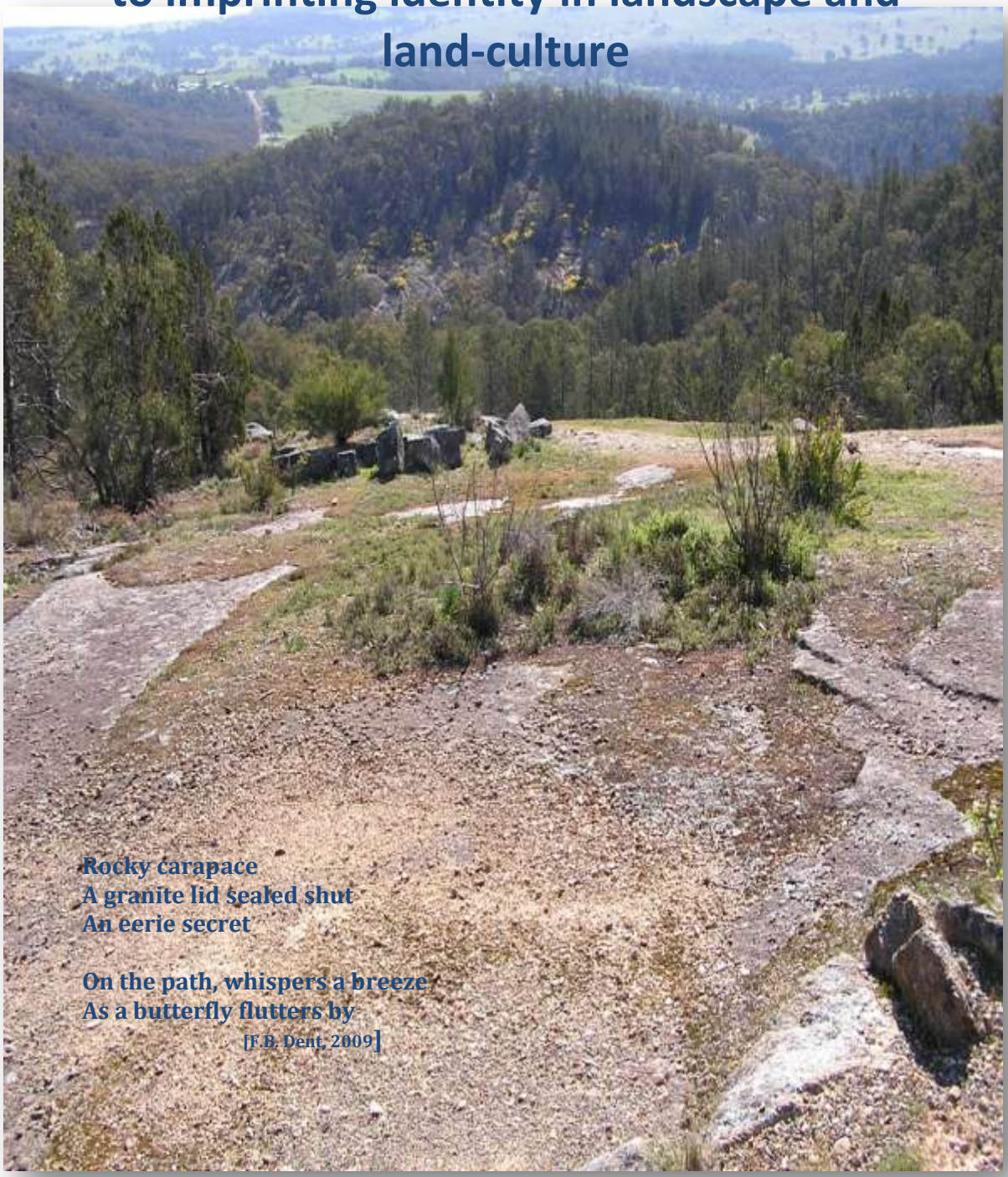
# Fabricating Place Story: an experiential approach to imprinting identity in landscape and land-culture




Meeting Place on Mt. Pilot near Beechworth, Victoria (Ned Kelly Country)
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2009]

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## Frontispiece

[Cover photograph and poem] After a friend and I climbed to the top of Mt. Pilot near Beechworth in Victoria, I wrote a few lines of haiku. It was to express what had been an intimate and memorable experience of place: to clot it as a 'landscape imprint' as I have called it. It was Place theorist Edward Casey who reminded me of the potential of haiku when he said of Bashō's haiku: "Every such image can be said to 'clot' the experience of that place" (1993:281).

Nobuyuki Yuasa introduces the tradition of haiku in *Bashō: The Narrow Road to the Deep North and other Travel Sketches* (1966) and then translates from the Japanese the writings of Matsuo Bashō and his disciples. I was overjoyed to find a copy of this book at a second-hand market in South Africa, after reluctantly returning a rather battered one to its owner in Australia. Bashō, born in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1644, lived until 1694 and at some time during that period he travelled north in Japan and wrote haiku and prose in each place he stopped along the way. The book includes examples of what was for Bashō and his disciples a lifetime study and my attempts are those of an amateur in comparison. As these poems have been translated into English, the strict syllabic rule may have been difficult to maintain but the essence continues to be conveyed to the reader. A beautiful example is:

> In a sorrowful voice
> A cricket is heard singing
> Beneath the withering grass
>
> I paid a call to a friend of mine
> Taking a desolate lane by the hedge
> (Yuasa, 1966:14)

Nobuyuki Yuasa explains the three elements of haiku: s*abi* – loneliness, *hosomi* – slenderness and *shiori* – tenderness, as expressions of intimacy, vulnerability and emotion, themes that also emerged in my research. *Sabi*, Bashō said, was the colour, the aroma or echo of the poem: the subjective element deeply buried in the objective element but giving it a profound wealth of symbolic meaning. For Bashō, poets and artists possess one thing in common: a mind to obey nature, to be one with nature and, by extension, to be as vulnerable as are the elements of nature, as Yuasa explains (1966).

Both my haiku placed at the start of each data chapter and the small artworks [photographed] that I have made during the course of this research, are examples of my attempt to capture the symbolism and an embodied/emotional response to landscape/place experience. Although there are many forms of haiku, my intent was to adhere to the 17-syllable rule over the length of the poem: the first line is 5 syllables, the second 7 and the third 5, with the last two lines described by Yuasa (1996) as linking sentences with the intention of conveying what he calls a fine thread of imaginative harmony.

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## Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis.

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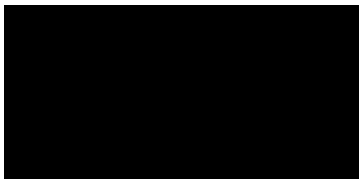

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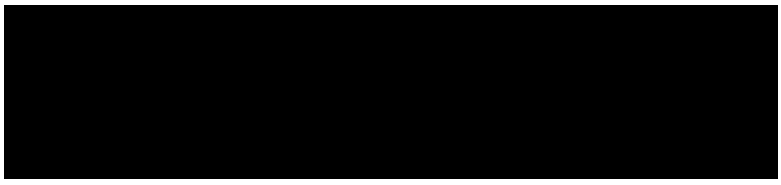
Signed:  Date: 2 February 2015

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I would also like to thank my family members for their interest and support. My daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter took me to all sorts of locations in The Netherlands to help with my research. My son helped with the technology bits. My father, who passed away in October 2012, helped to set the pace—he kept asking me when I would be finished—he knew that I had to hurry up if he was to be around for the grand finale, but unfortunately a thesis cannot be hurried along it seems. My sister has been my mainstay and chief commentator on what I have written, as well as accompanying me to The Netherlands, England and Ireland and, of course, back in South Africa. My nieces and nephew have been interested participants whose hospitality was wonderful, including airport and train pick-ups and drop-offs. My brother, who passed away within six months of our adventures, drove me all over the place in South Africa and also accompanied me to the Cape; I am so grateful to have had that time with him. Many aspects of what I have written are part of our family heritage story. Friends have also played their part, as has my partner, who helped with proofreading and I thank them as well as my American 'sister', who, in the days of the final draft, asked some pertinent questions and assisted with some valuable formatting, copy-editing and proofreading.

## Abstract

As a consequence of migration, family, cultural and landscape markers that map heritage and maintain narratives and representations of continuity are disrupted, and can result in fragmented identity, and the loss of a sense of place and belonging. This research explores whether in a post-colonial and post-modernist society displacement can be mitigated by the performance of place: imprinting landscape and learning land-culture in personal spaces/places and heritage sites. The point of stability and continuity in a post-colonial context it is proposed can be found in one's relationship with the landscape/place. My interest is in an embodied experience of the places and landscapes of my heritage in an attempt to work with and through displacement and find an identity that will sustain my living in Australia. This thesis, therefore, intends to make a contribution to the understanding and knowledge of the interdisciplinary studies of migrancy, identity-formation and place-making in the field of Place Studies, with an interwoven arts-practice that expresses an emotional/embodied response to landscape/place experience. I have named the multi-method narrative/experiential, post-qualitative approach as an *embodied-kinaesthetic* methodology. The implications are that the methods employed have restorative and dynamic capacities as an everyday practice of landscape/place experience in finding belonging and identity as an ongoing practice. The themes that I negotiate focus on landscape/place as the arena where issues of migration, transition and transformation are played out. I explore my heritage as multi-layered: formative and forming of my identity in each of the locations from which my forebears hailed, in Europe, South Africa and Australia, to retrieve snapshots of recorded/archival history and fabricate a new place-story in an embodied performative experience of place-making and identity formation. As I recognise that the processes are contingent and always partial, my interest is in enunciating and testing an approach where the researcher is the researched. The pro-active methods employed include: embodied knowing, visual knowing, and textual/oral knowing and an interwoven arts-practice. My encounters with landscape/place are analysed through the fractal nature of place, with identity and belonging traced thematically in what I call: the Seven Marks of Place: landmarks, placemarks, pathmarks, stretchmarks, crossmarks, stitchmarks and bookmarks; and in the conclusion I discuss benchmarks: where I am up to in my research. Place-story is fabricated/fabric-ated – hyphenated to designate the processes of fabric art and embodied actions that leave an impression beyond the immediate event – with the dual meaning of fabrication: made up and made into, kept open and organic in its interpretation.

# Introduction

An iconic hill in Lesotho is replicated in traditional Basutu hats, Southern Africa [Photo: F.B. Dent, 1998]

"There is a saying that when one wants to look forward, one has to look back first"
(Birkeland, 2005:105)

Travelling in Lesotho, Basutu territory in Southern Africa, it suddenly dawned on me that although I was very familiar with Basutu hats, I had never before associated their unique shape with an iconic hill in that landscape. The man I observed wearing a traditional straw Basutu hat, wrapped in his blanket and riding his horse along the road, belongs to that landscape. As place theorist and archaeologist Christopher Tilley explains, "The place acts dialectically so as to create the people who are of that place" (1994:26). Mulligan and Hill, in speaking of ecological thought, would concur, "human persons, too, are shaped by the places they inhabit, both individually and collectively... our bodily rhythms, our moods, cycles of creativity and stillness, and even our thoughts are readily engaged and influenced by shifting patterns in the land" (2001:8). But what of the migrant, shaped by a distant place, their 'hats' no longer reflected in a landscape feature like those of the Basutu?

In this research my personal experience as a migrant to Australia triggers a concern with displacement as a feature of post-modernism and post-colonialism, especially for those migrating from one post-colonial nation to another without a firm sense of cultural identity. Without family, cultural and landscape markers to map heritage and maintain narratives and representations of continuity, one can

feel a sense of alienation and distancing. I did not feel a strong link to any of the national/cultural groups in my heritage whether Irish, Scottish, and Dutch/Belgian or English, nor to the contested zones: my birthplace, South Africa or where I have lived for the past 30 years, Australia. In fact I appeared to be floating without national, cultural or religious links that could ground and sustain me. The search for identity and ways to relate to both heritage and local places is increasingly reflected in the popularity of family genealogy websites and centres, and what is described as genealogical tourism. The quest is part of a growing desire to learn more about one's ancestry especially amongst those from post-colonial nations such as Australia, USA, Canada and South Africa. My travelling to places in my heritage, however did not necessarily involve the usual practices of the genealogical tourist as such. I did not have the resources or extended time to spend in genealogy centres, searching national archives, museums or libraries overseas nor did I have all of the necessary biographical details of my forebears to facilitate such an undertaking. My interest was in an embodied experience of the places and landscapes of my heritage in an attempt to work with and through displacement and find an identity that will sustain my living in Australia. Those working in a variety of inter-disciplinary fields have also theorised, discussed and documented, their research into questions of identity, place, belonging and home in a plethora of literature within academia including sociology, psychology, cultural and human geography, archaeology and anthropology amongst others. Although change is a feature of place, people and landscapes, my hope lies in the latter as a point of greater stability and continuity over time. This performance of place involves imprinting landscapes and learning land-culture (which proposes a cultural teaching presence) in a post-qualitative approach of embodied-kinaesthetic actions and arts practices. It is situated between a more defensive (or aggressive) assertion of place, such as occupation/colonialism, and post-modernism that marks a more fleeting series of identifications with place (the sense or 'idea' of place).

We migrated to Australia more than 30 years ago, and I have lived here for almost as long as I did in the country of my birth, South Africa, but I often still feel that I am an outsider, a resident tourist taking photographs to send back 'home'. As I age, I am discovering that my identity is flawed, that my assumed characters and their masks are slipping. The cracks are showing. The masks we assume as migrants are self-protective, with a number of ingratiating and sycophantic guises, and without them I am laid bare. I seem now to forget the vernacular of this country that has helped me to be readily understood and not stand out from the crowd as the 'other'. Somehow I am losing my Australian veneer. I had heard about migrants reverting to their native tongue in old age despite 40 years or more of speaking in English, perhaps this is how the slipping-back process begins, even when my native tongue is also English. Place theorist Paul Carter says the "migrant does not arrive once and for all but continues to arrive, each new situation demanding a new set of responses, almost a new identity" as s/he "cobbles together a personality" (1992a: 2-3). It was my cobbled-together personality that was dissolving in the "oscillations of daily experience", an expression that appealed to me from Rudolf Arnheim's *Parables of Sunlight* (1989: 1).

The question is, how is one to find one's place in what is contested land, where the cultural influences of Europe were played out in Australia with devastating consequences for the Indigenous population, as well as for the landscape and environment. Australian identity continues to be invented and defined without any attempt to inculcate non-Eurocentric values of place and country or approaches that may sustain the landscape for future generations. What accentuated my situation was moving from my home location of 28 years in Belgrave, Victoria to Bass Coast Shire. I lost my familiar 'placemarks' to anchor me. Ironically, I read somewhere that the name of the town I moved to, Wonthaggi, means 'home' in the Bunurong language, although I remember other translations that have also proven to be pertinent, namely 'windy place' and another 'to drag or pull along' (Coghlan, 1979). I had relocated from the Dandenong Ranges after the bushfires of 2009 when, on our fourth evacuation from our home, I pledged that if our house survived we would sell up and move. I had lived in that locality, although in different houses, for most of my time in Australia, having had a few years in Karratha, Western Australia on our arrival from South Africa in 1980. In moving, however, I broke long-term ties. It was where we had been an intact family of mother, father and children. It was where they had grown up, where my pets were buried, where I had employment, friendships and importantly 'my home'. I found myself to be metaphorically homeless. My answer to adversity and emotional danger has usually been to flee, to change towns, states, countries, to go somewhere else. How ironic that rather than my research documenting my place-making and settling down in my new home location, as was my original intention, that I ended up fleeing and seeking my origins overseas. Could I learn to stay for the *fight* by going back to where I came from and come to terms with the futility of the *flight* response? Do we need to go back, to find out where we are? I am reminded that I am not the first person to leave in order to find my place with the familiar lines from T. S. Eliot's poem *Little Gidding*, one of the *Four Quartets* Collection (1943). A more extended quotation reveals, I think that Eliot is frequently misquoted:

> ...
>
> A people without history
> Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
> Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
> On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
> History is now and England
> With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
> We shall not cease from exploration,
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time
> When the last of earth left to discover
> Is that which was the beginning
> ...
> (Eliot, from "Little Gidding" in *Four Quartets,* 1943: unpaginated)

In my interpretation of Eliot, who was also a migrant – in his case from the USA to Britain – he is speaking of his experience of migration and his newly found love of England; his first impressions of an unknown place and on his return, with more knowledge and understanding after his explorations, seeing the place with fresh eyes and making a new beginning. My sense was that I went away to know more of who I am in this place. Norwegian philosopher Inger Birkeland (2005), in discussing travel and the making of self and identity, also reiterated the idea of the need to look back before we move forward. My endeavours were to uncover what had gone before, the landscapes in my heritage that had been shaped my forebears. I sought to uncover ancestral history as preserved in place, a history that only emerges when one is physically present. My embodied responses and the experience of landscape would overlay the story still there with another layer of story wherein what was written over could still be read beneath, like *faktura*. Here I draw on De Lillo's description of faktura: the picture we create with the eraser—there are no real absences, only replacements, he said (1986).

The ontological basis of identity, life's purpose and belonging, are universal questions although perhaps many live their lives without much reflection on the big questions but for those who leave their homeland to migrate, such reflection may become urgent. The epistemological nature of the question becomes the central narrative of their lives as they seek the knowledge to sustain their place in the world when a heightened sense of loss and a life of compromise overwhelms. Perhaps for those who migrate, their children who have grown up in a different culture are more like foreigners, they speak differently, have different values, experiences and attitudes. The family left behind in a home country have also changed, they are ageing, some dying, and the time one had hoped might be spent together now seems to be running out. On returning 'home' for a visit after a long absence one may discover that there is little familiarity or connection, that life there has also moved on. Perhaps return journeys need to be more frequent, a return to 'country' as it is for an Aboriginal person in Australia. Isobel Huggan in her book, *Belonging* (2003) writes of her annual trips back to Canada where she was born, to visit places, friends, relatives and gravesides as a pilgrimage from her adopted home in France, where she points out there is actually no word for 'home'.

Sanders warns that "education and culture have become almost synonymous with landlessness" when many of the worst abuses of land, forests, animals and communities have been carried out by "people who root themselves in ideas rather than places" (Sanders, 1999:82). Barnhill (in Sanders) in seeking connection to landscape, states that "people who root themselves in places are likelier to know and care for those places than are people who root themselves in ideas" (1999:83). Sanders takes issue with well-known author Salman Rushdie, who, he says, claims that migrants are stronger as a result of the necessity to make a new imaginative relationship with the world because of the loss of familiar habitats. Sanders points out that "the habit of our industry and commerce [as well as waves of settlers in Australia] has been to force identical systems onto differing locales, as though the mind were a cookie-

cutter and the land were dough" (1999:83). The challenge of my research is to fabricate place stories through embodied experiences in landscape/place but not treat landscape as dough to be manipulated to my own ends.

Previously, for the creative-writing component of my Honours thesis, I researched the early history of Melbourne and specifically Richmond, the birthplace of my maternal grandmother in 1896, to write a fictional story that emerged as a narrative poem (Dent, 2007). My great-grandparents left Scotland and Ireland to come to Australia and then went on to South Africa. I attempted to find my connection to Australia through the coincidence that had seen us reverse the journey when we came to live in Melbourne some 100 years later. My great-grandmother's profession of machinist as recorded on her marriage certificate was the impetus to represent their story of migration in fabric art: printed and sewn to old antimacassars and tray cloths (Dent, 2007). Women's handiwork on fabric is a neglected medium that holds and records history: starched and ironed, women's stories are draped across wooden rungs in antique shops but apart from the small embroidered motifs on the border, the historical 'canvas' is mostly blank, a metaphor for the lack of women's recorded history. These traces, like footprints in the landscape, reflect the ordinary, everyday lives of women and I laid my story down next to theirs to fill the cloth. I felt that I was weaving myself into the history and the place by inventing the story of my forebears: imprinting images and memories of place to build a closer association with my heritage. Carter discusses the "artificial myths" that Barthes described in the reconstructive phase of what he calls poesis and place-making: the acts of local invention, that prove to be the two aspects of one process (2004:11). I too, invented an artificial myth as the foundation for my place in Australia. The story of my forebears was a story of migration, as was mine, but the circumstances of their lives would have been far more tenuous than was my experience, especially as my great-grandmother faced the dangers of childbirth in that era, as well as arduous and perilous ship voyages, first to Australia via England and then to South Africa.

My son accompanied me on a visit to the Richmond Historical Society, where he was permitted to photograph various documents and I inexplicably burst into tears when I found my great-grandfather's name recorded on postal records. It was to my great disappointment that there was no house left standing at 52A Anderson Street in Richmond, an address recorded on my grandmother's birth-certificate, but as we explored the area and took photographs I realised that the land on which my forebears had walked was still there, as was the path of the sun across the horizon and the general topography was most likely unaltered. In terms of material culture, many small workers' cottages and the street names of the period had not changed, apart from the demolition of a number of cottages including my forebears' cottage, to make way for the erection of the high-rise, low-income apartments in the 1960s.

When my sister and brother read my poem, saw and touched my handiwork they, too, felt that the history of our forebears in Australia had come to life, and when Lorraine (my sister) visited

Melbourne for the first time in 2010, we were quite tearful as we went to Richmond together. This emotion was based on the mostly fictional narrative poem I had written but a family connection to place and people had emerged that enabled us to feel closer to their experience and to feel empathy and relationship where little had existed before. A narrative voice for my great-grandmother had emerged both in poetry and in the performance of what may have been her touch as I incorporated women's handiwork into my written work. The important adjunct to place-making was creative and tactile, situated within landscape, and was the basis for my endeavours as I attempted to find my place now on the Bass Coast.

But just as I began to rather like where I had moved to, and enjoyed seeing kangaroos in the early evening in the fields surrounding the wetlands as I stopped at the nearby intersection, I discovered that a new development, ironically called Heartlands, is soon to change it to something else. Adjacent to the wetlands cutting through a green area in the centre of town, the land is to be cleared to build a shopping centre and fifty houses, at present populated by wildlife, kangaroos and probably wombats and echidnas too. The developers have already cleared part of the land and begun the work on the ugly concrete pre-cast, utilitarian-designed shopping centre. I have spoken to the local councillor for this area (who reassured me that the animals would just move elsewhere), written to the newspaper (but had not one responding letter), attempted to find an environmental group interested in the cause and put up posters at the community house in an attempt to stop this change, but even local activists just shrug their shoulders in defeat. All believe it is regrettable, but as the development is on private land (although it was public land prior to previous Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett's sell-off, I am told) there is no hope of preventing it. The fight is already lost in a process that began five years ago with a community consultation to which Council received not one objection, I am told by the local councillor. Surely a green heart in the centre of a town is an asset to be preserved. This development could pose a threat to my emotional investment in wanting to belong to this place exposing my vulnerability to the risk of loss should I feel more connected.

Relph said that "the paradox of modern landscapes is that they are dehumanising because they are excessively humanised ... (but) with nothing in them which expresses human emotions and feelings" (1985:104). The dehumanising that I observe in Wonthaggi is a town losing its miners' cottage appeal with rampant development, on rezoned farm land, but also virgin bush bulldozed to make way for small sub-divisions, characterless houses and roads. I had also quite forgotten about the desalination plant under construction near Wonthaggi when I purchased my house, despite observing the signboards on the approach to the town in the area of the Powlett River. But sound travels, as will pollution possibly when the plant is operational. Rather than hearing the pounding of the wild surf along the coast at night, will I hear the pounding of machinery instead? Where I swim at Cape Paterson, 10km from my home, the sea is as clear as glass; will the processes of desalination and effluent released into the ocean alter the

ecology, and impact on the fishing habitat of the fairy penguins? There has been no industry to pollute the coast, apart from the run-off from cattle grazing, since the coal mines closed.

In attempting to come to terms with leaving my home and place in Belgrave to move to the coast, I had to move into a transitional state and decided to make what Winnicott (1971) described as transitional objects to assist my moving and settling down in a new location. Winnicott, who first coined the term, identified the items that children often become attached to such as a toy or blanket as assisting in their individuation – to see themselves as individuals and in transition from their total dependence on the mother. He recognised, however, that "we are all the time in the process of developing", not just as children (1971: xi). Leon and Rebeca Grinberg (1989) in their work with object-relations theory (that includes our relationship to people, place and things) recognised that in the adjustment process migrants need a transitional space for play and to find new objects to relate to. I was gratified to have some confirmation of my intuitive sense that I was not merely making things but was in a sense returning to the important transitional space of play and exploration in childhood.

Barry Brailsford relates the story of the women who left Hawaii to go to New Zealand and took the *kumera* tubers (a variety of sweet potato) with them under their arms, to plant there and make their home (2006). Casey describes the hearth at the centre of the home of the Greek Goddess, Hestia, from which young women on marrying, would carry the coals to establish their new home. In fact, as he explains, "economy" derives from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning abode, house or household and the hearth was "honoured by a sacred fire to invoke a presence that was dwelling within the home" (1993:133). In anticipation of what was perceived as the intolerable loss of connection to place, Casey (1997) explains how nomadic people utilised "practices of place fixing and place filling" to prevent an undermining of "personal or collective identity" (1997:4). The Achilpa people of Australia, he says, fashion what is called a *kaurwa-aura* (made from a gum tree) to take with them from place to place for place-setting purposes (Casey, 1997). Place setting begins with 'home', what Casey describes as our first universe. The intimacy of inside space that we were born to is inscribed in us, and we seek to recreate it wherever we move to, in the view of Bachelard (1962).

Symbolic of my *kaurwa-aura* were the small embroideries encased in an altered book that I made to represent the objects in my home location in Belgrave that were symbolic of place and home. The items I made at Belgrave were of the preciousness of the small things of home; they were what would have been lost in the fires of 2009 had the house burned down in any one of the incidents that threatened our home. Often photo albums are the first items mentioned that people take with them when hurriedly evacuating as a fire threatens but our photos are now easily stored online or carried on a USB drive or CD off-site. What I would have mourned were the tapestries and paintings I had laboured over, and I removed them on each evacuation event, even the largest, packed in the boot of the car but I would have mourned all the more the loss of the landscape that surrounded the house: the plants, birds

and animals of that beautiful location. It was these aspects that I represented in my arts-practice. When we made up our minds to move, I began to look around and to feel keenly what I would miss: the seasonal shrubs and plants that bloomed and I sometimes picked to put into vases in the house, the vibrant birdlife especially the kookaburras, king parrots, rosellas and lorikeets that were daily visitors to our house set high on a hill amongst the tree-tops. I also would hold dear the sun-filled window through which I could see the palms and ferns, the ornate fireplaces, the old fashioned crystal chandeliers and pressed ceilings that I had sanded, filled and painted. I would miss the possums, especially a white albino female, with her dark-coloured baby onboard, although she had not been seen for some time and I suspected that the 'dead' smell that wafted up occasionally from under the house related to her disappearance.

In the journal *Upland Britain*, Melanie Tebbutt (2004, unpaginated) argued that "landscapes are more than static physical locations; they are also formed in the imagination, mediated by art and literature and informed by popular culture affected by social, cultural and ideology differences". This viewpoint appeared to coincide well with my research proposal, especially her inclusion of art and literature as mediators in our relationship with place and landscape. The question asked in this research, therefore, is whether the transitional state of displacement, in my case as a result of migration, can be transformed to a more sustainable level of equilibrium and stability of identity and belonging through landscape/place encounters and the retrieval of historical references. My study emerged from what was unknowable and immeasurable: would my sense of place and belonging be enhanced by my undertaking the study; would knowing more about aspects of the history/culture of the places from which my forebears originated enhance my sense of self and identity? An aspect of my methodology was craft/arts-based (an artistic expression of experience performed with one's hands), which I put forward as an adjunct to place-making. There are a number of other far more skilled and professional artists and researchers who have employed a similar approach (outlined in the next chapter) who help to provide a background context for my rather amateurish craft/arts projects.

In looking to the literature and other research that could assist in placing my work within an academic field of enquiry, the options are many and varied. Perhaps most relevant is what Patti Lather (2013) highlights as 'metamethod' (Marcus, 2009) – that reconceptualises and experiments with standard practices, to move beyond current scripts and their conventional codifying and disciplining of inquiry; to the space of post-qualitative research. Lather outlines a number of aspects of post-qualitative work, but it is what Foucault described as the theory of change that is reflected in my research. Foucault's theory of change is not a new paradigm but rather serves to explain the "slow mutations, accretions, and accumulations" over time (Nealon, 2008:38). The key in the view of Lather (2013) is that practice itself is the motor and mode of change.

My research study has as a framework the notion of postmodern emergence. Somerville (2007) coined this phrase to describe the liminal space of research that she has observed in supervising many students in their research, as well as in her own research practices. She has found it necessary to evolve radical alternative methodologies as the way to respond to the post-colonial questions and conditions in which she has found herself working. Postmodern emergence, in the view of Somerville is a process of 'selving', through which selves and knowledge evolve simultaneously and one needs to become other-to-oneself in a sometimes messy, irrational and embodied process. The data chapters and methodology I have described need to be read in the same manner: waiting to become something, holding the place of the unknowing; how we can be in the world and what it is possible to know, as Somerville says (2007).

Both South African and Australian identity are mere constructs, and do not alone serve to define subjectivity. My contention is that identity must emerge from a relationship with the landscape and land-culture, and this requires an active, conscious approach, one I have tried to adopt in the methodology. Within this methodology, place-story is fabricated/fabric-ated (hyphenated to designate the processes of invention and intervention in self-creating identity processes) with the dual meaning of fabrication: made up and made into, interwoven in field texts and artwork but kept open and organic in its interpretation. I contend that this is an approach that is restorative but also dynamic as an everyday practice and that will make a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of migrancy, place-making and identity formation in the field of Place Studies.

In reviewing the literature in the first part of Chapter 1, I firstly look to the notion of place and the concept of landscape as they define the area of my interest in this research. I then move to the literature on migration, in terms of identifying the key areas and gaps in migration studies: displacement, belonging, identity, globalisation and home. Place studies, as described by Somerville and phenomenology proponent, Christopher Tilley, provide the basis of the theoretical and methodological approach. Inger Birkeland's exploration of what constitutes a research site opens up different ways to consider how we belong in and to place, particularly given the upsurge in genealogical tourism pursuits. Paul Carter's work is especially relevant, as he, too, writes from the migrant's perspective. In terms of moving beyond the loss of migration, I look to making a contribution to the knowledge of place-making and identity-formation: possible everyday practices that might assist in generating a sense of place and belonging. I also provide some examples of other migrant artists and researchers who have had a similar approach and motivation.

In Chapter 2, 'Methodology', when considering landscape as performance space/place, I reflect on different research methodologies that have assisted in formulating my embodied approach and validated my thinking. I propose the frame for the final analysis of what I have conceived of as the fractal nature of place which I have called the seven marks of place: landmarks, placemarks, pathmarks, stretchmarks, crossmarks, stitchmarks and bookmarks. The necessity of 'being there' in an embodied

approach to landscape/place experience is proposed within both the fields of Place Studies and phenomenology and is embraced in an embodied-kinaesthetic methodology. My methods include embodied knowing, i.e., travel, walking and making, as method and the artistry of walking and movement as language; visual knowing methods, i.e., reading cultural material, artefacts, photo journaling and elicitation, fabricating or materialising experience into transformative and transitional objects; and textual knowing methods, i.e., reading and writing the landscape as narrative inquiry.

In the data section, I present 'narrative inquiry texts' (Clandinin, 2000) that reflect on my fieldwork in the countries of my heritage. I began with my visit to The Netherlands, which has had a strong influence in my life, I realised, first as a South African-born woman whose grandfather's origins were probably Dutch/Belgian, and in more recent times since my daughter, her Dutch-born husband and their daughter, have lived in beautiful Delft, where I have visited them on a number of occasions. I realised that my childhood had been filled with names, cultural icons and stories from Holland as much as from England, and these influences were almost as significant in my formative years.

Leaving The Netherlands, together with my sister who had arrived from South Africa, for our bus tour of England, Ireland and Wales, we went seeking connection first in Ireland where we both warmed to the landscape, the music, the dancing and the people. I felt connected to Celtic spirituality, yet there was no escaping the impact of The Great Famine, brought strongly home to us through life-size sculptures representing starving people waiting to board what became known as the 'coffin ships' on the quay at Dublin. Although we were not able to include Scotland on this occasion, I had visited there previously and recalled the sense of wonder on first seeing Edinburgh, my maternal grandfather's birthplace, as well as the hills and dales of Scotland, where the rivers were the colour of whisky.

In England in 2010, my approach was to be open, to have an embodied experience of the landscape, although coloured by cultural influences, literature and of a feeling of Englishness. At Stonehenge and at Bronze Age Nine Ladies stone circle and at the old stone cottage that my sister and I encountered in Matlock, in Derbyshire, where her son and his family were living, I felt that it was 'my' megalithic ancestors who had left their traces in the landscape as they had in Drenthe in The Netherlands, and a Celtic spirituality was evident, as well. Most significant, however, given it was the birthplace of my paternal grandmother and featured regularly in conversations when I was growing up, was our trip to the seaside resort town of Brighton in England. I have subsequently materialised, or as I have called it *fabricated*, the experience through embroidery (as I had done for my maternal grandmother's story). I worked on a traditional obituary sampler, recording dates and places, but also seeking ways to materialise the sense I had of her home as the doorway to my birth and my relationship with her as my teacher of various handicrafts.

In ‘Who migrated to Australia?’ I consider how the landscape would have been encountered by early settlers including my forebears and the impact that the early history had on the country/landscape as it is perceived today and compare my response to what we encountered when we first arrived in Australia and went to live in Karratha in Western Australia. At first, it was the place of the storybook, as I remembered novels such as those by Nevil Shute about Australia and radio plays and serials that we listened to in South Africa that were made in Australia.

Finally in terms of data, I review aspects of the history of White settlement in South Africa and draw lines between what I now know in comparison with my closeted life there as a child. I contemplate whether I could go back to live there, enjoy the beauty of the landscape and wonder at the role that it played in a tragic history and try to come to terms with what I felt was my complicity in a racist system. During the three months that I spent doing research in South Africa, I also set out to read many of the classics of literature, some banned previously, or that I may have read as a young person or wished I had read, to round off my education. I especially was interested in gaining some insight into how the landscape was encountered by previous generations and was passed down through the family line to me.

In Chapter 5, I present my findings in a return to the literature reviewed and what I have learned through my explorations of the notions of place, landscape, belonging, identity and home in the fieldwork that I undertook. I then briefly analyse the data as to the seven marks of place as proposed and finally look to where I am up to in developing a methodology and securing my identity as benchmarks.

The Appendices include three examples of the methodology as an everyday dynamic and performative practice. The photographs of my fabricated *Artwords*, the transitional objects that I made to take with me as I moved from my home in Belgrave to the coast, are an example of the art form called ‘altered books’. Words are deleted in an existing book to provide space for artistic representations that elicit memory and landscape story; other words cut out and kept to tell a new story. The second example is ‘Interrogating Place—Road Kill’. I took photographs and then attempted to knit representations of dead animals that I called *Still Life* to express my grief at the numbers of animals lying dead beside the road in that first spring after I moved to Gippsland. Ironically, I believe that my actions also helped me to come to terms with the death of my brother, six months after my visit to South Africa, at only 57 years of age. The third example relates the story of Harmer’s Haven, a local beach associated with the communist enclave that was once was ensconced there and told by a feral cat that I spotted lurking in the vicinity of the threatened hooded plovers. The story is also represented in a tea-cosy I knitted, and is the culmination of the project: storying my place in fictional narrative, based on historical archival retrieval and personal experience.

## My Research Question

My research question explores whether displacement and disconnection in post-colonial and post-modernist societies, in my case triggered by migration, can be mitigated by the performance of landscape/place practices. I suggest a process of imprinting landscapes and of learning, what I call land-culture, in personal spaces/places and heritage sites as a self-creating identity practice. This thesis intends to make a contribution to the interdisciplinary studies of migrancy, identity-formation, belonging and place-making, conceptualised within the field of Place Studies and phenomenology using a multi-method approach. The methodology that I have called *embodied-kinaesthetic* incorporates visual, textual and embodied knowing methods that include movement, travel and an interwoven arts-practice that express and inculcate an emotional/tactile response to landscape/place experience.

# Chapter One
# Literature Review

> "So we are engaged in an ongoing struggle, a search for a new relation to the earth. It is also an old relationship: to be in and of place, to truly inhabit the land rather than just live on it. Why is it so important? The answer is all around us in the destruction of habitats, species, and individual beings, often done out of ignorance, greed and fear. The answer is also inside us, in a psychological rupture from the physical matrix of our life-nature and our bodies. And the answer is in the way we treat each other: our debasement and abuse of nature is linked with our debasement and abuse of people ... to heal the social and psychological, we need to heal our relationship with the earth"
> [David Landis Barnhill, 1999: 13].

## Place, Landscape and Migration

### Introduction

Displacement and loss of connection to place, family, and culture can have personal, social as well as environmental impacts, as eloquently described by David Landis Barnhill in the above epigraph (1999). While connection to landscape/place may be perceived of as static and abstract, my theorization draws on particular frameworks that have attempted to conceptualise and engage with landscape/place as dynamic and changing: a creative space to seek identity and belonging disrupted as a consequence of migration. The key themes that I will pursue in reviewing the literature will focus on migration and the issues raised in terms of place, identity, and the politics of belonging; home-making; cultural identity and othering; emotion; and globalisation. I begin however, with an investigation into the notion of place and then look to attempts to define landscape, firstly as that which can be seen and secondly, the way landscape is seen or framed; explore attempts to theorise an embodied framework and practice; travel, heritage and family genealogical studies and examples of the role of the arts to secure notions of identity and belonging.

### The Notion of Place

In an attempt to understand the notion of place, I have initially looked to Place Studies as it constitutes a new inter-disciplinary formation that studies the relationships between cultures and environments (Somerville, Power, de Carteret, 2009). Through place, in the words of Margaret Somerville, it is possible to understand the embodied effects of the global at a local level where place has the potential to offer alternative storylines about "who we are in the places where we live and work in an increasingly globalised world" (Somerville et al, 2009:6). The task of the researcher working in Place Studies is to deconstruct storylines: to decolonise and reinhabit by undoing the dominant stories and "identifying, affirming, conserving, and creating those forms of cultural knowledge that nurture and protect people and ecosystems" (2009:8). What is most significant for the purposes of my research is that

in Place Studies it is proposed that, “we are open to the materiality of places and stories, [in] that place learning derives from a deep embodied sense of connection such that a third subject emerges” ... a “different ontology of self becoming other” emerges in the space between the self and the natural world that is composed of humans, animals and plants, weather, rocks and trees (2009:9). Casey adds to this notion of place when he suggests that “boulders on a mountainside are not merely located on the mountain, they *make their place* there” (his emphasis) (Casey, 1993:215).

In Place Studies, a reconceptualised concept in a postcolonial pedagogy of place, moves beyond binaries (such as the self and the natural world) to consider three key elements or principles in the framework. Firstly, our relationship to place is constituted in stories and other representations; secondly, place learning is local and embodied; and thirdly, deep place learning occurs in a contact zone of contestation (Somerville et al, 2009). Somerville explains the final element, when she says that for Australian researchers working in the field of Place Studies, it is necessary to recognise that place, as active in our knowledge-making is influenced by the perceptions of Australian Indigenous peoples (2009).

Thus while my research at first took me overseas in a search for roots and the routes my forebears took, all roads lead back to Australia and my desire to find belonging in this country but which I recognise occurs within a site of contestation as was my belonging in South Africa, in fact as it was when we contemplated emigrating to Canada or the USA. As a new inter-disciplinary formation, place studies examines the relationships between cultures and environments, in which “place functions as a bridge between the local and the global” (Somerville et al 2009:6). Thus “specific local places offer a material and metaphysical in-between space for the intersection of multiple and contested stories” in what is described as the “contact zone” (2009:9).

Human geographer, Tim Cresswell (2004) defines place as not only a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world but also concerned with attachments and connections between people and place, meaning and experience. He adds a word of caution: what is to be avoided is to use place in order to exclude, such as occurs in xenophobia, racism and bigotry that arise out of fear when our place is perceived as under threat (2004). What I am asserting in this research is that the need to belong is fundamental and without a feeling of belongingness as a consequence of displacement can be both a personal feeling but can also arise as a consequence of the politics of belonging and the narrative of citizenship that is constantly under review and redefined in the mainstream of a society.

The preconceived notion of unoccupied space awaiting colonisation (what was labelled as *terra nullius*) was the case for the colonial settling that occurred in Australia. The label that is assigned to a constructed identity of Australianness or what is perceived to be un-Australian continues to be under scrutiny as situations and events present themselves.

In South Africa, the colonial guard changed in 1948 with the advent of the National party in government saw the whites only as South African while the blacks were allocated independent tribal

homelands outside the borders. By this definition, for those whites who emigrated, their return to the new South Africa is to a redefined space of emptiness. I take Casey's meaning when he speaks of our fear of the void to be a personal feeling "a sense of unbearable emptiness" as he explains it (1993: x). Yet place separation ensues, not only when we are literally without a home as one would presume but includes feeling out of place even when at home (Casey, 1993). Casey compares this anxiety to the separation anxiety that we experienced as children "all of which involve aspects of place" (1983 x).

Casey argues in *The Fate of Place* (1997) that place is in fact constitutive of our very being – even fear of an unknown place is unsettling desolate or uncanny – the prospect of no-place is felt to be intolerable. In fact for the Navajo people in the United States, their enforced relocation they believed "was to take away life itself" (Casey, 1993:35). They believed that illness "proceeds from a distorted relationship with the land"; taking without reciprocation; and not "being part of the earth place" disrupts a sacred balance (1993:35). To re-find place, Casey advised that "we may need to return, if not in actual fact then in memory or imagination, to the very earliest places we have known" (Casey, 1993: x). Casey highlights what are common concerns about globalisation: the fear of sameness of place on a global scale, he says, it is not just a matter of nostalgia "we pay a heavy price for capitalizing on our basic animal mobility... the price is loss of places that can serve as lasting scenes of experiences and reflection and memory" (1993:xiii). We have an active desire for the particularity of place – for what is truly 'local' or 'regional', and Casey puts forward his case for place when he says that "place brings with it the very elements sheared off in the planiformity of site: identity, character, nuance, history" (1997:xiii). It is these elements that I am seeking in landscape/place in my research.

As a means to focus on place, Thomas Brockelman (2003) argues that Casey is attempting to resist, the abstract character of modern life. In discussing the two seminal works by Casey (1993; 1997), Brockelman proposes that Casey has attempted under the banner of *topos* to battle against the levelling and universalising tendencies of modern life where we have given up place in preference to space and time as infinite and exchangeable loci. Casey is accused of preferring the concrete and particular to the abstract and general, which Brockelman defines as the Newtonian universe (Brockelman, 2003).

Like Somerville and Casey, Malpas' (1999) argues for a multifaceted approach to place. In his description of the structure of place he includes the natural landscape, the weather and its manifestations as well as the human activities that take place with the resources available in a particular location. It is a complex relationship, with our sense of who we are and identity "essentially place-bound" he asserts (1999: 177). Malpas tied in the vulnerability of the environment with the sense of alienation that is a condition of modernity. He notes that "in as much as our lives would themselves seem to be inseparably and intricately bound to the places and spaces in which we find ourselves, so the fragility of those places is indicative of a corresponding fragility in our own lives and identities" (1999:190). Vulnerability was the transitional space-in between that nature-writer Barry Lopez (1997) recognised as

necessary to transform space to place. The key, he said, is to become vulnerable to a place: by opening oneself up, one can build intimacy (and by extension he said, so can one's reader). Out of such intimacy "will come a sense of belonging, a sense of not being isolated in the universe" (Lopez, 1997, unpaginated). Lopez spoke of three qualities important to intimate connections to place: intimate attention which I interpret as an attentive close awareness, a storied relationship to place rather than a solely sensory awareness, and finally, living in ethical unity with a place (1997). This notion of vulnerability and how it can work to cultivate openness to place provides a crucial framework to my own research into place.

Cresswell (2004) has sought to distinguish between place and landscape when in most definitions of landscapes, it is the construction of an outside view in an aesthetic distancing that seeks to give order to place and thus possess it. In contrast we get inside places, in a more embodied and entangled relationship between person and place. Cresswell (2004) utilises Raymond Williams' character, Matthew Price in *Border Country* (1960) to help to define the difference. During an absence from his village Matthew Price forgot his 'place', his friends and his work, and in memory he could only recall 'landscape', as a visitor would. I would argue that this is an essentialist viewpoint that restricts our ability to relate to and belong to many places, and does not include the place-stories that we can hold in our imagination about many places recalled through what I have called a landscape imprint. Landscape imprints continue to influence one's identifying with a place and therefore one's sense of identity. Our ability to relate to places at a distance for example as significant unspoilt landscapes maintains an environmental awareness and desire to protect wilderness areas from human habitation and exploitation and does not require that one lives and works there. Cresswell, however, does help in distinguishing between landscape as "that which can be seen" – and "the way it is seen" – what I have described as: framing (2004:11). In the next section, the former is discussed under the heading of: The Concept of Landscape, what we see and what we take away with us in memory (perhaps as a lasting imprint), and the latter explains how we use landscape to our own ends which I have discussed under the heading of: Framing Landscape.

## The concept of landscape: what we see

Although geographers may have been engaged in a battle to maintain the meaning of what were arguably purely geographical terms such as mapping or landscape, geographer Stephen Daniels (1993) counsels against attempts to define landscape or to resolve its contradictions, stating that it is preferable to accept what he called its duplicity. The work of Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove "advanced an influential definition of landscape as *a way of seeing* and representing the world" namely in Western visual traditions and landscape painting that played an ideological function to reflect and reproduce the values and norms of socio-economic elites (Gregory et al, 2011: unpaginated). In Daniels' view "the

irreducibly visual aspect of landscape was a source of deep distrust" (2013:59) when distance was seen to be that of objective knowledge and visual authority and control. In their more recent essay, Daniels and Cosgrove (2013) discuss the dialectic of word and image, spectacle and text, and landscape metaphors in reshaping cultural geography, when meanings are created depending on our view of reality and they argue that "landscape is the discursive terrain across which the struggle between the different often hostile, codes of meaning construction has been engaged" (2013:59). For geographers and others, Gillian Rose states that it was a masculinist gaze: that of patriarchy and disembodied engagement (1993). It is necessary, therefore to look further into the concept of landscape and its origins in both the English language and investigate one's own prior understanding of the concept of landscape and 'what we see'.

There appears to be some agreement that 'landscape' is derived from the old Germanic word 'lantscaf', thence in modern German to 'lanschaft' and finally to the Dutch 'landschap' from which 'landscape' has emerged in English (Daniels, 1993). Simon Schama (1995) suggests that originally the term landscape had military connotations: defining a unit or jurisdiction of land utilised in planning campaigns during wars. In addition, he voices the common understanding of landscape as an artistic practice firstly of Dutch artists but more importantly it also described their engineering and manipulation of the land for human purposes (Schama, 1995). The geographic location of The Netherlands and landscape art is of particular interest, considering that my research identifies this country in my research, as both a heritage site and the place where some of my family now reside. I had not realised that there are many rivers that converge on The Netherlands from the rest of Europe prior to entering the sea, and when much of the land lies below sea-level, it is prone to flooding and inundation in fact from the sea and the overflow of rivers. The solution was to build dykes, construct windmills to pump water out of flooded land and reclaim it; rivers were straightened to form canals with overflow areas designated as polders including blocking the sea to form a lake with the damming of the Zuider Zee. The Dutch derivation of landscape then, could propose its usage in language that points to an extreme form of human intervention that potentially carries a narrow stance in controlling the discourse.

In the view of Kenneth Olwig (1996), the question of the various meanings which landscape has acquired from the Middle Ages until present times, besides arousing etymological curiosity, also reflects the history of conflicts between local and centralized power in emerging European nation-states as well as changing approaches to landscape within geography and within the arts. It is an example of what Olwig calls the dynamic construal of meaning, wherein various strings are attached to form a concept used in language. In a more recent essay Olwig (2012) includes the role of literature in the representation of landscape which I have focussed on as well in my research. It is often that our impressions of landscape/places are derived from fictional books such as Charles Dickens' images of London in the 1800s, usually missing from more formal historical documents and records. I wished to gain an impression of the landscape as my forebears saw it in places such as The Netherlands and read a fictional

story translated from Dutch, entitled *The Garden where the Brass band Played* (Verstdijk, 1965) and in South Africa, amongst many others I read *The Story of an African Farm* (Schreiner, [1883] 1979) for the same reason.

British anthropologist, Tim Ingold (2011a) reveals another interpretation of the word landscape – that of *land shaper* from the Old English. Medieval shapers, he says, were farmers, who hacked into the land criss-crossing with a plough to wrest a living like the weaving of cloth. For Casey (1993) it is simpler – what lies "beyond the house and neighbourhood lies the landscape" but not what we tend to think of as natural (wilderness) but can also indicate a cityscape; importantly it relates to what he calls a "felt difference unrecuperable by the usual designators of place" (1993:24). It is this drawing of boundaries though that contrasts with the approaches of Christopher Tilley. Tilley (1994) distinguishes between the concept of place which privileges difference and singularity and landscape which he argues is a more holistic notion that encompasses rather than excludes. Tilley asserts that "Landscapes are ... 'quasi-artefacts' existing *between* 'nature' and 'culture'" [his emphasis] (2006:36). For cultural geographer, Nicholas Entrikin landscape is something more than place because of its incorporation of the natural (2011). He argues that the concept of landscape has offered geographers the hope of a seamless connective tissue between culture and nature offering opportunities for renewal (especially for communities). In our culture, as he says nature operates as "a trope for location that directs attention to what precedes, comprehends and supports humanly constructed and controlled places" (2011:37-39).

## Framing Landscape: the way we see

Schama's (1995) argument is that landscapes are culture before they are nature. One could argue therefore that we frame or see landscape in the manner in which we wish to see it. For example, nature defined as wilderness is culturally constructed or framed it could be argued to serve the ends of environmentalists or in the case of logging companies, a forested area is framed as an available resource for economic purposes. Schama (1995) points out the projection of culture on to landscape is a controversial one, not for those working in human geography but in environmental ecology, the desire is for the land to be viewed prior to human intervention. Ecologists have "lamented the annexation of nature by culture" and the Arcadian idyll projected by artists disguises the ecological consequences of 'manscape' rather than the aesthetic landscape (Schama 1995:12). Landscapes are, he says, constructs of the imagination projected onto wood, water and rock as myth and our shaping perception/vision is what establishes itself in an actual place that makes the metaphor more real than its referent and becomes part of the scenery (Schama, 1995). Perhaps a good example of this phenomenon, I would think is the fictional story of the strange, unsolved mystery of a group of young women who disappeared during a school picnic at Hanging Rock, in Victoria, told in a book entitled *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Lindsay, 1975) and then in a movie (Weir, 1967). Many visitors to what is simply a geographical land feature have

remarked on feeling an eerie atmosphere that reflects the imaginative plot of the story rather than actual events.

Landscape focussed on an historical, political as well as an aesthetic that was projected by the gazing eye embodying and concealing forms of power, which according to Malpas (2011) was money and class (Mitchell, 1994; Barrell, 1980). Wesley Kort (2011) refers to landscape as 'comprehensive space' where the social and personal spaces are bracketed – and symbolically blocked from our vision – an imaginary reinforced by the literary and graphic from writers and artists who paint only those features that are considered aesthetic and leave out what is not, such as the visitors centre or toilet block perhaps. He believes that landscape can be used as a framing device "encompassing, inclusive spatial horizons" and "a spiritual resonance that confirms and challenges the way in which we are in the world" that lies beyond science (Kort, 2011:41). Cosgrove (1984) argues that landscape reveals the purposes and ends that have directed human energy and in this sense it is a social product and the consequence of a collective human transformation of nature. The idea of landscape as wilderness prior to human intervention is a recent idea.

Landscape as 'framing device' ought not to lead to an unfettered interpretative approach that transcends existing history and culture and John Bradley (2011) argues that landscape in Australia is not just an imagined place but needs to be seen as 'country' in the Aboriginal sense. Bradley recognises that the term landscape is an attempt to articulate human interaction with the environment cutting across intellectual and academic boundaries but is a conceptual tool in many disciplines. It is important at this juncture, he believes, to clarify its use when describing land that is not one's own (2011). Bradley notes that "a discussion of landscape/country belongs firmly within a dialogue about self and necessary emotional needs, attachments, and subjectivities" (2011:46) and he gives the example of the Yanyuwa people and their ontological and epistemological construct of home. In his view Casey (1993; 1997) offers the better alternative of 'place' (habitus) as the western gaze of 'landscape' can is seen to separate nature from culture with place relating to the way people perceive their worlds and themselves. Casey said that "The cultural dimension of place – along with affiliated historical, social and political aspects and avatars –adds something quite new… the felt density of a particular place…lasting…which relates to time" (Casey, 1993:33). In this framework landscape is not static says Bradley (2011) which also addresses the need to acknowledge people's changing interactions with place in order to investigate changes in the construction of place, self and identity. It is the framing of landscape to our own ends, as the point of stability and continuity, in creating a sense of self and identity by layering new stories and meanings in place that is the concern of my research, but whether this can be achieved without further colonial imposition is open to question. In Somerville's use of landscape, it encompasses the environment or locality and takes in both natural and person-made structures, as she says, it also serves as a holding place for words that we may not have available as a direct translation from an Indigenous word such

'wallum' meaning the coastal heathlands and all of the ecosystem that that encompasses (2004). Thus when she speaks of a "colonial landscape" it explains a way of looking: the manner in which the country is viewed as a new arrival and its adaptation to practices such as farming and mining (2004:5).

Theodore Schatzki reminds us that landscapes are not just present entities, but also existed in the past as historical entities and objects of memory (2011). He identifies two forms of memory: one form is when the present takes over the past memory, and the second form is when the past persists in the present either unchanged or as descendants of past forms. Both forms of memory, he suggests, contribute to the identities of people participating in and tied to memories of past landscapes and the rules that govern behaviour such as in rituals and ceremonies. Landscape is the teleological filling out towards the future of human activity (Schatzki, 2011).

Social ecologists Martin Mulligan and Stuart Hill (2001), point to painters who "contributed to our sense of perceiving ourselves as being separate from the 'landscape' being viewed" (2001:5). In his book *The Dark side of Landscape Painting*, John Barrell (1980) points to what he considered was the further exploitation of poverty-stricken workers depicted in pastoral landscape art as somehow arresting and picturesque rather than confronting the reality of their harsh lives. It is of concern too in South Africa, where colourful paintings of squatter camps are on sale for tourists to take back home and hang on the wall although the people earning a living from the paintings may themselves be residents of the very places they are painting rather than voyeurs profiting from the despair of the other. In Stephen Muecke's (2005) definition of landscape, it is the view of the voyeur: the picture already framed in the mind's-eye. In fact Muecke views landscape as 'othering': "Landscape, writing and travel are interrelated in the following ways" he says, "there is no landscape without a sense of otherness; landscape has to be seen or experienced in the way a tourist would" (2005:149).

In discussing the life of English poet John Clare, Barrell (1972) points out that the death of Clare was attributed to the loss of his childhood places as a result of enclosure. The landscape was changed from a circular one of the village centre surrounded by common land to linear parliamentary enclosure that resulted in a linear form of thinking but this change "could not be imprinted in the consciousness of the villagers" he says (1972:106). In Barrell's view the enclosures were also a way of making the landscape less hostile and analogous to the procedures of artists and painters as they attempted to enclose and civilize in landscape painting (1972). Matthew Johnson (2007) aligns the enclosure and partitioning of common land that occurred in the twelfth Century in England to the separation of personhood from place that eventuated in Cartesian thinking. Both Cartesian thought and linear thinking are attributions that indicate that our interventions in landscape may have resulted in changes to our very thought processes. Isis Brook (2011) charts the shift from the picturesque view of nature to contemporary environmental philosophy and reveals there was a time previously when mountains and dark forests were considered to be frightful wastelands best ignored and hidden from view or used as

evidence of the biblical Fall or Flood; the idea of a God who conjured up these abominations in response to human sin.

The greatest threat to nature as Kort (2011) points out was in the post-Darwinian period. Darwin illustrated an evolutionary explanation of the natural world, and ties to the divinity inherent in places were lost with nothing to raise nature above the political and economic interests of acquisition and exploitation and the resulting human subjugation (Kort, 2011). He asserts that it was also through Romantic poetry and art that the demise of natural space as the locus of human place-relations could be traced, when it was interpreted through what he calls 'the cultural priest': the poet or artist who interpreted the landscape in a manner that linked landscape art and poetry with nationalism, such as Van Ruisdael who exemplified what it was to be Dutch in his landscapes and Constable's art signified the English (Kort, 2011). Kim Torney reminds us that the landscape in Australia was painted by early English painters as though it was an English gentleman's country-place and with the European names given to "geographic features declared ownership of the land" (2005:32). Carter (1987) has expressed similar views. My sense of fabricating relates to the process involved in building a relationship with the landscape and for migrants it can mean fabricating an identity and a place to live in a new country but it can have negative consequences as Carter pointed out, when explorers to Australia, such as Mitchell, by naming and mapping the spaces invented a country for settlers to live in (1987). Tim Bonyhady analysed the early Australian landscape paintings, 1801-1890, as what he called images in opposition (1985). Lately however he has challenged the viewpoint that early artists in Australia in fact despised the environment and felt no emotional ties to the land (2001). In *Words for Country*, Bonyhady (with Tom Griffiths) investigated the stories and phrases that have helped in defining the landscape and how Australia was perceived going forward (Bonyhady and Griffiths, 2001). Deborah Bird Rose claims that the "images of Australian Aborigines have had a peculiar hold over the European imagination... harnessed to the purposes of others ... selectively appropriated as emblems of national identity" (2000:25). During the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, it was my sense too, that images of Australian Aborigines were utilised to portray a national identity, and an exotic landscape/place for the consumption of an overseas audience suggesting that an Aboriginal culture dominates in the mainstream of society and identity.

