkers of the Trail; not all walkers of the Trail can ‘describe in words’ the feeling that is associated with recognising the land as a living entity.\(^{87}\) Speculation over why walkers of the Trail were not able to articulate particular feelings in their coming to recognise ‘country’ might not be as valuable as knowing that for Adriana, there was an absence of articulation in the discussions that she was sharing with others. Such

\(^{86}\) Val Plumwood (2006)’s critique of the term ‘landscape’ as indicating a detached ‘colonizing gaze’ that produces the land as ‘passive, visually captured, something to distance from, survey and subdue’ (p. 123), is relevant to this instance. Also useful for examining the way in which the term landscape perpetuates dualistic relationships between people and place is Law’s (2004) use of the term ‘out-thereness’ which he defines as ‘the apprehension, common in Euro-American and many other cosmologies that there is a reality outside or beyond ourselves’ (p. 162).

\(^{87}\) This inability to articulate this ‘feeling’, or what could be an ontological shift, may be due to a number of factors: 1) there was not enough time or an inclination to reflect on this experience; 2) the feeling cannot be conceptualised; 3) there is an inability to make the implicit explicit; 4) the vocabulary to articulate such experience is absent; and 5) there is an uns sureness of how to approach this different/strange relationship with country.
absence may have played its own role in the story that Adriana chose to share in this research and the linguistic resources that she drew upon to do so.

In Adriana’s description of becoming aware of her relationality with the land, she uses the term ‘reconnection’ to allude to connections that were lost or forgotten. Her reconnection with the land (not just the country along which the Trail is walked, but more universally) is attributed to her experiences of walking, sleeping on the beach and seeing the stars while on the Trail. In speaking for herself and others, Adriana affirms that connections with country will endure beyond the Trail experience: ‘We’ve been able to come to the realisation that this isn’t just a one-off thing, it’s going to happen again. I know I’ll still have this connection.’ Potentially Adriana is one of the people to whom Roe and Hoogland’s (1999) statement about the endurance of some people’s connections with country after they leave the Trail applies.

Some people might come through and have a great time and go on with their personal journey of life, not worry about this particular piece of land. But at least they have woken up to something in themselves that might be beneficial to them and to the land everywhere they go to. You won’t lose it… As long as [you] get triggered off, [you] gets that connection again (p. 27).

Adriana’s experience of the land and her naming it as a living entity has introduced us to another actor and potentially vast network associated with the Trail, ‘living country’. She is, as we have seen, not the only walker of the Trail to question pre-existing, Western-based notions of the land and recognise the land as agential. Angela, another first-time walker of the Trail, spoke about how the use of particular conceptual language on the Trail caused a shift in how she saw and related to the land.

I remember having a conversation with Frans where I used a word like wilderness, implying the objectification of the country and he said to me, ‘It’s living country.’ And that to me was the task [of the Trail], getting people to understand that this country is filled with life and stories, as opposed to the notion of a vastness that needs to be filled. The way he said it [prompted] a mind switch where [I thought],
well of course it is! It resonated because I could sense it on Trail, but I hadn't really got to the point where I was actually thinking, this is how we talk about it now, living country.

Like Jeanné, who critiqued the concept of land being ‘pristine’ when it is without human presence, Angela recognises the power in how people speak about entities; words like ‘wilderness’ have the agency to create images of ‘a vastness that needs to be filled’. ‘Living country’ became a reality for Angela, not just because Frans used this word and distinguished it from ‘wilderness’, but because ‘it resonated… [she] could sense it on Trail’.

Living country is becoming present, known and experienced by walkers of the Trail; however, they did not arrive at this point overnight. Critical processes of translation (‘opening up’, ‘waking up’ and the work of liyan) are leading to new ways of seeing and relating to the land. By identifying and naming ‘living country’, and in comparing this notion of ‘the land’ or ‘place’ to alternative constructions (e.g. ‘wilderness’), walkers of the Trail are making visible the networks to which they are becoming enrolled and performing: the Trail, living country and potentially, Paddy’s Dream.

The appearance of living country (as an entity and network that is closely associated with the Trail) through the accounts and stories of walkers of the Trail, offers an opportunity to continue following previously identified actors and the possibility of meeting more.

Frans described living country as a multi-dimensional and giving entity, where ‘everything’ in country is doing work, including telling stories and holding memories. He recounted how Paddy used storytelling as an invocation to make living country known to walkers on the Trail. During a night of storytelling, Paddy shared a story about a dugong. The next day, a dugong popped up amongst the group who were swimming in the ocean. To use Frans’ words, country was saying ‘hello’. According to Frans, living country responded to Paddy’s invocation and in the process, demonstrated to walkers of the Trail that it was listening. In ‘standing up’,
on this occasion through the appearance of the dugong, living country became present, experienced and known by walkers of the Trail.

Frans spoke about different ways of connecting to living country, including through dreaming, sitting and walking. He emphasised people’s accessibility to the spiritual dimension and Bugarrigarra while on living country, saying, ‘It’s here for everybody to connect with.’ Frans described living country as ‘land that is walked and travelled through’. The walking of the Trail enables people to continue to follow the Song Cycle path as they move through country, from one traditional buru (camping place, spiritual country) to another. Knowledge and systems emerging from Bugarrigarra and the Song Cycle tell people which buru to use in each of the six seasons. Frans also explained that the Song Cycle and country are organised into different sites (men’s and women’s, increase), places (water, emanation) and grounds (ceremonial and law), each with their own particular purpose.

Through Frans’ description, living country appears not as a singular entity, but as an assemblage of heterogeneous actors, a people–place network.

Frans continued to illustrate what this network does and with whom and what it associates. He invoked even more of its actors (in this case, ancestors) to affirm the agency of living country and its effect on people.

When you walk through living country that is subject to the law and culture of a song cycle, you have a chance to get influenced by it, get dreams from it, get some experiences. You’re in contact with thousands and thousands of people before you … you’re walking through the whole spirit world. If people go into a church for a couple of hundred years, the church will take up some spiritual entity. But here, this goes on for thousands of years. The living spiritual entity is embodied in the land. It’s important to learn from it and keep it alive.

Much of the Indigenous ecological knowledges the Goolarabooloo community shares on the Trail is done so with reference to the six seasons: mangala (rainy), marul (hot and humid), wiralburu (the first south-east winds start to blow), barrgana (dry, cool sea and nights), wirlburu (warming up) and larja (build up).
To walk through living country is to make contact (consciously or not) with generations of ancestors. The spirit world is another important set of actors, helping living country to teach and give people dreams and experiences. Whilst country gives to people, there are responsibilities that draw people into a relationship of reciprocity with country. Brian offers this insight into the relationship of reciprocity that he shares with living country:

When we go on country we make it more alive … you feel spirit, you feel power.

For Brian, being there, present with country, helps to enliven both he and the country.

4.5 Summary

By following the actors that appear in the stories and accounts shared by members of the Goolarabooloo community and walkers of the Trail, this chapter set out to explore the research question: ‘What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’

The performance of relationships between people and place, and more specifically, ‘country’, became apparent through these stories. Liyan emerged as an important word (and actor) for the storytellers, who used it to render visible their particular relationships with, and experiences of country. Liyan enabled people and country to perform relationships of care, to attune, and collaborate with each other. People associated with liyan the ability to perform acts of reciprocity with country. Hence, in responding to the thesis question above, it is critical to highlight that both people and country are active in the performance of this relationship.

While Goolarabooloo and many of the non-Indigenous storytellers identified ‘country’, or ‘living country’, as the distinct ontological entity with which they were engaging, not all non-Indigenous walkers of the Trail related to place as ‘living country’, in the first instance. The different conceptions of ‘place’ that appeared
through these stories and accounts included, place as ‘pristine with no human footprint’, a ‘landscape’ and ‘wilderness’, with each term reflecting its own (and potentially multiple) meanings and ontologies. For some walkers of the Trail, their Western-centred ways of ‘seeing’ and naming place, along with the relationships that these ways of ‘seeing’ imply, were challenged by their engagement with Indigenous perspectives, and through their direct engagement with place. Subsequent shifts in ‘seeing’ and naming place were catalysed by processes of translation, leading first-time Trail walkers like Adriana and Angela to ‘see’ and relate to place as ‘living country’. Other storytellers used metaphors (‘opening up’ and ‘waking up’) and the term liyan, to signal these translations, which amounted to ontological shifts.

In effect, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail was being performed as a cultural bridge; it was supporting walkers of the Trail to expand critically their Western-centred view of ‘the land’ (including the notions of ‘landscape’ and ‘wilderness’), to incorporate alternative (Indigenous) perspectives (the land as ‘living country’) into their worldviews. For some non-Indigenous walkers of the Trail, these deep shifts were also accompanied by the re-negotiation of their identities: from individualistic and separate from place, to collective and through unity with place.

The relevance and necessity of people–country relationships (connections) on the Trail emerged through the invocation of Paddy Roe’s Dream: a vision to look after and protect the country for which he was custodian. This Dream enrolled a heterogeneous assemblage of human and non-human actors (Paddy’s family and friends, spirits in country, country and walkers of the Trail) to ensure that the country would be looked after in perpetuity, and relied upon a number of key processes of translation to do so: the country was ‘opened up’ so that it could be made ‘visible’ to walkers of the Trail, so that in turn, walkers themselves could ‘open up’ a receptivity to ‘see’, ‘read’, and experience reciprocity with and the aliveness of country. In addition, the storytellers spoke about the importance of a person’s liyan (as intuition and feeling) being awoken (by walking the country and through the agency of the spirit world), to enable them to attune to and connect with the liyan (feeling) present in country.
Meanwhile, in relation to the manifestation of Paddy’s Dream, Goolarabooloo people were performing the important roles of guides and intermediaries in relation to these transitions, in effect, helping walkers on the Trail to ‘see’, ‘read’ and connect with country. At the same time, reciprocal acts of care and enlivenment between Goolarabooloo people and country, whereby *liyan* and ‘being with’ country play a critical role, surfaced as a means of maintaining people–country connections, a subject that is central to Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Staying connected

5.1 Introduction

Where the previous chapter illuminated processes of translation, through which people–country connections are being formed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, the aim of this chapter is to explore if these people–country relationships, expressed here as connections, are enduring, and if so, how. It also explores the second thesis question: ‘What work are stories doing in the performance of relationships on the Trail?’

John Law (2009) contends that maintaining connections is a precarious process that requires ongoing work, whereby, ‘All elements need to play their part moment by moment or it all comes unstuck (p. 146). Accounts shared by Jeanné, Brian and Frans in Chapter 4 began to demonstrate that reciprocal ties between human and non-human actors are required to maintain people–country connections, including the network ‘living country’. Mutual recognition and communicative engagement between people and country (through the help of liyan) were seen doing some of this important work. In this chapter, some previously identified actors (Goolarabooloo people, walkers of the Trail, liyan, feeling, rayi, spirits and living country) and others not yet introduced (storytellers on the Trail, stories, Bugarrigarra and the Gas), help to illustrate the precarious nature of maintaining people–country connections on the Trail. On this topic, Law (2009) contends that ‘All it takes is for one translation to fail and the whole web of reality unravels’ (p. 145).

Both Law and Latour urge the ethnographer to pay attention to the minute interactions between actors if they are to gain insight into how networks endure. Towards this end, ANT writers Fenwick and Edwards (2010) state that it is only by examining

the individual nodes holding these networks together, [that one can see] how these connections came about and what sustains them (emphasis added, p. 9).
Taking heed of the advice given by these four ANT writers, this chapter applies to four ethnographic narratives the method of watching closely the minute interactions that occur at ‘the individual nodes’ that connect actors, to respond to the thesis questions: ‘What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’ and ‘What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?’

Further insights from the ANT writers are applied to make sense of these four ethnographic stories, including Law’s (1999) concept of network architecture, Latour’s (1987) observations on strong and weak ties, and Akrich’s (1992) articulation of performance as a co-constitution. As in Chapter 4, Indigenous and eco-philosophy perspectives are brought into the discussion of the stories to highlight the significance of the events storied on the Trail. In addition, perspectives from Theory U are also drawn upon.

The passage into these four ethnographic narratives is through the cracks that appear when controversies arise. Anthea Nicholls (2009) says that this ‘is when and where you see how networks are assembled and at what cost’ (p. 215). Latour (1987), who first wrote about being led by controversy to the strong and weak links of a network, affirms that it is during times of contention that people

look for stronger and more resistant allies, and in order to do so, they may end up mobilizing the most heterogeneous and distant elements, thus mapping for themselves, for their opponents, and for the observers, what they value most, what they are most dearly attached to (p. 205).

Through the challenges of holding together people–country connections associated with the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, actors ‘map out’ these connections, as well as their nature and strength. In turn, making apparent how Paddy’s vision to protect the country in perpetuity might be realised.

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89 See pages 103–104, 103 and 96 (consecutively) of Chapter 3 for an introduction to these ANT concepts.
5.2 Story 1: Feeling part of something bigger

ANT logic affirms that as an ethnographer, there is no escaping being a generative participant in research. During my fieldwork particular occurrences captured my attention, some more strongly than others, leaving me with a sense that something significant was being revealed. What began as an intuition kept pulling at my attention, beckoning me to follow, even if it was elusive and difficult to articulate. This ethnographic story was seeded by my own embodied experience of a storytelling event at a place called Minariny, during Goolarabooloo elder Richard Hunter’s last walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail in the role of storyteller. In this story I draw upon the accounts of Dallas, a walker on the Trail, Sharyn, a volunteer and walker, and insights from Richard, the storyteller on the Trail, to make sense of this happening and its implications for people staying connected with place. The story begins with my own personal account of this event, written while I was walking the Trail.

5.2.1 Under the *baragool* tree

Day 7

It was the final long walking day of the Trail. Our group – consisting of over 60 Trail walkers, Goolarabooloo guides and volunteers – arrived at Minariny in the heat of the late afternoon and sought shelter under the shade of a sprawling old *baragool* tree. Perched high on the sand dune and one of only a few *baragool* that grow along the Lurujarri coast, Frans referred to this tree as a *mamara*; a tree inhabited by the spirits of ancestors.

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90 Minariny is a traditional camping place along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle.
91 Red gubinge tree (*Terminalia ferdinandiana x petiolaris*). The red gubinge is commonly thought of as a hybrid between the *marool* and *gubinge* trees; however, Frans poses a different theory. He suggests that the red gubinge is the original tree and a metaphor for oneness.
92 Frans also says that trees that grow well outside of their usual habitats are called *mamara*. They are manifestations of spirit that can affect people.
The sounds of the group faded as Richard, in his characteristically quiet voice, began to tell a story about his mothers, Margaret and Teresa, and how their rayi came from this country. As Richard’s storytelling unfolded, I sensed a shift in the feeling amongst our group, as though the density of that moment had changed and something bigger was taking us in. Later, as our group descended the sand dune, crossed Minariny creek and set off walking up the beach, I fell into step with Dallas. He turned towards me and without hesitation asked, ‘Did you just feel that back there?’

Whilst Richard’s storytelling was assembling actors that could be named and perhaps seen, including his mothers and their rayi (spirits), listeners, the sand dunes and the baragool, both myself and Dallas sensed another less tangible actor.

Months later, during a conversation via Skype, Dallas recalled that particular storytelling event under the baragool.

I remember it vividly. [It wasn't just the story] it was also the context of Richard’s story, in that we’d had so many stories leading up to that. I remember Frans saying to me, ‘Too much talking, not enough walking.’

He went on to explain Frans’ statement, recalling a perceptible shift in the quality of the listening amongst the walkers of the Trail over the course of our journey. Walkers became quieter through their walking, listening and tuning into to the silences in Richard’s storytelling and moved into a receptive space that Dallas referred to as ‘deep listening’. Dallas linked his own experience of deep listening to his liyan and to ‘being and listening to country’. For Dallas, the pauses in Richard’s storytelling were a powerful and palpable silence, holding stillness and connection, in which he felt a ‘life force’.
Sitting with Sharyn in the lagoon near Nununggurrugun a few months later, she recalled lucid memories of the event. Sharyn described a powerful presence and something becoming manifest under the *baragool*.

When Richard was sharing with us there was something really magical [happening] at that point. He was sharing about his mothers and telling us it was their *rayi* county. I almost thought, am I worthy enough to hear this? I was one of the last people to get to that tree and it was almost like there was this holding. Richard was holding this space, like the masters do, you know those enlightening masters that you meet in your travels? It was like that. There was this holding there under that tree and it was so strong for me, I couldn’t actually sit near Richard, I had to go and sit right over the back. I had to keep a distance in a way, because it was so powerful. There was a very strong feeling.

That was like the penultimate [sic] moment of Trail underneath that tree, the fact that we’d all walked the Trail, I can’t even put this into words, it was like everyone’s intention of walking county and learning about country seemed to almost come into matter there. I could actually feel that we’d, that I’d walked on this [Song Cycle] and I’d added to it. I’d had something to do with its continuance.

Sharyn attempts to articulate her felt sense of this happening: it is enchanted and akin to a powerful sense of holding, the latter of which she attributes to Richard’s gifted abilities and ‘a very strong feeling’. As Sharyn goes further into describing her sense of being part of something bigger than herself and the group, she arrives at a generative process: intentions are becoming manifest and the Song Cycle is being maintained. Sharyn may not be referring to Bugarrigarra by name, but she is alluding to it by invoking co-creative processes that are associated with it. Through walking and learning on country, Sharyn, and she implies the others present, are active participants in generative processes on country, including ‘adding to’ the Song Cycle and aiding its continuance.

93 Given the gravity that Sharyn places on this moment, it is likely that she means the ultimate moment of the Trail.
Dallas also spoke about generative process, making reference to knowledge shared by Richard while on the Trail.

Richard spoke about how for [Goolarabooloo], Bugarrigarra and creation is directly linked to the stories, which are directly linked to that country … how we are part of the creation … that we’re all part of [something] that is bigger than all of us.

Aside from making visible direct links between Bugarrigarra, stories and country, the wisdom shared by Richard with Dallas and the other walkers of the Trail, confirms Sharyn’s sense that she was contributing to a co-creative process, or as Law (2009, p. 146) might state, an actor playing her part in a network, and in the process, maintaining important people–country connections.

5.2.2 Sensing the unseen

Described in his account as deep listening, Dallas’ receptivity to the more subtle presences in country did not come about spontaneously, it developed over time. Both Dallas’ receptivity and Sharyn’s ability to perceive a sense of ‘holding’ under the *baragool* tree, signal that they were becoming aware of their part in something bigger than themselves. Law’s (2004) personal account of a Quaker worship meeting sheds light on the important work that is going on here. The ‘centred’ silence that was present and manifest in the Quaker meeting, helped to disassemble amongst those gathered ‘the everyday habits of selfhood – the sense of being an individual with a distinct and separate identity’ (p. 115). Accounts of such ‘dissolving’ were presented in Chapter 4,94 where people’s experiences of walking the Trail were challenging and disassembling old identities tied to notions of individualism and separation, and leading to the formation of new identities based on a sense of oneness with people and place. Through the deep listening and within the ‘holding’, Dallas and Sharyn were sensing something that was beyond their selfhood. It took a week of practices being assembled (becoming quiet, walking in silence, tuning-in to

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94 See pages 162–163.
country, storytelling and deep listening) for them to ‘detect and amplify particular patterns that would otherwise be below the threshold of detectability’ (Law 2004, p. 116). Similar to Law, Senge et al. (2004) assert that ‘there is always much more than we [can] “see”’ (p. 27). More exists than is being revealed and even when more is revealed, there is still more that exists.95

Speaking about experiences that inhere deep listening, or as he refers to it, presencing,96 systems scientist Peter Senge (2014) identifies a limitation in how instances, such as those described by Dallas and Sharyn, might be approached:

If we just hold it at an individual level we would experience it as mysterious, because it’s beyond the capacity of our individual awareness to hold, construct, maybe even sense at some level.

Senge (2014) advocates that presencing is a collective process through which a group of people can sense that which is seeking to emerge, as demonstrated by Sharyn in her account: ‘everyone’s intention of walking country and learning about country seemed to almost come into matter there’.

Generative practices such as deep listening enabled Dallas and Sharyn to become aware of things that might typically be ‘below the threshold of detectability’ (Law 2004, p. 116) and perceive a connection with something bigger than themselves. For Sharyn that ‘something bigger’ was co-creation and the Song Cycle.

95 In Senge et al. (2004) Joseph Jaworski writes that ‘When people are really connecting to one another and to their larger reality, there’s a different feeling in the room. I’ve learned to trust the visions that arise in this space. It’s not that you see it all completely clearly. But you feel the presence of this larger intention, and you just need to work with it. In a sense, real visions are uncovered, not manufactured’ (pp. 132–133).

Still intrigued by the flowing together of Dallas and Sharyn’s accounts and their resonance with my own experience, I decided to query Richard about this particular storytelling event under the red gubinge tree. On a return visit to Broome, I asked Richard what walkers of the Trail, including myself, might have perceived under the red gubinge tree that day. He said that Minariny is a very old camping place where people can feel spirit rising up from the ground. He finished by stating, ‘In Minariny we can feel Bugarrigarra.’

By just being there, in Minariny, Bugarrigarra and spirits can be felt. Yet, for walkers of the Trail who may not be as familiar with these actors as Richard and his Goolarabooloo family, sensing the unseen is only part of knowing and understanding the country. Sometimes the process of making something visible (present, known and experienced), especially connections felt, requires the help of stories, as is seen in the following story.

5.3  Story 2: The power of story

For many years it was Richard Hunter who told Bugarrigarra stories on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. His storytelling was an invitation for walkers on the Trail to inhabit Bugarrigarra, the telling of each story in the place that it invoked prompting the listener to imagine and trace through the landscape the paths of ancestral spirit beings as they transmogrified into physical form. As Paddy Roe (1983) stated in his book Gularabulu, the sharing of these stories with non-Indigenous people was in part, to increasing the visibility of he and his people (perhaps he is also enrolling non-human entities into this collective); in Paddy’s words, so that white people ‘might be able to see us better than before’ (p. i).

However, standing atop the sand dunes at Dabardabagun on the first afternoon of the Trail, it was not Richard, but his nephew Terence who nervously began to share

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97 Recall that in Chapter 4 Frans said that Paddy made Bugarrigarra accessible (through being with country, walking, dreaming, sitting), so that walkers of the Trail could experience it.

98 Dabardabagun is the first emanation site along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, from which the ngadjayi ancestral spirits beings emerged in the Bugarrigarra process. It is located in what is now referred to as Minyirr Park in Broome.
the story of the first people, the *ngadjayi*, who emerged from the nearby reef in spirit form. It was Terence’s first time as a storyteller on the Trail, his uncle Richard having recently retired from the role. A few days later, from our camping place at Murdurdun, Terence spoke about coming into this role.

For a long time I was waiting for my chance to start telling stories, but my first time telling the [ngadjayi people] story I was very nervous, that’s why I was a bit emotional at one point. I felt like someone was there with me, saying, *just keep going.*

My great, great-grandfather Paddy Roe, wanted to teach the wider community about Aboriginal culture and stories. Stories are passed down through my uncles and my uncles passed that knowledge down to me, so I’m very proud to keep his legacy going. My fondest memories would be of my uncle Richard telling his stories. I love the way he goes about it, just the way he moves his hands and his facial expressions.

Before Richard retired as storyteller, he shared valuable insights into the significance of stories, saying that they are a way to pass on knowledge about country and culture and help people to ‘make connection with the country.’ The potential for stories on the Trail to do work, including the forging of connections between people and country, became increasingly apparent to me and other walkers of the Trail, as our journey unfolded, however, for unanticipated reasons.

Something interesting was happening at the places in country where Richard had previously shared Bugarrigarra stories. There was a noticeable hesitation from Terence and the other first-time storytellers, who appeared unconfident in taking on this role. So rather than stories being told in these places, the group (Goolarabooloo guides and walkers of the Trail) kept walking through, albeit with brief rest stops. With each day that the journey along the Trail progressed, the storytelling became more infrequent and the walkers of Trail more wanting of these stories. On occasions when Terence or another storyteller Brian (who spoke in Chapter 4) would share a

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99 Murdurdun is a traditional camping place along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle.
story, the silence amongst the Trail walkers was palpable; it was as though they were drinking in every word that was being uttered.

Some interpreted the shift in storytelling practices from past years as a ‘lack’. People who had walked the Trail on other occasions were taking note of the change and first-time walkers had expectations about storytelling on the Trail that were not matching their expectations. Here, second-time Trail walker and volunteer Emma (whom appeared in Chapter 4), articulates her disappointment:

I found it really sad we didn't have [all] the stories, because it just felt like walking through the landscape and there’s so many meaningful things that you need to get. A lot of people were there to hear the stories. At the start I was really disappointed and really sad and I expressed that to people. I said, “Look, I’m so sorry, but there should be beautiful stories here, I don’t know what’s happening this year on the Trail.” I just felt that we missed an important part of connecting because of the lack of stories.

Likely prompted by her previous experience of walking of the Trail, Emma recognised that stories had the potential to do important work on the Trail: help her and others to make meaning about, and connect with country. In my conversation with Terence at Murdurdun, he affirmed that telling Bugarrigarra stories on country was central to him and his family maintaining connections with country.

Us Goolarabooloo people are very connected to those Bugarrigarra stories. [We’re] always in our stories … when we’re sitting ‘round the campfire, even if we’re not doing Trail, we’ll be always telling ‘dem stories, to our kids, nieces, nephews, so we are always in our stories. Bugarrigarra stories are very special to us. When you are telling those stories, you just feel connection to country and kids sit down and want to listen. Yeah, move them away from that life in town, technology. They just want to sit, listen and connect to country, like we’re sitting here today. [The kids] are all lying on the beach and running around. Back to country, connected, back to country again. Get away from town for a week, maybe two and then go back to town alive.
Sharing Bugarrigarra stories on country, away from town and technology, holds great significance for Terence and his family. It is an ongoing practice that is integral to maintaining their relationships with country and to each other. Furthermore, Terence illuminates the important link between stories and place, or more specifically, that stories are places, through his statement, ‘we are always in our stories.’ While philosopher Edward Casey (1993, p. xvi) makes a case for ‘embodied implacement’ arguing that ‘we are in place primarily by means of our own bodies’, Terence’s account suggests that he is emplaced not only through being in and with place, but also through storytelling.

Without storytellers sharing stories about the country, a weak tie emerged in the Trail as a people–country network. Although this was not observed as a failure of the entire network, Law (2009) cautions that ‘All it takes is for one translation to fail and the whole web of reality unravels’ (p. 145). For a network to endure, ‘all elements need to play their part moment by moment’ (Law 2009, p. 146).

The events that lead on from this point demonstrate how actors on the Trail played their part to heal the network (Nicholls 2009, p. 214) around these weak links.

A desire for more stories amongst walkers of the Trail was visible in their flocking around interpretive signs (see Figure 5) keen to learn about Bugarrigarra and the six seasons along the Song Cycle. Located at key sites along the Trail, these signs held the attention of noticeably more walkers on this journey along the Trail, than on previous occasions. Having been relatively subdued up until this point, the expectations of walkers, that the Goolarabooloo should share more stories, began to surface more abruptly in conversations. People wanted the country they were walking through to be made meaningful through stories; they wanted to see the country through the lens of Bugarrigarra. This search for stories lead Trail walkers to Frans and volunteers on the Trail, with the hope that they might be able to find stories about the country somewhere. In lieu of the appointed storytellers sharing stories, other people, even objects (recall the interpretive signs), were performing this

100 Akarre woman Margaret Kemarre Turner (2010, p. 46) emphasises that a person must know and live ‘inside’ their Story (as in Dreaming stories) in order to be able to protect the story and the country.

101 Other authors, whilst referring to the same or similar concept, use the word emplacement.
role. Uncomfortable in the role of storyteller, Frans explained that he was proactively trying to support the Goolarabooloo family to continue this role. He acknowledged, however, that some concessions could be made:

I had to talk for many years on this Trail and I don’t really like doing it.
I want some of the family to talk. But, I suppose I can talk from my own experience.

At Wirriginymirri\textsuperscript{102} a volunteer on the Trail emerged from a Toyota troop carrier with a box of old Lurujarri Heritage Trail brochures (see Figure 6). Stained yellow with mildew and torn along the folds, these pamphlets had miraculously endured two decades of Kimberley wet seasons in storage. Bugarrigarra stories told through the brochures were poured over, the words quietly recited in their reading, before they were safely filed away into people’s travel journals and notebooks.

Further along the Trail at Walmadany\textsuperscript{103} camp, we were greeted by a large tent embassy,\textsuperscript{104} and Trail walkers came across another discursive object: a large poster board about Paddy Roe (see Figure 7) which formed part of a larger display about the Song Cycle. In addition to Paddy’s Dream, which Paddy’s family often invoked during the Trail, the poster board also gave Paddy agency on the Trail, this time through a material assemblage of laminated colour photos, a printed copy of his obituary and statements that he had made about looking after country. These included the words, ‘We must hold this land … We must hold it. For all of us’. Paddy was finding ways to ‘speak’ through new material assemblages, in this instance to tell walkers of the Trail and his family to stay connected, to keeping hold together people–country.

\textsuperscript{102} Also known as Willie Creek.

\textsuperscript{103} Walmadany is a traditional camping place along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle path.