The question is whether social justice and a sense of belonging is achievable for post-colonials when the preference in Australia is to elide the past history of colonialism and words such as invasion, genocide and exploitation are omitted from the official record. These words do not fit within the perception of what it is be an 'Australian' – and claims of egalitarianism, fair-go and equality. In South Africa a new generation of young people have had little experience of the racism or memory of the system of Apartheid and accept their freedom as a given much like young women tend to renounce feminism in the belief that inequality and discrimination has not been their experience nor fits their world view as it was for their mothers. As for ecological justice, what hope is there of breaking the

impasse on products such as coal or belief in progress as the panacea to feed the poor, as expressed by the old school as well as the viewpoint of the present government in 2014 (Q&A, ABC TV, 16/6/2014). In this context Deborah Bird Rose says that "social justice includes ecological justice; it is not to be achieved through denying the past, but rather through acknowledging and understanding it" (2000:234).

The issue to confront is voiced by Mulligan and Hill, who ask the question "How can we come to terms with the terrible things done in the name of settlement and nation building in ways that enable us to deepen our relationships with one another and with the land?" (2001:1). Perhaps it is the reason why for settler Australians, says Griffiths (1996) the search for historical identity, for roots rather than just an anchorage, leads overseas and requires a genealogy that he says transcends place. Their 'roots' – such a powerful metaphor of the land, were perversely to be found in another distant land, Griffiths says (1996).

It is not only Australian settlers who are searching for their identity, however there has been a growth in the interest in family genealogy, genealogical tourism and travel to heritage sites by many from post-colonial nations essentially. It is seen to be a search for belonging and historical identity that goes beyond an assigned nationality in an attempt to reconnect the present to an imagined past.

## Travel, Heritage and Family Genealogical Practices

Rafal Prinke claims that in searching for an authentic self identity, simultaneously our identity is combined with places we visit "penetrating to the truth about oneself by visiting places associated with one's ancestors" (2010:18). Prinke (2010) argues that genealogical travel gives us a practical way to explore those feelings and move toward a deeper understanding of our identities but also of others as greater tolerance of difference. The rise in popularity of genealogical tourism corresponds to the diaspora of races, cultures and ethnicities in countries such as the U.S. and a longing for an authentic connection to one's roots he believes (Prinke 2010). In this framework genealogical travel can be understood as more like a pilgrimage, but unlike pilgrims people go to places that hold a more individualised, symbolic meaning Prinke ascribes the turning point away from commercialised ritual and pseudo attractions to the hippie movement (or counter-culture social movement of the late 1960s) that was against "hypocrisy and artificiality" and "fossilised social and economic structures" when young people began to travel the globe looking for spiritual experiences and their own identity (2010:16).

As an academic, Anna Haebich (2005) reflects on her personal journey back to the birthplace of her mother's family in Germany. The journeys that people take back to ancestral homeland are in imagined, virtual and real place and time with the drive to return commonplace, in her discussion of the niche now described as genealogical tourism or homeland tourism. Her endeavours were similar to others who she says are yearning for 'home' in a world of transience and 'non-places and the desire to experience an emotional, personal and even spiritual contact with the past which was my intention as well in going overseas. Some went to more obvious memorialisation sites Haebich found such as

museums as well as searching archives for genealogical and historical facts (Haebich, 2005). She was surprised by the total lack of interest in her quest/story and on the part of the residents of the places she visited and heard similar stories from others on similar journeys. Strangely it was in attending a Lutheran church service in Amsterdam that she felt a sense of home that linked back to her early years of in Australia.

According to Carla Santos and Grace Yan (2010), genealogical tourism is one of the fastest growing markets in vacation travel because it represents a conscious shift away from relaxation and into the realm of personal enrichment and fulfilment. The increase in popularity of genealogical tourism, they deduce reflects contemporary tourists' preference for authentic, lived experiences over 'the bubble-like' world where mediated, inauthentic experiences have become such an ingrained part of everyday life. Hence genealogical tourism is believed to provide an irreplaceable dimension of material reality that is missing from our postmodern society (Santos, 2010). They (2010) assert that this type of tourism is a reflexive response "assisting in reaffirming both a generational sense of the self and a self recognition that one has one's own perspective on the world" and provides a way as of experiencing something eternal and authentic that transcends the present (2010, unpaginated online). They also claim that genealogical tourist practices create a critical space to imagine and feel life as a continuum (Santos and Yan, 2010).

Catherine Nash (2003) in deconstructing the explosion of interest in family genealogy says that while it seems obvious as to why settler people would embark on this course it can have racist, politically conservative and culturally defensive overtones. She recognises that "it reflects nostalgia for an imagined time when place, identity, culture and ancestry coincided" but the concern is that people are simply consumers of "products of transnational flows of images, information and people, in the past and in the present" as she says (2003:179-180). She indicates the fabrication involved in tracing the dynamics of identity and belonging that involves considering different spatial imaginations of culture and location: its task is the process of re-imagining kinship and constructing of relationships between commodities and between consumers and brands (2003). Nash specifically looks at the Americans who are keen to be Irish no matter the mixed heritage they may uncover (2003). I had a similar response picking and choosing the bits of heritage that fitted in with how I wished to perceive myself and be viewed by others. The selectivity made possible by contemporary genealogical practices needs to be accompanied by a corresponding sense of responsibility. The concern for example might be that in identifying with another nation and culture that belonging and identity is diluted back in the home country such as to Australia and should there be some conflict or war, loyalties and citizenship responsibilities to a home country are challenged.

Travel, however, has been characterised as a search for self apart from genealogical tourism. Inger Birkeland (2005) interviewed a number of people who were travelling in an attempt to find answers to questions of their identity. In speaking of Sofia (who walked to the North Cape of Norway from Spain)

she says that her story shows that human beings should make their own maps and create their own cardinal points particularly for women, who have had to use man-made maps of the world and of the self. The north Birkeland says is not a sight but a site from which to view something ... "it is to arrive at a place in one's internal world where one's experiences of place and self are fundamentally transformed because they converge and unite" (2005). Birkeland describes her experience of travelling to find place "As a travelling fieldworker, I became a wanderer, a pathfinder, an explorer of traces and tracks made by human beings, others as well as myself, in own and other places, both here and there, known and unknown" (Birkeland, 2005:26). Birkeland was an important influence in terms of my enunciating travel as a method. Birkeland however argues "for the necessity to theorize place in terms of sexual difference, that place is grounded in sexual difference" (2005:4). As a female geographer, Birkeland encounters life and place and their transformations through travel where history and geography have become "place less" and she evokes her travels as a study of the relationship between human beings and nature, land climate vegetation, water and mountains. Birkeland (2005) sees the tourist gaze as masculine, as an abstract visual logic and a masculine rationality that abandoned the body and instead found a resting place in pure, abstract thought that privileges distance rather than relatedness. When she describes the travelling women whom she met and interviewed for her research, Birkeland (2005) also brought awareness to my perceptions of travel: the realisation that it was far more unusual and difficult for woman to travel alone in previous eras although some did of course and my undertaking was therefore also my taking what may have been denied me in the past as a woman. As she says "Several centuries ago, a wandering woman would have been exposed to the life-threatening dangers, from the human and non-human world" (2005:5). A lone woman would also have been a threat to the dominant culture; for a woman to make such a journey, a woman alone, exposed to nature, would have represented wildness or chaos, and would be a threat to culture but we cannot say that the situation has changed throughout the world for women (Birkeland, 2005). It may be safer and more acceptable now for women in Western democracies to travel alone but Birkeland makes the case that "women and the feminine still represent a threat to western culture, in the sense that women and the 'feminine' is the other for a symbolic order constituted by a male, disembodied self" (2005:5). Berger speaks of the "woman who is born to an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men" thus to venture from this space is threatening (1985:46).

Tim Ingold (2011) has researched movement especially walking for an ongoing reciprocal engagement and involvement with landscape/place as a narrative, rather than a separation of the disembodied perceiver from their world which he argues is perpetuated when the duality of culture and nature are defined as a way of seeing. Cresswell (2006) points out, that there is a shift towards normalising mobility as central to the human condition. An aspect of mobility is an inner psychological movement towards a new place and away from the old, and place plays an active role in the constitution of culture and society but while early work focused on being in place, logically, as he points out, other

people, things and actions can be labelled as: out of place and perceived of as a transgression of normality and a possible threat (2006). Backhaus and Murungi (2004) spoke of travel as the movement away from what is familiar, into the strange and exotic, making the traveller the stranger in places that are familiar to those who live there, that can yield knowledge when the stranger as "other" has the privilege of thinking "about", rather than from "within". It was the position that I adopted when I travelled overseas to find my roots in this research.

## Theorising Embodied Landscape Practice

A Place Studies approach to landscape implies that the embodied sensations, emotions and sentiments that arise by being in a place, exposes the possible source of self and an inherited identity in the character and history of places. In acknowledging and retrieving aspects of an inscribed body, in faint traces and memories, they can be incorporated into the practice of imprinting new landscapes and learning. Landscape imprint is recorded in memory, but it is not stored as a static framed image as I at first thought, rather our remembered impressions also capture the peripheral vision of an image, and includes a memory of the experience. Where I have used imprint in this regard, Norma Tilden (2002) prefers the terms 'inscription'. In her analogy she describes the layered inscribed terrain of landscape and the inscriptions of writing on a page that only pretends to be blank given that beneath its surface is all the writing of others written through time. Bronwyn Davies wrote that "the concept of (in)scription is developed as text written on the deep/surfaces of the body/landscape, not in the sense of scarifying but in the sense of bringing the subjectivities into being" (2000:11). She uses the term landscape she says "to signal readings of the relationships with the physical environments in which we come to exist as embodied beings" (2000:23). bel hooks (2009) also refers to 'imprints' in her discussion of how the ways of belonging were taught to her in her early childhood, although these imprints were covered over by the received biased knowledge of dominator culture. Yet she realises that "healing could come from understanding the past and connecting it to the present" (2009:17) as is my endeavour. Frigga Haug et al (1983) observes that we interpret our past according to our present view of ourselves, the model of interpretation that we carry around in our head. In fact the layers or sediment she identifies in the landscape are all of our preconceived ideas. It is in this sense that Place Studies seeks to define our relationship with landscape and the imposition of story on place. Drawing on these frameworks, what I saw as 'landscape imprints' have also been described variously as mind-maps or mind-images that support a memory. It refers to the manner in which place-images are recalled involuntarily often without cue or apparent stimulus. They are lasting impressions that do not necessarily relate to full-blown stories or autobiographical accounts of events that had taken place somewhere; they may not involve drama or trauma, but are rather benign in fact, like a photographic record that is retained.

Perhaps what is counter-intuitive is the sense of finding one's place by moving away from and then back towards place, but the implication is that we find out where we are by moving away from that initial spot on which we stand in order to take a broader view. Migration positions one as 'out of place'. In speaking of landscape and the place of Africa, Jeremy Foster (2008) argues for "the importance of direct, lived experience of the sub continent's landscapes" in forming identity, shaping and instilling a sense of who we believe ourselves to be and laying down the framework for how we perceive subsequent landscapes when we are 'out of place' (2008:4). Place-based identification arises within and creates a horizon of experience that itself is conditioned by topographical practices and determines the world that is perceptually accessible to us as Norberg-Schultz describes it "a lived, tactile, kinaesthetic bodily experience" (Foster, 2008:83). Foster agrees with Norberg-Schultz who sees place-identification as forming early on where we are born, grow up and are immersed in a particular landscape's sensory, spatial, and material qualities that he believed established a perceptual schema that determines future experiences and reactions (Foster, 2005). Other theorists have also spoken of a schema or template. For example in re-creating home, Bachelard said that "over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us... we do not forget, an unforgettable house" (1994:15). Tarq Mahood (2005) notes that we respond viscerally to a childhood template no matter how long we spend away from it; Bronwyn Davis, in writing of her childhood, suggests that "the landscapes we lived with/in (and our reading of them) shaped our bodies, our mode of walking and running and jumping, breathing and talking ... they scribed us ... they (in)scribed us, as much in our imagining of possibilities..." (2000:22). These insights acknowledge the necessity to recognise the embodied, imprinted nature of our relationship to landscapes and the transition necessary when as a migrant arriving in new landscapes the template no longer fits. I have argued that what is required is for one to learn what I have called land-culture and imprint new landscape images to connect and have a sense of belonging and wellbeing in new landscape/places.

## Migration: Place, Belongingness and the Politics of Belonging

Place connection is often not recognised as at the core of social and emotional wellbeing as it is for indigenous people, such as in Australia. Garvey (2007) speaks of familiar topography that for Aboriginal people includes family and culture as well as geography and it is recognised that ill-health can result from the loss of these connections. While it may be recognised that belonging is a basic human need in fields such as sociology and psychology, the connection and feeling of belongingness to place for those living in the diaspora is sometimes neglected in discussions relating to mental and physical health. Some argue as well that such connections are somehow no longer relevant in a post-modern world of cyber space, mobility and transience. Moreton-Robinson (2003) believes that Australian indigenous peoples' relationship to home provides an insight that is important when it broadens the study of belonging and the concept of home to mean the land as well: "the indivisible relation between the

collective body and the land" (2003:11). In rethinking questions of identity and belonging what is more controversial is Homi Bhabha's viewpoint concerning "the ever expanding boundaries and territories of the global world", and our failure to see how intimate, indigenous landscapes are remapped and thus "annihilated or marginalised" to include those who are its new citizens whose financial and cultural impact upon their 'home' communities and societies, "should not be neglected in favour of a celebration of diasporic communities" (1994: xxii). Bhabha's opinion also could be seen to express the conflicts taking place in the 'contact zone' and what is at stake for indigenous populations in the heralding of multi-culturalism. It is also my concern as a long-term settler in either Australia or South Africa, the entitlement/right to belong to a post-colonial space and the politics of belonging.

Belonging is sometimes regarded as one of "the softer social science concepts" but Zlatko Skrbiš, et al (2007) state that it is central to the issues facing human societies today, namely: immigrant integration and cultural diversity. In addition, the threat to the stability of resident populations is evident throughout the world as people move to escape wars, famine and to find better lives. Anastasia Christou (2011) in examining the mediated representational practice of what she calls 'the diasporic condition', points to the gendered aspects of identifications that need to be included in such narratives as well. Gender, like identity, is performatively produced and is linked to belonging and bodily practices – it is through embodied movements that migrants both recall and reconnect with places that through their movements are remembered (Christou, 2011). It is in these kinds of spatial discourses of belonging that we trace the relationship between places, identities and bodies. Identities continue to be produced, embodied and performed and the disconnection to people and places that are correlated with ancestral roots and family histories and the search for ontological meaning and emotional stability as a consequence (Christou, 2011). It is the emphasis on a gendered, embodied performativity and how women make place that arises as a key theme in my research.

In an attempt to classify the various factors that scholars have identified, to construct an analytical framework of place-belongingness, Marco Antonsich (2010) scanned the literature and found five such factors: auto-biographical, relational, cultural, economic, and legal but recognised that 'place' is missing from the mix. As he says, belonging does not take place in a geographical vacuum and nor is it an isolated and individual affair. Drawing on the work of Elspeth Probyn (1996), Antonsich (2010) realises that the longing to belong that she speaks of, is not only associated with migration and displacement but is the core dimension of belonging in general. What is also significant for my research is that moving from one post-colonial nation state to another creates further complexity around what it means to belong in fact Probyn (1996) cautions that in a postcolonial world it is impossible to ever really and truly belong. She posits identity as process, rather than as a stable state and the longing to belong she says is a "defining feature of our postmodern, postcolonial times" (1996:19). Her insight recognises that belonging is never finite or fully achieved especially for those living in postcolonial countries.

Nira Yuval-Davis (2006) in her article "Belonging and the politics of belonging" points out that belonging has been the concern of both classical psychology and sociology over time. She outlines an analytical framework for the study of belonging that she has divided into three interconnected parts. The first is the notion of belonging and is constituted through social locations, identifications and emotional attachments as well as ethical and political values. The second part focuses on the politics of belonging and how it relates to the participatory politics of citizenship, entitlement and status. Finally she illustrates the ways particular political projects of belonging are constructed in the UK (2006). Social locations in her analysis, refers to belonging to multiple axes of difference including gender, race, class or nation as well as the stage in the life-cycle, with implications at different historical moments, as to the power relations at play in any given society (Yuval-Davis 2006). Identifications and emotional attachments are generated through the narrative stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are/or are not. They are both individual and collective narratives and can relate to the "myth of origin" or aim to explain the present as well as functioning as a future projection (Yuval-Davis 2006:202). But these identifications are not just cognitive, they reflect emotional investments and the desire for attachment, and she also cites Probyn (1996) and Fortier (2000) who speak of the combined processes of being and becoming, a duality often reflected in narratives of identity (Yuval-Davis,2006). Importantly Yuval-Davis (2006) points out that the less secure people feel the more their emotional investment in belonging is central – to the extent of even laying down their lives for a cause (she is especially reflecting on the 9/11 in US and 7/7 in UK and the suspicion afforded to strangers especially young men who were subsequently treated as a threat to cohesion and as potential terrorists, that has multiplied since both those events (2006). Yuval-Davis also highlights the ethical and political values that reflect the ways belongings are valued and judged and the contestations around ethical and ideological issues (2006). This is especially a relevant avenue of debate given the situation in the Middle East and the young people who are currently going to countries such as Syria and Iraq to join in the conflicts.

### Home-making and Belongingness

Many migratory studies look to home as the expression of identity and the notion of belonging. Marco Antonsich (2010) has concerns with the emphasis on the politics of belonging in much of the discussion he analysed while paying little regard to the feelings i.e. emotional belonging and feeling both at home and safe. Place is felt as 'home' and, accordingly, to belong means to find a place where an individual can feel 'at home' says Antonsich (2010). But he also has concerns that 'home' should not stand for the domestic(ated) material space, which feminist authors have criticized for reproducing gendered and patriarchal relations of oppression, violence, and fear (citing Blunt and Dowling 2006 ; Varley 2008). On the contrary, echoing the phenomenological approach in humanistic geography (citing Buttimer and Seamon, 1980; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974) 'home' Antonsich says, stands for a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment (he cites hooks, 2009). David Ralph and Lyn A. Staeheli proposed that "the migrant serves as a figure through which we can understand home, its

definition, meanings and its implications for the ways we live our lives" (2011:518). Home, however is a complex and slippery concept as they point out: both a location and a set of relationships that shape identities and feelings of belonging. The image of an accordion with the capacity to stretch is used to illustrate the attachment that may be felt to what is still considered to be 'a home' in a distant and remote place while being embedded in an immediate locale (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011). They attempt to unpack the tension between home as a stable fixed place and home as fitting a more contemporary viewpoint of mobility as discussed by Blunt and Dowling (2006), Urry (2000), Staeheli and Nagel (2006), Ahmed et al (2003). Others have stressed the materiality of home and the value of material objects especially from the perspective of migrants and trans-local relationships (Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Baldassar, 2008). Sallie Westwood and Annie Phizacklea assert that most migration studies focus on the "household as a central institution" with a passive gendered view of women, while an alternative view is neglected, that of the increased agency women often have on migrating: as decision-makers and forging a better life for themselves (2000:96).

Home, as Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling (2006) explain, is a complex and multi-layered geographical concept. It is "a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings and the relations between the two" (2006:2). These authors recognise that central to the concerns in migration is the notion of home and the disruption involved but they also recognise that "senses of belonging and identity move over space and are created in new places" (2006:2). Somerville relates the notion of 'home' as symbolic of the maternal: "Exploring interior space and home, the daily inhabiting of space, and the naming of maternal space in relation to the symbolic" (1999:180). Gaston Bachelard asserts that "the house is given meaning as mother, where the image of the house is seen through the image of mother" ... house is "human being's first world... before he is cast into the world" (1994:7). Bronwyn Davies ties in the mother as the first place (2000). But Somerville said of her work with landscape that her quest was, "searching for a home in the outside world" (1999:182).

A number of feminist theorists have looked to home, space and place as gendered. Birkeland suggests "an alternative notion (*chora*) on the grounds that it is necessary to develop sustainable human geographies that take their outset in the interdependency of life on earth, both human and non-human" (2005:11). Irigaray, she says "shows the way to work with female imagery in the making of place and self in the feminine" and writing place from a woman-centred point of view can be termed *choragraphy*: the creation and recreation of essentially different places and selves – where place is not a destination but a path that is "the continual becoming of self" (Birkeland, 2005: 16). What Birkeland calls a woman centred perspective is a greater sensitivity to the relationship between place, language and sexual difference (2005:27). My arts-practice is an attempt to work with female imagery and in the feminine by replicating the domestic crafts of women. Birkeland (2005) said of her own research practice, that she wanted to use place rather than time as the ordering principle as is usual in historical accounts and my story-telling has

a similar format. In her view the life of a human being is a place and the result of human existence which I take to mean that wherever we are present wherever we are situated in a place not in a history book or archive. It is for this reason that it is necessary to go to a place to recover the person if possible. Rose Braidotti (1994) (who is also listed more recently as an emotional geographies proponent: one of the organisers of the conference in Groningen in 2013 as discussed further on) criticized the gap between thinking and lived life in modern philosophy that is based on Cartesian division between body and mind, which is also the concern of those working in Place Studies. Braidotti (1994) thus illustrates the importance of the materiality in-between bodies and of places for embodied knowledge. It is in this in-between space where I wish to work in this research.

It is usually the work of women to make a home after migration, [although perhaps the work of men to build the structure or dwelling] and a number of researchers have asked questions about how home is re-enacted: Ahmed et al (2003) are concerned with "the ways different bodies and communities inhabit and move across familial, national and diasporic locations" in the "regroundings" of migration and home-making (2003:1). Gunew (2003) takes up the notion of nostalgia in relation to the past and a lived reality in the present with the idea of home not in stasis but in a continuous act of production and reproduction, a position also argued by Fortier and Gedalof in the same article (2003). Ahmed et al take as a model those feminist studies that have been "concerned with the intersectionality of race, class, gender and sexuality in the making and theorizing of transnational domains" and also want to challenge the notion of transnationalism, that is, the multi-local ties, so-called cosmopolitanism and mobility as somehow proposed to surpass the need for home-making (2003:3). Catherine Nash "asks us to think more about what home can mean by rethinking the 'familial'" ... in the transnational practices of doing family trees and genealogical tourism – and the hope of finding an undiscovered 'home' in places such as Ireland (2003:13). It was an aspect of my motivation in going to Ireland as a field trip during my research.

### Cultural Identity and Othering

Most social scientists, argues Loretta Baldassar (1999), conceptualise identity as a social construct subject to the continual interplay of history, culture and power recognising the dynamic changing nature of identity rather than as a static, inherited nationality, religion or even class. Seth Schwartz (2005) argues that personal identity represents goals, values and beliefs that immigrants are expected to have to anchor them in their transition into a new society. Schwartz looks to Erikson's 'Theory of Identity' (1980) that holds that it is identity that helps one to make sense of and find one's place in a world that is almost limitless with a vast set of possibilities (2005). While there is recognition that social identity refers to group identifications, both assigned and a chosen place in the social world, what is needed is a greater understanding of "the self that the individual presents to the outside world and the processes by which one presents this self to the world" he adds (Schwartz,2005: 295). Erikson,

says Schwartz, placed emphasis on the interaction between assigned identity elements – gender, ethnicity, nationality and the meanings that individuals give to those assigned identity elements (2005). One of the most important issues today in the view of Schwartz (2005) is the current rate of movement from developing, collectivist societies to developed, primarily individualistic societies and the 'culturalism' that is a necessary adaptive process. Some ideals, values and behaviours are embraced but what is carried over from a culture of origin can create stress/tension for both the individuals and the host society in general. Schwartz (2005) speaks of individuals with a strong sense of ethnic or national identity ingrained so deeply into their sense of self and their interactions with their social world, that it can be a major weakness in adapting to migration. He points out that there are several flaws with identity status and ethnic identity literature remaining separate. There is a blurring he perceives between individualism and collectivism: personal or social identity that may differ across ethnic, racial or national groups, and suffers from a lack of attention.

With migration, a different cultural construct of identity may be in evidence in the mainstream of the population, such as in moving from South Africa to Australia, assigned identity elements especially as regards gender and class were challenged when a far more progressive and equal society (for some) was in operation than in South Africa. As a migrant moving from another colonial setting, the cultural identity one carries with one can be unstable. Stuart Hall (2000) also recognised that identity is not fixed and unchanging, but is shaped by a number of presences built up over time and changes in personal history as it is for the mainstream of the population in most post-modern societies but the alternatives migrants confront on a daily basis: alterity and mimesis are more pronounced. By mimesis, migrants become poet-actors fashion(ing) an identity, as they 'make themselves up' (Carter, 2004; Eng & Davidson, 2008). These are the pantomimes migrants perform on a daily basis in imitation of the regular population, as they attempt to find their way in another country to fit in and not feel "unmasked as an imposter" when one's 'otherness' (alterity) is perceived: one must come to terms with "the superficiality of appearances and the solipsism of one's knowledge, the meaninglessness of words and things" which Carter refers to as "migrant poetics… the metaphorical leaps involved in living in a new country" (1992:4). In Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, he demonstrates how cultures come to be presented by processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are vicariously addressed to and through an 'Other'. Bhabha, who coined the term, cultural hybridity, used it to describe resistance to difference – a third space that enables he said other positions to emerge both inside and outside a culture (1994). He portrays the metaphorical forked path that the migrant walks in another's country that is also one's own, wherein the person divides, and in following the forked path encounters oneself in a double movement: once as stranger, and then as friend (1994). Ang (2009) suggests that her own migrant experience of hybridity cannot be dissociated from her personal history of migration, that it has also informed the trajectories of her thinking and research. For Ang the notion of hybridity captures the ambivalence of in-betweeness of the migrant's state of mind: in suspension. However in contrast to my argument for in this

thesis which is to find place and belonging where I live, Ang maintains that while not having a fixed address can be painful it is also liberating: infused in the suspension of the in-between, identity when captured by hybridity can lead to greater resilience. She identified a type of attachment that is not tied to any one place but to globality itself with a proposition which is somewhat counter-intuitive: people can feel close to those who are distant by identifying themselves as global citizens (2009). She also exposes a flaw in the studies of migration that has tended to homogenise and stereotype different waves of migration from the same country (2009).

As Julia Kristeva (1991) argues, it is the migrant who has to accept the stranger within – the person whose identity one no longer recognises who is attempting to change and fit in, with the onus always on the stranger to assimilate and keep alterity at bay – in fact it is the foreigner, she said who must move towards their own strangeness to the point of negating their own identity in order to become like 'the other'. It is, Kerry Mallan says, a psychological journey wherein there is a need to see oneself as 'other' and become other than what one once was and the familiar becomes strange (Mallan, 2004). Mallan quotes Edward Said who described it as a phenomenon of double consciousness: "the plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions both the new and the old environments are vivid, actually occurring contrapuntally'" (in Mallan, 2004: 13). Mallan said of migrants that they are caught in between "being there and here, between past and present, between cultural spaces" (2004:13). But there is a benefit to going away because she points out "I see who I have become in these visions of who I've been, moments that would have been obliterated if I had stayed, rubbed smooth or obscured by quotidian layers of encounter" (2004:95). Isobel Huggan (2003) said that as she goes back to the places where she lived in Canada, she keeps on bumping into herself perhaps as a small child running from a mob of children. Huggan's (2003) insight was that when she started out to write about going home, it was less about place than it was about memory and personal history. In thinking that it was the landscape that she wanted to see again, really she was looking for herself, and coming back, after a long absence, she saw things the way they were, not as they are. She came face to face with surprising ghosts, invisible to everyone else, "and some of the ghosts wear your face" she says (2009:94).

In describing the reality of encounters with the 'Other' Helga Leitner (2012) looks to what was an emotionally charged atmosphere of anxiety, fear and suspicion, in a two year collaborative study undertaken in rural Minnesota where participants were drawn from those who were long-term 'white' residents and more recent immigrants 'of colour'. The goal of the study was to examine racial prejudice but also the promise for relationships that will transcend difference. Leitner (2012) calls 'spaces of encounter' to draw attention to the relational quality of identities and attitudes and the active role of emotions and spatiality in processes of 'Othering' and racialization. The enactment of the politics of belonging included: the negotiations and power struggles over cultural and racial boundaries as to who belongs and who does not and across both local and national boundaries, as well as questions about who is entitled to share in the economic and political resources (2012). Leitner (2012) significantly recognised

that the sense of place for the long-term residents was tied to who they perceived themselves to be as White Americans living in rural Minnesota, defending that privileged position and culture against those they defined as outsiders (a familiar discussion as to what takes place in Australia currently). In conclusion she considers the implications for living with difference (and beyond conditional belonging granted to those willing to assimilate) to a new model of intercultural coexistence that requires knowledge of and a willingness to learn and recognise value in the 'Other' (2012). It would be a type of belonging that is based on a shared commitment to a mixed community not race or ethnicity. Interventions Leitner (2012) believes are needed to break down racial stereotypes and deeply held notions of a 'White America' [which have parallels in Australia as well despite the end of the 'White Australia' policy] and would also need to seriously address the emotions of anxiety and fear when they manifest in local conflicts. Research indicates a need for local initiatives that address issues of race, privilege and discrimination, she says (Leitner, 2012).

Ahmed (2000) advises that the work of Benedict Anderson (1983) is crucial for understanding how nations are invented and imagined as fantasy: as cultural artefacts. Such an approach she says "allows us to recognise that the boundaries of nations are not simply geographical or geopolitical ... but also discursive" (2000:98). But she stresses that it does not mean that the nation and one's nationality is not real at the same time as it is imagined but is at times a mechanism to define who belongs and therefore who does not, who is the stranger or 'other'. Ahmed (2000) advocates in conclusion that we think about how we may inhabit the world *with* others in a form of political community that moves beyond opposition and lies somewhere between sameness and difference. A close encounter she says is always a strange encounter until we discover what we have in common (Ahmed, 2009).

### Emotion and Emotional Geographies

Those working in the field of migration recognise that emotions play a significant role. In answer to the question, what is belonging? Louise Waite and Joanne Cook (2011) point out that migrant belonging is shaped in particular ways as an emotionally charged category recognised in the burgeoning new field of study: emotional geographies (2011). The theme of emotional geographies deals with the relationships between emotions and geographic places and their contextual environments; that is how humans relate to, or affect, the environment around them (Gregory, 2011).

Ahmed (2004) identifies emotions as playing a crucial role in what she describes as the 'surfacing' of individual and collective bodies. Emotions she says work to secure and align collectives as we read the bodies of others. She challenges assumptions about emotions as only emerging from within an individual, and moving outwards (2004). Instead they define multiple worlds that are inhabited by different subjects: the emotion constructs the feeling of the collective as though it has a body in the first place with common social bonds (2004). Ahmed builds on psychological/nationalistic notions of imagined and sentimental community attachments through a reading of a variety of texts in her methodology. In view

of more recent social and psychological theory that she says is informed by phenomenology and post-structuralism, emotions have been theorised as interweaving personal, cultural and social dimensions in complex and over determined ways. Local attachment to community is given up Ahmed (2004) asserts, as people become part of a new community. Our understanding of emotion and its relationship to attachment is implicit: "What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place or gives us a dwelling place", Ahmed says (2004:27).

There is a call therefore to look critically at the notion of belonging both individually and politically as it is central to the sense of identity and wellbeing. There are assumptions Waite and Cook (2011) believe, that are made about group identity when in reality migrants have multi-positioned relationships in different locales on account of their differing migratory journeys, networks of social, symbolic and material ties that are retained to homelands and newer sets of social relations. The migrants who participated in the study these researchers (2011) draw on expressed feelings of belonging and attachment to different places simultaneously as they straddled different worlds. They found that the sense of attachment for second generation children to ancestral homes depended on parents' attitudes, the socialised norms and values; the degree of discrimination experienced and the perceived downward social mobility and narrowed opportunities that may have eventuated in the host country were all factors that determined belongingness (2011). While these migrants strongly articulated a sense of emotional attachment to and love for distant places – mostly connected to where their parents were born – they had only a pragmatic belonging to the local places in the UK where they now live. Home, as Waite and Cook (2011) explain, is a multi-placed and metaphorical space. The emotions associated with belonging to different locales are regarded as powerful processes that enable people to "situate themselves in the world through meanings and feelings" in metaphorical space (2011, unpaginated). Their call is for researchers to look critically at the notion of belonging both in individual lives and politically which in their view is central to a sense of identity and wellbeing but they ask the question: what is belonging and is migrant belonging shaped in particular ways? It is this line of questioning that is at the basis of my research as well. The defining question in their view is how can we live together?

Loretta Baldassar (2008) examined what she considered was a highly charged emotional situation, in what is termed trans-local belongings. She outlined what had been a large, collaborative five year research study that investigated the manner in which relationships were maintained when families were split between Australia and Italy as a result of migration, particularly as parents left in Italy began to age and their needs changed. In interviewing both sets of family members - parents still living in Italy and their adult children who had migrated to Australia - what was found was that emotions manifested in four ways: discursively through words, physically with the body, through their actions and practice and in their imagination. Emotions, she says, are rarely the central focus of analyses of transnational processes and social science research in general. In semi-structured, quasi-life history interviews, the adult migrants in Australia revealed their need for co-presence. Baldassar (2008) indicated that four types of shared co-

presence were recorded: virtual (facilitated by new communication technologies), proxy - through objects and people whose physical presence embodies the spirit of the person; physical presence (being-there was important) and imagined co-presence such as praying for their family members, which reinforced family closeness and characterises Italian conceptions of health and wellbeing. They also expressed their concerns about their capacity and obligation to care for their ageing parents and the negotiated commitments within families. In Casey's (1987) terms these 'transnational objects' embody the missing person were especially poignant. The objects included photos, letters, memorabilia and gifts and were a tangible connection to a person or place, and "stand for" the absence of being there or seeing someone in reality. An example of their significance was when one participant held a photo to her heart. Baldassar identifies herself as a researcher co-presence, when she recognised that her own experience as a migrant enabled her to feel empathy and frequently the participants in the study felt able to share intimate feelings with her rather than their family members. What is significant in this study is the manner in which new technologies have changed relationships, especially those of migrant men with their absent family members, with the convenience and availability that new communications systems have afforded.

### Adaptations in the Wake of Globalisation

In the view of Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng and Andrew P. Davidson (2008) there is a need to redefine diasporic communities as living entities whose identity and culture and responses to migration "evolve over time and space in response to the social, communal and individualistic needs of their members and the contextual pressures of the wider nation state in which they are embedded" (2008:2). In their research on the experience of the Chinese diaspora, they reflect on this adaptation to 'the migration experience' as trans-nationalism: whereby people move between nation-states frequently to pursue business or family pursuits and trans-culturalism that recognises that people are able to pursue their cultural interests in their countries of origin as well as their designated local home in another country. They maintain that these trends have emerged as an offshoot of globalization and the ease with which people can communicate and travel. Eng and Davidson (2008) in their interviews with migrants discovered changes whereby people attempt to maintain homes and lives in different places especially to pursue business interests that benefit from their dual citizenship. Migrants may spend extended periods of time in one or other place as against others in the global economy who also travel for business purposes but return to a designated home-place. While this migrant adaptation to the issues of home, belonging and identity could appear to offer the best of both worlds and a means to mitigate the issues of loss, the concern may be that individual lives are more fragmented as they have been incorporated into a global economy with no real ties to any one place. There is also an impact on the families with an absentee parent, perhaps away from home for extended periods of time, that can result in increased pressure on family members, a lack of community participation and concern for environmental issues

when there is little 'dwelling in place' as a result of trans-nationalism. There could also be broader national and environmental consequences with globality when it is proposed as a new identity – an identity with no ties, loyalty or commitment to the future of any one place or nation apart from individual economic interests. It is the possible negative consequences of trans-nationalism that is also the concern of my research in stressing the need to find belonging and connection in landscape/place.

Nadje Ali-al and Khalid Koser (2001) believe that it is the changing relationship between the migrant and his/her 'home' that is held to be an almost quintessential characteristic of transnational migration. There is a need to refocus attention on the utilization of international migrants of modes of telecommunication and transport, their pooling of resources and successful exploitation of global markets and their association with new social forms, political challenges and cultural resources generated by geographical linkages across several geographical locations. Thus migrants are able to have multiple localities and arguably multiple identities with family/kinship ties moving from local to global thus enlarging and restructuring the concept of home and host societies. In terms of home for some it has become merely a space – a community created within the changing links between here and there these authors say. Thus conceptions of home should be revised: they are not static places, but dynamic, involving processes that include imagination, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving homes but for some as Ali-al and Koser (2001) point out it goes against the traditional idea of family, community, homeland and nation and is simply shelter. At the same time concepts of sovereignty and citizenship are being reappraised and migrants may not feel anchored to any one place, thus redefining the meaning and conception of notions such as 'place' and locality.

Sallie Westwood and Annie Philzacklea (2000) argue that although the debate on globalisation suggests that we live in a post-national world, nation-states and the huge emotional investments in national identities persists, and is reflected in brutal conflicts as well as the forging of national identity amongst diverse people. They also argue that the politics of belonging is expressed through citizenship and patriotism, but is also the pursuit of forms of popular culture, such as sport. However there are also migrant groups whose labour is required but they are not encouraged to settle and make a home, an example they highlight is the plight of itinerant workers in the USA who cross the border from Mexico, but occurs in Australia we well on when people are encouraged to enter the country on short-term visas to fill temporary employment vacancies. Westwood and Philzacklea (2000) found that transnationalism meant the crossing borders for business as well as pleasure but these practices can result in the privileged consuming poverty-stricken cultures that have been integrated into the global economy as providers of holidays and cheap labour. It is sobering to recognise as these researchers highlight, that for gypsies, refugees and asylum seekers there is "no space for a sense of belonging" they must move, "shunted from border to border in search of a home and a safe place" – and is the dark side of trans-nationalism as Westwood and Philzacklea point out (2000: afterword).

## Transitional Objects and Transformative Landscape Arts-Practice

In an effort to stabilise identity, migrants needs a transitional place where they can experience migration as a game in the sense of a serious pastime of children who use play to discover and make sense of their world (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989). Leon and Rebeca Grinberg refer to the work of Donald Woods-Winnicott (1971) who maintained that the continuity of existence is assured by cultural inheritance: an extension of the potential space between the individual and his environment and he was the first to identity what he called transitional objects to bridge this space. What are mere constructs, i.e., South African or Australian identities do not alone serve to define subjectivity. Identity must emerge from a relationship with the landscape/place and land-culture, and this requires an active, conscious approach, one I have tried to adopt in my methodology. The Grinbergs (1989) identify a number of transitional/transformational phases in object-relations theory which they say are critical to identity formation: spatial integration, which refers to the interrelations among parts of the self that lends cohesion as the person compares and contrasts objects; the differentiation between self and non-self that provides a feeling of individuation; temporal integration connects different representations of self over time and lays the groundwork for a feeling of sameness; and social integration when aspects of the self and of object-relations are established to create a feeling of belonging. The question asked in my research therefore is whether arts- practice is a transitional mechanism to explore identity and belonging as a creative and generative means for the migrant to overcome the "sustained loss of reliable objects in his environment" and through such activities lead to a "quality of rebirth ... and a development of his creative potential" (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989:15).

While the notion of object-relations theory in the field of psychology has the potential to pathologise transitional objects, others in the field have also offered possible insights into how we relate to objects and can use objects to relate to others as well. Somerville (2013) writes of the collaborative research, undertaken with a group of Aboriginal artists in *Water in a Dry land,* that the artworks functioned as transitional objects ... as gifts ... "bridging different undertakings, relationships and knowledges of Country and water" (2013:16). Somerville, I believe describes the complexity of art as transitional objects to form a relationship between the maker and the audience beyond just the maker and herself which has been my experience. The paintings were the medium to express complex ideas for artist Chrissiejoy, who says that to the best of her knowledge, there is no word for art in an Aboriginal language (Somerville, 2013). Carl Jung (1964) distinguished between natural (deriving from the unconscious and psyche) and cultural symbols (collective images that can evoke a deep emotional response) and both signal a symbolic connection to people, places and things. This idea is further expanded on by Aileen Jaffe (1964) who says that "man, with his symbol-making propensity, unconsciously transforms objects or forms into symbols (thereby endowing them with great psychological importance) and expresses them in both his religion and his visual art" (Jaffe in Jung,

1964:257). She looks specifically at the symbolism of humanly placed stones, which was relevant to my experience of the stone circles and dolmens in Europe and in Tilley's (1994) studies of similar landscapes as well. Gary Backhaus and John Murungi (2009) and D.W. Meinig (et al, 1979) looked to symbolism in landscapes as culturally encoded with meaning but something more than the everyday pragmatic values and includes accretions in the landscape over time. Poets and artists may be those most attuned to these resonances (Backhaus and Murungi, 2009). When Paul Devereux (1992) discusses symbolic landscapes, in different places in the world he begins with the power of the mythic landscape in Australia and its presence in the topographical surroundings and its sacred geography and art.

Other researchers and artists have also attempted through the arts to express the intermeshing of family story, migration, vulnerability and emotion encoded in the symbolism of landscape/place, in an embodied landscape practice in finding a sense of place and belonging. Eisner has said, "Art helps us connect with personal, subjective emotions and through such a process enables us to discover our own interior landscape" (Eisner, 2008:11). I uncovered a number of projects similar to my own that helped to discover an interior landscape and that have helped in both articulating my work and formulating my methodology. The following are a few examples:

**Landscape Art and Family Migration Story:**

Sarah Jameson (2011) also uses the word im/prints (although slashed) of migration in her study exploring family artefacts, story and heritage in an attempt she says to heal the "trauma of involuntary migration [that] ruptures identity development and coupled with resettlement into a new country has a synergistic effect" (2011, unpaginated online). Her project sought to voice the silent spaces of British 'ten pound pom' migrants to discover some of the truth about the past and themselves especially from a gendered point of view. Another project curated by Lisa Byrne *(*2009), brought together a geographer, an artist, a poet, a designer, an architect, a landscape architect, as well as an historian, a geologist and an anthropologist to produce ten final art works based on the landscape of the Western District in Victoria were put on display at the art gallery in Ballarat and several responses involved fabric and sewing. The book about the project (Byrne, 2009) describes it as designing a place – an experience of human connection to space with place realised through the practices of the everyday and commonplace, which gelled closely with my own work. Carol Glover (2006) in her research investigated the history of her family, the Glovers of Sale, Victoria, in the processes of place making, firstly, in Ireland and their transformation in the terms of the family's sense of place resulting from their migration to Australia in 1860. A family history, incorporating archival material and photographs, she believes provided the opportunity to examine not only macro processes that impact upon place, but also the phenomenological experience of place and the significant meanings attached to particular places. Thus she brings a critical stance to phenomenology and has documented her family's

story as research. Rene Bahloo (2010) integrates her personal account as a South African migrant artist with an exploration of the work of Koori artist, Lin Onus who she says was an agent for change. Bahloo explored through a critique of his landscapes, the ways in which space transforms place from exile to belonging as are the experiences of alienation and belonging which characterise the South African artist's experience within Indigenous Australia. It also explores ways in which the development and assertion of a personal identity within place can contribute to reconciliation between exile and belonging. This project was especially relevant to my research as our home in Belgrave was adjacent to the place where the father of Lin Onus had one of the first Aboriginal business enterprises, making boomerangs and teaching throwing. My place-making was enhanced as I would imagine these activities taking place in the small building (used by the plant nursery on the site) and surrounding grassy areas – a place-story from the past impacted on the my life there in the present.

**Transitional Objects and Home:**

The sense of an evolving emotional journey and erosion of identity that Annemarie Murland (2009) describes in her research resonated with my own work. She speaks of a disrupted sense of place as a migrant and used art including painting and drawing, poetry and photographs from where she migrated in Scotland to "remember conceptually" and to "prompt an emotive response" (2009:33). She wanted to reinterpret the past in order to inform the present, she said, a goal in common with my own (2009). She speaks of an erosion of identity indicative perhaps of a slow process that comes to a head in later life. Divya Praful Tolia-Kelly (2010) describes a project where she worked with migrant Asian women and an artist to produce concepts of home to help the women to transition (transport) their image of home from their country of origin to the United Kingdom working with an artist. In the project in collaboration with an artist, participants described a landscape they remembered: narrating their memories of living in the colonies and the value of these landscapes to their sense of being a British citizen and culturally 'English' (2010:11). Tolia-Kelly was also a guest essayist in an arts project entitled *Spill,* at the SASA Gallery at the University of South Australia in October 2007. One of the artists who participated in *Spill,* Agmeszka Golda said that her art was an opening up of the emotional territory of the experience of moving between Poland and Australia and is performative of her culture that "seeks to stabilise the irreconcilable through the recovery, and salvaging of historical, collective, personal and sensory experiences and memory" (2007:11-13). Gannie Ankori (2003) looks specifically at the art of Sliman Mansour who used mud relief to preserve the metaphor of the archetypal mother-earth/homeland; and artist Mona Hatoum who took the domestic objects of the home and modified them into threatening objects to illustrate her "unsettledness" as a Palestinian; she has also used her own naked body encased in a plastic cell

in a live-show that symbolised her hiding in the bathroom of her home in Beirut where she was exiled. Entitled: *Under Siege*, it illustrates the physical ordeal of trying to survive as a Palestinian woman. In discussing this work, importantly she says that the work marked a "phase of transition and acted as a *rite de passage*..." (2003:63). There is symbolism inherent in these artworks that illustrates the potential art has as an instrument of transition for migrants as well as for those whose settlement is threatened and tenuous. The notion of art as helping one move through a space or to cope better having expressed an emotional physical ordeal is well illustrated in these artists' work, I believe.

**Fabric Art and Historical Representations:**

A project that linked an interior landscape of personal story to local heritage and ancestry and provides an insight into the meshing of the two was entitled *Threaded Connections* (SBS TV documentaries, 12/7/09). It involved a group of women in creating a collective biography with fabric pieces sewn as a collage recording the history of their local colonial ancestors. It was both a personal journey for each woman and community building activity, as they 'stitched themselves together' with a shared history. In another major part of a project titled *Roses from the Heart* (ABC TV, Arts Show, 9/8/09) the work of conceptual artist, Christina Henri, was documented. She recruited people from all over Australia to make bonnets for each of the women who had been shipped here as a convict. The sheer number of women (25,566) could be better comprehended when in physical form: the bonnet – a personal and nurturing signifier to cover each convict women's head. Louise Saxton's artwork was featured in a recent exhibition, entitled *Sanctuary* (March – July 2012) at the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Melbourne. She also works with fabric art: described as the reclamation of handcrafted textiles made in and for the home, drawing parallels between the lost homemakers' art and the vulnerability of many threatened species. She also incorporated embroidery into her work and utilised other women's craft as I have. She researched natural history illustrations to construct images of birds combining the embroideries from doilies, tablecloths and bed linen, salvaged from Opportunity Shops, fixed to tulle thus creating "a silent collaboration with the anonymous original makers" (Saxton, 2012, unpaginated).

Paul Carter describes "an act of self-remaking" using a weaving analogy to describe his collaborative arts project with artist Charles Anderson, entitled: *dis / appearance* (the solidus (/) of the title signified that "something happening in the gap") (2004:3). His creative collaboration he believes is beyond migrant nostalgia because apart from the two threads in weaving a third apprehension emerges which is what he calls material thinking "redefining who they, and their environment are" (2004:5). Carter puts forward this project as a method of advancement. The

first, critical stage of creative research is dismemberment – in the second phase, the dismembered parts are put back together, "but re-membered in a way that is new" (2004:11).

Creative research, Carter says is thus the always unfinished process of making and remaking ourselves through our symbolic forms and the self is an historical process representing the 'unfinished' character of society at large (2004:14). Schama (1995) says that we can look to the old myths that they are reflected in our national identity. He asserts that our entire landscape tradition is the product of shared culture "built from a rich deposit of myths, memories and obsessions" – they are not just in traditional native cultures but alive and well and all about us if only we know where to look for them – in fact what it points to is that however hard we attempt to cast off the past as rational scientific beings, it emerges in curious ways as "ancient motifs" in our "social memory" (1995:17). He does not agree, with Oelschlaeger (in Schama, 1995) who he has called for new creation myths to repair the damage of the mechanical abuse of nature and to restore the balance which does raise the question of whose culture dominates and which myths?

## Conclusion

In conclusion and to bring the discussion back to where it started in Australia, Stephen Muecke asserts that "all Australians are caught in a complex process of self-definition as the country slowly becomes more independent from Europe ... and Britain" (2005:9). Loretta Baldassar in the Introduction to "National and Cultural Identities" (1999) stresses the need to include disenfranchised Australian battlers in any discussion of multi-culturalism and focuses on the contested sets of notions which deal with identity and ancestry. In Australia, race tends to mean indigenous and ethnicity refers to minority group identity, and nationalism refers to majority group identity thus multi-culturalism is not inclusive of 'dinky-di Aussies' she says (1999). Despite enormous internal heterogeneity, there continues to be a binary opposition of essentialist/constructionist debate in Australia too as regards the indigenous population.

The literature reveals that place connection, belonging and identity is recognised as crucial to our sense of wellbeing especially in a post-modern era when populations are increasingly mobile with trends such as transnationalism and trans-culturalism shaking the very basis of community and place, and the issues of cohesion and stability more urgent than previously. I believe that my research will further the knowledge and understanding of belonging in an experiential engagement with landscape/place to engender a sense of place and self-creating identity. In the next chapter I will look to define landscape/place as transitional/transformative research space for the purposes of a methodology that seeks to address the issues of place-making, finding identity and belonging as a performative and proactive embodied engagement.

# Chapter 2
# Developing a Methodology

Hunebedden, kabouters, the woods, fields of hay, the sky and the sun: My attempt at felting at an 'old times' workshop at the *Hunebedden Centrum*, Borger, Drenthe, 2010 [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

"A person who paints, writes, composes, dances, I felt compelled to say, thinks with his senses".
[Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*, 1969: 1]

## Introduction

My methodology has sought to validate the personal, experiential approach to landscape as the site of embodied engagement and performance. The respondent is both the researcher and researched in terms of the process, with reflexivity and feedback as primary research technique and focus. Whatever comes to the attention of the researcher is taken as relevant in an acknowledged subjective approach. What I have described is a place-based, experiential qualitative approach that I have termed embodied-kinaesthetic methodology with a theoretical framework in Place Studies as well as some elements of phenomenology. My fieldwork is synthesised as field texts that combine experience and story (as described by Clandinin & Connelly 2000) with an interweaving of historical archival data, analysis and interpretation.

The arts practices I have designated as 'fabric-ation' included writing, decoupage and collage using fabric and wool. I have also written poetry and prose in my attempts to materialise experience. I played with the dual meaning of fabrication in terms of *making something up* and *making something out of*. Carter said that migrants never arrive once but continue to arrive: like in weaving they go back and forth [often literally between their country of origin and a new country] – each time starting a new line. His weaving analogy resonates especially if one allies fabrication with that of fabric itself, thus as one moves back and forth creating the threads of story weaving in and out of the existing culture (2004). It creates a new fabric but the threads of the previous weavings are still present as the foundation of the new weaving. Migrants fabricate place stories as "a poetic act" Carter says (2004:2) and such a "history is a fabric woven of self reinforcing illusions" as was the case with early explorers to Australia (1987: xv). Foucault also describes a self who is fabricated: in trying to find a coherent identity, the genealogist sets out to study numberless beginnings whose faint traces and hints of colour are readily seen by a historical eye he said (1991:81).

My interest is in arts as an everyday practice available to anyone not only those working in the fine arts or classical literature. Arts-practice I contend should be seen as an integral aspect of place making and embodied-kinaesthetic experience and not only slotted in under the heading of arts-based research. Indigenous art in Africa or Australia demonstrates that it is a natural partner to landscape experience, place-making/fixing. The methods include embodied knowing through movement: travel, walking and making things; visual knowing: reading landscape/material culture, photographs and making things as visual prompts, journaling and memorialising; in addition to textual/oral Knowing: reading, writing and conversation. Collected data are inter-woven with interpretation and analysis occurring simultaneously and presented in field texts.

We get into places together, said Casey (1993). As social beings we create stories together with others and I recognise that my encounters with different places were more significant because I was with a family member—we found where to go to together, got lost together, talked about our experience and shared the story with other family members. Our shared stories, the photographs that were taken, created a cultural place in our family history. I was not the only participant in the research therefore as my forebears are of course also those of my father, siblings, our children, their children and so on down the line. Travelling with various family members also influenced my impressions, as did our discussions, debates and, shared memories. Whilst there is no ethical debate concerning research when one sets out to experiment on oneself, there are inherent concerns, of which I was always cognizant, as one focuses on family heritage and for some perhaps painful memories. Place Studies identifies the collective nature and complexity of networks involved in research and in my case that included spending extended time with family members who live overseas, something I had not had the opportunity to do for many years. It was to retrieve story about our experience in a shared space while also creating new stories together. We

were reviewing our shared identity, and in the final analysis, we were not always in complete agreement as to what we remembered and how we interpreted past or present events.

The main countries that I was able to visit over the six month period of field research were dictated by available time and funds and whenever possible I stayed with relatives to enable me to have an extended in-depth encounter with landscape/place and culture. I spent two months in The Netherlands, one month in England and Ireland (and France), and three months in South Africa. The other significant heritage place that I would have liked to return to, as the birthplace of my maternal grandfather, was Scotland but I had visited there previously and had to make do with that experience as well as subsequent reading and discussions with family members.

In seeking a theoretical approach and methodology I first looked to different perspectives that would assist in conceptualising and articulating my understandings within Place Studies and phenomenology.

## Place Studies and Phenomenology

By identifying the various understandings and definitions of words such as landscape and place, I have had to recognise that both have been appropriated to different ideological purposes and had to back-pedal when landscape is seen to be the preserve of those wishing to have authority and control and place to be only those designated locations to situate personal memories, where I work and have family. Place Studies speaks of breaking down the dominant culture and perceptions (Somerville, 2009) and when I began this research I hoped that the labels of migrant, white and woman as perceived in the dominant culture could be avoided – they all appear to load my identity as 'other' depending on where I am. In Australia, as a migrant I am tired of being asked where I am from; in South Africa, race was paramount and my identity was privileged as 'white' and other than 'black' or 'coloured'. In both countries, where I have lived for extended periods, my life has been defined by my gender but I felt sure that in landscape and in experiencing place-story I could shed all such designations and simply be a person at large in the great outdoors. It seems that the labels are not to be overcome however and essentially each of these social locations influences my identity, my right to belong, my voice and perceived right to speak, and even where I can feel safe.

My research seeks to bridge Cartesian dualism and a mechanistic, rational worldview that creates absolutes: mind/ body, internal/external, subjective/objective, self/other and so on, as described by Birkeland (2005). The question is whether landscape/place can be thought of other than as a way of seeing and the culture/nature dualism as described previously by theorists such as Cresswell (2004) or can be gender neutral or defined within a masculinist gaze (Rose, 1993)? I have attempted therefore to disperse the masculinist tradition of landscape/place definitions with an embodied presence and an

interweaving of what are perceived to be more feminine arts and crafts in order to present a comprehensive thesis response to my question.

Somerville et al (2011) defined a critical research process in Place Studies, as the exploration and experimentation in a learning/teaching space that seeks to analyse what the unjust and oppressive social conditions are and to determine the relationship between social and ecological systems. The distinction is made between what is described as world-making and the kinds of teaching and learning experiences that will enable this, as opposed to globe-making which dismantles the social in favour of the economic (Somerville et al, 2011). There are three principles that I recognize as incorporated within my methodology; first, fundamental to meaning-making is the relationship to place as constituted in stories and other representations including visual, aural and performance (and science); second, the ways of knowing places that are embodied wherein the landscape is understood as subject and includes human and non-human earth others; and finally a deep place learning in a cultural contact zone with contested stories of place. The in-between space of the contact zone has been described as a space of transformative potential – coming to know our own places in new and unexpected ways that includes our senses and the breaking down of preconceptions (Somerville et al, 2011). Themes significant to place-making are uncovered through this methodological framework, with the permeability of bodies allowing something to pass between place and self, such as in walking and writing, and the desire to belong in an intertwined research practice that is not an individual process, but rather a space in which collective, complex networks arise (Somerville et al, 2011).

A person is in place, Tilley argues (1994), just as much as in culture, with common experiences, symbols and meanings that are located in places that are fundamental to the establishment of personal and group identities and the formation of biographies. A sense of attachment to place frequently derives from a stability of meanings associated with it. There is general agreement that phenomenological researchers have, as their central concern, a desire to return to an embodied, experiential meaning that aims to bring a fresh, complex and richer description of concrete lived experience (Finlay, 2009). A phenomenologist's experience of landscape takes place through the "medium of his or her sensing and sensed carnal body" from the inside as against outside mediated texts including maps or photographs for in this approach there is no substitute to being there (Tilley, 1994:26). Tilley proposed a phenomenological encounter with place. He regards landscape as both a physical teaching resource, which I have called land-culture, and a repository that holds the stories of what has gone before. The philosophical investigation and description of conscious experience in all its varieties is carried out in his encounters with landscape, without reference to the question of whether what is experienced is objectively real (Tilley 1994). The knowledge of landscapes, either past or present, is gained through perceptual experience of them from the point of view of the subject which Tilley describes as 'thick' description, but one's writing allows "others to comprehend these landscapes in their nuanced diversity

and complexity and to enter into these experiences through their metaphorical textual mediation" (1994:25). In Place Studies the term deep mapping aligns with thick description, to describe landscape experience as it reconnects stories to places and the Aboriginal understanding of country in Australia (Perkins and Somerville, 2010). I am asserting that each experiential encounter with place marks the landscape as an interacting ecology that is dependent on one's heritage, previous learning, memories and experience. I have therefore identified seven marks of place although of course there could be several more.

## The Seven Marks of Place

The fractal nature of place can be read as marks, both in the landscape and inscribed on one's body, the unconscious mind as well as consciousness, as imprints. The marks are not closed categories or boundaries however but bleed into each other, and overlap when there is slippage. They are: landmarks, placemarks, pathmarks, stretchmarks, crossmarks, bookmarks and stitchmarks and finally I will use benchmarks not as one of the seven marks but to sum up where I consider I am up to in this research. In my fieldwork I will be seeking *Landmarks*. The dictionary definition reflects its usage as both a noun and an adjective, as a noun it can describe that which is a familiar sight, a marker, a sign, a signpost or attraction while as an adjective it can be a milestone, a breakthrough, something innovative, ground-breaking, radical even revolutionary. In my interpretation its most important function is to describe an aspect of the landscape that assists one to gain one's bearings: to find out where I am – my place. Landmarks in the landscape/places are frequently experienced at a distance rather than as a close encounter – iconic views that may be represented on postcards, photographs and are well known as tourist centres or places of interest. In going to the places where my forebears came from I hope to identify what were their landmarks and thus experience that landscape through their eyes. In his description of landmarks, John Berger (1967) proposes that landmarks are not simply geographic features but are also biographical and personal which has been my approach as well.

As a word, *Placemark* is not included in the dictionary and yet I believe that it has a commonly held meaning. I define it as marking those significant places where one may have a remembered or an embodied experience – perhaps a déjà-vu sensation as a memory is evoked or touched on, of something that happened but it is also a record of what takes place in any given place that proves to be memorable or worthy of recording as a photograph or in art; it is where an integration of place and self in the metaphorical journey of life occurs. Placemarks indicate a more personal encounter or experience at a place rather than the broader spectrum of a landscape, whether currently or in the past recorded in memory but would be overlaid with a new story on a more recent visit. They may also include places in one's birthplace and childhood places where stories can be retrieved and we can write a new story there. Recording new biographical and autobiographical stories takes place at the intersection of what is a

familiar placemark but is changed given the passage of time and one's own life experience and new perceptions. The role of photographs cannot be underestimated in recording a placemark, apart from our visual images recorded in memory it is cemented very often with a photograph. According to Mike Crang, seeing the self as an accumulatory project with a past is an important project and photography plays an important role in this project (Crang 1999).

In recording *Pathmarks*, one looks to how one's presence marks the landscape and in conjunction with land-culture, it is possible to read the traces of previous generations. The pathmarks I recognise are those pathways that will lead me to my ancestral landscapes: those of my megalithic ancestors in the landscapes of Ireland, England, Scotland and The Netherlands. These are reflected in the landscape with man-made structures such as stone circles but also natural features such as sacred trees and rock formations. There is the merging into the landscape that pathmarks seek to achieve, a shift from a displaced person to one who observes the landscape as my dwelling place no longer the 'perpetual tourist' destined to take photographs forever more to send back 'home'. It is the pattern of one's physicality (physical presence and emotional response) and what is left behind as traces in a place that is recorded in one's memory – we layer our walking on that of others keeping the pathways open as we tread the well-worn way. Following a set path is a synecdoche practice, whereby to walk along a pathway in a forested area is only an interaction with a part of the forest yet this stands for the whole in our memory, is the valuable insight of Tilley (1994) that I had not considered before. By retracing the 'pathmark' that Casey described (1993), as migrants to a new place, we can read the storied landscapes bound by narrative as Tilden said (2002) when the space, she says only pretends to be blank when in fact everything that has ever happened there creates a 'storied landscape' (Tilden, 2002:29). Schama, who also uses the geological analogy of rock strata, says that "before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as form layers of rock" (1995:7). In the "very act of identifying the place", he says, "presupposes our presence" (1995:7).

*Stretchmarks* include connections to mother, father, children, home, a homeland. The stretchmarks reflect bodily scars such as from pregnancy that mark birth but also seek to pull one back like an elasticised thread that is still attached, stretching rather than releasing. I also see the stretchmark of the child leaving the mother as we strain to break the ties that bind us but keep snapping back to the safety of her arms and of course the ultimate stretch when a mother dies and the tie breaks. Another stretch is of migration – the invisible elastic that continues to connect me to South Africa, where my family still live and I lived up until the age of 32 and the one that connects me to my daughter and her family in The Netherlands. The elastic snaps back in my consciousness as a constant as I live the dualism of migration - in two places at the same time, the one physical, the other in my imagination. When I am in South Africa or The Netherlands, the elastic can stretch at any time and I am snapped back to Australia, to where my life is now including of course to my son and his wife but also to relationships, my partner,

friends, my house and my pets. *Crossmarks/metaphysical* space includes religious influences; uncanny experiences; the legacy of apartheid and war; metaphysical space: spirituality; death and sadness; nature and sacred space; Indigenous spirit of place and contested land. When I contemplate a spiritual attachment to landscape/place, I consider the crossmarks that mark those encounters. I cannot escape the influence of the twelve years of my schooling as a non-Catholic (lapsed) in a Catholic school and the image that comes to mind is of a cross but it is tempered by the image of a Celtic cross as well. *Bookmarks*: Literature of place; significant stories bookmarked for future reference. Bookmarks are an obvious inclusion in a work of research bound together with the words of others in various forms of literature that reflect landscape interpretations and experiences but play their role in influencing the manner in which landscape/place is experienced and encountered. They are the backbone of the learning that we carry with us. *Stitchmarks*: Writing, sewing and women's handiwork as representations of domestic history; Arts-practice; Writing; Fabric art and women's handiwork as representations of domestic history. I am proposing that while I write in a masculinist tradition, my gendered experience can be expressed in arts and crafts in order to present a comprehensive thesis response to my question. By fabric-ating a story: stitching place story of identity as the embodied process of materialising experience fabric art - my approach has been to undertake a critical reconstruction of place in the feminine through my art work. My sense is that I am trying to build relatedness to place through direct experience but expressed in writing and art – to come closer to the subject. Stitchmarks reflect artistic experience and representations of landscape/place experience as well as the more permanent ways in which one is attached to a place as one is stitched in. A kinaesthetic approach that includes action and concrete experience (experiential) provides a means towards this more encompassing approach to place-learning engages one of the intelligences as described in the work of Howard Gardner (1993; 2004).

## Kinaesthetic Intelligence and Learning

To further illuminate an embodied methodology, I draw on the work of Howard Gardner (1993), particularly his notion of bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, one of the seven intelligences he identified and among various practices involving movement that are useful for my purposes. In the light of gestalt philosophy, the caution is not to divide learning into strict categories but to recognise the intelligences Gardner has defined as only a tool that is proposed to encourage educationists to ensure that learning experience involves all of the proposed intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal as well as bodily-kinaesthetic. This thinking recognises that some learners will find more resonance with one or more learning experience and supports an argument for a plurality of forms of engagement with the world. I focused on bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence in developing my methodology, believing it to be rather neglected in educational settings where children continue to spend most of their school day sitting at desks. It relates to movement, both walking and travel and the hand movements involved in handiwork; and entails the potential of using one's body to solve problems and

enhance learning. Recently Gardner has added naturalist intelligence to his categories; others under consideration include spiritual intelligence and existential intelligence (1994). Other theorists have spoken of *kinaesthesia*; Maxine Johnstone (2011b) says it is the neglected sixth sense. The development of this sense, she says, takes place before the eleventh week in the foetus, and although there is a focused age of "embodiment", it only serves to perpetuate the divide when "kinaesthesia is nowhere on the map" and "animation is the key to resolving the underlying division that remains part of their thinking" (2011b:119). Jean Houston (1996), in her psychological group practice integrated imagery and creativity studies in exercises by going back and forth between movements felt inwardly in the "kinaesthetic body" as she called it (the body of muscular imagination based on the work of Moshe Feldenkrais) and the same movements performed outwardly in the physical bodies; she said that she witnessed the "ability to tap into the great mythic and symbolic realms of the deep self" (1996:48). It was only in coming to this book by Houston that I felt an increased confidence to articulate my methodology and specifically relate an embodied approach to learning that incorporates movement and an 'opening' that can occur in the deeper realms of the self that I witnessed and that can as she said lead to heightened creativity and an "enriched perception and knowing" (1996:127).

More recently, Tilley (2010) also described a "kinaesthetic approach" to material culture and it was gratifying to have him use similar language to what I have adopted. This approach, he says, uses the full body and all the senses that can "better approximate the meaning that artefacts such as both natural features such as hills as well as rock art and dolmens" have for makers and viewers (2010:18). While we would usually utilise an iconographic cognitive approach to produce meanings within the human mind, his approach (as was mine) was an attempt to find out something different: in Tilley's words, "a kinaesthetic approach to the interpretation" (2010:18). He sought to define the active role that outstanding features such as rocky outcrops played in socializing the landscape and meaning thus created. He noted in observing the approach of visitors to a rock art site in Sweden, where they performed a spatial dance – the choreographic basis was "platial" he said (2010:18). Platial combines spatial and place as the stage on which the performance occurs and relates to my assertion that the landscape guides/instructs our actions as choreography. The performance of place relates to this notion of choreographic movement – we move according to landscape features in learning land-culture. Tim Ingold (2011a) points out that what art, architecture and anthropology have in common is that they involve observation, description and purpose and all involve moving, knowing and describing—all aspects of my methodology. He calls our attention to what is frequently the lack of acknowledgement of the world that surrounds us. Texts and other media dominate in our research and writing, he points out while the majority of us neglect the ground we walk on, the sky, mountains and rivers, rocks and trees as well as the houses we inhabit and the tools we use, or our companions, both animal and human, as resources (2011a). Life is movement, as he highlights, a texture of interwoven threads, which is a useful metaphor

for my use of fabric in attempting to materialise my world. The methods I describe, I have defined fit under the heading of an embodied-kinaesthetic methodology.

## Embodied-kinaesthetic Methodology

Taking the basic tenets of Place Studies, and incorporating aspects of phenomenology, experiential education and learning; and bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, I have formulated an *embodied-kinaesthetic methodology* that takes place in landscape as performative space/place, which encompasses different forms of movement and arts-based practices that I will describe fully under the heading of embodied methods. I would define it as the heightened perceptual awareness of where we are in space/place and the learning through movement that occurs with our whole body. With the background to my methodology established, I will look to the methods that I employed: embodied knowing, travel and walking, that encompasses the artistry and language of movement and making material cultural artefacts; visual knowing, which includes reading material and cultural landscape and artefacts; and photography as elicitation/journaling; verbal/textual knowing: narrative inquiry and 'writing as a method of inquiry' (Richardson, 2005); "working hot" as described by Bolt (2009:142) in story-ing the landscape and reading and acquiring knowledge from text-based as well as oral sources but with a critical perspective as defined within Place Studies. Based on John Dewey's theories, David Kolb's (1984) four categories in his experiential learning model stresses the need for deep learning that moves through those categories as a continuum: concrete, abstract, action and reflection. We need concrete or immediate experiences to provide the basis for observation and reflection. These are distilled into abstract concepts producing new implications for action and new experiences. In my methodology taking action and what is concrete fall under embodied knowing methods which link to visual and textual categories, e.g., looking, reading, writing and thinking, that are the more abstract and reflective arenas that are included as visual knowing and textual/oral knowing methods. I begin with Embodied Knowing Methods.

### Embodied Knowing Methods

These methods include action and what is concrete, thus in this category I include all forms of movement in a physical experience including travel, walking and the making of material objects. But what does movement as method allow one to know? In speaking of John Dewey in their introduction, Jacob and Baas (2009) highlight his use of the word 'realisation' in the sense of making real, i.e., making experience available to the senses and as a process that is transformative (2009). Dewey said, "This experiential process is inherently pleasurable and both subject and object emerge from it changed – the subject has experienced a transformation of the self, while the object has acquired new meaning" (cited in Jacob & Baas, 2009: 2). Thus, art is inherently pedagogical because it dissolves restricting barriers, opening the mind to further experience. As John Dewey said, "every experience both takes up something

from that which has gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (cited in Jacob & Baas, 2009: 6).

### a. Travel

To travel, as discussed previously, is to place oneself in a state of transition and vulnerability; it is also to suspend decision-making, about one's life or future, which can then be experienced as a liminal state when possibilities for new learning and transformation are heightened. My travelling stimulated a far greater interest and questioning than sitting at a distance reading a book or watching a documentary could ever have achieved. To travel to another place and to be in that place physically is to make the place concrete and real. It is not a concept read or pictured in a book, to be believed on hearsay and the second-hand experience of another, but is primary source material. Part of the consequence of travel is to evoke an emotional response, depending on one's degree of physical involvement. Travelling leads on to reading, of course, and to interpreting what one experiences in writing or speech. Reading related to embodied experience and then writing about it was a synthesis that led to further interpretation and to an oral sharing and discussion with others.

Emily Sutherland's paper "Research, travel and creativity" (2008) links these aspects of my work through the thinking of sociologist, Fiewel Kupferberg who identified three models that are conducive to creativity, that of migrant, stranger and traveller (1998). Kupferberg's insight was that the open-endedness of travel frees the individual from the tyranny of the familiar, while as Sutherland points out Eric Leed saw travel as cleansing, given what he described as the social decontextualisation of travel (2008). Leed's 'cleansing' is demonstrated in a traveller who develops a greater understanding of social diversity, geographical features and language, and sheds their preconceived notions and prejudices in the process (Sutherland, 2008, unpaginated). There are greater opportunities for personal interaction as well as the chance to develop new ways of thinking that can lead to more creative solutions to problems, which was my recognition too, as a migrant, stranger and traveller in my research. Sutherland says that for Kupferberg,

> the stranger is in a privileged position because natives are less inhibited in giving strangers information, knowing that they are unlikely to use such information against them. This, of course, assumes that the stranger is not perceived as a threat. The stranger is in a better position to make objective observations, being detached from the culture and society, unlike the migrant, who wishes to become part of that society. Thus the stranger brings innovative thinking from the experience, and also gains new insights into his or her familiar world (Sutherland, 2008, unpaginated).

To maximise the effect on creativity and the acquisition of new knowledge, Sutherland (2008) says, travel needs to meet three criteria. Firstly, it should be undertaken as a quest with a particular goal in mind; secondly, the mode of travel requires some adaptation from the usual way of life and thinking; and thirdly, this adaptation allows the traveller to acquire new skills and insights. As my travel undertaking had the specific focus of fieldwork, it narrowed the focus but also afforded purpose and goals, which Sutherland recommends for creativity to flow.

Inger Birkeland's (2005) insights into women's travel situated my research clearly, in that the phenomenological making of place and self stresses the human being's subjective reality in terms of the life-world, or the embodied essence of the place-world. The journey may be to a place in a "person's inner geography", Birkeland says, as a "stable point of reference from where one may get a new sense of direction or meaning ... a woman's departure symbolises the search for herself and her place in a feminine sense, for the ordering principle of the totality of her female inner geography" (2005:7). I consider this to have been my approach—to go back to my point of departure, to look at something with fresh eyes, as the new me—to look for insights in new and old places as a site of arrival.

Birkeland points to Kristeva's suggestion, of the possibility of "seeing the self as another who exists within, or as a strange or unknown region of meaning forming part of a subjective geography" (Birkeland, 2005:92) thus when we travel to other places, we are seeking the unknown part of ourselves that we hope will be exposed in a new location, or are trying to see ourselves by making ourselves other (2005). Travel in the view of Birkeland (2005), may be associated with a desire to feel whole in relation to a self that is central and moving in a 360-degree arc. She sees tourists as moving places just as knowledge fields are moving "central to both travelling theory and travelling fieldwork is the idea of movement from one point of departure to a site of arrival with an accompanying movement of meaning" (2005: 93).

Birkeland refers to Carl Jung, who spoke of a journey as a search for truth in one way or another, a metaphor for individuation, personal development, change and transformation, of becoming whole in Jung's words (2005). "The journey is an image of personal change" Jung said (cited by Birkeland 2005:7). This theme she says exists in a broad range of cultural fields: myths, folklore and fairy tales, in arts and music, film, poetry, novels and in the interpretation of dreams, some facets of which I have also explored in my research. When I experienced a type of *déjà vu* in the woods in Drenthe in The Netherlands, it sent me wandering into the realm of gnomes and fairy tales to consider whether childhood stories, or Jung's collective unconscious, had any validity that would help to illuminate that space. Without the embodied experience of being there, I would never have thought about these matters in the same way. This insight into place and travel were essential components to my rethinking the role of place and landscape. De Certeau says of travel that, like walking, it is "an exploration of the deserted places of my memory" (1988:107). My journey back to where I was born in South Africa was to visit places and to remember but also to discover what I had forgotten, misinterpreted or not absorbed previously.

### b. Walking: The Artistry and Language of Movement

While all would agree that dance is an art form, I have proposed that to walk in place is artistry as well. As we walk we perform the practice of walking in a space that is determined often by the terrain, tracks, signposts and pathways. While as a creative or subversive act we may leave the proscribed route, we often are discouraged by restrictions such as rocks, water, heavy vegetation or our own learned or emotional responses: fear of the unknown, getting lost or perhaps concern about the impact we may have on the ecology. The question is how walking translates into an embodied learning process that can enhance *knowing* and new understandings. Just as in the child's art experience of 'taking a line for a walk' and then filling in the spaces created with different colours, we too can 'take a walk and draw a line' to appropriate the spaces with our own colourful perceptions and experiences. This is the story we perform in our walking experience. Ingold (2011a) also speaks of the 'art of walking' tying in drawing and making with walking. He, too, discusses the notion of line as perceived by the Evenki reindeer hunters and the Inuit, who see the human as forming a line as they move from one place to another. The Aborigines of Australia describe a song-line as they sing their stories of the spaces they walk through. Our walking movements make marks with spaces between, a concept Ingold describes (2011a) which connects to my artistic pursuits of sewing and knitting, where the spaces in between are as important as the lines to enable the production of a garment or in the case of speaking and writing, communication. Ingold also describes what he calls "ways of mind walking" that include: walking, reading, writing and painting (2011a:196).

In rising above an urban place, de Certeau saw the totalising eye as the voyeur, the one who can read what the walkers on the ground write as the "urban text" although to the walkers cannot read it (1984:93). The landscape as seen from above is often the perspective of the Australian Aboriginal artist, not as voyeur but rather as representing journeys across the landscape as the footprints made by animals and humans from a totalising viewpoint. Bentarrak, Muecke and Roe (1984) argue that Aboriginal stories keep the land alive, in contrast to calling such stories the Dreamtime, a term that tends to represent Aboriginal philosophical frameworks of place in terms of a mythological past and not an everyday practice. Each time land is walked, spoken and sung is a way of talking, seeing, a set of practices like poetry that must be re-enacted; the performative function that I refer to in my own work. The trace left behind is read and interpreted individually but has cultural and historical determinants that merge in a current response to place. Ingold in the introduction (Janowski and Ingold, 2012) outlines at least three ways of imagining the past in landscape:

> there is the *materialising* mode, which turns the past into an object of memory to be displayed and consumed as heritage; there is the *gestural mode*, in which memories are forged in the very process of redrawing the lines and pathways of ancestral activity, and there is the *quotidian* mode in which what remains of the past provides a basis for carrying on (2012: unpaginated).

Ingold's assertion is that images are not out there waiting to be seen, we participate in their creation from within, uniting perception with imagination and growing them from the soil of an existential involvement in the sensible world (Janowski & Ingold: 2012).

Walking in forested areas or along a beach or bush track and following paths, one can become conscious of the countless anonymous footprints: human and animal that de Certeau (1984) points out have left a trace, although the original purpose of the activity is absent and forgotten. Thus walking in place, as he argues is a spatial acting out of place and can be a space of enunciation, as one makes an attempt to read the purpose of previous walkers. To complicate the argument, however, he pointed out "that to walk is to lack a place" while one temporarily appropriates the spaces others claim (1984:103). Standing and looking at my grandmother's former home in Brighton was to appropriate someone else's home place temporarily for my own purposes. To subsequently write the story of being there and embroider a representation of the house as an obituary sampler was how I chose to materialise the experience, thus tying her memory to my story and that particular encounter of a place. Walking towards the house was to mime the approach of my forebears—a mimetic performance. I was there physically experiencing first-hand what may have been their habitual practice. One could say that what begins as mnemonic writes a new story, when each walker creates the place of their unique walking experience. What are (says Tilley) "initially hostile and alienating encounters with a new place" is inscribed with human activities in a landscape and it becomes a familiar autobiographic place, "a biographic encounter that recalls traces of past activities and events" (Tilley, 1994: 28). My experience there was both biographical and auto-biographical.

Following a set path is a synecdoche practice, whereby to walk along a pathway in a forested area is only an interaction with a part of the forest, yet this stands for the whole in our memory, as is Tilley's valuable insight (1994), which I had not considered before. When I walked along a small designated pathway as required in the trope of walking on Stanton Moor in Derbyshire, we followed the approach from the proscribed direction, retracing the steps guided by previous walkers and markers, such as stiles and gates that led us to the final site or sight. As it was not a well-known tourist destination, there were a number of paths and we had to find our own way using the available cues, which meant we had to retrace our steps several times. At one stage we asked directions of a man who was taking his run down the hill (like a Welsh fell-runner) and without hesitating in his downward plunge, he pointed in the general direction we should walk to find The Nine Ladies stone circle. This was the path-finding of previous generations, without maps and signposts. As Carter (2009a) says, although our world is composed of the traces of movement, our representations, such as maps, conceal it. What Carter calls dark writing is the trace of the body's movement, both intellectual and physical, in what he calls "the phenomenol environment" (2009a: 232). This is important because it does not divorce the body from its thinking head. He speaks of the traveller as a kind of topographer whose rhythm imprints/organises the

chance marks we make on the world into a memorable pattern (Carter, 2009a). It would also seem to relate to what Somerville and Tony Perkins refer to as 'deep mapping' in *Singing the Coast* (2010). Perkins explains that deep mapping is the work of reconnecting story to country and involves language, story and place. Colonial mapmakers, in contrast, saw the empty places of Africa and Australia and named them often in meaningless ways or in ways that were reminiscent of their home places, the "inscriptions of settler landscapes" described as "genocide by cartography" (Trigger and Griffiths, 2003:20). Movement is also represented in our making of material objects and in our reading of items made by others.

### c. Making Material Cultural Objects

Richard Hickman (2008) recognises as do other theorists, that there is a direct link between phenomenology and the arts, pointing out that the concern is for understanding subjective knowledge while embracing the concept of intuitive or tacit knowing. In fact, some phenomenological enquiry is in itself reported as an art form and offers a way of understanding the world (Hickman, 2008). Arts educators are concerned principally with the individual's consciousness and how it influences their relationship with the world, he says (Hickman, 2008).

The premise that "creative arts research has for extending our understanding of the role of experiential, problem-based learning and multiple intelligences in the production of knowledge ..." is put forward by Estelle Barrett, as she lay the groundwork to creative arts research in the foreword to the book she and Barbara Bolt edited (2009:2). Barrett, importantly, focuses on process rather than product, recognising that "knowledge may be applied in multiple contexts but also has the capacity to promote a more profound understanding of how knowledge is revealed, acquired and expressed" (2009:2). What Heidegger called handability or praxical knowledge, says Barrett, has the capacity to extend "our understandings of the role of experiential, problem-based learning and multiple intelligences in the production of knowledge" (2009:2). While Carter's (2004) "material thinking" looks to the relationship between the image and the text, Bolt looked to what she termed "materialising practices," in other words "the researcher's own self-reflexive mapping of the emergent work as *enquiry*" (2009:5). Learning, as Barrett goes on to explain in line with Kolb's views (1984), "takes place through action and intentional, explicit reflection on that action" with an added benefit of "*new* knowledge" emerging from the practice (2009:5). What are emergent and disparate are strengths, not flaws, when the knowledge making is creative and new. Ingold (2011a) argues that as they make things, practitioners improvise, thus binding their own pathways or lines of becoming into the texture of the world, indicating both the creativity involved and the process rather than the end-product. The difference between making and writing, as he explains, is that in order to write, we turn *away* while to make we have to turn *towards*. The pulling through of the thread: is the looping back and forth of story-telling connecting the present to past experience as a narrative re-enactment (2011a). To do needlework that represents an impression of a

kookaburra, I had to keep getting up from my chair 'to turn towards one' that luckily, chose to sit on the rail of my verandah for a while as its entire family were wont to do at different times of the day.

My experience of making material objects calls into play aspects of my culture and learning in a mnemonic ritual or performance. As explained previously, I wanted to mimic the handwork of women thus knitting, sewing and to embroider was available and portable when travelling as a medium, required little preparation or clean-up and can be a social activity: while in conversation or watching TV with others. I could have chosen woodwork such as I learned during my American Field Service scholarship school year in Allentown, Pa., or there was pottery, when Art and Craft was my semi-specialisation in the teacher education course I did in South Africa, but probably why I moved towards more feminine artistic pursuits was to follow on from the experience of my Honours thesis, to replicate the handwork of my great-grandmother as a machinist in Richmond, Melbourne. To embroider a landscape or landscape feature is analogous to painting but requires the application of cottons in an attempt to bring shadow and build form. It was also to remember the nuns who taught us embroidery at the Ursuline Convent I attended for 10 years of my schooling and a tradition of embroidery as a suitable activity for girls who would become 'good' housewives preparing the household linens for their trousseau. Feminist and art historian Rozsika Parker, in *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1984; 1996) reminds us that feminists scorned embroidery, blaming it for the constraints on women's lives, including their ill health in the 18th century, when they spent too many hours bent over their work in poorly lit rooms. At times it also signified autonomy and was a legitimate way for women to sit and talk together as well as affording the opportunity to insert words or symbols into their samplers that reflected their true feelings. The banners women made during the counter-culture protest movement represented a similar motivation as Parker explains (1996). Hence this craft and its use in practices of subversions are an important aspect of women's history. Writer and historian, Olive Schreiner, who has featured strongly in my reading and writing about South Africa, said of her handwork that it was treated symbolically as she was treated in the street—trodden underfoot (Parker, 1996). Annette Iggulden's (2009) in her discussion of what she calls "Silent Speech" as creative arts enquiry describes how women expressed the silences in their lives by transforming words into images as "scripto-visual" in a process that revisits history such as in the work of medieval nuns on sacred scripts. She points to Deleuze and Guattari, who defined the process thus, to "de-stratify analysis and re-assemble them in new ways" (Iggulden, 2009:112). Phoenix de Carteret (Somerville, 2005) in her research, engaged the metaphor of the spaces or holes that produce the patterns in lace, when she invoked an old family tradition of lacemaking that enabled her to attend to the uncertainties and knowledge specters—hauntings, consonant with the inquiry itself. De Carteret, Somerville says worked through "the silenced and shameful in the production of classed subjectivities" through the metaphor of lace (Somerville, unpublished paper, 2010).

As discussed previously, the production of transitional items relates to play. Winnicott (1971) believed that play was crucial to the development of an authentic selfhood and sense of being, and key to emotional and psychological well-being; people need to be able to play as children and to continue to play as adults. Jung (1961) tells of his experience as a child, playing what he called the building game: using small blocks, as well as rocks held together by mud for mortar to build castles and buildings but it was only later in life that he realised what had been the value of the building game in a creative life, which he felt he currently lacked. He started to collect rocks and began "playing again", and moved on to sculpture, and painting, especially mandalas, which became an important part of his therapies, described as "the circumambulation of the centre of the self" (1973:197). He said that when in his thinking, practice or writing he came "up against a blank wall, I painted a picture or hewed stones. Each such experience proved to be a *rite d'entrée* for the ideas and works that followed" (1973:175). Having made something it then moves into a visual/tactile form which is the next knowing method I describe.

### Visual Knowing Methods

Visual knowing methods in terms of my methodology include what we see and how we interpret what we see as a form of 'reading'. Sarah Pink (2011) points out, however, that neurologists have recognised that sensory sensations—sounds, smells, tastes, lights, sight and touch—amalgamate in a coherent multisensory world rather than moving along separate channels, which I have designated as reading the landscape as though it is text. In my research, visual knowing is what we glean when we read the landscape; reading cultural artefacts and material culture and photo elicitation is both visual record and journal, a diary of daily events and experiences of different places. Jacques Derrida (2001) speaks of his attempt to "open a space, where even sound, the voice and the tactile impression – the optical… should be … interpreted as *traces*… a broader and more differentiated concept of writing-reading *(écriture)"* which indicates a broadening of both writing and reading from what they may be conceptualised as only text (2001:44).

#### a. Reading the landscape, material culture and land-culture

The universal human characteristics such as is the process of learning to walk can be argued emerges as a means to read a physical environment and is modelled in a particular place and culture, in the view of Bradd Shore (1996). He speaks of the eco-logical brain – in which our bodies evolve and develop cognitive skills within a particular physical world. An example he gives is of a Samoan village that he studied where the geographical layout was reflected in the minds of the people. What is in the forefront and along the beach is *tai* and good while the backwoods are what is *uta* and bad, and people and their behaviour are described using these words as well. He saw culture as a "web of meanings" that are instilled as "pre-existing forms" in the mind, and learning is thus cognitively variant (1996: 379).

If we define place as being like a theatrical stage, it then plays the role of witness to different actors and dramas unfolding. This is the existential space that is established, the landscape to be researched and the untold stories told to fill the space. It involves a different observation. For example, on wanting to connect to the places where the Australian bushranger, Ned Kelly lived out the drama of his life, I was disappointed that there were no relevant 'Kelly' buildings left standing in Glenrowan, Victoria; the space where the hotel stood and site of Kelly's last stand, is a vacant block of land. But then, in looking around to the surrounding landscape, it could be made to speak: the shape of the hill on the horizon, the colour of the soil and old trees left standing filled in the space of this piece of Australian folklore. While not necessarily drawing parallels between contemporaneous and prehistoric societies, Tilley's (1994) view is that his walking in the United Kingdom provides an insight into his study of Mesolithic and Neolithic places where so little information is available. What can be read in the landscape when, as he says, "the skin of the land has gone for good" is but the "bones of the land – the mountains, hills, rocks and valleys ..." that still exist the same as in the time of the Mesolithic period, for example (1994:207). The paths are also those of the movement of animals when, during the Neolithic, animals were domesticated, and, as Tilley says, "herding involved seasonal movements along pathways... serving to inscribe and 'fix' the landscape" (1994:207). These narratives of place establish bonds between people and features of the landscape that encode historicity and sacred power in the view of Tilley, who comes from an archaeological perspective in his particular discourse (1994).

In fabricating place story, we need to read the land culture as does an archaeologist or geologist. Norma Tilden wrote in an article entitled, *'Stratigraphies: Writing a Suspect Terrain',* (Winter 2002) that we need to "read the land as legible" (2002:29) but not just the surface of what is there now – "the terrain" but to go deeper exploring the "terrane", citing geologist, John McPhee (Tilden, 2002:29). By reading what is deeply encoded in a place, we can follow geological practice and surmise about the "blocks of time and space …lay across it a skin, a membrane of text and experience... the skin to hold the stories in place transforming the illegible land into a storied landscape" (Tilden, 2002:29). Tilden quotes Hiss who speaks of "simultaneous perception" wherein: "The familiar hard-and-fast boundary between ourselves and our surroundings seems softened, expanding our sense of the space occupied by here and the time taken up by now and uncovering normally ignored patterns of relationships that make us part of larger groups and events" (Tilden 2002: xiii).

Material culture, in the view of Jon Wagner (2011), raises "Propositions about the relationship of culture, materiality and visibility (that) implicate ideas about how people live, what they care about, who they are, what they see and how they look" (2011:72), and all were evident in these locations. Tilley et al (2006) say that the purpose of the *Handbook of Material Culture* is to emphasize that the material dimension is as fundamental as is a focus on language, or social relations, or time, or space or representations. The purpose of material culture is to deepen our insight into how persons make things

and things make persons, while also illustrative of the land-culture that effected such lifestyle choices. Tilley in the introduction (2006) points out that in reading and decoding the text, different theoretical perspectives compete and are always limited when "things provide a powerful medium for materializing and preserving memories and embodying personal and social experiences" (2006: 9). It is also possible to read women's handiwork as a repository of culture and history in a similar way. It was in reading Tilden's article (2002) regarding geological layering in the landscape, that I came to picture the layering of fabric as representing generations of women's lives as the linens they produced were placed in trunks and travelled with them as they migrated, or as part of a trousseau, or stored as household Manchester.

### b. Reading Cultural Material Artefacts – Women's Handwork

Reading the material artefacts produced by women that were traditional in a particular place was an insight into their lives and culture. Art becomes "artefact" when based on what others have made previously: its "poētic [her spelling] revealing" says Bolt (2004:9). It exists now to hold the memory of its provenance. In exploring visual culture in this manner, the researcher/researched is a respondent who can stand apart from her work and interpret it first-hand, it has not been filtered through a second party. The practice behind the production is its value as "embodied cultural capital", in fact, shrinking from what may be an obvious failure as 'works of art' to be valued by others, rather than sold or displayed in a gallery says Bolt (2004:7). Bolt (2004) described the role of the art historian as one who reads works of art in terms of unique qualities, identifies a sense of movement and focal points, makes a semiotic reading and analysis of the codes especially after their production, and builds the case as to their social meaning.

It is visual media's expressive capabilities that lie within material culture: the physical artefacts of a particular group of people – items that were made for the household that survive as embroidered cloths or tapestries that hung on walls, clothing, handmade toys and dolls but also old family photographs and so on. Viewing and touching these items can bring one into an intimate relationship with a culture and the people who made the items in an unusual way, especially as you are able to touch what they made, despite the passing of time and their makers' demise. To produce a similar item is a mnemonic process of decision-making: what to purchase, the fabric, stitching, colours and content, creating another opportunity for intimacy. Their lives become more accessible through the production process. What does it say of the women and their lives, and what they attempted to express and to bring into their lives through their handwork? The temperament required for precise fine cross-stitch work for example; the time they had available; the materials and the cultural iconography chosen as to what was symbolic of their environment and landscape. It reflects what was valued and their attempts to create meaning and bring aesthetics into their lives and can be read as text, or 'imagetext' – the term coined by Mitchell in what he called picture theory: visual and verbal representation (1994b).

Growing up in Zimbabwe Helen K. Ball (2008) studied the arts expression of the Shona people and said that her direct experience led her to better understand the spiritual connection they have to each other and to their ancestry as it is expressed through their arts. Music, dance, storytelling, sculpture, pottery making, and fabric arts and crafts are a creative, cultural expression of a Shona's psychology that is sustaining. In speaking of quilt making, she said that it speaks of deep knowing, "Art helps us connect with personal, subjective emotions and through such a process, it enables us to discover our own interior landscape ... the reflexive, transformative act of making art has many benefits… cognitive exercise, emotional catharsis, creation and explication of imaginative potential, theory building, perspective shifting ..." (2008: 551).

bel hooks (2009) relates her grandmother's quilt making reusing remnants of fabric to the fragments of memory that are recalled in story-telling. hooks' grandmother did not set out to make story quilts but she "believed that each quilt had its own narrative – a story that began from the moment she considered making a particular quilt" (2009: 159). In just the same way, hooks in her book *Art on my Mind: visual politics* (1995) says that the art that evolves from place does not set out to tell a story but is in the story. In a discussion with artist Carrie Mae, about the twin disadvantages of being exiled and black that have contributed to her art practice, Mae explained that "like all other exiles, we imagine home, we imagine journeys of return ... we embark on such journeys by first looking for traces" (1995:74). When looking at Mae's work, hooks recalls Derrida's palimpsest that reveals the multi-layered nature of our experience: "a vision, a journey through time – past, present, and future – to unravel connecting threads … there is both the evocation of exile ... and a politics of dislocation" (1995:74).

### c. Photography - Elicitation and Journal

Photography was an essential aspect of my research from a number of perspectives. A camera when travelling especially overseas has become a taken-for-granted piece of equipment, as is the activity of taking photographs, sometimes an end in itself. In fact the coach tour operator stopped at places simply for us to take a photo when my sister and I travelled in the United Kingdom. In fact one can wonder at the compulsion now to photograph rather than just enjoy the sights and commit them to memory. Photographs are a way of sharing experiences, of course and can elicit memories on reflection when time has passed. It may only have been on viewing a photograph that I had taken, that I moved into writing about an experience as Tilley's "thick description" (1994) as the landscape/place impression moved on to become imprinted on my memory.

Birkeland (2005) points to geographer Michael Crang's argument that it is important to see photography not as the simple recording of an event but as a creative act – a narrative of travel into another landscape, of meaning that is fictional and is his interpretation of the viewpoint of de Certeau (1984). Taking photographs during my research travels was to record the story visually of what I saw as well as to help to write a new story sometimes overlaying my story on to that of my forebears. The

personal narration of art and writing stimulated by travel and movement, as Birkeland explains, become "preferred stories ... a narrative of the self created and experienced in a temporal and spatial way linking the exterior world, past and present, to the interior world of the person" (2005:106). According to Mike Crang, says Birkeland (2005), there is a need for a past, which contributes in seeing the self as an accumulatory project and photography plays an important role in this project; can capitalize on experiences that provide opportunities for the accumulation of cultural symbols. For tourists as self-knowing and reflexive individuals, Crang, in the view of Birkeland (2005), believes that photography plays an important part in the creation of spatial stories when compared with classical autobiography, which is dominated by linear, chronological form. They are about connectivity and communication between the times and spaces of the individual - a spatial and temporal practice in tourism and a form of self-narration suitable for the modern age. In a similar way, Birkeland reminds us that

> images encourage embodied knowledge – it is through our bodies that we conduct research – people are not ideas, but flesh and blood beings learning through their senses and responding to images through their embodied experiences. The visual disarms or bypasses the purely intellectual, leading to a more authentic and complete glimpse of what a particular experience is like or what people think or feel. There is an unintentional but automatic and visceral identification with some images (2005:46).

As such the research encounter and production of images, Pink reflects is always "collaborative and situated" with a high degree of self-reflexivity that seeks to interrogate one's own role, values and moral judgments, situatedness and subjectivity in the production of knowledge as part of a multi-sensory, "culturally constructed category" rather than simply a claim to look and record (2011:602). In looking at the photo of a cyclist Pink points out that we may experience the imagined sensation of riding if we have had that experience but we may also be reminded of other glossy magazines we have read and the smell and touch of the paper (2011). Photographs are not just images she says they are the outcomes of multi-sensory contexts, encounters, and engagements. The act of taking a photo involves the convergence of a range of different social, material, discursive (logical rather intuitive) and moral elements in a multisensory environment, rather than being a solely visual process (Pink, 2011).

Photographs though can be seen to be a way of distancing oneself from the place being viewed and looking through the camera lens rather than your own lens. Not confident of what is remembered as an imprint of place, we use a mechanical means of recording the impression that has become second-nature to travel. The image can either serve, to broaden out to be inclusive of memories as one fills in the surroundings, or narrow down to frame what one wants to remember of the experience. Susan Sontag speaks of the traveller who uses the camera when they are unsure of what their response to an encounter could be; it is an appearance of participation but as she says it "has set up a chronic voyeuristic relation to the world which levels the meaning of all events" and is "essentially an act of non-intervention" (1977:10-11). But apart from the visual recording it is also a medium of exchange when in

taking a photograph one illustrates respect and appreciation for another's country, culture and landscape/places. An accompaniment to photographs, then are the textual/oral knowing methods that are an obvious adjunct to embodied, visual knowing practices.

## Textual/Oral Knowing Methods

'We live our lives through the stories that we tell' is a refrain one hears, the manner in which we continue to build identity and pass on culture one could surmise. Ingold writes at length of "a storied world" (2011a: 141) as does Ken Plummer (1993) who said that "Stories have recently moved centre stage in social thought—in anthropology they are seen as pathways to understanding culture. In psychology, they are the bases of identity. In history, they provide the tropes for making sense of the past. In psychoanalysis, they provide 'narrative truths' for analysis" (1993: 333). In philosophy, Plummer asserts, they are the bases for new forms of "world-making" and the key to creating communities, and even economics has recognized its "storied character"—a clear narrative moment has now been sensed (1993:333). The benefits for a writer moving in a new environment has benefits for writers who are also strangers in that they are detached enough to make objective observations, in the view of Kupferberg (1998) that will inform, develop and colour their writing. There are no constraints or need to assimilate into the community or environment, or become settlers. Importantly however was his insight that those who have spent time in another country or environment as strangers may return home able to look at their familiar social environment in a fresh way (Kupferberg, 1998, unpaginated). This insight throws an even different light on the familiar quote by Eliot as quoted previously: to see differently when you return to where you started from is because you know so much more about the world and the human condition on your return. Emily Potter identifies the capacity of the story to be used "reconstructively" as a means to seek out previously invisible place stories, or to generate new stories about place when, rather than only focus on a sense of loss when we think of Australia given the dispossession of the indigenous population, we should focus on "a place continually composed through acts of discursive recollection that materialise hidden geographies of life and community in the face of their erasure" (2009:66). Thus, writing and telling stories as a method of inquiry is to uncover what is hidden, to expose a space and a time period. Anita Desai, in speaking of the spirit of place, says that time is as much an unexplored territory as place and "writing is often a journey of exploration" (1984: 107).

### a. Writing as a Method of Inquiry/Narrative Enquiry

Although we may see writing as something we do to record and document and to present our ideas to others, we also write relation to Richardson's terminology: writing as a method of inquiry, as research practice to find out more about ourselves and a topic (2005). Richardson views this writing as the manner in which we "word the world into existence" and as more vital and dynamic, where the writer's

voice is not silenced or suppressed but opens up a space (2005: 923). It is only when I began to write about an experience or event that I reached a deeper understanding and 'knowing' of what had happened there. I travelled overseas and told my story but recognise that it was a 'way of thinking' located within the context of my thesis topic, and read it as a story back to myself from that point of view. There is an interweaving of data collection, analysis and interpretation with the assertion that the experiences were at times transitional and at others transformational. Narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007) uses field texts as the units of analysis to research and understand the way people create meaning in their lives as narratives, through: stories, family stories, autobiography/biography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations and interviews, photos (and other artefacts), and life experience. This narrative approach is proposed as capturing the emotion of the moment described, making it active rather than passive, and is infused with the latent meaning being communicated by the teller. Birkeland (2005) as previously quoted, described herself as a travelling field worker, to facilitate communication and critical reflection which is the preserve of Place Studies as well.

Finding a voice and giving voice are important aspects of this fieldwork especially for women who have been silent and silenced throughout history. When the supervisor of my Honours thesis said that my great grandmother's voice in my narrative poem was plaintive, at first I took this to be a criticism, but then realised that at least she had a voice now and as a migrant woman in 1880s her voice was most likely plaintive, perhaps also a reflection of mine, as a newcomer to Australia in the 1980s too and as valid as any other. I only discovered a voice for her by walking in her shoes, reading historical accounts of the time and then writing from that perspective. The opportunity of "experiencing a situation in a form that allows you to walk in the shoes of another, provides "a deep insight into what others are experiencing… a form of research that is derived or evoked through emphatic experience" in the view of Eisner (2008: 7).

### b. Writing Poetry and Creative Writing

An aspect of the methodology too is writing: poetry, and creative writing. Poetry allows for the expression of emotion and expresses the essence of the experience, as discussed previously (see frontispiece). Creative writing allows for storytelling in a form that we recognise as fiction, but is frequently based on factual accounts and actual places. Richardson refers to the breakdown of the solid demarcations between fact and fiction and between what is imagined and what is supposedly true (2005). Richardson refers to the contradictory interpretations that are "governed by social interests and prevailing discourses" in any case with "the individual both site and subject of these discursive struggles for identity and for remaking memory", which puts into doubt any claim of truth (2005: 929). Nicola Boyd (2009) discusses the concerns of moving creative writing research from the margins to the mainstream and proposes her own methodology with what she describes as 'strange loops'. This seems appropriate

as a metaphor for what occurs as one writes a fictional story based on an element of what is factual but that moves in a loop between invention and fact.

### c. Oral Narrative

Travelling provides opportunities to meet people and to have conversations that are primary research sources. In my case such conversations were informal, unplanned and undocumented, but often served as turning points, further stimulation and new motivations. The contact that I had with other people is as much a part of learning as is reading; it represents the verbal knowing aspect of my research that can only be translated into text, as I did not have a video camera or tape recorder. Conversations can often assist one to process and interpret information and enhance understanding. As a traveller, one is more likely to notice details that locals take for granted and such details can be a source of creativity as well, as previously discussed. Especially relevant to my undertaking was to travel and spend time with various family members as we told each other stories, reminisced and made new stories together as collective biography and memory. Travelling with family members especially in a car, on a bus tour or plane provided extended periods of time for talking and debate without the usual interruptions such as mobile phones or more urgent matters that arise in our daily lives.

### d. Reading Literature with a Critical Perspective

In terms of reading literature of the places in heritage, I am referring to works of fiction. More so than in historical accounts and works of non-fiction, writers of fiction and poetry use descriptive language, especially of landscape, to provide a deeper insight into how places may have been perceived by earlier writers, and by extrapolation, members of that society and thus forebears.

In discussing the confusion between life-narrative and fiction, Smith and Watson (2001) speak of the convergence between the two genres but ultimately define one mode as self-referential, in other words, what fiction is not. This is open to dispute. Books are to a great extent self-referential, although described as novels when published. In the same way, my research is both life-narrative and fictional at times but is situated within what are considered to be factual historical records as a discourse. The critical perspective that underlies one's reading includes reading between the lines in fiction and historical references. Often in the literature written about South Africa, what is not said is often an undercurrent of awareness that one brings to the reading given the censorship that was in place during the period of Apartheid for instance.

## Conclusion

From a phenomenological perspective I was open to just "being there", wherever I was at the time in the manner described by Tilley (1994). I was also experiencing landscape as to what is socially inscribed as well, in line with Foucault's (1991) assertions. My bodily-kinaesthetic learning, as I have called it, is encompassed within Place Studies and included travelling, walking-in-place, taking

photographs, researching local crafts and purchasing examples and materials to make my own items, using my hands as women throughout history have done to create domestic items—sewn, embroidered, knitted and crocheted—that evoked their lives, culture and identity. The data to be analysed included my writing and interpreting my embodied/emotional responses, especially in places where my forebears originated. Travelling to places in my heritage was an attempt to read and imprint landscapes and land-culture, those missing parts of my unstable, constructed identity. The intention was to inculcate embodied experience as performative—movement, writing and art-practices—in the spaces and places of my ancestors to awaken that part of my inherited body to that part of my heritage.

# Part One
# Formative Landscapes in my heritage

In part one, divided into chapter three and four, I trace my journeys to The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Scotland as well as to the places where I have lived for more than 30 years apiece: Australia (the latter straddles both heritage and dwelling place) and in chapter four – South Africa in order to extend my understanding of place, belonging and also that of alterity and exile. Using a combination of public and family history, and individual experience, I trace the footsteps of my forebears, and reflect on their places and the landscape imprints they carried with them on migration; their attempts to belong, to occupy as well as to exclude. From tracing this history I extend my reflections of place and identity, by exploring various features of the natural landscape and the attempts to forge meaning to places by way of myth, folklore and historical legend. I consider the experience of being born and growing up in South Africa as the most influential and formative with the confluence of the political/indigenous history on the landscape and identity. In reviewing some of the recorded history and my personal experience, I attempt to come to terms with the guilt and extreme sorrow I feel for what occurred there under the system of Apartheid and my own perceived complicity in those events as well as the consequences of my leaving both the country and my family. This forms a background from which I can begin to understand my relationship to place and landscape – by means of a phenomenological encounter and various modes of 'being in place' – walking, riding, travelling, tourism. Of course it is not enough to simply 'be' in place, one must also represent it, and examine how others have also attempted to describe their relation to the same places. Consequently I use and explore a range of attempts to capture and represent place/landscape – in literature, oral history, photography and finally my own artistic and creative practice.

These journeys and the methods I adopt to narrate my relation to these places will, I hope allow for a more complex relationship to be understood, one that necessarily combines a range of physical, historic and personal modalities to engage with something that shapes us and continually eludes us at the same time. I have presented each as a fabrication/fabric-ation.

# Chapter 3
# Fabric-ating 1: On Visiting The Netherlands

One of two *hunebedden* (dolmens) set in a copse of trees in the middle of a farmer's field, Borger, Drenthe, The Netherlands
[Photo: F.B. Dent 2010]

Glacial rock
Carried south to Drenthe
A tomb piled high

In the farmer's field a silent
Megalithic memorial
[F.B. Dent, 2011]

## Introduction

As previously stated, my ties to The Netherlands are two-fold: not only is it where my daughter, son-in-law and grand-daughter live but most likely is also where my paternal grandfather's heritage lies. I have visited them in Delft on several occasions and can only describe my response to what remains of 'old Delft' as one of pure love. Delft has been described as one of the most beautiful of Dutch towns. With the open window angled just right, in the bedroom where I slept, I could see the reflection of the Oude Kerk (old church). Both this tilting church built in the 1200s and another situated on the broad

cobbled town square, the Niewe Kerk (new church) built in the 1300s, represent that symbol of repression in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church, I was drawn to their long history. On the other side of the square is the Civic Centre, where my daughter and son-in law were married. I would often lie in bed unable to sleep, listening to the Oude Kerk's bell, ringing out the hours of the night and think of the people who had listened to this sound over the decades. I wanted to find my Oude Kerk, too. Every day for the two months I was there, apart from when we went exploring on weekends and for a week in Drenthe, I would spend the morning working on my thesis and then would set off walking along the canals and the narrow roads to the town in the afternoon. The roads I had to navigate were always a busy mix of pedestrians, bicycles, motor cycles, cars and trams while the train ran on an elevated overhead track. The more recent thudding sound of construction at this junction was evidence of the major undertaking by the Delft city council to have this section of the train line run underground in the future and to restore the original canal—a bonus for the houses situated alongside. I would miss the sound of the train though, I thought, as my stomach turned over in an adrenalin rush, given the speed at which it seemed to travel above my head at as it curved along the tracks to Rotterdam.

## Dutch/Belgian Heritage

The different cultural influences of my heritage point to a somewhat controversial union at the time given the animosity between the English and Afrikaans speaking South Africans: my paternal English grandmother, Winifred Caroline Holden, met and married my Dutch-named grandfather Albertus Johannes Theunissen in South Africa. She had migrated from England with her first husband, who disappeared soon after arrival, leaving her with their baby son, Brian. My grandfather's background was a mystery as he was raised by relatives but recently the story was clarified when I was contacted on *Facebook* by a distant relative who is researching the family tree and discovered that his origins indeed lay in Limburg in Belgium and subsequently in The Netherlands. The only memory my father had of his paternal grandfather was that he arrived on horseback on one occasion, but that proved to be inaccurate given that he died before my father was born according the records but does verify that his mother had died soon after his birth. On official documents such as my father's baptismal certificate, a baptism that took place in a Presbyterian Church, my grandfather had anglicised his name to read Albert John. He may have wanted to avoid the discrimination that persevered in the business world towards Afrikaners or it was a rejection of his family background but as my father preferred not to discuss such matters, the truth was not to be revealed. Although the advent of the Nationalist government in South Africa in the election of 1948, spelt the end of the English dominated past, even in 1953 when my brother was born, an Afrikaans name was a disadvantage, especially as regards employment opportunities, and he was christened with my grandmother's maiden name, Holden, to form the double-barrelled surname Holden-Theunissen. My brother's children, who now live in England, have dropped the latter part of the name. Given that my sister and I would marry, and our names would change, it was not expected to be

necessary on our account. My mother had to give up her Scottish maiden name, Browning: first, to take on Louw, her first husband's name, (he was killed during World War II) and then Theunissen and she disliked being addressed in Afrikaans in shops or elsewhere when it was assumed that she was Afrikaans-speaking.

Despite our leaving South Africa to give our children a different future in Australia escaping the influence of the Afrikaans-dominated government and the racist system of Apartheid instigated by the Nationalist Government in 1980, my daughter managed to marry into a Dutch family in Australia, and she has now lived in The Netherlands for the past 13 years. My relationship with that country is thus cemented and given my probable heritage traced through the name of Theunissen, the strong affinity I feel when I am there, even as an English-speaking South African, is tinged with a degree of confusion and animosity concerning what came to pass in South Africa since the arrival of the White population and I felt compelled to come to terms with it.

## The Dutch in South Africa

Much of the animosity and prejudice between the English and Afrikaans-speaking communities is deeply seated in historical events, such as the Anglo-Boer Wars and even prior to that, in the early history of the Cape colony, as is further discussed in a later section. Many who do not have much knowledge of the history of South Africa may be unaware of the divisions that existed within the White population and, in fact, among the Black tribes as well, which helped to complicate what were even more complex divisions between black and white and the defining role such divisions played in events. As my personal history was implicated in all aspects of the tragic story of racism as it progressed in South Africa, given that my family origins were tainted with Dutch or English, depending on one's perspective, I felt that I had to deal with the questions I had regarding the Afrikaans. First and foremost I sought to understand why I felt such deep dislike for them as a group and the blame I laid at their feet, rightly or wrongly, for what eventuated in the Apartheid era in South Africa.

Having spent several wonderful holidays visiting my family in The Netherlands, I had one burning question: How was it that the Dutch there were so different from those who had settled in South Africa? In The Netherlands, the Dutch became the most open-minded, free society in a landscape confined by small parcels of land between the encroaching sea and the many rivers that converge from all over Europe in The Netherlands before entering the sea. Yet in stark contrast, those who went to South Africa to escape any form of authority into the wide-open spaces were the narrowest, most deeply prejudiced people on the face of the Earth, or so it seemed. Racism and the system of Apartheid were part of the reason why we immigrated to Australia – profound in our personal history as well as in the lives of millions of others in South Africa, since the arrival of the Dutch, over 400 years ago.

An interesting opinion given by a friend of my father's who lives in The Netherlands, to whom I posed the question in 2010, was that The Netherlands continues to be a country of contrasts and complexity: what appears on the surface is not always the full picture, he said. For example, while legal drug-supply venues and prostitution are permitted in places such as Amsterdam, the Dutch Reformed Church is still attempting to promulgate Calvinistic attitudes. As an example, its website is closed on a Sunday; and visitors to the site are admonished for using the computer on a day of rest when they should be at prayer. It's not surprising that that this church and its various offshoots in South Africa used their influence and interpretation of the Bible, labelled Christian-Nationalism, to dominate policies that led to the brutality that unfolded.

Although the history of European exploration of Southern Africa begins with the Portuguese (Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco Da Gama) and the English (in the person of Sir Francis Drake), neither of these countries at first laid claim to the territory now called South Africa. Portugal claimed the area called Mozambique on the east coast and Angola on the west, and the English were to return at a later date when gold and diamonds were discovered. On March 20, 1602 the world changed forever, as Holland aimed to challenge the Portuguese and take over the international spice trade, a trade that only declined towards the end of the 18$^{th}$ century when British Imperialism challenged them. Perhaps the severe south-easterly winds and storms off the coast of the Cape, where it sits at the confluence of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, rendered it unattractive as a port and the English sailed on to calmer waters. Perhaps the Dutch had a better experience of the weather: when it was referred to as the 'Cape of Good Hope' rather than the 'Cape of Storms' as was the impression of the English sailors. In fact it was after the Dutch ship *Niewe Haerlem* was wrecked at Table Bay, in 1647 that a junior merchant onboard, Leendert Janszen who survived, wrote a report to VOC recommending that a refreshment station be established at the Cape ("Leendert Janszen" n.d). It was a private company, the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) or in Dutch, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) that established the refreshment station. The VOC was said to be the world's first multi-national company bringing goods from China such as porcelain, which was the influence on the Delft blue and white, textiles, spices such as pepper, cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, as well as coffee and tea were brought back and influenced cooking (Ran, 2003). Their ships also went to Persia, Japan, the Malaysian Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago through the port of what was Delfhaven, at the time part of Delft but is now incorporated into Rotterdam, at the mouth of the Niewe Maas River 10 km south (Ran, 2003).