\textsuperscript{104} In response to the presence of Woodside Energy on country, Goolarabooloo law bosses established a tent embassy at Walmadany on the 14th September, 2011. As well as the town of Broome and a community blockade at the corner of the Manariny-Cape Leveque Roads, the Walmadany tent embassy was a gathering place for community action to protect the Song Cycle path from the proposed Browse LNG Precinct.
Figure 5: One of the many interpretive signs located along the Lurjarri Dreaming Trail. Image source: Author.

Figure 6: An original Lurujarri Heritage Trail brochure endures decades of wet seasons and resurfaces on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Image source: Author (brochure produced by WA Heritage Committee 1988).
It is not unusual for walkers of any trail to seek interpretive materials in lieu of human guides. Writing on the use of discursive tools by walkers along the Spanish Camino de Santiago, Slavin (2003, pp. 14-15) emphasises that discursive objects (maps, guidebooks, pamphlets and signage) narrate journeys in very particular ways and in effect, spatialise time and place. The types of interpretive materials walkers engage with, whether they are on the Camino de Santiago, or on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, lead to nuanced effects. Stated in ANT terms, each performance of a Bugarrigarra story, whether the performance enrolls objects or human storytellers, signifies a distinct material assemblage of actors, which in turn generate their own set of effects. It cannot be assumed that the effects of different storytelling networks will be the same.

If the intended effects of telling Bugarrigarra stories were to help people to learn about country and the culture of the Goolarabooloo people, and to help people to form connections with the country, are the new material arrangements that are performing Bugarrigarra stories on the Trail generating the same effects?
Despite the changes in material assemblages around storytelling practices, and with questions looming about the effects generated by these new assemblages, Bugarrigarra stories were finding ways to keep being told, and walkers of the Trail were finding some information or interpretation no matter how insubstantial or inadequate in their eyes.

Puzzled by the occurrences on Trail, I returned to research notes of an earlier conversation, during which I asked Richard where the Bugarrigarra stories he tells on the Trail come from when he is sharing them. He said that the spirit of living country speaks through him when he tells these stories. Richard said that he speaks for country because, ‘Who else is going to speak for him? Otherwise he get destroyed.’\footnote{105} If there was any doubt that the storytelling practices on the Trail were a collaboration between multiple actors, including people and country, Richard puts an end to these speculations.

Yet, even without Richard, Bugarrigarra stories keep moving, finding new spokespeople and material forms of production through which to perform: new storytellers Terence and Brian, Frans, past walkers and volunteers on the Trail, interpretive signs, pamphlets and poster boards are all being enrolled into Bugarrigarra storytelling practices and ‘play[ing] their part moment by moment’ (Law 2009, p. 146) to help hold together these practices, and in turn people–country.

Shortly after our group completed walking the Trail, I shared a cup of tea with Frans at his Millibinyarri home. Looking out to the Indian Ocean with families of brolgas flying overhead, he and I pondered the events that had unfolded on the Trail with regards to people searching out stories. Speaking here about the walkers on the Trail, Frans said,

> They were hungry for something … I was sitting there and somebody asked me a question and we started talking. Then they

\footnote{105 In his description of George Dyungayan’s nurlu (song-poetry) originating from the same song cycle as the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, Stuart Cooke (as cited in Dyungayan 2014, p. 24) echoes Richard Hunter’s description of the movement of stories through country to people, and charges spirits with the agency of facilitating this movement.}
wanted to know about the ngadjayi people, dreamtime, so we started
talking [about that]. Then I looked around and realised that [almost]
everybody was there, hungry to hear.

I mean, we’ve got all that artificial world with our great movies and
our science fiction and all this stuff, but here [on the Trail] is a
tangible world, a world we can hold and feel and see and merge
with. That’s something else.

I was amazed by their hunger, I’d never noticed that before. It was
like being hungry, you know? Yeah, hungry for … maybe that
connectedness. Hungry for that world.

Pondering why walkers of the Trail were ‘hungry’ to hear stories, Frans arrived at
the idea that people were yearning for a connection with the world in which they
were walking – living country. On some level, consciously or not, walkers of the
Trail understood the power of story to help, as Richard said, ‘make connection with
the country.’ During a big time of transition with the storytelling practices on the
Trail, actors did as Latour (1987) predicted and looked ‘for stronger and more
resistant allies, and in order to do so … end[ed] up mobilizing the most
heterogeneous and distant elements, thus mapping for themselves, for their
opponents, and for the observers, what they value most, what they are most
dearly attached to’ (p. 205) – a connection with country.

5.3.1 Connecting through being enrolled into a storytelling performance

So far, members of the Goolarabooloo community and walkers of the Trail have
recognised that stories help them to form and maintain relationships with country.
Yet, by what means do stories, or acts of storytelling, do so?

Dallas, a first-time walker of the Trail, undertook this journey prior to Richard
retiring as storyteller. In this following account, Dallas offers insights into how being
on country, listening to the stories shared by Richard and other Goolarabooloo
people, enabled him to see the land in new ways and connect with people and
country.
[The Goolarabooloo] talk about how everything’s connected and interwoven … I don’t think that can be experienced without [the storytelling] being on country … It’s like they’re completely integrated, the stories can’t exist without the country [and] the country doesn’t exist without the stories. When the stories are being told you can see the tracks of the mythical beings, the paths that were taken during the ancestral journeys. You’re sitting in the camps that have been camped at for generations and generations. You are listening to the stories in an oral context, not second-hand via a recording. The extra connection that comes from sitting on the land and actually being directly in front of the storyteller, the meeting of the eyes, the feeling of the emotion, the laughing together. If you sit listening to a recording of that you don’t get that, you’re not there and that layer’s missing. I don’t know how to quantify that, but that layer is something that’s really very important. As much as being on the land, for me, it was sitting in front of Richard and actually being a sensory part of the story, so you’re hearing the story, you’re feeling the story, you’re feeling his emotion. You’re instantly responding to his emotion because you can see the expressions on his face, or the way he moves his hands.

Direct links are created or maintained when people listen to stories on country. For Dallas, hearing stories on the country about which the story is told, and being face-to-face with storyteller Richard, enables him to feel connected with both storyteller and country. Through his embodied engagement with country and storyteller, Dallas perceives himself as part of the storytelling performance. Dallas illustrates a material assemblage of actors coming together to enact storytelling on the Trail, highlighting the relationality that inheres in oral storytelling performances on country. The storyteller, listeners/learners, place, creator beings, landforms, ancestors and living country are all enrolled into a storytelling network, each playing their part in the
performance, with the effect being an experience of interconnectedness for Dallas, and more broadly, the holding together of people–country.\textsuperscript{106}

Dallas demonstrates how the inherently collective and performative aspects of storytelling on the Trail lead to generative effects. This finding concurs with Madeleine Akrich’s (1992) premise that performances are always a co-constitution. Freya Mathews (2009) also points to a co-productive dimension of storytelling, which she refers to as poetic collaboration. She describes storytelling as opening people up to ‘the larger possibilities of existence which emanate from poetic collaboration with reality’ (Mathews 2009, p. 4). Both the performative and generative dimensions of storytelling on the Trail, not only help people to connect with country, but support them to carry out the ongoing work that is required to maintain people–country connections.

5.3.2 Durability in people–country networks

In Chapter 3 I posed the question, given the ANT insistence on the immediacy of performance (nothing exists but it is being performed, \textit{now}) what then accounts for durability? Both Latour and Law present ideas that offer insights into how networks achieve strong links and particular material arrangements, strategies or discourses that may lead to the durability of networks. While Latour focuses on strong links (or multiple weak links) and the cost of undoing them, Law concentrates on the concept of architecture, an idea that is taken up and explored now.

Using the metaphor ‘architecture’, Law (2009, p. 148) contends that three interrelated aspects afford networks their durability: material arrangements, strategies and discourses.\textsuperscript{107} In the case of the Trail, material arrangements (people

\textsuperscript{106} Verran (2010) highlights the agency of the listener/learner in a cross-cultural storytelling context, stating, ‘Being a crucial part of those narrative performances as listeners, leaners of language and culture will actively contribute to the re-making of places themselves. Their engagement with the stories – confused, puzzled, and uncomprehending though it may be to the students, is a crucial element of the performance’ (p. 88).

\textsuperscript{107} For a more fulsome discussion of Law’s concept of network architecture, see Chapter 3, pages 103–104.
actually being there on country) are leading to the formation of strong links, that may or may not prove to be durable. In relation to Dallas’ account, the very fact that connections were being felt with place when and because he was on the Trail, hearing the stories on the Trail, is a material arrangement. Despite only walking the Trail for nine days, what happened for Dallas that was so powerful that even temporary material arrangements were leading to such strong connections?

Strategies can also create strong ties that subsequently lead to network durability. For example, Paddy’s Dream might be described as a deliberate strategy to hold together people–country. In Chapter 4, Frans characterised Paddy’s actions in establishing the Trail as a ‘tactical manoeuvre’ to ‘get more people who then become aware of the importance, beauty and cultural aspect of the land, who could help to look after the country.’ In addition to Paddy’s Dream, there are other deliberate strategies in place. The whole Trail experience is carefully organised: Goolarabooloo people and volunteers prepare campsites, equipment and food; people are asked to pay a large sum of money to walk the Trail and in doing so, they must value the experience beforehand to want to pay (more extensive network connections must have been in play); once people have paid the money they have made a commitment to walk to the Trail; and the Trail is a particular length and is walked (not driven or ridden). All of these strategic, and material, arrangements work together with the powerful influence of discourse, to strengthen the ties that are being created. From a Bugarrigarra perspective, it could even be said that the ancestral creator beings employed their own strategy to leave behind material evidence in the country, in the forms of landscapes, rock formations and footprints, to affirm their existence.

Discourse is the third aspect that anchors Law’s concept of networks architecture. Drawing on the work of Foucault, Law (2009) says that ‘discourses define conditions of possibility, making some ways of ordering webs of relations easier and others difficult or impossible’ (p. 149). It is through defining ‘conditions of possibility’ and more importantly, excluding or discouraging other conditions, that discourses contribute to the stability of a network. However, a subsequent downfall is that they cannot recognize ‘certain kinds of realities’ which exist and ‘have to [somehow] be handled’ (Law 2009, p. 149).
As a very specific type of discourse, how do Bugarrigarra stories lead to the durability of people–country networks on the Trail? On the one hand, stories shared by Goolarabooloo storytellers on the Trail or passed on by pamphlets and display boards define their own ‘conditions of possibility’, including the emergence and fluidity of creator beings between spirit and physical worlds, and order people–country relations through such means as co-creation, patterning and return. On the other hand, realities that are not recognised by Bugarrigarra stories (but that Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail must nevertheless deal with) are the ontological categories that are produced through the separation of ‘culture’ from ‘nature’, the attribution of agency and subjectivity to the human realm alone and the premise that only a physical realm exists.

The material, strategic and discursive aspects of the Trail are working together. Law and Latour have offered insights towards understanding something of the remarkable strength of the network, which will soon be tested in its encounter with another network, which is stabilised by the very discourses of separation from which the walkers on the Trail have sought to disassociate themselves. First, however, there are more actors on the Trail to follow and listen to, as they continue to reveal the materialities, strategies and discourses in which they are engaged.

5.4 Story 3: Country keeps bringing you back

In this story, personal narratives shared by Goolarabooloo people and insights offered by their close friends, illustrate how people are maintaining connections with particular places in country. Or, observed from a less human-centric perspective, these stories show how country is finding ways to continue staying connected with people, despite challenges that arise, offering insight into the second thesis question. In addition to Paddy’s Dream and his ‘tactical maneuver’ to initiate the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail (as revealed in Chapter 4), other deliberate strategies are at play, bringing together material arrangements that are leading to the endurance of people–country connections on the Trail.
5.4.1 Back in Teresa’s spirit country

The leaves of the *jigal* (*Bauhinia cunninghamii*) trees danced above us with the rising heat of our campfire. It was our final day camped at Bindinganygun,\textsuperscript{108} the last traditional camping place that we would journey to along the Trail. Deciding not to walk up Yellow River with a large group of Trail walkers and Goolarabooloo guides, I instead found myself sitting under a stand of *jigal* trees with Paddy Roe’s daughter Teresa and four generations of women from her family. Teresa’s young great-grandchildren began creating a joyous ruckus by weaving in and out of our campfire circle just as I asked Teresa if she would share her story about her relationship with this place. Unfazed by the action unfolding around us, Teresa was happy to tell her story.

Returning to Bindinganygun was an emotionally charged experience for Teresa and telling her story invoked memories of her parents and her deep ties to country. Another familiar actor, *rayi* (spirit), also appeared in her story. Referring to herself as a ‘Jabirrjabirr girl’, Teresa described the significance of this place and nearby Minariny to her sense of connection with her parents and country.

> [Those *rayi*] walk ‘round, like us we walking around. But the old people who was in this country, they tell [mum and dad], there’s spirit girls in this country. When my mum and dad was walking around here, they found us. They found me first, spirit children. Spirit go anywhere, walk around anywhere. I think in this country now all the *rayi* [are] in here. The spirit must be here, in this country, Bindinyangun.

Well this is our spirit country, now where my mum and dad find me and my little sister. [My dad and mum] come from two different languages, Nyigina and Karajeri. My father see [two] Jabirrjabirr girls and then they walked from this country to old station, Denham Station. Mum was pregnant for me, I was born there. My little sister

\textsuperscript{108} Bindinganygun is also referred to as Yellow River.
followed me from here, so we both born in Waterbank, in Denham Station.\textsuperscript{109} We been bush girls all our life.

Well, most [old] people said [to my mum and dad] that you got a spirit from this country now, you gonna have two daughters. That’s all they gave them, two daughters from this country, me and my younger sister. And so mummy got me from there and my little sister followed me, to old Denham Station.

If no Trail you know, I’d still come back to this country, ‘cause this country will bring me back … When I feel lonely, thinking where to go and fish, I’ll come right up here and I feel good and then I go back home. Shed tears around this place then go back home, because he remind me of my mum and dad. ‘Cause my mum and dad found those two girls, from the last old people who was walking this country.

Teresa shares her deep feelings of connection with places in country, Bindinganygun and Minariny, country that keeps bringing her back.\textsuperscript{110} Her relationship with these places stems from a particular type of connection – it is Teresa’s rayi (spirit) country. She recalls how her parents Paddy and Pegalily found two rayi, ‘spirit girls’, in Jabirrjabirr country, her own rayi and the rayi of her younger sister. In \textit{Reading the Country} Paddy Roe shares his story about coming to the Lurujarri coast in 1933 with his wife Pegalily.

Working on pastoral stations and stopping to camp on country with the old Jabirrjabirr people, Paddy and Pegalily encountered an old \textit{maban} (highly spiritual)\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{109} The old Denham pastoral station, originally Hill Station, is now referred to as Waterbank (Muecke 2005, p. 95).

\textsuperscript{110} Turner (2010) speaks about the land calling people, who belong to that place, back: ‘What area you’re from is important. And it just like brings you back. Wants you to settle. That sort of touch we get from the Land … The Land has all those feelings, and it gives those feelings to people. And also how you feel about the country itself. Like what that feeling to me is like my grandfather’s feeling. And you get that touch. Sometimes people cry with that feeling, and that touch of feeling always comes. It’s in the Land, it’s in us’ (pp. 95–96).

\textsuperscript{111} Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) refer to \textit{maban} as ‘doctors’ or ‘men and women who have obtained a high degree of knowledge and who have special perceptive and combative skills’ (p. 246).
woman who told them that two rayi\textsuperscript{112} – spirits and more specifically the spirits of unborn children – had chosen them from a place called Minariny.\textsuperscript{113} At that time, only the old people remained on country, with their children and young people having been forcibly removed to the Catholic mission at Beagle Bay.\textsuperscript{114}

Whether it was a deliberate strategy of a) the Jabirrjabirr people, b) the country, c) the rayi, or d) collaboration between multiple actors, strong connections between Goolarabooloo people and country were produced through the two spirit girls from Minariny being born to Paddy and Pegalily. Teresa’s rayi keeps her returning to her spirit country, she says that even without the Trail ‘I’d still come back to this country, ‘cause this country will bring me back.’

The story about Teresa and her sister’s rayi coming from Jabirrjabirr country, and another about how Paddy came to be custodian, underpin the Goolarabooloo family’s sense of place and connection.\textsuperscript{115} Bernadette, a friend of the Goolarabooloo who spoke in Chapter 4, directed and produced the animated documentary \textit{Lurujarri Dreaming} together with the Goolarabooloo family. The documentary draws upon the

\textsuperscript{112} Ethnographers and linguists working with Indigenous Australians have long documented the significance of rayi or ‘spirit children’ which reside in country (Bates 1913; Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984; Elkin 1932; Glowczewski 1998; Mowaljarlai & Malnic1993; Rose 2001; Stanner 2009). Daisy Bates (1913, pp. 389–390) took a particular interest in the ngargalula (dream/spirit babies) spoken about by Indigenous people in the Broome area, including the ‘Kularrabulu’ people. She described at length the ngargalula that fathers see in their dreams prior to the birth of their child. Each ngargalula was said to have its own buru (ground/place) and be associated with particular plants and animals. Drawing on the accounts of Indigenous elders from the Broome area, Glowczewski (1998) says the following about rayi: ‘Everybody has at least one rayi. Some people have two or more little people that look after them and can help them to cure people who are sick … All animals and plants have their rayi’ (pp. 1–2).

\textsuperscript{113} Paddy Roe told this story to Stephen Muecke in \textit{Reading the Country} (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, pp. 116–119).

\textsuperscript{114} The story about how Paddy Roe became custodian of Ngumbal-Jabirrjabirr country is connected to the removal of children from their Ngumbal or Jabirrjabirr families. See Chapter 1, pages 5–8 for further explanation.

\textsuperscript{115} These Goolarabooloo stories are also an example of discursive stability that is holding together people–place.
family oral history of the Goolarabooloo people to tell stories about their connections with country. Speaking here about these connections, Bernadette said that,

The story of the Goolarabooloo and how they came to be so connected [to country], ... was a survival mechanism for the Jabirrjabirr tribe to overcome those challenges they faced because of colonisation. [Passing on custodianship to Paddy] was a cultural adaptation ... It opens up other possibilities of how other people can be connected to country.

Bernadette is referring to another crucial strategy that was put into play by the old Jabirrjabirr people to ensure the ongoing survival of their law and culture: passing on custodianship of the law and culture for the county to Paddy, who was already a Nyigina lawman. In doing so, they could have confidence in the material durability of people–country connections, and know that rayi from their country would play an important part in this process. Kathleen, Paddy Roe’s granddaughter, affirms the validity and strength of her family’s connections with country.

We are connected because of my grandparents. [Paddy] had the knowledge of this place, no one else did. He knew [the old] Jabirrjabirr people in ‘dem days, who he met up with. And now they all gone. That country knows us. When we go there, we feel like we belong.

Kathleen knows that the links between her family and the country are strong because Paddy held the knowledge for country. At a time of great threat, he was a critical link in the survival and continuation of a law and culture lineage. Feelings of belonging and the mutual recognition between people and country described by Kathleen confirm that these connections not only exist, but that they are strong.

As encouraged by ANT writers Fenwick and Edwards (2010, p. 9), through examining ‘the individual nodes holding these [people–country] networks together’, the means by which ‘connections [come] about and what sustains them’ is starting to become apparent. In the case of the story told by Teresa, sharing a rayi connection with a particular place makes for strong links with that country, and returning to that
place (or allowing one’s self to be drawn back by the country) helps to sustain those connections. For Kathleen, her and her family’s connections with country are affirmed and sustained through the passing on of knowledge for the law and culture associated with the Song Cycle from the old Jabirrjabirr people to Paddy (and as implied, from Paddy to his descendants) and the mutual recognition between her people and country.

5.4.2 Brian and old man Walmadany

Whilst Teresa’s rayi connection with Bindinganygun and Minariny keeps bringing her back to her spirit country, Brian’s liyan keeps him returning to his most treasured place in country, Walmadany. Sitting on the veranda of Teresa’s house at Millibinyarri a few months after the Trail during larja season, Brian shared with me a story about this connection. He began by referring to Walmadany as not only a place, but also the old Jabirrjabirr warrior ancestor by the same name.

Well that’s my favourite place, Walmadany. I go there, he know me that man and I know him. Every time I go there he give me fish that bloke. I go with boat he give me turtle, whatever. Anything I want pretty much, he give me. ‘Cause he know me that man. And my little girl, every morning she walk, she walk, she go right around, on top of ‘dem hills and everything. I got no worries in the world. Normally we worry for her, you know like? Where she gone? Nothing. When she gone walkabout she gone there on top of ‘dem hills now. Right around, she go picking up all ‘dem seeds. Before ‘dis Gas thing bin start up, that was our favourite camping spot you know. Drive over that hill, park right on the beach, set ‘em up our camp there, boat and everything. Not today. [My daughter] asked me, “Dad can we go Walmadany camp? Dad we can’t go there ‘dem blocke blocked the road off. Where we going to camp? Dad we can't camp at Walmadany no more.”

That old chap [Walmadany], I still feel him here, inside here [in my heart]. You know I’m tell you about liyan? My liyan still belong ‘dat place. He’ll still feel me. He'll feel me, especially for my daughter, she’s got a strong feeling there too. She got ‘em, she got ‘em boy,
don’t you worry about that. That liyan he strong. My liyan, her liyan.
It'll fix 'em everything that thing.

For Brian, strong liyan equates to a strong connection. To emphasise the strength of his and his daughter’s ties, Brian reveals that their liyan belongs in Walmadany. The links are not just strong because Brian and his daughter feel them, but also because Walmadany (the country and ancestor) reciprocates them. Not only does the ancestor Walmadany recognise Brian and his daughter, he is ensuring that Brian’s hunting in country is successful and that his daughter is safe in country. Brian’s ‘being with’ Walmadany, expressed by him as liyan, but which also resembles mutual recognition and reciprocity of care, adds to the material durability of people–country connections.

However, a new actor-network and challenge to the endurance of people–country appears in Brian’s story, referred to by him as ‘the Gas’.

116 While there is much to write about this actor-network, given that it forms a central focus of the next story in this chapter, for now it is enough to know that its appearance signals a threat to the holding together of people–country on the Trail. The past ritual of camping in Walmadany, a means through which connections were maintained, now proves tricky for Brian and his family.

5.4.3 Opening up possibilities for more connections

Earlier Bernadette stated that the ways in which the Goolarabooloo people became connected with country ‘[open] up other possibilities of how other people can be connected to country’. Echoing Paddy’s edict that everyone can have a connection with country, Brian and Teresa explain how. Continuing from his story about his relationship with Walmadany, Brian said that,

You don’t have to be from here. You know what they say, when you love a place you find your liyan somewhere and you get feeling for that place, you might as well call him home. You see if he got no

116 ‘The Gas’ is a colloquial reference to the proposed industrial precinct to process liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Browse Basin at Walmadany (James Price Point).
feeling for you, the country where you come from, well that's not home. If you find 'em here, well that's your home.

For Brian, the only condition for calling a place ‘home’ is feeling love for that place, which is akin to finding your liyan there. It is the reciprocity that abides in liyan (stated here as feeling), which allows this ‘home’ connection to form. Following in similar vein, Kelly (2013) writes that ‘mutuality is an inherent aspect of love’, not just love of the world, but ‘love by world’ (emphasis in original, p. 277). In our conversation, Brian emphasised that his statements about finding one’s liyan and home in country were not limited only to Indigenous people; anyone who found their liyan here could call this place home.

Teresa outlined another means through which people, regardless of cultural heritage, are becoming connected with country along the Song Cycle path, revealing that rayi are indifferent to the people with whom they connect. She insisted that the unborn children of pregnant non-Indigenous women could also be chosen by rayi from the Song Cycle path. During our conversation in Bindinyankun she spoke about a woman who found rayi for her unborn children in Murdurdun.

She found her spirit kids in that country too. She had a boy and a little girl, in that country. And they all grown up now. She wasn't Aboriginal girl, but she had two kids from that country, two spirit kids from that country.

Teresa concluded her story by emphatically refusing to emphasise distinctions between who can and cannot connect with country.

We come from this country! You blokes come from this country!

Whilst writing in a North American context, Carl Jung’s (1930) statement that the ‘country somehow gets under the skin of those born in it’ (p. 969) resonates with Teresa’s rayi story. More broadly, Jung and Australian Jungian scholar David Tacey (2009, p. 33) explore the concept that the land has the agency to claim ‘new’ peoples that dwell there, so that they become colonised through processes of
Indigenisation may not be the term used by Teresa, Brian, or Frans whose statement follows, but it provokes further discussion about the agency of country, or actors within this actor-network, to put in place strategies for the durability of people–country connections.

After my conversations with Teresa and Brian, I carried on this dialogue about belonging with Frans under the shade of a tamarind tree at his Millibinyarri home. A disconcertment that had up until now escaped articulation was beginning to coalesce into words. I broached the issue with Frans by citing a powerful narrative amongst settler Australians and their descendants (including myself) that we do not or cannot belong to country. There was no hesitation in Frans’ response.

We all belong. There is no [such thing as] belonging or not belonging, belonging is only a state of mind within the person. Australia might be the easiest country to belong to, because if you’re born here then you come out of this country, you come out of this land. You come out of this Dreaming.

Irrespective of culture, Fran maintains that people who are born on this continent are born out of this country and this Dreaming. To Frans, questions of belonging are not part of the reality that he is referencing – Bugarrigarra – perhaps only in the questioning mind. Although this insight might be obvious to Frans and the Goolarabooloo, it is not guaranteed, nor likely, that all who walk the Trail (and certainly not all who are born on this continent) recognise this particular reality. It is important to distinguish that Frans, Teresa and Brian are not talking about people becoming (or trying to become) Indigenous; instead, they are pointing out that indigeneity is not an a priori factor for creating (or perhaps remembering) deep connections with country. While this might be the case, is there durability in the

117 Tacey (2009, p. 33) describes indigenisation as reverse colonisation whereby the land colonises the people.

118 Recall the concerns about belonging raised by settler Australian writers in Chapter 2. Peter Read (2000) asked ‘Do I have the right to belong in this soul-country?’ (p. 9), while Margaret Somerville (1999) questioned how she might flesh out a connection to place’ (p. 6). Miller (2003, p. 217) makes the case that belonging is ontological, constitutional and relational; it is afforded by a relation to or with something. Following Miller’s line of thought, to ‘be with’ country is to belong.
people–country connections that non-Indigenous people, including walkers of the Trail, are forming with country? Like Teresa, Kathleen and Brian are people returning to ‘be with’ country once they have walked the Trail.

Answers to these questions emerged during my last walking of the Trail. Sitting on the ground of our makeshift Trail camp kitchen, kneading damper on a makeshift ‘bench’, Kathleen reminisced over the many people who had walked the Trail over the preceding decades.

They love it, they feel at home too. “Oh I don’t feel like going back,” many people say who comes on the Trail. [Country] making them stay and attracting them. Every year we have people who come for Trail and when they go, they want to come back. It’s bringing them back. Maybe they learn knowledge or cultural things, good feelings when they come here. They feel at home, looked after. Well I know when I go anywhere [in country], I feel like I’m look after, with feelings, you know. Don’t get frightened. Nothing happen to us. When we go camping or anything, nothing happen to us, or kids or babies. I love this country. And we’ll always be here with this country, with our kids, our next generations, show them and carry on our knowledge for this place. I hope that this Trail goes on forever. We’ll be having nearly everybody here then! Then they’ll [all] come back. You see this mob that was here before, they back now, living in Broome. You know, helping us, wanna be with us. [Country] keeps bringing you back.

Walkers of the Trail are returning to country. Yet, Kathleen says that their returning is not entirely of their own volition. Even though good feelings experienced on country and an opportunity to learn about local Indigenous knowledge and culture might be attracting walkers of the Trail to return, country is also playing an active role in ‘bringing them back’. The generosity and nurturance afforded to Kathleen and her family by country also extends to walkers of the Trail: ‘they feel at home, looked after’. Kathleen shows that there is durability in the connections many walkers of the Trail are forming with country, for they too are returning to ‘be with’ country and the Goolarabooloo. With this, there are further signs that Paddy’s Dream is coming to fruition.
For now, material arrangements, important discourses and deliberate strategies from human and non-human actors are producing powerful connections in people–country networks. Furthermore, links between people and country are holding together. Do these connections have the strength to hold when a new controversy arises and more threats are posed to country and people–country?

5.5 Story 4: Threat to what is sacred

Previous stories in this chapter illustrate how the people–country networks associated with the Trail overcame various challenges, including colonisation and changes in storytelling practices, in a bid to keep people connected with country. However, these were not the only threats testing the durability of people–country connections on the Trail. The emergence of a rival network, referred to colloquially as ‘the Gas’ by the research participants and many Broome locals, also threatened to break people–country ties associated with the Trail. This story traces the actors of the Gas network and in doing so, makes visible its architecture (the material, strategic and discursive structure), and the strength of the links that constitute it. This method also allows comparisons to be made between the durability of the two rival networks: the Trail and the Gas. Ultimately, it is the potential for the Gas to break existing, and prevent future connections between people–country on the Trail, which is at stake. Will people–country connections on the Trail and in turn Paddy’s Dream hold together? Are the ties that inhere in these networks strong enough to withstand the threats posed by the Gas? In turn, the same questions could be asked about the Gas.