The need for a halfway station at the Cape was simple, we were told in history lessons at school, to avoid diseases such as scurvy afflicting sailors on the long voyage to the East Indies, the consumption of fresh water, fruit and vegetables was found to be crucial and could be grown at the Cape to supply ships halfway through the voyage. From my point of view, it is amazing to see a school lesson materialised, with the insignia of the VOC on a building in Delft. Delft was one of the six chambers of the

company in different cities in The Netherlands. Given it was a private company, business goals were foremost in their minds, as Sparks (1991) explains, when the VOC sent Jan van Riebeeck and crew on three ships in 1652. Their motivation was not land exploration and settlement but to establish a refreshment station on the route to the East Indies. Sparks speaks of the bitter-almond hedge (remnants of which still remain) that was planted to symbolise the barrier the Dutch wished to establish between their outpost and the rest of Africa, where they had no intention of settling (Sparks, 1991). Had the Portuguese been the original settlers, the lives of the indigenous inhabitants may have been somewhat different, given the experience of countries such as Brazil where racial integration has been more successful, as he points out (1991). What eventuated in the Cape, J.M. Coetzee explains, may not have originally been the "myth of Eden taking shape in the garden" but it became the place of "the wandering tribes of Afrikaners like the Israelites that exerted an 'animating force' as the search for the 'Promised Land'" (Coetzee, 1988: 2). Coetzee was born in Cape Town and has written extensively about South Africa, winning a number of awards for his fiction and non-fiction.

The VOC's journey to the East was to restock on spices required to mask the smell of decaying meat prior to the invention of refrigeration, according to Sparks (1991). The spices that feature in Dutch cuisine include cinnamon, nutmeg, pepper and mild curry but not the hot curries in traditional South African dishes that are rather more the influence of India and Malaya, one would surmise given the numbers of people from both those countries taken to South Africa as indentured labourers or slaves on the return voyage from the East. The history of the VOC was somewhat sanitised in our history lessons Mindy Ran, in writing of "The forgotten history of the slave trade" (2003) claims that the first slaves at the Cape were from Angola. The practice of slavery appears to have been orchestrated through an arm of the VOC, the Dutch West Indies Company (WIC) which had the same board of governors, may have taken the first slaves from Africa to Virginia, USA (Ran, 2003). Dr Susan le Gene, head curator of the Tropen Museum in Amsterdam said that slavery was hardly mentioned in the 400 year celebration of the VOC and the Golden Age of the Dutch (Ran, 2003).

Well-known South African writer Olive Schreiner, writing in the 1920s, spoke of the early arrival of the first European settlers in 1652, in South Africa. She describes them as Frisian (from Friesland, a province in what is now The Netherlands) and also German, Swedish and even English soldiers and sailors (1923). Interesting also in that Afrikaans (the language of the Boers), bears more resemblance to Frisian I am told by my Dutch friend who is attempting to teach me her home language. I had assumed that they were all of those on-board Van Riebeeck's ships were Dutch, a detail left out of the oft-repeated history lesson at school. The national borders in The Netherlands region were only drawn between the years 1550 and 1650 "when the political identity of an independent Netherlands nation was being established," Schama explains in his vast text that explores the character of the Dutch (1988: 34), it is significant as he says that the "dramatic physical alteration of its landscape," which contributed to the formative Dutch

nationhood was already underway then (Schama, 1988:34). Schama points out that the Dutch believed that they were ordained to inherit the land they had reclaimed from the sea and retained from invaders, a message pushed by the Calvinist preachers, and carried with them to South Africa as well (1988:34). Schreiner (1923) describes those who arrived in South Africa as having in common "an unquenchable passion for movement and change, and a fierce rebellion against the limitations with which civilised life hedges about and crushes the life of the individual ... free-fighting children of fortune, rovers of the sea and the sword ..." Even the orphan girls who were sent to be wives from Holland, she maintains, came willingly to a new land and did not look back (1923:69). The notion of being "the chosen people" is very significant as regards the conduct of the Dutch in South Africa. As Sparks points out "implicit in it is the principle of the basic inequality of men" wherein "Calvinism induces a sense of individual powerlessness" in any attempt to overcome what was predestined (Sparks, 1991: 27). One could question whether the mixture of sailors who arrived in 1652 personified Calvinistic religious zealots but Calvinism was certainly the Dutch legacy to South Africa.

The inhabitants of Africa were doomed before Van Riebeeck even arrived at the Cape, given the Dutch belief that only White Christians could be blessed. Having visited the Cape previously, Van Riebeeck apparently considered the racial superiority of the Dutch a given, and his early perceptions of the indigenous inhabitants: the Bushmen (!Kung) and Hottentots, as they called them (Khoi-khoi), was that they were dull, stupid and brutal, and lived without conscience, according to Sparks (1991). In any case, Van Riebeeck made no effort to learn their language or their culture they were simply classified as the enemy in their native continent to allow for their 'dispersal', given the propensity of the Khoi-khoi especially to steal cattle. They were agriculturalists and had large herds of Nguni cattle on land it is believed they had occupied since the 5$^{th}$ century (Sparks, 1991).

Sparks describes a significant time in Dutch history prior to their "surging forward as the world's leading trading nation" into the "Golden Age of Dutch civilisation" with the VOC (Sparks, 1991: 24), the Eighty Years War [1568–1648] against Hapsburg Spain, which the Dutch provinces waged for their independence, led by their beloved William of Orange [1533–1584]. William of Orange was murdered in Delft; the bullet holes can still be seen in the wall of the stairwell at the *Museum Het Prinsenhof*. The eventual defeat of the Spanish who had brutalised both the land and the people with the intention of either laying waste to or capturing it, led to what Sparks describes as "a national myth of a re-enacted Exodus" (1991: 25). Joost van den Vondel [1587–1679], the celebrated Dutch poet, wrote an epic poem "with a specific comparison between the redemption of the children of Israel and the liberation of the Netherlands" says Sparks (1991: 26). Although I saw a very old copy of a collection of Van den Vondel's poetry for sale in Delft, I left it where it belonged in The Netherlands especially as my attempts to understand Dutch, especially old forms, was minimal.

My daughter and I went to the festival in Leiden, on the October 3, which commemorates the date, in 1574, of the Dutch in holding out against the Spanish siege, despite starvation and "Prince William opened the IJsseldijk and other river defences to flood the countryside, paralysing Spanish troop movements and enabling a rebel flotilla to sail almost to the city walls as a relieving force" (Sparks, 1991: 26). The traditional food on offer at the festival was the same food that the Dutch ate when eventually their famine was broken: potato with fried onion and carrots mixed in together and called *hutspot.* The events at Leiden and Bergen op Zoom where they held out against the Spanish "imprinted the self-image of the Dutch as a chosen people", says Sparks (1991: 27).

Given the Eighty Year War against the Spanish, it is surprising that on December 5, the Dutch celebrate *Sinterklaas,* when an old bearded man, dressed in the garb of an abbot, re-enacts the arrival of Saint Nicholas from Spain bringing presents for children. In recent times he arrives aboard a steamboat, and his journey is tracked each night on television programs for the benefit of children as the build-up to the day and Christmas. This celebration has obscure origins: some say that Sinterklaas is a conversion of the pagan figure, Odin, from German mythology – a story then incorporated into Christianity as Saint Nicholas who is buried in Spain, hence the starting point for his journey. That he arrives by steamboat appears to be derived from a more recent children's book, but given that Saint Nicholas is the Patron Saint of Ships, it is a plausible connection. His helper is *Zwarte Pieter* (Black Peter), a dark-skinned boy traditionally dressed in Moorish clothing, who has come to represent what is naughty but carries a willow branch to meet out punishment to children. In recent times, he has been interpreted as a racist figure, and children are told that he is black from all the chimneys he goes down. But the Sinterklaas and Zwarte Pieter tradition continues with children dressing up in Moorish clothing, parades and concerts and is much more important for children, my daughter tells me, than is gift-giving at Christmas. It surprises me that this tradition did not find currency in South Africa where Zwarte Pieter would have fitted right in, given that the Black population were considered bad in the past and continue as helpers to the Whites. The Santa Claus figure of Christmas, that most of us in Australia would know, is of course also based on Saint Nicholas but he has relocated to the Arctic Circle, and wears red (apparently in response to early Coca-Cola advertisements), and his helper has transformed into a group of elves.

My grand-daughter, Sharmae with 'Zwarte Pieter' at the street parade in Delft wearing her Moorish hat although he appears to have swapped his headgear for a bucket-shaped hat
[Photo: L. Versteeg, 2013]

An additional influence on the national character of the Dutch, Sparks asserts, was the struggle between Spanish Catholicism and Protestant Calvinism, which resulted in the Dutch Church's official dogma 'The Synod of Dort' adopted at the great Cathedral at Dordrecht, "a sternly conservative interpretation of the predestination doctrine, which holds that God has foreordained some of mankind for grace and salvation and others for eternal damnation" (1991:27). My daughter and I also visited Dordrecht and saw the Cathedral, which luckily escaped the floods of 30 years ago when many people drowned. While flood had saved the country from the Spanish previously, on this occasion it was also seen to be divine retribution for overabundance and comfort. The notion of an ascetic life without enjoyment or pleasure was exemplified by the church, and had portent for the lives the Dutch were to lead in South Africa (Sparks, 1991). Perhaps what is more likely to have caused the floods is Dordrecht's position at the confluence of five rivers and rainfall, as that was much higher than average that year, as happened in 2012 in the northern provinces, where the annual rainfall fell over the period of only a month.

Sparks refers to Max Weber's deduction that the "social effect of religious doctrine ... is a subconscious influence on practical conduct" and suggests the basis of the religiosity that the Dutch took to South Africa leading to the "sacral nationalism of a chosen people in their promised land, imbued with a sense of divine mission and equipped with a utopian ideology for reordering society that amounted to a civil religion" (1991:30). Thus the Dutch Reformed Church and its derivatives subsequently came to underpin civil government in South Africa while in The Netherlands, Sparks points out, there was a break out from piety in art forms such as the paintings of Pieter Breugel "swarming genre canvasses redolent of conviviality" and other Dutch masters "which blended an outward soberness with the discreet

contemporary sex symbolism" in their art (1991: 34). Thus, we begin to see the contradictions that would colour South African life, when even the game of *Snakes and Ladders* was censored as a game-of-chance, but the homelands (demarcated by the South African Nationalist government as outside of the confines of South Africa) were assisted in establishing casinos to help fund their independence (such as at Sun City in the former homeland of Bophutaswana) (Sparks, 1991).

What moved the settlers away from the original settlement at the Cape was also an economic company decision by the VOC: the need to cut costs by reducing staff numbers. The VOC released some of the men to be free burghers and given land as compensation for being taken off the payroll. The result was that those Khoi-khoi, not yet been dispersed, were thrown off their traditional lands so that the new settlers could move in and grow the crops needed by the VOC. Later, Van Riebeeck was to justify their land grabbing actions as "the just desserts of the laws of war" (Sparks, 1991: 39). What was not anticipated was that the burghers would begin "moving inland ... gobbling up land they now believed they were freely entitled to" and were out of the reach of the VOC administration or any regulations apart from the Bible (Sparks, 1991:39). If there was a dispute they would just up and leave looking for new ground further north not willing to negotiate a settlement or compromise, Sparks says (1991).

The isolation in South Africa meant that they (the new Boer race) "missed the momentous developments of 18$^{th}$-century Europe, the age of reason in which liberalism and democracy were born" – events such as the French Revolution (Sparks, 1991:42). But they were left stuck back in the 17$^{th}$ century when their forebears had left The Netherlands and Sparks says that they were, "the simplest and most backward fragment of Western civilisation in modern times" frozen in time, but "it bred in them a tenacity of purpose, a power of silent endurance and the keenest self-respect" (1991:42). In fact, their way of life began to resemble the native inhabitants: they were semi-nomadic, surviving and adapting in a subsistence economy too distant from the VOC, to trade their wares, and thus was born "the white tribe of Africa" (Sparks, 1991). They were not idle, says Sparks, they simply saw the Blacks as their natural servants, drawing clear lines as to what was *kaffir work* (meaning those who are uncivilised) while they did the real work of hunting and herding their stock in the "hardest of continents" (1991:44). To define their separate identity, however a people need a language and thus we see the birth of Afrikaans.

## Moedertaal (The Mother Language)

Second only to his love of the land then, says Olive Schreiner (1923) in one of her essays, is the Boer's *moedertaal* (mother language). So while the English, I assert, use Afrikaans as carrying the vernacular to encompass the humour and affection for place, for the Afrikaner his language is sacred and the Boers developed a body of literature to back it up as a fully fledged language. Schreiner then compares the evolution of the Boer's language to what happens in nature when a species does not die out as it has done elsewhere but survives in isolation as "a child of the seventeenth century" (1923:93).

Perhaps this description seems harsh (as is Sparks' in the previous paragraph) but it serves to explain to some extent the political system—Apartheid—that was adopted to sustain this passion, which continues in pockets throughout South Africa today. While the word *Boer* may be translated as farmer, it means far more than that: it is one who speaks Afrikaans and all that encompasses, no matter his occupation (Schreiner, 1923).

Although few in number, the French Huguenots were a significant migratory group in terms of what they contributed to the birth of Afrikaans as well as to the establishment of the wine industry. Although some French had been amongst those who came with Jan van Riebeeck, the main group of French Huguenots left France to escape Louis XIV and the revoked Edict of Nantes, which "had for about a century guaranteed religious freedom to this community" (Rosenthal, 1965:250), thus preventing them from following their own brand of Protestantism. Although they numbered only 176 when they came to the Cape in 1687, out of a group of 500,000 who fled from France, their contribution to the development of the country was great (Rosenthal, 1965). They were to establish the wine industry in the Cape on land given them in the area now known as Fransch Hoek [French Hook] and left their mark in many South African surnames, such as De Villiers, Du Plessis, Joubert, Retief and my mother's first husband's name: Louw (Rosenthal, 1965). Families bearing these names are spread throughout South Africa but are usually Afrikaans-speaking as a result of their early history at the Cape.

The Huguenots were forbidden from using French in public life and it was not taught in schools. Schreiner links the development of Afrikaans to the autocratic decree that forced the French to speak Dutch. What emerged was more of a 'kitchen Dutch,' which Schreiner points out was "so clipped as to be scarcely recognisable" as Dutch (1923:87). The *taal,* as it was called, shrunk Dutch to only a few hundred words "shorn of almost all their inflections... the plurals, which in Dutch are formed in various and complex ways the *taal* forms plurals by an almost universal addition of an 'e'... with verbs reduced to a third person singular", she says (1923:87). Dutch was also 'kitchenised' when the early settlers spoke to their slaves although there are a few words from Malay (such as *piesang* for banana) and from what she calls 'native sources', the predominant influence is a bastardised form of Dutch (1923). Schreiner compares this speech with the Southern American Negro dialects in stories such as Brer-Fox and Brer-Rabbit as told in Uncle Remus by the old Southern slave where a poverty of vocabulary results in the same abbreviated condition of words (1923). The language was not slowly shaped but adopted as was required in a short space of time, she says but another theory she identifies is that the "settlement being largely Frisian and wholly uneducated, never spoke Dutch at all, but a dialect" (1923:89). Schreiner summed up the population blend thus even in 1923, when she said "we are a more or less homogenous blend of heterogeneous social particles in different stages of development and of cohesion with one another, underlying and overlaying each other like the varying strata of confused geological formations" and when people attempted to go back and live in Europe they came back because she said they felt

"there was no room there ... it's so free here" (1923:51). The smattering of Afrikaans that I have retained to some extent has hindered my learning Dutch I think especially when the pronunciation is so different. Frequently I found myself reverting to Afrikaans to make myself understood in The Netherlands only to be met with a more confused look than I had received speaking English.

## The Familiar yet Strange

I had previously visited the Netherlands before my daughter lived there en-route to England and on another occasion en-route to the United States and I recalled the easy sense of familiarity because many words are similar in Afrikaans to Dutch especially when written and it certainly helped when ordering from a menu, reading a map or understanding signboards. I knew when visitors to my daughter's home were discussing me when I heard 'moeder' come up, but not whether what they were saying was good or bad. I also apparently 'look Dutch' or sometimes Scandinavian, I have been told, in comparison with my sister who is more like a small-statured English woman. I am tall and big-boned and felt quite comfortable blending in with the other women, the clothing sizes fitted me and people spoke to me in Dutch in shops. I did not stand out as a visitor until I opened my mouth. I loved all things Dutch at the Antiques Market and relished my weekly piece of *Lekkerbek* (a battered fish on sale at the produce market held in the main town square served with varieties of mayonnaise) but did not try the raw herring, eaten straight from the fishmonger's knife down the hatch with a sprinkling of salt and onion. None of the traditional Afrikaans foods that South Africans miss when they are living overseas was on offer: Mrs Ball's *blatjang* (chutney), buttermilk rusks, *melktert* (milk tart), *koeksisters* (syrup-dipped, plaited pastries), *boerewors* (farmer's sausage) or even *biltong* (dried meat for a seafaring voyage). In fact there is more biltong for sale in Australia than could be located in Delft. My son makes both biltong and boerewors and has adopted an African theme in his home identifying with his birth identity, which I find quite curious considering we left there just prior to his first birthday. I love the way people of all ages ride bicycles everywhere in The Netherlands and have the right of way on the roads. They do not have to wear bike-helmets, a plus perhaps as a consequence of their elevated status on the road there. Only the black population and school children rode bicycles in South Africa when I was a child, although the bicycle as a means of transport is significant by its absence now, as the majority of the black population catch over-crowded Hi-Ace style taxis or drive cars. Bike riding now in South Africa, is a leisure-time fitness pursuit that involves sleek Lycra and sharp helmets, a growing sport as it is in many other countries in the world.

I was struck by the manner of children growing up and even the background sounds in The Netherlands that my forebears would have experienced as reflected in one of the classics of Dutch literature that I managed to find in English translation, *The Garden Where the Brass Band Played* (1965) by Simon Vestdijk [1898–1971]. It is a fictional account of a childhood spent in Harlingen, Friesland,

where Vestdijk was born. On a visit to a park, the young boy, who is the narrator, is sent off to play and told "to ask his way back should he get lost" (1965:18). He takes on the role of leader of the small children whose nannies are only too happy to be relieved of their constant vigilance in what appears to be an aura of unbridled freedom for the children (1965). They would never have been too far from the canals with the sound of boats and water as the background noise that would have defined a childhood, including the fairy tale world of "dwarfs and elves and mermaids" who "took their complaints to higher beings of their own kind" (Introduction, 1965:6). Although expansive in its freedom, there is also a sense of the limited landscape in which the children lived. Vestdijk says that "The horizon seemed to belong to another land, with the dairy factories put along the border as a protection" (1965:32). His world is an urban environment with the farmland defined as a foreign country, in his narrow view of landscape. The town square is called *Zaailand* (sowing land), and it is there that the children play football surrounded by narrow alleys and shops, "the paraffin lamps shining through the yellow blinds pulled down over the windows" (1965:35). This may have been the experience of my Dutch/Flemish forebears.

I could only surmise that my sense of familiarity with what was in fact strange stemmed from the Afrikaans/Dutch influences of my heritage, having grown up in South Africa, rather than any deeper ancestral memory, but that conclusion, was put on notice when we went to the northern province of Drenthe.

## The Woods in Drenthe

We travelled to the province of Drenthe together some friends of my daughter and son-in-law to stay in a house in a holiday park near to the town of Borger for a week. These holiday parks are scattered throughout the country providing accommodation but also activities for children. My main interest in going to Drenthe was to find the *hunebedden* (giants' beds) that I had read about on the Internet. As no one else in our holiday-house group was particularly interested in seeing 5000-year-old megalithic tombs/dolmens, of which there are 54 in Drenthe, I set off alone through the woods in the general area of a site I had found on the map. In the woods, I readily recognised many of the trees, some seen in gardens in Australia and South Africa. As I stopped to eat a wild blackberry, I thought how this small outcrop was so different from the pestilential tracts that we had struggled to keep at bay in the garden of our previous home in Belgrave. There was even a toadstool: red with white spots, now in its forest habitat, not an illustration in a book. It was a perfect home for a fairy or goblin family, and I felt that I had entered a familiar place, the site of childhood books of fairytales, perhaps. I moved between the extremes: the realm of miniature in finding the home of the gnomes (*kabouters*) and that of the giants' beds (*hunebedden*).

Where land is at a premium, it is surprising to find that quite large tracts have been put aside for *bos* [bush] protection in the Drenthe province. The Aa National Park devoted to preserving the *landschap*

[landscape] as it was prior to agricultural development and the straightening of river systems into canals and incorporating small towns and farms, did not match with either an Australian or South African national park concept. The woods are comprised of a variety of systems: coniferous forests, deciduous and a mix of the two. Ornamental trees such as the silver birch, which the Europeans have transported and planted in their gardens around the world, grow here in their natural habitat while the coniferous forest is dark within half a metre of entering, with little understory due to the lack of light and sunshine. It took some courage for me to venture down the dark paths alone, although all were clearly numbered, but I had neglected to bring the map and ordinance information with me, so within a short distance of leaving the main road, I felt uneasy. There was an element of fear: of something dangerous that was watching me and, of getting lost. These are my old familiars. They have accompanied me through the bush and forests in the Yarra Ranges in Victoria, where I lived prior to moving to the coast. While getting lost was always my prime concern, there was also a sense of unease about a presence in the Mountain Ash forest in the Yarra Ranges that I could not identify, not of a wild beast but a lurking vigilant danger. I had a similar sensation in the woods in Drenthe, but it had to be overcome if I was to have the adventure I wanted.

John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1985) raises the issue (which Hélène Cixous recognised as well) of the female as "continually accompanied by her own image of herself", watching herself as she has been trained to do with the eyes of a man, always conscious of how she looks (Berger, 1985:46). Perhaps what I experience then is my innate sense of always being observed but usually masked in a crowd. Throughout history, to be on one's own as a female has been dangerous and this warning has been handed down through the generations, not to be thrown off in just one lifetime. I have often jokingly related my personal fear of something in the forest, not necessarily a wolf, to the story of *Little Red Riding Hood.* A feminist reading of fairy tales may identify the wolf as representing the predatory male in our society but I wondered, too, whether this childhood tale represented what Kim Torney describes in her book *Babes in the Woods* (2005). She said that it is a "common experience at that visceral level of childhood where stories are absorbed without intellectual mediation" and evoked "quickly by a passing reference" having this "near-subliminal quality" …"drawing on a fund of emotional sympathetic responses laid down in childhood" (2005:34). I also recognised that I carried this fear from my childhood in South Africa where we were warned of the potential danger posed by the Black population.

Torney, in her thesis where she studied the role of what she termed 'transposed culture' from Europe to Australia, took up the theme of 'getting lost' in Australian-settler historical accounts and art. The woods, she points out, in "European folktales … appear to operate universally as an image for the unknown, offering both a potential refuge and a threat" … a duality, she says, in the perception of the 'wild' environment (2005:41). Recently I heard that the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* is symbolic of a

young girl's maturing as a woman and in earlier forms of the story, it is she who devours the grandmother not the wolf (Sarah Churchill, *The Book Show* (Radio National, 26/1/2011).

Barry Lopez in *Of Wolves and Men* (1978) writes of the symbolic role wolves, including werewolves, have played, which seem to have come to the fore in the Middle Ages, including at pagan festivals which I discuss in more detail in my account of my visit to England. He reminds us that the wolf is associated with famine (the wolf at the door) and, in fact, "anything that threatened a peasant's precarious existence was 'the wolf'" in the small settlements people lived in scattered throughout the dense forests that covered much of Northern Europe at the time (1978:206). Wolves were also believed to threaten the spiritual world by exhuming bodies and scavenging on corpses during the Black Plague, and the wolf coupled with highwaymen merged as a threat to travellers. Lopez says the wolf was also a symbol of transience, seen at dawn and dusk, and even a form "halfway between man and the other animals" (1978:209). The prejudice towards wolves has been widespread; it was only in the 20th century that the human imagination could no longer produce a new wolf as a projection of the confusion, superstition, depression, and anger that characterized the middle Ages (1978:211). It is not surprising then that wolves would feature large in the psyche of those of European descent. In terms of the role of gnomes, dwarves, elves, goblins and trolls as well as wolves, it is intriguing to unravel their origins and place in a child's world of fantasy and story that remains with us as adults.

Bruno Bettelheim (1976) said that English writers such as Chesterton and Lewis considered fairy stories as spiritual explorations revealing life as seen or felt from the inside. Bettelheim says that "they direct the child to discover his identity and calling and suggest what experiences are needed to develop his character further" (1976:24) and that they suggest that despite the hazards encountered if one "remains true to one's purpose, benevolent powers will come to one's aid" (1976:24). Gaston Bachelard says that "a fairy tale is a reasoning image. It tends to associate extraordinary images as though they could be coherent images, imparting the conviction of a primal image to an entire ensemble of derivative images" (1962;1994:163). Entering the woods is thus to enter a primal space.

While analysts have studied the basic motifs of fairy tales from the perspective of similar plots, characters and themes, few have analysed the landscape and environment of the story and its role in our inherited perception of place. When the signs and symbols that we are accustomed to viewing in our landscape are no longer present, the landscape becomes foreign, exotic and at times alienating and frightening. Bettelheim, in speaking of the forest, said that it is "the forest, where (the characters)... go to decide that they want to have a life of their own (perhaps the reason why Little Red Riding Hood must devour her grandmother and all that she stands for) (1976:93). The forest in stories symbolizes the place in which inner darkness is confronted and worked through; where uncertainty is resolved about who one is; and where one begins to understand who one wants to be. Since ancient times the near-impenetrable forest in which we get lost "has symbolized the dark, hidden, near-impenetrable world of our

unconscious" (1976:93). Bettelheim, who died in 1990, survived his internment in both Dachau and Buchenwald during the Second World War to become a psychoanalyst, was recognised throughout the world for his work with children with severe emotional trauma. In his book, *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976) he outlined the role of fairy tales in a child's development. His is a similar approach to that of the founder of the Waldorf schools, Rudolf Steiner, who concurred in terms of the purpose and content of stories. Both the aforementioned writers argued that if fairy/folk tales are read to children at a crucial time in their development, these stories answer relevant questions for the child at a subconscious level. Fairy tales originally would have been in oral form, but it is only since they were written down that their content has had some continuity, with common motifs that taught valuable lessons to children as in the Rudolf Steiner Educational tradition.

Nila Chambers (1986), a Steiner teacher at the Steiner School that my children attended, wrote a succinct, but as far as I know, unpublished, outline of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy regarding the role of fairy/folk tales in a child's education and development. She explained that Steiner believed that from approximately the age of one to seven years, the child exists in a dreamy state, as if in the first evolution of mankind when he was in a state of temporary living between this world and what Steiner called: his spiritual home (1986). In this phase s/he wandered the earth without roots in any one place and for children, fairy and folk tales mirror "beautifully the consciousness of the little child" during this developmental period. For this reason Steiner recommended 'nourishing' children with these stories (Chambers, 1986:7). In discussing what she calls Steiner's holistic theory of child development, she says "it is suggested that man has passed through four stages of consciousness since he first appeared on earth... (and) the child must experience within his being the changing states of human consciousness before he reaches adulthood and takes up his own place in the flow of human evolution" (Chambers, 1986:7).

Although I concurred with many of Steiner's teachings, my son, Kyle did not thrive on the diet of fairy/folk tales on offer when he was first learning to read at the Steiner School but he enjoyed hearing the tales, perhaps illustrating the pre-literate role they are meant to play in a society. I believe that I witnessed the relevance of fairy tales when Kyle asked for the story *Jack and the Beanstalk* to be read to him night after night for many months, soon after he started school. We never quite understood its significance for him. The giant may have represented adults in his life (teachers and a domineering father) and perhaps the story gave him hope that he would eventually be stronger than they were and able to cope with life's challenges without his parents. Bettelheim actually places the blame for Jack going up the beanstalk on his escaping from his over-protective mother (the usual culprit in these matters) but he also points out that by reading stories to children that feature aspects of their issues, we give them the message that we "approve of his retaliating in fantasy for the threat which adult dominance entails" and killing the giant as Jack did (1976:28). It may have been obvious why the storybook *Home for a Bunny*

(1961) appealed to my young daughter, Leigh, an immigrant child —the lost bunny goes from one animal family to another trying to find where it belongs.

Carl Jung (1961;1973) said that "the concept of the archetype ... is derived from the repeated observation , for instance the myths and fairytales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere", and that we meet these same motifs in fantasies, dreams, deliria and delusions of individuals living today (Jung, 1973:392). The archetypes and magical nature of fairy tales appeals strongly to children when the nature of fairy tales, following the oral tradition, enhances the child's ability to visualize a spoken narrative, as well as to remember the story as heard (Jung, 1973). Speaking on *The Book Show* (Radio National, 26/1/2011), author Sarah Churchill spoke of fairy tales and magical mysteries as reflecting the world of our dreams taking us through a threshold into a fictional world. They can teach us emotional truths, she said, where we experience a shared metaphorical understanding such as in Jung's collective unconscious. It was for this reason that Freud, she explained, led his patients into the interior space and time of dreams, "like a home to go to" during a psychoanalytic sessions where dreams are metaphors and the house symbolic. Birkeland (2005) speaks of Jung's interpretation of journeys and the manner in which they are often the theme of stories such as fairy and folktales and speak of personal change as a metaphor for individuation and transformation.

My entering the woods alone then was to perform a mimetic quest, as Husserl's "knowing subject" within a fairy tale story environment where I was brought face to face with the reality of that environment and my own fears (Birkeland, 2005:7). The forest, says Bachelard "...originates in a body of impressions which, in reality, have little connection with geographical information. We do not have to be long in the woods to experience the always rather anxious impression of 'going deeper and deeper' into a limitless world" (1994:185). This explanation seemed relevant to the fear of getting lost in what my rational mind told me was not an immense forest. The experience of even a small grove may be to invoke the fear of getting lost because one is surrounded by trees as though the forest is vast and undergrowth impenetrable, with the way out not obvious or visible. Bachelard cites Thérése Brosse who said that "forests... with the mystery of their space prolonged indefinitely beyond the veil of tree trunks and leaves, space that is veiled for our eyes, but transparent in action, are veritable psychological transcendent" (1994:185). The forest is "immediately sacred" Bachelard says, by virtue of the tradition of its nature, far from all history of men... before the gods existed and came to dwell there (here Bachelard identifies Pierre-Jean Jouve's forest description). For some, the forest brings a sense of inner peace and intimacy, but when it is described as ancestral, Bachelard says, we have no way of relating to what is supposedly ancient, we have no experience of this occurring (1994). Perhaps this is why forestry workers can cut down ancient trees with impunity: they seek to take command, proving who is in charge when even a tree can be older than they are, or they may feel affronted that the tree may go on living after they are dead.

In terms of reducing our world to smallness, do we desire, too, to control our environment by reduction as we do in producing a landscape painting? It points to the transpositions that we move between in place and art when we reduce the picture to what can be framed on the wall, but our imagination on viewing the painting attempts to transpose it to what is expansive and real. This is also what happens with distance, as Bachelard (1994) points out, what we see from afar is tiny until we move closer. We can possess something from afar, as he says. Perhaps it is connected with what we can hold within our mind's eye, an image we can keep. Birkeland said something similar, "Open space can represent the horizon of visual control, or the landscape conquered visually from an observation post.... open space can be the area one may visually seize and control from the top of a mountain" (2005:98). She would "like to suggest that open space is essential to feminine subjectivity as a mental image, or a metaphor that is useful in creating a relationship to the interior world of a woman... open space is thus, a metaphor that works to support the growth of feminine psychic space" (2005:98). And yet it can be frightening to be in an open space as a woman, given our prior conditioning, as discussed previously. Have storytellers populated the woods with small creatures, such as elves and gnomes, to make them into less threatening places although there are dangers too especially for princesses and young maidens? Given the inculcation of these stories from childhood, the thought of meeting a friendly elf, does make it more familiar and less alien; I think, in fact I should have remembered that in many tales there are even helpful animals should we get lost. Perhaps we attempt to control our environment to what is manageable with stories and even in such activities as keeping fish in tanks because it reduces the vastness of the ocean to something we can handle and control in our physical environment or imagination. Barry Lopez (2002), spoke of our need to identify a place's vulnerability if we are to feel an emotional connection and intimacy. Children love illustrations (as I do too) of buildings where the side has been removed in cross-section and people can be observed doing what they do at home. Looking across the street from one block of apartments to another can be a similar experience – the voyeuristic opportunity to observe others and their home configuration in miniature as in a diorama. Bachelard (1994) discusses fairy tales in terms of the 'play of miniature'; he, too, is interested in the "very origin of images of this kind" but dismisses the notion that they are "simply taking us back to childhood... to familiarity with toys" as the only attraction to an adult (1994:148-149).

We know that we continue to hark back to miniature childhood toys when women have elaborate doll's houses and men set up model train tracks supposedly for their sons. When my sister and I were children, my father made us a beautiful wooden, double-storied doll's house that even had a staircase to reach the upper level and tiny electric lights that ran on batteries. The furniture, he either made or purchased. But being careless children we left it out in the garden once and it rained and the timber swelled a little and we were forever left suffering the guilt of his disappointment. What I do remember was feeling disappointed that no one lived in the house and wished that there were little people who could move in, perhaps that was a good excuse I could have used at the time for leaving it

outdoors. When we moved from Johannesburg to Krugersdorp, the house my parents purchased was a double-storied one similar to the doll's house, and we all got the chance to live the fantasy, including my father. Bachelard speaks of imagination as being in miniature "which appears at all ages in the daydreams of born dreamers" (1994:149). As an example, he relates the story told by Hermann Hesse of a prisoner who painted a tiny train on the wall of his cell, set in a landscape that included a tunnel. When he needed to escape the confines of his cell, he could imagine himself on the train, travelling through the tunnel away from where he was. Through his daydreaming, the prisoner was able to escape reality and maintain his sanity (Bachelard, 1994:150). Another example Bachelard gives is that of the apple seed within the apple, holding the potential of an enormous tree, weaving "a closely knit fabric of dream and reality" (1994:163).

On returning to Delft, I found an old copy of the book entitled *Leven en Werken van de Kabouter* [The Life and Work of Gnomes] (Huygen and Poortvliet, 1976) and the illustrations came alive given that the story is set in Drenthe. The woods were the home landscape of the gnomes, and perhaps they were there sheltering under a toadstool or watching from behind a tree root as I walked by. The front page of the book pictured what we had experienced in Drenthe: the same birds we had seen around the holiday resort we stayed in, the woods I had wandered into, including the blackberries and toadstools I had seen growing in their habitat. Also featured were distinctive houses similar to those we had seen in the surrounding towns and on the farms. They had thatched roofs, steep pitched to prevent the weight of snow building up, and windows covered by green shutters, just as in the *kabouter* world of the book. To see the gnomes in the book doing the same things that we do is an intimate view. We know what they wore and even how they looked without clothes, where they cooked and what they ate, where they slept, worked and played. Their world looks a lot like ours despite being under the roots of a tree. The book depicts a home, a warm secure 'inside' place with a yellow-glow; the loving *kabouter* parents are taking care of their little *kabouter* children, secure from the dangers of the 'outside' woods, and they are vulnerable just as we are. It was quite enchanting to see the illustrations so closely representing the actual place and landscape we had recently experienced in Drenthe.

If children in places such as Drenthe in The Netherlands could read a book that so-closely represented what was familiar in their place and environment, then they could believe that the stories too were true, in contrast with a child seeing the illustrations where they live in a far-off land such as in South Africa or Australia. The feeling of recognition I felt, brought a sense of comfort and relief: the child in me knew that indeed this illustrated world of fairy/folk tales from my childhood, did exist and I was a direct descendent of this rich heritage. I wondered, too, how my grand-daughter one day would remember our visit to Drenthe and the *kabouter* world, with the benefit of the book that I left for her to read and that she had helped me to photograph by holding the pages down with her feet. But I still had to find the hunebedden [dolmens].

## Finding Hunebedden

The tracks through the bush in the illustrations of the *kabouter* book were like the pathways I took trying to locate the *hunebedden,* but the *kabouter* had the benefit of his divining rod, which he used to locate gold, as well as his sixth sense and second sight and I was not as lucky. All the recently man-made tourist attractions were well marked on the map, but the *hunebedden* were shown as icons in the middle of fields with no supporting signage. Probably the most significant in the area was located within the *Hunebedden Centrum* in Borger, Drenthe, but I was keen to see one in its landscape. Perhaps the lack of markings was to protect them from vandals, although they had managed to survive the previous 5,400 years. It was frustrating that we were so close to such ancient sites with no way of locating them. Eventually we were able to find one site using my daughter's mobile phone GPS system; the incongruity of this was mind-blowing. It was a glorious feeling to place one's hand on an enormous stone carried and balanced on others by what method no one can be too sure, the actual rocks having been carried from Scandinavia in glacial movement during the last Ice Age 150,000 years ago. I had never heard of these structures, built it is believed that these structures were built as single-chamber megalithic tombs between 3,400 and 3,200 BC by people belonging to what is defined as the funnel beaker culture, given that beakers were found in the tombs (*Hunebedden Centrum* brochure, 2010). The brochure tells us that the megalith builders were not tall people but were able to move stones weighing as much as twenty cars. In the centre, I watched a short film of an attempt to replicate this feat using wooden poles as rollers and numerous teams of harnessed people, who were able to move quite large stones, but the story of the giants is far more magical. The *hunebed* enclosed within the centre, had the spaces between the rocks filled with mud. It was dug out underneath the slabs of rock, with steps leading down into an interior space, to recreate the way they would have looked. The brochure states that "with a length of almost 18 meters it may look relatively small nowadays" but "the people 5,400 years ago were able to stand up straight in the tomb". In fact, these graves pre-date Stonehenge and the Egyptian pyramids (construction on the first pyramid was to start 900 years later) (*Hunebedden Centrum* Brochure, 2010). We do, "in this limited sense still have a direct bodily connection with the past" says Tilley (2010: 30) through the topology, smell of seaweed, light and darkness, sight of a conical hill, he says, and in our case touching the rocks of the *hunebedden* in Drenthe.

At a market held at the *Hunebedden Centre*, celebrating old crafts and things of antiquity, I participated in a felt-making workshop. The blobs of wet wool washed with soap, stretched and pulled and flattened into a felted collage emerged as the houses, the *hunebedden* and the *kabouters* of the area. It was an embodied experience to do traditional crafts in that location, and what I made was far more relevant as a memento of my visit than something purchased at a tourist shop. When my grand-daughter participated in a candle-making workshop using strips of beeswax rolled diagonally, she too was learning an old craft.

## The Laywoman's Appreciation of Dutch Art

Just as I was enchanted to find the fairy tale world of *kabouter* and *hune* in the landscape, it was a profound experience to spend concentrated time in the city of Delft and then to see paintings produced in the 16th and 17th Centuries that depict the places and buildings of that time in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and at Maritzhuis in The Hague. I have had an uncanny relationship with the art of Johannes Vermeer [1632–1675] who lived and worked in Delft, having bought a reproduction of his well-known painting *The Milkmaid* in a Salvation Army Opportunity Shop many years ago. I am embarrassed to admit that I had no idea who the artist was or the significance of the painting at the time. I was drawn to it as it depicted a kitchen scene in similar colours to those I had used in our newly painted kitchen in Belgrave, so I was keen to hang it in that room. My daughter did not live in Delft and I had no idea how strong would be my ties there in the years to come.

In the original painting where it hangs in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, it is easier to recognise that there are Delftware tiles along the skirting of the room. An antique dealer told me that the tiles protected the walls from flood waters, a common occurrence in The Netherlands. I now have an old tile, purchased in Delft, framed on the wall in my house in Wonthaggi. It comes from a 17th-century house that was demolished and depicts a house and tree on an island surrounded by swirling floodwaters. I was also curious about a wooden box depicted on the floor near to the figure in painting and was delighted to find one like it in the antique shop. According to the shop owner, despite its wooden construction it held coals from the fire to keep the occupants warm. My daughter and I had previously attempted to find out about the box in a number of books and websites regarding Vermeer's work, but it took a visit to Delft, Vermeer's birthplace to find the answer. My sister and I also shared the experience of Vermeer when we met in Delft before we headed off for the UK when at the same antique shop we found a print of *The Milkmaid* for her: they hang together now, drawing our homes together, hers in South Africa and mine in Australia as a reminder of our time in Delft together. There is a symmetry that I find quite poignant.

Although a crude concrete statue at one entrance to the City of Delft is a depiction of *The Milkmaid* and an attempt to link to the art of Vermeer, it serves only to emphasise that Delft does not have a single original of Vermeer's paintings, despite its identity as his birthplace, and must make do with an ugly modern sculpture. Delft does have a centre devoted to his memory for the benefit of tourists as well as Vermeer's original inspiration are still there, in the many old buildings and the town square as they would have been when he depicted the city and the life and times of its residents. In speaking of the rediscovery of Johannes Vermeer in the 19th century, Van Maarseveen, (2009) approaches the subject by way of the location—Vermeer's life and work are described in relation to his association with places in Delft (2009:7). The location of the scene of his painting *The Little Street* (c. 1657–1658) is yet to be determined, and I enjoyed attempting to solve the mystery as I wandered along the canals and lanes in

Delft. In Van Maarseveen's opinion, Vermeer's work is significant for the "systematic development of themes and techniques" (2009:24). He may not have been an innovator but he raised the findings of others to a far higher plane, he says (2009).

As I have now spent more than four months in Delft at different times over the past five years and have studied paintings by Vermeer in some depth (and have four prints hanging in my home) as well as exploring the streets and houses where he is thought to have lived and painted, using the little book by Van Maarseveen (2009) as my guide, his presence there is now palpable. The painting *Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Vermeer hangs in the Mauritzhuis in The Hague (where my daughter works) and she and I enjoyed a quiet few minutes in appreciation of it. We both have identical reproductions hanging in our houses, linking our homes and the embodied experience of seeing the original painting together. As Berger said in *Ways of Seeing* (1985), paintings also provide the only way to see into the past "closing the distance in time between the painting of the picture and one's own act of looking at it" (1985:31). Berger identified this role of art, too, when he said "No other kind of relic or text from the past can offer such a direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times" (1985:10).

Before I had any ties to Delft, I had also read the book *Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier (1999) and saw the movie with the same title (Webber, 2004). Taking the title from one of Vermeer's paintings, Chevalier's book is based on the little that is known of Vermeer's life, but it has created a presence for Vermeer, especially for tourists who may not know very much about this artist. In Delft, the book and movie have overtaken art, connecting popular culture to place. It draws a tourist audience, which Berger (1985) would have discovered contradicts his viewpoint concerning the role of class in our appreciation of art when he asserted that the domain of art was the prerogative of the ruling classes, and although art is reproduced and made available to the masses, he said they continue to be uninterested and sceptical. The art of Vermeer and the prints that we have tie us to the place and to each other and fabricate a place story.

## Fabricating/Fabric-ating Place Story

To materialise my experience, I experimented with various artistic methods to connect to the women who may have been my forebears in The Netherlands. I purchased a book of traditional cross-stitch patterns at an antique market in Delft and tried my hand at this intricate work but without much success. I found a good use for my investment in an old book purchased in Delft on the topic of "the Netherlands spirit" (*De Nederlandsche Geest*, 1941), written by male authors, I used its pages and cover as a frame for my and other women's miniature traditional cross-stitch embroideries; knitted, old-fashioned doll's clothes and dolls dressed in traditional garb. Although the book can still be read, I aimed to complicate the narrative and slightly deface this symbol of patriarchy by incorporating physical, tactile

symbols of women's artistic work, the silent female voices not represented and stitched into place on pages that had been left blank.

Berger spoke of the paintings in a building where "the images on the wall are records of the building's interior life, that together they make up the building's memory" (1985: 19), and I decided that by incorporating my art in this book it would add to the book's memory to provide a more complete picture. Bachelard discusses books as holding the past, as small containers, where "dreams, thoughts and memories weave a single fabric" such as in a story by Edgar Allan Poe that tells of those who watch beside a woman who has died surrounded by her books (1964:175). The books that I have used to contain my small, embroidered samplers are literally the fabric that holds my thoughts, dreams and memories within their covers rather than framed and hung on the wall. Bachelard (1994) described the intimate spaces such as drawers, wardrobes, shells and nests. Like a locked diary, the benefit of populating a book with one's art is to create an intimate viewing moment for anyone I choose to share it with. I am no expert embroiderer and am not displaying examples of my skill, only my interest in working with women's craft and participating on that level with the work of the women in my heritage. I have felt free then to incorporate other women's work with my own, items from different periods of their history, to honour their contribution to 'home' and the background to cultural life such as that depicted in Dutch paintings. Much of what is sold in Delft for tourists is not seen in Dutch homes and is very much distained by the younger generation. Having grown up with a Delftware cruet set (the origins of which I have no idea) on the dining room sideboard, I had a sense of familiarity with the ware and a desire to purchase more. One wonders about the significance of cultural icons that have become commodities for tourists. Although these objects form part of the background for local residents, especially in the setting of shops surrounding the town square in Delft, they are apparently no longer relevant in Dutch homes.

## Conclusion

My roots are now in the present with members of my immediate family living there. I took a photograph of a house that was for sale a few doors down from my daughter's home in Delft with Sharmae posing in front and told her that maybe one day that house would be mine. My daughter tells me that Sharmae always points it out as 'my house' and so I have a physical presence in her life, although fabricated, but a reminder of our walks to all the parks in the vicinity with her on her bright pink tricycle, up and down the lanes with the houses opening directly from the narrow pavement, each with a window display for the benefit of those passing by. It was easy to indulge in that delicious pastime of looking in at the way that other people live, their lives and their concept of a home. One small house turned out to be a corner store and we would go in and have an ice cream cone sitting at the only table and chairs in the front room. Our visits to the supermarket would be remembered by fellow shoppers, I am sure, as Sharmae would make requests for items in Dutch while I attempted to translate to English, which she understood perfectly but preferred not to speak. On one of our trips we met up with some children who

were excited to hear me speaking English. Their mother, with an American accent, told me that the family had just returned from the States and the children had refused to speak English prior to their going there despite her best efforts for them to be bilingual. She repeated a view I had heard previously, that children prefer to speak the language of their peers rather than that of their parents. And so, leaving a world where the language had become an unbearable noise after two months of listening to it—like radio static, only partly on the station—it was a relief to take off for England and Ireland where the accents would prove to be equally strange and baffling at times but pleasingly musical, especially in Ireland.

## Photo Journal: The Netherlands

*Oude Kerk* in Delft, with reflections from the bedroom window at my family's house and below looking down the canal in town [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

IJsselmeer, what was the Zuider Zee [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

The old factories driven by windmills at Zaanse Schans [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]


Left: Cover *of Leven en Werken van de Kabouter* used with permission of publisher 8/10/12

Right: Modern-day Little Red Riding Hood wearing her pink crocs in the woods in The Netherlands
[Photos: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Little feet taking footsteps along the illustrated pathmarks

A real little fairy princess

[Photos: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Left: Replicated traditional house, perhaps similar to the one my ancestors lived in at the Hunebedden Centrum, Borger, Drenthe

Right: The modern houses built in the old style at the holiday resort in Borger, Drenthe where we stayed [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

My Megalithic forebears in the *Hunebedden Centrum*, Borger, Drenthe

[Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

## Fabric-ating place story in The Netherlands
## Samplers

Frame Book: *De Nederlansche Geest* (The Netherlands Spirit) 1941


Traditionally dressed male and female dolls purchased in Antique Market in Delft 2010 help to keep the book upright attached to the cover to form a bookend. The woman has a bag and a pair of scissors attached to her belt. The man is dressed as a canal boatman/fisherman wearing wooden clogs. [Photos: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Sampler 1: Conjuring up Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers', embroidered after I bought a bunch of sunflowers at the market in Delft and arranged them in a vase [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Sampler 2: Traditional cross-stitch of a *pakhuis* (warehouse), I discovered that I did not have the gene for cross-stitch [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

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Sampler 3: Traditional cross-stitch of a house at Zaanse Schans. This wonderful place features many old windmills built on top of houses/home factories to provide power for industries such as mustard making (continuing), colour-pigment production and others. The houses in the adjacent village are quite distinctive
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

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Sampler 4: Antique school embroidery entitled: Naalenlap (Needle-holder) made in 1912 purchased at the Antique Market, Delft in 2010, where the seller sold old embroidered cloths and books on the topic. The icons of Dutch culture he indicated on various embroideries were *molens* (he kept repeating this word so I have to include the Dutch word for windmills here), canals, cheese-makers, bicycles, fishing boats, buildings, and so on [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

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Sampler 5: My journal cover using fabric depicting traditional Delft ware colours (charcoal that turns blue on firing) of cultural icons, and lace purchased in Delft, 2010. Each square represents the tiles that were placed along the edge of the floor in old houses in case of flood, to protect the walls [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

Sampler 6: Antique net food cover – pulled thread lace work, purchased in Antique Shop in Delft, 2010 [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

Sampler 7: Hunebedden, kabouters, the woods, fields of hay, the sky and the sun: My attempt at felting at an 'old times' workshop at the *Hunebedden Centrum*, Borger, Drenthe, 2010 [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

## Fabric-ating 2: Literary/Spiritual/Biographical Landscapes in England

"Bones of the land in relation to processes of human dwelling" (Tilley, 2010:18)
The fireplace, stone table and seat with inlaid shelf in the old stone cottage near The Nine Ladies, Stanton Moor
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Mossy kitchen
A rabbit stew prepared
On Stanton Moor

Enter an old stone cottage
Sit and share the bounty
[F.B.Dent, 2010]

### Introduction

The starting point of our coach tour of England, Ireland and Wales, left from Kensington in London. My sister, Lorraine and I arrived at Heathrow from Amsterdam and took the train to London then a taxi to our hotel where we dropped our bags. Impatient to orientate ourselves to the place, we went out walking to explore the surroundings. We discovered that we were staying very close to Kensington Palace and realised on seeing all the flowers and messages attached to the gates that they had been placed to commemorate Princess Diana's birthday a few days before. To look in through the gates of the palace was to see the gardens and windows that were her place and to turn and look out was to see the parks and skyline that had been her view from the windows of the palace. A few weeks later, I

would be in Paris and the place of her death was pointed out: the car accident in the tunnel and linking the two places she had travelled between as I had.

What made the journey to England, Wales and Ireland especially meaningful was that I went with Lorraine, my sister, who lives in South Africa but who was in the United Kingdom for the birth of a grandchild. The journey gave us the opportunity to explore our common heritage and make new stories in places together. This was the first time we had shared a bedroom or been away without spouses or children since we were children. We took an organised coach tour for seven days of our journey while the balance of our time together was spent with family members. The tour was something neither of us had done before, in fact would have scorned such an endeavour, but it proved to be wonderful. We revelled in the total sense of relaxation and adventure with no responsibility for anything at all regarding the arrangements, knowing that all we had to do was put our cases outside our hotel door each morning and be back onboard the coach at the departure time. Without young children or husbands demanding to have their needs met, as would have been the case on previous shared holidays, and we found that we had plenty of catching-up to do, too. The tourist says Inger Birkeland (2005) citing Mac Cannell, never admits to going on a package trip, as it probably smacks of a lack of sophistication, and I must admit that at times some of the others on the tour were embarrassing and annoying when the 'school excursion' appeared to free up the inhibitions and repressive cultural norms that usually hold adults in check.

Of course, another downside was that we by-passed places where we would have liked to have stopped, and instead were often taken to endless tourist shopping outlets. In retrospect, however the bonus was that the dots on the map and the spaces in-between were filled in by our well-informed tour director, who related the stories of places as we were passing by and in preparation for our arrival at the next stop. Tilley (1994) cites De Certeau who spoke of the map as "stripping away" spatial stories when the "tour describers have disappeared" (1994:32), but luckily we had a history buff onboard. Place myths, says Birkeland (2005), are created through tourist brochures filled with place-images that communicate unconscious meaning, beliefs and ideas which are taken for granted through their use over a long period of time and wide dissemination, and this was certainly true of some of the more well-known destinations we stopped at. Our coach tour took us from London to Stonehenge and on to Bath and Bristol before setting sail by ferry for Ireland from Pembroke. Nothing had prepared us for the experience of either Stonehenge or Bath. The latter was first glimpsed from the height of the surrounding hills as we approached. Later I read that Jane Austen, whose former house there is now a museum in her honour, is said to have disliked staying in Bath but the grand design of the town and the retained uniformity of the building materials is breathtaking.

I had previously visited London and surrounding places such as Windsor Castle on a stop-over en-route to the USA, and on a another visit had been further afield to Scotland by air, so driving through the English countryside was a long-awaited treat. England, apart from being the birthplace of my paternal

grandmother, was also the seat of our English language and culture and thus the most significant influence on my heritage. I had grown up and been educated in an English-style system and our home life was based on English domestic practice plus the literature, history, mythology and symbolism of 'Englishness'. Bhabha speaks of finding our starting points as a means to achieving our own identity thus,

> in keeping with the spirit of the 'right to narrate' as a means to achieving our own national or communal identity in a global world, demands that we revise our sense of symbolic citizenship, our myths of belonging, by identifying ourselves with the 'starting points' of other national and international histories and geographies... (1994: xx).

Specifically in discussing the writing of Adrienne Rich, Bhabha says that she placed herself at the intersections and interstices of these narratives, thus emphasising "the importance of historical and cultural re-visioning: the process of being subjected to, or the subject of, a particular history of one's own – a local history..." (1994: xx). One local history that I sensed was in re-visioning my tie to a lost ancestral spirituality rooted in the natural world and in remnant pre-Celtic structures, especially Stonehenge although its origins and prior use continue to be the subject of speculation. My reaction to such historical places in England appeared to relate to my lack of agency within mainstream religions.

### Pre-Christian Spirituality

There was the sense of sacredness at two sites that did not relate to any formal religious dogma or teachings, firstly at Stonehenge and at another much smaller stone circle called The Nine Ladies in Derbyshire. Within patriarchal systems backed up by mainstream religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam, the after-life is considered to be of more consequence than our earthly existence, and women have shared this denigration as being of the earth. Birkeland highlights feminists such as Héléne Cixous, who pointed to this derivation and its significance in the lives of women, as originating in Man-Woman dualism, wherein "women over time have been associated with the sphere of physicality, materiality and nature... and men ... with the sphere of culture and superiority of reason" (Birkeland,2005:99).

Jeremy Foster (2008) on the other hand reflects on the subjective responses to landscape that may be rooted in "topographical intimations" forgotten today... that "played a central role in Western environmental imagination until the end of the eighteenth century and remained current up until the end of the nineteenth century" (2008:6). He is referring to the ancient cultures that "subscribed to some version of the idea that the earth was a potentially fertile maternal figure that needed to be inseminated to bear fruit" and cultivation as the basis of culture and the resulting practices of appeasing certain spirits of place (*genius loci* he calls them). As he points out "even during the Renaissance flowering of humanism and retreat of pagan animism, ancient sacred presences of the earth continued to be invoked within and refracted by the geometric symbolism of that most cultivated of human artefacts, the garden" (2008:7).

Even although the 'thou' of earth spirits gave way to an inanimate 'it' in the Enlightenment and rationalism, the emergence of aesthetics bridged the divide as a "tradition of classical mimesis" (2008:7).

I was also reminded of a book that I read in the 80s that had a profound effect on me in terms of my spiritual hunger, *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Bradley (1983). It is the retelling of the Arthurian legend from the point of view of the women, who were not painted as evil witches or under the control of men as is customary in our literature but as leaders who were independent, strong and spiritual women. This was empowering. The book engendered a strong sense of place and the authority women had in the spiritual realm in what I believe to be my heritage. I, too, could be the butt of humour: seeking Avalon, just as the faithful Dan Brown followers are ridiculed as they attempt to find the places mentioned in *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). Women are grasping at straws alluded to in popular fiction, when their denigration in mainstream religion continues against a background of persecution and inequality. As Tilley says,

> both novels and non-fictional accounts thus ground themselves in landscapes that form a primary and an existential basis for cultural 'Being in the world'. Places and monuments are always a form of presencing of the past in the present and in their mute way objectify a story of the generations who have used and inhabited them (1997:34).

Margaret Drabble writes of the sacredness of places and the "shiver of contact" that we may experience at locations such as Stonehenge, Glastonbury or Hadrian's Wall or (as we did at The Nine Ladies stone circle site) in the "ancient little woods, solitary standing stones" as "an intimation of the distant past" (1979:17). I certainly had the sense of making a pilgrimage to a site that was an aspect of my self-understanding, although it is difficult to define in what way it did unless one moves to a more metaphysical explanation. Tilley says that "Landscapes are ...'quasi-artefacts' existing *between* 'nature' and 'culture' " (2010:36), which points to the definition of a landscape as having been subject to human interference in some way, and in the case of Stonehenge we have been given a remarkable insight into our past that I perceived of as spiritual.

## Visiting Stonehenge

Tilley (2010) describes monuments that "became the new vivid symbols of cosmic order, and the landscape became structured and perceived in relation to them: cultural representations of order" (2010:36). In describing Stonehenge as a locale in the landscape, he says that it cannot be understood simply in terms of constituting a fixed place, given that part of its meaning and significance was created through the process of the experience of moving toward it in the right way and from the propitious direction following the path of the rising sun, as he explains; a phenomenological interpretation of the monument in its landscape setting provides an altogether different view (2010). I had not realised

previously that it is an entire landscape setting. Although it is a little too close to roads, unfortunately, at least it still sits alone on Salisbury plain, with no houses and or development encroaching. In a recent television documentary entitled *Stonehenge Decoded* (TV Channel 7, 1/5/11) Professor Parker Pearson from the University of Sheffield put forward his theory, namely that there had been a seasonal settlement a few kilometres from the site, where diggings have revealed the traces of more than one-thousand dwellings. It is thought to have been seasonal as no evidence was found of agriculture or animal remains and was probably only used when people came to Stonehenge for ceremonial occasions such as at the summer or winter solstice when the sun is aligned in the centre. A nearby wooden circle built to the same proportions as Stonehenge was used as a place of feasting and celebration as evidenced by the food remains found there. His theory is that the people moved from one to the other walking along the Avon river, first to take the ashes of the dead to offer to the gods as the sun set at Stonehenge and then to the nearby wooden circle for fertility and rebirth rituals as the sun rose at the solstice, sprinkling the ashes in the river as they went by. It is believed that both were built long before the time of the Druids, who may have continued with such festivities, tracked time, and held ritual functions to honour the dead at the same location. I felt strongly that my ancestors had participated in such events. Tilley explains how our history is embedded in the natural and man-made environment, as follows:

> the material traces of human history are accretions in the geologies and the topographies of landscape ... through time, traces of humanity, such as a cairn, become as fundamental to that landscape and the manner in which it is understood as do the rocks and the hills (2010:34).

Although another stone circle we visited was quite insignificant in terms of size and fame compared to Stonehenge, also served to arouse my spiritual curiosity and interest in the record it holds of human history as well as its current usage by other unknown groups.

### Finding The Nine Ladies Stone Circle

While visiting Stonehenge was one of the highlights of my journey so was my encounter with another stone circle in Derbyshire. It was far less outstanding but perhaps more comprehensible and symbolic as a site to situate a lost spirituality. We were able to explore the landscape on foot, without troops of other tourists, and to experience the surrounding landscape without any preconceived notions or photographs seen beforehand. It was my nephew Robin, who has gone to live in Derbyshire, who shared the information about the Nine Ladies, a nearby stone circle on Stanton Moor. Robin said that he felt he was in the landscape of the 'Famous Five' and the 'Six' books by Enid Blyton on arrival in the countryside of the United Kingdom, living firstly in Wales and Shropshire and now in Matlock, Derbyshire. When my sister and I stayed with Rob and his family in 2010, it was not Enid Blyton's landscapes that we experienced although Stanton Moor could easily have featured in one of Blyton's adventure stories. Nine Ladies, is only one of the attractions that include burial barrows and standing rocks, such as Cork Stone

and the Andle Stone, but it was all that we located. Fortunately it had been saved from the workings of a company wishing to expand a nearby quarry site when protesters kept a vigil for over ten years, given that the company had permission to pursue their aspirations in the locale.[1]

Lorraine and I parked opposite the stile which together with a small sign indicated that it was the start of a walking track. We then made our way over the stile and entered an open field in an elevated part of the countryside where the ground sloped away to the left while rising to our right. The moment we were in the field, we focused on a fenced rocky outcrop and copse of trees with another stile ready to grant access. I found myself seeking instruction as we approached the grove of trees. Not knowing in which direction to head, when the path split in two directions, we veered left, and in doing so it felt as though we had entered a sacred place. My unanticipated sense was that I needed to silently ask for permission to enter and that my request was granted. This was not an intrusion on some other culture's spiritual, sacred ground I believe, but my place, too, only I had never been there before. I felt that the protocols if broken would be forgiven should I behave wrongly out of ignorance.

Tilley considers that landscape research is of necessity a retelling of the stories latent in these places and monuments but "it cannot be an 'original' or a 'true' story... it is rather a process of attempting to weave narratives around those sensuous aspects of prehistoric or historic landscapes that may still be experienced today, a reconstruction of the past in the present" (2010:35). From my perspective, most important is his insight that the process becomes "part of one's self-understanding and self- knowledge, part of the way in which one's identity is mediated and constructed" (2010:35).

The descent on the path we took was quite steep and rocky in several places. When we came upon a large inscribed standing stone we thought we were at the site of the headstone and marvelled at how it had been so precariously placed upright on that ridge, but with a date of 1856 imprinted on its surface, it was too recent. We had no idea of its significance nor has anyone been able to enlighten us subsequently, but soon we were walking between wooden tracks embedded in the pathway that must have enabled some sort of trolley to carry stone down the hill from what would have been a much earlier quarry-site. There were perfect circles of moss-covered stone stacked next to each other but without a hole in the centre that would have pointed to some sort of vehicular use, perhaps used for some sort of

[1] In an article headed: *Revocation ends long-running quarry row*, the dispute is explained as follows: A long-running planning saga over quarrying rights near historic remains in Derbyshire has finally come to an end now the Peak District National Park Authority has received confirmation that the Government has revoked the relevant planning permission. The Department for Communities and Local Government has confirmed a revocation order withdrawing planning permission for Lees Cross and Endcliffe quarries, close to the Bronze Age Nine Ladies Stone Circle on Stanton Moor, near Matlock. This follows a long campaign, orchestrated by the authority and supported by many concerned people, to protect the area's archaeological remains and wildlife habitats and to minimize the impact of quarrying on local communities. Following lengthy negotiations with the quarry operators, landowners and community groups, the High Court in 2004 upheld the authority's stance that the quarries were dormant (Druid Network, 2009).

grinding operation. When Isabel Huggan in her book *Belonging* (2003) talks about visiting Tasmania and seeing the grinding stones of the Aborigines, she said that it helped her to connect to the daily life of the people who had lived there which she had not previously been able to do. The circular stones helped in a similar way, too as did the vehicular track. They created a sense of movement in the static monument, an opening to help visualise the lives of those who had lived here, previously including the precision required to cut from solid rock a perfect circle as an inspiring human endeavour and then to wonder at their purpose: such expenditure of energy for what end only to become redundant, left to gather moss where they were stacked.

Then we came to the remains of a cottage, butted into the side of the cliff. Although it had no roof, the interior was preserved in its stonework: the fireplace was conveniently built at waist height and there was a shelf cut into the back wall with the stone furniture an indication of how the room may have functioned as a home. We were able to move back in time running our hands along the cold, dank walls and standing before the elevated fireplace, we could imagine the daily lives of the inhabitants. But it was so dark and gloomy amongst the trees and thick undergrowth that we did not stay too long and when the path began to descend the hill again, after leaving the cottage, we headed back up the way we had come and right instead on the other side of the trees, along a steep rocky pathway. Later, when reading about 'corpse paths' (or spirit roads) that were followed for walking funerals to carry a coffin to burial, in Paul Devereux's book *Spirit Roads: an exploration of otherworldly routes* (2003), he speaks of what were called 'churchways' that linked different churches, as possibly pre-Christian ceremonial routes given that the Christian churches were frequently built over or adjacent to pagan sites (2003). Perhaps the path we followed to The Nine Ladies was just such a route as there were large rocks placed horizontally at certain points that may have been used to rest a coffin on. In addition to actual physical roadways, "the corpse way", Devereux says "attracted spirit lore ... through the invisible country, the mental terrain ... vestiges of this archaic spirit lore are revealed ... in physical features across Old Europe" (2003:28). He explains that there were places that people would avoid at night, such as an imagined path that was said to run between two different cemeteries, and phantoms were seen to flit between them.

The markings on one rock along the pathway I contemplated as possibly that of Celtic Ogham script which Spence (1994) describes. The characters of Ogham were a system of strokes that were made above and below a line and he says they bear a close resemblance to Pitman's Shorthand (1994). Other references describe them as markings to the left and right of a vertical or below and above a horizontal line, while the markings we saw were more like Roman symbols, but I can find no further information regarding them. Spence (1994) describes different forms of communication such as Virgular Ogham that appears as a series of arrowheads, and these are visible at Stonehenge. Another form was tree writing: leaves, as well as tree bark and twigs, from different trees were strung together to represent the letters of an alphabet. It consisted of thirty-four characters and was called Bethluisnion from the names of the

first three letters 'beth' (birch), 'luis' (quicken) and 'nion' (ash) (1994). Later on it developed into a picture-writing system called the Bobileth alphabet and is still preserved in the Celtic languages of Britain, he says (1994). Barry Brailsford (2008) in *Song of the Stone* described the writing found on a stone in Killaloe in County Clare, Ireland. It is in both Runes and what he calls Celtic Oghams, and his sense was of a "Stone People (who) had reached across the ages to say we all carve our story: some in stone, others in the land, or in the lives of those we meet along the way" (2008:196). No matter then what the symbols we saw represented, those who had made them were given a physical presence in materialising our story in that landscape.

Although Tilley (2010) in explaining the derivation of the word *topography* as being formed of *'topos'*, (the Greek for 'place') and *'graphy' (*the Greek*:* to write), says that a topographic description is thus 'the writing of place'. It could also be a way to talk about 'writing in place' or 'writing to mark a place' as was the writing on the rock or the tributes hung in the sacred oak tree as communicating a message. It is through that act of writing, Tilley says, that we can develop an understanding of how that place comes to have human significance—the layering of event, myths, memories and associations. He describes his approach as writing landscape and place through the body, "attempting to imaginatively reconstruct how landscapes were embodied in prehistoric lives" and physically 'read' the writing on the rock (2010:33). He goes on to say that "there is no human narrative or plot to an unaltered geological or topographic landscape. The process of human inhabitation and its layered material traces secreted and developing through time creates the narrative that anthropologists and archaeologists, geographers and historians, must unravel" (Tilley: 2010:34).

The path ran along the edge of the fence and soon we came to a gate and went through to a clearing. The Nine Ladies as at Stonehenge was also in an open area and it was a relief to move from the dark treed area into a flat, sunny open space. What we saw were nine standing stones placed on end in the ground, about the height and width of a chair, surrounded by grass but not overgrown, and then a thin line of birch and other native trees stood at the perimeter. When I was in email contact with Melanie Tebbutt (13/09/13) at Manchester Metropolitan University, who wrote the previously quoted article (2004) that I read while in Derbyshire, she mentioned that the Nine Ladies stone circle site is still used as a centre for neo-pagan activity such as at the time of the solstice. She also pointed out that the King Stone has the name 'Bill Stumps', an 'O' and a 'T' or cross shape scraped into the surface and is mentioned by Dickens, in *Pickwick Papers* (1837) but no one knows if Stumps was a real person or why he left his graffiti on the stone but that Bill Stumps may feature in the Doomsday book, the survey of 13,415 settlements commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086 but he is not listed as a landowner ("Doomsday Book Online", 2013). Lying about thirty five metres to the south west of the circle, the King Stone is now known to have formed part of a destroyed ring cairn. There are in fact 10 stones, in the Nine Ladies circle with another discovered in 1979 and there may originally have been more. The embanked

stone circle, was more visible when we were there as the grass had been cut during recent restorative work at the site ("Nine Ladies" n.d.). There was one tree that was more remarkable than the others. It was an oak tree, often associated with Druidic practice, was hung with were all manner of colourful tributes and remembrances in what is known as "tree-dressing", and we were aware of the layered history of this place and its continuing role in the spiritual life of some people unknown today ("The Druid Network" 2009).

The name The Nine Ladies is a recent one, given that the explanation on the accompanying information board tells the story of nine women who danced on the Sabbath and thus were turned to stone, but hardly the correct place name in a pre-Christian pagan narrative. The stone circle itself had a magical feeling and we sat on some of the flattened rocks without any sense that we were desecrating the place in any way. This was natural behaviour in our place. Many people had sat there before us and many more would again. As Tilley explained,

> cosmologies explaining the origins and the place of people in the world are derived from the embodied sensory exploration of that same world ... mediated through the medium of landscapes...prehistoric populations depended on cosmology to provide an explanation of their world... geology and ecology were woven into their belief and value systems—their embodied consciousness (2010:35).

In our historical period, when details are recorded in books, museums, libraries and now on computers, and places are located by means of maps and now Google Earth and GPS systems, we forget the situation of early human settlements where a more permanent way to record anything may have been with rocks and rock carvings that have stood the test of time. Tilley's interpretation of the small stones in the Exmoor stone rows is that they may have "acted as *aides-mémoire* for the people who erected them... through the stones one could remember persons and events and stories" and this seems relevant for other standing stones as well (2010:335). What also seemed relevant was his belief that the stone circles and stone rows are likely to have had a collective social significance to communities as a whole rather than to an isolated group with the general assumption that they had had unspecified ceremonial or ritual significance and were also landmarks, providing excellent vantage points along and across specific stream valleys and parts of the moor (Tilley, 2010). They were a means to mark significant places to which one could return; discrete markers of place and identity, as he says (2010). In explaining Tilley says that what he believes can be gleaned from such sites is the consistent theme of phenomenology, anthropology and literature that "supports the basic point that identities of persons are significantly related to the topographies and the geologies of the landscapes that they inhabit— they become part of people's characterful existence, as fundamental as the languages that they speak, the occupations that they pursue, and the material things that they create and use" (Tilley, 2010:34). It was

to literature and literary landscapes that I turned to next with the lucky find of a relevant book by Margaret Drabble.

## Literary Landscapes

In terms of literary landscapes, it was a large-format book replete with wonderful photographs by Margaret Drabble entitled *A Writer's Britain: Landscape in Literature* (1979), which I pounced on with glee at a second-hand book sale, and proved most valuable in England. Lorraine was bemused at how frequently the right book presented itself to me on our travels! The book sale was held at a school museum near Letchworth in Hertfordshire, where my sister and I were visiting my brother's family. It was somewhat sobering to find a school museum that looked similar to one's former school classroom. Drabble (1979) discusses the English love of landscape and its portrayal in literature. As one of my favourite fiction writers, Drabble had already contributed to the landscape imprints that I took with me to England, and in this book she has thoroughly researched and identified the specific places that inspired the great figures in English literary heritage.

Our visit there has had an added significance and poignancy now since the death of my brother. His ex-wife and their sons had repatriated some years before returning to her birthplace in England, leaving him behind in South Africa. Despite his personal devastation at their going, he had made the decision not to stop them leaving, believing that his children would have a better future in England. My sister and I enjoyed being reacquainted with his now-adult children, their partners and their children for the first time. We were not to know that within a year of our visit, Graeme, aged only 57, would pass away in South Africa, just after he had also visited England. That area is where a branch of my family now find their place, my brother's grandchildren will be English as both have English-born mothers, but will never know their grandfather, the South African man who no doubt they would have thought had a funny accent.

Given my reaction to forests, I was specifically interested in Drabble's (1979) interpretation of the role played by the woods in England as represented in literature. Although I freely interchange the words 'woods' and 'forests', they do have different origins. After the Norman Conquest, 'forests' were apparently woodlands set aside for the use of the king and gentry for hunting purposes, I learned recently, thus making more sense of the story of Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood. Drabble (1979) discusses the influence of this 14$^{th}$-century tale on the manner in which the woods were encountered when access was restricted to what had been common land when as she says Robin Hood attempted to capture the forests for the common man, "Legend has surrounded the great oaks of Sherwood forest... symbols of protection, keeping watch over the poor and simple... where the forest became a place of freedom... where all men were equal, where the landscape belonged to all" (1979:24). The wooded area I visited in Derbyshire would not have been that different from Sherwood Forest in adjacent

Nottinghamshire. The woods, says Schama (1995) were not just a place for outlaws like Robin Hood, people lived there, and were settled

> making a livelihood out of its resources, a robust society with its own seasonal rhythms of movement, communication, religion, work and pleasure. Even the broadest forests were laced with cart tracks, footpaths, and trails which to its adepts were as familiar as Roman roads ... distinctive landmarks such as rocky outcrops ... shapes suggestive enough to earn nicknames ... a micro-economy for its inhabitants... and the wild animals shared the woods with the domestic livestock (1995:144).

This world, represented in medieval forest scene tapestries, with the pig the most common animal, was not an imaginary utopia, he says but "a vigorous working society" that was seriously affected by the Frankish law that came with the Normans who annexed the forests to protect royal recreation (Schama, 1995:144).

In contrast, Drabble also reveals what must have been the reality of "nature as hostile" where "the great forests were inimical to human life, dangerous and wolf-infested, an obstacle to be hacked and cleared and burned down before man could survive"... the old English did not have the luxury of "an eye for scenery" (1979:18). It is interesting, too, when she reveals that the building of churches was an attempt to block out "the distractions of beauty" and Christians "thought it wrong to enjoy this world's beauty at all" (1979:19), which seems ironical given their belief in and worship of its creator. We see remnants of this attitude continuing today in approaches to environmental degradation and yet, as Drabble points out, "asceticism did not destroy all natural feeling". Many writers wrote allegorically of nature "deeply rooted in place", where red moss on the stones at Holywell in Wales is the "blood-stained hair of the martyred St. Winefride" (1979:20). Other priests saw "God in a waterfall", such as Gerald Manly Hopkins, a Jesuit priest who pointed out that "by destroying it, we destroyed his kingdom" (1979:38-39). In both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon literature, Drabble traces "a positive liking for the bleak and desolate, a melancholy and nostalgia that provide a powerful strain in our national feeling for landscape" (1979:21). In fact the English language preserves "some of the attributes of our early landscapes" she says, "and our way of looking at them" (1979:23). With the prevalence of words such as misty, dusk, dreary or sodden, as Drabble points out, no wonder we might struggle to find words to describe the places of Africa and Australia. I can remember returning to Melbourne from Auckland and finding the light so bright that sunglasses seemed inadequate and I wondered where the poetry was that described this light.

Although we have overlaid colonial landscapes, such as in parks in Australia, with the type of trees from the woods in places such as England, which have seriously impacted on ecologies, I can also understand why migrants wanted to transplant symbols of home to their new place, especially when

many of them were never to return, given that travel was not as easy or inexpensive as it is now. Drabble identifies writers who spoke of beloved places but from a distance where they preferred to live, such as Robert Browning, who preferred to live in Italy but wrote of wishing he was in England "now that April's there" (1979:7) and poet A.E. Housman, who wrote nostalgically of the pastoral scenery of Ludlow in Shropshire when apparently he had never been there. A friend and I went seeking the landscapes of Housman in Ludlow on my recent visit to England (2010), although at the time we were unaware that he was writing of a utopia rather than what he had actually experienced. As Drabble points out, he "conveys a powerful sense of place, but it is an unattainable place, a distant shining land from which the poet is forever and inexplicably exiled" (1979:265). In fact, Drabble intimates that Housman used landscape as a metaphor for sex and the loss of landscape is "an inner landscape of universal loss" in the "land of lost content" (1979:266).

In Ludlow we discovered a wonderful castle and Tudor-style buildings leaning in towards each other across the narrow roads, but that was only after we had trudged up the hill with our cases and recovered from the initial shock of an expansive *Tesco and Aldi* supermarket complex near the railway station where we arrived. It raised the question, of course, of mythical places as conjured up in poetry and fiction and perhaps best left there when the reality has developed into something that is less than sacred. In a recent television documentary entitled *Town* (ABC, 2011) the narrator explained the reason for the location of the supermarkets as deliberate. Rather than see the town possibly die with the building of a new shopping centre outside of town, the council opted for it to be built within the confines of the historical precinct, matching the roof slope to the surrounding hills. It pointed to a town that is more than just a tourist attraction but serves the daily and changing needs of its citizens.

Wordsworth as a Romantic, Drabble says "forged a new relationship between man and the natural world…for him the landscape is the message, and he himself is the landscape ... in his work were the 'qualities of the region that reared him' " (1979:147-148). His poetry must have influenced the approach to beauty for many a scholar "connected (landscape) ... in new ways with man's thought processes and moral being", illustrating the "interaction of place and emotion, of past and present, of reality and imagination" (1979:152). Drabble has the view that the landscape became Wordsworth's family when he lost both mother and father at a young age. I recognised my own journey to Ireland as a search for my dead mother and contemplated my need for a sense of place and belonging as resting with the loss of significant relationships in one's life. The associations of childhood places and remembered landscapes with the protective mantle of mother and father would seem to be closely linked. Drabble has noted "a passionate attachment to the places of childhood ... an almost mystic devotion to the land itself" (1979:7). She believes, too, that "the reason why Wordsworth struck so deep a response is that he was drawing on deep sources of collective feeling, a primitive animistic view of the world" (1979:161) but she also saw the relevance of writers returning to "dreams of the house" lived in with family as a longing

for lost worlds “both in time and place” (1979:249). The first words of poetry that comes to mind if anyone was to ask me to quote a few lines, would be one by Wordsworth:

> I wandered lonely as a cloud
> That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
> When all at once I saw a crowd,
> A host, of golden daffodils;
> Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
> Fluttering and dancing in the breeze ...
> [William Wordsworth, “Daffodils” in *Poems in II Volumes,* 1807]

His words were relevant each year when the daffodils and jonquils growing wild in the field adjacent to our home in Belgrave would bloom. It was delightful then to find a close connection with Wordsworth in Derbyshire, with the story of Wordsworth’s tree. To add our story to his story, when I visited my nephew and his wife Nades and children in Derbyshire, I heard the story of Wordsworth’s tree, a lone tree that could be seen on Oaker Hill from their house. He wrote this poem when passing the area in a coach on his way to his home in the Lake District. It concerned two brothers who planted two trees before parting ways to make their fortune—one remaining in their home-place and the other travelling abroad. When the latter died, the tree did, too, and thus a lone tree still stands. When Nades’ much-adored Labrador Tonto died, Rob carried a spade and Tonto in a sack up the hill and buried him beneath Wordsworth’s tree, expecting at any moment to be challenged for such bizarre behaviour. Thus our family story became part of the landscape of Wordsworth and Derbyshire. Malpas said that “the land as carrying on its face, in pathways, monuments and sites, a cultural memory and storehouse of ideas” such as Wordsworth’s poetry as memorial inscription (1999:187). My nephew passed on a copy of Wordsworth’s poem (*A Tradition of Oker Hill in Darley Dale, Derbyshire,* 1829) as we stood looking at the tree:

> 'TIS said that to the brow of yon fair hill
> Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face from face,
> Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still
> Or feed, each planted on that lofty place
> A chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfil
> Their courses, like two new-born rivers, they
> In opposite directions urged their way
> Down from the far-seen mount. No blast might kill
> Or blight that fond memorial;—the trees grew,
> And now entwine their arms; but ne'er again
> Embraced those Brothers upon earth's wide plain;
> Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
> Until their spirits mingled in the sea
> That to itself takes all, Eternity.
> [William Wordsworth, 1829]

## Conclusion

In Matlock, Derbyshire, I left my sister to help to care for her grandson and the new addition to her family, catching the train first for Ludlow, where I met up with a friend and then on to Brighton, to the birthplace of my paternal grandmother.

## Photo Journal: Stanton Moor, Derbyshire

Permission to enter the copse of trees on Stanton Moor [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Perfect circles cut from stone near to the old stone cottage [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

The back wall of the stone cottage [F.B. Dent, 2010]

The woods in Derbyshire, England [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Markings on a rock on the pathway leading to The Nine Ladies

[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Tree dressing: The sacred Oak tree at The Nine Ladies Stone circle and confirms its current usage by neo-pagan groups

[Photo: L.P. Beetge, 2010]

My sister takes her place as one of the Nine Ladies [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]


Information Board at The Nine Ladies Stone Circle site [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

## Writing a Biographical Landmark

> Landscapes can be deceptive.
> Sometimes a landscape seems to be less a setting
> for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which
> their struggles, achievements and accidents take place.
> For those who with the inhabitants, are behind
> the curtain, landmarks are no longer only geographic
> but also biographical and personal.
> [John Berger, 1967]

Although Brighton is a biographical landmark and featured in conversations in our family as my grandmother would share the story of her birthplace, I did not really remember much of the detail apart from remembering photographs of the palace and the pier. The biography I had to fabricate linked the topography and built environment with the old family photographs and postcards that I had carried with me to Australia. To be there was to attempt to be in their shoes and to know what their lives may have been like prior to immigrating to South Africa. In a place like Brighton where there are many famous landmarks, it seemed more accessible; the curtain described previously by Berger (1967) more easily drawn open to write biographical landmarks. What was most important to my study, though, was to understand the influence a particular place and landscape had on my forebears and the cultural landscape they took with them, including its representation in literature, art and poetry.

The places I visited also became part of my story, and as I add my story to what I surmise may have been their experience of a particular geographical location, our histories are layered. When Berger wrote of the country doctor (1967) who attempted to decipher in the landscape and landmarks the connections between where he had come to practice, and the way people lived, their way of thinking and their attitudes, he describes a similar process to mine, although I was involved in a genealogical study of my blood relatives who had an impact on my identity. When the doctor watches a young woman walk away from his surgery, stuck in her life, unable to take the initiative to bring about change, she walks up the road enclosed on both sides by walls that are "cemented together", he says (1967:33), and yet my forebears did make the decision to leave to break out of the restrictive walls. My sister said that I would also be looking for both "the traces of what they left behind" and the *something* that they took with them and influenced the people they became in a new country. My sense is that it is this *something* that is passed down through the generations and has played a part in the person I am, as well. I have chosen to focus more on their appreciation and experience of landscape: the built environment and the natural features of place as carried with them rather than only my cultural heritage. While my grandmother was disdainful of people who continued to speak of England as 'home', it was still very much a part of who she was and thus our family identity, too.

My grandmother, Winifred Caroline Holden was born on June 3rd, 1896. On her recently found birth certificate we now know that she was born at 6 Montreal Road, but the only address my father

knew of at the time of my visit to Brighton was 10 Cuthbert Road, where she had lived prior to immigrating. I have an old black-and-white photograph of the street (included in this document) and it was to this address that I went in search of a moment of connection with my much-loved grandmother. She immigrated to South Africa with her first husband, Lloyd, who deserted her soon after their arrival, leaving her with a small baby, my uncle Brian, to care for alone in a foreign country. What a scoundrel! Although she went back to England to visit, she returned to South Africa to marry my grandfather, and subsequently the balance of her family followed, including mother, father and her two sisters. In seeking an impression of what it was for my grandmother to leave England, it was Olive Schreiner, (1923) who wrote most poignantly of what it would have been like to immigrate in that era:

> while for the ordinary emigrant female (she) bids farewell to Europe to make her home in the new land... the moment in which she catches a last glimpse of the land of her youth is one of the emotionally intense of her existence… and even if she finds a much better life where she settles ... binding her to the land behind her are the ties of blood and childish remembrances of home – ties which shape themselves ... she is leaving the one spot on earth where she is an object of interest and importance to her fellows. When she arrives in the new world it is to that home that she sends the record of her marriage – there that she knows the story of her sorrows and her gains will be waited for! In the hour of her childbirth it is to the women of her own blood *at home* that her heart turns with yearning; and as the years go by 'my people' and 'my home' gain a colour and size that they would never have borne if near at hand. The stories that she tells her children are of this 'home' in Europe with the names of relatives there assuming mythological status: this she calls the 'Mother tradition' ... And so it goes on from generation to generation … it is the echo of this legend which goes so largely to form that curious body of sentiment with which the most commonplace colonist visits Europe for the first time (1923:70-71).

Schreiner's (1923) reflection highlights especially the reality of migration for women, but luckily for my grandmother she was soon joined by close family. On going to the house in Brighton I was taking part in a performance that can never be repeated or experienced in the same way again: going to somewhere significant for the first time.

The taxi I took to Cuthbert Street climbed quite a steep hill past row upon row of double-storied attached houses on either side of the road. Each resident had attempted to make her house unique with different front doors and paint colours. I located my grandmother's former home distinctive to the others in the row of identical houses by the addition of a third storey loft room, and climbing out of the taxi parked across the street, took a few photographs. Crossing over, I picked up a stone from the front flower bed. The old, gnarled white rose bush growing in the small flower-box in the front of the house may have been planted by my great-grandparents: perhaps Harry Holden was the gardener or was it Caroline, called Carrie, whose surname was formerly Vessey, which coincidently is also the surname of my next-

door neighbour in Wonthaggi. My father had said that it was a Cornish name but I remember that my grandmother spoke of her French blood and the origins of the name on the internet[2] confirm this. I reached out to pick a white blossom and the petals came away in my hand before I noticed that someone was sitting at a table indoors, hidden by the lace curtains on the window. I should have knocked on the door and introduced myself, but with the taxi waiting, hurriedly turned away in case I had been seen pausing only to pick up a few pebbles from the garden bed. I had a strong impression of three young girls bounding out through the entrance and down the steps. Perhaps the checked dark blue-and-white tiles and the door painted blue to match are new, but the impression remains of an opening, as an imprint in my mind's eye. Although I spent no more than five minutes looking at the house, the front door has stayed with me as a symbol of my grandmother's leaving. She left that house to travel to South Africa as a young woman and as a result I was born. For me it was an intimate space: a symbolic birth canal. It was a transitional moment in her life that would transform her entire family's destiny as well. Bachelard identified the role of houses (and novels) as places where our imagination, our consciousness, needs to locate itself in what he calls a spatial construct. He said that they invite the exploration and expression of private and intimate relations and thoughts and he saw the home as a "metonym of inner, psychological space... these spatial constructs not only compose and record our past but also set out a grid for our current and future lives and understanding" (1994: xxxvii).

Fortunately the street was little changed from the old black-and-white photograph that I had, although there were no boys with their delivery cart, of course, but a modern-day young man with a motorbike instead and numerous cars now parked along the kerb. Not only was it an address where they had lived but it also an opportunity to experience the landscape features that they would also have experienced and enjoyed or possibly found trying: climbing the steep road up to where the row house was located. I saw my great-grandmother, Carrie struggling up the hill to their home in Cuthbert Road, with a baby in a pram as there was no way to avoid the hills that rose from Brighton foreshore. For the first time I felt a connection with her. She suffered ill health, especially due to facial palsy, a condition that caused severe pain in her cheek. Hearing of her condition I felt empathy for her, realising why her smile in photographs looks strained. I have a wonderful photo, however, of her as a younger woman with my grandmother clutching her rag doll sitting on her mother's lap riding in the attached trailer, while my great-grandfather did the pedalling on a bicycle up front. My father tells me my great-grandfather

[2] The Dictionary of National Biography (accessed 4/6/14), lists de Vesci or Vessey as having its origins in an old noble Norman family from the Calvados region of France. The first records are about Robert de Vesci, Norman conqueror and Ivo de Vesci, Lord of Alnwick. The de Vesci family, held lands in England and Ireland. The family was also linked to the Scottish Crown through the marriage of Eustace de Vesci to Margaret, an illegitimate daughter of William the Lion by a daughter of Adam de Hythus. William de Vesci was one of the competitors for the Crown of Scotland, upon the death of Margaret, Maid of Norway in 1290.

invented and made this mode of transport, but seeing the terrain in Brighton, I now realised that it would have involved some heavy peddling to get back home, too (photo is included further on).

The taxi driver, a local of 30 years, was happy to point out the amenities they may have enjoyed: a large park nearby at the top of the hill, with arched stone entrances at each street. From the top of the street they could look out to sea, to dream of journeys to faraway places; their lives were not enclosed by damp woods, fields and hills as I had recently experienced in Derbyshire similar to where I had lived in Belgrave in the Dandenong Ranges in fact but more like the coastal location I had moved to. How did they adjust to living 600 miles from the sea in Johannesburg? I could see why my grandmother loved going to the Vaal River then sitting at the water's edge while my grandfather fished and she did her knitting. I have fond memories of them accompanying us on day-trips for picnics to Parys on the Vaal River and to stay overnight at a riverside shack. For many years my father's boss had a house on the river where we would stay overnight. It included the use of several boats, moored in an elaborate boathouse, far more resplendent than was the shack. I can still visualise the screened food cabinet hung in the shade of a tree, which I would now all a "Coolgardie Safe" but have no idea if we had a name for it. My father has always loved messing about in boats and to be near water and it is a pity he could not have lived closer to the river rather than land-locked Johannesburg for most of his life. Perhaps it was in his blood, given that his grandmother's cousin ran *The Skylark,* a pleasure boat that operated from Brighton. I found the figurehead of *The Skylark* in the Maritime Museum there and decided to crochet my own representation of the sweet-faced wooden bird. According to the Maritime Museum website when the call goes out to board a variety of boat and trains in the United Kingdom, the expression "All aboard the Skylark!" derives from this early pleasure craft ("Fishing Museum", n.d.).

In recent years Brighton has acquired an openly gay residential population and culture, I was told by the taxi driver, with the boardwalk, piers and beach providing the promenade for people's lives to be on display. The penny arcade was still there, with the opportunity to have one's fortune told, as were the buildings housed beneath the boardwalk. I imagined my grandmother as a small child, together with her two younger sisters, Violet and Mabel, playing on the beach. When I attempted to walk barefoot on the large pebbles, I had the physical kinetic experience that enabled me to be in touch with her as a child. It was mimicking what had been their embodied experience where they, too, suffered the agony of a beach so unlike any we have in South Africa or Australia. I found myself crawling on my hands and knees back to where I had left my shoes and bag, thus spreading the weight across all fours rather than exposing my feet to another dose of pebbles, thankful that I would not be recognised nor did I care what anyone thought of my behaviour. I stood there for a while and looked to the white cliffs in the distance, another distinctive English land feature that extends right along the southern coast, with the words of the song I equate with Vera Lyn's "The White Cliffs of Dover" in my sound-memory. Later I wondered if my forebears also knew that people chose to end their lives by jumping to their death from those cliffs; this rather sombre information was shared by the bartender as I enjoyed a cool drink on the pier.

My forebears may also have contemplated the menu of available seafood at the pier, including cockles, whelks, mussels and jellied eels, or perhaps enjoyed ordinary fish and chips on the Palace Pier at sunset, as I did, looking across to the West Pier in the distance that was damaged and apparently then burned down in 2003. Its shell remains, slowly disintegrating, marooned out at sea, a sad end for a structure more beautiful than the Palace Pier I was on. I have a postcard featuring West Pier sent by my great-grandmother to my Uncle Brian reminding him to be a good boy (undated), as well as an aerial photograph of Brighton (dated 1919), also a postcard. These must have been some of the first aerial postcards produced. Did they walk along the pier to the end and look down into the English Channel as I did? Did they watch the eel-like swimming of seaweed, too, as their mother pulled them back from the edge?

My grandmother was born in 1896 and Brighton Palace Pier was completed in 1899. It is a magical structure, with benches down the centre under a trellised cover allowing one to enjoy the sea when the beach is difficult to negotiate. The seagulls were much larger than their Australian counterparts and their call conjured up memories of old movies where the pier was featured. The Royal Pavilion, built by the Prince Regent and later King George IV in stages between 1787 and 1823, its oriental appearance entirely at odds with the surrounding architecture, may also have been where they, too, enjoyed picnics under the trees of the open palace grounds as many people were on the day I was there, or wandered through the ornate, extravagant interior if it was open to the public then, too. Were there squirrels running up the trees and scurrying around the ground?

My experience has created a place now to attach to the idea of Brighton and my grandmother's memories that I grew up with. She was a beautiful soul who could stretch a penny further than anyone else, as we were often reminded, even making sheets by sewing flour bags together or knitting string to make a dishcloth. She was always busy with sewing, knitting, crocheting, cooking and baking and she played the mandolin, accompanying my grandfather on the piano. Her almond-shaped brown eyes, I see in my daughter; and her love of dogs is part of who I am, too. She passed away within a year of my grandfather's death – he died at the age of 65 of a stroke – she dying of pancreatic cancer in what had been my sister's and my bedroom after she came to live with us in our home in Krugersdorp. For a long time after her death, I could still smell the fern-scented powder my mother had used after bathing her, to mask the smell of oncoming death in our bedroom. During that year, and before she became ill and moved upstairs to our room, I spent many hours with her after school as she reminisced and shared her philosophy of life and worked on her handiwork, sitting in the late-afternoon sun as it streamed in the doorway of her room in the backyard of our house. My grandparents were both influential people in my life as well as that of my siblings and our cousins, and I loved them dearly. On my return home I wanted to materialise my memories of my grandmother and her birthplace with my visit to Brighton and the little keepsakes I purchased there.

## Fabric-ating Experience

As with my maternal grandmother, I had kept my grandmother's handkerchief bag and handkerchiefs, perhaps fascinated with these quaint artefacts in the age of tissues, (not to mention having brought them with me to Australia in 1980) and purchased another handkerchief in Brighton at the Palace Shop with her initial "W" embroidered on the corner to add to the collection. I used the latter handkerchief as a memorial sampler recording the place, and dates of her birth and death as well as embroidering a representation of the row house at Cuthbert Street with the third-floor addition tacked on top. The house is surrounded with small white roses, symbolising the white rose that was growing in the garden when I visited there. I also embroidered onto one of the old handkerchiefs some of the loving inscription written by my grandfather in her autograph book before they were married. Perhaps she carried this very handkerchief in her handbag when they were courting. These items that express my emotional response to telling their story and visiting England are now enclosed in a book that I found, *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady* (1977), by Edith Holden (my grandmother's maiden name), not a relative as far as I know but an appropriate holding place for my embroideries and memories.

Understanding, according to Gadamer is a "participation in a process of tradition, like a process of transfer where the past and the future move constantly through reinterpretation" (cited in Birkeland, 2005:19). In speaking of Gadamer, Birkeland says that "aesthetics and art are important for the understanding of culture" ... "since art is understood as the capacity to create images or representations of experience" (2005:20). Of course, this brings one to the matter of tourist images of places and the question of how to use observation and photography as a means of creating knowledge "while deconstructing and reconstructing observation so as not to use it in an objectifying way", as Birkeland discusses (2005:20). The photographs that I took and have included in my thesis are there because my experience was visual—this is what I saw, while the written word is how I interpreted what I saw. They also represent what my forebears may have seen; these are the impressions, images they carried with them from that place and this is the picture that came to mind for them perhaps when they were talking of that place but which I did not have the benefit then of knowing. Now I have filled in the image space that had stood open. Photographs can serve to distance oneself from the place being viewed, the stance from behind the camera's lens rather than one's own lens, but ultimately they are both—the visual as recorded by the camera or artist and the visual as interchange whereby I was taking photographs of my historical referencing to help to lay down imprints.

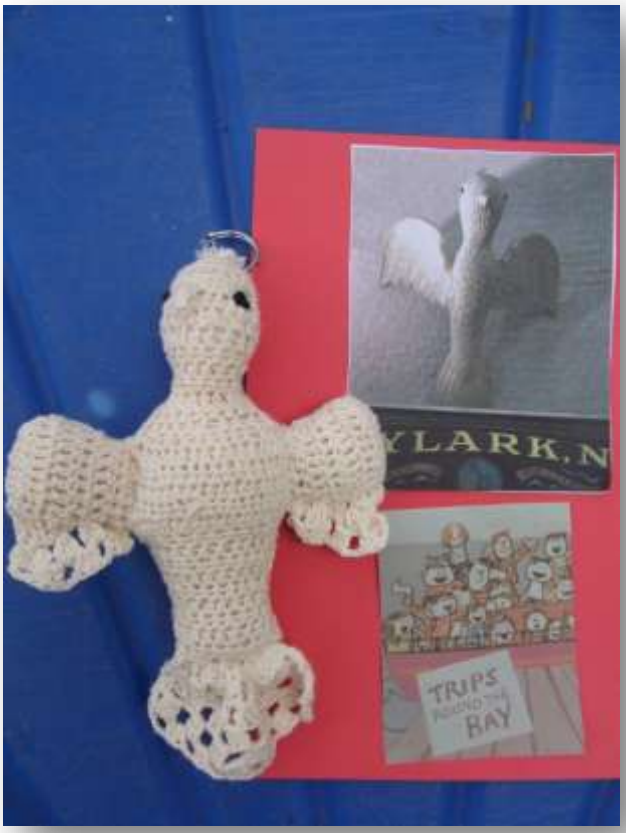
## Conclusion

My brief time spent in the United Kingdom connected to books I read, literature and the essential Englishness of our culture transported to both South Africa and Australia, although we seem to have lost many of the localised trappings. I found the most moving aspect of the experience was the

unexpected, namely the deeply spiritual connection I felt for a history at The Nine Ladies stone circle and nearby dwelling place, and especially going to Brighton and being in my grandmother's birthplace. Subsequently, on reading books by Christopher Tilley and his phenomenological approach, I found a language to better describe 'just being somewhere' without a preconceived agenda. On my return to Australia, I increased my knowledge of both family and English history, and geography to weave the fabric of this heritage and embroidered with my particular experience there.


Sampler I: My grandmother's former home in Brighton, England embroidered on a handkerchief as a Memorial Sampler, the handkerchief purchased at the Palace shop encased in *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady* by Edith Holden [Artwork & Photo: F.B. Dent, 2011]

Sampler 2:
A message from my grandfather in my grandmother's autograph book, I reproduced in embroidery on my grandmother's old handkerchief [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2011]




Sampler 3: A crocheted representation I made in 2011, of the masthead of the pleasure boat called *The Skylark* that was operated by my great-grandmother's cousin and is housed in the Fishing Museum at Brighton. The film "Launch of the Skylark" was made in 1898
Fishing Museum, Brigton Quay [http://intheboatshed.net].
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2011]

# Photo Journal: Brighton

Brighton Palace Pier, September 2010 [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Along the quay at Brighton – Fishing Museum [Photo: F. B.Dent, 2010]

Recently in a movie called *Brighton Rock,* that was set in 1960s, it recreated the buildings that stretched on the foreshore at the time that were similar to the one I photographed above rather than the ugly modern additions such as those seen on the left and right [Photo: F. B.Dent, 2010]

My grandmother's former home at 10 Cuthbert Road, Brighton [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]


Cuthbert Road, Brighton, circa 1920s

Cuthbert Road [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

## Family Photo Album

My great grandparents: Harry Holden and Caroline Holden (née Vessey) [circa 1915]

My grandmother, Winnifred Caroline Holden is on the left and her young son, Brian is the curly haired boy. The sisters are Mabel , the youngest in the centre and Violet on the right [circa 1915]

My great-grandfather's invention to move the family around town.
My grandmother is the young child on her mother's lap [circa 1890]

My grandparents Winnie and Bertie Theunissen with her son, Brian [circa 1918]

# Fabric-ating 3:  Seeking connections in Ireland

A Cathair (or Ring Fort), County Kerry, Ireland [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Fairy ring fort
In the shadowed field, cows
Leans a Celtic cross

A lilting uilleann pipe
Wafts across an empty place
[F.B. Dent, 2010]

## Introduction

On visiting Ireland for the first time in 2010, I came to that landscape uninscribed: my approach was entirely open, with few preconceptions or historical grounding apart from the knowledge that my mother had held an Irish heritage dear to her heart. Ironically, we had lived in a suburb named Kenmare in Krugersdorp surrounded by Irish place names: our street was Waterford, and our house was at the turnoff to Shannon Road, while my sister lived first in Kerry and then Clare Street after she was married. Obviously someone held Ireland dear when naming the streets and the suburb located on a hill above what was essentially an Afrikaans dominated town.

We went seeking embodied experiences in ancestral places in Ireland, a heritage to which we had no place-stories of attachment but where the landscape belonged to the memory code of our forebears somewhere along the line. I was looking for a bodily and spiritual response. My sister and I had specifically chosen the coach tour that incorporated as much of Ireland as possible, it was a place we had both always wanted to visit and we immediately warmed to the landscape, the houses, the towns, the music, the dancing and the people. We attempted to be free spirits despite our organised tour, choosing our own path when we could, not wanting to waste a moment of the short time we had. We chose not to queue to kiss the Blarney stone, making do with a kiss on the stone wall below, and had more time to spend in the woollen mills shop buying pieces of embroidered Irish linen. Nor did we queue to ride in the horse-drawn Jonty carts in Killarney and we caught a taxi to see the magnificent Cliffs of Moher when we realised it was not included in the itinerary. There were many other places we would have liked to see such as New Grange, but that had to wait for another visit.

Although our mother's maternal grandparents were born in England and immigrated to Australia, before going on to South Africa, their heritage was Irish, having left Ireland for England during The Great Famine, or so we believe. Their name was Deegan, and from my study of genealogical records, appear to have lived in County Clare. Unfortunately with only a day to spend in that part of Ireland (the downside of an organised tour), we had no time for independent family research, but it was a good opportunity to get a feel for the landscape. I remember my mother's quiet celebration of St Patrick's Day and she looked stereotypically Irish, with twinkling, deep blue eyes and dark curly hair. Perhaps her fair, freckled skin was her Scottish heritage.

In his book *The Irish in Ireland*, Fitzgibbon says that there are two types in Ireland: blond, tall Celts and small, dark and swarthy people who are the older Irish (1983). I chose to read Fitzgibbon's book in depth as it is in the collection of books that my partner inherited from his father. To read someone else's book is to link to that person as well as the contents of the book, just as annotated recipe books are now highly sought after. His father had collected newspaper clippings about Ireland that were pressed within its pages, and in reading the book I felt that I was party to his pre-learning prior to going to Ireland to encounter his own heritage. My mother never had the chance to go to Ireland or overseas at all. Her love affair was at a distance and it was tinged with a sadness that we never understood. I remember that she would call out to us to turn off the song *Danny Boy* should it be played on the radio, as it reminded her of something sad which she never explained. During the Second World War, she lost both her first husband, Roger Louw, and her youngest brother, Thomas, nicknamed Sonny, then married my father, and gave birth to my sister during the space of four years. I have always believed that the enormous emotional stress of that time ultimately led to the mental illness from which she suffered in later life. She also mourned the loss of her working role outside of the family, having given up a job she loved at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange when she got married, as was customary in fact enshrined in the law (as

was the case in Australia) at the time. The result has been that both my sister and I believed that we could ward off her fate by maintaining paid jobs outside of the home despite marriage, children and juggling roles that were very stressful at times.

I especially felt that this Irish heritage was dominant in my disposition and attitude to life as it was for my mother. We both had a short-fuse and were quick to anger although perhaps I am relying too heavily on cultural stereotypes but I sense that there is something in my nature and character that aligns with misfortune and suffering as imprinted in my genes and ancestry. Fitzgibbon (1983) speaks of a certain fatalism that has continued as a national character trait, presumably, he says, linked to superstition and magic. Recently another person of Irish descent shared with me the idea that misfortune comes to those who make the mistake of being too happy, it being preferable therefore to maintain one's guard against being struck down with some unexpected calamity by maintaining a quiet anguish. The Irish people, on the other hand, also know how to let their hair down and both Lorraine and I should take account of this aspect of our heritage more fully in the future. On our bus tour we were taken on a hunt for the *craic*—without a direct English equivalent, it translates to the theme of having a good time—and found it in an old pub where traditional music and singing, and Irish whisky flowed (although another cultural stereotype, a predilection or tolerance for alcoholic beverages, is one that I do not share). We also went to a variety show with comedy, traditional Irish dancing, singing and bagpipe playing on the beautiful and haunting uilleann pipes (played by pumping the elbow rather than using the lungs to fill the bag as in Scottish pipes). Lorraine enjoyed the show so much that she bought every single CD that the performers were selling after the show, not able to disappoint any one of them. In fact, when I saw some small sample bottles of Irish liquors on sale, I jokingly asked for them to be locked up, knowing she would buy those as well, but it was too late. I have never seen her so happy and carefree and willing to indulge herself. Her usual approach was to buy things for her children and grandchildren – she had caught the *craic* no doubt! The question that I still needed to answer however was: Who were the Irish people and who were the Celts?

## The Irish People

The pre-Celtic people left very few records, says Paul Devereux (2003) but their stories persist in folktale and myth apart from in built-structures such as the Cathair fort (pictured previously), which some attribute to the Celts. This style of fort is found throughout Ireland and some refer to them as "fairy forts" as their original builders are not agreed upon, he says (2003). Other places such as New Grange are not fully understood either, given that very few bone relics have been found there, which would distinguish it as a burial chamber. Devereux explains that it means 'The cave of Grainne' – a heroine with traces all over Ireland; it is 44 feet high with a 280-foot diameter and was once covered in white quartz pebbles. What is currently on view is not entirely original having been reconstructed while as to its purpose, all

that can be observed now is that the inner chamber window opening captures the mid-winter sun at the Winter Solstice on December 22, which is what is most significant.

The Celts arrived in Ireland in about 500 BC from Europe and "their imprint is even now quite easy to discern" in the view of Fitzgibbon (1983:32). He says of the Celts that they were a "very mature and self-assured society which had flourished for many centuries in central Europe", and while they did not create Ireland, "they imprinted upon the Irish a style which in some measure has endured" but he says that to understand Ireland we need to "follow the Celts far back into their pre-Irish past" (1983:32). It is commonly believed, Fitzgibbon says, that the indigenous population were probably absorbed as slaves, and for a thousand years the Celts made their collective will predominant and that was reinforced most importantly in a "conscious awareness of a shared past, often a very remote past, handed down in folk tales, poems and history and given actuality by custom and law" (1983:33). It was these avenues that I have subsequently delved into, to augment my having physically been there.

The Celts brought with them the system of *septs* or clans, a kinship group headed by a person called the *Ri*, wherein a number of families who all paid taxes and were obedient to the Ri and had a common ancestry and surname (Fitzgibbon, 1983). When several septs joined together they formed provinces and these are the origin of the current arrangement of counties, he says; there was no private property, only what was held within a *sept* and one could become servile to another because of defeat in a battle (1983). They had an extended-family system, which we continue to find traces of in the practice of naming a godfather and godmother for a child at baptism (1983). The saga of the *sept* and its genealogy was interpreted and recited or sung by those qualified as a *file*, the bards and poets whose voices were perceived as a semi-divine and undisputed authority. To qualify as a *file*, the poet had to learn seven stories of varying length: some stories were told across all septs, such as of Cuchulain, Finn and Queen Maebh and are "storehouses of language, tradition and custom" (1983:39). The poet's role, just as it continues in traditional Africa today with the bestowing of praise names (Madiba is Mandela's praise name), was to glorify the chieftain to build an image in the eyes of potential foes. It was the Irish monks who inherited the powers and methods of the pre-Christian poets, according to Fitzgibbon (1983).

Some of what has been found buried in Ireland is mysterious, as Fitzgibbon (1983) reveals: gold and silver jewellery in Greek style, such as torcs, speak of an unknown past and may be connected to Greek mythology such as that of the story of the *Tuatha de Danaan* (pronounced: tootha day danan), meaning people of the Goddess Dana, from the Greek myth of Danae. The Tuatha de Danaan was a race of people in Irish mythology who are part of the 'Invasions tradition', being the fifth group to invade and settle (1983). In a study of *Leprechauns, Legends and Irish Tales*, McGowan (1994) says that these people are said to be the forebears of the Leprechauns (who dressed in green) and Fir Darrigs (who dressed in red), banished to live underground after their defeat at the hands of the Formorians. The folklore of the Leprechaun persists in Ireland and is one of the more 'twee' examples of tourist paraphernalia that we

observed, sold without reference to what the little green-dressed figures represented. I pledged not to buy a little green man unless I could find a book of Leprechaun stories at any one of the tourist outlets our coach conveniently dropped us off at. None was to be had. There is no confirmation as to their origins apparently: perhaps referring to meanings such as 'the little body' or 'the shoemaker', his chief occupation (McGowan, 1994). One curiosity is the colour green: the colour that has become synonymous with all things Irish. I wondered how it was that my mother would never wear or have anything green in our home, which seemed to contradict her Irish heritage. She considered green to bring bad luck, and it has been associated with misfortune and death. When first the colour green was introduced to clothing and wallpaper as a dye it was made from copper arsenite and this proved to be lethal. There is also the theory that connects green as an unlucky colour to those who suffered in Ireland during the famine, who turned green from eating grass (Radio National*, Life Matters*, 17/6/10). I am not sure from which culture they have derived, but other superstitions that I continue to pay attention to include: not putting shoes on the table (pretty sensible really); not walking under a ladder; or the bad luck associated with seeing a black cat. The one I most religiously observe is to throw salt over my left shoulder should I spill any. The latter I discovered is backed up by a story that Devereux (2003) relates of a woman throwing salt over her shoulder, which caused her pursuer to turn into a pool of water. I am curious as to the origins of these superstitions as far as my mother was concerned: did they reveal aspects of her Irish or her Scottish heritage? It is difficult to find any explanations.

I was also curious about that well-known symbol of the Celts: the Celtic cross—a cross with a circle around the intersection. Fitzgibbon (1983) reveals that there is no clear explanation there either, some say that Saint Patrick introduced the Celtic cross with a circle to represent the sun to appease the pre-Christian pagan sun worshippers, while others say that it symbolises eternity, and is merely decorated with Celtic symbolism. Fitzgibbon says there was no religion in Ireland prior to Christianity, a curious statement which indicates the prejudice of ascribing spirituality only to organised religions.

## Celtic Spirituality

Before Christianity, there was no religion, Fitzgibbon (1983) says, only the belief in magic, the reverence of holy wells, the sanctity of mistletoe, sacred groves (nemeton), certain trees such as the May and Oak and belief in fairies, that persist in the vernacular if not in belief. The Mother Goddess Brigid, says Fitzgibbon, was the most powerful deity, now incorporated into the Christianised St. Brigid with her feast day, 1st February, which is considered the first day of spring: she was exalted as the life-giving goddess of fertility in both Irish and Scottish traditions (1983). The Celtic revival, Marion Bowman (2002) says, in her investigation into contemporary Celtic spirituality had theosophical connections, and was the interest of poets such as W.B. Yeats, George Russell and artist, John Duncan, in what was considered to be a return to a Golden Age. She describes it as a desire to capture the spirit of the pre-Christian Europe –

a return to ancestral, native traditions – reconnecting with rituals, nature and the Celtic calendar, in an attempt to tap into a bygone age (Bowman, 2002). The Celtic revival at sacred places such as at holy wells and stone circles is common, with a desire to retrieve festivals such as Brighde, with bride dolls and bride crosses as the universal sacred female and incorporated as well into an Irish folk Catholic tradition (2002).

My sister and I went to see the pages that are presented open of the *Book of Kells* [c.900] at Trinity College in Dublin in 2010, with its combination of Celtic symbols bordering the pages of scripture. The commonly held belief is that the *Book of Kells* originated on the island of Iona, in the Inner Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland and was taken to Kells (forty miles north-west of Dublin) "when the Iona monks abandoned their monastery after a Viking attack in 806" and moved to Kells (Bowman, 2002:56). Some believe that the monks on the island of Iona were in fact Druids who retreated there to safety and posed as monks, producing the essentially Celtic illustrations (2002). Bowman takes up the issue of what is meant by Celtic spirituality and indicates that in its broadest sense one could say that it has become an increasingly popular 'brand' – "something intangible but somehow identifiably Celtic" that "adds a particular flavour" to music, art, jewellery, writing and religious belief as well as archaeology and mythology (2002:56).

This upsurge in interest in Celtic culture is compared to that of other fringe peoples "who live on the margins like the Australian Aborigines and the Native Indians of North America" and represents a questioning of progress, scientific and technological advantage and a desire to return to a "cultural primitivism" (Bowman, 2002:61). Others, Bowman says, wish to reconstruct the beliefs and lifestyle of the Celts in folklore and story amongst the Scots, Irish, Welsh, Manx and Northumbrians, and in the West Country within the British Isles, but there are also what Bowman calls "cardiac Celts"—people who identify themselves as Celts because they 'feel it in their hearts' wherever they are, what she calls "free-range Celts" (2002:63). While some would criticise this approach as pure "aspirational invention", Bowman agrees with those who hold that history is not discovered as unambiguous truth, but rather that we *create* history: "history is what *we* think, say and write about the evidence of the past" (2002:66). The six volumes of *Carmina Gadelica* that Carmichael published in 1900 was an attempt to record the folkloric history before it was lost, and this vast work continues to be accepted as a record of the antiquity of Celtic spirituality (Bowman, 2002).

In her compilation of essays (which includes Bowman's) Joanne Pearson (2002) has connected Wicca, Celtic spirituality with the New Age. She speaks of spiritualism as becoming increasingly attractive to women as it openly advocated the feminism of the mid-nineteenth century and she describes one well-known spiritualist, Helena Petrova Blavatsky, who founded the *Theosophical Society* in New York, as well as others who rebelled against the restrictions society placed on them (2002). I was drawn to this discussion as my mother described herself as a spiritualist. She would sometimes break into what

appeared to be an illegible but elaborate scrawl across the page, in what is called 'automatic writing' when the spirit moved her, although she was careful to hide all such pursuits from my rational father who would not have approved. Latterly he has said that she was drawn to spiritualism motivated by the death of her first husband and brother during WWII and the hope of making contact. A factor that would also account for the growth in spiritualism that Pearson says took place in the 1940s and 50s, as many tried to come to terms with the losses of the war. Pearson describes the influence of Freemasonry on the Theosophical Society, and given that my father later went on to be a staunch freemason, it would seem that in the end my parent's spiritual pursuits were unintentionally linked in the "Western Esoteric Tradition", the influences of which continue today on religious thought in general (Pearson 2002:23).