5.5.1 The gulbinna and the medal

Accustomed to making connections with the Western world, Paddy Roe sought to enrol diverse and distant actors into his Dream to ensure the protection of country. When in 1990 Paddy was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his service to the community, he held up two objects, stating, ‘This is my gulbinna (shield). The government gave me this medal. This gulbinna is asking the medal, you going to break up this country or keep it the same since bugarre garre [sic] (Dreamtime)’ (see Figure 8).
Holding his Order of Australia Medal held in one hand and *gulbinna* in the other, Paddy could see reflected in each object two very different networks: a ‘Western’ network that threatened to ‘break up’ the country, and a ‘traditional’ network that he was working hard to maintain. He did not need to wait for long before the strength of his ties with both of these networks would be tested.

In 1991, Terrex Resources lodged an application to undertake the mining of mineral sands along the Lurujarri coast, including north of Walmadany, a traditional camping place along the Song Cycle. Working together, Paddy and the other law bosses from the Northern Tradition Song Cycle successfully enrolled archaeologists, ethnographers, government institutions and the judiciary into their networks to
protect their law and culture and the Song Cycle path from mining exploration.\textsuperscript{119} However, as Callon (1986a) asserts, holding networks together is a tenuous process and not all actors comply. Less than 20 years later, a configuration of new alliances led to the emergence of a powerful new rival network.

5.5.2 A rival network appears and takes form

In 2009, the Western Australian Government announced that it would work with Woodside Petroleum and their joint venture partners to develop an industrial precinct to process liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Browse Basin at James Price Point. Very quickly this alliance between government and industry became known to people in Broome and on the Dampier Peninsula as the Gas. Although it appears as a single actor in the accounts of many research participants, the Gas was also a vast network that enrolled an ever-increasing cast of heterogeneous actors to ensure its success.

The architecture of the Trail has been examined (in Law’s terms) to understand its durability, but what of the architecture of the huge network represented by this rival? Table 1 (see pages 225–226) asks some important questions of both networks:

- How are its materialities configured?
- What plans and priorities are employed? Revealing what motive?
- What discourses are employed in order to strengthen the network?
- Are there any overlaps between the two networks in each of these aspects of ‘architecture’?

\textsuperscript{119} The Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority and Senior Magistrate Dr. J. A. Howard of the Broome Warden’s Court ultimately rejected applications for sand mining and exploration along the Lurujarri coast, citing the environmental and cultural significance of these places (EPA 1991). Paddy Roe worked with archaeologists, ethnographers, palaeontologists, and botanists to translate his knowledge about the Song Cycle into textual forms that could be understood by politicians, planning authorities, heritage bodies and the judiciary. According to Botsman (2012, p. 21) Paddy’s collaborations led to ‘an avalanche of studies’ that helped to highlight the significance of the Song Cycle’s ‘cultural’ and ‘natural’ heritage.
Few individuals associated with the Gas are mentioned in this story. A key actor who emerged and performed the role of spokesperson supporting the Gas was the WA Premier, Colin Barnett. When dealing with networks it is crucial to ask the questions ‘Who speaks in the name of whom? Who represents whom?’ as did Callon (1986a, p. 214) in his ethnography on the scientists, fishermen and scallops of St Brieuc Bay. In taking on the role of chief spokesperson for the Gas, and owing to his position as the head of the WA Government, Premier Barnett spoke on behalf of and represented other actors in this network. His bigger strategy of developing the mineral resources in the state of Western Australia helped the Gas network to take form.

When did the Gas network begin enrolling actors? Was it back in deep time when bacteria broke down the organic matter trapped in ocean floor sediments to form the natural gas in the Browse Basin? Or, was it more recently when geologists surveyed the Browse Basin and discovered gas fields? For the purposes of this story and brevity’s sake, I take the enrolment of actors into the Gas network as beginning with the announcement by Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett, that James Price Point (Walmadany) was the preferred site in the Kimberley for a multi-user LNG processing plant. Just as Paddy and the Goolarabooloo did with the Trail, Premier Barnett employed a range of material, strategic and discursive means to create many strong ties, in a bid to make durable the Gas network. For Premier Barnett, the durability of the Gas network hinged upon Woodside and their joint venture partners siting the LNG processing plant at James Price Point.

Note that the Trail and Gas networks are using different names for the same place. People closely connected with the Trail are calling it Walmadany, whilst Premier Barnett and people associated with the Gas are referring to it as James Price Point.

120 See Appendix 6 for a timeline of significant events related to the Trail and the Gas.
121 The Western Australian Government and Woodside investigated several onshore options for the possessing of gas from the Browse Basin, from potential sites in the Kimberley Region, to the already heavily industrialised Pilbara Region south of Broome. An offshore ‘floating’ option also emerged during investigations, but was initially thought to be unlikely due to a lack of appropriate technology and financial cost.
Each name has the potential to assemble a vastly different cohort of actors from the other.

The cast of actors enrolled into the Gas network is far too numerous to name in full, however, it is important to offer some insight into this network, which included in its assemblage: James Price Point (the proposed site of the Browse LNG Precinct), Woodside Petroleum and their joint venture partners (Mitsui, PetroChina, Shell and BP), WA Minister for State Development (Premier Colin Barnett), Kimberley Land Council, an agreement with the traditional owners, notices of compulsory acquisition of the land from traditional owners, a financial compensation package of $1.3B for Indigenous people in the Kimberley, financial resources to undertake scoping studies and initial works, Broome Shire Council, the WA Police Force, WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and WA State Environment Minister Bill Marmion, Strategic Assessment Report (including a multitude of reports: Site selection technical report, environmental technical report, social impact assessment, Indigenous impacts report, palaeontology reports, modelling studies), scientists, geotechnical surveys, commercial evaluations, retention lease over the Browse

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122 This was the configuration of the joint-venture partnership at the time of writing this thesis.
123 In 2010, the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) facilitated a meeting during which it declared that a ‘majority decision’ was made by the Goolarabooloo – Jabirrjabirr Native Title claim group, to approve the acquisition of traditional lands by the WA State Government for the proposed LNG plant at James Price Point. The Goolarabooloo people unanimously vote against this decision. The decision making process used in this meeting by the KLC was heavily scrutinised by the Goolarabooloo people, some Jabirrjabirr traditional owners and legal professionals. In an interview with the ABC Four Corners program, passed Goolarabooloo custodian and law boss J. R. stated, ‘The KLC was set up to look after these things, not to negotiate, not to do anything like that but to help us fight for country’ (ABC Television 2010). Former Federal Court judge Murray Wilcox also called into question the active role taken on by the KLC in the negotiation process, stating, ‘Their role is to act on behalf of native title claimants … to gather together the information about families, genealogists, get anthropological reports where that’s necessary and present the case in a comprehensible way to the court. In other words, they act on behalf of claimants’ (ABC Television 2010).
124 There are estimates that Woodside Energy spent up to $1.25B in the earlier assessment process of the Browse LNG project (Woodside 2009).
125 On the 5th July 2011 a large police task force, which had been sent to Broome by WA Premier Barnett, broke the community blockade at Manariny Road (ABC 2011). During the course of the community campaign to stop the LNG plant from being built at Walmadany, there were many other confrontations between the WA Police Force and community members.
Basin, the works compound near Walmadany (bulldozers, fences, gates, security guards, communications tower, survey and drilling equipment, technical workers and machinery operators), legal professionals, corporate spokespeople, CEOs, a secure market for the gas in China and elsewhere in Asia, and commercial viability of the James Price Point site option.

Due to the size and apparent power of the Gas network, many people, including the Premier Barnett, assumed that the proposed development at James Price Point was a *fait accompli*. In an interview with Vanessa Mills (2010) from ABC Kimberley Radio, Premier Barnett was asked, what could stop the LNG industry from going ahead at James Price Point? He responded:

> I think the only thing that could, was if there was some international collapse of world economies. Now I don’t expect that to happen for one minute, certainly not in the Asia-Pacific region. So as long as the demand is there and it’s very strong at the moment, I expect James Price to proceed (Mills 2010).

From the Premier’s perspective, there was only one potential weak link – global economic connections – which had already led to the downfall of many complex networks only a few years prior. Although Premier Barnett did not acknowledge them in his statement, other weak links, as well as actors overlooked and those that resisted enrollment, threatened the success of the Gas.

### 5.5.4 Forgotten actors and those that resist enrollment

Callon and Law (1982, p. 619) write about the failure of some networks to enrol a crucial actor.\footnote{Callon and Law (1982, p. 619) cite an instance where a group of scientific authors seeking to publish a scientific paper, failed to enrol their chosen journal.} Was Premier Barnett successful in enrolling all of the necessary actors to ensure the success and durability of the Gas network? In short, no. The process to enrol the traditional owners was compromised by disunity amongst the Goolarabooloo Jabirrjabirr (GJJ) Native Title claim group, and subsequent
challenges to the agreement that was reached threatened to puncture the network. Not only did they resist enrolling into the Gas, the Goolarabooloo people and several Jabirrjabirr people put into place their own strategies to weaken the Gas network. Weak links appeared when a legal challenge initiated by Goolarabooloo senior law boss Phillip Roe and Jabirrjabirr traditional owner Neil McKenzie led to a failed attempt by the WA Government to successfully compulsorily acquire the land for the Browse LNG Precinct. Not all failures in the network centered on an inability to enroll actors.

Once made, some links did not hold; this was exemplified through the rescinding of environmental approvals that had already been granted for the development, through another legal challenge, this time initiated by Goolarabooloo senior law boss Richard Hunter and The Wilderness Society.

Putting into play their own strategies to resist enrolment and rupture the Gas network beyond repair, the Goolarabooloo were drawing upon traditional associations (people and country), the existing Trail network (which had enrolled many actors over the previous two and a half decades) and relationships with people from Broome. At the same time, they were forming valuable new alliances with scientists, environmental

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127 See Appendix 6 for a more detailed explanation of this conflict.
128 On 6 December 2011 Goolarabooloo law boss Phillip Roe and Jabirrjabirr traditional owner Neil McKenzie won a matter before the WA Supreme Court, in which Chief Justice Wayne Martin ruled that the notices of compulsory acquisition submitted by the WA State Government for the Browse LNG Precinct were invalid due to a discrepancy over the areas of land stated in the notices. The WA Government intended on compulsorily acquiring 7,000 hectares of land for a 3,500 hectare precinct, without specifying the exact parcels of land to be used for the proposed development (Collins 2011).
129 In 2013, Goolarabooloo law boss Richard Hunter and The Wilderness Society challenged the validity of the Environmental Protection Authority’s (EPA) approvals process in the WA Supreme Court. On 19 August 2013, Chief Justice Wayne Martin ruled in favour of Richard Hunter and The Wilderness Society, stating that the environmental approvals were invalid as there was a conflict of interest amongst the board members of the EPA. Chief Justice Martin also ruled that the authorisation from the State Environment Minister, Bill Marmion to approve the Browse LNG Precinct was also invalid (The Wilderness Society 2013).
organisations (local, national and international), filmmakers, journalists, well-known and highly respected public figures and legal support.\textsuperscript{130}

Latour (1987) attests that in times of controversy people ‘look for stronger and more resistant allies, and in order to do so, they may end up mobilizing the most heterogeneous and distant elements, thus mapping for themselves, for their opponents, and for the observers, what they value most, what they are most dearly attached to’ (p. 205). As contention grew around the siting of the proposed Browse LNG Precinct at ‘James Price Point’, the two rival networks continued to expand in a bid to be more powerful and more enduring than the other.

The Goolarabooloo community continued to enroll actors from ‘traditional’ and ‘Western’ networks to make their own more durable. However, the same cannot be said for the Gas network; there were key actors that Premier Barnett did not (or could not) consider enrolling. Paddy Roe’s grandson Phillip describes here an instance where the absence of a key element in the Gas project, reliable access to freshwater at the preferred site, presented another weak link in the Gas network.

\begin{quotation}
When I’m out there, I can go anywhere, walk about freely, because I know that old fella [Walmadany], he looks after me there. He’s there protecting country, that’s why when [Woodside] drilled they couldn’t find any fresh water. I just got shocked and one of the drillers said, “We’re leaving tomorrow, it’s a waste of our time,” because they didn’t expect this to happen.
\end{quotation}

Paddy Roe buried the ancestor Walmadany in the sand dunes at Walmadany (the place) in an area that fell within the proposed industrial precinct, and which was earmarked for excavation. For Phillip, the ancestor Walmadany was an ongoing presence in this place, working to protect the country and implementing his own strategies to weaken the Gas network.

\textsuperscript{130} See Muir (2012), Ruiz Wall (2010), and Muecke and Dibley (2016) for analysis of the campaign to stop to the Gas.
5.5.5 Being ‘there’ and translating places ‘out there’

As the Gas continued to grow, by enrolling more actors into its network, so too did the campaign to stop the development. Established below the sand dunes at the traditional camping place of Walmadany, a tent embassy – an assemblage of traditional owners, local Broome people and supporters from afar, campfires, tents, camp kitchen, four-wheel drives, bush office, long-range mobile phone antenna, power leads, solar panels, brightly painted flags, information boards, camp dogs, monsoonal vine thicket, red pindan and numerous other material and immaterial entities (including ancestors) – allowed people and place to remain connected for the duration of the campaign. People were ‘there’, on and with country, maintaining direct links and protecting country as Paddy’s Dream had invoked.

Unlike the Goolarabooloo, walkers of the Trail and people present at the Walmadany tent embassy, Premier Barnett was not ‘there’ on country, walking the Trail, listening to Bugarrigarra stories, sleeping under the stars, opening and waking up his *liyan* (feeling and intuitive connection) and connecting with country. Despite many invitations by the Goolarabooloo to walk the Trail, the Premier and others centrally involved in the Gas project declined. Jeanné was acutely aware of the Premier and other decision-makers’ lack of hands-on engagement with, and absence from country. She alludes to their distance from country (in proximity and relationship) as a deliberate strategy.

If you’re making decisions for places you don’t have any relationship with, you can do what you like, as long as it’s separate from you … as long as it’s out there, outside the sphere of your personal life and doesn’t affect you directly. The answer is trying to personalise the experience so people can actually realise the full import of what they’re doing. Until you can get to that point, nobody’s going to change their decision making, because they’re not affected on a gut level by it.

In not being ‘there’, Premier Barnett was not susceptible to awakening his *liyan* and ‘being with’ country. Yet, it was unlikely that the Premier would have become part of people–country networks, even if he had walked the Trail. Strong links with networks in the cities and big towns may well have overridden the potential for the
Premier to be enrolled by actors on the Trail into Paddy’s Dream. Distant from these networks, through both geography and mindset, he was instead associating with other actors in boardrooms and in offices in big cities. These actors were connected with the ‘money story’ and global markets, two vast networks, and the whole list of actors mentioned earlier in the story. In lieu of generating direct, strong connections with ‘country’ by being ‘there’, links with ‘the site’ were produced at a distance, through engaging with statistics, balance sheets, survey data presented in scientific reports, aerial photographs, geomorphology maps and other representations (translations) of country. In performing their relationships with place through distance, Premier Barnett and other actors enrolled in the Gas, including the economists and scientists, were practicing what Latour (1987, p. 251) calls metrology: the process used (by scientists in Latour’s case) to translate places ‘out there’ into paper forms, including maps, reports and charts on walls, that cohere with the paper world inside the boardroom (or as Latour observed, the laboratory).

Premier Barnett and other actors in the Gas network were not the only ones practicing metrology. Paddy Roe, his family and other actors enrolled in the Trail, were also engaged in such practices (although unlike Barnett, they were there on country), producing an extraordinary number of translations of ‘living country’ into paper forms (field surveys, tables, graphs, reports and management plans), with the hope that these paper actors would hold influence in other networks that politicians, planners, heritage officers and mining bosses were enrolled into. In his report *Law below the top soil: Walmadany (James Price Point) and the question of the Browse Basin gas resources of north western Australia*, Peter Botsman (2012) asked the pertinent questions: ‘How did the major actors in the planning of a Browse Basin LNG plant miss the [paper] work that Paddy Roe had done? How did they miss the significant body of scientific and heritage literature about the nature of the coastal region and Walmadany (James Price Point)?’ (p. 21).

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131 Barnett and the Gas network, of which he is a part, are performing what Deborah Bird Rose (2004, p. 9) calls ‘structures and processes of distance’ which she claims, drive the behaviours of ‘Whitefellas’ in their relationships with place.

132 For another pertinent example of metrology see the reference to David Trigger (1997) in Chapter 2, pages 71–72. Also see Appendix 7 for an example of maps that translate Walmadany into ‘the Gas’ network.
Although the name ‘Walmadany’ appears on some maps associated with the Gas proposal James Price Point was the name consistently used by Premier Barnett and the network to acknowledge the place and their hopes for it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the place that Brian and his Goolarabooloo family associated with the Jabirrjabirr ancestral warrior Walmadany, good liyan and belonging, was being ‘seen’ through a very different discursive lens.

Yet, is Walmadany/James Price Point the same place (actor)? If so, then the two networks being examined are performing this place in two very different ways. The Trail network, particularly the Goolarabooloo people are performing ‘Walmadany’ as a significant place on the Song Cycle connected to myriad other sites, a Jabirrjabirr ancestor, and a place where liyan belongs and deep place connections are held. Meanwhile, the Gas network is performing ‘James Price Point’ as a potential site for an industrial precinct, a panacea for Indigenous people’s prosperity and a gateway for Indigenous economic development in the Kimberley, amongst other things.133

5.5.6 What is visible to one network is not always visible to another

In explaining his concept of network architecture, Law (2009, p. 149) states that discourses define particular ‘conditions of possibility’, but they also, and more importantly, exclude, discourage or fail to recognise other ‘kinds of realities’.

Premier Barnett visited James Price Point (not Walmadany) on few occasions. In one instance, he commented to the media:

> It’s a pretty piece of, ah, beach, but when I use the word unremarkable, uh, I’m making the point that this is not the spectacular Kimberley coast that you see in picture postcards (ABC Television 2010).

From the Premier’s statement it is apparent that his experience of place was vastly different from those of the Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail. Following

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133 Refer to pages 221–222 in this chapter for related media statements from WA Premier Colin Barnett.
the logic of his above statement, places are only worth preserving if they are ‘postcard’ spectacular. By supporting his reality, this discourse also ignored another actor – living country.

Much was at stake for Teresa and her family. On more than one occasion, Teresa shared with me her own discourse about place, which revealed the entities and connections she was trying to protect. Each time she shared this statement and plea she would ask if I was making a recording; she too wanted to ensure that her words, her reality, would travel to distant places in a bid to find an audience that could help her and her people to protect what was sacred to them.

We ‘bin protecting this country from day one, from Bugarrigarra, so we want that country to be kept alive. I feel all the hurt from that country, that’s my home, that’s my spirit country. If I didn’t come from that country I wouldn’t fight for it. We don’t want the money, we want the country. Country is spirit. The old people died in that country, their remains all around there everywhere. So don’t touch it, please! Leave the country alone!

Teresa is not financially invested in her country; instead, her connection with spirit in country is central to her investment to protect it. Her plea to leave it alone is not vague, it is directed at one person, the Premier. I suggested that perhaps the Premier grew up disconnected from the things that Teresa and her family valued, including connection to country. Teresa was emphatic in her response:

Well he should get connected to everything, if he’s the Premier then he should get connected to everything! He should say ok, this is what Aboriginal people are fighting for, this is their country and their spirit so we can’t take this away from them! We ‘bin there from day one, from Bugarrigarra.

In Teresa’s eyes, it was the Premier’s duty to become connected, so that he could see and understand what she and other Aboriginal people were fighting to protect. Her statement, ‘We ‘bin there from day one, from Bugarrigarra’ not only serves as a reminder of her own connections with Bugarrigarra, it makes visible the vastness of
these connections within place that spans great lengths of time, all the way back to ‘day one’.

The Goolarabooloo could see that the construction of an industrial precinct on the path of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and the Song Cycle would lead to more (and potentially deeper) consequences than loss of access to traditional camping places, the clearing of vast areas of the monsoonal vine thicket ecological community including the loss of bush foods and medicines, the removal of the sand dunes where the Jabirrjabirr ancestors, including the warrior Walmadany, are buried, the disruption of humpback whale migration and calving off the coast, and damage to dinosaur track-ways.

For Teresa, her son Richard and grandson Brian, Premier Barnett was blind to the potential for connecting with country, yet more dangerously, to the power that resides within the land. On our final walk of the Trail together, Richard alluded to the agency of country in his statement, ‘Country is alive, we’re just living on the surface.’ Teresa and Brian spoke more candidly about the need to respect and revere the spirit, power and law contained deep within living country, which may not be apparent on the ‘surface’, depending on one’s relationship with country.

Referring here to two rival networks, living country and the Gas (as represented by the Premier), Teresa made clear the source of her and her people’s power to stop the Gas:

> Well that’s the powerful thing we got, in front of us already, [country]. We got the power to stop him. He should listen. Why is he going over us for? We don’t want his money, we want our country alive.

Picking up from where Teresa left off, Brian spoke about what lies beneath the surface, and if disturbed, how powerful entities (those hinted at by Teresa) can rise up to defend country.

> We won’t be able to control it. [Woodside] will come back and think that it was us, they’ll blame us, but it’ll be country who done them things.
Brian is well aware that people–country relationships must be maintained and protected in certain ways for country to be a safe place, what other Indigenous people refer to as ‘quiet’. He spoke on, emphasising that the Goolarabooloo people are charged with the responsibility to protect and maintain a balance with country. According to Brian and his father, the integrity of the Song Cycle is paramount to sustaining people–country connections. To borrow Latour’s (1987) words, in this next statement Brian is ‘mapping for [himself], for [his] opponents, and for the observers, what [he] value[s] most, what [he is] most dearly attached to’ (p. 205).

Papa J, he explained it the right way. He said [the Song Cycle] is like a snake. You give [Woodside] that snake, he'll break him in half, it'll never join back together. That Song Cycle he strong right through from Swan Point right down to Bidyidanga. But [Woodside and the State Government] don't understand that. You break that snake, you break that Song Cycle, and then what we got left? Culture and everything will finish. It's just sad. That's what we live for. We live for our culture, our law. If our law and culture get broken, what we gonna do then? Liyan get lost, everything get lost. That's why I'm saying, if that Gas hub goes through, I can't live here. It'll kill me this place.

Brian emphasises that the Song Cycle’s strength is contingent upon its integrity and the multiplicity of connections between country, people, law, culture and liyan. Following on from Latour (1987), Nicholls (2009) proffers the insight that ‘ultimately it is the work that it would take to undo a link, the cost of undoing it,

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134 Based on her work with the Yarralin people, Rose (2004) refers to quiet country as ‘the country in which all the care of generations of people is evident to those who know how to see it’ (p. 4).
135 Deceased. The grandson of Paddy Roe and recently passed Goolarabooloo custodian and senior law boss J. R.
136 Recall the statements made by Bradshaw and Fry (1989) and Wilcox (2010) in Chapter 1 regarding the importance of the Song Cycle, and the Trail, remaining intact. Bradshaw and Fry (1989) made clear the imperative for the integrity of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail to be maintained, to prevent ‘far reaching effects on Aboriginal people throughout the West Kimberley’ (p. 7). In addition, Wilcox (2010) highlighted the interconnectedness of the Song Cycle, warning that ‘If one area is destroyed, the whole is affected’ (p. 27).
which determines how strong it is’ (p. 214). The cost of breaking ties with the Song Cycle and breaking the Song Cycle itself, cannot be underestimated in Brian’s terms – law, culture, liyan and ‘everything’ will get lost, including the meaning of his existence and his life.

Frans helps to contextualise Brian’s statement about the cost of his connections with country being broken by the Gas. Here Frans explains how past physical damage to and disturbance of places in country, led to the breaking of strong people–country links, with dire consequences for the Goolarabooloo people involved.

Goolarabooloo people have rayi connections to country relating to certain places. When their rayi grounds get disturbed or destroyed, they can get hurt or die. It’s a life force connection. When Inballal was bulldozed, Lulu’s first grandson passed away, then when Bilingur lawground got damaged Lulu’s second grandson passed away. After that, when ceremonial trees got bulldozed in the Gundando area, Lulu’s third grandson passed away.\textsuperscript{137}

Hence, for Brian, his assertion that ‘if that Gas hub goes through, I can’t live here. It’ll kill me this place,’ is not an overstatement of the personal cost of the Gas hub being built at Walmadany; it is his reality. Brian’s father also wrote about the cost of breaking people–country links on the Song Cycle, highlighting the connection between a person’s rayi and their rayi place, through liyan:\textsuperscript{138}

For many traditional people, a specific tree, animal or place that [has] some relationship to the time of their conception – their heart’s first beat – becomes their ‘rai’, or spirit essence. It is to this place that a person’s spirit returns when they die. The ‘rai’ of the person and the country of the same essential vibrational spirit are connected by ‘le-an’ (‘spirit’ or ‘feeling connection’). If country is affected, the person is also affected (emphasis added, as cited in Ruiz Wall 2010, pp. 28–29).

\textsuperscript{137} The deceased are not named due to issues of cultural sensitivity. Inballal, Bilingur, Gundando are places on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and part of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle.

\textsuperscript{138} Note that the words rayi (rai) and liyan (le-an) are written using a different orthography in the following quoted text.
Although a person’s *rayi* connection with a place may be strong enough to keep bringing them back to that place in country (as was made visible by Teresa through her relationship with Bindingyangun), they are not strong enough to withstand physical disturbance and damage to country. *Rayi* connections are strong, but their durability is vulnerable to particular competing perceptions of and commercial interests in the land, such as the Gas, that cause these destructive effects.

Concerns over maintaining the integrity (and durability) of the Song Cycle and the Trail are echoed by close friends of the Goolarabooloo, Don and Luke. Don, who helped Paddy to establish the Trail and lived for many years at Millibinyarri with the Goolarabooloo, spoke about how the siting of the Gas at Walmadany would fracture the Trail.

The Lurujarri Heritage Trail. That’s the only thing that I fight for in this country. And what this Gas project is going to do is cut this Trail in half [so people have to] make a side trip around some industrial complex, through the bush. Some new track through the bush, because the industrial complex is there. For no other reason, for no historical reason or anything like that. If you want to get back on the real Trail, then you have to go back around the industrial block and hook up to the main Trail on the other side. And that to me is a break, it’s a cut in the flow of the Trail, which begins down south and ends up at Yellow River.

Don understands that the Trail is not merely a path; it is a *powerful movement* through country that people have followed for millennia; it has a history and because of this, a legitimacy in his eyes. Luke, another old friend of the Goolarabooloo, continued on from Don, explaining in greater detail the impact of siting an industrial precinct on the path of the Trail. He does so by recounting his sense of journey along the Trail.

When you leave Broome, I find you’re still in Melbourne or still somewhere else you know [in your mind]. And slowly as the days go on, you start to slowly feel [country] and by the time you’re up around near [Walmadany] you’re starting to get in tune with it, so that by the
time you get to Yellow River, [you’ve had] ten days of feeling it. You know what you’re taking home with you. But, if like Don’s saying, with the split, if you get half-way up and hit a fence all of a sudden and have to go around this thing, when you get to the other side you’ve got to start again. And then by the time you get to Yellow River you’re only getting a percentage of that feeling again. You haven’t peaked.

Luke highlights the importance of allowing slow processes like feeling, tuning-in and connecting to occur so that the desired effect of walking the Trail – knowing ‘what you are taking home with you’ (connection) – can be reached. For Luke, an industrial precinct on the path of the Trail would mean starting these processes all over again. As stated in Chapter 4, even without the Gas, there were concerns from Jeanné that the effects of the ‘big town’ (e.g. keeping people ‘separated’ from place and in their ‘logic brain’) would intrude on people’s experiences of walking the Trail. For Jeanné and Terence, being on the Trail created distance from town, its accoutrements and isolating effects. Free from these distractions, they could be present and experience ‘being with’ country. With the presence of industry, this precious distance from ‘town’ would cease to exist.

Whilst the Goolarabooloo and their friends warned of ‘breaking’ the Song Cycle and signalled that the consequences of doing so would be greatest for country and people who hold particular types of connections with country, Premier Barnett and proponents of the Gas were describing impacts from the development in different terms. The Gas network had great faith in ‘mitigating’ the potential impacts of the development, through conditions imposed by the EPA.

Borrowing a phrase from Latour (1993), despite the public appeals made by the Goolarabooloo people to Premier Barnett and Woodside to see and acknowledge living country and the Song Cycle through their eyes, ‘people who are interested in [science or business] feel justified in paying no attention’ (p. 3). The Premier’s interests and attention were elsewhere, as revealed by the discourses that he used to make durable the Gas network.
5.5.7 Strategies and discourses: the flow on effects

Premier Barnett used a clear discourse to invoke a very different set of priorities and actors from the Goolarabooloo, and in the process, mapped out to what he was most dearly attached. The discourse employed by the Premier was strategic in that it inhereed plans, priorities and motives, which in this case, were to ensure that the Browse LNG Precinct was built at James Price Point. In turn, his strategies relied upon material assemblages and configurations to enact this discourse, indicating that all three elements of Law’s architecture (material arrangements, strategies and discourses) are interdependent.

Below are five of Premier Barnett’s media statements made about the Browse LNG development, which serve as examples of his discourse. Note how he tries to enrol particular groups of people (‘the Aboriginal people of this region’, ‘Indigenous people in the Kimberley’ and ‘the people of Broome’) by giving them a role in the Gas network:

1. ‘The gas is there [in the Browse Basin] and it is just a matter of time before it is used. We are being prudent about its development and aiming to ensure the maximum benefit will flow through to the people of Broome, the Kimberley and right across Western Australia’ (Government of Western Australia 2011).
2. ‘The development of these projects will provide a major boost to the regional economy through jobs, training and business opportunities across the wider community’ (Government of Western Australia 2011).
3. ‘The Aboriginal people of this region entered into an agreement with the State to ensure that the benefits of development in the Kimberley would, first and foremost, flow to them’ (Government of Western Australia 2011).
4. ‘The agreement will give indigenous people in the Kimberley a higher level of economic independence and is a real and practical milestone in the reconciliation process’ (Government of Western Australia 2013).
5. ‘I recognise there were strong differences within the [Native Title claim] group and reaching a decision has not been easy, however this is an important act of self determination that will generate real economic opportunities and real jobs for indigenous people over many years’ (Government of Western Australia 2013).

In a bid to enroll more actors associated with Indigenous networks into the Gas, Premier Barnett draws on positive discursive elements, such as ‘reconciliation’, and ‘self-determination’, to which the Goolarabooloo are already linked, furthermore, implying that there is an unquestioned link between these positive discourses and the Gas. The Premier outlines his priorities of regional economic development and creating economic opportunities for Indigenous people in the Kimberley. Unlike the stories that Goolarabooloo people and Trail walkers have shared thus far, which relay direct and unmediated benefits such as reciprocity of care with country, Premier Barnett frames benefits through a capitalist agenda; they ‘flow through to’ people. He reveals a deeper neoliberal\(^{139}\) reform agenda (a strategy), making claims that the Gas is a pathway to ‘self-determination’ and an ‘opportunity’ for Indigenous people in the Kimberley to develop ‘economic independence’ through ‘real jobs’.

The ‘money story’ presented by Premier Barnett is connected to a vast network of actors and other networks and brings into focus discourses of ‘profitability’ and securing ‘global markets’, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, neither this story nor its associated strategies appeal to the actors already enrolled in Paddy’s Dream. Expounding the strong views of the Goolarabooloo community, Teresa emphatically states, ‘We don’t want his money, we want our country alive.’

\(^{139}\) In a report titled *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009) critiques the global ascendancy of neo-liberalism and the impact of such policies on Indigenous peoples. The Report defines neoliberalism as, ‘a belief that the market should be the organizing principle for social, political and economic decisions, policy makers promoted privatization of state activities and an increased role for the free market, flexibility in labour markets, and trade liberalization’ and highlights the common failure of these ‘benefits’ to translate to Indigenous peoples, who ‘acutely feel their costs, such as environmental degradation and loss of traditional lands and territories’ (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2009, p. 16).
The holding together of people–country is valued more by Teresa and her people than what Premier Barnett has to offer.

Muecke and Dibley (2016) give a pertinent critique of Premier Barnett’s claims of a direct (and strong) link between the Gas being located at James Price Point and Indigenous economic prosperity. Their analysis begins by citing Premier Barnett’s threat that unless there is a gas precinct in the Kimberley ‘there will be no gas-related economic development in the Kimberley and there will be no economic benefit for the Aboriginal people of the Kimberley’ (ABC 2008). In response to Barnett’s threat, Muecke and Dibley (2016) write:

   Repeating the received wisdom of dominant policy discourse in Australia, which assumes that Indigenous poverty can only be alleviated with modernisation and its development programs, the rationale behind Barnett’s veiled threat was as familiar as it was unconvincing. Certainly the Goolarabooloo were unpersuaded. A gas plant was equivocally not an entity to which they saw their wellbeing as attached, financial or otherwise (p. 4).

   For Teresa and her family, the country is worth infinitely more than Premier Barnett and Woodside could promise in terms of economic benefits packages, future employment and self-determination; it is the ultimate source of material and spiritual sustenance and wellbeing. As Deborah Bird Rose (2004) states,

   The benefit of being in relationship with country – walking, camping, fishing, hunting, performing ceremonies, burning off, telling the stories and singing the song poetry of country – is that it is mutually life-giving to both people and country (p. 173).

   It is this benefit that Rose enunciates, the mutuality of country and people giving each other life when they are in relationship, that Teresa and the Goolarabooloo people identify with most. Figure 9 and Figure 10 hint at this generosity.
Figure 9: Country provides for its people: collecting *munga* (bush honey) up Yellow River.

Image source: Author.

Figure 10: Country provides for its people: Richard finds a *barney* (sand monitor) up Yellow River. Image source: Author.
Table 1: Examining the network architecture of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and the Gas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material configurations</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are materialities configured?</td>
<td>What plans and priorities are employed? Revealing what motive?</td>
<td>What discourses are employed in order to strengthen the network?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail</td>
<td>Paddy ensured that people were ‘there’ on country in the Trail. Once people arrived on country, there were guides leading the way and storytellers sharing Bugarrigarra, living country and Goolarabooloo family stories; sandy beaches, wetlands, monsoonal vine thickets, cliff tops and sand dunes to walk on; bush honey to collect and fish and crabs to hunt; campfires to sleep around; star constellations to gaze up at; people to share the experience with; and spirits in living country to wake people up. Through walking, listening to stories, camping, sitting and dreaming, people are ‘being with’ country. The network of Paddy’s Dream extended out to reach people, organisations and funds from across Australia and overseas, with the aid of mainstream and social media. The national and international support offered to the ‘No Gas’ campaign (both material and immaterial), was little acknowledged by the Gas network during the campaign (or when the Gas network failed). Material integrity means that people–country connections are unmediated, strong and that entities in country, such as the Song Cycle, remain whole. There are powerful entities in country that must be respected and not disturbed, otherwise there will be very real consequences for those involved. Reciprocity between people and country is a means through which people–country (including law and culture) is holding together.</td>
<td>The Jabirrjabirr and Ngumbal elders made Paddy Roe custodian of Law and culture of their ancestral estates to ensure the durability of people–country connections. Rayi are connecting with children born on the country and are calling them back to their rayi place so they will ‘be with’ and look after country. Paddy sent out a dream to get people to walk the Trail and in turn, become connected with the country and feel compelled to protect it. The Goolarabooloo and volunteers are orchestrating the organisation of the Trail: maintaining a website, taking bookings, buying food and supplies, organising guides and storytellers, guiding walkers, telling stories, cooking food, appeasing spirits. The name Walmadany is used to refer to a place in country and the Jabirrjabirr ancestor, thus linking it to all the stories associated with Walmadany and a vast network of ancestors. Discourses, such as Bugarrigarra stories, family and personal stories of belonging to place and personal stories of ‘being with’ country, are working to hold together people–country, including stories about the ancestor Walmadany. ‘Protecting country’ is another discourse that emerged through Paddy’s Dream and grew in power during the campaign to stop the Gas from interfering with the Song Cycle and Lurujarri Dreaming Trail networks. Living country stories are providing a conceptual language for walkers of the Trail to ‘see’, ‘read’ and relate to the land in new/different ways, including as a multi-dimensional entity with which a person can be in a relationship inhering reciprocity and care.</td>
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<td>The Gas</td>
<td>Most of the actors associated with the Gas (particularly the human decision makers) were associated in boardrooms and in offices in big cities; they were not ‘there’ on the Song Cycle path, walking the Trail, sitting by the fire, listening to Bugarrigarra stories and sleeping in a swag looking up at the constellations of stars. Actors associated with the Gas were connected with the ‘money story’ and global markets, two vast networks and the many other actors listed earlier. These actors have likely never made direct, strong connections with the country. Instead, links with the proposed site are generated through statistics, balance sheets, survey data presented in scientific reports, aerial photographs and geomorphology maps, translating James Price Point (Walmadany) into paper representations, a process that Latour (1987, p. 251) calls metrology. The WA Government and Woodside were guided by well-known strategies associated with discourses around ‘shareholder profits’ and ‘economic viability’. Premier Barnett was guided by the strategy of increasing mining royalties into the State of WA and being re-elected at the next election – appeasing people connected with the mineral resources industry and ensuring a foothold into Asian markets for resources from WA. Strategies that blocked the forming of connections: staying away from the Song Cycle; employing discourses that make visible some things (economic benefits, economic development, positive social outcomes in terms of housing, education and health care) and ignore others (people’s deep spiritual connections with the land). Although metrology can apply to material assemblages, both networks are using processes of metrology to translate the country into paper forms in a bid to make their separate arguments stronger than the other, in particular to actors that need to be convinced/enrolled. However, the key distinction between these efforts is that each network is using metrology to generate different effects: in applying the process of metrology, the Gas network is creating greater distance between people and place, while the Trail network is using metrology to try and lessen the distance between people and country. Otherwise, there is no overlap between the strategies that are employed by the two networks. Profits and securing Asian markets are the motivating factors for the Gas network. Holding together people–country so that the integrity of country is maintained is the underlying motive of the Trail network. Use of the name James Price Point, and the implications associated with that name (a European story). The discourses employed by Premier Barnett centred on economic benefits (with social benefits as a flow-on effect); economic self-reliance; economic opportunities; real jobs; and economic boosts to regional economies. He tried to make links with discourses that the Goolarabooloo had already accepted and were connected with, including reconciliation and self-determination. Discourses were used to block the impacts of being there, on the Song Cycle. Premier Barnett referred to James Price Point as an ‘unremarkable’ place. Following his logic, places are only worth preserving if they are ‘postcard’ spectacular.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential overlaps between networks</td>
<td>There is some overlap between material configurations. Some of the actors in the Gas network are ‘there’ on country (Woodside workers, security guards, heavy machinery operators, scientists), but they are a) indifferent to the Trail and what it might offer them, or, b) resisting enrolment into the Trail and Paddy’s Dream.</td>
<td>Although metrology can apply to material assemblages, both networks are using processes of metrology to translate the country into paper forms in a bid to make their separate arguments stronger than the other, in particular to actors that need to be convinced/enrolled. However, the key distinction between these efforts is that each network is using metrology to generate different effects: in applying the process of metrology, the Gas network is creating greater distance between people and place, while the Trail network is using metrology to try and lessen the distance between people and country.</td>
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140 See Appendix 7: Metrology at work – maps that translate Walmadany into ‘the Gas’ network, for examples of metrology.
A network falls apart

At the Woodside Annual General Meeting on 24 April 2013, Woodside Chairman Michael Chaney (2013) announced:

This was a difficult decision, but one that we are convinced is in the best interests of our shareholders. Following a very rigorous evaluation of the upstream and downstream scopes of work, it was clear that the existing James Price Point development concept would not deliver the commercial returns necessary for a positive final investment decision.

Even though there were several weak links along the way, it was the lack of ‘commercial viability’ of the James Price Point onshore processing option that prompted the failure of the Gas network in its intended material assemblage. Invoking Latour again, in a controversy people will look around for stronger allies. After the failure of the Gas network in its proposed material configuration (being sited at James Price Point), Woodside and their joint venture partners sought to keep their network intact by employing discourses and enroll new actors. In this process, they too were mapping out what they were most dearly attached to: profits and economic viability. In a later announcement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) on 20 August 2013, Woodside revealed that it would utilise floating LNG technology to commercialise the gas resources in the Browse Basin, with Woodside Chairman Michael Chaney stating that:

A compelling case has emerged for floating LNG as the best option for early commercialisation of the world-class Browse resource (Woodside 2013).

Woodside’s touting of the floating LNG option as ‘the best option for early commercialisation’ of the Browse Gas, it did not fulfil the WA Premier’s agenda of State development, of which James Price Point, and more broadly the Kimberley Region, was a central feature. The adoption of floating technology meant that the gas
extracted from the Browse Basin would fail to make landfall, and hence, massive state-based royalties could not be derived from this resource.

Ultimately, the strategies, discourses and material arrangements employed by Premier Barnett and the Gas network were not enough to ensure the durability of the network in its intended form. Although the proposed development at James Price Point had appeared to be a certainty, Premier Barnett was unsuccessful in maintaining the enrolment of his most precious allies, Woodside and their joint venture partners. Even the retention lease, which mandated that Woodside process the gas onshore, was not strong enough to hold Woodside to the James Price Point option; links with global markets and profits proved stronger.

As is the case with many failed networks, new strategies help to give life to new material assemblages that carry on with some of the old actors. Once the Gas failed in its intended form, the Premier continued to pursue his strategy of developing James Price Point as an industrial precinct. The land including and surrounding James Price Point was eventually compulsorily acquired\(^{141}\) and an application to develop the site as a ‘Common user LNG hub precinct for future Browse Basin gas processing in the Kimberley Region’ was resubmitted to the EPA for approval.\(^{142}\)

At no stage during the contest between the rival networks did Premier Barnett or Woodside acknowledge the powerful people–country network connected to the Trail and Paddy’s Dream (by this time extending overseas), which did prove durable.

Perhaps this is not surprising given that many of the actors in this network may not have even existed for them. Following Woodside’s announcement to the ASX, Goolarabooloo senior law boss Phillip Roe acknowledged some of the crucial ties

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\(^{141}\) In November 2013, the WA Government completed the compulsory acquisition process for 3,414 hectares of land including James Price Point and surrounding areas. However, at this time, there were no longer any agreements in place with mineral resource companies to develop the site.

\(^{142}\) Following the rescinding of EPA approval of the Browse LNG Precinct at James Price Point, new members were subsequently appointed to the EPA board and in 2014 the EPA began reassessing the application for a ‘Common user LNG hub precinct for future Browse Basin gas processing in the Kimberley Region’.
that helped to hold together the people–country network that he, his family and supporters fought to protect:

This campaign belongs not only to the Goolarabooloo people, it belongs to each and every one of you who supports this campaign. My grandfather now, he’d be clapping his hands (Mailer & Collins 2013).

By anticipating Paddy Roe’s joy and approval, Phillip shows that Paddy’s Dream to protect country was indeed coming into fruition. The ties that constituted the people–country networks associated with the Trail were strong enough to withstand the threats posed by the Gas. Against the odds, people–country connections were holding together.

5.6 Summary

This chapter aimed to explore whether people–country connections on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are enduring, and if so, how.

By examining people–country connections as ‘individual nodes’ that help to hold together the Trail as a network, we were able to see ‘how these connections came about and what sustains them’ (emphasis added, Fenwick & Edwards 2010, p. 9), and in turn, how the Trail itself is enduring, even in the face of significant challenges.

Goolarabooloo people, walkers of the Trail and non-human actors, found ways to keep people–country connected, despite changes in storytelling practices on the Trail and the threat of ‘the Gas’, a rival network that appeared on country. Both human and non-human actors alike (stories, new human storytellers, discursive objects, rayi, liyan and country) played their part to hold together people–country connections and the Trail network. These actors configured new, and drew upon old materialilities, and employed particular strategies and discourses to make these relationships endure, demonstrating Law’s (2009) concept of network architecture.
As anticipated by Law (2009), material configurations, strategies and discourses, were affording durability to networks. In the case of the Trail, durability meant people and country staying connected and the endurance of the Trail. The material configuration of being ‘there’, situated on and with country, surfaced as a key aspect of the relationships that people on the Trail, Goolarabooloo and other walkers, were performing with country, offering insight into the first thesis question posed. By being situated in country, humans were susceptible to feeling connections with country. The performance of these direct and unmediated relationships was in turn leading to relationships of care and reciprocity between people and country.

Deliberate strategies were ensuring that people were ‘there’ on and with country, creating and maintaining connections. These strategies included the Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr elders passing on custodianship to Paddy Roe, rayi calling people back to their spirit place, Paddy’s vision to protect country, and the Goolarabooloo and volunteers’ orchestration of the Trail.

Discourses also proved to be important in supporting the durability of the Trail, by helping people to relate with country in particular ways, offering insight into the second research question. Bugarrigarra stories, also described in this chapter as a powerful discourse, did important work towards the establishment and maintenance of people–country relationships. The Bugarrigarra stories told on country by Richard and other storytellers did this work by offering walkers distinct ways of ‘reading’ the country, which defined certain ‘conditions of possibility’ and ordered relationships (Law 2009, p. 149) through means of co-creation.

For new walkers of the Trail, Bugarrigarra stories offered access to different and new ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ place, and a means through which to experience a co-productive relationship with country. Performances of Bugarrigarra stories in place were in effect, co-creative acts into which the storyteller, listeners and entities in country were enrolled, supporting Akrich’s (1992) contention that performance is a co-constitution. For Goolarabooloo storyteller Terence and his family, the performance of Bugarrigarra stories on country offered a ‘place’ within which to dwell; these stories did work to maintain connections by situating he and his family in country. Listening to and performing these stories while being situated in the
places about which these stories are told, was a critical aspect of storytelling performance on country for both Goolarabooloo people and other walkers of the Trail, demonstrating that as a material configuration, storytelling in country is particularly effective at holding together people–country connections.

A change in storytelling practices on the Trail, whereby fewer stories were being told, amplified the important work performed by Bugarrigarra stories in creating and maintaining connections between people and country. Despite this change, Bugarrigarra stories found ways to keep being told, albeit through new and different material assemblages, which included discursive objects, Frans and volunteers and past walkers on the Trail.

In addition to Law and Akrich, this chapter also drew upon insights from Latour (1987) to make observations about if and how networks are enduring. As Latour (1987) predicted, when a serious threat to country and people’s relationships with country emerged in the form of ‘the Gas’, a controversy ensued and actors from both the Trail and the Gas networks mapped out to what they were most dearly attached. The Goolarabooloo people showed that they most valued their material and spiritual relationships with country, the Song Cycle, law and culture, and liyan. The threat to people–country connections posed by the Gas also prompted Goolarabooloo people to reveal at what cost people–country networks are assembled – their very meaning of existence and for some, their lives.

Mapping out a very different set of priorities, the key proponents linked to the Gas showed that they were most dearly attached to developing the liquefied natural gas in the Browse Basin with the highest profit return to shareholders, mining royalties and state development. Unlike the Goolarabooloo and walkers of the Trail who performed their relationships with place through being situated in and with country, many actors in the Gas network performed their relationships with place through distance, as was reflected in the materialities, strategies and discourses they employed. Ultimately, weak links between key actors and the formation of new stronger links with other networks (the greater financial viability of using floating LNG technology) led the gas network to fail in its intended form: an LNG processing plant at James Price Point.
Despite challenges internal to the network and external threats, the Trail, as a people–country network, is finding ways to hold together. Furthermore, more people are being enrolled into Paddy’s Dream (to protect the country) during times of threat, helping to make the Trail durable.

The next and final story-based chapter builds upon the work begun in Chapter 4, where ontological shifts experienced by walkers of the Trail were observed and followed. These shifts proved integral to the ways in which people saw, spoke about and related with country. Storytellers were showing (to varying degrees) that they were not merely being ‘on’ country, but ‘being with’ country. Chapter 6 explores in greater depth the performance of relationships between country and people walking and protecting the Trail, and looks at the potential for a relational ontology of ‘being with’ to support ongoing, mutually supportive relationships between people and country, regardless of Indigeneity.
Chapter 6: ‘Being with’ country

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters offered insights into how walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, including Goolarabooloo people, are becoming and staying connected with country. Despite historical and contemporary challenges and threats to the durability of these connections people–country is holding together, for now, and the sacredness of country is being protected. Building upon these earlier insights, Chapter 6 explores the generative potential of ongoing relationships between people and place that are performed through a relational ontology of ‘being with’. By examining the realities that are (co-)produced by these relationships, this chapter responds to the third thesis question: ‘What do these [people–country] relationships tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?’

Beginning with a reflection of the stories and accounts presented in Chapters 4 and 5, this chapter then goes on to follow actors identified in additional stories and accounts from research participants. Perspectives from Actor-Network Theory (ANT), Indigenous philosophies, eco-philosophy and Theory-U are again considered in relation to these stories, to help make sense of the aforementioned research question.

6.2 The emergence of realities

The stories and accounts presented in this chapter are approached as performances, and invocations of past enactments, of relationships between people and country,

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143 Chapter 5 recounted ‘the Gas’, another very powerful network, falling apart while the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail held together, despite being dismissed by the Gas network and its chief proponent Western Australian Premier, Colin Barnett.

144 As with Chapter 5, the work of ANT writers informs the use of the words performance and performativity, including Madeleine Akrich’s (1992) position that performance is always a co-constitution. Performativity is also constructed here as an Indigenous philosophical principle.
while the use of the term ontology refers to the realities that emerge through these people–country performances on the Trail, which are inherently generative.

On the matter of realities being performed, the ANT writers Law and Mol make two important contributions. Firstly, John Law (2004) maintains:

Realities are produced, and have a life, in relations (p. 59).

Secondly, and in the same vein as Law, Annemarie Mol (2002) contends that realities are situated and relational:

We are not talking about what things are ‘by nature’. We are not talking about what something or someone is in and of themselves; for nothing ever ‘is’ alone. To be is to be related (p. 54).

Indigenous researcher Shaun Wilson (2008, p. 73) articulates reality as multiple and co-constituted through relationship, a view that resonates with ANT’s relational ontology. He asserts that reality does not exist ‘out-there’ as something objective; it is embedded within relationships:

There is no one definite reality but rather different sets of relationships that make up an Indigenous ontology. Therefore reality is … a process of relationships (p. 73).

Both Mol and Law urge the ethnographer to approach realities as emergent rather than through a priori assumptions about what ‘is’, so that ‘what there is and how it is divided up [is] not … assumed beforehand … [realities] arise in the course of interactions between different actors’ (Law 2004, p. 102).

The use of ANT, as a method with which to approach the research participant’s stories, has led this thesis to do a particular type of ontological work, work that is underpinned by a commitment to deal with human and the non-human entities in the
same terms and through a performative/generative mode. Far from being neutral, method works to recognise certain ‘kinds of realities’ (Law 2004, p. 59). An outcome of practicing ontological symmetry in this thesis is the increase in ‘realities that can be known, and forms by which we can know them’ (Law 2004, p. 103). Furthermore, this approach allows the ethnographer to work across knowledge systems and recognise multiple realities.

If, as Wilson states, reality is a process of relationships, then certain realities are emerging from the types of people–place relationships that are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. By virtue of the research participants’ ability to articulate their stories about these emerging realities, a further question that serves to lead this exploration into the ontologies being performed on the Trail is, how do people *know* these realities?

Helen Verran (1998, p. 254) offers two useful and accompanying terms that are employed in this chapter to focus the response to the questions just posed. The first is ‘ontic commitments’, which refers to the forms of meaningfulness that are practiced in the enactment of people’s realities. The second term is ‘epistemic commitments’, the explanations of origins of this meaningfulness, which Verran (1998, p. 254) asserts are, in practice, inseparable from ontic commitments.

6.2.1 Reflecting on the ontological work already revealed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

Important ontological work has already been uncovered in the previous two chapters. As revealed in Chapter 5, Paddy took seriously the task of negotiating realities associated with Western networks, which was evident in the question his *gulbinna* (shield) posed to his Order of Australia Medal: ‘This gulbinna (shield) is asking the medal, you going to break up this country or keep it the same since *bugarre garre*

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145 In Chapter 4, ontological work was described as the process of making critical distinctions about what ‘is’, which included imagining ‘new categories and [reworking] old categories in new ways’ (Verran 1998, pp. 241–242).

146 From an ANT perspective, ontological symmetry involves recognising the agency of any entity that does work and calling it an actor, regardless of its status as a ‘human’ or ‘non-human’.
(Dreamtime)?’ (Broome News 1990, n.p.). The continuity of this work was apparent when Paddy’s family acknowledged and enrolled actors from Western networks (Trail walkers and volunteers, lawyers, the judiciary, scientists, anthropologists, environmental non-government organisations) into their campaign to protect the country from the threat of the proposed Browse LNG Precinct (the Gas) at Walmadany.

The ontological work Trail walkers were undertaking was marked by a series of shifts, which were described by this thesis using the ANT term ‘translations’.

These shifts were catalysed by country (or particular entities within country), which was affecting people on the Trail as they walked, sat and slept ‘there’, on and with country. Such processes, which situated people in and with place, led to transformations in how they saw, spoke about and related to place.

In addition to these embodied acts of being ‘there’, listening to stories about Bugarrigarra and living country also offered walkers of the Trail another stimulus with which to question and reconfigure the pre-existing categories they used to see and relate to the world. This openness to work with Indigenous realities (ontologies and epistemologies), evidenced in the storytelling of research participants, further demonstrated the ontological work walkers of the Trail were performing. In one particular instance, Trail walker Adriana described her shift in ‘seeing’ as becoming aware of her previous dualistic lens, which had informed her ‘reading’ of the land as ‘landscape’, and then coming to know, experience and be present to ‘living country’, an entity and people–country network that she could merge with: ‘it’s a part of me and I’m also part of that cycle.’ Adriana came to recognise living country

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147 See Chapter 3, pages 100–101 for an explanation of the ANT term translation.

148 The metaphors ‘opening up’ and ‘waking up’ were used by the research participants to signal that translations were occurring due to their engagement with country along the Trail and referred to the recognition of the agency within country and an awakening of a receptivity to connect with country.

149 In Chapter 5 a ‘hunger’ for stories, as expressed by walkers of the Trail, amplified the importance of Bugarrigarra stories and teachings about living country in supporting people to attribute meaning to, and see the country in new/different/shared ways.

150 ‘Landscape’ in the sense described by Val Plumwood (2006) as a detached ‘colonizing gaze’ which produces the land as ‘passive’ and through distance (p. 123).
as an ontological category and in doing so shifted from being ‘on’, to a relational ontology of ‘being with’ country. Alternatively, in the words of Mathews (2002, p. 4), Adriana’s experience shows that she is ‘coming into country’ by taking seriously categories from Indigenous knowledge systems, and in the process evolving her own metaphysics.

6.3 Performing a relational ontology of ‘being with’

The advent of such ontological shifts amongst walkers of the Trail creates a starting place from which to follow the realities emerging from people’s relationships with living country, and catalyses a number of pertinent questions: What do enactments of ‘being with’, performed by walkers of the Trail, look like? Do these performances have similar characteristics to the ‘being with’ country enacted by Goolarabooloo people? This section draws upon accounts already shared by Goolarabooloo people and presents more stories from Trail walkers, to respond to these questions and the third thesis question posed.

6.3.1 Characteristics of ‘being with’

Characteristics of people’s ‘being with’ country came into sharp focus in Chapter 5 when Goolarabooloo people Teresa, Brian and Kathleen described their personal and collective relationships with country. Reciprocity of care, mutual recognition and communicative engagement emerged as experiential aspects of this ontology.

Paddy’s granddaughter Kathleen expressed a sense of mutual recognition when she affirmed, ‘That country knows us. When we go there, we feel like we belong,’ while Paddy’s great-grandson Brian illustrated the reciprocity of care that defines him and his family’s relationships with country: ‘When we go on country we make it more alive … you feel spirit, you feel power … Country supply us, make family happy. I don’t know how it works. Good feeling in your liyan. We’ll never starve in this place.’ Brian also used the example of liyan (feeling) to describe his communicative engagement with the ancestor Walmadany, stating, ‘That old chap [Walmadany], I
still feel him here, inside here [my heart]. You know I’m tell you about liyan? My liyan still belong ‘dat place. He’ll still feel me.’

Are walkers of the Trail experiencing the same characteristics of ‘being with’ country as Goolarabooloo people? Frans suggested that this was possible. In Chapter 4 he described how Paddy ‘opened up’ the country and invited people to walk the Trail so that they too could ‘be with’ country and experience two vast networks, living country and Bugarrigarra.

The first ethnographic story presented in this chapter features encounters between two walkers/volunteers on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and two trees in a women’s place called Murdjal, located along the Trail. The tellers of this story – Sharyn, who appeared in Chapter 5, and Karlien – both established a relationship with country beyond the nine days of walking the Trail, each spending time living in traditional camps along the Trail at Walmadany and Murdjal, with Goolarabooloo people, helping to protect country from the proposed Browse LNG Precinct development (the Gas).

6.3.2 Story 5: The women and the mamara

At first, a story may appear as an isolated performance of a person’s encounter with place, but then a curious thing happens; more narratives begin to emerge that resonate with this initial story. That is how this ethnographic story took form, through the convergence of multiple stories from women, all revolving around a

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151 In describing their ‘being with’ country, Kathleen and Brian are articulating ‘an ontology of self becoming-other in the space between self and the natural world, composed of humans and non-human others, animate and inanimate; animals and plants, weather, rocks, trees’ (Somerville, Power & de Carteret 2009, p. 9).

152 I continue to draw upon the definition of encounter offered by Freya Mathews (2003) who states that, ‘To encounter an other is to approach it as another subject with whom it is possible to have a relationship (in something like the interpersonal sense rather than in a purely formal sense) and from whom it is possible to elicit a response’ (p. 77).

153 Murdjal is a traditional place in country, within which is a smaller camping area called Murdurdun. Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail often refer to Murdurdun, which is used as a camping place on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, instead of the larger place name Murdjal.
central actor – *mamara* (spirit trees). As with the story in Chapter 5, ‘Feeling part of something bigger’, the seed for this ethnographic narrative was planted during my own embodied experience with a *mamara*, which subsequently led to my following this actor on the Trail.

Despite many previous walks of the Trail, it was not until I began to spend greater lengths of time on country while undertaking this research that I felt drawn to particular trees growing along the Lurujarri coast. Having no explanation for their presence or my heightened awareness of them, I sought the perspectives of Frans and Richard. Both men approached my query with the same response: things in country reveal themselves to you, when you are ready, including the presence of some trees. At my mention of feeling drawn to the big, old *baragool* (red gubinge) tree on the sand dune at Minariny, Frans nodded in understanding and exclaimed, ‘Ah, *mamara*! You got trees on special places who got certain powers, certain energies.’ The word ‘*mamara*’ confirmed my experience of a presence associated with the *baragool* tree and offered another step towards making this entity visible (known) as an actor on the Trail.