Neither of my parents, however attended church or promulgated formal religious doctrines. My sister and I attended a Catholic School only when it was recommended as better scholastically, incorrectly as it eventuated, when we moved from Johannesburg to Krugersdorp on the gold reef. We puzzled over our contradicting life-worlds where my mother was always prepared to go down to the school and "rip off those nuns' habits" whenever we complained of perceived injustice, a throw-back to the family's status as lapsed or 'fallen' Catholics, perhaps, a title bestowed by a visiting priest once when she was young. She was just at the dawn of the New Age Movement and I am sure would have found her spiritual beliefs reflected in the variety of alternatives that opened up in the 80s and 90s. She read daily from her *Path of Truth*, a booklet published monthly by the School of Truth based in Johannesburg. I was moved to discover via the internet that this organisation still exists, and to read about its origins and beliefs something I never understood but recognised as sustaining her throughout her life. Based on the writings of a man named Nicol C. Campbell, *The School of Truth* dictum was: "I have to think, to live, to act in tune with the thing that I desire. I have to trust, to the best of my ability, the spiritual Power within me and it will, without any doubt, bring my all-good to pass for me" (Campbell, n.d., unpaginated).

Celtic spirituality, says Pearson, has been a "significant bridge between the 'alternative' and the 'mainstream'" religions (2002:2). To some extent the New Age Movement, arising from the 1960s counter-culture social movement, found its resonance within Celtic spirituality which served the needs of both pagans and New Agers, she says, referring to the eclectic mix of different practices including Jungian psychology as a "'spider's web' of concepts and assumptions" (2002:2). My own desire for a nature-based, feminist spiritualism, however, is always cautioned by the voice of my Catholic education, even as a 'lapsed' Catholic who continues to flinch at words such as pagan, witchcraft or Wicca, fearing that I will be struck down should I even contemplate them. The word 'pagan' simply means 'country dweller' and it is remarkable that its use for me conjured up notions of heretical, sinful people on their way to hell. Pearson relates the development of the term through the period of Romantic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when urban growth led to an admiration for ancient Greece and a nostalgia for a vanished past which she says is reflected in the poetry of Keats and Shelley. Pan was

invoked as the great god of nature and Gaia as earth mother, who fulfilled a need to commune with and see the divine in all of nature (Pearson, 2002). At some point, however, the word pagan became a 'civilian' who was not baptised and was synonymous with heretic (Pearson, 2002). Marion Bowman says that by the 6th century the word had come to mean anyone "rooted in the old religion of the pagus" (locality) who was a non-Christian (2002:76). What is most interesting is that Pagan Druidry expresses this interpretation as a local religion "where the devotees revere the spirits of the landscape around them, the water courses and wells on which they depend, the soil of the fields and forests that surround them, the sprites and elementals, sometimes to deification... it is a basic attitude in the Pagan mentality that the spirit of the land is the most potent force" (Orr cited in Bowman 2002:76). This interpretation is what most interests me in my research. The stated aims of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD) according to their website: [www.druidry.com], is to "develop their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and artistic potential and to work with the natural world to cherish and protect it, and to co-operate with it in every way— both esoterically and exoterically" and these sentiments gel with my own life principles. As Bowman points out,

> an important element in the current practice of Celtic Pagan spirituality is the assumption of some practitioners that Britain's native religion was and is akin to the beliefs and practices of Native American and Australians, and ... other indigenous or tribal groups and to seek spiritual expression there but it may instead lead to what many Druids believe: to 'honour' and 'sacrilize' a local landscape's creative inspiration ... in the divine inspiration that flows, spirit to spirit, between the people, the land and the ancestors (2002:76).

In Ireland the fairy tradition appears to persist despite religious beliefs as Paul Devereux discovered when he interviewed people for his research (2003).

## Fairies and Folklore

Paul Devereux (2003) describes his visits to sites in Ireland, which he calls: Fairy Paths and Places, and in County Clare tells of how he discovered many events that folklore continues to credit to the work of fairies, such as a man falling from a wall in an Iron Age fort. Prior to our more rational society, crediting all occurrences to some unknown force or evil spirit was common as it was in many traditional societies —there was little room for simple accidents or human error and all one's actions were to be monitored for fear of offending 'the spirits' or the ancestor. Due to the nature of his research, Devereux (2003) was asked if he believed in fairies and ghosts. His reply was that he was seeking "folklore in the landscape", "the lore with geographic corollaries... mapping of mindscapes that were projected onto the physical landscape in past time ... to gain a glimpse of worldviews that existed before our modern culture" (2003:12), and this explanation resonated with my own. There are words left in our language that we may use without knowing what was once their significance, too, and Devereux uncovers fairy lore such as

the ‘Banshee Path’ in County Clare (the word ‘banshee’ derives from a Gaelic word meaning ‘fairy woman’, he says), or a folk version of a mythical earth goddess or nature spirit heard at sunset or at night outside of a home where someone was dying, a type of keening (2003). Eddie Lenihan, a local author, storyteller and folklorist who has protested against the loss of Irish cultural heritage joined the outcry to save a whitethorn tree, believed to be a meeting place for faeries, threatened by the construction of a motorway between Limerick and Galway. Although the fairy tree was saved thanks to the public protest, it was vandalised subsequently. Devereux quotes from the moving tribute Lenihan, wrote:

> Above the driving chain-saw’s steely shriek
> Who can hear the whispering of a tree? (2003:152).

Another story that Devereux came upon in County Clare, was the story of Biddy Early. On returning to Australia, I was able to purchase the book *Biddy Early: Wisewoman of Clare* (1978) by Meda Ryan via the internet. I felt that the story of Biddy would bring me closer to the beliefs and practices of healers who worked in the fairy tradition in Ireland especially as she may have been known by my forebears given they had lived in County Clare. Biddy Early [c. 1798–1874], was a traditional Irish healer who helped the local peasants claiming to have received her wisdom from the fairies sitting beside a large “perpendicular stone jutting four feet above the ground” when she was a child (Ryan, 1978:9). She acted against the wishes of Catholic priests and local tenant landlords, however and was accused of witchcraft but fortunately for her, the charges were never substantiated (1978). She would visit the sick and could identify problems with buildings that were constructed “in the way” of fairy passage.

Devereux also uncovered one such story: a woman was said to have observed shadowy figures materialise out of the wall and disappear through the opposite wall and she soon moved from the house (2003). What was interesting was to contemplate the influence on my forebears of such stories and beliefs. While there are fairy traditions that vary in concept throughout Europe, Devereux says that “in the Celtic tradition, fairies were entities barred from paradise. They inhabited a middle kingdom between the human world and the Otherworld of the dead: the places that they were believed to inhabit or haunt were treated with fear and respect or misfortune could result; in addition, “certain protocols had to be followed in order for humans to keep on good terms with the fairies” (Devereux, 2002:37). Devereux found that in Ireland “country hobmen or land spirits haunted wild, uncultivated locations” and often featured in poetry and folktales (2003:37).

The belief in fairies as the dead awaiting a return to mortal life as changelings inhabiting the bodies of mortal children were all “features of Druidic belief” according to Lewis Spence (1994:54). Spence investigated mainly Scottish folklore and although some of his writings such as those concerning Atlantis have been somewhat discredited, there is little in the way of verifiable written information regarding folklore and Celtic beliefs, and his view would seem to be is as good as any. Although it related

to a “Cult of the Dead”, the Celts did not see life as “a mere ante-chamber of death”, “they rather considered it as one of the main objects of religion to preserve life in the fleshy body, and to keep the world of spirits at bay by placation and other means” (Spence, 1994:54). This is reflected in their “partiality for the mistletoe, the plant and emblem of life, the divine life-substance or protoplasm” and the war they waged against any threat to life and limb, in contrast with more Eastern-style philosophies, which are more “indifferent” to the idea of death, as Spence explains (1994:55). There were many parallels with what I had read of the role of fairy and folk tales as interpreted by Bettelheim (1976) in his work with children, but it would appear that in Ireland fairy lore has persisted in the very psyche of the adult population as well. I did wonder what stories would be associated with the amazing Cliffs of Moher, in County Clare in Ireland: an incredible land feature now listed as a World Heritage site.

## The Cliffs of Moher

While in the town of Ennis in County Clare my sister and I were looking at the map on arrival in our hotel room and noticed the proximity of The Cliffs of Moher, but to our disappointment it was not on our tour itinerary, one of the downsides of organised tours. We decided then and there that we could not pass up seeing this recently declared natural wonder of the world [UNESCO, 2011] considering we were staying only 35km away. It was already quite late in the afternoon but as we were leaving the area early the following morning, we resolved to find a taxi to take us there, hopefully before it got dark. The reception at the hotel called a taxi on our behalf and the man who arrived in his flashy Mercedes Benz was part-time taxi-driver in the town but revealed as he drove us at breakneck speed to catch the sights before nightfall that he had a number of other roles as well. As he was a local, I asked him if he knew anyone by the name of Deegan (our Irish family’s name) and his reply was “to be sure” and had we had more time he could have introduced us and he rattled off a few names, including the name of a woman who would be happy to assist track down my ancestors but that was not to be – another downside of an organised tour. He also suggested that we come back one day and fly into Shannon where we could arrange to pick up a campervan which sounded like a great idea. To access the cliffs, it was necessary to go in through the gates via a parking lot but as it was just at closing time when we arrived, the gates were already locked but he drove a little further on to the exit and we were able to creep in unnoticed. As we walked along the pathway where it was constructed with a safety wall, one could see why the surrounding area was fenced. The cows in a nearby field could easily have wandered to their death not to mention the risk of anyone lost in the fog or at night stumbling over the edge. We held our breath in awe as we looked down a sheer drop to the sea of some 214 metres in some places. The cliffs stretching for 8km along the Atlantic coast, geologists say were formed by the action of rivers in an ancient delta, composed of layers of sandstone, siltstone and shale normally only visible under the ocean (“The Cliffs of Moher” n.d.). Unfortunately it was too dark for us to look out to the distant islands from O’Brien’s Tower an outlook built in 1835. The Cliffs of Moher, I read online is the most visited tourist attraction in Ireland

so it was unfortunate that our fellow travellers on our bus tour missed seeing it ("The Cliffs of Moher" n.d.).

On our return journey we were stuck behind a family including a working dog herding their cows, home from where they had been grazing presumably during the day. There was no way to overtake with stone walls on either side of the narrow road. These are the moments that *make* the experience of being somewhere else: to be a part of just a brief interlude in someone's life in another country. When I think of Ireland, the picture that remains first and foremost it is that of the cows in the field with the shadows of the cliffs dividing the landscape. Our taxi driver had never been to look at the cliffs, he said, because he had a fear of heights. We left Ennis the following day to drive to Dublin to stay in a hotel overlooking the Liffey River, with the evidence of the Great Famine on the quay.

### The Great Irish Famine

On our walk along the quay close to the location of our hotel in Dublin, we came across the commemorative life-size statues of a group of wretched-looking people, including a woman carrying a baby wrapped in cloth. They were making their way to board what were dubbed 'coffin' ships: a replica of one docked nearby. The ships that took the starving masses to countries such as England but also Canada and America resulted in the death of many of the passengers mostly as a consequence of their poor state of health on boarding. The statues are an incredibly moving symbol of the suffering of those who endured the Great Irish Famine. They were also a reminder of the tenuous nature of one's birth: why was it that some of the peasants died, some survived and others emigrated. I guess that my forebears were amongst the lucky ones as I do not imagine that they belonged to the upper class. Irish author, Nuala O'Faolain (2001) tells the fictional story of a modern-day travel writer, named Kathleen, originally born in Ireland who goes back to discover the truth of an Englishwoman's death, and found a landscape with "an emptiness (that) was a positive presence... they knew how many families had been formally evicted... the landlords and their agents had taken the opportunity the Famine gave them to clear the land of people – throwing them out as they fell into hopeless arrears with the rent ...the cabins of the pauper Irish were made of the materials ready to hand – sand and straw and grass and sods of turf ... their dwellings had melted back into the fabric of landscapes like the one before me" (2001:63). Kathleen is forced to face the truth as well (which may have been the reality of my family's truth too) of "how our people survived ... anyone who had a field of cabbages or turnips put a guard on it to keep off the starving, we were those guards" she says (2001:67).

What I had never realised before is that people did not just die of starvation but with what was called *famine fever* and other diseases, as well which are described by Cecil Woodham-Smith in her book *The Great Hunger* (1975). There were two diseases: *typhus* passed on by lice and *relapsing fever* also passed on by lice but caused by an organism that produced different symptoms. People also died of

scurvy, given that the potato was their only source of Vitamin C, had hunger oedema and dysentery. Despite the poverty, the cold and the over-crowded living conditions, Irish hospitality still meant that those who had taken to the road were not refused shelter for the night and disease spread rapidly to people who were already starving and had little resistance. Children and even babies resembled old people, and for no known reason, grew a fine hair on their faces and looked like little monkeys (1975).

Australian writer, Thomas Keneally speaks of the turnip thieves who preyed on the growers who had "planted a few turnips as a hedge against potato blight" causing them to stay up all night to guard their crop, which in fact reflected a turnaround for Irish hospitality where people had always been ready to share food (1998:185). Although Keneally (1998) speaks of the potato, served with buttermilk that was considered to be a complete diet, he does not explain how it was that potatoes, a vegetable not even native to the island, came to be the crop of choice of 80% of the poor Irish cottiers (tenants who rented land) and synonymous with Ireland? As far as is known, the potato had been introduced along with tobacco and tomatoes from the New World of the Americas by Sir Walter Raleigh (he was in Ireland between 16$^{th}$ and 17$^{th}$ centuries) but some credit Sir Francis Drake or the Spanish with bringing it to Europe, says Fitzgibbon (1983). Sources reveal that the potato, reduced to only one species in Ireland, was grown because of the reduced size of the cottiers land (between 1 and 5 acres) as the middlemen who represented absentee landlords sought to increase the rentals they could glean. Since 1801, Ireland had been directly governed under the Act of Union as part of the United Kingdom and despite some reforms the Irish Catholics continued to suffer under the penal laws that prohibited them from purchasing land, voting or holding office, even living in a corporate town, having a profession or getting an education. It was against this background that they faced the consequences of monoculture on small parcels of land (Uris & Uris, 2003). West Clare was one of the worst areas for evictions, when the cottiers were unable to pay their rent, landlords demolished their cabins. In that area the Earl of Lucan, one of the worst landlords owned 60,000 acres (Litton, 2006). When as much as 75% of the viable soil was used to grow export crops: wheat, barley, oats as well as livestock, the poor had no money to buy food they could only rely on what they grew to feed their families (2006).

What Keneally (1998) feels was the real shame of the famine was the failure of all the principals concerned, namely the administrative officials and governments at the time who failed to act to distribute food that could have saved the local crofter population preferring to reap the revenue from grain crops that could be exported (1998). These decisions were made by the English cabinet and Christopher Morash in *Writing the Irish Famine* (1995) discusses the cold-hearted economics of starvation when from a distance in England it was considered that over-population impeded progress. Those who died were blamed for being too numerous. It was considered to be an example of the efficient functioning of society to reduce the size of the population, and this Morash (1995) describes as the meta-narrative, a famine that is inevitable. Fitzgibbon reveals that in 1841, the census illustrated that 80% of

the population lived in one-room mud huts and their farming described as “lazy beds” while “his wife knew only how to boil the potatoes” besides which it was said that “she did not know how to grind wheat or corn into flour, and lacked even the simplest tools for this purpose” (1983:287). What is little known is that the potato blight was not isolated to Ireland, but hit America and Europe as well but in terms of a folk memory and of victimisation, it has always been blamed on the English for inflicting it on the Irish (Fitzgibbon 1983). In Belfast there is a memorial of what is described as Ireland’s Holocaust at Gorta Mór on Ballymurphy Road, it records the death of 1.5 million Irish between 1845 and 1849 attributed to ‘genocide by starvation’ perpetrated by Britain (Boyle,2012).

One has the sense that generations of Irish have been damaged as a result of their history of suffering, the harsh lives of women and children, and excessive alcohol consumption so graphically portrayed in that story of childhood, *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt (1996). Another poignant reminder of the Famine history are some the walls built we were told by the starving people, many entirely without purpose as the lines of rock run up hills only to peter out towards the middle of the rise. The rock walls are an embodied, visible material presence in the landscape, representing the hands that first dug the rocks from the earth then lifted and carried them to build a wall. Work for work’s sake but undertaken in a state of hunger and starvation when to work was to exert scarce energy, and seems cruel at the least.

Recently in discussing the collateral deaths reported by the United States in places such as Pakistan or Afghanistan, Fatima Bhutto at the Sydney Writer’s Festival spoke of the inaccuracy or seeming lack of concern for human life in reports that provide options, for example, that a certain number *or so* were killed (Radio National, *The Book Show*, 21 May, 2011). It was reminder of similar accounts of the famine, when people *either* died or migrated from Ireland. Surely, one would think that there were records of immigration even if the dead were of little importance or too numerous and widespread to count. Woodham-Smith (1975) gives a detailed account of the experience of the famine on the different towns and regions. Recognising the places that we had happily travelled through in our comfortable coach or the hotels we stayed in and the restaurants where we enjoyed meals, the contrast between our tourist experience and the lives that had gone before was sobering.

## Conclusion

Leaving Ireland onboard the ferry, I saw dolphins diving in front of the ship as we rolled with the waves and headed for Holyhead in Wales. Having read the sad tales of coal mining in Wales (Richard Llewellyn’s *How Green was my Valley* (1939) comes to mind), I had the expectation of a dark, gloomy place and the weather and landscape did not disappoint in that regard. The buildings took on the ominous mood of the dark rock used in their construction and our view of the Snowdonia National Park was limited. I felt no link or affinity with Wales in contrast to Ireland despite my sister’s excitement to

share with me the experience she had had there when her son lived in Cardiff and they climbed the fells. Leaving Wales onboard our coach, we headed for Shakespeare's country at Strafford-on-Avon, where we were firmly caught-up in extreme tourism, and then went on to London and the end of our journey.

## Fabric-ating Place Story in Ireland

A Leprechaun sitting on top of a tea cosy with his pot of gold and the rainbow running through the middle that I knitted; standing on a piece of Irish Linen from Blarney and the Irish family name: Deegan on the back embroidered in cross-stitch

[Artwork & Photos: F.B. Dent, 2012]

## Photo Journal: Ireland

An imprint that stays in my mind's eye: Shadow of the Cliffs of Moher on the fields, County Clare, Ireland [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Part of the Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

The Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

On the wharf in Dublin, commemorating the people coming to board a Famine ship
[Photo: L.P. Beetge, 2010]

Blarney Castle, Ireland (The protruding structure on the right hand side is the toilet outlet) [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

A beautiful landscape somewhere in the vicinity of Feakle [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

## Fabric-ating 4: What do I remember of Scotland?

The baby seal trapped in a rock pool at St Andrews, Scotland
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 1988]

Sad-eyed baby seal
In the rocks at St Andrews
Stranded by the tide

A secret underground passage
Linked to a castle ruin nearby
[F.B. Dent, 2011]

### Introduction

Some years ago, we visited Scotland and went to Edinburgh, birthplace of my maternal grandfather, but unfortunately I was not able to go there again on my recent research journey. I have recalled the sense of wonder I had on first seeing both Edinburgh and St. Andrews, however, and have reviewed the little that I know of my grandfather, and through conversations with my father, have been able to piece together this aspect of my heritage as well. I have also looked briefly at the occupation of my great-grandfather as coal miner in Lanarkshire, especially in view of my connection to that locality through industry since I have now moved to what was a coal mining area in Victoria at Wonthaggi.

My mother's father, Thomas Browning was born in the Edinburgh district on July 1st (also my brother's birth date) in 1889, to a father of the same name, who was a coal miner, and a mother for

whom my mother was named, Agnes Brown. They were married at Stonehouse on June 28, 1889, only a few days before my grandfather's birth. Their address is given as 175 Wellgate Street. Unfortunately I did not have a copy of his birth certificate when I went to Scotland, however, I have been able to view the street on Google maps and it is now a shopping strip with a hardware store on the corner where the house would have stood, a disappointment. The area, now in Larkhall, is surrounded by green fields and a golf course, which disguise the location of the previous coal mining industry. According to one account, at the time that my great-grandfather was a miner, the entire family, including the children, may have worked in the mines ("Lanarkshire Mining Industry" n.d). Many of the mineworkers were in fact Irish, refugees from the Irish Great Famine, although the potato blight was experienced in Scotland as well.

The Blantyre mining disaster, which occurred on the morning of 22 October 1877 at Blantyre Colliery, 12 years before my grandfather's birth, would have been a significant local event for him as he grew up, but especially for his parents given that his father was a coal miner. The blasts were in two pits where more than 233 men were working. The cause of the explosions was unknown but it was believed that there was fire damp (gas) present in the pit and it might have been ignited by a naked light. On the surface, the blast was heard for miles around, with a dense volume of smoke filling the sky. Another explosion at the Blantyre on 2 July 1879 took another 28 lives. Soon after the explosions, the mining company erected a large granite monument to mark both disasters, with an inscription that records the death of 240 workmen killed by explosions in Blantyre Colliery in 1877 and 1879 ("Lanarkshire Mining Industry" n.d.). Apart from mining accidents, the history of Scotland has its share of tragedy of course.

When I read that a soldier, during the Anglo-Boer War, related the clearing of the Boer homes in South Africa to that of the Highland Clearances in Scotland, I realised that this was an aspect of my Scottish heritage, too, but I knew very little about it. The Clearances, beginning in 1780 and ongoing until the mid-19$^{th}$ century, led to widespread migration throughout the British Empire, as did the potato famine in Ireland and Scotland (Gourievidis, 2000). The Improvement Movement as it was called led to the policy of land clearances when thousands of crofters were moved off of their traditional land to accommodate economic development and large-scale sheep farming. The reversal of the movement with the Crofters Act of 1886 was a watershed in terms of subsequent history, Gourievidis says (2000). These events were momentous, not only in terms of their local impact, but also in what eventuated when people were forced to move and chose to go to far-flung places to start a new life as had the Irish.

Laurence Gourievidis (2000) in an essay concerning history and memory discusses the clearances as harnessed to project a strong and vibrant national identity in Scotland today. Some dispute that it was that bad, asserting that there was over-crowding with the traditional system of land tenure. In an article in the conservative newspaper *The Economist*, the criticism is that it is the "perceived sense of victimhood" relating to this history that has played its part in the move towards the currently proposed devolution and separation from England and what might eventuate as possible negative economic

consequences ("Home Truths", 2006). It is an example of how history can be re-interpreted and serves to play-down the aspirations of those seeking self-rule, to serve the viewpoint of an ideological purpose – in this case a more right-wing conservative stance.

The reality of life for the poor in Scotland and their link to Australia when their petty crimes saw them shipped here as convicts is graphically portrayed in an account of a number of women who grew up in Glasgow and were shipped to Tasmania in the 19th century. The author, Deborah Swiss *(2010)* an American woman who travelled to Tasmania with the intention of trail-walking, by chance met up with Christine Henri and heard about her art project: *Roses from the Heart*, 2009, discussed previously. Swiss was intrigued with the story of the convict women and their children kept at the Women's Factory in Hobart. It is the story of hardship especially as the women were kept as concubines for the benefit of the local men and many bore children during their imprisonment. In one story, Agnes McMillan, who was arrested for shoplifting in Glasgow had been left to fend for herself at the age of 12, working the "wynds" of Glasgow as a singer; but in the end turned to thieving to survive. The beauty of the landscape and the way of life were changed with the industrial age in towns such as Glasgow which Swiss says meant 'clean green place', but became "a black and white world set on fire by the tobacco and linen trade", polluting the beautiful Clyde river as well (2010:15).

On my visit, I remember thinking that the very rivers in Scotland were the colour of Scotch whisky as they hurtled downstream, running through bald, mist-covered hills on their journey. On visiting St. Andrews, the ruins of the castle there and the famous golf course, one was struck by the sense of history, which was also our experience of Edinburgh castle. I felt proud that my family had lived in such a beautiful place. When the grey skies dawned day after day, during our stay, I could understand their leaving for the sunny shores of South Africa and Australia, however. I had no idea of the circumstances that had led my grandfathers' family to leave Scotland, but some of his heritage persisted through my mother in rituals around New Year.

## First Footing

I remember my mother wanting to follow traditional practices like 'first footing' on New Year's Eve, when someone would have to knock on the front door, carrying a coin and a piece of coal. I sensed that my father given his lack of Scottish heritage was less than enthusiastic, and our attempts to maintain the practice were ultimately abandoned. It is indicative of the essential ingredient missing from my heritage: the continuity and cohesiveness of one cultural background that would have kept us all connected to some meaningful inherited, common rituals. The custom of first footing at Hogmanay, New Year's Eve in Scotland, dates back to pagan times and commemorated the winter solstice and a festival of gratitude to the sun (Lyall, 1998). It took on greater significance as a celebratory event when the Puritan government in the 1600s banned Christmas. As for the name Hogmanay, it may have been Celtic or

Anglo-Saxon but no one knows it origins (Lyall, 1998). The custom dictates that at midnight on New Year's Eve, the first person to cross a home's threshold will determine the homeowner's luck for the coming year. The ideal visitor bears gifts, preferably whisky, coal for the fire, small cakes or a coin, and is a man with a dark complexion. The clue to this strange proviso dates to the 8th century, when the presumably fair-haired Vikings invaded Scotland and a blond visitor was not a good omen. The homeowner offers food and drink to the visitor and in the current era, the custom continues as people go from house to house having a drink and eating shortbread with large-scale celebrations take place in cities and towns (Lyall, 1998). Although we had no understanding of the background to the more quaint traditions that my mother wanted to maintain, many in the English-speaking world, whether of Scottish descent or not, would sing *Auld Lang Syne* – a traditional song transcribed by Scottish poet Robert Burns, to welcome in the New Year.

## A Little Family History

I regret that I did not talk more to my mother or perhaps cannot remember much about her father, although they were not on speaking terms when he died. My maternal grandfather, Thomas Browning served in the South African Armed Forces in both World Wars, according to my father, serving as an engineer with the rank of Quartermaster Lieutenant, an officer in charge of supplies, but was never sent overseas. He was Secretary of the Sappers (Engineers) Association and helped to establish Sappers Rust, a holiday resort for returned sappers at Hartebeespoort dam, west of Johannesburg. Although we often went to the lake on picnics and later on boating excursions, this piece of history was only related to me recently and I wondered why my mother did not feel pride at his achievement. He had a sister named Vanessa (Nessie) and a brother Walter (Wally), and in their later years they lived together in Northcliff in Johannesburg. The presence of his siblings indicates that it was probably his entire family who emigrated from Scotland. When he was 24 years old, he met my maternal grandmother, Theresa McDonald, who was 26 (born in Melbourne). They were married in Johannesburg on 4 June (my sister's birth-date) in 1913 and my mother was born nine months later. Coal miner, Thomas Browning Senior, signed the marriage certificate as a witness, as did my maternal great-grandfather indicating that they were either visitors or resident in South Africa at the time. Everyday living in Wonthaggi, I am reminded of my connection to my heritage in Lanarkshire and have respect for anyone involved in coal mining, a dirty and dangerous occupation.

## Conclusion

Where I walk my dogs adjacent to the rail-trail near to my home is the site of what was the first mine at Wonthaggi named McBride's shaft. The land is sculptured into odd shapes and mounds, and signboards indicate where various buildings and activities took place. The enormous brace where the coal was processed is slowly deteriorating into a pile of timber and corrugated iron. It is sobering to stand at

the sloped concrete walkway that led underground, marked by posts on either side, and to imagine the men going down to work in the mine where nineteen men at different times lost their lives (Coghlan, 1979).The land beneath my house was mined and when I read of the land subsiding in Lanarkshire, Scotland, I wondered how deep the mines were under my feet. In fact, according to the history written by John Coghlan (1979) there were tunnels at several levels: number one bench was 1700 feet, number two was 1900 and number three was 4200 feet. In 2010, the centenary celebrations of coal mining in Wonthaggi, included a parade through the town as well as the performance of the *Miners' Requiem*, composed by local resident, Larry Hills that commemorated the death of 13 miners in an accident on 15 February 1937. It was a very moving performance and I felt sad on reflecting on the history of this town but also a connection to my great-grandfather's history and the Blantyre mining accident. Each day at midday a siren continues to sound in the town as a reminder of this history, and one wonders if it invokes bad memories for some older residents, although I am told that it is not the same siren as that used to indicate an emergency. Mining ceased in the 1960s.

Of the two places, Ireland and Scotland, I feel more affinity to Ireland, probably preferring the label 'Irish'. If I am to be a Scot, too, I am happy to align myself with their ingenuity and invention but not to be stereotyped as dour or too canny/less generous with money, but luckily I can pick and choose the cultural identity I prefer to adopt in my hybrid heritage.

# Photo Journal

'Scotch on the rocks' in Scotland
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 1988]

Ruins of the castle at St Andrews, Scotland
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 1988]

A loch somewhere on the way to Inverness [Photo: F. B. Dent, 1988]

## Family Album

My Scottish-born grandfather, Thomas Browning – carrier of the tall gene that both my brother and I inherited, with my Australian-born grandmother, Tess [Photo: Harold Theunissen, circa 1953]

## Fabric-ating 5: Who migrated to Australia?

'Stitching together' in reality and as metaphor in writing – the role of women in making 'home' and 'place' – the fabric collage and narrative poem of my Australian forebears (my mother at the knee of her mother is pictured left)
[Photo and Artwork: F.B. Dent, 2007]

Stark land echoes
The very sky to shatter
Silence breathes loud

Beautiful by day, the night ominous
A dark presence of what I know not
[F.B. Dent, 2012]

### Introduction

Australia holds a dual position, significant in my heritage but has also been formative, too, in terms of the person I have become. I have lived in Australia for almost as long as I lived in South Africa and have been strongly influenced as regards my outlook on life, concerns for the future, the environment, social justice, gender, race and class issues and financial situation. Certainly it changed the

lives and destinies of my children and my relationship with them –although I am not sure if I contemplated that possibility prior to leaving South Africa. My forebears may not have foreseen the consequences of their decisions to migrate, either first to Australia and then to South Africa.

In terms of my family's migration, I have gone full circle in returning to live in Melbourne, birthplace of my maternal grandmother. Her parents left first Ireland and Scotland then England to come to Australia, where she was born (Mary Theresa McDonald) in the suburb of Richmond in March 1886, and then went to live in South Africa at some stage prior to my mother's birth in 1914. I can imagine my forebears in the 1800s, absorbing information about Australia and eventually making the decision to immigrate, just as we did in 1980. Perhaps they, too, would have recognised the sentiment that local Wonthaggi woman, Hilary Stuchbery, whose parents were migrants, expressed in the song she wrote to sing at a Citizenship Ceremony; she gave permission for me to quote her lyrics:

Let's go, let's go to Australia
Let's go while we have nothing to lose.
Let's go, let's go to the land of the sun
While we still have time to choose.

I have to leave my mother
Leave my brother
Leave this land I've known so well.
You say we've nothing to lose
We just have to choose
But it's my soul you want me to sell.

You know, you know there are people like us,
And we can fit in, wherever we live.
You know, you know that my family are there
They'll love you they've so much to give.

Will they need my skills?
My qualifications?
Can we save enough to buy a house?
What will I find when I get there
I've no information
I've nothing to help me compare.

Let's go, let's go while there's work to be had
They say there's money growing on trees.
Our kids, our kids will have plenty of space
We don't go now, we're out of the race.

I will trust your instincts
And leap in the dark
Putting aside my worries and fear
I will look to the future
Knowing its better
Than what we might experience here ... We will ... go!

It would seem that Hilary's family responded to the marketing of Australia as a promising destination for 'ten pound poms' as they were called!

## Marketing Australia

To make Australia an attractive alternative, marketing found its way into advertising, according to Richard White (1981). In White's book *Inventing Australia* (1981), he speaks of the political propaganda, which was to change the perception of depravity, to make Australia an attractive alternative but "most new nations go through the formality of inventing a national identity", he says (1981: vii). Archibald Mickie, a liberal politician, compared the working man's lot in London "where he could starve and die in mouldy garrets", to the paradise that was Australia, where there was a danger that people could "get too much" when even in a depression, that hit in the 1890s. Statistics revealed a better standard of living than in the USA, Europe or Britain (White, 1981:41). But whose interests were served in this propaganda and did Australia offer a better life for the working class?

White (1981) asserts that it is difficult to arrive at any accuracy in the historical recordings of the time in Australia but does reflect on the appalling situation in the tailoring industry where women were employed. This was relevant given that my great-grandmother, Mary Theresa McDonald (née Deegan) was a 'machinist'. Was she one of the women employed for 60 hours per week as an apprentice and then earning only five shillings a week if she was lucky enough to be chosen to work after the 18 months of apprenticeship? (1981). Women and children did not enjoy the benefits of the so-called working man's paradise, with hours and conditions of work appalling while unskilled workers endured worse conditions than the skilled. White points out that poverty was frequently aligned with "unthrift and self-indulgence which accompanies 'abundance'", a blame-the-victim attitude that helped to preserve the social order (1981:44).

There was no intention to develop Australia as a rural pastoral extension of Britain but rather to link it with industrial England, in the opinion of White (1981). The wool industry in Australia, provided half of Britain's wool by the 1850s, and as Britain sought further "profitable overseas markets", the assisted emigration schemes were created to enable Britain to expand in a land of opportunity (White, 1981:29). With two depressions in economic terms in 1840s and 1890s in Australia there must have been mixed outcomes for immigrants in the colony, and my forebears were most likely caught up in the consequences of the latter, choosing to move on to South Africa at that time.

White believes that in tandem with the vision of depravity, there had always been an "undercurrent of admiration for the new country ...expressed in relation to the landscape, the favourite comparison being to an English gentleman's park" (1981:29) and he cites such writers as Arthur Bowes in

his journal and Elizabeth MacArthur. As White points out, it was the systematic burning of the land by indigenous inhabitants that had led to its park-like appearance, perhaps only accurate in New South Wales and coastal regions; the hinterland and desert landscapes were far from an English park in aspect (1981). It was well known, Australian poet Dorothea Mackellar (1908) who wrote "I love a sunburnt country", transforming what was quite unattractive to be embraced as 'the soul of the land' and almost a national anthem. "Instinctively, we seemed to know that our identity was somehow linked with a better understanding of our 'monotonous' eucalypt forests and wide-open plains", says White (1981:2). Australian landscapes have had a deep impact on our sense of self, he says,

> to survive in tough environments … we have had to develop an 'ethic of resilience and mutual support'. The colour of the land was in the yellow wattle, the sunshine, the beaches, the wheat the golden ore of the mines, golden grain, golden opportunities and the golden hearts of Australians (White, 1981: 118).

This vision of Australia was also described by the poets such as Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. In A.G. Stephens' vision of Australia, White says that he described the colours as 'the land of faded things' —of delicate purples, delicious greys, and dull, dreamy olives and ochres rather than the "English ideals of glaring green or staring red and orange" (1981:118). Paterson's *Clancy of the Overflow*, White believes is the most famous expression of "the bush as imaginative refuge" and away from the fetid city to the wide open spaces (1981:102). The other symbolic images are of bushfire, flood, drought, pioneering, campfires, bush and station life, of the gum tree, and he says "can all be found in the literature and art of both generations" (1981:102). The real Australia, says White, was seen to be a place where there was freedom from conventional restraints, allowing for radicalism, male comradeship and as he says these bohemians "projected on to the bush their alienation from their urban environment" (1981:102).The establishment of institutions such as the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne as well as the public library were "stride(s) forward to civilisation" and culture – the "intellectual and moral improvement" of the populace (White, 1981:61). Imagination was the forerunner of exploration, as Paul Carter (1996) points out: could anyone leave their familiar 'homeland' without imagining where they are going to?

Carter speaks of a 'debatable land'—the debate taking place in the mind as people in Victorian Britain contemplated the unknown. Carter's point is that the wild and frightening imaginings were often the *raison d'etre* for colonialism's journeying. Gibson discusses the "formative landscapes" as depicted in Australian films which continue to be in the background of the national character as stereotyped and clichéd in its representation of Australia (Gibson, 1994:50). Gibson says of Patrick White's book *Voss* (1960) that "the protagonist is the 'guide' who absorbs dreams based on foreigner's expectations of the land, and who then tests them against the realities of experience in an Australia which is on the point of developing a sense of independent identity" (1984: 200). As he says "the narrative is directed constantly

toward the centre of Australia, where spiritual mysteries might be uncovered" – it was the diminishing paradise – a purely metaphysical character. Interestingly Voss goes is portrayed by Patrick White as on a quest to uncover an alternative to colonial life and looks to concepts of nature as an alternative reality in the view of Ross Gibson (1984).

## Realities and Fabrications

At the time that I wrote my fictional family-narrative poem, I had not yet read Janet Mc Calman's (1988) far more detailed history of Richmond. Most of what is observed of Richmond is via the train journey into the city—the bird's eye view is all I had had previously as well. As Mc Calman points out, it was Richmond's topography that sealed its fate when travellers on the train in the 1950s to Melbourne, from the east, saw the slum-living conditions exposed from above (1988). It was

> a town of corrugated iron: roofs were patchworks of rusting oddments kept down by bricks, bits of grey timber, jerry cans and car tyres; corrugated iron also replaced the fences that had been torn down for firewood in the depression … and the aura of working class dirt was made almost tangible as the outsider was assaulted by Richmond's industrial stenches …tanneries, lime works, tomato sauce, and burning malt" (1988:8). But she says that this was also Richmond's magic "poverty and prejudice welded its people into a richly human community (1988:9).

It was not all slum conditions however. In the 1880s there were "erect plump mansions and spacious terraces on the hill" (1988:11) built as residences for the local merchants and manufacturers and even the father of Nellie Melba lived there. The first Anglican Church, St. Stephens, is in Richmond, designed by Wardell, the same architect who designed St. Patrick's Cathedral (1988).

Although it has one small hill, the land is quite flat and was prone to flooding from the Yarra River with the flat areas often water-logged collecting all of the run-off and filth from industry, livestock and human occupation (Mc Calman, 1988). The area, too, was notorious for bandits, who at night brought the decrepit community "menace and alienation" Mc Calman discovered (1988:8). The problem seems to have been the mix of commercial and residential areas with one encroaching on the other. Some could afford to move out to the more leafy suburbs, leaving behind the workers who had no choice but to stay and try to live in the pollution and decay (1988). There were improvements that included sewerage connection and the maintenance and sealing of roads, but name plates for roads and lighting of streets were left neglected. The history of Richmond seems to reflect Council ineptness and corruption, where money was spent on doing up the Town Hall rather than on amenities and repairs, in Mc Calman's opinion (1988). Richmond had quite a recreational aspect in 1900, with no less that 65 pubs, the Yarra River and adjoining parklands such as Yarra Park, where "local dairymen grazed their cows and draught horses on the lush river flats and Richmond children chased rabbits in its unkempt corners", a racecourse,

the baths, halls, schools, libraries, sporting clubs and so on (Mc Calman, 1988:13). There was also Survey Park, 153 acres of natural bush with a ferry linking the picnic spot to Toorak (1988). Next door was the Burnley Horticultural Society's Gardens of 36 acres; Chinese market gardens provided fresh vegetables and Barkley Gardens in South Richmond developed from a filled-in quarry attracted crowds " to listen to band recitals in its rotunda" (1988:13). In travelling on a pleasure cruise recently up the Yarra River, the tour operator pointed out that the residents of Richmond had the good views across the Yarra to the magnificent houses in South Yarra, while the wealthy had to look at Richmond. It is interesting that in the current era we see a reversal of fortunes, as Richmond has become a desirable real estate prospect, with prices sky rocketing for would-be purchasers or renters.

In Richmond around Anderson Street, however the last address I have been able to establish where my forebears lived, it has a sad and sorry appearance with the Department of Housing units in various stages of neglect, torn curtains on windows and broken furniture tossed alongside the overflowing garbage bins. On the day that we went there (with my sister visiting from South Africa) an elderly Asian woman came out to see why we were loitering around her home. She was bent over and wizened, seemingly out of place I felt, with no vegetable garden to tend or community to relate to, she emerged to sit on the step at the doorway probably attempting to make sense of a group of voyeurs. She would only be left to wonder why anyone would bother to come into her space. We were trying to imagine the cottage that had once stood there where our grandmother lived for a short time in the late 1800s. Perhaps if we had spoken to her and described our mission, she would have thought about a similar journey that she could make: back to China to the village where her grandmother was born and to have imagined what her life may have been like had her family stayed there. How different would her old age have been surrounded by her contemporaries and in the community she had known all her life rather than here in a foreign place, where she spent most days alone while her adult children worked long hours. Were her grandchildren foreigners who knew little of her birthplace, history or culture?

My father has described my Australian-born maternal grandmother as a rather negative and embittered old woman, but I have little memory of her, I was only about 10 years of age when she died but I do remember that she told me to "get out" once when I stood at the door watching her inject insulin in her leg; she had diabetes. On another occasion I accidently rode my tricycle into her as she and my mother sat outside in the back garden in the sun having their mid-morning tea. I guess that I may have an inherited disposition to have diabetes one day, but have proved to be a fairly good driver since I switched from tricycles to cars. Apart from that history, I wonder what I have within my gene pool from that part of my heritage. I have been accused of being negative at times but perhaps our life experiences warrant our disposition apart from an inherited capacity for gloom. Until I wrote her fictional story, I had never connected a mother's grief with the story of my uncle Sonny, who died during WWII at the age of

23 when his parachute did not open over North Africa. Our migration story began at a great distance from her birthplace in Richmond but I had ended up back here.

## Living in the Bush

When we first arrived in Australia in 1980, we headed for Karratha in Western Australia, 1000 miles north of Perth to take up employment. I was thrilled to be in the Australia of the stories, I said—the outback. There were horror stories about the north before we even set off from Perth – people getting lost in the bush, breaking down in their vehicles sometimes for days before help came, others dead from snakebite within minutes. The Aborigines, we were told, were drunks who pulled down the houses they were given to use for firewood, and it seemed that the beaches and sea were crawling with every imaginable stinging and biting creature known to man. Early explorers said that the enemy was the land itself, although some have questioned this assertion, perhaps they have never driven from Perth to Karratha or lived up north. According to news reports, the land was threatening to the unwary: people died from snakebite or from heat exhaustion and thirst just metres from salvation; and there was a period during the hot summer called the 'silly season' when people became quite deranged.

On our arrival in Perth we purchased an enormous station wagon to drive up north. We were surprised by the distances between points on the map and realised we would have to be careful to have drinking water and a full tank of petrol when we did the 600-mile stretch between roadhouses. When we climbed out of our air-conditioned station wagon at Greenough, near Geraldton on the west coast, the hot air was like walking into something solid, and the trees grew sideways blown by a perpetual southerly wind. As newcomers to the country, we stuck to the endlessly straight road ahead, not even deviating to see such features as the Murchison gorge or the dolphins at Shark Bay. These attractions would be explored on future trips to Perth, which to the residents of Karratha, were as frequent as a jaunt to the city is to any suburban resident of Melbourne.

Anyone arriving in Karratha in 1980 would not have been impressed. It was a disappointment to say the least. On the outskirts of town was the industrial area, nothing more than a collection of iron buildings as unsightly as any hodge-podge of utilitarian light-industrial developments could be, surrounded by old car bodies and discarded metal objects in a barren, vast expanse of red earth with little vegetation. I thought it was the ugliest place I had ever been to despite having grown-up on the dusty, dirty West Rand gold mining region of Johannesburg. In retrospect it probably did not help that we had been living in the lush sub-tropical region of Natal, for a number of years prior to immigration.

Karratha, established to house the mine workers as they spilled over from the neighbouring company town of Dampier, was an 'open town', meaning that others not employed by the mining company could also live there. Karratha had one supermarket, making it a monopoly and considering

there was no alternative place to shop and every item in the shop had travelled the same long distance we had just travelled from Perth, the prices were high but there was no excuse for the rude staff. The houses were all built in a similar style of grey breeze block, with a cyclone-proof metal frame. The windows were also screened to withstand the cyclones that were a seasonal feature of the area. There was one 'made' road that we could drive our station wagon along and as we wanted to see the country, we soon exchanged it for a Land Rover to go out 'bush'.

As we fossicked in this inhospitable environment and found evidence of European habitation, such as an old sewing machine, cutlery and metal matchboxes, we could only wonder at the tenacity to survive without an 'esky' full of ice and food, a four-wheel drive vehicle and a two-way radio. The bush was indeed hostile for inexperienced adventurers, with very little hope of emergency assistance, given the sparse population in a very expansive landscape. There were snakes: my son almost crawled on a brown snake curled up near our campsite; water snakes lurked in the beautiful aqua-coloured sea surrounding the islands off of Dampier. We saw deadly cone shells along the mangrove swamp beach at Karratha and were warned to look out for equally deadly stonefish. In contrast to Natal, also on the Indian Ocean, the beaches on this side of the ocean were quite forbidding. We had to travel to the closed mining town of Dampier to swim, where a huge wire cage had been erected in the sea to keep the sharks out (and we hoped the sea snakes too). Given the enormous tides, you had to walk for miles to get wet at low tide, and when at last you reached the water, it was warm. We had also landed ourselves in the middle of a desert and summer up north was indeed hell. The only way we could survive was in our company-provided, fully air-conditioned house. People avoided going outside after 10 a.m. especially during the extreme summer months.

Dampier was named after English navigator William Dampier (1651—1715), the man who famously set Australians on the road to racism in 1688, when he described the Aborigines as being "of a very unpleasing aspect, having not one graceful feature in their faces … the inhabitants of this country are the miserablest people in the world…" (Stow, 1984: 21). Sadly many of the young Aboriginal women we observed in our local area had to walk back to the town of Roebourne from Karratha on a Sunday morning a distance of 40 km after they had been picked up on a Saturday night by the single men who were mine-workers and left to find their own way home the next day. What we failed to recognize at the time was that they were able to walk the distance home in the searing heat while we could barely breathe with the flaps open on the dashboard of the Land Rover roaring along at 80km per hour, its maximum speed. In the *Great Australian Loneliness*, Ernestine Hill (1954) writes of her travels through this area as she explored the outback but does not mention what are new towns: Karratha or Dampier. Hill (1954) does speak of Cossack, where we would go for bush dances in an abandoned stone-built woolshed. There were other abandoned buildings as well in what was a real ghost town and according to Hill it was already abandoned in 1954. I did not know it had been a pearling town nor did I know about

what was called 'blackbirding' the practice Hill (1954) describes that involved Europeans in the capture of Aborigines to undertake the dangerous deep-diving required for the retrieval of pearls in those waters.

I must admit that I felt the same "colonial arrogance" that Rutherford describes (1984:13): a rejection of "any landscape that failed to conform" and "the assumption of superiority" reared its ugly head as I indulged in the migrant refrain that begins with sentences such as "back home", "in South Africa", "when we were" with everyone we met. We, too, went searching for something to look at as Patrick White said (quoted by Gibson,1984), and tried to find some redeeming feature in the landscape as did the first explorers, whose naming of landscape features reflects their mood more than anything else, places such as Mount Disappointment (Griffiths, 1996). After all, we had given up our comfortable lives and the beautiful green landscape of sub-tropical Natal in South Africa (afraid that we would soon lose them to a civil war with the ANC in any case) to come to this barren land but it was exciting too. Just as the explorer Sturt, wanted to be the first white man to lay his foot in its centre, as Rutherford (1984) says, we felt that we were making our own roads to undiscovered places, as we set out in our Land Rover along unmarked tracks that disappeared into the red dirt and spinifex.

Only now do I recognise that we were ignorant migrants, with our journeys into the 'outback' surrounding Karratha, exposing our children to dangers, as well. There may have been opportunities to be a hero but there were also chances to be foolhardy, such as when we followed the tracks left by another vehicle across a vast mud flat, only to become bogged down. Eventually we managed to get out of the quagmire while our two small children innocently were seated in the back seat awaiting their fate. Later when we recounted the story, someone asked, "Were there any tracks coming back?" and then it dawned on us—it was risky to follow the tyre marks of a vehicle that had obviously never come back. Perhaps it had returned via another route but we would have risked getting completely lost in an unmapped flat terrain with no prominent land features to help get one's bearings. In Patrick White's *Voss*, the geographical idea is used, says Hansson "to portray an explorer 'sufficient in himself', intent to make his own map, and convinced of his own divinity" (1984:28). Perhaps it was a reflection of our mood as well.

But there were still opportunities for heroes in our time in Karratha. Driving from one point on the map to another we came across two women beside the road with a flat tyre on their vehicle. They had been marooned there for two days, they said, as they waited for someone to come along and help them to loosen the wheel nuts that seemed to have fused to the bolts on the wheel they needed to change. With a can of WD40 and a little extra muscle-power, we had them going again soon enough, back to wherever they were going from wherever they had come. There was quite some mileage to be had from that story, especially that the 'damsels in distress' wore hard *Yakka* shorts and *Blundstone* boots with language at home in any bar-room. What is significant is that I cannot remember where we going or on what road we were headed because as soon as we left Karratha the land looked exactly the same to

us no matter which way we went, and one could be a hero an hour from home or 600km away on the road to the next roadhouse. On another occasion we decided to head north to a river marked on the map for a Sunday picnic, the sort of pastime we had both grown up, but towards late afternoon when we still had not arrived at our destination, we stopped beside the straight, featureless road, had our lunch and turned again for home. As Giles the explorer said, "geographical features have been most terribly scarce upon this expedition" and in comparison with the great lakes 'discovered' by the British in Africa, he says he named the Great Victorian Desert in Australia and a small spring he came upon in honour of his Queen, and he hoped that she would find that acceptable (cited in Rutherford, 1984:17).

On another trip we undertook with two more experienced 'bushies' and their families in our four-wheel drive vehicles to the Fortescue River, we had to build the road as we went down to the ravine where we planned to camp (and with a great deal more difficulty climbed back up again when it was time to depart). Rocks were placed under the tyres down the steep embankment and we slowly made our way to a group of sparsely foliaged gum trees to erect our tents. We took the temperature in the shade and it was over 50 degrees Celsius. I spent the weekend spread out beside our tent on a wet tarpaulin, my head throbbing, only rousing myself in horror to save my young daughter from drowning as she disappeared under the muddy surface of the river. She had been playing happily with the other children, and before she even knew she was in trouble, I managed to grab her as she surfaced.

My father's comment on the photos we sent back home was to ask if they had soap in Australia as it seemed the children's faces were always dirty. Our happy snaps were of remote places and campsites and the children playing in the red dirt, my young son was still crawling at the time: a little brown berry wearing only a nappy. A follow-up photograph sent home was of my daughter 'hanging out' with another four year old proving that there was both water and soap in Australia as they had a wash in a small basin at the rear of the Land Rover. We had indeed gone bush in the outback of my Australian dream landscape and imagined stories. Soon the bleakness began to grow on us and we stopped looking for the colour green and accepted shades of red, yellow and brown as beautiful, too. D.H. Lawrence (1923) in his book *Kangaroo,* written during a brief sojourn in Australia, recognized that the fault was somewhat his own when he said "The strange, as it were, invisible beauty of Australia, which is undeniably there … seems to lurk just beyond the range of our white vision..." (1923: 87).

I remember the thrill of arriving at one peninsula, where, as far as the eye could see, there was not a sign of human occupation. This very peninsula is now the site of an onshore refinery to support an offshore rig. In the end the land did reveal the 'untold riches' that early explorers thought it lacked, such as natural gas, to be exploited as reward for the hardship and perseverance of the early settlers but what has been lost is beyond description. This land was believed to be unsuitable as an inspiration to write poetry in the view of the colonials; not only that, it had no history or "past tense" either, says Rutherford (1984: 15). Rutherford found it ironical that Australia proved to be the perfect setting for what is often

considered to be the “greatest of all the literary genres, the epic” ... “suffering could be endured” and “obstacles overcome” (1984:17).

Artist, naturalist and campaigner Kathleen MacArthur connected the vulnerability of the landscapes of the ‘wallum’ in New South Wales which she campaigned to save from development and clearance, with that of the tiny wildflowers which she painted. Somerville speaks of Kathleen MacArthur’s experience in *Wildflowering* (1982) when she recognised that a Eurocentric vision did not take in what was unfamiliar: early settlers did not see the wildflowers and were able to destroy them and their habitat without compunction as they did not match the flowers that were imprinted in their consciousness from their home places (1982; 2004). The matter of vulnerability is a key theme in my research as I recognised that my feeling vulnerable was a necessary state of mind if I am to care about where I live. The artwork of botanical artist Kathleen MacArthur also indicates that our relationship with the landscape/place is in the small detail seen within the broader viewpoint which was my discovery as well.

When Maggie MacKellar went to live in Canada from Australia for a short time, it aroused in her a curiosity as to the transition experience of other women “who had journeyed into the wild more than a hundred years ago” in places such as her homeland, Australia, and in Canada, where she went to live for awhile (2004: 8). One of the stories Mackellar (2004) tells is of Georgiana Molloy, who went from England to Western Australia with her husband in 1830. For women such as Molloy “their movement was restricted by a culture that defined middle-class women in terms of passivity, lack of utility, and fragility… but women still responded to the natural world around them”, restricted as they were by both their clothing and the immensity of the land around them (2004: 8). Mackellar considers that their stories emphasise what she terms the connective tissue between “self and place” which women gave expression to through their writing and “break down the specific national myths of women’s frontier role” (2004: 9). What surprised her was the commonality of experience across race, space and time rather than the imaginary woman who has been constructed who could not survive in Australia and either left or went mad in the confines of her home (2004). In fact, Randolph Stow (1984) argued that this metaphor of imprisonment (within the home) has haunted Australian literature in the character of the bitter bush woman. An example is the story entitled *The Drover’s Wife* by Henry Lawson (1892) wherein a woman is left alone with her children and a wily dog while her husband is off droving and she must cope with wandering bush men who wish to take advantage of her lone status and a snake that takes up residence under the house. Henry’s mother, Louise Lawson, in 1889 says Kessow, wrote of an enduring circulation of cultural and national constructions even in the late 20th century that includes the literary stereotype of the romance of the bush (2005). Like the pioneer women, that Mackellar speaks of, my Australian forebears and I also took the broken bones of home to make a new home; this metaphor builds on the epigraph to Mackellar’s first chapter where she cites Marie Harris (1975) who said in one line of a poem “I think: be careful. Do not say Home. The bones of that word mend slowly” (“Interstate” from *Raw Honey*,

1975). It was this poem that Mackellar believes led her to consider the lives of pioneer women with greater depth and the brokenness of identity in another land. She points out that it is difficult to pin down a definition of the concept of 'a sense of place' that can arise, she says, from alienation "so that a strange land may be imaginatively possessed"… "a sense of place has to do with the timelessness and universality of myths; it is bound up in stories about ourselves as individuals and the connections we make with each other" (2004:18).

## Conclusion

In comparison with my female forebears, I have been given so many more opportunities, especially since immigrating to Australia including a greater sense of freedom in my gender role, and away from the racism in South Africa, nor have class or income been an issue in this more egalitarian society. I am more fully cognisant of prejudices that I have had to fight to unravel. My sense of social justice, feminism and environmental awareness was born during the time I lived in the United States, and I experienced a far more open and questioning educational system when I attended school in Pennsylvania for a year and of course since living in Australia.

## Photo Journal

Re-making the road as we climbed up from the Fortescue River, W.A. [Photo: F. B. Dent, 1981]

My daughter, Leigh (standing) and her friend taking a bath outback-style, W.A. [Photo: F. B. Dent, 1981]

Burrup Peninsula, W.A. now the site of a gas refinery [Photo: F.B. Dent, 1981]

# Chapter 4
# Formative landscapes of my childhood and early adulthood

There is no denying the importance of the place where one is born and spent one's childhood and early adulthood in defining one's identity. In my case, both my parents were born in South Africa and had known no other place apart from the influence of overseas-born parents and grand-parents; we called ourselves South Africans through and through. In briefly reviewing some of the recorded history of South Africa, I wanted to hold it up to the light and have another look at what I believed and had learned. Much of my learning was through the filter of what suited the white population in justifying their existence and practices in the country and with the change to majority rule in 1992 much had changed but in many respects not much changed in my perceptions, given I was not living there when Mandela was freed and Apartheid ended. I had always held a progressive viewpoint I believed but could not shrug off the latent racism that seemed to crop up every now and then given my previous conditioning. Thus I set out to answer the question: what happened in South Africa?

# Fabric-ating 6: What happened in South Africa?

The Cederberg in Western Cape [Photo: F.B. Dent 2010]

Jagged blocks
Scrape a sky too blue
An ancient landscape

My brother and I together
In a place both sinister and awesome
[F.B. Dent, 2010]

## Introduction

On my recent overseas journey and pilgrimage to South Africa, I attempted to gauge my embodied reactions to the landscape and place. I wanted to know if I still felt an emotional attachment and whether I could return to live there as the place where I belong. I was also prepared to engage with repressed 'truths' of my personal history and memories, as well as aspects of recorded history. Through conversations, reading and travelling, I hoped to gain a more educated and balanced understanding with the benefit of hindsight and the experience of my 30 years plus in Australia.