It was not long into my fieldwork that I realised that *mamara* were also becoming visible for other women on the Trail.

My lasting memories from the time I spent with Sharyn and Karlien on country are inextricably tied to the stories they shared with me, separately, about their encounters

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154 *Terminalia ferdinandiana x petiolaris*

155 This thesis does not seek to ask or answer the questions, do *mamara* exist? Or, Are they *real*? As presented in Chapter 4 through the writing of Fenwick and Edwards (2010), ‘Whether an object is more or less abstract … is not the point. The key feature is that it is identified, has reality, in particular networks of historical, cultural, behavioural relations that make it visible’ (p. 18). Concurring with Fenwick and Edwards (2010) is Law (2004), who asserts that ‘Realities are not explained by practices and beliefs but are instead produced by them’ (p. 59). The use of the word *mamara* in the discussion and analysis of Sharyn and Karlien’s stories is referential to the meaning about agential trees that emerges from the Trail as a network of relations.
with special trees in the monsoonal vine thicket at Murdjal. Located roughly halfway along the Trail, Murdjal is a place referred to as women’s country due to its association with the Bugarrigarra stories about three sisters and their miligan (digging sticks). Sharyn was the first to share her story about her experience with a garnbor (freshwater paperbark) tree in the thicket.

There’s been a couple of trees I can’t walk past. They pull me down onto the earth, my legs buckle under me and I have to sit down on the earth and just stay there. It happened to me once here when a few of us went for a walk with Frans in that back area at [Murdjal]. We’d gone past this garnbor tree on the way there and then on the way back everyone else had gone back on a different little track and I was called back to this tree again. I couldn’t [walk past it], it just made me, my legs went all jelly-like and I had to just sit down there for a few minutes. It wasn’t a long time, but this tree called me back. [I felt that] this tree and I know each other, we've met before, but I’d never been down into that back area around [Murdjal] before. We knew each other, it was a coming home for both of us, it was a welcome home. I felt it in my body through the weakness in my legs because I just couldn't go anywhere. I can see the tree now, it was really big and swollen, like it was full of water. It was like a pregnant woman. That’s a very magical place down in there. That’s one of the most powerful places I’ve been.

The meaning that emerges from Sharyn’s embodied and visceral encounter with the garnbor is clear to her; she senses the garnbor tree ‘calling’ her back. Her unquestioned knowing of this is affirmed by the weakening of her legs as she attempted to walk past the tree. Although other similar experiences with powerful trees also inform Sharyn’s understanding of her encounter with the garnbor tree, her ontic and epistemic commitments are not derived merely from past encounters. Shared meaning emerges through a mutual recognition between Sharyn and the tree.

Interestingly, the flocking of these stories only became visible when they were brought together on the pages of this thesis; the women have not yet heard each other’s stories. In this, one can see how the act of writing can also be a generative practice where realities are performed.

156 Melaleuca dealbata
which she senses as a female presence in country: ‘We knew each other, it was a coming home for both of us, it was a welcome home.’ In her storytelling, Sharyn invokes the garnbor tree as an active participant in an exchange, perhaps even leading it, by recognising and calling to her. In addition to the mutual recognition between Sharyn and the garnbor, the familial sense of home she felt with the tree constitutes her ‘being with’ country.

Sharyn did not need the term ‘mamara’ to affirm the agency of the garnbor tree. Her embodied encounter with the tree generated the meaning she required to make ontic and epistemic commitments about her experience: she had encountered a powerful female presence in country that called her to ‘be with’ it.

Sometimes the pathway to understanding the significance of stories such as Sharyn’s takes a curious turn. As this ethnographic story began to take form away from the monsoonal vine thicket at Murdjal, I came across a document containing ethnobotanical field drawings and notes from artist and botanist Jeanné, whose stories were shared in Chapter 4. The sketch of one particular plant that grows along the Lurujarri coast, the garnbor, stood out for me (see Figure 11).

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158 This sketch formed part of an Emergency Heritage Listing Application that the Goolarabooloo community was preparing to submit to the Australian Heritage Council, to have the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail listed on the National Heritage Register of significant Indigenous sites. In the end, the application was not submitted due to changes issued by the newly elected Federal Government in 2013, whereby the Australian Heritage Council was no longer receiving submissions. I came across this document through my contribution to the process of putting this application together.
Figure 11: Jeanné’s garnbor field sketch and accompanying notes. Image source: Jeanné Browne (artist).
Jeanné’s notes accompanying the sketch read:

Huge garnbor trees stand in the dusk light in an open area, limbs spread like arms, wide, *welcoming*. The hollows around their feet are water-dig points, undulating mounds of sand and leaf litter. No actual camps here. Traditionally, big old female spirit trees,¹⁵⁹ whose spirits, undisturbed for a long time, are keen to walk the earth, to move. A woman who sleeps under this tree is likely to fall pregnant. We are warned to take water and go – they are too strong to sleep under.

Informed by teachings from her Goolarabooloo friends on country, Jeanné’s account convergences with Sharyn’s embodied knowing¹⁶⁰ of the *garnbor* and affirms Sharyn’s encounter with a powerful presence in country.

Law (2009, p. 152) refers to such convergences as the dovetailing together of realities, yet warns that ‘any such coherence, if it happens at all, is a momentary achievement’ (p.152). However, as this next story from Karlien makes evident, the coherence between the women’s encounters with the powerful trees is holding together long enough for *mamara* to become visible as an ontological category and for characteristics of ‘being with’ to be recognised.

¹⁵⁹ The Goolarabooloo community contested the gendering of these trees when they read through this thesis in draft form. They contend that spirits present in material forms in country do not have a gender. However, this view is not shared by all Indigenous people in Australia. In the case study ‘Love and Reconciliation in the Forest: A Study in Decolonisation’, which centers on the move to halt logging of forests on the sacred mountain Gulaga on the south coast of New South Wales, based on ethnographic work with her Yuin informants, Deborah Rose (2002) reports that place, rocks and even trees can be gendered. On re-reading her notes in a draft of this thesis, Jeanné commented that she no longer sees these trees as ‘female’, and that she may have misunderstood the teaching shared with her on country. The process of sharing the writing of this thesis with the research participants highlights the need to continually negotiate meanings attributed to country, or phrased otherwise, people’s ‘readings’ of country.

¹⁶⁰ Elsewhere in this thesis, embodied knowing is referred to as somatic knowing, a ‘felt reaction of rightness within an experience’ (Siegesmund 2004, p. 81).
On a different walking of the Trail, sitting with her back against a shady *goonj* (*Celtis philipensis*) tree in camp at Murdurdun, Karlien spoke about another much older *goonj* that she had encountered in the monsoonal vine thicket some months earlier.

One day I was walking through the ebony forest and just stopped at this really awe-inspiring tree that seemed so old. When I saw it I felt so opened up to this tree and ready to listen to or get a feeling from it. As I approached the tree I had this sense that it really wanted me to place my hand on it. As I did this I felt nurtured by the tree, but also [a sense that] it was glad to have someone there with it, touching it.

Every time I went back to the tree it would sort of tell me something different. Sometimes I’d feel like the tree wanted me to hold onto one of its limbs or climb into it, but every time it would be different. Other times I got there and it just wanted a brush stroke and that I should just keep going. But other times it’s like it demanded that I sit down on the ground in front of it for a while. Sometimes I would feel to climb the tree, find a branch that felt good, and I would just lie there, feeling for a while and sometimes the feeling would change.

Like Sharyn, Karlien also shows a receptivity and openness to enter into a meaningful engagement with the *goonj* tree. Karlien’s relationship with the *goonj* tree is underpinned by reciprocity of care: ‘I felt nurtured by the tree, but also [a sense that] it was glad to have someone there with it, touching it.’ The ontic commitments that Karlien communicates through this story reveal that the *goonj* tree was seeking to ‘be with’ her through different forms of physical contact (sitting, climbing, stroking), and that she was happy to accept these invitations to ‘be with’ the tree. The responsive interplay and communicative engagement between Karlien and the tree is guided by feeling (*liyan*), which is described as perception on Karlien’s behalf and an intention originating from the tree, pointing towards her epistemic commitments.
The women and their respective trees are co-producing particular realities. Through the convergence of these realities in this ethnographic story, certain aspects of ‘being with’ are becoming more apparent. One such aspect is an intention originating from the *mamara* for the women to be physically close to them. Seen from this perspective, ‘being with’ is not an ontology that arises as a human desire to connect with place; it is a reality that emerges from the relationship between people and place, or an entity in place.

Similarities are beginning to emerge between the characteristics of ‘being with’ expressed by Sharyn and Karlien and those articulated earlier by members of Paddy’s family, Kathleen and Brian; mutual recognition between people and country, a sense of reciprocity of care and nurturance, and communicative engagement through feeling (*liyan*) are forms of meaningfulness between people and country that Goolarabooloo people and some walkers of the Trail are recognising. Note too that these stories shared by the research participants are pointing to a different concept of ‘being with’ from that, which is articulated by philosopher Martin Heidegger, and environmental phenomenologist Simon James. Heidegger (2010) afforded ‘being-with’ to others of its kind, whilst James (2009) went further and extended ‘being-with’ to inter-species relationships comprising of humans and other animals. However, neither went as far to suggest ‘being-with’ could be experienced in inter-entity relationships such as people and place, as is being demonstrated through the stories of Sharyn, Karlien, Teresa, Kathleen and Brian.

There is another important aspect to Karlien’s relationship with the old *goonj* tree that reveals the strength of this connection in the face of a threat to people–country from ‘the Gas’.

This [encounter happened] at a time when the [No Gas] campaign was really intense and I felt so strongly that I would give my life for this country. It was at the stage where Woodside was releasing the perimeters of the Gas hub site and [at that point] it was planned to stretch south of Murdjal across the area with the tree. I thought, I’m just going stay in this tree and never move. I would stay there and no one would be able to move me. I felt like the tree also felt strongly
that people needed to stand on this country and that it would give them the energy to not move, to not be defeated.

While in Chapter 5 Teresa and Brian expressed what they valued most and the cost of holding together people–country, Karlien is also mapping out the lengths to which she would go to protect country from the Gas. Karlien is prepared to defend the goonj tree and country from the threat of clearing with her own life, but she asserts that she would not be acting alone. A co-creative aspect of her relationship with the goonj tree is revealed when she states, ‘I felt like the tree also felt strongly that people needed to stand on this country and that it would give them the energy to not move, to not be defeated.’ Karlien’s investment in her relationship with country that she would go to great lengths to defend and protect it, offers further evidence that Paddy’s Dream is becoming manifest and more specifically, explanation of how this is being done. Her encounter with the goonj tree inhere multiple aspects of ‘being with’ and affords her the conviction that she will fight for the continuance of people–country. Her willingness to work in co-operation with country renders visible the co-productive nature of her relationship with place, and by virtue of her articulation of this story, Karlien also demonstrates that she is aware of this collaboration.

Sharyn and Karlie’s stories affirm that some walkers of the Trail are in fact experiencing these same characteristics of ‘being with’ country as Gooloarabooloo people. However, neither Sharyn nor Karlien were walking this country for the first time, hence, their ongoing relationships with country need to be taken into account. On this matter, Paddy and Frans suggest that an invitation to commune with country does not necessarily enter into a person’s awareness when they first walk the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. They assert that it is with each journey through this country, that a person develops their receptivity to the agency of country and that although ‘Everything here is looking at you and communicating with you … it takes a while to become aware of that’ (Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 25).

If a capacity to engage communicably with country takes time to develop or recognise, people need to stay on, or return to country, so that this potential can be realised. The strategy and work of non-human actors on the Trail, including country, is ensuring that this takes place; recall that in Chapter 5, Kathleen spoke about the
agency of country to bring people back and offer walkers of the Trail the incentive to do so: ‘they feel at home, looked after’.

Is there a broader significance to Sharyn and Karlien’s encounters with country, and if so, what might this be? According to Paddy and Frans, an ongoing relationship with living country that incorporates ‘feeling’ (liyan), ‘seeing’, ‘reading’ and communicative engagement, which are all apparent in the stories shared by these women, enables a person to contribute to the country’s continuance:

In order to keep the country alive, you have to experience it, you have to get the feeling for it, and when you get the feeling for it and you are reading the country, you can help to keep it alive. You can communicate with it. Unless you can communicate with it you won’t be able to help keep it alive (Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 18).

It is worth, at this point, recalling previous insights about liyan shared in Chapter 4, first by Frans – ‘Everything in country has liyan, feeling, and its own purpose. It’s hidden, but it comes alive when you’re with it’ – then secondly by Brian – ‘When we go on country we make it more alive … you feel spirit, you feel power.’ Liyan, as a form of connection or ‘being with’, something that is performed by both people and country, is critical to maintaining the aliveness of people and country, highlighting the importance of people staying connected with country and the generative potential of these ongoing relationships.

Sharyn and Karlien are relating to place as living country, and living country is responding to their receptivity by engaging with them in recognisably meaningful ways. If mutual recognition, reciprocity of care and communicative engagement are ontic commitments (forms of meaningfulness) presented by Sharyn and Karlien, what are the accompanying epistemic commitments (the origin of this meaningfulness)? Meaning emerges from Sharyn and Karlien’s embodied, intersubjective relationships with the mamara. This form of relational knowing relies upon the agency of the mamara to co-produce meaning. Eco-philosopher Freya Mathews (2009) affirms the potential for such forms of knowing in her statement that the world has ‘a capacity and inclination to create and share meaning with us’ (p.
2). Her position, which advocates that there is a poetic structure to reality, also resonates with Paddy and Fran’s contention that the world is full of communicable presence and intention. Sharyn and Karlien’s stories challenge positivist conceptions of knowledge and knowing, by demonstrating that meaning can emerge from relationships.

6.4 Knowing realities through a relational ontology of ‘being with’

In following Sharyn, Karlien and the mamara, particular ways of knowing begin to surface. This next section explicitly focuses on how people on the Trail know their realities. The implications of these ways of knowing are then mapped out, so that their relevance to the generative potential of ongoing relationships between people and country becomes apparent. Observations made while following the women and the mamara offer a foundation for this inquiry and are expanded upon through further perspectives offered by Jeanné, Sharyn, Tegan and Frans, and another story told by Tegan.

Before delving back into the accounts and stories of people on the Trail, it is important to first clarify the use of the term ‘to know’ that this chapter employs, without pre-empting or precluding ways of knowing that people are performing on the Trail. Drawing on the Oxford Dictionary of English (2015), the meanings attributed to the term include: to be aware of, to be certain of, to recognise and to have experienced something or someone.161

Applying one of these understandings of knowing to the story above, Sharyn and Karlien knew (experienced) their encounters with the mamara through their

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161 This chapter does not seek to ask, what is knowledge? Freya Mathews (2003) offers a relevant critique of knowledge, as approached from a scientific perspective, which informs this thesis. Mathews (2003) argues that, ‘encounter rather than knowledge is the appropriate primary mode for relating to the world, when the world is viewed as subjective’ (p. 85) and ‘when knowledge is understood as an end-in-itself, rather than as an incidental flow-on from encounter, then that which is known is, in the final analysis, despite accompanying feelings of warmth and kinship on the part of the knower, a mere means to an epistemic end’ (p. 84).
embodied sensations, feeling (*liyan*, intuition) and a sense of connection. Andreotti, Ahenakew and Cooper (2011, p. 46) write about the marginalisation of ways of knowing that are embodied, experiential and relational, from Western rationality, which is a privileged form of knowing in Western societies. Sharyn and Karlien demonstrate through their stories that they are situating or resituating themselves in a knowledge system that is more akin to an Indigenous epistemology. Piikani First Nation woman Betty Bastien (2004) refers to this positioning as:

> Re-situating themselves in their bodies, emotions and spirits: to the current moment and to what went before, to present and past . . . to the cycle of seasons, the celestial movements, the weather, the land, the past of the land, the plants and animals, and to fellow human beings (p. 187).

Living country is becoming known through the women’s embodied encounters, their ‘being with’ with the *mamara*, pointing to a relational form of knowing. The following accounts and story, explore how people know their realities on the Trail, and more specifically, know their relationships with living country.

### 6.4.1 Country as guide and teacher

Earlier in the chapter, reference was made to Roe and Hoogland (1999) and Mathews (2009) who embrace the idea of a poetic structure of reality, through their view that country has the ability and tendency to communicate meaning with people. The stories that follow illustrate the agency and role of living country as a guide and teacher.

The agency of living country has become a reality for Jeanné through her decades of living seasonally on country and walking the Trail. In this next story she refers to a translation identified in Chapter 4, ‘opening up’, to explain how people walking the Trail for the first time can become receptive to learning from country.

> I feel like the country is the ultimate teacher, but the onus is also on you to be open to it. It’s a big learning curve for lots of people, [who] come armed, most of them, with a great deal of curiosity and
keenness to learn and understand and they’re never disappointed at what’s on offer. The more interested you are, the more things open up to you. But at the same time, you’ve to learn not to be talking and asking questions all the time. You’ve got to have faith that the country will show you things if you’re prepared to sit and wait there and be open to it. You don’t necessarily go trailing after Richard or the family asking a million questions and wanting to be spoon-fed the answers, you’ve got to work things out yourself.

Jeanné cites the potential for walkers of the Trail to learn through a direct relationship with country, if they are open, patient and trusting in the agency of country and a process of country revealing itself. At the same time, she also spells out a type of learning that is not encouraged on the Trail: incessant questioning of Goolarabooloo people. The acumen that Jeanné shares about country teaching people through ‘opening up’ is akin to Mary Graham’s (2009) argument that ‘the world reveals itself to us and to itself – we don’t “discover” anything’ (p. 76). Graham (2009, p. 75), a Kombu Merri woman, employs the metaphors ‘discovery’ and ‘revealing’, to contrast a Western rational form of knowing that is human-driven, from an Indigenous perspective whereby meaning emerges from place. Both Jeanné and Graham’s views align with Mathews’ (2009) proposition about a poetic structure of reality, through which ‘the world … is capable of engaging with us in recognizably meaningful ways’ (p. 1), which is expressed by Roe and Hoogland (1999, p. 18) as communicative engagement.

Jeanné is not alone in recognising the capacity of country to be a teacher and guide, so too is Sharyn. In the previous story, Sharyn’s encounter with the garnbor tree affirmed for her the reality of living country. Below she speaks about being guided by country during her involvement in the campaign to stop the Gas.

Sometimes things happen and the situation just seems absolutely hopeless, that we’re not getting anywhere, that nothing’s happening. And then something happens [and] you go, right, we’re plugged in, country knows we’re looking after it and so it’s looking after us. I’ve noticed some little instances when Woodside’s going out on country and country totally stuffs up their plans … And the timing’s too precise
for it to just be a coincidence I think. It’s the intelligence of country looking after itself and helping us to help look after it. It does guide us. I feel very strongly it guides us. And it guides us down the path to help protect it because it knows which people are really genuinely there, who love it and respect it. And I feel for me it’s shown me quite a few times [if I’m] off on the wrong track, [if I] need to go off on [another] track. Sometimes it might be some brolgas flying past and they confirm something. I find the brolgas are very potent messengers for me at the moment.

Sharyn knows that country is intelligent and filled with intention and meaning, because she is reading signs that are emerging from country, including plans going awry for Woodside (uncannily so) and the presence of brolgas, that lead to positive outcomes for people and country in the networks in which she associates. For Sharyn, this intelligence extends even further, into the ability of country to recognise the intentions of people, including ‘which people are really genuinely there, who love it and respect it.’ These manifestations of intelligence confirm for Sharyn the connection (feeling ‘plugged in’) and reciprocity of care she experiences with country, which is capable of ‘looking after itself and helping us to help look after it.’

In Chapter 4, Frans spoke about a ‘living spiritual entity’ embodied in country. He said that, ‘It’s important to learn from it and keep it alive’. Sharyn’s experiences of being guided by country – her openness to recognising the agency of living country in its capacity to guide her, and her interpretation of signs that were presented and action on this guidance – reveal a conscious commitment to an ongoing connection with country and the co-production of realities with country. In the instance described by Sharyn, the generative effects of this co-production are reciprocal care, the protection of country and the durability of people–country connections.

There is another key aspect to her knowing that Sharyn shares in her account. Her reading of country’s intelligence is not merely through visual signs or circumstance, but also through feeling, further gesturing towards the role of liyan in people knowing their realities on the Trail.
Important translations have occurred for Jeanné and Sharyn to recognise country as a teacher and guide. Roe and Hoogland (1999) map the process that people go through to become consciously aware of their direct communication with the land:

In order to experience this, we have to walk the land. At a certain time for everybody, the land will take over. The land will take that person. You think you’re following something, but the land is actually pulling you, you’re not even aware you’re walking – you’re off, you’re gone. When you experience this, it’s like a shift of your reality. You start seeing things you’ve never seen before. I mean, you’re trained one way or other and you actually look through that upbringing at the land. You project through your training process the reading in the land. And all of a sudden it doesn’t fit anything. Then something comes out of the land, guides you. It can be a tree, a rock, a face in the sand, or a bird (p. 19).

Being there, walking the country, undergoing a shift that allows ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ the land in new, different or shared ways, enables walkers of the Trail to recognise forms of guidance that emanate from country, which in Sharyn’s case, included the presence of brolgas and her encounter with the garnbor tree in her earlier story.

Relational ways of knowing are being performed on the Trail, through country showing itself to people who are ‘there’ on country, and through people’s ability to apprehend clearly the meaning that emerges. For the walkers of the Trail who have shared their stories thus far in this chapter, knowing arises through a direct relationship with country and is thus unmediated and primary. Psychologist Eleanor Rosch and Theory U developer Otto Scharmer (1999, pp. 19-20) characterise primary knowing as a participatory mode of knowing that senses wholeness and interconnectedness, whereby there is no separation between the mind and world and causality is interdependent. Rosch seeks to expose the dualistic processes that pervade the making of certain realities (what Latour refers to as purification), stating:

162 Note the reference here to the ontological disjuncture that occurs in the transition from one reality to another.
All of our cognitive science is based on, rooted in, and set up to deal with separateness. All of our private folk psychology is too. But that is not because it is reality; it is because it is our metaphysics (Rosch & Scharmer 1999, p. 20).

The enactment of primary forms of knowing by walkers of the Trail could be considered an effect of the ontological shifts that they experience: transitioning from being ‘on’ to ‘being with’ country.

In Chapter 4, Frans outlined knowing through direct relationship when he spoke about liyan: allowing one’s feeling to connect to the feeling of country (or an entity within). Paddy’s great-grandson Brian (whom spoke in Chapters 4 and 5) offers a deeper insight into the type of knowing that is afforded by liyan. He says that as well as meaning feeling, liyan is love.163

By following liyan, links between this complex actor, ‘being with’ (as communicative engagement) and knowing (as being guided by country) become visible. Tegan (see her account of merging with country in Chapter 4) further elucidates the role of liyan in guiding some people’s decision-making processes on country. In addition to volunteering on and walking the Trail, Tegan spent several years living in traditional camping places in country, working with Goolarabooloo people to protect country from the threat of the Gas. In this next account, she makes distinctions between the different ways of being and knowing performed by supporters of the No Gas campaign and Goolarabooloo elders, living together at a tent embassy established at Walmadany. In this account, Tegan refers to liyan as feeling and energy.

[I’ve noticed] the Goolarabooloo mob and people who have been here connected with them for a long time always using their feelings to guide them and their decisions. Sometimes there would be people

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163 Both Mathews (2003) and Kelly (2013) explore love as a mode of encounter, with Kelly stating that, ‘mutuality is an inherent aspect of love’, not just love of the world, but ‘love by world’ (emphasis in original, p. 277).
from outside here [saying], ‘We’ve got to do this and we’ve got to do it now!’ And then there would be people who have been here for a long time, like Phillip, [who] would say, ‘No, we don’t need to do that, we need to just chill out’, [and be] guided by his feelings. Sometimes people wouldn’t understand that. A few times people would fight against that, thinking that they were doing the right thing in the urgency of the situation and fighting this battle against the industry. I noticed that a lot, new people coming in and not yet being able to read their own feeling or the energy around them.

For Tegan, the tensions that arose through the enactment of different ways of being and knowing at the Walmadany tent embassy served to amplify the faith that Goolarabooloo people, and others associated with them for a long time (perhaps even herself), invest in being guided by their liyan. The unfolding of these events, during a time of high risk to the country, demonstrates the gravity with which the Goolarabooloo people and their close friends followed their liyan. As stated by Frans in the documentary Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World (1992), liyan is not just a voice of guidance to the Goolarabooloo people, it is the ‘first and last voice’. For Phillip, the Goolarabooloo elder and law boss who appears in Tegan’s account, the survival of his culture and connection with country rely upon his faith in, and ability to listen to his liyan. As a relational and primary way of knowing, liyan is enabling Phillip and others on country, to work with country and consciously co-produce realities, including the protection of country and the holding together of people and country.

People’s accounts and stories are demonstrating that ontic and epistemic commitments cannot be separated; ‘being with’ country informs how and what people know, whether it is through the presence of brolgas at a salient moment, feeling drawn to sit against the trunk of a beckoning mamara, or, as is the case with this next story, dreaming on country.
6.4.2 Story 6: Country gave me that dream

As was the case with the narrative about the women and the *mamara*, this story also began to take form through the convergence of stories and accounts, challenging Law’s (2009, p. 152) argument that any coherence between realities is ephemeral.

Nestled under the shade cast by a young *jigal* tree at Millibinyarri, Tegan shared with me a story about her recent encounter with country in Murdjal. Her long involvement in the No Gas campaign had seen her living in traditional camping places at Walmadany and Murdjal, together with Goolarabooloo elders and other people campaigning to protect country. Despite Tegan’s extended period of living on country, she lamented that she had rarely been fully present in country, until the following experience.

I was camping [at Murdjal] and I hadn’t really spent much time there since doing the whale research\(^\text{164}\) and [No Gas] campaign work. Maybe it’s the only time I’ve ever been there just to camp and enjoy the place. I was camping near two *gubinge* trees for a couple of nights and on the last night I had a continuous dream. I’d wake up and go back into it. I’ve never really had a dream like that before, because I’d wake up for long periods and then go straight back into it. [In my dream] there was a group of women and particularly this couple of women. I don’t know exactly who the women were, it’s possible that they could have been Narbi and Gardalagan.\(^\text{165}\) These women and I were living there, eating from the land and just being there.

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\(^{164}\) Tegan is referring to the citizen science Kimberley Community Whale Research project that was based at Murdurdun during the humpback whale migration seasons of 2011, 2012 and 2013. Led by marine scientists, the project was a collaboration between Broome community members, the Goolarabooloo people and volunteers from around the world. The annual survey collected data on the number of humpback whales migrating and calving along the coast and their behaviours, to ascertain how the proposed Browse LNG development might impact the west coast population of humpback whales (Kimberley Community Whale Research 2013).

\(^{165}\) Narbi and Gardalagan were elder Jabirrjabirr women and *maban* (healers/seers) who lived on the Lurujarri coast at the time that Paddy and Pegalily arrived in the Ngumbal-Jabirrjabirr ancestral estate. These two women informed Paddy and Pegalily that Pegalily would give birth to two *rayi* (spirit children) from Minariny (Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 246).
The women [represented] everything that I feel about Murdjal being a nurturing, caring, mothering, relaxing place. They took me under their wing and we were fishing and getting shellfish and living from the bush and breastfeeding. I remember that bit really clearly, there was always breastfeeding going on. After we’d lived together for quite a long time throughout this dream and I was just part of this group, these women guided me through an understanding and feeling of I guess what I call the Song Cycle. All my knowledge so far of the Song Cycle comes from the [Goolarabooloo] mob talking about it, what it is, how it works and their connection with it. But they always say that the Song Cycle is men’s business, so I only had a shallow understanding of the Song Cycle, never really feeling anything more than that. I knew that there was more than that, but that was men’s business and people had to be allowed to be given those sorts of understandings.

So these women guided me throughout these dreams, going deeper and deeper into feeling and understanding the Song Cycle and the land at Murdjal. It started there at Murdjal but then as we went deeper and deeper we started connecting with all the little areas closer by. I kept coming to these new conclusions and feeling these new feelings and then finally it was like everything just clicked and everything linked in and just made sense. And that was that the Song Cycles from all over Australia and the world are all linked together and connected. Then these women just changed in front of me, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, changing over and over into women from every different culture in whole world. It was like I saw every single one of them at the speed of light, but I got a really good look at each of them. Cultures that I’ve never even seen or imagined or experienced, they all flashed before my eyes and then became one. It was like going deeper and deeper into this understanding and then bang! This massive force of enlightenment or something came bursting out when everything made sense at the end.

It definitely wasn’t in my head, I could feel it. The feelings were so strong, they were the main part [of the dream]. These understandings didn’t come through facts, no one was telling me these things, it was the actual feeling … I can remember feeling it in my whole body, I
could feel it everywhere. I could feel it really strongly in my chest and in my tummy area where I always feel feelings the strongest. That really overpowering feeling, like you're going to explode, like there’s something that’s bursting to come out.

I always felt connected to this country, but it does feel different [now]. I definitely feel like the country gave me that dream. The country knows that I’ve had that dream and can feel my sense of ease. It’s reciprocated as well. The country feels more relaxed with me [like it has] taken me under its wing.

Tegan’s powerful encounter with country shows that merely being ‘there’ on country is not the same as being present (in a deep listening sense) while being ‘there’ on country. It was only after she had stopped being busy on country through the campaign, when she was ‘there’ to enjoy the country, that she had this experience. By being fully present in and attentive to country, she was ‘being with’ country. Tegan immediately knew that this dream was unique in character and different to other dreams she had experienced in the past. Although she was not entirely certain of the identities of women who presented in her dream (she thought it likely that they were two Jabirrjabirr ancestors), the feeling of the women was familiar to her; they were the human embodiment of the nurturing, mothering feeling that she experienced at Murdjal, the same place in which Sharyn and Karlien encountered the mamara. Just as Sharyn perceived a female gender associated the mamara she encountered, Tegan also presents an example of sensing gender in association with place.

The women present in her dream shared the knowing (understandings) that Tegan experienced. These women began by demonstrating to Tegan how to live on country (fishing, collecting shellfish, breastfeeding) and then guided her through a continually expanding ‘understanding and feeling’ of the Song Cycle. Tegan is guarded when speaking about the Song Cycle, based on her awareness from conversations with Goolarabooloo people that the Song Cycle is related to ‘men’s business’. Yet, she is clear that the guidance she received from the women in her dream relates to this entity and the country that it takes in. If this was the case, why did country choose
Tegan to share these insights? One explanation is Sharyn’s suggestion that country can read people’s intentions and knows which people love and respect it.

Whether it was a guarding of sacred or secret knowledge that had been shared with her, or an inability to put into words in that moment, Tegan did not spell out the ‘new conclusions’ and ‘new feelings’ that she experienced in her dream. She insisted that ‘these understandings didn’t come through facts, no one was telling me these things … it was the actual feeling.’ Further resonances appear between the forms of knowing performed by Tegan, Sharyn and Karlien, whereby Tegan’s knowing came through embodied feeling: ‘I can remember feeling it in my whole body, I could feel it everywhere. I could feel it really strongly in my chest and in my tummy area where I always feel feelings the strongest.’ Tegan’s differentiation between experiencing things in her ‘head’ (as in imagined or cognitively) and through ‘actual feeling’, implies that feeling ‘it’ made her experience more real. In Chapter 4, Jeanné spoke in very similar terms about liyan, that it is a person’s ‘sense and feeling for things’, that is ‘not in your head, it’s more of a gut feeling.’

For Tegan, the power and magnitude of what the women shared with her in her dream was akin to a ‘force of enlightenment’. The meaning inherent in her epiphany was clear to her and unquestioned by her. The women were offering Tegan profound insights about oneness and the connection between song cycles in Australia and around the world. This second insight is an invocation of the vision that Frans outlined in Chapter 4, that ‘all those sites, song cycles, get connected, that we can walk this country and get feeling completely. Reading it, understanding it, being it and becoming part of it and then have no more drama wherever we go because we don’t feel lonely, we are with everything.’

Tegan perceives a deepening in her connection with country, which in Chapter 4, she described as a sense of merging with country. Her most recent encounter is

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166 Like Tegan and Jeanné, Akarre woman Margaret Kemarre Turner (2010) refers to the mapping of feelings onto different parts of the body when she says, ‘All over your body it’s got different feelings’ (p. 102).
characterised by a new depth of understanding and a sense of reciprocity with country, and a certainty that country gave her that dream.

The potential for country (and spirits) to teach and guide people through dreams arose in another account shared on country, this time by Frans. The reality presented here, converges with that described by Tegan above. Notice how such convergences have the effect of amplifying encounters and the realities produced.

The spirits will come in dreams, try you out, teach you. You can see [people] clearly like I can see you and they show [you], this is how we do this and this how we do that, [like] a teaching dream. They are clear, physical teaching dreams, where you see scenery, where you [are] taken by a bunch of people, or stand in front of a bunch of people and see [them] doing a certain ceremony, a certain thing, [like] showing you how to make ochre, showing you how to paint yourself, or showing you objects. And [the dreams] can be on many different levels. Ah, and if you think, “Oh that was just a dream, all this mob came into my dream and then were painting themselves up,” and then maybe a year later you go to a ceremony and you find yourself standing there and it is like a déjâ vu of your dream and it’s real, then what is going on? Now, why did I pick [the dream] up? Maybe I went to the wrong place, or maybe it was the right place. So those dreams, they’re real, very important. You have to pay attention, but you have to have a clear mind, not a very busy, occupied mind [or else] you can’t get ‘em.

Without having heard Tegan’s story, Frans describes hallmarks of her dream with the women at Murdjal, including the demonstration of how to perform certain acts on country and the necessity to be fully present. If Tegan needed confirmation that her dream was significant, she could find it here, with Frans asserting that ‘teaching...
dreams’ are ‘real [and] very important.’ Akarre woman Margaret Kemarre Turner (2010) also offers an Indigenous perspective to explain the significance of dreams on country. She cites dreams as belonging to particular places and affirms that places and the people of the land can give other people (anyone) dreams:

Anyone can see any dream, it doesn’t have to be just on your own country … you dream about the Dreams belonging to this place that you’re on … You’re just dreaming about their Dream, their Stories, their Traditional Story Dreams. The way they see it and the way the People of the Land gives you, “oh, this is what our Dream is, this is the Dream of all these people here … I’ll give you a dream” … you dream it then. And that’s how it is, that’s most certainly how it is (p. 53).

Taking into account Turner’s understanding of dreams on country, the people of the country, past and present, gave Tegan a dream that belonged to Murdjal, a place in country for which women’s stories are still told. An effect of Tegan’s experience is a more intimate and aware relationship with country, incorporating a communicative engagement with country that enables her to know through feelings and insights that are shared by country. Whilst Tegan’s story was told at a point when she did not have the benefit of hindsight to reflect upon the full potential of co-producing realities with country, it nonetheless points towards the realities that might be realised through her ongoing connection with country: the co-enlivenment of people

167 Writing in an Indigenous Australian context, anthropologist Fred Myers (1991) presents the idea that ‘a dream may gain importance in retrospect, if the appearance of an event confirms an interpretation of it. The significance of dreams, then, becomes a product of negotiation and not a given. Even if one believes one has come into contact with ancestral beings, to validate this publicly one must be able to persuade others to accept the claim’ (p. 52). Taking this view into account, the writing (and subsequent making public) of this thesis becomes a means of negotiating the potential meanings that emerged from Tegan’s dream. The placement of Tegan’s story next to Frans’ account is a first step in this negotiation process, the outcome of which, for the time being, is the validation of Tegan’s dream experience.

168 Turner’s (2010, p. 53) perspective on dreams in country might be considered as a further attempt to negotiate the meaning of Tegan’s dream. It serves as further confirmation of the reality that Tegan performed with country and the ancestors in country.
and country, the protection of country and knowing how to live well on and with country.

6.5 The co-creative potential of ongoing relationships

As predicted by Law (2004), realities performed by human and non-human actors on the Trail are ‘produced, and have a life, in relations’ (p. 59). Similarly, the enactment of a relational ontology of ‘being with’ in people’s encounters with country is revealing, as Mol (2002) argued, that ‘to be is to be related’ (p. 54). Each of the stories and accounts presented in this chapter is based on such ontology and either explicitly or implicitly refers to the generative, and more specifically, the co-productive potential of ongoing relationships between people and country. This includes the capacity for country to guide people and an inclination for people to listen to and act upon this guidance.

The storytellers who share their experiences in this chapter are aware of their individual collaboration with country, as is consistent with Paddy’s Dream. However, unless explicit connections are drawn and a broader perspective applied, their stories of ‘being with’ country remain isolated ‘islands’ of experience. The significance of this awareness needs to be more fully realised in the context of Paddy’s Dream.

When Paddy sent out his Dream and initiated the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, he sought to bring people together, ‘black and white’ as his grandson Phillip described in Chapter 4, to walk and protect the country. A dimension of his vision was for non-Indigenous people to experience Bugarrigarra, a vast and powerful network and a process of co-production, which can also be described as a collaboration with country. The stories articulate by storytellers in this chapter, about their collaboration with country, demonstrate some level of awareness that they are performing Bugarrigarra, even if they are not calling it that; by seeing and knowing living country, storytelling, walking, living, being and co-producing
realities ‘with’ country, there are strong indications that they are participating in the Bugarrigarra process.\textsuperscript{169}

While the encounters described in this chapter are collective in the sense that they occurred between a person and country, they do not involve a collective of people, leaving the potential of a group of people consciously co-producing realities with country yet to be explored.

In Chapter 5, Sharyn indicated that a broader collective process was unfolding, when she accounted for the storytelling experience under the *baragoool* tree at Minariny. She said, ‘that was like the penultimate [sic] moment of Trail underneath that tree, the fact that we’d all walked the Trail, I can’t even put this into words, it was like everyone’s intention of walking country and learning about country seemed to almost come into matter there. I could actually feel that we’d, that I’d walked on this [Song Cycle] and I’d added to it. I’d had something to do with its continuance.’\textsuperscript{170} The palpability of her collective contribution towards enlivening the Song Cycle serves as a demonstration of what Frans describes as collectively envisioning a future possibility and co-creating it together with country. In light of Woodside’s attempts to gain access for drilling in sacred areas of the sand dunes at Walmadany, Frans emphasised the necessity of maintaining an alternative vision to the Browse LNG precinct, a strong vision of people ‘being with’ country ‘to help the country to stand up.’ He continued:

\begin{quote}
One mob. We can collectively come together, to sit down, send out a dream and then start walking on it. That’s powerful. That’s how
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{169}Recall from earlier in the thesis these three important insights about Bugarrigarra: In Chapter 2, through the descriptions of Paddy Roe, Bugarrigarra was described as ‘a performative and generative “set of practices” dependent on people actively participating with country’; also in Chapter 2, Paddy Roe’s collaboration with Benterakk and Muecke produced an understanding of Bugarrigarra as a perpetual process that depends upon people ‘seeing’, ‘knowing’ and ‘living in the country, travelling through it and naming it, constantly making new stories and songs’ (Benterakk, Muecke & Roe 1984, p. 14); and in Chapter 4, Frans invoked the words of Paddy Roe, stating that, ‘We are all participants of the Bugarrigarra process, everyone can have a personal experience of Bugarrigarra by being with and walking this country’.

\textsuperscript{170}See page 179 (fn 93) for clarification on Sharyn’s use of the term penultimate.
creation always been started. That’s how this whole place we see got started, you know, somebody got a dream.

When a big mob of people work on something all together, they got a picture they working towards, they build a car, build an aeroplane whatever, they all collectively bringing out thoughts, sending it out. And if you proper connected, you can send it out and then start walking on it, make it alive. [Using] the same principle, people can walk together to create something, a proper intention. Country will stand it up, become part of it. Yeah, you have to be with it. You have to be with it, clearly, you know. You can’t be half with it. As a mob, you have to be with it together.

We have to be strong as a people to collectively be able to dream and be together. See our mob moving together, sitting together, then we move closer to the old people, see? Then we connect again.

Frans identifies the process of collectively sending out a vision of intent (Dreaming) as a powerful means of creation. He lays out a process of co-creating realities on an even bigger scale than previously described by the other storytellers, with the exception of Sharyn. Rather than country communicating meaning and intention with people, he describes a process whereby a group of people can send out an intention (a dream, just as Paddy did) that can in turn be made to ‘stand up’, be manifested by country. For Sharyn, her experience of collective co-creation at Minariny involved, ‘everyone’s intention of walking country and learning about country … almost [coming] into matter there.’ She could feel that both individually and collectively, she had ‘walked on [the Song Cycle] and … added to it.’ The campaign to stop the Gas might also be described as an act of collective co-creation, in that the people who were becoming enrolled in this network were unified by an intention to stop the industrialisation of the Song Cycle path, while the country was also playing a role in guiding people to help protect it.

To form a more comprehensive view of the potential that inheres in people’s ongoing connections with country, it is worth considering the writing of Theory U proponent Otto Scharmer. Applied to this research, Scharmer’s (2009) perspective suggests that
people’s individual experiences of co-creating with country can become ‘gateways to connecting with and entering the deeper source of collective creativity and knowing’ (p. 189). He cites ‘deep collective cultivation practices’ as enabling groups of people to access ‘the deeper sources of communal awareness and attention in the context of everyday’ (Scharmer 2009, pp. 188–189). The conclusion from Scharmer (2009) is that ‘when we succeed in keeping that connection to our deeper source of knowing alive, we begin to better tune into the emerging future possibilities. Acting now, from a “different place,” we are able to begin to operate from a different source’ (pp. 191–192). For Frans and Scharmer, people who derive their current knowing from an atomist Western scientific tradition require re-orientating with the world, founded upon major ontological and epistemological shifts, to allow them to know from the direct primary source (through relationship) and have faith in the process of envisioning.

6.6 Summary

This chapter examines people’s relationships with country to respond to the third thesis question, which investigates the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. The stories and accounts presented in this chapter describe inter-subject encounters between country and non-Indigenous walkers, volunteers, and campaigners on the Trail, demonstrating that it is not only Goolarabooloo people who are performing a relational ontology, and hence, ‘being with’ country. By ‘seeing’, ‘reading’ and relating to the land as ‘living country’, Sharyn, Karlien, Tegan, Jeanné and Frans showed that they had undergone the ontological shifts (translations) required to enable this entity (and network) to become a reality for them.

The idea that performances are inherently co-creative becomes evident through the stories of Sharyn, Karlien and Tegan, who make visible the generative potential of ongoing connections between people and country. Their ‘being with’ country (expressed through mutual recognition, reciprocity of care and communicative engagement) generates multiple effects, including the care, enlivenment and
protection of country, and for themselves, feelings of love and connection, and a sense of enlightenment.

The ways in which people on the Trail know their realities also becomes apparent. Intuitive ‘feeling’ (liyan), embodied ‘feelings’ and reading signs in country, form the primary ways of knowing that characterise people’s communicative engagement with country.

For Sharyn, Karlien and Tegan, knowing occurred through their ‘being with’ country (a knowing ‘with’ rather than a knowing ‘of’ or ‘about’), with meaning and intent often originating from country. Subsequently these walkers, volunteers, and campaigners became aware of their co-production of reality with country, including the capacity to learn from and be guided by country, and in turn, protect country.

However, as exposed towards the end of this chapter, there is an unrealised potential associated with the co-creative aspects of people–country connections. Some people might be aware of their individual collaborative relationships with country, however, the generative potential of collectively co-creating with country, has been little recognised.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Responding to the thesis questions

Three questions directed the research carried out on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail:

1. What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?
2. What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?
3. What do these relationships tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?

In undertaking this research, both the fieldwork on the Trail and the subsequent writing, it became clear that many relationships were being performed. However, in heeding the advice of the Actor-Network theorist, Latour, and following the actors, listening to their stories, I was repeatedly led to performances taking place between people and place, or as they revealed, between people and country.

The research demonstrates the performance of these relationships between people and country on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, in which country is an influential actor. Stories are also powerful actors on the Trail, doing important work to help people ‘see’ and ‘read’ the country in particular ways and supporting them to establish and maintain connections with country. The relationships performed on the Trail demonstrate the enactment of a relational ontology of ‘being with’, whereby people and country are drawn into co-productive acts.

7.1.1 What relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?

Inter-subjective relationships between people and ‘living country’ were being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. These relationships involved the formation and maintenance of connections between people and living country, through distinct processes and involving particular actors.
Goolarabooloo people were important actors who helped walkers on the Trail to connect with country. By performing the roles of guides, intermediaries and storytellers, they supported Trail walkers to recognise (‘see’) and make meaning about (‘read’) place/the land as a distinct entity, that is, ‘living country’. Narratives about living country and Bugarrigarra and words like liyan, offered walkers of the Trail a conceptual framework through which it was possible to connect with and enliven (reciprocally) living country. However, the precursor to the formation of these connections was the symmetrical ‘opening up’ of the country and people: Paddy Roe ‘opened up’ the country so that it was ‘visible’ to Trail walkers, and walkers were also required to ‘open up’ their receptivity (liyan) so that they could perceive living country and experience reciprocity with country.

Liyan (as intuition and feeling) surfaced as an important, and complex, actor that supported both the formation and maintenance of people–country connections, by enabling people to attune to the liyan (feeling) present in country. Once awoken, through the process of walking country and by the agency of the spirit world, a person’s liyan allowed them to engage with country through inter-subjective encounters. The active engagement of both people and living country in these relationships enabled collaboration between these actors, which was named in the thesis as co-creation and co-production.

Sustained connections between country and Goolarabooloo people, some walkers, volunteers and campaigners on the Trail, produced relationships of care, where mutual recognition and communicative engagement were also being performed. Despite threats to these connections, from both within and external to the Trail network, human and non-human actors found ways to stay connected, including through the work of particular material arrangements, strategies and discourses.\footnote{See section 7.4.5 for further discussion of the ongoing work needed to sustain people–country connections.}
7.1.2 What work are stories doing in the performance of these relationships?

Stories proved to be powerful actors on the Trail, doing important work in the performance of people–country relationships. Firstly, stories helped walkers on the Trail to establish connections with country, and enabled Goolarabooloo people to maintain theirs. By enrolling human and non-human actors (storytellers, listeners, place, creator beings, ancestors, landforms and living country) into each storytelling performance, with each actor playing their part in that performance, storytelling was revealed as a generative and relational act that created and maintained connections between people and country. The situatedness of storytelling also worked to ‘hold together’ people and country: telling stories about place, in and with the places that were being storied, both storytellers and listeners in place.

Secondly, stories also did work in the performance of people–country relationships by offering people on the Trail distinct ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ places in country. Bugarrigarra stories told on the Trail (including stories about living country) were recognised as powerful discourses that define certain ‘conditions of possibility’ and order relationships in terms of co-creation. By participating in storytelling performances as listeners and learners, walkers of the Trail were not only learning about Bugarrigarra (in terms of the transmogrification of ancestral beings into forms in country), they were also becoming aware of their participation in Bugarrigarra as a co-creative process.172

7.1.3 What do these relationships tell us about the ontologies being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail?

Relationships between people and country performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail reveal the enactment of a relational ontology of ‘being with’ country, expressed in varying degrees. This ontology acknowledges and relies upon the agency of the non-human world and was demonstrated through the performance of inter-subject relationships between country and people on the Trail. Stories in the research made clear that ‘being with’ country transcends cultural boundaries.

172 See section 7.4.4 for further discussion of the agency of Bugarrigarra stories.
People’s ‘being with’ country on the Trail was performed to varying extents. First-time walkers of the Trail enacted their ‘being with’ country through walking, listening to stories, sleeping under the stars, and becoming quiet and present to country over the nine days of the Trail. For Goolarabooloo people and walkers, volunteers and campaigners on the Trail, ‘being with’ country was performed through mutual recognition, reciprocity of care and communicative engagement. The effects generated by people’s ‘being with’ country included ‘living country’ itself, the care and protection of ‘living country’, feelings of love and connection. Fundamentally, in ‘being with’ country, people on the Trail recognised ‘place’ and the non-human entities within place, as ‘living country’: a multi-dimensional actor-network of which they are a part.  

Whilst this ontology was unquestioned by Goolarabooloo people involved in the research, some first-time walkers of the Trail needed to undergo an ontological shift in how they conceived of ‘place’ in order to experience ‘living country’ as a reality. These ontological shifts were significant; what walkers of the Trail felt and saw had the potential to change them and to alter what they sensed.

7.2 Significance of the research and key contributions to the academy

7.2.1 Pathways to connecting with country and reconciliation

A broader realisation of ‘living country’, by more than just Indigenous peoples, is critical to the survival of Australia’s First Peoples’ sacred connections with country. Competing visions of what place is and how it should be valued, enacted as ontological politics, pose a real threat to the endurance of these connections. The vision of building a Browse LNG Precinct at Walmadany (James Price Point), as proposed by the WA State Government and Woodside, was not a vision that resonated with Paddy Roe’s Dream for holding together people and country. Whilst discourses on ‘self-determination’ and ‘economic independence’ were touted by the

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173 See section 7.4.3 for further discussion of the varying degrees to which people on the Trail were ‘being with’ country.
proposed development’s chief spokesperson WA Premier Colin Barnett, the economic opportunities on offer were not the types of ‘benefits’ that could meet the Goolarabooloo people’s ultimate goal, nor reflect what they valued most: to keep people and country connected and the Northern Tradition Song Cycle intact.

Crucially, the Goolarabooloo, beginning with Paddy Roe, recognised that the people–country connections on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and the Song Cycle, are vulnerable to competing visions of the land/place, and that, the endurance of these people–country connections depends upon settler people in Australia interrogating their perceptions of what the land is, and how they are in relationship with it. The recognition of the land/place as ‘living country’ by non-Indigenous walkers on the Trail is significant, because it demonstrates what would be – for most non-Indigenous people – a new, different kind of connection with country and that shared ways of understanding and relating with the land are possible. The shared ways of ‘seeing’ that are emerging from the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are an act of reconciliation, not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, but non-Indigenous people and the land, an aspiration promoted by Indigenous elders in Australia. For this reason, the cross-cultural walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is a powerful performance of reconciliation. It offers non-Indigenous people an opportunity to question what might be their ‘colonizing gaze’ towards the land, and to foster ‘new’ or different ways of seeing and relating to place that respect Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

7.2.2 Key contributions to the academy

Elements, such as, Actor-Network Theory (ANT), Indigenous, sense of place and eco-philosophy literature are brought together for the first time in this thesis, to analyse the performance of people–place relationships and the role of storytelling on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. In addition to this development, this thesis makes three key contributions to the academy: articulating ways to ‘work together’ knowledge systems, taking ANT into new places and generating new insights, and, showing how non-Indigenous people are coming to recognise place as ‘country’.
7.2.2.1 Articulating ways to ‘work together’ knowledge systems

In seeking to ‘work together’ Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, this thesis drew upon the work of Helen Verran (1998) and a cohort of ethnographers at Charles Darwin University (Christie & Verran 2010; Nicholls 2009; Nicholls 2013; Verran & Christie 2013). The identification and use of the research principles relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatenedness/situatedness, is a key development of this thesis that builds upon the work of Helen Verran (1998), to articulate further how Indigenous and Western knowledge systems might be bridged in research. These principles, which were first identified as important themes in Indigenous metaphysics and place literature, were also found to resonate with ANT and storytelling, offering a respectful and ethical means of doing research in a context where multiple knowledge systems were being performed. Through this development, the thesis makes a methodological contribution towards the broad area of cross-cultural research.

7.2.2.2 Taking ANT into new places and generating new insights

This research put to work the tools, sensibilities and methods of ANT on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. By taking ANT onto an ancestral dreaming track that is walked by both traditional custodians and a raft of other people who are mostly non-Indigenous, several original insights were generated, showing that ANT is useful in such places. In the case of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, an ANT method helped to reveal how people–country (where country is recognised as a distinct ontological entity) connections are formed, held together, and at what cost. By treating human and non-human entities in equal terms, this thesis reveals important insights into the work of non-human actors; liyan, rayi, Bugarrigarra, ancestors in country and living country are all helping people to make and sustain their connections with country. While Goolarabooloo and Indigenous philosophies already affirm the importance of these particular actors, ANT also has the ontological openness to tell stories respectfully about non-human actors by taking their agency seriously. This thesis makes visible what might be considered ‘unfamiliar’ actors and networks, for particular audiences, and in the process, contributes new stories to the cannon of
ANT ethnographies. In turn, these stories may go on to perform in new and interesting ways, just as the stories of Callon (about the scallops, scientists and fishermen) and Laet and Mol (the Zimbabwe Bush Pump) offer valuable insights to those wanting to take ANT into ‘new’ places.

However, did ANT have its limits? Surprisingly, none were encountered in this research, quite the opposite. This is a remarkable claim, but ANT has proved again and again to be a remarkable tool when working with Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies as a group of researchers already referenced in this thesis, have shown (Christie & Verran 2010; Nicholls 2009; Nicholls 2013; Verran & Christie 2013). On the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail ANT proved to be a very useful lens and a practical set of tools with which to do restrained ethnographic work that held me back from making ontological assumptions. It enabled me as a researcher to listen and to watch; to see more actors than I might have otherwise seen, precisely because it did not prescribe any ontological categories that might preclude my ‘seeing’. In turn, no actors or voices were disallowed through the use of ANT.

Did this mean that I met, recognised and acknowledged everything there was to be seen, heard or perceived and understood in some way? Did I always acknowledge all of the actors at work in each scenario I researched? No. But this was not a limitation of ANT. Rather it is the lot of researchers to be constrained by time and place and influenced by interests. These would be stories, in turn, of more actor networks, and an ANT thesis would potentially never end.

However, did ANT prove wholly adequate in doing ethnographic work with Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail? In short, yes. ANT’s instance on relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness, principles that resonate deeply with Indigenous ontologies, meant that it had the capacity to do respectful and honest work alongside Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies to explore the performance of people–place relationships on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.
7.2.2.3 Showing how non-Indigenous people are coming to recognise place as ‘country’

The literature review identified aspirations amongst Australian sense of place writers (Cameron 2003; Kelly 2013; Read 2000), eco-philosophers (Mathews 2002, 2003; 2007a, 2002, 2006, 2007; Rose 2004) and Indigenous elders and people (Birrell 2006, Kwaymullina 2008; McConchie 2003; Roe & Hoogland 1999) for settler Australians to learn from Indigenous Australian ontologies and epistemologies, and recognise ‘country’ in the Indigenous sense of the term. This thesis not only shows that ‘country’ is becoming known, present to and experienced by non-Indigenous walkers on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, but specifically how this is occurring.

Walkers of the Trail who shared their stories in this research, showed that they are realising the meaning of country, both for the Goolarabooloo (and perhaps other Indigenous people), and for themselves. Note that it was through applying an ANT method of following actors (both directly observed on the Trail and through people’s stories) that the particular ways in which this is happening became apparent.

Ontological shifts proved critical in people’s coming to recognise place and the land as ‘country’. These shifts were supported by being situated ‘there’ on the Trail, walking, camping, sleeping under the stars, fishing, becoming quiet and through practices of deep listening and storytelling. Goolarabooloo people shared a philosophy of living country through these storytelling practices offering walkers an alternative conceptual framework encouraging them to question their previously held notions of place and how they framed their relationships with place. Through these ontological shifts and by ‘coming into country’, walkers of the Trail demonstrated that, as eco-philosopher Freya Mathews (2002, p. 4) put it, they were overcoming ‘the dualistic grip of Western thought’ (p. 3) and finding alternate ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘relating’ to place.

This thesis builds upon the work of Freya Mathews to create new bridges between eco-philosophy and Indigenous metaphysics. Whilst the notions of encounter (Mathews 2003) and ontopoetics (Mathews 2009) go some way towards recongising the relational ontology of ‘being with’ that is performed by participants in the
research, this thesis expands upon these particular understandings of inter-subjectivity to articulate in greater depth how people can co-produce realities with country, through their ‘being with’. As demonstrated through the stories in this research, in allowing themselves to be guided by country, people are working in collaboration with country towards the care and protection of country and the co-enlivenment of people and country. These stories showed that the co-production of realities is not only possible between a person and country, but in a broader collective sense, whereby a group of people can collaborate with country to envision and make manifest a particular reality. Although writing from a completely different field, these particular insights resonated with the perspectives of Theory U proponents Scharmer (2009) and Senge et al. (2004), opening up the potential for new inter-disciplinary studies of human relationships with place.

7.3 A method for ‘working together’ knowledge systems

The theoretical framework of this thesis responded to the fact that multiple knowledge systems were being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, and that in order to respect Indigenous realities, the methodology employed would need to be ‘ontologically open’ (Wright et al. 2012, p. 51) to the agency of non-human actors on the Trail. A methodology of ‘working together’ knowledge systems was employed to respond to this situation and through the research was found to support ontological openness.

The approach taken by this thesis to ‘work together’ knowledge systems builds on the work of Helen Verran (1998), who calls for the negotiation of the ontological categories and metaphors that inform how people talk about and relate to place, and in so doing gravitates towards ANT and material semiotics. The thesis not only incorporates Verran’s approach of ‘working together’ knowledge systems, but expands upon it through emphasis on four key research principles: relationality, performativity, generative practice and locatedness/situatedness. First identified as

central themes in the Indigenous metaphysics and place literature, and resonating with the sense of place and eco-philosophy literature examined, these principles offered logical criteria with which to select appropriate research methods that respected both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Actor-Network Theory and a ‘working with stories’ approach, incorporating storytelling and ethnographic stories, were found to be ideal approaches, as the four research criteria/principles inhere in each.

Storytelling, chosen as a method for its ability to be relational, performative, generative and situated, led to the emergence of stories about people and place that also embodied these four principles. This outcome serves to highlight John Law’s (2004, p. 116) point that methods are not innocent; they perform a particular ontology and in doing so, not only detect, but also generate and amplify certain realities. This might be seen as a limitation or bias, however, it is a reality that all researchers must confront and somehow address. What this research showed was that although ANT and storytelling were enacting a particular ontology, this did not preclude them from recognising other ontologies that were being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail: relationships between people and place performed through distance and practices of metrology (translating place into paper forms that perform in scientific laboratories or corporate boardrooms).