During the years that I lived in South Africa, outright government censorship blocked access to information, other information was biased, carefully scripted and filtered; and many significant writers

were banned. Nobel-prize-winning author, Nadine Gordimer is one writer whom I have followed since leaving South Africa. In Clingman's introduction to a collection of her essays, he concurs as to the role she has played as "Interpreter of South Africa as, over the years, her country has marched down its doom-ridden slope of Apartheid... [she] has been the voice of conscience, of moral rigour, and of clarified hope ..." (Clingman, 1988:1). But there were many books that I had avoided, perhaps not wanting to rub salt into the old guilt wound, which I have only recently had the courage to read. One such book is Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995). How illuminating it has been to view South Africa from his perspective. I had never realised how influential Gandhi's non-violence approach had been, even although I knew he had lived in South Africa and had played a part in the struggle for civil rights for the large Indian population there.

The many acts of civil disobedience and peaceful protest were most likely not covered in the government-controlled media. Although as a young person I do not remember reading newspapers very often, there were news broadcasts on the radio but no television until the 70s. My parents supported the United Party that had been in power prior to the Nationalists but their names were neither 'Joe Slovo' nor 'Helen Suzman', two well-known White activists who fought against Apartheid. The only result of a stay-away-from-work strike we would have witnessed would have been my mother expressing her annoyance that the maid, or my father, that the gardener had not come to work. As Gordimer says, there are two images "an image of the life lived by the banished, harried, and spied upon active opponent of Apartheid, and the juxtaposed image of life in the sun lived by a prosperous white population who does not care what happens so long as it goes on living pleasantly" (in Clingman, 1988:52); we leaned towards the latter variety.

My endeavour, then, in this section is an account of my going back and reviewing what I brought with me from South Africa to Australia, but also what I left behind. My hope was to be *in the landscape,* as the place where I was shaped—to lay bare a foundation that has informed and influenced my perceptions and expectations in other places, especially Australia.

Although I wanted to engage directly with the landscape – to get down and dirty with the people on the street, to gain a greater insight into their lives, it was difficult not to just slip back into the same old mould: *the view from the car,* which I identified as a metaphor for my engagement there previously. The life of others observed – the car, an extension of our family home that on the whole kept us separate and protected from the reality of the lives of people on the street. Most striking when one returns to South Africa is the life on the streets, in comparison with Australia where there are no casual street-vendors, or queues of people waiting for what are already overcrowded taxis, or the smell of roasting *meilies* (maize) on an open brazier.

My brief review of South African history serves to paint the location of our birth: my children and their parents if they are to know who we are and where we came from and what the experience of migration has been for me—the mother with the funny accent. For other readers, it also is an attempt to illustrate how the circumstances of historical events led to a system of government that was reprehensible, the epitome of colonial racism. I also wanted to discover if mechanisms such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, held after the establishment of majority rule had helped to heal the wounds of what had occurred – the murders, torture and imprisonment of people deemed to be enemies of the state. I also needed to face up honestly to why we had immigrated.

## Emigration

The circumstances that led to our leaving South Africa to settle in Australia in 1980 are complicated. Why did we leave and others, who could have left, stayed, vowing never to leave and wearing this decision as a badge of honour? How much of my personal story is implicated in this decision, but which I have chosen to deflect outwards to the political turmoil to justify our emigrating, a half-truth repeated so often it became truth? What was I running away from? The reality was that the dangers very much lay within our fragile little family unit, this danger we carried with us packed neatly within our furniture and household effects that arrived in Australia via container ship some months after we did and would manifest as a family breakdown within eleven years of our arrival. At what cost is migration, however, when we have foregone a deep belonging to landscape/place and to an extended family, although many of whom are now spread around the world, as South Africans have become a people in diaspora? Gordimer (cited in Clingman, 1988:34) summed up the reasons why some have left South Africa "where our skin-colour labelled us as oppressors" saying that "a few have left because they cannot bear the guilt and ugliness of the white man's easy lot here; a few left because they are afraid of the black man ...or a combination of the two". Although she has fluctuated between a desire to be gone, "to find a society for myself where my white skin will have no bearing on my place in the community ... [she feels] a terrible, obstinate and fearful desire to stay" that has won through and she has remained in South Africa (as at 2011) to speak out, to write books of fiction and non-fiction (in Clingman, 1988: 7 – 9). Clingman says of Gordimer that she had to seek

> reservoirs of intellectual and emotional strength ... to confront the facts of one's own privilege while seeking ways to undo it" ... "because objective reality is out of kilter, the self who is part of it must be inspected as well ... every gaze at society is thus accompanied by a look in the mirror" and where one's "sense of self is bound within cultural patterns" that on the whole go unquestioned by the majority amongst whom one lives (1988:7-9).

Although I felt that I could now look at South African society as an outsider: someone who left there more than thirty years ago, with an objective eye not available to those who have never left, I

found ‘a self’ so bound up in the history and landscape that my loving eye felt implicated each time I had an opinion or made an observation. It was “the look in the mirror,” as Nadine Gordimer so aptly described it above. It is my attempt to find agency, when those who have remained judge that we émigrés have foregone our place but no matter their opinion, my concern is with the landscape. Certainly there is truth in what Jeremy Foster (2008) says that the non-indigenous populations in countries such as South Africa, Australia or the US, are simply the “outcome of socially and politically constructed myths forged over time,” but he places nationhood in the land that he says, “is an icon of continuity” (2008:16). Icons of nationhood, Foster says are found in landscape where they contain material traces of past activities that can be selectively used to justify a cultural group’s activities “wherever history and mythology are used to construct a common past, landscape has the potential to stand for an imaginary shared space in which the great story of nationhood has unfolded, rendering it timeless and indisputable” (2008:17). The question is: is it just an imaginary shared space?

This argument situates culture, as I have done, in the landscape but it is an imposed culture rather than one emerging from the land itself. I recognised the cultural icons that stand neglected now in South Africa, given the change from what was mainstream to a peripheral minority, namely that of the Afrikaner. These cultural icons frequently represented the experience of the Voortrekkers and the Anglo-Boer Wars – the latter an aspect of South African history that I investigated during my stay. The landscape that I perceived at times spoke of tragedy but it also was filled with our stories, our memories and our place attachments.

### A Landscape filled with Heartbreak

When I wondered whether the landscape itself had played a part in what happened in South Africa, apart from the underground minerals that had economic benefit, I had not yet found Foster’s book, mentioned previously. An architect and landscape designer, Foster (2008) is an expatriate South African living in the USA. He speaks without cringing of feeling a ‘mood’ in certain places in South Africa in what some would criticise as simply personifying the landscape. He says that it was “seemingly inhering in the experiential and ... phenomenological qualities of the landscape... it resembled the character found in human individuals – infinitely nuanced and hard to describe, yet always distinctive” (Foster, 2008:6). In asking others about their responses, residents and visitors, he was gratified that he was not alone in these perceptions, just as I am in finding Foster’s book. He asks the question “Could affective feelings triggered by a landscape be a consequence of a pre-reflective, corporeal-mimetic recognition of life or action in its material constitution rather than evidence of some kind of secret fixed or complete essence standing behind the object?” (2008:11). Foster then very much reflects what I was looking for in certain places “homologies (a product of descent from a common ancestor) for subjectivities” and believes that most people would find this “identificatory kind of enmeshment of body-subject and topography

meaningful" but he questions the role it plays in a "sense of identity" and whether it could "provide the raw material for the making of meaningful, imaginatively inhabitable places" (2008:12). To do so though we would need to bracket semiotics and the focus of social constructedness of meaning, as he says: it is *how* rather than *what* something is and the possibility of "some kind of articulation between such apparently incommensurate phenomena as physical terrain and a disposition or way of being in the world" (2008:13).

My conclusions were that the land itself had absorbed traumatic events, just as Hamish Miller and Barry Brailsford wrote about in New Zealand (2006). When they visited a beach at Wharehunga Bay where a massacre occurred, it awakened a "past echoing out of land" and Brailsford says that

> never again would I treat the land as a thing apart, mere rock and stone, grass and forest, to which I had no deeper connection than the attraction of its beauty. I was propelled beyond the realm of the eye into a space that transcended to reveal the joy and the pain of ancestors long departed (2006:49-52).

Interestingly, Michael Pollan, when he describes choosing a building site in his book *A Place of my Own* (2008), says that one area felt shy while another was self-assertive. Was the landscape reflecting back to him how he felt in various places or did it reflect its own culture? Either way, he used the information to choose the best situation for the small room he was building in his backyard. Both Brailsford and Foster are concerned with the notion of 'land memory': the traces that remain of man's actions in a place are perceptible if one is open to them as well as the physical cultural icons he has erected to memorialise events that took place there.

From my perspective when travelling through South Africa, the landscape at times spoke of the heartbreak of so much hardship and bloodshed, often recorded in a place name such as Slagtersnek (butcher/slaughterer's neck) in the Eastern Cape, but was this because of the history that I had learned at school or some other sensitivity—I did not know. The event that led to Slagtersnek and what was one of the most significant events in the history of South Africa: *The Great Trek*, that icon of Afrikaanerdom when parties of Dutch who had arrived at the Cape left there to travel north in ox wagons. Sparks (1991) says it was triggered when an Afrikaner farmer in the Cape Colony, refused to release a Khoi-khoi labourer (the indigenous people who the Dutch referred to as Hottentots) when his work contract expired and held back both his pay and the cattle he had been allowed to run. This was illegal under the labour regulations and the end of slavery that the British had introduced in 1812 and the Khoi-khoi man decided to fight for his rights. He took his complaint to the *landdrost* but the farmer refused to comply for two years, and eventually he was sentenced to jail for contempt of court. When the police came to arrest him, he holed himself up in a cave and was shot. This event caused outrage in the Afrikaner

community – that a white man should have been killed because of his right to do as he pleased with his servants, or this is how Sparks reflects on the outcome (1991).

This event led to a broader insurrection, which resulted in the appalling event at Slagtersnek. Out of five men who had been condemned for their role in the insurrection, four survived their hanging due to rotten rope, but were hanged again by the British authorities despite their pleas for clemency. The local Afrikaners saw this act as defying "the intervening hand of the Almighty" (Sparks, 1991:94). This event marked the beginning of the British imposition of rule of law and the dissatisfaction of the Boers grew as a result: an awakening nationalism, as some described it, although it was not until 20 years later, in 1835, that 14,000 people left the Cape Colony to escape British control (1991) in what became known as the Great Trek.

The niece of one of the Trek leaders, Piet Retief, said of the freeing of the slaves, "it is not so much their freedom which drove us to such lengths as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion... we rather withdrew in order thus to preserve our doctrines in purity" (Preller, cited by Sparks, 1991:105). Some sources dispute the interpretation that the Afrikaners' desire to maintain slavery was a cause of the Great Trek, but rather the loss of labour that resulted. Others have highlighted the attempt by the British to Anglicise the Dutch as more significant. The Dutch language was prohibited in schools and in legal circles, for example in 1840, with English "compulsory ... for a job in the civil service", and the sense was that "their identity as Afrikaners would be lost" (Sparks,1991:116).

Imperialism and its partners, colonialism and capitalism, disturbed the map of Africa with disastrous consequences that continue to lash its landscape, as is evidenced so graphically in South Africa. Recent population growth exacerbates the legacy of Apartheid, with shortages more acute as many people from other countries in Africa have come to South Africa in search of a better place to live and work. Enormous squatter camps have developed on the outskirts of towns and cities, corrugated iron dwellings covered with blue tarpaulins with inhabitants' lives a daily struggle to survive without basic services such as water or electricity, at risk of disease, starvation, murder, rape, theft, and flood, as was the case recently (2011) when more than 120 people drowned. Many thousands of houses have been built by the current government's Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP houses as they are called), but the waiting lists are huge and the houses are too small, given that people usually have large numbers of children and an extended family structure as the norm. One can only visualise the slums of the future as makeshift extensions are needed to accommodate everyone.

Several years ago many people had to be moved to safer places during what were dubbed the xenophobic uprisings, when people turned on those who were not South African — some were refugees from war-torn African countries such as Somalia and Sudan, but many from neighbouring Zimbabwe.

Their contribution to the economy and labour market was recognised when many of those from 'Zim' were allowed to legalise their situation with the correct stamp in their passport, but this resulted in long queues at the Home Affairs Office and impeded my less urgent purpose of obtaining copies of family birth and death certificates at the time. Most of the craft on sale is produced by those from countries outside of South Africa, especially Zimbabwe, and one can only admire their creativity and forbearance in getting their items to the South African tourist markets given the cost and shortage of materials and difficulties of transport and border crossings. Their situation is precarious. Some nationalities, such as a contingent of Nigerians, have invaded entire areas where they rule by fear and intimidation, I was told. Thus fear continues as a defining characteristic of life in South Africa for all segments of the population.

To see the landscape now with the benefit of more understanding and knowledge is to see the overlays of what had happened there over the centuries since Europeans first arrived. Of course, the dangers were also of the land itself—the droughts and floods, the wild animals, reptiles and insects— its very nature, an anathema to what our forebears from Europe had left behind. I was conscious of a desire to protect these wild places and wondered whether the landscape itself, a siren so breath-taking it engendered lust, not only a rapacious plundering but a selfish desire to keep it all for oneself, that its very nature may have contributed to its own tragic history. The rapacious plundering, due to gold mining on the Witwatersrand, for example, has been devastating. The land has been left turned upside down, with the contents of the yellow sub-soil from deep below the earth now piled high on top, then eroded by wind and rain to form deeply creviced white mounds in a lifeless landscape. Some of the mine dumps are being re-worked using new technologies, and, on others, attempts have been made to regenerate the soil with vegetation. Where I grew up in Krugersdorp, the view in the distance from my bedroom window is an imprint of one such mine dump—a gold/uranium dump. Recent media reports reveal that the toxic underground water created during the mining processes is rising and infiltrating groundwater especially in Johannesburg.

## Living with Fear

Although as white children, we were protected from the real situation – that we were a small majority of white people who sought to keep control and power by force – we did know that the world beyond our home held dangers. Whether real or not we believed that the black population posed a threat and fear was a constant feature of our lives. The black children lived with fear too, of course, of the heavy-handed police or army, of local gangs, of starvation. Black parents without the required pass to live in a white area of the city feared that they would be arrested with no one left to care for their children; their youngest children were sometimes sent to live with their elderly parents on the farm where they may not have had enough to eat.

Our parents feared an uprising, like the Mau-Mau in Kenya which led to a civil war (1952 – 1960), and there was the tragedy of Sharpeville in 1960, a watershed in South African history when the police opened fire on a peaceful protest against the pass laws killing 69 – including 10 children. The fear that Sharpeville would end in civil war led to the government declaring a state of emergency, detaining of 18,000 people, banning the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the beginnings of the international isolation and condemnation of Hendrik Verwoerd's government. Verwoerd, one of the pivotal Nationalist Party's Prime Ministers, is credited with the title Architect of Apartheid; he was assassinated in 1966. In another incident, this one in 1976 when I was living in the US, police opened fire on school children who were protesting against Afrikaans as the sole language of instruction. Many were shot in the back as they tried to run away. Even as children, they saw Afrikaans as the language of their oppressors and were aware that without English their future options would be limited to servitude within South Africa; locked out of English, their employment and educational opportunities outside of South Africa would be nil. Incredibly, children took to pouring out the debilitating alcoholic beverages produced in *shebeens* – the illegal establishments that made their own beer, recognising that it was at the root of their parent's lack of motivation and ability to fight back (Clingman, 1988:125). During the state of emergency, in the sixties, while we went for our Sunday picnics, in places such as Soweto funerals were the only type of public gathering allowed the blacks and attracted huge numbers (1988).

The Nationalists came to government in the year of my birth, 1948, and I would know no other regime during my time of residence there. Their taking control was a surprise in the face of the broad expectation that the previous Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, leader of the United Party, would win, given his role during the Second World War and his assistance with the setting up of the League of Nations. Soon after the Nationalists took government, the cornerstones of Apartheid legislation were in place ensuring that the black population lived their lives on the edge more than ever before. I remember feeling a measure of their fear when we would see a police *bakkie* (ute) pulled over at the side of the road, lights flashing, the khaki-clad occupants, their guns protruding in holsters, challenging a black person on foot, who was busily digging in a bag or a pocket for identification. They would be the more fortunate if they had the necessary pass that indicated their right to be where they were (had employment and the necessary inked stamp in place) while we, the more fortunate, went gliding by in our vehicle to our privileged white-only school or to see a movie at the white-only bioscope.

The townships where the blacks lived were well hidden from our view, no-go zones in fact, as ironically the Whites also required a permit to enter the Black townships and without television we never had the visual images either, the Nationalist government was of the view that television would interfere with family life. Occasionally at the bioscope, where the program included a short news film just before the cartoons, we would see footage of unrest perhaps elsewhere in Africa, but always the voice-over

assured us that all was under control and our privileged lives were not under threat. In writing this, perhaps I am just recalling George Orwell's book *1984* (1948).

It took only one visit from the security police when I returned from a year to the US in 1966/67 on an American Field Service scholarship to keep me subdued. They asked if I would be joining NUSAS, the national union of university students, which was open to both black and white students and was always under surveillance, especially since black political organisations had been banned. When Robert Kennedy came to South Africa as a guest of NUSAS in the late 60s, White students took on the voice of the Black people who were prohibited from speaking. However, as Sparks points out, "black students as they became more educated began to resent the fact that whites dominated the organization" (1991: 259). One such student was Steve Biko, a medical student at the University of Natal. He maintained that the domination of the Whites in the organisation "concealed an unconscious attachment to the status quo" that "appeased their conscience" but did not further the cause (Sparks, 1991:258). So Biko formed a break-away group called The South African Students Organisation (SASO) that was to be the "core of the Black Consciousness movement" (Sparks, 1991:258) from 1969 to 1978. He recognised that integration would only see the "assimilation of blacks into a set of norms and code of behaviour set up and maintained by whites" when in fact "a country in Africa, in which the majority of the people are African, must inevitably exhibit African values and be truly African in style" (Sparks, 1991:262). He did not state that the Whites would have to leave, however, but rather that a true integration could occur when there was mutual respect. As Sobukwe (from the PAC) had said, Africa was for all those who "owed his only loyalty to Africa and was prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority" (Sparks, 1991:257). This attitude was often not reflected by young militant Africans who believed that Africa was only for Black Africans, however. Biko's Black consciousness was aimed at young people and led to what Sparks describes as the "children's war in the townships" (1991:263). But the student uprising in 1976 saw the banning of those organisations seen to be responsible for inciting rebellion and Steve Biko was dead of massive head wounds after twenty-six days in police detention (1991). Many of the children who left school to riot in 1976 never returned to get an education and had little employment opportunities as a consequence. They have become the dispossessed and brutalised many believe today who live by murder and crime.

Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography (1997), describes his slow awakening to the realities of being born Black in South Africa in the 1930s but also acknowledges the opportunities that were afforded him as a result of the circumstances of his birth (privileged within his tribal group and his opportunity to gain qualifications as a lawyer) but of course, those opportunities were tempered by the lack of freedom, for the Black population. For Mandela, the struggle against Apartheid, he describes as *his life*. Surprisingly he also reminds readers that there were laws restricting the lives of Blacks already in place prior to Apartheid and the Nationalist government coming to office in 1948. Laws such as the 1913 *Land*

*Act*, "which ultimately deprived blacks of 87 per cent of the territory in the land of their birth; the *Urban Areas Act* of 1923, which created teeming African slums... in order to supply cheap labour to White industry; the *Colour Bar Act* of 1926, which banned Africans from practising skilled trades; the *Native Administration Act* of 1927, which made the British Crown, rather than the Paramount Chiefs, the supreme chief over all African areas ... and in 1936, the *Representation of Natives Act*, which removed Africans from the common voters' roll in the Cape..." and so the list goes on (Mandela, 1997:114). Mandela says that he realised that the people themselves had to overcome their sense of inferiority, which one of the freedom fighters, Anton Lembede, too, had said was the greatest barrier that they faced to liberation, as well as the idolisation of the West and its ideas (Mandela, 1997). Lembede also identified the shift from ethic differences as young women and men began to see themselves as Africans first and foremost, not as Xhosas or Ndebeles or Tswanas, although there seems to have been a shift back to tribal groupings as I noted recently (Mandela, 1997).

Life on the streets in Krugersdorp, our old hometown, took on a menacing aspect when my brother and I visited the Burgershoop cemetery in 2010, seeking the graves of those who had died in the Anglo-Boer War. Graeme became anxious when we had parked and were attempting to read the faded headstones in the unkempt graveyard. He had spotted a few shady-looking characters keeping an eye on us. When he pointed them out and suggested that we hurry up and get out of there, I noticed that they were obviously homeless, poor Whites, sleeping rough—their skin was like leather, and their filthy clothing hung on their scrawny, undernourished bodies. I realised too that I was no longer as alert to potential threats as I once would have been living in South Africa. I was forced as well to confront the term: 'poor Whites' a term that was used to describe the mainly Afrikaner poor who suffered discrimination and were over-represented in menial job categories that drew low wages. As children, we would observe them, to the west of the town, and would often stare with curiosity as we drove by to reach our more affluent suburb up the hill in Kenmare, above the main town. Most notable were the sores on the children's ill-nourished legs, no doubt the result of bed-bugs. Of course, with the coming to power of the Nationalist government, their situation improved, especially when many gained employment in an over-bulging public service. With the change to majority-rule however those jobs are gone for Whites.

Later that day in Krugersdorp, we went to look at the house where we had grown up, from 1956 until 1977. Luckily, the current owners, a young Afrikaans-speaking family, invited us in when their helper caught us peering in through the electronic security gate. The owners have made many changes, including the building of a *lapa* (the thatched-roofed outdoor BBQ area in many South African gardens) beside the swimming pool. When asked if anyone had died in the house, I chose to say "no," but later regretted not querying why she had asked such a question. I preferred not to explain that not only had my mother died there but my grandmother had also died in our house, in my sister's and my upstairs

bedroom, of pancreatic cancer. My grandmother had asked me if I would like to have her sewing machine as she lay dying, and of course I did; she knew that I enjoyed sewing. I also have her collection of knitting needles in their handmade holder. For months after her death, the smell of the Cashmere Bouquet Fern powder my mother had used after bathing her, stayed in the bedroom. Now, as I entered our old room, I felt no attachment, it was a pink, fluffy young child's room filled with light.

The house has been reduced to a virtual fortress, with the perimeter electrified and elaborate burglar bars on all windows, including an ornate wrought-iron structure that separates the upstairs sleeping quarters from downstairs. The young woman explained that they had experienced an ambush in their car the week before. Approaching the house, they noticed an unfamiliar car parked outside and decided to keep driving. Unfortunately, the occupants of the car recognised them and pursued them into the next street where they had stopped, and pulled the family from their car at gunpoint. Their two children, we were told, were still traumatised at having had guns pointed at their heads while their mother handed over her jewellery and purse. I did not want to add to their trauma by admitting that there had been two deaths that I knew of in the house, but I could not help sharing my ghostly experience.

At the age of about 12, I was frozen in fear behind the closed door of the downstairs toilet as I distinctly heard rowdy horsemen ride past the door and up the passage right through the house. I remember that at the time I discussed this uncanny event with my friend's older brother, and his erudite conclusion that I attached to the experience, was that they were Boers no doubt, ghosts of the Anglo-Boer War, who would have ridden all over this part of Krugersdorp. The current retelling of the event led my brother to suggest that it may have been the 'headless rider', a Boer story he had heard of in the area, and I was glad that I had not had that information as a child. This occurrence was inexplicable, given there was no TV or radio on as the rest of the family had already gone to bed upstairs. My sister remembers my telling the story when eventually I built up the courage to dash upstairs. Fear had always stalked me in our home in any case at night and after this strange event, more so, especially in the area of the passage and staircase. One of my self-protective practices was to jump down the last flight to avoid being struck by a knife that I was convinced would be dropped down the back of my neck from the landing above by a knife-wielding bandit. The wrought-iron structure now in place in the stairwell at least took care of that danger. Another was to take a giant leap into bed from a distance to prevent the *tokoloshe:* an evil little spirit hiding underneath to grab at my ankles – it was the reason why our maids always put their beds up on bricks. Knowing what the children who lived in the house had already experienced, I suddenly regretted telling the current owner the ghostly story and asked her not to tell it to her children.

We left our old house carrying peaches from the trees my father had planted to take home for him and with a request for us to check if the books and papers they had found in the roof cavity were his.

Unfortunately they turned out to be old engineering books and probably belonged to a prior resident and were not the treasured documents we may have hoped for. Perhaps our visit to the house helped my brother and me to lay the ghosts of the past to rest as I now picture our old home filled with the young family who live there.

There was another house that we did not drive by in Krugersdorp: the house where we lived prior to emigrating. I recalled my plan to create an inner sanctum in that house: a sealed shelter in case we were attacked. We had only just returned after two plus years spent in the USA and Canada, and the contrast made me feel far more vulnerable especially with two small children in a country I now felt was about to explode. In that house I had decided that we should leave. The first time we made the decision to come to Australia, I halted the process when I refused to have the necessary chest x-ray to check for tuberculosis. Although my gynaecologist had assured me that the lead apron used for pregnant women would protect my unborn child, the radiologist on duty that day advised that there was some risk and I walked out without having had the procedure. I knew that I could never live with myself should the x-ray have resulted in a birth defect. My decision caused a great deal of angst as we could not follow through on our Australian immigration acceptance and a lucrative job offer in Sydney was jettisoned, but within a year we were again accepted, this time without a job offer, and were soon 'packing for Perth' – as the joke in South Africa went – a slight directed at the PFP – the Progressive Freedom Party.

My brother and I had another brush with fear later that month during my visit in 2010, when we went to the Cape and travelled north to the Western Coast and Cederberg region. We were told of many well-preserved !Kung paintings in caves, which I was keen to see especially since I had experienced first-hand the Aboriginal art on rocks at a sheep station called Cooya Pooya in Western Australia. The area around Clanwilliam in the Western Cape, home to *Rooibos* tea, attracts many visitors each spring with a magnificent wildflower display. We drove up the coast, first calling in at places such as Blouberg Strand, where the view across to Table Mountain conjures up 'memories' of what the first white settlers saw as they arrived in the Cape in 1652. It was a clear day with no 'tablecloth' as it is called, the iconic white cloud descending over the mountain, but we would see that from other vantage points during our stay. Our first stop was in the fishing village of Paternoster (in Latin meaning the prayer: Our Father), so named by the Portuguese but now home to mixed-race fisher families who live in white-washed cottages along the shoreline. The bed and breakfast we stayed in was one such building.

I photographed the fishermen going out in their wonderful, brightly painted boats using the perfect voyeur's tool, my telephoto lens, concerned that they would object to being the subject of tourist photos. They were living their lives in that place as their forebears had. We were warned that they were thieves who would try to steal anything not nailed down, or to sell us illegally caught crayfish but my sense was that they resented us being in their town as visitors. We ate at some of the seafood restaurants they ran and shopped for mementos at the tourist shop to make some contribution to their

economy. It was probably a romanticised viewpoint but they seemed to have the perfect lifestyle living on the edge of the magnificent coastline fishing for a living. The place where I had booked us into following on from Paternoster was at a farm-stay.

When we called into the farm stall on arrival at sunset, to check-in and pick up the keys to the hut assigned to us we were told that the door did not lock. There was no need to lock anything, the owner laughingly advised us. We had just left Johannesburg, with its houses surrounded by electrified barbed-wire fencing and the armed response unit on-call 24-hours a day, not to mention being constantly vigilant when out of doors and here we were with a door that did not lock. As night fell, we found we had no mobile phone coverage and realised that we were the only visitors staying at the farm, the farm-stall staff had left for the night, and we were quite alone feeling utterly vulnerable in this empty landscape; the only sound, the harsh bark of baboons. Neither of us could accept the safety we had been assured of and pushed a table against the door that night, having closed all the windows despite the heat, and crawled into our respective bedrooms at either side of the expansive hut once used to house farm workers. In retrospect, our response spoke of our current fear, but also I believe of the fear we shared during our upbringing and of our fragile hope that a table against a door and a barbed wire fence could protect us from the dangers in the night. The owner had told us that the area was safer because there were few 'Black kraals' in that region and that it had been populated mainly by the Khoi-khoi and !Kung. As we drove away the following day, we observed that there were no Black people walking or on bikes on the roads as was customary in the country areas until we came to the towns. It was also raining hard with a fine mist now hovering over the craggy, ancient block-constructed mountains and we were glad that we had seen a few faded !Kung paintings the previous day but I resolved to return at another time to climb up to where the others were located. We visited the shoe shop where *velskoen* (the high-sided boot traditionally worn by the boers) are made and saw the Rooibos tea plantations as we drove by. We headed for the area where the French Huguenots had first established grape vines and the wine industry in 1688, centred in the area of Fransch Hoek and the different but equally magnificent mountain ranges that surround it. That night we stayed on a wine estate in a cottage, one of four enclosed by barbed wire, once again safe and secure. These were places where we had often toured on our family holidays to the Cape with landscapes that would play their role in the future as a benchmark: what was aesthetic and worthy of awe and appreciation and what was not. The Cape Dutch architecture inspired by the White tribes of Africa against the backdrop of the mountain ranges is awe-inspiring. The different settlers in South Africa have each made a distinctive mark on the landscape.

### The White Tribes of Africa

While it might be assumed by Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, that they are the one and only 'White tribe', the English have firm roots as well in Southern Africa, although their settler experience differed. Writing in 1991, Sparks describes the English as "a curiously helpless and rather pathetic

community who do not identity with either side in the conflict of nationalisms ... and cannot define a role for themselves in between" where they remained aloof to Afrikaner Nationalism and shrunk from Black nationalism "withdrawing into a private world of business and home and sunlit leisure" politically powerless, given their lower numbers (1991: 47). In his opinion, "it is also a matter of identity. The English-speaking community does not burn with a sense of grievance or sense of mission. It has no positive, purposeful creed. It lacks cohesion: it is an amorphous community with little sense of any collective identity" without even a proper name either, defining themselves more by what they are not than by what they are – harsh criticism indeed (1991:47). Alan Paton (1981) agreed that the only thing the English had in common was their language and so were represented right across the political spectrum. The problem was as Paton says "we are a mixed bunch, and we don't have the bonds that bind so many Afrikaners together; we never had a Karoo, we never trekked, we never developed a new language, we never were defeated in war, we never had to pick ourselves out of the dust" (1981: 96). But 30 years on from when Paton made his statement I would beg to differ.

In 2010, travelling along the freeway from Oliver Tambo airport (what was Jan Smuts airport) to Johannesburg's Northern Suburbs, a billboard pictures a straight road through the Karoo, the semi-desert arid area that must be traversed to drive from Johannesburg to Cape Town, unless one takes the longer journey via the coast. The billboard is meant to advertise the advantages of flying rather than suffering through this stark either too hot or freezing cold landscape, depending on the season or time of day/night, but for expatriate South Africans returning 'home' for the Christmas family gathering (my nephew from the UK and I) we have a synchronised nostalgic response. The photograph on the poster is symbolic of our connection with a landscape that we recognise on some deeper level , perhaps it is the wide open space, the bleakness and the subtle colours of the Karoo that are held in the imagination as the quintessential image of 'our' South Africa. No matter that in a country the size of Queensland, the varieties of topography and vegetation offer far more aesthetic landscapes than the Karoo: including at the Cape or those in Eastern Limpopo (what was the Transvaal) and of course the Drakensberg range or the Kruger National Park region; the sub tropical paradise of Natal which could rival any other lushly, verdant seaside region but the Karoo appears to hold a special place. Most literary critics (J. M. Coetzee, Sparks and Paton) place the Karoo in the heart and soul of the Afrikaners but our expatriate response would seem to expose this stereotype as open to debate: a slippage in the assumption.

The landscape of the Karoo is stark and relentless in its barrenness but its attraction is strange and compelling. It appears to epitomise the formative landscape and the very character of the people of South Africa just as the 'outback' and the people who lived there represent what is thought of as the real Australia, although the majority live around the edge of the continent on the coast. The shadow that fell across Western Australia in 1980 was that of the Karoo. We came to appreciate its stark beauty as familiar, where instead of stunted Karoo bushes we saw spinifex and the heap of iron-stones piled one

upon another: the 'kopjes', encapsulates so aptly the small rocky hills that are all that disturb the flat unforgiving sandy plains in both countries. Australia needs a word like 'kopje' too. Many plants in the Karoo have only a flimsy hairlike root to anchor them in the soil. These are Ice plants, which Schreiner (1923) describes as "covered in little diamond-like drops, which when broken are found to be full of pure water; leaves pressed closely together fastened by the slenderest roots to the ground or rocks, (that) live almost entirely on the moisture they may draw from the air and will grow and bloom for months or even years in a dwelling without either earth or water" (1923: 39). This conjures up images of migrants without firm roots in any place but free floating, and I have used this metaphor to describe my condition on a number of occasions since learning about Ice plants. In contrast, Schreiner describes another variety of plant: The Karoo bush, which is a tiny plant a few inches high that safeguards itself from drought by growing roots of enormous length stretching to a depth of thirty feet ... a pale-green tinted tissue down its centre, is all that indicates that it is still alive (1923). Perhaps these are the people who have the choice but cannot leave South Africa no matter how difficult and stunted their lives have become. They have made the decision that they are staying, have no regrets and are enormously proud of what South Africa has achieved in recent years as a Rainbow Nation and in many ways I envy and respect them. While there are still pockets of complaint and blame directed at the ANC government, I believe that the majority of the English-speakers want the country to succeed as a multi-racial society.

The English, says Sparks, brought the nineteenth century to 'the South Africa' the Boers had conquered, thrusting their "modern world on their ancient institutions" and "crushing the tribes in war, annexing their territory, and eroding their institutions with Christianization, education, and finally industrialization and urbanization" (1991:46). With the discovery of "the world's most fabulous deposits of diamonds and gold" an industrial revolution was launched (Sparks 1991: 46). The first big wave of settlers from Britain, who came in 1820 and landed at Algoa Bay were hoodwinked into leaving an England facing hard times; they thought they were coming to be farmers Sparks (1991) says but the land allocated to them was Nguni tribal land. The administration's intention was to plant them as a buffer to incursions by Ngunis, who were insisting on returning to their traditional lands, especially to the clay grounds utilised in ceremonies (1991). It is eye-opening to read this account of the arrival of the British settlers, a fact I remember so well, learned off-by-heart to regurgitate in history tests at school. Apparently, Sparks goes on to say, the British had no success as farmers in any case, as they originated from over-crowded cities in England without any farming experience (1991). Any experience they might have had would not have prepared them for a vastly different climate and terrain in any case. Instead, they set out to create an industrial economy "with a landless black peasantry that provided the captive labour force to service it" and that is the real story of their success Sparks says (1991:51). There were constant conflicts over land such as those recorded as Zulu Wars but it was the second war between the English and the Boers that I chose to focus on – the consequences of which would be tragic beyond anyone's imagination, given that many believe it was what led to the system of Apartheid.

## The Second Anglo-Boer War

The first Anglo-Boer war in 1881 had been short-lived but the second war raged from 1899 to 1902, ending with the defeat of the Boer Republics and the signing of the Peace of Vereeniging and seemingly the end of Afrikaner nationalism but the victory was an illusion (Sparks, 1991). The Afrikaner world may have been broken, but its mind and will were intact and most importantly, strengthened. Sparks argues that this strength was interwoven into what became a sacred history (1991). It was surprising to the British that it took as long and cost 22,000 lives to defeat the Republics in fact – the Orange Free State and the Transvaal that the Boers declared as separate from the British territories. The Boers were so strong in their nationalism and desire to "preserve the independence of these republics," for without land "there could be no Afrikaner *volk*, or nation, with its own culture and language and *eie* [own] identity" (Sparks 1991:127). Sparks believes that it was as they rode across the landscape that the Boers learned to not only love every feature, rocky outcrop and river but also to identify possible shelters should they be needed (1991). This was how they were able to withstand the onslaught of the British troops for even longer in the so-called South African war.

This war, led to a "lasting sense of Afrikaner grievance" and no one could fail to have some glimmer of understanding, given the actions of the British as regards the women and children (Sparks, 1991:128). It was a war fought against a people, not another country or army; one wore a uniform, the other their ordinary clothing; one was funded by the full might of Britain the others were what we would now call rebels or freedom-fighters who used their farmsteads as their base and to store their supplies. This led the man in charge of military action, Lord Kitchener to undertake his 'scorched-earth' policy: to retaliate against the strikes by the Boers, the farms had to be destroyed as they were providing the structure that supported and sustained the enemy. Thus they burned down the buildings, removed the livestock and when the families were left homeless, they 'magnanimously' created places to provide for them in what became known as concentration camps, the English term introduced to history by the British, although the concept had already been used in Spain and some sources say for the internment of the Cherokee people in America (Sparks, 1991). There seems to have been no consideration given to the question of who may have had a prior, or at least equal, claim to the land they were fighting over and Sparks describes the plight of the black population who suffered in the crossfire, some of whom were also incarcerated.

During the Boer War, the British garrison had established its headquarters in Krugersdorp and a blockhouse was built on the hill in the suburb of Monument to keep the town under surveillance. It is across the road from the primary school that my brother attended and stands there today surrounded by barbed wire built in solid yellow rock, with small openings presumably for spying or for weapons to protrude. Adjacent is a mobile phone tower to take advantage of this highpoint in the landscape, one

presumes: the juxtaposition is so incongruous that one can only shake one's head. The town also has great significance for the Boers as the site of the Paardekraal monument, in what was one of the breakaway colonies from the Cape Colony, the Transvaal. The Boers met at Krugersdorp to vow to fight for independence and each man placed a rock on a cairn, and this became the foundations of the monument. Its location is just down the road from St Ursula's convent, where I went for ten years of my schooling but is now surrounded by barbed wire and is inaccessible due to fears of desecration; the grounds and surroundings are neglected and overrun with weeds, a strange turn-around given its pride of place when we passed there each day on our way to school. Although commemorative events are still held at the monument, government coffers have no money available for upkeep of a monument that symbolises in many respects the horrors of nationalism and Apartheid. Krugersdorp was named after the Boer's leader, Paul Kruger, whose bust once graced the corner where the road turned into the school. I am struck by my total acceptance of these icons of history once upon a time, without any real understanding of what they represented. The present-day population want the name of the town to be changed to Mogale City, named for a local hero, who I had never heard of before, but it is not official as yet. Although place names can commemorate the sad and bitter times of the past, it is a loss when names are no longer recognised as the places of one's history, in conversations, on maps or in the media. It is an issue that relates to the shifting political geographies of identity as a result of the changes to post-colonial national boundaries which cut across prior modes of identification, as Bunnell discussed (2010). In South Africa changes in the government, led to language and cultural changes both in 1948 when the Afrikaans dominated National party came to power and more recently with the advent of majority black rule. What would Paul Kruger have thought?

Paul Kruger was one man who trembled at the moral outrages that came with the discovery of diamonds and gold, including the inflow of *uitlanders*, "who soon threatened to outnumber the Boers" (Sparks, 1991:124) and who was to play a defining role in history. His wife had borne him 16 children. He still believed that the earth was flat, and the 'old people' of the Great Trek were indeed the 'Elect of God' who had been "led out of bondage to the Transvaal", where the 'trekkers' created their homeland at a distance from the British at the Cape (Sparks, 1991:124). His faith was deeply rooted in the Old Testament as Sparks describes him – "an Abraham to his people" (1991:124). What he feared the most was that the British would arrive to dominate the society again with the power to quash the Boer Republics, the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and thus control the land where the minerals had been found (Sparks, 1991). His greatest fear came to pass.

## The Concentration Camps

Prior to taking a pilgrimage to our old home town, an online search on the Anglo-Boer war [1899-1902] revealed a startling discovery ("British Concentration Camps" n.d; "Hellkamp" n.d.). Krugersdorp,

situated west of Johannesburg on the gold reef, had been the site of one of the concentration camps established by the British during the second Boer War and there were graves of those who perished in the graveyard at Burgershoop, a suburb close to the town centre. I persuaded my brother to go with me to the cemetery and for the first time, we saw row upon row of small child-sized graves. We had lived most of our young lives in that town without knowing that a number of the 16,000 children and 4,000 adults, who are approximated to have died in the camps, had been incarcerated in Krugersdorp. The location of the concentration camp, gleaned from photographs online showed row upon row of canvas tents, and was where the hospital was subsequently built and my daughter was born, stretching down to the lowland where Coronation Park was located. We often went for picnics in that park after school, and it was where my father taught my mother to drive on its network of narrow, sealed roadways. How ironic too that when I visited in 2010, it was home to a group of 'White' squatters. They were living in makeshift, corrugated-iron shanties, caravans and tents, congregated around a toilet block, having lost their homes presumably through financial hardship, they had nowhere else to go although there has been talk of forcibly relocating them to one of Krugersdorp's previously black townships, where ironically they will join the ranks of the previously marginalised whom they may have discriminated against in the past. The township, Munzieville, was the birthplace of influential Anglican Archbishop, Desmond Tutu, who is now retired. As we had an Anglican bishop in the family, there was some contact with him over the years. There is a huge backlog on housing, especially for Whites, who obviously are low on the list of priorities, and with state income-support minimal, their only means of survival is begging or as we noted, fishing in the nearby dam. Many could be the descendants of the self-same people who were held in the concentration camps, those who were lucky to survive.

In my research on the concentration camps, I came across a list of names of people who had been interred and discovered 61 by the name of Theunissen, my family name ("Boer Wars", n.d). It was difficult then not to see this history as my history, too, with all the contradicting emotions and loyalties provoked: we were English, we were Dutch/Flemish, we were Irish/Australian, we were Scots – on which side had my forebears stood, and how was I to come to terms with the brutality on all sides of our history in South Africa? In terms of the concentration camps, it was a book by a woman, Emily Hobhouse (1902) that proved most informative from the women's point of view. She was simply a woman living in England who was moved to take action to support the women and children who were incarcerated even although they were on the enemy's side.

Emily Hobhouse's book: *The Brunt of the War and where it Fell* (1902) is a valuable history that I purchased as a one-off reprint. In this book she presented the case against the British in terms of the articles of The Hague Convention that pertain to the treatment of civilians and their property during war, all of which the British flouted. Hobhouse was accused of slandering the British troops but maintained that she had a responsibility to the weak and the young who were incarcerated. She said that "The death

of the Boer children will not have been in vain if their blood shall prove to be the seed of ... a ripened determination amongst the kingdoms of the world to settle differences by methods worthy of civilised men" but she would have been disappointed were she to have witnessed the wars that have followed (1902: xvi). Unfortunately she only paid attention to the White Boers who were incarcerated and not the Black people and there is little data available on that score, in fact online, one website states that as many as 14,000 Blacks may also have died as a result of incarceration.

Lord Roberts, who commanded the British troops, consistently maintained that they were only responding to the aggressive acts of the Boers such as their invasion of British territory in Natal, where unsubstantiated claims were made that they took cattle and confiscated homes. Boers who swore an oath to "abstain from further participation in the war" (Hobhouse, 1902: 9) were given passes to allow them to return to their homes but these were not honoured in many cases. If the Burgher (meaning the male member of the family) would not swear, then the women and children suffered the consequences as well; in addition, they were punished if they did not report the presence of "the other upon their farms" (Hobhouse, 1902: 9); neutrality was not an option. If the male head of the household was absent, it was assumed that he had joined the commandos and the home was pillaged and then dynamited or burned. If a railway line was damaged, all farms within a ten-mile radius were destroyed in retaliation. In the end, it did not matter whether there was a reason or not, the residents were assumed to be culpable and the homes burned. In one Public Notice posted in my home town, Krugersdorp, on 9 July, 1900, it states that "unless the men at present on commando ...in the town and district of Krugersdorp surrender themselves and hand in their arms ... the whole of their property will be confiscated and their families turned out destitute and homeless" (1902: 15). Hobhouse states that this proclamation was what led to the Krugersdorp camp as well as the total devastation of the district. She quotes General Smuts, who in one report said "Let me take as an example that part of the Krugersdorp district situated between the Magalies and Witwaters mountains; one of the most beautiful, most fertile, and best cultivated parts of South Africa ...the land was green with an uninterrupted series of cultivated fields, gardens and charming houses and farmsteads ... it is now a withered, barren waste" (cited in 1902: 21). One man writing home compares their actions to the "old-time forages in the Highlands of Scotland two centuries ago ... we moved on from valley to valley, 'lifting' cattle and sheep, burning, looting and turning out women and children to sit and cry beside the ruins of their once beautiful farmsteads (1902:41). Another described their actions as "exciting, very unpleasant work" (1902:19).

Hobhouse was given permission on her first arrival in South Africa to visit all the camps by Lord Milner, the High Commissioner at the Cape, but Lord Kitchener who was in charge of military action, restricted her to the camp in Bloemfontein. She found that the people lacked the basic necessities of life and her plan to alleviate their suffering with small luxuries was futile. Pressures on sanitation were increased as the numbers in the camps swelled and any attempt by the local community to show

empathy to the women, children or the elderly was suspect. Her views of the camps stand in strong contrast to that of Mr. Conan Doyle, whom she said wrote "in the fairyland of his fertile imagination" that 'no money was spared' and 'every child under six had a bottle of milk a day' (1902:121). There were not even mattresses on the bare ground within the tents, and despite Hobhouse offering to pay for (with funds raised in England) and procure such basic amenities, she was refused. Her task was made all the more difficult because she was to show no "personal sympathy" towards the women and children although she argued that "she had come amongst them as a woman to women, and talked to them on no other ground" (1902:124). There were 63,000 that needed to be housed and fed and there was no way this could be adequately achieved given that it was the military that needed first and foremost, to be resourced. Mr. Brodrick reported to the House in Britain that the "people came to the camps for protection... and might go" if they so pleased (cited in 1902:124), but Emily Hobhouse wrote to him to outline the true state of affairs. In the end she was denied the opportunity of returning to South Africa, but was in receipt of many letters from the women.

Thus, it was the Boer War that many believe firmly instilled in the Afrikaners the love of the land and desire to hold onto their power and control no matter what. Ann Harries (2005) in the introduction to her fictionalised story of the Boer War, *No Place for a Lady,* agreed when she said "it became apparent to me that the racist system of Apartheid... was to a large extent founded on the outcomes of the Anglo-Boer War" (2005: v). Some in South Africa continue to stand firm on their original nationalism. Recently there has been concern, even at ANC government levels, that a newly released song would stir up old sentiments and rebellion. The folk song about a Boer General, Koos de la Rey, is entitled: *De La Rey* was first written and sung by Bok van Blerk in 2007. My brother, who was keen for me to include the song in my thesis (at the end of this chapter) told of being in a bar on the West Rand when it was sung by a large group holding hands in a circle, so stirring that he wished for a moment that he too, was Afrikaans and could join in wholeheartedly. I heard it sung by chance when we were at a shopping centre, performed by a young boy at a talent contest. De la Rey represents the proud and patriotic man, who came home to find his home and family gone, having perished in a concentration camp. One cannot help but be stirred by the sentiments expressed and feel intense regret at the reprehensible behaviour of the British during the Boer War. The words of the song are translated and then amended by various visitors to one website, but it is still beautiful in its poignancy if rough in its English translation.

The words of the song keep the memory of the war alive and are a link to the past: when the Nationalists ruled the country with an iron fist. One wonders if these people will remain rooted in the past rather than embracing the new South Africa as so many have done. There is a museum dedicated to the memory of the sacrifice of the Boers (Oorlogsmuseum van die Boererepubliek) in Bloemfontein in the Free State. Nico Moolman (2010) wrote a book about Die Groot Kwilt (the big quilt) and the work of his wife, Naomi Moolman and other women, which hangs in the Women's Monument at the War Museum.

The quilt is made with symbolic windows through which to view the experience of the women and children in the Anglo-Boer war, who are always the victims of war. It incorporated photographs printed on fabric, old doilies and babies' clothes, and hung as a backdrop in the museum for historical symbols of home such as teapots and biscuit tins. It so closely aligned with my own fabric art incorporating elements of women's history that I felt an immediate sympathy with their endeavours to keep their story alive. I found the book at a tourist shop at the Vaal River where we went on a day-trip in a spirit of nostalgia together with my sister, her family out from England, and my brother. The Vaal has a namesake in The Netherlands, and is a similar in colour to the Yarra River in Melbourne. It holds a fond place in our memory as it was where my father taught as all to swim and as I discussed previously was where we spent many holidays at 'the shack'. When I reach for the book about the quilt now in faraway Australia, it holds the emotions and memories of that day, as objects can do. The war that was most significant in my life growing up in South Africa, however, was the Second World War which had had a profound impact on my entire family, as I have described previously. It was frequently the topic of conversation and infused the household with an attitude of 'waste-not-want-not' which continues to be a maxim that I live by.

## Wars in Europe

This short history cannot ignore world events that impacted on South Africa, the two most significant was the First World War in 1914 and the Second World War that ended in 1945, the year my sister was born. My paternal grandfather served in both wars: in the First World War he was sent to France in the infantry, where he was the victim of gassing at Delville Wood in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. He spent many months in hospital and had several ribs removed to drain his lungs, which resulted in ongoing health issues after his discharge. Despite this, he signed up for the Second World War and flew as an aerial photographer. My father also served in the Second World War for the Allied Forces, having changed his birth date from 17 to 18 years old on his birth certificate to enable him to enlist. After his training he was stationed in Cairo as a navigator in the South African Air Force. As I have stated previously, in the space of the four years of war, my mother had lost both her brother, Thomas, called Sonny, who was also in the Air Force and her first husband, Roger, and had married my father towards the end of conflict and become pregnant with my sister. Sonny was killed at only 23 years of age when his parachute did not open and he is buried at Alamein in North Africa. Roger was taken prisoner in Italy and died in Salerno Hospital. An odd coincidence was that after my parents were married and my father was up North, he saw a photograph of Sonny in a photographer's display window after Sonny's death—the photographer probably not aware of the fate of the person in his photo display. My father 'luckily' he says, broke his leg in an accident with an armed vehicle on a runway, as it kept him out of direct combat when he was hospitalised for many months although he nearly lost his leg to gangrene. He flew in various sorties in North Africa but given the war was nearing its end, was mostly involved in the repatriation of

troops, flying soldiers back home from various locations in Europe. My sister was 6 months old before she met our father.

Once again there was a particular manifestation amongst many South Africans with the outbreak of both World Wars and as a result of the Boer War, who were obviously hard pressed to join the Allies and fight alongside their foes: the British. Some were interned in camps as possible traitors for the sake of national security. Many of those who were to become leaders in the Nationalist government after the war had at one time been interned as Nazi sympathisers. Sparks says that as countries such as Norway, Holland, France and Belgium capitulated to Hitler, "a wave of excitement swept Afrikanerdom at the prospect of the early overthrow of Britain... out of which Afrikaner Nationalism might be able to negotiate with the victorious Germans to take over the country and establish a Christian National republic" in South Africa (1991: 172). The Afrikaners and Nazis had some principles in common, Sparks says that it included an anti-Jewish extremism, that I was not aware of and with organisations such as the Ossewa-Brandwag (the Ox-wagon Sentinels) he asserts the Afrikaners achieved "massive grass roots support," and with their secret arm, the Broederbond (Brotherhood) were the real authors of Apartheid" (1991: 177). The Borderbond was openly pro-Nazi and similar to the more recently formed extremist group that have a three-pronged emblem resembling the swastika and also use the Nazi salute. As the war drew to an end, the United Party that held government in South Africa, led by Prime Minister Jan Smuts, as previously discussed, who had held the rank of general in the Boer War and at the end of World War II was seen as an important figure abroad, was unexpectedly ousted when the majority of White voters apparently felt that he was too concerned with external politics rather than the situation in South Africa (I remember this as the opinion of my mother who was his staunch supporter). This change was the beginning of the end for South Africa in the view of my parents and no doubt they were right. Had Smuts and his party remained in power, the country may have moved gradually towards integration and equal rights for all population groups, rather than the artificially imposed system that eventuated, which attempted to separate people into Bantustans: homelands established for each tribal group but with no rights in the cities and towns where the majority in fact, lived. As Sparks says "until World War II the kind of pragmatic segregation that was practiced in South Africa was scarcely out of tune with racial practices throughout the Western world ... in the age of imperialism and the assumption of white racial superiority … thus granted its right to dominate the rest of mankind" (1991:184).

Sparks (1991) maintains that most historians would agree that another of those great watersheds in human history was when the great Imperial powers of the West withdrew their hegemony in continents such as Africa and Asia. The consequences were that nearly a hundred new nations came into existence in the space of a single generation, replacing a paternalistic dominion over people with a new concept of "equality and dignity of man" (1991: 184). The changing of the guard throughout Africa slowly moved south. In the end, South Africa would be the sole nation with a White minority

government. With conflicts raging in surrounding territories: Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique, the vulnerability of South Africa's situation led to a heightened state of insecurity.

The Nationalist government presented this as a war against communism/terrorism, as troops were stationed on the border and supplied weapons to Anglo and Mozambique to fight against rebels but the real war was against its own population and even its children. There was probably never a time when the imperialist Europeans who annexed various territories were not in a state of alert and fear, regarding the African inhabitants of Southern Africa or that they themselves were not jostling for land and advantage and fighting against each other. With the perceived threat of communism, the police and armed forces believed they were in a war against the incursion of overseas trained terrorists, which was true in some respects given that the ANC (who are in power now) went to the Soviet Union for training. Those believed to be involved in subversive activities were kept under surveillance and the police, usually the Special Branch, would swoop in the early hours of the morning to arrest suspected collaborators or perpetrators. The fight against communism was relevant in the context of the world situation, and many countries outside of South Africa were involved in similar wars against terrorism, as indeed they continue to be, only that the enemy has changed names. But the methods that the Nationalist government condoned cannot be justified, just as the torture of prisoners, in the name of defeating terrorism, in recent times cannot be justified. After the revelations of those who testified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) we know now that 'arrest' was a euphemism for the most appalling torture and often murder but if there is one thing that South Africans can feel proud of however, it is the process of the TRC.

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

I was no longer living in South Africa when the process of TRC hearings initiated by Mandela took place. In many respects I feel that I simply ran away from the situation in 1980, when we immigrated to Australia. Although the TRC certainly helped some resident South Africans come to terms with the past, without knowing the details, I held a rather naive belief that the TRC had worked as an all-healing balm and that people on all sides of the divide had come together in the spirit of reconciliation to bare all and put the past behind them. It was only on reading the book by Antjie Krog, *Country of my Skull* (1998; 2000), that I confronted the reality. It had not been a cure-all, of course, because many had not sought amnesty, and conflict arose during the hearings that were not resolved, says Krog. A well-known Afrikaans poet in South Africa, she was a reporter for the South African Broadcasting Corporation during the TRC hearings. Her Afrikaans background and family roots presented a challenge when she became fully aware that the names of the white perpetrators were all Afrikaners, as is her surname, she says. Those who did not seek amnesty were on both sides of the divide, including members of the ANC, and the majority of Afrikaners would never let go of their perceived God-given mandate to rule in South

Africa, as they believed was revealed in the Bible. Although I remember accounts of the horrific acts performed by some of the ANC Youth League members, such as 'necklacing,' when so-called informants were burned alive with a petrol-filled tyre around their necks, many perpetrators have never been called to account for their actions and some hold a seat in the present government.

The book by Krog and the accounts of torture and brutality during the years before the release of Nelson Mandela is something I had avoided up until this moment. Tony Morrison spoke of "Re-memory (as) an inscription of a body or event in time in place, which is touched, accessed, or mediated through sensory stimuli. A scent, sound or sight can metonymically transport you to a place where you have never been, but which is recalled through the inscription left in the imagination, lodged there by others' narratives" ... " you can bump into the "oppressive experience of slavery and lost narratives"... "re-memory mediates between now and the past as a resource" (in *Beloved,* cited in Tolia-Kelly, 2010: 88-89). From my perspective, while visiting the site of the graves of those who died in the concentration camps in Krugersdorp was to re-member a lost narrative, reading Krog's book was to force myself to have these memories. My attempt, however, to read the book on the nearby magnificent Cape Paterson beach where I now live, when I picked it up at home accidently, intending rather to take the historical/fictional account of the Boer War I was also reading, resulted in me packing up in tears and leaving without swimming. The contrast of that glorious landscape, of my relatively carefree life, with what I was reading was overwhelming – how could I read about torture while in such idyllic surroundings? In a strange twist, however, in my recent reading of the history of Cape Paterson, a massacre took place there that resulted in the first hangings of two Aboriginal men in 1841 in Melbourne. It was alleged that a group of five Aboriginal people, one of whom was Tasmanian woman, Truganini were seen in the area where two whalers were murdered. Two of the men nicknamed Bob and Jack were hanged for the crime while Truganini was sent back to Van Diemen's Land (Chambers, n.d.).