By approaching storytelling as a relational and performative practice that enrols heterogeneous entities (including country), this thesis became an ethnography that was able to recognise the distributed agency that inheres in country and relationships between human and non-human entities. Through the stories of human research participants, storytelling was affirmed as a generative practice that enabled these storytellers to become more aware of their relationships with country through the performance of their stories.

The writing of ethnographic stories for this thesis became a generative practice through which stories shared by the participants were translated into new material assemblages (stories were put alongside other stories, incorporated into chapters and arguments, and inscribed onto paper) that can be called a ‘thesis’. These ethnographies are new actors that that do work: they amplify the visibility of living
country, perform and re-perform people–country relationships, and perhaps in doing so, contribute to the durability of these connections.

An ANT approach to ethnography offered an ontologically open method for working with stories, avoiding the re-interpretation of knowledges through a Western cultural lens. Identifying actors on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail (through people’s stories and ethnographic descriptions) and following the observable traces left as they did work, led to particular realities becoming apparent: Paddy ‘opened up’ living country so that it would be ‘standing up’ and ‘standing out’ for people to see with greater ease; spirits were ‘waking up’ people’s liyan (intuitive awareness) so that they could ‘see’ and ‘read’ living country; Goolarabooloo people were acting as guides and in some case intermediaries to help people see ‘place’ in different or ‘new’ ways; Bugarrigarra stories, whether they were told by Goolarabooloo people or through other material assemblages, were critical for the formation and maintenance of people–country connections; mamara (spirit trees) were calling people to ‘be with’ and protect them; ancestor women were teaching about the country through dreams; and Bugarrigarra was sensed as holding people and country together in Minariny (and likely elsewhere).

By focusing on the synergies between Indigenous ontologies and the relational, performative, generative and situated ontology that underpins ANT, this thesis demonstrates that ANT can play a useful role in the ‘working together’ of knowledge systems, especially when partnered with a storytelling approach. Therefore, ANT offers this thesis a method for avoiding essentialist and positivist approaches to doing research, which subjugate and frame Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies as ‘other’.

Yet how far can the insights generated through this ANT study travel? Can they become ‘generalisations’ that can then be applied to the cross-cultural walking of an ancestral dreaming trail (song cycle) elsewhere on the Australian continent? An ANT study of a localised situation does not qualify an ethnographer to say that, because something particular is happening here, that it is happening elsewhere. However, this study does demonstrate the kinds of possibilities that emerge when certain actors (an ancestral dreaming trail, traditional custodians, walkers, stories) come together to
perform people–country connections. ANT’s insistence on locatedness means that the only way to know a given situation is to follow the actors that appear in that situation. In doing so, some of the insights gleaned in this or other ANT studies might prove useful in these new circumstances. ANT’s embeddedness in the local may be interpreted as a limitation, yet, in the context of this research it works to hold me, the researcher to account, in not overstating the findings of this research or overstretching their relevance to broader contexts.

It should also be noted that this research represents a further limitation, in that it limits the diversity of perspectives on the relationships and ontologies being enacted on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. This arose from the purposive sampling technique used. People who were asked to participate in the research had already, to some extent, demonstrated that they were connecting, or connected with country. Consequently, this research cannot profess in any way to represent the full diversity of relationships and ontologies that are being performed by people on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. Having said that, the third ethnographic story in the thesis, Threat to what is sacred, did create a forum for divergent views relating to concepts of place. An analysis of the threat to the Song Cycle posed by the proposed Browse LNG Precinct, drawing on a host of different actors (media releases, documentaries, news articles and websites), enabled the thesis to look at tensions being performed on country, through competing visions for ‘the land’.

### 7.4 Key insights generated by this research

#### 7.4.1 Stories people tell about place reveal their situatedness

In performing their relationships with place/country through story, participants in the research revealed how they situate themselves in relation to place/country. Disparities between different conceptions of place were amplified by the controversy surrounding ‘the Gas’ – the proposed Browse LNG Precinct at Walmadany (James Price Point). A utilitarian construct of ‘the land’ promulgated by the proponents of the Gas was pitted in opposition to a philosophy of ‘living country’.
In the case of this controversy, where people were situated (physically and in mindset) in relation to the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, emerged as an important factor in how they related to place (as a resource, ancestor and/or living country). Country and the non-human entities within country were affecting people who were ‘there’, on the Trail. In being ‘there’ on and with country, walkers and volunteers on the Trail, some of whom were also working with the Goolarabooloo people to protect country from the threat of the Gas, were susceptible to developing connections with country. In contrast, key proponents of the Gas, including the WA Premier Colin Barnett and the CEOs of the mining companies involved, were not ‘there’ on country or on the Trail. Instead, they were associating in boardrooms and places great distances from the Trail (in both mindset and geography).

Goolarabooloo people and walkers on the Trail were performing their relationships with the Trail as direct and unmediated. For example, Paddy Roe’s great-grandson Brian performed his relationship with Walmadany (the place and Jabirrjabirr ancestor) through liyan (feelings of connection and love). Premier Barnett and actors in the Gas network were recognising ostensively the same geographical continuity as James Price Point, a site appropriate for an industrial precinct. Through processes of metrology (Latour 1987, p. 251) Walmadany (James Price Point) was translated into data, statistics, aerial photographs, spread-sheets and balance sheets; paper forms that represented place through distance. Interestingly, actors involved in the Trail and the campaign to protect the Song Cycle from the Gas were also using metrology, but with a very different aim: to convince decision makers that the Song Cycle existed and that it was worth protecting. Perhaps their belief in the agency of country was so strong that they had faith that even though translated into new paper forms, country could still act at a distance.

For people who were on the Trail, including Jeanné and Terence, distance was being performed between the Trail and town. Being on the Trail, free from distractions associated with town, enabled them to be present with country.

Deborah Bird Rose (2004) argues that ‘Situatedness poses significant challenges for our New World societies’ because of Western/settler society’s ‘immersion in concepts of disconnection, our future-orientation [and] our seeming indifference to
the losses that colonisation entail’ (p. 8). The case of the proposed Browse LNG Precinct at Walmadany is no exception. In framing their relationships with James Price Point through distance and disconnection (as identified by Paddy Roe’s daughter Teresa in Chapter 5), the human actors associated with the Gas threatened the material and sacred connections with country, held by the Goolarabooloo, and others who had formed connections with living country.

7.4.2 The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is being performed as an ‘opening’ and a cross-cultural/ontological bridge

For several reasons, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is being performed as an ‘opening’. For the Goolarabooloo community, it is an ‘opening’ for meaningful engagement with non-Indigenous people and an opportunity through which to share their understandings of living country. For some walkers of the Trail, it is an opportunity to ‘open up’ to the possibility of connecting with other people and with country. Through such openness, the Goolarabooloo community is sharing a profound gift with other peoples: an experience through which people can come to know and experience the land as living country.

Stories shared by Paddy’s family members and Frans in Chapter 5 showed that the Trail is also an ‘opening’ for people to realise their belonging in and with certain places, not just on the Trail. The type of belonging that Teresa, Kathleen, Brian and Frans spoke about, ‘cross[es] both nature/culture and Aboriginal/settler divides’ (Kelly 2013, p. 275) and is accessible to anyone who is open to forming or in Brian’s words, ‘finding’ their ‘liyan’, in a particular place.

Stories told by non-Indigenous walkers on the Trail Jeanné, Adriana and Emma, reflected that the sharing of living country (philosophically and to walk through) by the Goolarabooloo people, offered them and other walkers an alternate reality with which to challenge their previously held dualist understandings of people and place. For this reason, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is performed as an ontological and cross-cultural bridge. The impetus for people’s ontological shifts on the Trail was in part through the sharing of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, which Mâkere
Stewart-Harawira (2005) asserts ‘have much to contribute to the reconceptualizing of being in the world’ (p. 154). Also, by being ‘there’ on the Trail, people were susceptible to being affected by country.

Most walkers of the Trail leave the Song Cycle country after nine days on country and go back to their homes. Their being ‘there’ on and with country is ephemeral, raising the question as to whether walkers of the Trail are able to sustain any deep ontological shifts and a sense of connection with country, not just on the Trail, but in other places. Frans and first-time walker of the Trail Adriana offered responses to this question. Adriana believed her connection with country was not going to be a ‘one-off thing’, she knew that she would be able to reconnect with country in other places, because through walking the Trail, she now attributed a greater value to the fostering of connections with place. Frans offered a direct (and hopeful) response to this question, through his writing with Paddy Roe:

Some people might come through [on the Trail] and have a great time and go on with their personal journey of life, not worry about this particular piece of land. But at least they have *woken up* to something in themselves that might be beneficial to them and to the land everywhere else they go to. If you get triggered off here to see one time, you will *see* everywhere. You won’t lose it (emphasis added, Roe and Hoogland 1999, p. 27).

‘Waking up’ to ‘seeing’ things in one’s self (perhaps a capacity to connect) and in country (its agency and mutual capacity to connect) can be carried with people when they leave the Trail. Although walkers of the Trail may not continue to perform their relationships with the particular places and country through which the Trail travels, they have developed a ‘sensitivity’, as Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) call it, to be able to see ‘the “already there” in a quite different way’ (p. 13).

Paddy Roe himself was an actor that worked to bridge two cultures, Indigenous and European/Western, so too is his friend and Goolarabooloo community member Frans. Paddy saw in Frans someone who might be able to help his people, through his ability to speak English and ‘turn things around to the government’ (Roe & Hoogland 1999, p. 17). As an actor in the research, Frans performs important
bridging work by carrying forward the philosophical teachings of Paddy Roe and by helping walkers of the Trail to access these teachings.

7.4.3 People on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail are ‘being with’ country, to varying degrees

The threads of ‘being with’ first appeared in this thesis in Chapter 4 as an intention. It was here that Frans described how Paddy ‘opened up’ country and invited people to walk the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail with him and his family, so that they too could ‘be with’ country. This aspect of Paddy’s Dream was seen to be coming into fruition.

Storytellers in the research demonstrated that they were not simply being ‘on’ country, but also being ‘with’ country to varying degrees. For some storytellers ‘being with’ country was performed through walking, listening to stories and sleeping under the stars. Others enacted ‘being with’ country through becoming quiet and present over the nine days of walking on the Trail (deep listening), and in telling stories about their relationship with country and invoking actors in country in the process. Then there were some people on the Trail who performed and experienced ‘being with’ country through mutual recognition, reciprocity of care, love, being called by country (communicative engagement) and a sense of belonging. All of the storytellers in this research who articulated their ‘being with’ country in these latter ways had spent far more than the nine days walking the Trail and living (and/or learning about) the philosophy of living country. This group of storytellers included Goolarabooloo people and Trail walkers and volunteers, who were also campaigners to stop ‘the Gas’.

Paddy Roe’s daughter Teresa described her ‘being with’ country through her rayi (spirit) connection with the places Minariny and Bindinganygun. Teresa’s rayi keeps calling her back to her spirit country, so that she will stay close to and look after that country. In Chapter 5 Teresa said, ‘If no Trail you know, I’d still come back to this country, ‘cause this country will bring me back … When I feel lonely, thinking where to go and fish, I’ll come right up here and I feel good and then I go back home.’
Paddy’s granddaughter Kathleen spoke about ‘being with’ as belonging, love and enduring connections, saying, ‘Well I know when I go anywhere [in country], I feel like I’m [looked] after, with feelings, you know. Don’t get frightened. Nothing happen to us. When we go camping or anything, nothing happen to us, or kids or babies. I love this country. And we’ll always be here with this country, with our kids, our next generations, show them and carry on our knowledge for this place.’

Paddy Roe’s great-grandson Brian performed his ‘being with’ Walmadany (the Jabirrjabirr ancestor and place) through liyan (feelings of connection and love). For Brian, ‘being with’ Walmadany meant that both he and the ancestor/place recognised and cared for one another.

Sharyn and Karlien (both walkers and volunteers on the Trail and campaigners protecting country) were also experiencing mutual recognition with entities in country, through being called to ‘be with’ old trees in the monsoonal vine thicket in Murdjal, a traditional women’s place in country. They spoke of the mutual recognition, communicative engagement and nurturance that they experienced with two separate old trees, a garnbor (Melaleuca dealbata) and goonj (Celtis philipensis), encounters through which meanings were shared with them by the trees. These encounters, like those shared by Teresa, Kathleen and Brian, demonstrate an ontology whereby intentions can emanate from country, and are recognised. As this thesis stated in Chapter 6, ‘being with’ is not an ontology that arises as a human desire to connect with place; it is a reality that emerges from the relationships between people and place, or an entity in place. The notion of ontopoetics, first articulated by Freya Mathews (2009), help to make sense of these encounters. Described by Mathews (2009, p. 1) as ‘the communicative engagement of self with world and world with self’, ontopoetics involves ‘interactions between self and world that are not merely causal but meaningful … [where] meaningfulness emanates not merely from our side but from the world’s side as well … in recognizably meaningful ways’.

For Sharyn and Karleen, and also for Tegan, another Trail walker, volunteer and campaigner protecting country, ‘being with’ did not only equate to relational ways of
being, but also relational forms of knowing. As stated in Chapter 6, the enactment of primary forms of knowing by these women could be considered an effect of the ontological shifts that they experience; a transitioning from being ‘on’ to ‘being with’ country. The three women knew through being guided by country. In Tegan’s case, this involved being taught about country and the Song Cycle by ancestor women in Murdjal, through dreams. Stories from all three women showed how they were sharing recognisable forms of meaning with country: through liyan (feeling), dreams and signs in country. In allowing themselves to be guided by country, they were able to work with country to protect the Song Cycle from the Gas and sustain people–country connections. The ontology being performed here shows people co-producing realities with country. Importantly, their ‘being with’ country was founded upon a belief, and openness, that the country could meaningfully engage with them. For Sharyn, Karleen and Tegan, this belief in living country was reinforced by their experiences of ‘being with’ country.

Note that the ontology of ‘being with’ demonstrated by this thesis is distinct from that presented by Martin Heidegger. A key, differentiating factor is that Heidegger’s (2010) ‘Being-with’ (Mitsein) only extends to ‘others of its kind’, with Heidegger refusing to afford ‘Being-with’ to relationships between humans and non-human animals or humans and non-animal entities. Whilst Simon James (2009, p. 40) accepts the potential for ‘Being-with’ to extend to relationships between humans and non-human animals, he too falls short of including non-animal entities in intersubjective encounters with humans. This thesis reflects an Indigenous ontology and a philosophy of living country in recognising that ‘being with’ can indeed be afforded to relationships between humans and non-human entities, including trees, ancestors and country.

To borrow the words of Somerville, Power and de Carteret (2009, p. 9), ‘being with’ country on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is performed as a type of ‘place learning that derives from a deep, an embodied sense of connection’, which supports the enactment of ‘a different ontology, an ontology of self becoming-other in the space between self and the natural world, composed of humans and non-human others, animate and inanimate; animals and plants, weather, rocks, trees’.
By recognising the agency of non-human actors in the articulation of ‘being with’ country, this thesis responds to calls from eco-philosopher Val Plumwood (2007a, pp. 18-19) who argues for the ‘reclamation’ and ‘recovery’ of the agency of non-human entities in ethical and philosophical theories. The ontology of ‘being with’ recognised here does just that.

7.4.4 Bugarrigarra stories and stories about living country ‘do work’

The performative and generative dimensions of storytelling on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail enabled people to form and maintain connections with country.

Storytelling emerged as a generative practice that enrols a whole cast of actors, all playing their part in the enactment of stories. Bugarrigarra stories told by Goolarabooloo storyteller Richard, enrolled Goolarabooloo guides and children, walkers of the Trail (as listeners), ancestral beings (the entities invoked) and the places about which and in which the Bugarrigarra stories were being told. All of these actors were performing, in some way, through these acts of storytelling, and in doing so, were exemplifying Akrich’s (1992, p. 222) argument that performance is always a co-constitution and Mathew’s (2009, p. 4) notion of poetic collaboration. Inherently relational and co-constitutive, storytelling performances helped walkers of the Trail to create connections with country and Goolarabooloo people to maintain theirs.

In Chapter 5, Dallas, first-time Trail walker, showed that being ‘there’ on country supported sensorial links (feeling, hearing, seeing); links between himself (the listener), Richard (the storyteller), and place (the country about which stories were being told). He described these links as direct connections. By listening to Bugarrigarra stories that Richard was narrating and invoked in the particular places, Dallas was able to experience directly the material evidence of the Bugarrigarra process. He felt a part of the story, because he was quite literally in the story, and story and country were one and the same.
Also in Chapter 5, Paddy Roe’s great-grandson Terence shared key insights into how Bugarrigarra stories helped him and his Goolarabooloo family to stay connected with country. He said that by listening to these treasured stories whenever they are camping on country, he and his family are living in their stories; and quite literally so. Bugarrigarra stories, embodied in and reflected by the shapes of the land, are places that Terence and his family can inhabit.

Despite changes in storytelling practices on the Trail, brought about by the retirement of Goolarabooloo storyteller Richard, Bugarrigarra stories continued to ‘move’ and find new material assemblages through which to be told. The reluctance of Goolarabooloo storytellers Terence and Brian to take on the role of storyteller from their uncle Richard did not prevent Bugarrigarra stories from finding new audiences. A detectible ‘hunger’ for stories, experienced by walkers of the Trail, led them to seek alternative sources of Bugarrigarra stories. Hence, these stories continued to be told, though reluctantly, through other people (Frans and past walkers of the Trail) and discursive objects (old brochures, interpretive signs and poster boards).

Not only were Bugarrigarra stories powerful actors that were enabling people to connect and stay connected with country, they were also performing important ontological work on the Trail. As discourses, both types of stories gave people access to particular ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ the country. In their hunger for Bugarrigarra stories, walkers of the Trail were demonstrating their desire to make meaning of the land through this discourse, to be able to trace the journeys of ancestral creator beings across the land as they shaped the country. These stories, and others about living country, offered walkers of the Trail access to different ways of understanding place, based on Goolarabooloo ontologies and epistemologies. Stories about living country affirmed the agency of the land, a multi-dimensional entity with which a person could enter into a relationship of reciprocity and care. Such stories proved to be catalysts for some first-time walkers of the Trail questioning their pre-conceived notions of what the land is. Notions of ‘landscape’ and ‘wilderness’ (which reflected separation between people and place) were challenged and replaced by an understanding of place as ‘living country’.
7.4.5 Sustaining people–country connections takes ongoing work

Law’s (2009, pp. 148-149) concept of network architecture, incorporating materialities, strategies and discourses, was applied to the Trail and the relationships being performed there to explore if and how the Trail, a people–country network, was enduring. In doing so, this thesis found that the Trail is enduring and doing so because of its material, strategic and discursive architecture. Particular *material configurations* of the Trail meant that people were ‘there’ on and with country, performing reciprocal acts of care and enlivenment. *Strategies*, employed by human and non-human entities, were also ensuring that people were ‘there’, on and with country: the Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr ancestors passed on custodianship to Paddy Roe when their young ones had been taken away to the missions; *rayi* (spirits) were calling people back to their spirit country; Paddy sent out a dream to protect country; and the Goolarabooloo people, along with volunteers, orchestrated the walking of the Trail so that people could walk country. *Discourses*, in the form of Bugarrigarra stories, living country stories and personal and family narratives about ‘being with’ country, were making visible and invoking meaning in country, and renewing and affirming people–country connections.

The agency of Paddy’s Dream, and the single question that initiated it – How we gonna look after this country? – cannot be underestimated. Sharing his dream, Paddy Roe was able to ‘involve a whole series of actors by establishing their identities and the links between them’ (Callon 1986a, p. 205). Starting with ‘opening up’ the country, then inviting people from all backgrounds to walk the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, and assembling both human (Goolarabooloo family and volunteers) and non-human actors (stories, *liyan*, ancestors, country), Paddy ensured that walkers of the Trail would form connections with country *strong enough* to want to protect it. Stories shared by Paddy’s family, Frans, Sharyn, Karlien and Tegan showed that Paddy’s Dream was indeed coming into fruition. Yet, as the story about the Trail and the Gas demonstrated in Chapter 5, the durability of any network, including the Trail, takes ongoing work. All (or enough) actors had to play their part, and go on playing it (or passing it on) in order for the Trail to endure.
7.4.6 Ontological politics are at work on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail

The introduction and literature review chapters noted that contested perspectives of place have underpinned Indigenous-settler relations since colonisation and that divergent understandings of what the land is, and how it should be valued, continue to be played out as ‘ontological politics’. The performance of ontological politics through the various and conflicting ways that settler people perform their relationships with the land, more often than not, negatively impact on Indigenous peoples and their capacity to maintain their material and spiritual connections with country. The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail is no exception.

When WA Premier Colin Barnett, the key spokesperson for the proposed Browse LNG Precinct at James Price Point (Walmadany), looked at the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail he saw an ‘unremarkable place’ (not suitable for a postcard) and the potential for a ‘gas hub’. Initially, some walkers of the Trail saw a beautiful landscape or wilderness. The Goolarabooloo people, and a growing number of Trail walkers, saw living country, an entity that they could ‘be with’ and which was worth protecting at any cost. It was through the performance of particular ontological politics on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, that Premier Barnett, Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail did as Latour (1987, p. 205) predicted and revealed what they valued most and at what cost they would try to hold their precious networks together, be it ‘the Gas’ or ‘the Trail’.

‘The Gas’ brought not only controversy, but also an opportunity to see what people (associated with the Trail and the Gas) valued most and the cost of holding together these connections. Goolarabooloo people mapped out their spiritual and material connections with their *rayi* country, the Song Cycle, law and culture and *liyan*. Moreover, to lose the country was to lose the meaning of existence.

The presence of the Gas network on country amplified the importance of Paddy’s Dream and the responsibility of the Goolarabooloo people to protect country. These conditions helped to make visible the means through which people were being enrolled into Paddy’s Dream. The Gas pervaded people’s storytelling; they could not
talk about their love for country, or even sense of country without making reference to what threatened it and their connections with it.

The rivalry between the Gas and the Trail networks characterises the ontological politics that impact Indigenous peoples living on their country in ancestral estates across the Australian continent. In this instance, competing realities of what the land ‘is’ and how it should be valued appeared in the form of a LNG Precinct (a network of mining companies, State Government, shareholders, compulsory acquisition, benefits packages and boardrooms which promised economic benefits to Indigenous people in the Kimberley) and a song cycle (a multi-dimensional entity that holds stories, culture, law, spirits, speaks, recognises, cares for and enlivens people, and relies on reciprocal relationships with people to be enlivened).

This thesis was able to show how ontological politics on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail were being played out. While people–country relationships in the Trail network were being performed through people being ‘there’ on and with country, the Gas was performing place through the process of metrology (Latour 1987, p. 251): translating places into paper forms (maps, reports and charts) that cohere with the paper world inside the offices and boardrooms of people associated with that network. What Latour refers to as metrology, Deborah Bird Rose (2004, p. 9) calls ‘structures and processes of distance’ (p. 9) that situate ‘Whitefellas’ in relation to place, through ‘disconnection’ and ‘future-orientation’ (p. 8).

The ontological blindness of actors in the Gas network to living country, and the spiritual connections that people hold with the land, was no trivial matter; the potential cost to Goolarabooloo people was huge. For Brian, the cost of breaking the Song Cycle and industrialising Walmadany was the very meaning of his existence and even his life, hence, the political imperative for making living country and sacred connection with country visible to more people.

As already stated, the Goolarabooloo people, beginning with Paddy Roe, were deeply engaged in ontological politics. Paddy’s vision, that people would come and walk the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail with his people, develop a deep connection with the land and help to protect it in perpetuity, relies upon the successful enrolment of
non-Indigenous people into his reality; a reality that is performed through Bugarrigarra in association with living country. In Chapter 4, Frans Hoogland, Paddy Roe’s friend, collaborator, student and an organiser of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, said that ‘everyone can have a personal experience of Bugarrigarra by being with and walking this country.’ Some, perhaps not all people who are walking the Trail, are connecting with country, feeling compelled to protect the Song Cycle and realising that they too are (somehow) participants in Bugarrigarra.

This thesis also became an exercise in ontological politics, beginning with the choice of categories with which to speak about the world, and more specifically, ‘place’. A significant challenge in this research was allowing place-related categories to emerge, rather than applying them as a priori assumptions. However, doing so allowed for interesting and unexpected categories to appear – mamara, liyan, living country, Bugarrigarra – all of which did ‘ontic work’ (Verran 2007, p. 39); as categories they reveal something about the types of realities that people are enacting. As an actor, this thesis does ‘work’ by exploring the ontic categories that people on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail use to speak and make meaning about and relate to ‘place’.

The second act of ontological politics performed by this thesis was choosing a methodology and specific methods. ANT writer John Law (2004, p. 116) argues that methods are far from innocent; they perform a particular ontology and in doing so, not merely detect, but also generate and amplify certain realities. Selecting methods that inhere a relational ontology enabled such realities to be detected, but also realities inhering dualist metaphysics (as evidenced in the Gas network).

The third act of ontological politics performed by this research was in taking seriously the statement of Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984), that:

Words like “seeing” and “reading” must continue to be theorized and worked upon with a method which makes these seemingly innocent words carry the responsibility they deserve (p. 13).
Demonstrated through the research participant’s stories, both ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ are critical acts in the performance of an ontology. ‘Seeing’ was performed as far more that a visual sense it was also a capacity to perceive, recognise and become aware of, through feeling/liyan/intuition, one’s relationality with other entities, including country. ‘Reading’ forms of meaningfulness in the country came through knowing Bugarrigarra stories about country, but also through liyan.

The fourth act of ontological politics comes through bringing together people’s stories in a thesis and arranging them in particular ways, to make certain realities visible. Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail who shared their stories for this research were aware, or through telling their stories became aware of the realities that they perform with country. Yet, the convergences between people’s experiences (might) only become apparent when stories are placed side-by-side. As stated in Chapter 6, unless explicit connections are drawn and a broader perspective applied, [people’s] stories of ‘being with’ country might remain isolated ‘islands’ of experience. Hence, this thesis performs an act of ontological politics by amplifying particular realities of ‘being with’ country, at the cost of others.

7.5 Finding new actors and networks

Two interrelated areas for future research arise from the insights generated by this thesis; in turn generating new networks inhering new actors based on the themes of situatedness, the power of discourses and helping to make ‘country’ (in the Indigenous sense) a reality for non-Indigenous people in Australia.

The first area of research centers on the question of how dominant discourses on ‘remoteness’ in Australia impact on the human rights of Indigenous peoples living on their ancestral lands. Based on the notion that cities and big towns are ‘central’ and Indigenous homeland communities are ‘out there’, dominant discourses on ‘remoteness’ too often underpin the inequality of service provision to remote Indigenous homelands. The threat of remote community closures in Western Australia has eroded any surety for Indigenous peoples living on their ancestral lands.
that they will be able to live on their homelands into the future. It is an intrinsic human right for Indigenous peoples to live on and have access to their ancestral lands (United Nations 2008). The aim of consequent research would be to broaden and inform discourses in contemporary debates, challenging *a priori* assumptions about what constitutes ‘remoteness’, a ‘sustainable’ community, ‘appropriate service delivery’ and appropriate and just ‘consultation’ (involvement in decision making) with First Nations people living on their homelands.

Another area for possible research would be the on-country initiatives of Indigenous communities across Australia that are helping to make ‘country’ a reality for non-Indigenous people. This research would aim to map and articulating forms of ‘placemaking’ in Australia that are leading to shared ways of understanding ‘the land’ as ‘country’. This area of research relates to the proposal (above) to investigate the impacts of dominant discourses of ‘remoteness’ on Indigenous peoples living on their ancestral homelands, in that becoming aware that country is ‘home’ and the center of a person’s universe, challenges many of these discourses.

### 7.6 Final words

Many relationships are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. In this research it was the relationships between people and country that emerged as most significant. The stories told by Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail made visible the agency of country to recognise, care for and communicatively engage with people, demonstrating country’s capacity to participate in co-productive relationships. Paying close attention to the enactment of these relationships helped to reveal a relational ontology of ‘being with’ that people and country are performing on the Trail.

In addition to country, stories themselves were powerful actors, offering Goolarabooloo people and walkers of the Trail nuanced ways of ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ place that helped them to create and maintain connections with country.
Perhaps the stories performed by this thesis might also become powerful actors, working to make visible the realities enacted on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. For as eco-poetics writer Noelene Kelly (2013) writes:

The word … can do some things: it can help us to see more and hear more, it can attune our senses more sharply to where we are and what might be required of us as we negotiate these times in which we live (pp. 168-169).

It is hoped that the words and stories in this thesis help people who have not been on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, and even those who have, to ‘see more and hear more’ and ‘attune’ to living country, so that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people might together ‘hold’ the country.
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307


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315
Images


Legal rulings and bulletins


News items (online)


**Non-refereed and unpublished essays and reports**


**Pamphlets**

Sound recordings


Websites and media statements


Appendices

Appendix 1 Languages, orthography and glossary

Appendix 2 Description of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle

Appendix 3 Lurujarri Heritage Trail brochure

Appendix 4 Permission to undertake research from the Goolarabooloo community

Appendix 5 Plain language statement given to potential research participants

Appendix 6 Timeline of events related to the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and ‘the Gas’

Appendix 7 Metrology at work - maps that translate Walmadany into the Gas network
Appendix 1: Languages, orthography and glossary

1.1 Languages spoken by the Goolarabooloo community

The local languages spoken by the Goolarabooloo community originate from the Nyulnyulan family of languages, including Bardi, Jabirrjabirr, Ngumbal, Nyulnyul, Jugun and Yawuru (Muecke & Lowe as cited in Kelly 2016). These languages are spoken more broadly by other Indigenous peoples on the Dampier Peninsula and in Broome, with many words from particular languages entering into common use in English. The most common medium of communication is a creole language, known as ‘Broome English’.

Paddy Roe was a speaker of many languages: Yawuru, Jabirrjabirr, Ngumbal, Jugun, Malay (Hosokawa 2011, p. 17), Nyigina, Mangala, Karajeri and Broome English (Roe 1983, p. xi; Walton & Christie 1994, p. 68).

Several of the storytellers in this research shared their stories in Broome English, a type of Australian Aboriginal English that is distinct to the Broome area (Brumby as cited in Sandefur 1986, p. 26). More broadly, the term Australian Aboriginal English is used to refer to a spectrum of dialects spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, each of which incorporates creole and Standard Australian English to varying degrees (Saderfur 1986, p. 25). Muecke (Roe & Muecke 1983, p. xi) identifies characteristics of Australian Aboriginal English as including, a lack of differentiation between gender pronouns, and quite often, statements without the verb ‘to be’ (Butcher 2008, p. 631). For a more comprehensive explanation of the linguistic characteristics of Australian Aboriginal English, refer to Butcher (2008) and Sanderfur (1986).
1.2 Goolarabooloo orthography and pronunciation

The orthography used in this thesis, the *Proposed Goolarabooloo Spelling System/Pronunciation Guide and Place Names*, was developed by Stephen Muecke and Pat Lowe (see Kelly 2016) and is mostly based upon work done by Muecke and Lowe in collaboration with members of the Goolarabooloo. This thesis acknowledges that there are other spelling systems in use; however, at this point in time, there is no standard orthography in use on the Dampier Peninsula.

The excerpt below is from the guide developed by Muecke and Lowe (as cited in Kelly 2016), presented here with the permission of the authors:

Like most Australian languages, [the Nyulnyulan languages] use some sounds that do not occur in English. Because of the limitations of the English (Roman) alphabet, these sounds are in most cases expressed by a combination of two letters, eg the consonants ‘ng’, ‘ny’, ‘rl’, ‘rt’.

There are also some English sounds, such as those written ‘f’, ‘h’, ‘s’, ‘z’, ‘sh’, ‘e’ and ‘o’, which are not found in [Indigenous Australian languages]. Some vowels sound like ‘e’ or ‘o’, but this is not significant, since it is a 3 vowel system (i – a – u).

In most Australian languages, no distinction is made between the sounds in the pairs (voiceless and voiced) written in English as ‘b’ and ‘p’, ‘d’ and ‘t’, ‘g’ and ‘k’. For this reason, only the voiced series ‘b’, ‘d’ and ‘g’ is used by us, for Goolarabooloo. Other languages use ‘p’, ‘t’ and ‘k’ instead, but the choice is arbitrary.
Pronunciation of Goolarabooloo

a  like u in but
b  like b in boy or p in pal
d  like d in drum or t in tap
g  like g in girl or k in kill
i  like i in big
iyi like ee in greet
ayi like y in ‘my’
j  like j in just
l  like l in lamp
ly  like lli in million
m  like m in mother
n  like n in nut
ng  like ng in singer
ny  like ni in onion
r  like r in parade
rl  like American pronunciation of rl in curl; r is sounded
rn  like American pronunciation of rn in corn; r is sounded
rr  rolled r as in Scottish and Italian r
rt  like American pronunciation of rt in party; r is sounded
u  like u in pull; not like u in but
uwu  long u as in clue
w  like w in window
y  like y in yellow. Note: y at the end of a word modifies the
    preceding letter (n or l). It is never an extra syllable as in the
    English many.
1.3 Muecke’s typology

The excerpt below, taken from the text *Gularabulu*, explains the typology developed and used by Stephen Muecke when transcribing oral recordings with Paddy Roe. This typology was used in *Gularabulu, Reading the Country* and *Textual spaces*.

The texts are divided into lines whenever the narrator pauses. The length of these pauses is indicated by one dash per second of pause. Hesitations in mid-line, at which points the breath is held at the glottis, are indicated in commas. Extended vowels, “growls” or breathy expressions are indicated by adding more letters to the extend of one per second. The texts are also broken up into episodes. The change from one episode to the next is indicated largely in changes of content: a change of character, place or time (Roe & Muecke 1983, p. x).

1.4 Glossary

The Indigenous language words cited in this thesis and listed in the glossary below originate from the Nyulnyulan family of languages. As many of these words are now in common use across the different language groups, their originating language is not specified. Note that proper nouns are in standard text and other words appear in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>baragool</th>
<th>red gubinge tree (<em>Terminalia ferdinandiana x petiolaris</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>barney</td>
<td>sand monitor (goanna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barrgana</td>
<td>cold season where the sea and nights are cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingur</td>
<td>place; the second emanation site along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bindinganygun</td>
<td>place, also called Yellow River; the final camping place along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bugarrigarra</td>
<td>the Dreaming; a term used by Indigenous peoples on the Dampier Peninsula in the West Kimberley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buru</td>
<td>spiritual country; a camping place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dabardabagun</td>
<td>place; the first emanation site along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garnbor</td>
<td>freshwater paperbark (<em>Melaleuca dealbata</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goonj</td>
<td>tree; <em>Celtis philipensis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gulinna</td>
<td>shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabirrjabir</td>
<td>dialect on the Dampier Peninsula; group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiga</td>
<td>tree; <em>Bauhinia cunninghamii</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jila</td>
<td>freshwater springs, which can also be sacred places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jugun</td>
<td>dialect of Broome area; group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karajeri</td>
<td>language and group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>larja</td>
<td>build-up to the wet season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liyan</td>
<td>feeling, feeling connection, intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lulu</td>
<td>grandfather; term of endearment and name given to Paddy Roe by his family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maban</td>
<td>doctor; a person with a high degree of knowledge and who holds ‘special perceptive and combative skills’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mamara</td>
<td>spirit tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mangala</td>
<td>rainy season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marul</td>
<td>hot and humid season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayi</td>
<td>plant-based bushfood, refers also to the monsoonal vine thicket ecological community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miligan</td>
<td>digging stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minariny</td>
<td>place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minyirr</td>
<td>place, also called Gantheaume Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munga</td>
<td>bush honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdjal</td>
<td>place; associated with women’s stories from Bugarrigarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdurudun</td>
<td>place; part of the greater Murdjal area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngadjayi</td>
<td>ancestral spirit creator beings that emerged from the reef near Dabardabagun and took on human form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngumbal</td>
<td>dialect on the Dampier Peninsula; group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nurlu</td>
<td>song-poetry that is passed on from spirits to living people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

175 See Benterrak, Muecke and Roe (1984, p. 246).
through dreams\textsuperscript{176}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nununggurrugun</td>
<td>place; the third emanation site along the Northern Tradition Song Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rayi</td>
<td>spirit, particularly of an unborn child; a person’s inner spirit; a spirit in country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walmadany</td>
<td>place; Jabirrjabirr ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wirlburu</td>
<td>warming up season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wirralburu</td>
<td>the season in which the first south-east winds begin to blow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirrar</td>
<td>place, also called Barred Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirrginmirri</td>
<td>place, also called Willy Creek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{176} See Cooke (as cited in Dyungayn 2014, p. 11).
Appendix 2: Description of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle

The following excerpt from *Kimberley at the crossroads: the case against the gas plant*, was written by Murray Wilcox QC (2010) in collaboration with the Goolarabooloo people and the not-for-profit organisation Save the Kimberley. Wilcox (2010) offers insight into the threat of potential development to the integrity of the Northern Tradition Song Cycle:177

Traditional knowledge of the origin and function of things, and stories and skills that derive from centuries of experience in the area. “This body of cultural knowledge is known as “Bugarigaara,” the Dreaming. It is perpetuated within the Song Cycle which recounts the creative journeys of the ancestral beings who made the land and its people.

The Song Cycle is an oral heritage map. Its songs contain codes of behaviour fundamental to sustaining the balance and well-being of the land and its people. “The people talk about the Song Men being given the songs by the Country itself.

The Song Cycle is made up of Law Grounds and seasonal camping places, along a connected route between water places. These grounds and sites promote abundance – for humans, turtles, birds, fish and animals.

The layout of the land is encoded in the songs. A person who knows the songs can travel through the country and stay in a sustaining relationship with it.

The Song Cycle on the coast of the Dampier Peninsula has its birthplace north of One Arm Point, from whence it travels to the south of La Grange,

177 Note that an orthography different to that which is applied in this thesis is used to spell many of the Indigenous language words written in this passage.
the exit place where that creative process finished. Its sites connect, in a continuous linear system ranging between 50 and 100kms in width, from west in the ocean to east on the land. This greater Song Cycle looks after and protects other (east-heading) creation Songlines that move from the west through Uluru and across to the east coast – Sunrise country.

Within the Dampier Peninsula, the Song Cycle system unites all the west coast saltwater people: the Jawi, Bardi, Nyulnyul, Nimanburru, Warrwa, Jabirr Jabbirr, Ngumbarl, Jukun, Yawuru and Karajarri. The boundaries of their territories (‘burus’) and associated languages and Law, were established in Bugarigaara, at the beginning of time.

The responsibility for maintaining the Song Cycle is shared by the Law Bosses of all these clans. Collectively, they look after the whole Song Cycle, working together. If one area is destroyed, the whole is affected (pp. 26-27).
Appendix 3: Lurujarri Heritage Trail brochure
Booome is located 2,200km north of Perth via Great Northern Highway (National Highway 9) or 2,355km via North West Coastal Highway (National Route 1). The trail starts at Mirani, about 96km north of Broome. Access is via Skipper Bay Road and Mirani Road (Quondong Road) at the turn-off for Willie Creek.

Please note:

- The estimated walking time is based on an easy pace. Take your time and enjoy the living quality of the country.
- The best time for walking is during new and full moon phases when tidal variation is greatest. Cross the tidal inlets at Wirrak (Barred Creek) at low tide only. Do not cross Wirrakrnmbtn without a guide. Please follow the tidal plain around the creek via Nalalinga, as crocodiles have been sighted.
- Carry sufficient water and food to last your walk.
- Fresh water is hard to find.
- Make sure someone is notified as to when and where you are walking. Preferably have someone back you up with a vehicle carrying water.
- Camp only at the places marked with Heritage Trails Network symbols. They have been selected because they have been tested and tried over many generations of Aboriginal experience.
- Treat the trail with respect. It holds knowledge older than human life.
- Do not wander off the trail, as it is easy to get lost in the bush.
- Do not leave burning camp fires behind. They can cause severe damage to the environment.
- Take nothing except photographs, and leave nothing but footprints.
- Aboriginal sites are protected by the Aboriginal Heritage Act. Please do not harm them in any way. Do not remove objects from these places. Leave them as you find them.
- Do not gather bush food without proper knowledge of what is safe to eat.
- As the trail does not return to the starting point, arrangements should be made to have a vehicle at your finishing point.
- Persons using this Heritage Trail do so at their own risk.
Introduction

The figure on the right shows the layout of the discussed

This feature highlights the importance of understanding the

The figure on the left illustrates the relationship between

Abbreviations and the Board Cycle

Abbreviations and the Board Cycle
Myth 1.
The Three Sisters (Murrajar)
Three Dreamtime sisters, Lilja, Udang and Bilmurra, traveled from the north to the south, creating parts of the landscape as they went. When they reached the beach at Murrajar they found an ant-bed which was full of sweet ants. They dug up the ant-bed with their digging sticks, and sifted the ants from the earth by shaking them rhythmically from side to side in the wooden cooiamun dish they carried. The ants all separated out to one side of the cloth, and the chunks of ant-bed to the other. The sisters ate the ants, but threw the pieces of hard ant-bed on the beach. These can still be seen along the beach as a line of piled-up stones like a giant wall which is called Wajira Wayiru by local Aborigines.

The three sisters threw away their digging sticks which then grew into bushes suitable for making more digging sticks. Not far away, standing stones on the beach are a reminder of the bosswoman Lilja and her two sisters. The sisters continued on their creative journey south, finishing on a beach at Unguneangurra, east of Dampier Creek, where they were all turned to stone.

Myth 2.
Kundandu Burru and the Snakes (Kundandu)
One of the Dreamtime Creator Beings turned himself into a powerful and vicious snake in order to maintain law during troubled times. This snake became the symbol of one of the kinship groups which control social relationships. The Dreamtime ancestor passed on to his descendants his power to control snakes and thus to control society. The last man who inherited this special power over snakes died in the Derby Lepersarium within living memory. He had no descendants and since then the snakes have been without any form of control.

The area where the snakes have their source is Kundandu Burru which is passed on the trail. Local Aborigines feel apprehensive in this area, and do not camp overnight in the vicinity.

Myth 3.
Marrala and the Nadi Women (Minyirri)
A creator spirit called Marrala—commonly referred to as Emu man—made his appearance at various points along the coast, creating features and aspects of the Law as he went. South of Minyirri (Garrthaurant Point) he saw seven Nadi women, Yinara and her six daughters, who were spirits from the sea. The girl had been warned by Yinara not to take any notice of anyone on the land, but they disobeyed and watched the emu man. The result was that, as he walked past and tried to touch them, Yinara turned herself and her daughters to pillars of stone, which can be seen today, the mother standing taller than her daughters, at what became known as Yinara. Nearby, at Minyirri, Marrala's three-toed footprints can also be seen.

Marrala composed a song about this incident which is still sung, and which makes Minyirri an important place in the Law. Murrayar (Garrthaurant Point) is also much visited by tourists who come to see the three-toed footprints from Yinara to Minyirri point, which European scientists believe to be those of a dinosaur. In the Aboriginal belief system, Marrala, the Law-giving Emu man, is also represented by three stars which rise before the morning star, and his shadow may be seen in the Milky Way, his head laying next to the Southern Cross.

1. Minyirri to Walmadany
   (Walk of 15km)
   Minyirri: Old camping grounds, shell middens.
   Walmadany: Black Rock: Marks fresh water source attainable only at low tide.
   Rich food area of low-growing vegetation.
   Kutumkarawarn Jum and Ngarrilarrman Jum: Two dry creek systems which lead to inland water sources.

2. Walmadany to Kardilakan
   (Walk of 10km)
   Walmadany: Old camping grounds marked by buried shell visible as a layer in the piedon cliff face.
   Kardilakan: The Place of Snakes, associated with mythology (See Myth 2).
   Inbalara: Dried bone hole sunk over former Gilla (sacred water source from the Dreamtime) with Kumber trees.
   Wayirrui Wayirru: Wall of stones on beach with mythological origins (See Myth 1).
   Lilja: Standing stones representing mythological women (See Myth 1).

3. Kardilakan to Wirrar
   (Walk of 10km)
   Jajaj: Gravel area, Associated snake mythology, with track heading inland. Unfortunately, upright stones representing snakes were blasted for gravel to construct the Broome jetty which was completed in 1966.
   Inbalara: The song cycle includes reference to sea splashing against rocks. There is an important Aboriginal Law Ground here.
   Burrjakom: Large camping ground in open dune area protected from east wind. The only shade is under a clump of Pandanus growing in the sand.

4. Wirrar to Wirrkimunirri
   (Walk of 10km)
   Wirrar (Barred Creek): Tidal creek and natural limestone jetty. Excellent fishing.
   Wajilalan: Where the bushland meets the tidal plains. The commencement of small island camps amongst the mangrove marshes.

5. Wirrkimunirri to Ingardinganyjal
   (Walk of 17km)
   Ngungungurraruk: Rocks denoting an important power place for both creation and death. No touching please. Photographs only.

6. Ingardinganyjal to Minyirri
   (Walk of 10km)
   Wajugum: The main living area for Jukun people.
   Minyirri: The song cycle place where Marrala left his footprints in the Dreamtime. (See Myth 3).
   Ngakurayala: Where the Nadi sea spirit women became stone pillars. (See Myth 3).
   Yinara: Marrala's place of entrance.
Appendix 4: Permission to undertake research from the Goolarabooloo community

Nia Emmanouil
C/o 29 Kenmare Street
Mont Albert North
Vic 3129

Monday, 28 May 2012

Dear Nia,

I am writing to grant you permission to respectfully undertake your Masters research project, Being with Country, on Goolarabooloo country.

I understand that you will be doing this research while spending time with members of the Goolarabooloo community walking the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, and that the sharing of cultural knowledge will happen through storytelling.

It is also my understanding that the Goolarabooloo community will retain intellectual property over the cultural knowledge that is shared in this process.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Goolarabooloo Custodian and Law Boss

Note: The Goolarabooloo Custodian and Law Boss who wrote this letter is now deceased. His name is obscured out of cultural respect.
Appendix 5: Plain language statement given to potential research participants

Plain Language Statement / Information Sheet

Project title: Being with country

This is a PhD project that is being undertaken by Nia Emmanouil from Charles Darwin University.

Project Aims

• Investigate the people–place connections that are being performed on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

• Investigate the ways that people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are maintaining or (re)establishing connection to place.

• Ask, what do these connections say about how people are ‘being with’ country?

Permission to do the research

Permission to do this research has been received from J.R., Goolarabooloo Custodian and senior law boss, and senior law bosses Phillip Roe and Richard Hunter. Other senior elders in the Goolarabooloo community have been included in negotiations on how this research will be carried out.

Who can participate?

• Goolarabooloo people

• People from other Indigenous groups and non-Indigenous people who have previously walked or volunteered on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.
**What are participants committing to?**

- Sharing time with me on the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail: walking the trail and sharing stories.
- The length of time that participants spend with me on country can be negotiated together.
- I expect to make 2 - 3 extended visits to the Kimberley coast between Broome and Walmadany (between September 2012 – September 2013).
- It is possible to meet up with past walkers of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail away from country if talking on country is not possible.

**Risks and benefits**

- Participants in this project need to be clear about what information they wish to share, as the results of this research will be made public.
- All information shared by Indigenous participants remains the intellectual property of their cultural group.
- It is hoped that through this project participants will be able to communicate to a wider audience, the nature of their connections with country and, what is happening when Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are being with country together.

**Collection of information**

- The information that I record will be in the form of notes taken in my journal, photographs, sound recordings and stories that I write on my blog (website).
- There will be no formal interviews - instead this research will be done through sharing stories and having conversations.
- These stories and conversations will be written up by me in my journal and on my blog (website) and shared with each participant to confirm that what has been written is accurate. Some of these conversations may be recorded using a sound recorder, *only if the participant is comfortable with this.*

*Participants will need to make clear whether they wish to be identified in the*
project (e.g. by name, gender, cultural identity), or whether they wish to remain anonymous. Every attempt will be made to maintain the privacy of project participants.

- Permission may be sought from custodians, elders and other participants to take photographs of people and country and to publish these images as part of the project. Any images that are taken with permission will become the joint property of the individual and/or community and myself (copies of which will be provided to the individual/community in digital and paper format).
- No images will be published without the appropriate permission(s) and with a clear statement on where they will be published.
- No images will be taken of persons under the age of 18.
- Any images taken with permission will be securely stored on a computer.
- It is expected that images taken will be used on my project blog (website), in formal presentations I give as part of this project and in my thesis (end report). Images taken will not be used for any other purpose.

*Cultural knowledge will remain the intellectual property of traditional owners. Where permission is granted by an artist(s) to use images of their work or stills from films, the artist(s) retains all intellectual property rights and copyright.*

Results of the research

- All participants will have sent/given to them results of the research project, including written stories and images that were taken during my time with them on their country.
- The results of this research project will be published in a thesis (end report) and academic journals.

Participation is voluntary

- If you don’t wish to participate in this project, you can say no.
- Participants can also withdraw at any time. If you wish to withdraw from the project, please let me know as soon as possible. Any information gathered
from you directly, or from my time with you (including images and written material) that identifies you will be destroyed or returned to you. If your identity has been concealed, then this information will not be withdrawn.

**For more information contact:** If you have any questions about the project, please contact Nia Emmanouil on phone or on email: nia_emmanouil@yahoo.com

If you have any concerns about this project, you are invited to contact the Executive Officer of the Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee by e-mail: cdu-ethics@cd.edu.au, phone 08 8946 6498 or mail: Research Office, Charles Darwin University, Darwin NT 0909. The Executive Officer can pass on any concerns to appropriate officers within the University.
Appendix 6: Timeline of events related to the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail and ‘the Gas’

1987

Paddy Roe, his family and close friends establish the Lurujarri Dreaming (Heritage) Trail.

1988

The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail becomes part of the Heritage Trails Network, instigated by the Western Australian Heritage Committee, to commemorate the 1988 Bicentenary. As stated in the brochure *Lurujarri Heritage Trail: retracing the song cycle from Minarriny to Yinara* (1988), the intention behind the Heritage Trails Network is to ‘enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia’s natural and cultural heritage’.

Archaeologists Elizabeth Bradshaw and Rachel Fry carry out a survey of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites along the Lurujarri coastline, between Bindinganygun and Minyirr, on behalf of the Western Australian Museum. In reporting their findings, Bradshaw and Fry conclude that ‘the entire coastal strip ... has a high density of Aboriginal sites of great significance’ (Bradshaw & Fry 1989, p. 1).

1990

Paddy Roe receives an Order of Australia Medal as part of Australia Day Honours, for his service to the community.
Multiple applications are lodged for sand mining along the Lurujarri coast, including at Quondong Point and Walmadany (James Price Point) (Wells 2012). In its report on the first application the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) concentrated on ‘key biophysical environmental issues that related to the protection of coastal vine thickets; recreational value and current and future usage of the coastal area; the scientific value of the fossilised rock type (silcrete); and the maintenance of the conservation values in the area’ and concluded that ‘no exploration is environmentally acceptable on the western side of the Broome-Manari road and that no ground-disturbing exploration is acceptable on the eastern side of the road unless and until an exploration program is submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority under Section 38 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1986’ (EPA 1991, n.p.).

Senior Heritage Officer for the Department of Aboriginal Sites, Mr Nicholas Green, conducts a separate ethnographic survey along the Lurujarri coast and produces a report detailing his findings (A Report of the Ethnographic Survey of Exploration Licence Applications 04/645, E04/656 and E04/676 in the West Kimberley), recommending that ‘no exploration activity should occur in the areas defined as the Song Cycle path’ (Howard 1991, p. 5). The Broome Warden’s Court hears objections to the exploration license in July 1991, with Senior Magistrate Dr. J. A. Howard upholding the objections and recommending the mining application be refused (Howard 1991). On the same matter, the EPA recommended that the ‘no exploration or mining activities should occur within the vine thickets and coastal dune system within the license area’ (EPA 1991, n.p.).

1994

Paddy Roe passes on the role of principal custodian and law keeper to his grandson J. R. (recently deceased).

The Goolarabooloo people lodge a Native Title claim over an area that encompasses Minyirr/Jugun, Ngumbal and Jabirrjabirr country.
2001

Goolarabooloo custodian Paddy Roe OAM passes away during the annual walking of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.

2007

The WA Government establishes the Northern Development Taskforce to carry out investigations into an appropriate site for the onshore processing of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Browse Basin gas reserves (Government of Western Australia 2007).

2008

The Northern Development Taskforce releases its final findings in December, recommending James Price Point (Walmadany) as the preferred site from the 43 sites that were examined (Government of Western Australia 2008). WA Premier Colin Barnett adopts the recommendations of this report, setting in process the acquisition of James Price Point, which at the time is deemed vacant Crown Land, but with a pending Native Title claim from the Goolarabooloo – Jabirrjabirr Native Title claim group.

The WA Minister for State Development refers the project to the EPA.

2009

The WA Government announces that it will work with Woodside Petroleum and their joint venture partners to develop an industrial precinct to process LNG from the Browse Basin at James Price Point (Government of Western Australia 2009). The WA Department of State Development is the proponent of the development.
The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) facilitates a meeting of the Goolarabooloo – Jabirrjabirr Native Title claim group, during which it declares a ‘majority decision’ is made by the group, to approve the acquisition of traditional lands for the proposed LNG processing plant at James Price Point. The Goolarabooloo people unanimously vote against this decision. The way in which the decision-making process was facilitated comes under heavy scrutiny from the Goolarabooloo people and legal professionals (Rush to Riches, 2010). The said agreement towards the compulsory acquisition of traditional lands triggers a $1.3b benefits package for Indigenous people in the Kimberley region. The Waardi Ltd trust is established to manage these funds (Mailer & Collins 2013).

Almost 11,000 public submissions are made with regard to the environmental assessment process for the Browse LNG project at James Price Point, with almost all of these submissions objecting to the proposal (ABC 2013).

On 5 July a long-running Goolarabooloo-led community blockade, stationed at the corner of Cape Leveque Road and Manariny Road, is broken by a WA Police task force at the instruction of WA Premier Colin Barnett, to allow Woodside to bring land-clearing machinery onto country. Permits have not yet been granted to Woodside to carry out land-clearing works. Land clearing works are initiated immediately and a compound is established 3 kilometres southeast of Walmadany.

On 14 September the Goolarabooloo people establish a tent embassy at the traditional camping place of Walmadany.

On 6 December Goolarabooloo senior law boss Phillip Roe and Jabirrjabirr traditional owner Neil McKenzie win a matter before the WA Supreme Court, in which Chief Justice Wayne Martin rules that the notices of compulsory acquisition submitted by the WA State Government for the Browse LNG Precinct are invalid due to a discrepancy over the areas of land stated in the notices. The WA
Government intended on compulsorily acquiring 7,000 hectares of land for a 3,500-hectare precinct, without specifying the exact parcels of land to be used for the proposed development (Collins 2011).

2012

The Goolarabooloo people celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail. More than 60 walkers accompany Goolarabooloo families for the nine-day journey from Broome to Bindinganygun. At the end of the Trail, Richard Hunter, Goolarabooloo senior law boss and storyteller for the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, retires as storyteller on the Trail.

On 16 July Chairman of the WA EPA Paul Vogel recommends the Browse LNG precinct at James Price Point for conditional approval (Moodie 2012).

2013

On 24 April at the Woodside Annual General Meeting, Woodside Chairman Michael Chaney announces that it will not pursue the development of an LNG processing facility at James Price Point as part of the development of the gas resource in the Browse Basin (Chaney 2013). The $1.3b benefits package for the Indigenous peoples of the Kimberley region is affected by this decision. The WA Government is now solely responsible for a payment of $30m for compulsory acquisition of the traditional lands surrounding Walmadany/James Price Point (Mailer and Collins 2013).

For the first time, there are four cross-cultural walks of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail during the barrganna season.

Goolarabooloo senior law boss Richard Hunter and The Wilderness Society successfully challenge the validity of the EPA approvals process (re: the Browse LNG precinct at James Price Point) in the WA Supreme Court. On 19 August Chief Justice Wayne Martin rules in favor of Richard Hunter and The Wilderness Society, stating that the environmental approvals are invalid as there is a conflict of interest.
amongst the board members of the Environmental Protection Authority. Chief Justice Martin also rules that the authorisation from the State Environment Minister Bill Marmion to approve the Browse LNG Precinct is also invalid (The Wilderness Society 2013).

In an announcement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) on 20 August, Woodside reveals that it will utilise floating LNG technology to commercialise the gas resources in the Browse Basin (Woodside 2013).

In November the WA Government completes the compulsory acquisition process for 3,414 hectares of land including James Price Point and surrounding areas. The land is to be managed by LandCorp and the Broome Port Authority. There are no longer any agreements in place with mineral resource companies to develop the site (Mills 2013).

The joint Goolarabooloo – Jabirrjabirr Native Title claim group splits into two separate claim groups. The Goolarabooloo families submit a separate Native Title claim to the Federal Court of Australia.

2014

J. R., grandson of Paddy Roe, Goolarabooloo custodian and senior law boss for the Northern Tradition Song Cycle, passes away.

There are three cross-cultural walks of the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail during the barrgana season.

New members are appointed to the WA EPA Board. Reassessment begins of the application by the WA Department of State Development to develop a ‘Common user LNG hub precinct for future Browse Basin gas processing in Kimberley Region’ at James Price Point by a delegation appointed by WA Environment Minister Albert Jacob. The WA EPA formally delegates its powers to assess the proposal to three delegates, Gerard Early, Dr Tom Hatton and newly appointed EPA member Glen McLeod, none of whom have been involved in the previous EPA assessment of the
Browse LNG Hub which was found invalid by the WA Supreme Court in 2013 (Government of Western Australia 2014).

2015

The Browse Delegates recommend the re-approval of the Browse LNG Precinct at James Price Point to the State Environment Minister (EPA 2015).

Native Title hearings for the separate Jabirrjabirr and Goolarabooloo claims begin on country, with the Jabirrjabirr people presenting their case.

2016

Native Title hearings are set to continue in March 2016 when the Goolarabooloo families are due to present their claim to the Federal Court of Australia on country.
Appendix 7: Metrology at work – maps that translate Walmadany into ‘the Gas’ network

Figure 12: Location of Existing Visually Sensitive Receptors and Light Sensitive Receptors. Source: WA Department of State Development (2010, p. 4-38).
Figure 13: Conceptual Model for Medium Term Impacts on Coastal Processes Caused by Precinct Harbour. Source: WA Department of State Development (2011, p. 57).
Figure 14: James Price Point – Proposed LNG Precinct Location in the West Kimberley, Western Australia. Source: WA Department of Environment (n.d.)