In the chapter entitled "They never wept, the men of my race", Krog discusses the committee meetings when the first drafts of the legislation to establish a TRC were heard, in contradiction with an evening spent back on the farm with her family (2000). Krog faces the reality of their lives when her brothers respond to a cattle-rustle during the night. Anyone of them could have been shot. When eventually a voice is heard on the two-way radio calling for an ambulance, they dread the worst has occurred, but no one was fatally injured, fortunately. Since 1994, there have been no consequences for cattle thieving and farmers take the law into their own hands, her brothers tell her, or they lay charges and see the accused walking home after the case is heard, out on bail. He explains what they steal: "the value of my life... the value of my farm, the value of my future plans, (and) the value of my peace of mind..." (2000:16). Krog reminds him that "it was always like that for millions of black people," from the time of the first White settlement at the Cape: the brutalisation of ordinary people for whom stealing from whites was a means of contesting power (2000:18).

In the draft legislation meeting, held prior to the commission, there were members from groups who had probably never been in the same room together before. The women from the Black Sash, who I remember stood silently on the sidewalk in the city streets with a sash worn like Miss World, but theirs signified death, a reminder to everyone who walked by of those who had either died or disappeared as a result of their political views. Mary Burton a member of the Black Sash concluded their submission to the TRC as they had always concluded their meetings, with a reading of the names of all those who had died in custody. Others groups Krog describes such as the Ystergarde, the elite corp of the new far-right Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB), appeared wearing black balaclavas, rolled back like caps but ready to be pulled down to hide their identity. The slightly more moderate Eugene Terre'Blanche (murdered in 2010) appeared in military khaki, his collar threadbare. His group bemoans the murder of their hero Hendrik Verwoerd under whose watch F.W. De Klerk's move towards democracy would never have occurred (Krog, 2000). It must have been incredible to witness all these arch-enemies in the room together during the preliminary planning for the TRC.

A previous Truth Commission was conducted in Chile (there have been 17 in the world previously but none other included politicians according to one website ("Truth and Reconciliation Commissions" n.d.) and a representative from that country, José Zalaquett, Chilean philosopher and human rights activist tells the meeting why one chooses truth when asked to decide between truth and justice, "truth does not bring back the dead but releases them from silence," he says (cited in Krog, 2000:32). Not only those with Afrikaans names are culpable, however, as one Afrikaner journalist pointed out – English business leaders would approach the Nationalist government with a blank cheque asking that their interests be protected no matter what. Eventually, the composition of the commission was arrived at with each group represented; and the first hearings got under way. Krog relates the weeks of "account after account ... the web of infinite sorrow woven around them... a wide, barren, disconsolate landscape where the horizon keeps dropping away" (2000:45). International journalists are confused at the lack of objectivity when the local 'journo's' are so often in tears, she says (2000). Some, such as murdered activist, Steve Biko's family, tried to stop the TRC, they want justice not reconciliation. The first hearing took place ironically in his birthplace, the Eastern Cape, also originally home to Nelson and Winnie Mandela. Krog relates the place to the resistance it fathered: "It has to be this part of the country that turns us inside out ... this region of fierce opposites—meadows and plains, waterfalls and dongas, ferns and aloes—that spark from a speechless darkness the voices of the past" (Krog, 2000:48). Krog vows that "no poetry should come forth from this" (2000:66) but her writing is often poetry.

In speaking of Winnie Mandela, her fall from grace was a source of enormous grief for the nation and, indeed, many in the broader world who had championed her during the years that Nelson Mandela was imprisoned. She was the mother to black women all over the world, says Krog, and her hearing at the TRC was eagerly awaited. We all wanted it not to be true, it was unthinkable that she had witnessed the

beating of a young boy, Stompie Seipei, a member of her Mandela United Football Club, to such an extent that he had been murdered to hide the evidence, or that her club orchestrated the disappearance of others. This strong, intelligent woman, who not only held the candle while Nelson Mandela was imprisoned, but was also her own person as she stood up to authority, not kowtowing to the restrictions placed on her by the Nationalist government. Did she also succumb to the brutalising to become a brute too? In the chapter devoted to her testimony: "Mother Faces the Nation" Krog outlines just how big a news story it was with over 200 journalists from around the world flown in to hear what she had to say. The question was, as Krog explains, which archetypal image she fit: black and beautiful or black and evil? (2000). One witness after another revealed that she scared and intimidated people but no one implicated her directly in the murder, and it became clear in Krog's opinion that "those who didn't have the courage to stand up to her in the past still don't have it today," (2000:330).

One witness described the situation in mid-1985 when thousands of destabilised and leaderless youth as soldiers of the struggle became gangs meting out their own version of justice and Mrs Mandela created her own vigilante gang out of what was meant to be a positive approach to the 'youth problem' (Krog,2000). Winnie Mandela denied every allegation of human rights abuses against her, insisting that "we fought a just war" (cited in Krog, 2000: 337). Desmond Tutu attempted to break through by asking her to admit that "things did go horribly wrong" and at last she did so; Tutu had "latched on to her operative principle of honour ... and moral accountability" (Krog, 2000:340). In her book, *July's People* (1981:frontispiece) Nadine Gordimer cited Antonio Gramsci who, in his *Prison Notebooks,* said "The old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms", and the case of Winne Madikizela-Mandela I would assert, exists in one such interregnum.

The reconciliation process during the TRC hearings and those attending were subjected to abuse in the different towns and communities where they were took place. Eventually after three years, the five-volume report was completed and handed to President Mandela by Archbishop Tutu—Krog describes them as 'our president' and 'his prophet' – "the two moral giants of our country" (2000:367). The two helped to lead the country to reconciliation that is the essence of its survival and ability to move forward. Krog said that

> reconciliation still resounds in the land. It carries within it the full variety of survival strategies: choice, flight, amnesia, rituals, clemency, debate, negotiation, and so on... the goal is not to avoid pain or reality, but to deal with the never-ending quest for self definition and negotiation required to transform differences into assets (2000:386).

With these words Krog provided me with a pathway to go forward, too as a citizen of the world perhaps as trite as it sounds. It was at a conference that I attended while in South Africa in 2010, that I had the opportunity to observe more recent developments regarding trans-culturalism and trans-nationalism.

## Recent History

Both trans-culturalism and trans-nationalism were evident at the conference that I attended at Monash South Africa given that the majority of students who attend the University are from other countries in Africa and not South Africa and travel back to their home countries in semester breaks but maintain their national/cultural group on the whole while at the University. The fees are too high for most Black South Africans and there are only a small minority of White students who attend. Those from other countries in Africa represent their elite: the possible business leaders and trans-national/cultural professionals and decision-makers of the future in their home countries but the advantage for both countries would most likely be to have established ties in South Africa.

A desire to belong to a defined group that relates to a defined place might be an aspect of our evolution that homogeneity and assimilation seeks to undo. At the conference that I was sponsored to attend in 2010[3], one speaker spoke of racism as naturalised in South African bodies. Categories of separation that were legislated under Apartheid now continue voluntarily as a mechanism to feel connected to a group in South Africa: Coloured, Chinese, Indian, but also to tribal groupings such as Twana or Zulu or Xhosa – there are eleven official languages in South Africa now. Crain Soudien from the University of Cape Town noted that people ask each other: What are you?

A student from Kenya spoke of the phenomenon of 'going away to stay home' when students only mix with students from their home country and language. Another spoke of becoming a 'better student stranger' and he recognised a need to 'adapt to the land' as well as 'curiosity and empathy' as building blocks to that end. Professor llana Snyder from Monash University in Australia discussed the form that border crossings takes which she expressed as "code-mixing to mesh" – a mixing of language and culture from several countries to get by. There are sites of collective identity within the university, however, that was expressed most aptly when one group of students took a stand by walking out of a presentation by a different language/tribal group at the conference. It is the operation of what Bunnell calls containers of political identity outside of countries as individual and collective identities are emplaced and renewed – a process that is described in his research, which studied the lives of a group of retired Malayan sailors living in Liverpool in the UK (2010). On the other hand, place relationships or identities are not fixed when unbounded transnational linkages mean that identity is fluid and mobile depending on where they were located at the time as Bunnell also describes (2007) and I noted while travelling with my South African sister – the answer to the question – "Where are you from?" when I am in Australia, is "South Africa" but when I was overseas, I answered "Australia".

[3] Organised by Monash University's Institute for the study of Global Movements and Monash South Africa and held at the campus in South Africa, entitled: *A Home Away from Home*? *International Students in Australian and South African Higher Education*, 2010.

In private conversations that I had with some students at Monash South Africa, they spoke of the discrimination they suffer as outsiders when shopkeepers refuse to serve them because they are recognised as being from other countries in Africa and perhaps are perceived of as competition for scarce resources and employment. I was struck by the irony of the discussion at the conference that concerned attacks against Indian students in Australia (a hot issue here at the time) that were perceived as racist and the dangers that these students faced on a daily basis living in South Africa.

To hear speak of the type of brutal murders that have occurred to people in South Africa even in recent years, one can only think that Sparks was right. It was during the crisis of the 80s that he says he wrote about the possibility of

> a Khmer Rouge generation emerging, a generation of black youth so brutalized and desensitized by its violent encounter with white South Africa's repressive forces that it would lose all sense of life's value, a generation grown up in the institutionalised violence of Apartheid and the endemic violence of the ghetto... (1991:267).

My family have had friends murdered in their homes when there was no other motive but revenge-style killing. In one incident a friend of my father's was shot in the head, in front of her husband after the house was burgled and the robbers were preparing to leave, just so that he would have to watch it would seem, considering that both of them had been eye witnesses and could have identified them, not even a realistic concern considering that few such crimes are even investigated, much less solved. My father and his partner have been the victims of home invasion on two occasions, experiences that have left them embittered with no wish to participate in the new Rainbow Nation in any form. When violence is random and the motivation of the perpetrators seemingly cold-blooded murder or plain-and-simple undirected revenge, people live in a state of constant vigilance. Many people have lived their lives in South Africa, just as any other white person did in Australia or America, paid those who worked for them what was considered to be a fair wage and continue to assist those less fortunate whenever they can, yet face the threat of brutal assault on a daily basis. Violence is non-discriminatory and begets more violence or simply passive-aggression that does little to further the goals of reconciliation or to find solutions to insurmountable problems. There is also the threat of more radical and what could be disastrous change when the steadying influence of Nelson Mandela goes. Politicians such as Julius Malema are preaching the policies and land-grab of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and the current president, Zuma, has his corruption reported on daily in the press. The future continues to be uncertain.

Sparks had a dream for the next millennium that "South Africa will cease to be a world symbol of racism and division and become a symbol instead of national reconciliation and racial harmony" (1991:404) and his dream in some ways has become reality, although as an outsider, to me it feels contrived and self-conscious. Clingman cites Gordimer who said, "the white African exists ... (but) finding

our way there out of the perceptual clutter of curled photographs of master and servant relationships, the 78 RPMs of history repeating the conditioning of the past" is fraught with difficulties (in Clingman, 1988:270). One hears people attempting to speak to each other as equals, even when the relationship is not an equal one. White women are overly nice to their black helpers, as they are now termed, no longer the 'maid,' the 'girl' or the 'boy,' who may call the 'madam' or 'master' by their first name. They are better paid and have all the rights now of an employee, including wrongful dismissal, but their economic and social status is little altered. They often continue to live in one room in the back garden, in an overcrowded, dangerous township or squatter camp, or more recently, in a city high-rise squat, travelling on overcrowded and dangerous public transport while the employers live in the huge house in the leafy suburb and have several cars. One group of women who have benefitted from the change of government forms an emerging black middle class. As companies must employ a percentage of those who were most discriminated against previously, many educated young black women can name their price in terms of salary, but this is not the reality for the older and uneducated.

## Conclusion

My reading of the history of South Africa now has helped to better conceptualise a whole picture when school lessons were either remembered as unrelated snapshots or were taught that way or I had no real interest in gaining a deeper understanding. Much of my migrant life has been to stand accused of racism, prior to the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and majority rule in 1994, conveniently carrying the racist burden for the rest of world. I had come from a pariah nation that allowed people in countries where we have lived such as the USA, Canada and Australia to point the finger at South Africa while deflecting the focus from circumstances in their own backyard. To some extent I had refused the label based on my belief that the responsibility for Apartheid lay at the door of the Afrikaners. I needed to unpack this abdication and dig a little deeper in terms of my own complicity as an English-speaking South African.

The reality is that South Africa exists in my imagination as a fantasy; it is not a place where I could very easily live. By going back, I realised yet again a double loss— first, in having left and then in the loss of my return, the hope for utopia. I must now face the truth, that I could return but I would be going to a new place, not returning to the old. I told my sister that I could not go back because I needed my freedom and she repeated the word 'freedom' back to me and I was forced to explain what I meant by it. Was I saying what Gordimer (in Clingman, 1988) had said? I needed to hold on to my privilege now outside of South Africa just as I had done as a White person there. But what right did I have to do so? They were reaping the consequences of the life we had all benefitted from; when we migrated like a privileged criminal class we had taken money, education and skills wrenched from those who received only the crumbs we allowed them to have, to benefit ourselves and now other countries and societies.

But what it came down to when I tried to explain was one word: fear. I was too scared to live there, I said, but added in my own defence that at least I was no longer using scarce resources either, someone else could have the house, the job, the health care, the education that I and my children had received in Australia instead.

As I sat in my sister's lounge room with a woman from Zimbabwe, who had brought some of her sewn and embroidered handiwork to sell to us, I was struck by the realisation that something had changed. In previous times, we would have been negotiating the prices at the backdoor: the servant's entrance. I was impressed by her craft, the ingenuity and daily struggle that it represented in comparison with my work that is simply an expression of my personal journey while hers is a livelihood as she supports more than twelve family members back in her home country. But I also felt uncomfortable when I realised that nothing had changed: the way we continue to live in comparison with the majority of the Black population and I wondered how she felt but I dared not ask her.

**This chapter is dedicated to my brother, Graeme, who patiently drove me to our old landmarks, as well as to Monash South Africa on a number of occasions, and with whom I travelled to the Cape, and who died on the 17th June, 2011, at the age of only 57. I am so grateful that we had such wonderful adventures together during the three months of my fieldwork in South Africa given all the years we had lived on different continents. Graeme wanted me to include the words to the song De La Rey that follow, which when sung in bars by groups of Afrikaners, their arms linked together, he found so evocative of belonging and White nationalism that momentarily he wished that he was a member of their group as well, he said.**

## Lyrics to the song*:* De La Rey

### Afrikaans

Op 'n berg in die nag
Lê ons in die donker en wag.
In die modder en bloed lê ek koud
Streepsak en reën kleef teen my.

En my huis en my plaas tot kole verbrand sodat hulle ons kan vang,
Maar daai vlamme en vuur brand nou diep, diep binne my.
*Chorus*
*De La Rey, De La Rey sal jy die Boere kom lei?*
*De La Rey, De La Rey*
*Generaal, generaal soos een man, sal ons om jou val.*
*Generaal De La Rey*

Oor die khakies wat lag
'N handjie van ons teen 'n hele groot mag
En die kranse lê hier teen ons rug
Hulle dink dis verby.

Maar die hart van 'n Boer lê dieper en wyer, hulle gaan dit nog sien
Op 'n perd kom hy aan, die Leeu van die Wes Transvaal
*Chorus*
Want my vrou en my kind lê in 'n kamp en vergaan

En die khakies se murg loop oor 'n nasie wat weer op sal staan

### English

On a mountain in the night
We lie in the darkness and wait
In the mud and blood, cold.
Grain bag and rain stick to me.

And my house and my place are burned to coals so that they can catch us,
But the flames and fire burn deep, deep inside of me.

*Chorus*
*De La Rey, can you come lead the Boers?*
*De La Rey, De La Rey*
*General, general like a man, we shall fall with you*
*General De La Rey*

Hear the British laugh
At a handful of us, against their whole great army
Our backs are up against these cliffs
They think it's over.

But the heart of a Boer is deeper and wider, they can still see it
On a horse he comes, the lion from West-Transvaal

*Chorus*
Because my wife and my child are in a [concentration] camp, rotting
And the British marrow runs over a nation that shall rise again
("De la Rey Lyrics" 2007).

## Fabric-ating Place Story In South Africa

A skirt I made of African fabric in 1988 now includes new fabric purchased at Paternoster in the Cape to include what represents the blue waters of the beautiful Cape coast with the land especially Table Mountain and the Cederberg represented by the brown panels. The pockets are those of the Colonials holding the coins- embroideries by unknown hands purchased at Kalk Bay, Cape. [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2012]

## Photo Journal: South Africa

Our family home in Krugersdorp [Photo: H.H. Theunissen, 1965]

On a recent visit to Krugersdorp, we saw our old home with an updated look

[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Desmond Thomas, 40, (right) lights a cigarette beside the charred remains of his caravan that burned down the previous night after a candle set it on fire at a squatter camp for poor white South Africans in Krugersdorp on March 7, 2010.
[Photo: REUTERS/Finbarr O'Reilly]

The Blockhouse built by the British to overlook the town of Krugersdorp during the Anglo-Boer War and the adjacent communications aerial for the current era
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2012]

The well-tended graves in the Burgershoop Cemetery, Krugersdorp of the women and children who died in the Concentration Camp, during the second Anglo-Boer war [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2012]

Blesbok at Kloofzicht where Monash University Conference participants stayed
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

# Photo Journal: Cape

The fishing village of Paternoster, Western Cape [Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010]

Fishermen at Paternoster, captured with my telephoto lens [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Farmstay in the Cederberg – our cottage named “Immi” – coincidentally the name my grand-daughter has given me [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

The view at Kommetjie from my niece and her partner’s home to the rear of Table Mountain [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

The view from the cable car station and looking down to Lion's Head and the foothills of Table Mountain [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

The view of Table Mountain from Robben Island [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2012]

## Family Photo Album

Faith, Graeme and Lorraine Theunissen circa 1958

Extended family circa 1953

From left, Auntie Molly (mother's sister), Winnie – paternal grandmother; Uncle Brian (father's elder brother); my father holding my brother; Uncle John (husband of father's sister Gwen sitting in front of him with Linda on her lap). From left second row: Tess – maternal grandmother; Auntie Norah with Bruce on her lap; my beautiful mother with me at her knee. From left in third row: Cousin David (son of Gwen and John); my sister Lorraine; Cousin Valerie at her mother's knee and Cousin Michael (son of Molly)
[Photo: Grandfather, A.J. Theunissen, 1953]

# Chapter 5

# Implications and Findings

Stories from the Silence: narrative poem printed on fabric, collage and embroidered artwork
[Photo & Artwork, Dent, 2007]

Needlework
a travelling man's
comfort this autumn night
[*Issa's haiku* translated by Gollub, 1998]

## Introduction

In this thesis I have been interested in displacement as a feature of post-modernist society, apart from what may ensue from migration/exile, which disrupts personal identity and the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual connections to landscape and place-story but has also had impacts on the environment. In this study place-story was fabricated/fabric-ated with the dual meaning of fabrication:

made up and made into, interwoven into field texts and artwork informed by archival retrieval and historical record at personal heritage sites. The practice was kept open and is organic in its application and interpretation in a post-qualitative approach in the field of Place Studies with aspects of phenomenology. In my introduction I prefaced my research as post-qualitative (Lather, 2013) an indication that what can be drawn in the findings, are implications rather than results, as is often the case with research in the social sciences. It is an indication too of the contingent and partial nature of a self-creating identity practice as a work-in-progress. As I recognised that the processes are experimental, the researcher was the one to be researched with my interest in enunciating and testing an approach and methodology with myself as subject.

In what I have termed an *embodied-kinaesthetic* methodology to engender place story, in landscape/place experience, the methods included: embodied knowing, visual knowing and textual/oral knowing and in combination were empowering. I owned the practices: they were in my control as I gained new knowledge and understandings. I brought together the basic tenets and stereotypes of nation to deconstruct nationality and identity, home, place and belonging in an attempt to reconstruct a self-creating identity. The primary sources were personal experience with secondary material in literature, formal recorded historical and archival information and uncovering the exclusions in personal family history in my cultural inheritance and identity. I took a snapshot of recorded history in the different places where my heritage lies, and make no claim as to its veracity or lack of bias in my interpretation. The style I adopted was very much like that of letter writing. Birkeland speaks of the genre of letter writing as a familiar genre for women travellers of her generation, in reference to Mary Wollstonecraft who had the freedom thus "to switch back and forth between narrative, anecdote, social commitment and personal reverie" (2005:117) as I did. Prior to the era of Skype , SMS or the quick email, migrants wrote long letters to those left behind in a home country over many years as was my experience and is most likely a style into which I slip quite easily.

The imprints and inscribed learning that I brought to the experience of travelling included memories of my childhood and early adulthood as well as previous visits to South Africa and Scotland; visits to The Netherlands, and to new places such as in England and Ireland, but I had the sense that my travel had a different intention than had been the case on prior journeys. I was travelling as a researcher gathering data as I collected material and analysed information for the purposes of my research. I had the intention to have that experience. I moved and worked artistically to express the emotions that arose adding my story to the stories that were already in the landscape like the strata in rock – shaping what was biographical to autobiographical, creating personal place-stories and collective family memories. The process is what I have termed imprinting by fabricating a new story to embed my embodied experience on another level of learning and knowledge acquisition that I assert is kinaesthetic. It was only in reading about the historical periods at the time that my forebears migrated from different corners of the globe to

South Africa and Australia that I came to the realisation that have I come from a line of migratory people. I hoped that this work would help in building the foundation for my identity and a sense of place and belonging to where I have moved to in Victoria, rather than moving on yet again as a wandering nomad.

In this chapter I will discuss the implications of my research and revisit some of the literature emanating from those working in the field of migration that contributed to my thinking especially regarding belonging and identity as well as proposed analytical frameworks and theoretical positions. In a transitional space, identity, belonging and home are suspended. Heritage is recognised as multi-layered: formative and forming of identity if one is flexible, open and vulnerable. In each of the locations from which my forebears hailed, in Europe, South Africa and Australia I wrote a new story as a transformative process; an embodied experience in place that was a performance: an acting out of the role of researcher seeking a heritage story. In terms of my findings, the fractal nature of place, identity and belonging is traced thematically in what I call: the Seven Marks of Place: landmarks, placemarks, pathmarks, stretchmarks, crossmarks, stitchmarks and bookmarks; and in the conclusion I discuss benchmarks: where I am up to in my research.

In analysing the implications and to gauge the possible contribution that my research can make to the field of Place Studies, place-making, migrancy, belonging and identity formation I will firstly return to some of the literature that has informed the research.

## Belonging and Identity

What is meant by belonging and is migrant belonging shaped in particular ways? Waite and Cook (2011) asked these questions in their study of pluri-local belongings across generations in migrant families – questions which are relevant to my study as well although there are no definitive answers. Yuval-Davis (2006) recognised in her framework of belonging, a number of levels described as social locations, identifications, emotional attachments and ethical and political values; while I have included geographical (as does Antonsich, 2010, who stated that belonging does not occur in a geographical vacuum) and historical identifications (including stories and memories) and attachments to landscape/place as well. In the second part of her framework Yuval-Davis (2006) focused on the politics of belonging and how it relates to the participatory politics of citizenship, entitlement and status but I wish to stress a personal sense of belonging as political as well; and thirdly, she looked specifically at the way the different levels play out in reality. In terms of social locations, in her framework Yuval-Davis (2006) noted that people identify themselves along multiple axes of difference such as gender, class, race, nation or profession that includes economic or social standing including age but that they constitute each other. I recognise that all axes of difference are relevant in terms of my perception of belonging but in varying degrees and at different life stages and situations. From the outset in this research, I noted that as one gets older, questions of identity and where one belongs are more troubled as is a change in one's

home location, social standing and the choices one has: whether single again or partnered as well as one's economic situation in retirement.

Yuval-Davis (2006) noted the contested, dynamic and transient ways that belonging manifests which is also the position in Place Studies especially when focussed on Australia. While I have focussed more on the personal feeling in my research, I do recognise that entitlement as regards the contested nature of belonging in countries such as Australia and South Africa has both a personal and a political dimension. In fact entitlement to belong is much more than having the correct immigration documents and citizenship rights, it is also as to whether one feels that one has entitlement given the historical context of colonialism and the attitude of the society in general to newcomers. Entitlement in all its nuances was at the core of my research – as I have lived in both South Africa and Australia (as well as other post-colonial nations: USA and Canada) when my settling could be perceived of as endorsing a continuum of European migration supplanting prior land occupation, culture and a way of life. I have not felt entitled as a consequence and therefore looked further afield to Europe to discover my sense of 'country', as do the Aboriginal people in Australia, to a landscape/place where I am entitled to claim belonging perhaps where my ancestors lived their lives and over the generations were buried.

Although Antonsich (2010) acknowledged that Yuval-Davis (2006) had produced one of the most comprehensive studies of belonging, he was concerned as I was that the personal, intimate feeling of being at home and place-belongingness not be neglected when the focus falls more heavily on the politics. Loretta Baldassar and Stuart Hall have both written and researched migration issues broadly and refute identity as essentialist. They too assert that identity as a social construct is subject to the interplay of history, culture and power but what is missing from the interplay of those three concepts is the personal feeling of belongingness. The personal feelings that construct the individual or collective as Ahmed (2004) highlights are the implications of my research in that I assert that one can feel empowered in the pro-active search for a self-creating identity and not be the victim of history, culture and power. In the analytical framework that Yuval-Davis (2006) outlined she indicated that identity is inherently a concern as well. In an experiment with the notion of a self-creating identity, belonging is closely aligned with notions of vulnerability and emotion; the two themes that are threaded through both the literature on migration that I reviewed and arose throughout my undertaking. Both are illustrative of the much quoted 'being and longing to belong' that Probyn (1996) proposed and others such as Yuval-Davis (2006) reiterated.

Eng and Davidson (2008) as well reiterate the need to redefine diasporic communities as living entities whose identity and culture and responses to migration evolve over time and space individually and collectively depending on the contextual pressures of the wider nation state in which they are embedded. This is an important insight in that identity is sometimes construed of as terminal when one is locked in despite the passage of time to a particular identification. Most theorists (Yuval-Davis, 2004;

Ahmed, 2004; Eng & Davidson, 2008; Schwartz, 2005) recognise the changing nature of belonging and identity. I have noted however, that in the mainstream of society (in Australia) the notion of country of family origin continues to define identity. No matter how long one has been living in Australia, if the hint of an accent, a non Anglo-Celtic name or skin-tone is detected, the person will be asked where they are from. It is a practice that for the children of migrants sometimes causes confusion when they may have never known any place other than Australia as their home and for migrant parents can send them back metaphorically to where they came from as Kristeva (1991) pointed out. Migrants may feel unmasked as imposters Carter (1994) explained with the more serious nature of identity-politics in play when the mainstream of society alienate and separate-out those deemed not to belong.

Yuval-Davis (2006) noted that at all levels of belonging power relations are positioned at each historical moment in any given society. Her insight is especially relevant in relation to claims to belong to South Africa given the enormous changes that have occurred there since the historical moment of majority rule with the first majority election held in 1994. At an official policy level, anyone born in South Africa, who emigrated, is entitled to return with full citizenship rights as if one had never left. In addition Yuval-Davis (2006) recognises that there are also historical moments that can change one's perception and identifications: for white South Africans identification once carried with it the label of white racist but altered somewhat when the situation in South Africa changed with the end of Apartheid and there was a sense of pride at what had been achieved without a full-blown civil war. In my investigation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission held in South Africa, I recognised that what was an admirable step forward from the horrific history of segregation in South Africa had not wiped out the historical reality or cleansed the past. Both personal and collective identification in South Africa has altered the narrative: it is now the rainbow nation with the majority of racial groups seemingly striving to overcome its past and racial divisions. It is an indication of the changing nature of the narrative as contested, as relating to the past, as a myth of origin and can aim to explain the present while functioning as a future trajectory as Yuval-Davis (2006) describes it.

Skrbiš, Baldassar, and Poynting (2007) affirm that an investigation of belonging is central to the issues facing human societies today, and especially so throughout the world at this particular historical moment with the vast movement of people as refugees and immigrant integration and cultural diversity are under constant review and debate. It is for this reason that I believe that my research is timely and will add to the discussion and proactive approach that is called for. The gap in the research that I have identified, and hope that my study will contribute to, is the conversation that concerns interventions that seek to assist newcomers to relate to their heritage in terms of the Australian landscape and land culture in their endeavours to find belonging and a sense of place. It is a process that seeks to break down the barriers as stories are created in local landscape experience that can be shared with the broader

community and an identity is constructed that enables an ongoing practice of belonging rather than separation and alienation from the mainstream of society.

## Home and Home-making

As Yuval-Davis (2006) discovered, home/homeland is slippery and complex. It is both location and a set or relationships. Antonsich (2010) was referring as I was, to the phenomenological approach to home which in humanist geography is the symbolic space of what is familiar and holds emotional attachment in the outer world. I included memories and place-stories as sites of remembrance in this category of home and belonging as well in my research focusing on geographical locations which was also his concern, namely that belonging and home does not exist in a geographical vacuum. In reviewing the literature of belonging, Antonsich (2010) identified several factors that generated a feeling of place belongingness and home which are included in my methodology such as auto-biographical, relational and cultural while I was less concerned with the other two factors he identified that of economic and legal.

The migrant serves as a figure through which home can be better understood, was suggested by Yuval-Davis (2006) yet its definition and meaning has implications far beyond a geographical location. The concepts of home and of home-making have been the focus of much research and Blunt and Dowling's (2006) study has been seminal in this regard. Home is a significant geographical and social concept in their view with wide symbolic and ideological meanings that is central to the construction of identity, and feelings of belonging. Home in my definition was a concept that described how I perceived my surroundings and the culture of Australia: whether I identify with certain cultural practices or set myself apart. In their study of home Ralph and Staeheli (2011) attempt to unpack the tension between home as a stable fixed place and home as fitting a more contemporary viewpoint of mobility as discussed by Blunt and Dowling (2006); Urry (2000); Staeheli and Nagel (2006) and Ahmed et al (2003). In visiting my grandmother's home-place in Brighton, England, it was an experience of visual knowing but also embodied as a profound experience of birthing, both hers and mine. I went to a house in Brighton with a photograph passed down through the family held firmly in my hand and adopted it only briefly as a home – for a short moment it was a holding place for the emotions that arose there. The visit to the last home we lived in as a family in South Africa prior to my mother's death was not only profound but also healing. Haebich (2005) spoke of 'going back' to a place she had never been before when it was the birthplace of her mother and dominant in the family discourse as she grew up in Australia. She discovered no welcome home reception awaiting her in Germany, and people were not interested in who she was and what her story was. The place she went to existed in her imagination only. In my case, seeking a relationship with the landscape was far less risky, there was no rejection to be registered in walking in heritage places or simply in viewing my grandmother's previous home in Brighton without the need to knock on the door and proclaim my interest in someone's home. There was no claims of heritage to be challenged either in

a contested zone such as in South Africa or Australia. As Waite and Cook (2011) and Yuval-Davis (2006) discovered, too, belonging is an emotionally constructed category; tenuous too in creating entangled connections in the social formation of a place of origin that becomes even more entangled as migrant parents attempt to inculcate their place of origin into their children's experience as well. I noted the consequences for my own children of extended periods spent in South Africa when on our return they found it difficult to re-establish their social standing in their peer group at school while also missing their South African cousins.

The feeling of being at home that shape identity and feelings of belonging is based on both location and relationships but when not-at-home, where one belongs is confused. I noted during my travels that my identity and where home was located were suspended although it was my own perception and not enforced by any means. I found that I hesitated when asked where I was from. In Australia I was accustomed to answering that question by saying that I was from South Africa but while away from Australia, the answer called for a different response. I was perceived to be South African by others on our bus tour, when I travelled with my sister who has lived in South Africa continuously for the last 69 years. I also deferred to her opinion regarding questions about South Africa considering I had not lived there for the past 30 years. The majority of travellers were Australian, as I had booked our tour from here but migrant status and accent meant that I did not feel that I could assert my Australianness amongst this group either. The entire experience was an interesting micro-study in itself. The question raised was who are we when we travel and our identity is not secure, when we are not-at-home in what is our more recently adopted at-home? Fiewel Kupferberg identified three models that are conducive to creativity, that of migrant, stranger and traveller (1998) and it may be the case that all three categories describe the liminal space I occupied on the bus tour but rather than creativity it was conducive to a heightened awareness of questionable identity and a sense of uncertainty about both belonging and home. It would have mattered more if decisions were made by some authority regarding who went where based on certain assumptions and racial classifications such as was the case in South Africa for the majority of the population other than the whites.

Many migrants continue to speak of their country of origin as home. A Greek friend once described the house she still owned and maintained in her village in Greece and English migrants are frequently derided when the UK is referred to as home despite their having lived in Australia sometimes for decades. Soon after our migrating, a migrant woman said to me that in the end the airport was the only place where one would feel at home as one waited to travel elsewhere, a sentiment I came to endorse. Other people play a role in 'sending migrants back' as Kristeva (1991) pointed out by asking questions such as: when are you going home or when did you last go back home? Belonging as a discursive resource, in Antonsich's (2010) framework constructs a 'sense of home' but he makes it clear that he does not mean a domesticated material space which as he says feminist authors (Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Varley, 2008) too have criticised for reproducing gendered and patriarchal relations of

oppression, violence and fear highlighting the political dimension of feeling safe in a home-place which for many women and children is not the case. Others have stressed the materiality of home and the value of material objects especially from the perspective of migrants and trans-local relationships (Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Baldassar, 2008). Sallie Westwood and Annie Phizacklea assert that most migration studies focus on the "household as a central institution" with a passive gendered view of women, while an alternative view is neglected, that of the increased agency women often have on migrating: as decision-makers and forging a better life for themselves (2000:96).

## Silent Spaces and Narratives of Identity and Attachment

At the level of identification and emotional attachments that Yuval-Davis (2006) recognised in her framework, she includes the narratives that people tell themselves about who they are/or are not both individually and collectively. She asserts that identities are narratives and are always producing themselves which affirms my notion of a self-creating identity created through stories and narrative that I have told myself in this study and written down for the benefit of future generations. This insight expresses my motivation, practice and agenda in this research project very well, which I pursued as a textual knowing method. Birkeland also worked with biographical methods as I did because of the similarities between the making and writing of self, for, as she says, human beings order events into wholeness through storytelling, "a universal fact in humanism" (2005:27). For Carter (1993) he describes identity as fluid, and shaped by embodied, embedded narratives located in particular places and times; but he warns that it is about connecting to a relational group identity, as against what he called atomistic individualism. I have documented both my story and therefore my children and grandchildren's story as well ensuring that it will be passed on as to our group identity. My narrative of identity has a small claim to truth as historical interpretation and documentation and serves to fill the gap, the silent space that Sidonie Smith defined as the role of narrative and auto-biography for women (Smith, 1987). In her view, "Autobiography is both recovery and creation" and "an exploration into the possibility of recapturing and restating a past ..." (Smith, 1987:18). Entrikin (1991) explained that the interest in narrative in modernity is based on the humanistic idea that human beings create coherence in their lives through narrative. The narratives we tell in his view re-scribe and re-tell the world constructing what he labelled an as-if world (Entrikin, 1991).

Birkeland's suggestion, that we should write place through "writing the body as place" is the basis of the embodied approach in my research. Its intent was to break down a mind/body dichotomy, as she explains further on "place writing describes a common field between life, earth and the feminine based in the materiality of life..." (2005:29). Other writers too, have looked at the silent space: that of exile and the opportunity offered of not belonging. It can be the privileged position of the migrant too, who has a view of the society that is more open to new interpretations as was revealed during my research. Dutch writer, Armando recognised that his creativity lay in the space between knowing and

understanding thus he had to remain exiled to access this space (Suleiman, 1998). This was the research space where as a migrant I was enabled to write a narrative between knowing and understanding to gain insights that would not otherwise be available to a discourse on belonging. The discourse in terms of what is auto-biographical in the literature that Antonsich (2010) analysed, is the telling of the story of identity, of one's past history regarding belonging but what was missing was reference to geographical location. Many scholars, have preferred to reject forms of socio-territorial belonging, and have attempted to challenge their fixed and stable boundaries (Antonsich, 2010). What is lacking from this category of auto-biography however is the acknowledgement that identity is a collective biographical story as well; identity and belonging are dynamic and changing in the everyday layering of stories that build identity and belonging that is reflected in the methods I employed in my research.

Somerville et al (2009) have argued that place has the potential to offer alternative storylines about identity and who we are in a global world but my intent has also to indicate my origins in my story (2009. I have attempted to deconstruct my post-colonial non-identity by "identifying, affirming, conserving, and creating those forms of cultural knowledge that nurture and protect people and ecosystems" as those working in Place Studies call for (Somerville et al, 2009: 8). It is an alternative storyline that I was pursuing that relates to places and landscapes both local and global as relevant to my identity and belonging. A self-creating identity is an alternative storyline that is in a broader category of belonging that goes beyond nationality, race or ethnicity. It is not entirely a self-serving auto-biography or narrative of self, I assert, but attempts to answer the question: What did you bring with you? (The question Christine Peacock asked of Paul Carter, 2009). This thesis is also the narrative of what I brought with me. It is the story of my family origins but it is also the story of migration, a snapshot of recorded and family history: of South Africa and The Netherlands, Ireland and Scotland, England and Australia. It is the long answer to the question for the benefit of my children and their children as well. Winnicott (1971) maintained that the continuity of existence is assured by cultural inheritance: an extension of the potential space between the individual and his environment.

## Landscape, Place and Emotional Geographies

Emotional attachments and what are described as emotional geographies have become an important new focus in transnational migration research (Christou, 2011). The term emotional geographies that I only recently stumbled upon deals with the relationships between emotions and geographic places and their contextual environments; how humans relate to/ affect the environment around them (Gregory, 2011) is especially relevant in placing my research in a field of study.

Although Antonsich (2010) identified positive factors that contribute to settling and belongingness where a strong attachment is reflected to what he called 'relational' (relating to a defined community or family group) –and 'cultural' (namely attachment to a strong cultural practice and focus) such advantages are not always available to all migrant groups. For those who migrate without family or

without a firm culture of origin, ethnicity or religion lack both relational and cultural factors to sustain their transition. It is difficult to name a culture apart from 'Englishness' as a post-colonial living in Australia without extended family in yet another post-colonial country and was the motivation for my research. I note that my daughter living as part of a Dutch extended family has had to learn all of the quirks of that culture, the values and the norms have had to become hers as well when there is far less cultural flexibility. A person I met recently from the US regularly goes to McDonalds (or with her American accent to fly to Hawaii, the cheapest, closest US territory to Australia) to experience and relax in her emotional and cultural milieu. Nesdale et al (1997) point to the little attention given to origins as to the impact of migrant ethnic identity on the adjustment process.

Nesdale et al (1997) also include factors such as levels of self-esteem and self-mastery, interpersonal trust and external and internal coping resources such as tangible support to the process of belonging and identity. I believe I have demonstrated in this research that a stronger sense of identity in place-based practices can contribute to self esteem, interpersonal trust and internal coping mechanisms (Nesdale et al, 1997). In performing this research, I also renewed and developed relations with family members. It created conversations that were of a different calibre and intention that I believe brought us closer together in the 'oral knowing' method I employed to collect data as the relational aspect of identity. Our relationships were enhanced through my undertaking as a social action as were the new understandings I had in the information received and analysed with the perspective of time and distance. The fieldwork component created the opportunity for conversations with my father and brother, crucial since they have both recently died, and travels/visits with my siblings and our various children in the various places where they now live. The fieldwork was the context of where we went and what we did together, thus it is in itself a relational activity that affirmed our familial and cultural attachment. I believe that ultimately it will serve to highlight for other family members what their heritage is and where their belonging and identity lie. What migrancy offers to others is a focus on relationships with family that is often a troubled matter rather than a taken as is often the case in families who live in close proximity. At times I believe that relationships are more intense at a distance and perhaps my narrative reflects that attitude and is a valuable insight for others, perhaps a positive for migrating.

Christou (2011) says that identity is a form of representation that can be both, experienced and imagined rather than territorially bound, and in fact movement becomes a mode of identification and (re)grounding. My intention of travelling was not to continue to find my identity as a nomad although ultimately I came to the realisation that my family had been a migratory people over time. Instead I was endeavouring to find a firm foundation of heritage. In this research I wished to work against the trend: that placelessness can be a norm, when transnationalism and mobility as a form of identity, purports to suspend the need to belong as liberating and hybrid identity a positive resolution to the concern. This was the position put forward by Ang (2009). Ang also said that being a migrant is a state of mind but one

could argue equally that belonging is a state of mind as well: to be worked either towards rather than away from. The former is the basis of the embodied-kinesthetic methodology, that I have attempted to articulate/develop in this thesis – recognising as do Christou (2011) and Yuval-Davis (2004) that identity continues to be produced, embodied and performed and in my view is within one's realm of power and control.

The area of family genealogy and genealogical tourism/travel is one such pursuit that is within the control of a self-creating identity practice and provides insights as to why people are seeking heritage information. In terms of the growing interest in genealogy and genealogical tourism, Santos and Yan (2010); Prinke (2010); Haebich (2005) assert that it assists and reaffirms the continuum of heritage and ancestry; the sense of the self and self recognition that transcends the present. I felt cut off from my past including my heritage and needed to go to places to connect and re-connect to the landscapes and places of my heritage while also finding other heritage sites in Europe. Berger said that, "A people or a class which is cut off from its own past is far less free to choose and to act as a people or class than one that has been able to situate itself in history" (1972:33). Massey (1994) on the other hand has argued for multiple identities/places and people and for resistance to universalism and genealogy derived from family history which also has validity. Holding on to old allegiances and prejudices has the potential to be disruptive to social harmony in Australia and to be carried forward generationally as well. This is played out for example when there is a protest on the steps of parliament in Melbourne about a situation in a distant country such as in Iraq or Ukraine and one wonders about its relevance to Australia. Travelling to and visiting the Euro-centric landscapes of my forebears has provided a 'storied' identity of a migratory past but I do not believe that it has had a negative impact on my belonging and identity in Australia. Like any story-telling process the plot moves on and develops from its beginnings and I have the sense that I was only establishing a foundation to build on rather than to live out as the story.

Christou (2011) also acknowledges however, both the ambivalence of transnational belongings and the sense of self that is at stake when connections are lost with people and places that are correlated with ancestral roots and family histories. Christou's viewpoint would support the exploration of family genealogy and genealogical tourism as well as travelling to/writing about places that are significant in heritage as I did. Emotion is the central medium of identity in the view of Christou (2011) the medium through which embodied, mnemonic and representational experiences intersect: they are the filters which equally I believe defines my methodology.

Santos and Yan (2010) identified similar benefits to mine in their research as resulting from genealogical tourism: a deep emotional feeling and added value and meaning to travel. It was also an emotional/spiritual experience to be in the landscapes/places of one's immediate forebears and ancestral origins which I agree with researchers Santos and Yan (2010) reaffirmed and reinforced my identity. Prinke (2008) believes that identity and the places visited combine, tied together in a new narrative of

identity. That was my intention although at the time I did not label myself as a genealogical tourist considering I had very few details available to me that I could follow up. My travel was an aspect of embodied and visual knowing methods of being in place rather than attempts to follow up on archives and records. There is a symbolic reading of landscapes/places that are culturally encoded with meanings more than the everyday as described by Backhaus & Murungi (2009). The places I visited expressed values and social behaviour as well as individual actions that had accumulated from the past to the present as was especially the case at The Nine Ladies Stone Circle with tree hangings nearby that indicated current usage. There were codes of cultural/social significance but also spiritual dimensions to be read that also evoked an emotional response especially messages of hope and love in the tree hangings that were a connection to the people who used the space more frequently. Meinig (1979) said that both poets and artists are attuned to such symbolism perhaps the reason why encounters with such landscapes/places leads to artistic pursuits as an embodied knowing method of engagement.

When I am arguing that stability and continuity for a migrant is in the landscape, Yuval-Davis (2006) refers to the 'instability of landscape' in that as she says it is open to interpretation which refers back to the two viewpoints that Cresswell (2004) put forward in his definition of landscape: what one sees and the way it is seen – the frame we place around it. We arrive in another landscape/place carrying the template from childhood as described by Mahood (2005) Foster (2005); Davies (2000); Hiss (1990); and Bachelard (1969). All have attested to an impression that we take with us from the first place and the influence on our future perceptions of landscape/place if we are to find belonging elsewhere. I recognised that at first my template of what is aesthetically appealing had to change in Western Australia: moving from lush green Natal in South Africa to the semi-desert of Western Australia but would not have been the case had I arrived in Gippsland in Victoria. My concerns in this research, has privileged the inner feelings and emotional geographies as highlighted by Ahmed (2006).

Loretta Baldassar (2008) in the research project she drew on highlights the emotional impact on relationships as a consequence of migration and the manner in which relationships were maintained but also changed as a result of new technologies when families were split between Australia and Italy. The dominant perspectives in theories of emotion: constructionism (with its emphasis on discourse) and embodiment (sensory experience) - mediated the analytical model that was utilised in the study (2008). Emotions are rarely the central focus of analyses of transnational processes and social science research in general as she points out (Baldassar, 2008). This study highlighted for me that there is a particular and peculiar imperative at play depending on the attitudes and norms of an identified national culture that influence long-distance relationships and what may especially come to the fore when there is a high degree of responsibility expected towards ageing parents. It reveals the divergence in the adjustments in maintaining relationships in the migrant population that should not be homogenised or stereotyped.

## Attachment, Alienation and Globalisation

The notion of co-presence, the use of objects to maintain relationships and attachment with distant relatives, in the collaborative study that Baldassar (2008) describes, was vital she discovered in managing the emotionally-charged terrain of trans-local belongings but my experience of migration does not entirely support her findings across different migrant groups but does call attention to the notion of objects, and objects-relation theory.

There is a need for migrants to have transitional space the Grinbergs (1987) said in discussing object-relations theory, and legitimises my assertion of the potential of this space for adjustment. It was in the transitional space that I worked to make transitional objects and discovered the importance of building attachment by relating to place in the small detail within the broader landscape, to build intimacy and feel the vulnerability of objects in place, and this was to initiate an embodied, emotional response. This is an essential component to foster if one is to care about where one lives and to feel that one has a stake in its future. To represent a subject using handmade embroidery or painting or to write haiku, to fabricate a story in words requires a close attention to the essence of what is portrayed. Picking a flower and then attempting to represent it in embroidery, for example, is to have a relationship with that object, to come 'to know' it in a manner that is meaningful and memorable. This is the value in fabric-ating landscape experience in arts-practice as an embodied, visual knowing.

In conducting this research I recognize that there are many ways of being 'displaced'. Whether alienation is self-imposed, such as in moving house or even as a visiting tourist, to the extremes of exile as a refugee, it is material circumstances that heavily condition the degree to which displacement can be managed as an experience. One is constantly brought back to reality when brought face to face with one's own privilege. Lavinia, one of the travelling Norwegian women, that Birkeland spoke to said that "Africa was a shocking mirror to her, because it revealed to her who she was and where she came from: white, rich and competent" (2005:113).

In the recent television documentary (*Foreign Correspondent,* ABC Television, 10/06/14) about a refugee camp in Jordan, that has become home to some of the 3 million displaced Syrians what was relevant was the manner in which the people were making a home despite their living conditions and lack of entitlement to stay there. It was the small things such as planting a grape vine in their temporary compound in the desert that spoke symbolically about the concept of home and the need to contemplate a future. In other words just having a roof and feeling safe is not sufficient to feel at home but having no entitlement does not preclude one from making a home. Of course, this said: the right to live somewhere in safety and to earn a living, get an education and have access to services is the foundation to a sense of belonging as well as a strong sense of identity that can be correlated with positive adaptive mental health outcomes for migrants over time but in the view of Schwartz (2005) has not been

adequately researched. There is a need for identity intervention programs that are based on understandings of how it relates to behavioural and mental health outcomes as he points out.

Yuval-Davis (2004; 2006) importantly stresses that the less secure people feel, the more their emotional investment in belonging is central both to the host society and existing migrant groups with the extremes of terrorism a manifestation of feeling alienated. It is a sense of alienation and exclusion from the mainstream of society that drives some deviant behaviour: they work in partnership. In a circular loop of exclusion based on racism and fear, social issues can manifest such as crime, alcohol-abuse and drug-taking, although mental health issues are also believed to result from the atrocities of war and what was witnessed. In Australia to be white and English speaking as a migrant, able to blend in on the whole, has been an advantage as I do not believe that I have experienced discrimination (apart from a neighbour who expressed the viewpoint that I should not have found employment when her Australian daughter could not). Issues for English-speaking migrants however are often ignored and neglected, a sentiment some British migrants have expressed. It is often assumed that British migrants in Australia have enjoyed a homogenous blending with different waves taking their place in an established British outpost where they have continued to live their British lives but as Sara Wills (2005) illustrates in her research it has often been far from the reality. 'Britishness' as the dominant culture is in reality a 'myth' in Australia, when hybridity is as much a feature of identity as it is for any other ethnic group (2005).

While practical matters for migrants such as access to health resources, language, income and workplace injury appear to be adequately addressed, as revealed in various studies, there is little discussion concerning the relationship between 'place' and physical and mental health (Bhugra and Ayonrinde, 2004). I have proposed and attempted to illustrate in this research that it is in embracing the landscape and land-culture that in a sense of place and belonging will be enhanced for migrants of whatever persuasion. Whether it is to travel overseas as I did in an attempt to find elements of identity that I could relate to, or undertaking everyday practices such as in the arts to help to learn place and imprint new landscapes, it is within one's control and not to be defined by others as to who can belong.

Ahmed (2004) suggests that we can feel close to others who are distant, by identifying ourselves as world or global citizens and the notion of giving up local attachments to become part of the new community: which begs the question whether it has to be one or the other or if there is a choice.

### Arts-based Practices

Apart from the physicality of being and participating in the land-culture of place, by fabric-ating experience, I referred to some action that is taken that leaves an impression beyond the immediate event, to write a story; to take a photograph; to purchase a keepsake or the craft done by women in my

heritage; but also to make something as a fabrication as I did as a representation of women's home-making – sewing cloth, embroidering or knitting in fabric art – as a response can invoke a tactile/emotional response that may be available to others as well who look at one's work. The message in a handmade item, as does writing, lives on after the person and materialises their presence – a small legacy connecting one to a place and a memory of one's place in that environment as well. Art elicits conversations that might not have been invoked perhaps not what the artist intended but readily available for many interpretations; memorialising and materialising events, people and places. John Berger (1972) said that the visual arts were originally the preserve of what was magical or sacred and the experience of ritual that was set apart from the rest of life. While my visual art is more prosaic, available and an everyday practice, there is something magical in its creation that has evolved as a ritual performance of place. An important adjunct to embodied experience and art-practice in framing of landscape is also photography. It has an ability to capitalize on experiences that provide opportunities for accumulation of cultural symbols, and plays an important part in the creation of spatial stories (Crang, 1999). Crang argued that photography not as simply recording an event but as the creation and making of self and travelling and photographing places creates a fictional landscape of meaning that one ascribes to it regardless of the reality of those who live there. Narratives do not discover something hidden or unknown, but create something new through what they tell as was the assertion of Michel de Certeau (1984). Photographs carry a preferred story when one marks this place rather than another. They are, as Birkeland says, "a narrative of the self created and experienced in a temporal and spatial way linking the exterior world, past and present, to the interior world of the person" (2005:106).

In the final analysis, I have outlined a small representation of my findings from the perspective of the seven marks of place as described previously (Chapter 2 Methodology). The fractal nature of place is analysed as marks that are imprinted in story in an experiential approach to securing identity in landscape and land-culture. They incorporate what knowledge and understanding was gleaned through the practice of a multi-methods approach: embodied knowing, visual knowing and oral/textual knowing but are intermingled and layered.

## Seven Marks of Landscape/place Experience

Firstly, I recorded *Landmarks* by travelling to places where my forebears came from; going back to my birthplace and childhood places to retrieve my story; travel as methodology; writing biographical landmarks; recording new biographical and autobiographical stories; Secondly I identified *Placemarks*: significant places where I had an embodied experience; integrating landmarks/places and self in the metaphorical journey of life; *Pathmarks*: how my presence marked the landscape and I read the land-culture and traces of previous generations; *Stretchmarks* included home, house, mother, feeling homeless, abandonment, migration and the pull of the threads that draw one back home; *Crossmarks*:

religious influences; uncanny experiences; the legacy of Apartheid and war; metaphysical space: strange feelings, spirituality; death and sadness; *Bookmarks* represent the literature of place and the role of literature in representing the landscape; significant stories bookmarked for future reference; *Stitchmarks*: writing, sewing and women's handiwork as representations of domestic history. Not included as a landscape/place mark is *Benchmarks*, describes where I believe I am up to in both finding belonging and a sense of place in Australia; securing my identity and heritage; and articulating and testing an embodied-kinaesthetic methodology.

The *Landmarks* that I identified including those in Australia were the landscapes that my forebears too would have experienced. The imprints of landscape, landmarks, culture and history that they carried with them on migration would have included such memories as the devastation caused by industry such as coal mining in Lanarkshire in Scotland, the Highland clearances and the rapid industrialisation of Glasgow and pollution of the air and the once beautiful Clyde River but also impressions of castle ruins at St Andrews and Edinburgh Castle as it stands in the landscape as a true landmark. Were my Irish forebears some of starving people, during the famine? The green fields divided by stone walls and the incredible Cliffs of Moher, Blarney Castle and the Cathair forts, the beautifully decorated doors of the Georgian homes in Dublin and the pages of the Book of Kells at Trinity College are the landmarks I took with me. Did my English family visit the stone circles and remember stories of the communal land prior to enclosure; had they been to Bath? Those who came to Australia may have witnessed the destruction of the waterfall in Melbourne or the destitution of the Aboriginal people but I doubt would have seen the Great Barrier Reef or Uluru. In the Netherlands they may have had the experience of flood and witnessed the necessity of building dykes and polders that define the landscape now to keep the water at bay.

While the material culture evident in landmark sites such as Stonehenge and The Nine Ladies stone circle as well as the stone cottage and remains of a quarry in Derbyshire, England were only a small representation of the landmarks in England that could be visited, they provided a wealth of experience and insight as research sites, from my point of view. In The Netherlands, the evidence that was present did not relate directly to my personal or social memory but I sought to make it so. It was the *hunebedden* (dolmens) that were able to transport me back to an old culture, the relics of which were all that remained but I chose to see as related to my heritage, as well as what was depicted in the paintings by some of the Dutch masters. In South Africa, the evidence was more recent, graves and forts were landmarks that spoke of the Boer War and the landscape itself evoked a strong sense of sorrow and regret for what had unfolded there and what may still eventuate in the future given the environmental consequences of over-population and poverty in the rest of Africa. While in Australia, the evidence of material culture included rock art in the Pilbara and on a personal level the landmark that is St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne but also marks the place where my grandmother was christened and her parents

married as well as the small houses and streets in Richmond where they lived. It is identified now as a placemark in the fictional story based on my grandmother's birth in Richmond; it is the story of that locality and my history, real or not.

In Ireland, the *Placemarks* that are remembered include the life-size statues of famine victims on the wharf in Dublin, with the 'coffin ship' standing by. The anticipation and excitement we felt driving at speed to see the incredible height and beauty of the Cliffs of Moher before sunset marks it as an awesome place as well as the slow return journey when the road was blocked by the farmer and her cows not to mention a helpful child and dog. I felt a sense of pride that my grandfather was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. In the Netherlands, finding the *hunebedden* marks the experience as palpable; the sense of history as I walked the streets, along the canals and went to the open cobbled marketplace in Delft, and sought out the places where Vermeer was known to have lived and the sites of his paintings. Of course it was the stone circles at *Stonehenge* and *The Nine Ladies*, in England, that are both landmark and placemark, like the Cathair Ring Fort they are profound traces of something unknown that went before that resonates into the present reality of being there. As social beings we create stories together with others and I recognise that my encounters with stone circles as a placemark was more significant because I was with my sister—we followed the map together, got lost together, talked about our experience and shared the story with other family members and can remember it together. Our shared stories, and photographs that we each took, create a cultural place in our family history. My sister also created a printed, hard-covered photographic book for us both after we returned to South Africa. In The Netherlands, South Africa and Australia I was with family members thus adding to our collective memory.

I recently made a return trip to South Africa for the funeral of my father (2012) and spent some time with my niece who lives in Cape Town. We took the ferry ride to Robben Island and it can now be included as both a landmark and a placemark where I had an embodied experience. The prison buildings have been preserved as a tribute and memorial to those who were imprisoned there as political prisoners. In his book *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela says, it "was without question the harshest, most iron-fisted outpost in the South African penal system" (1994:459) but he would have had to agree that as a prison, like Alcatraz in San Francisco bay, it had the best views. We saw Mandela's tiny cell and the quarry where he and others worked - the glare of the sun was on the white shale that led to his deteriorating eye condition. It was hard to imagine how anyone could survive such harsh conditions, outdoors in the Cape winters and sleeping with only a piece of hessian and a thin blanket on a concrete floor for 17 years of his life. But the magnificent view in the distance of Table Mountain and the surrounding ranges of 'The Cape of Good Hope' perhaps provided the inspiration to go on with the hope of release and more freedom for all the population. On our return journey we had a taste of 'The Cape of Storms' however, as we faced heavy seas and found out later that another boat had capsized in the vicinity and one person had drowned.

In terms of *Pathmarks* I identified how my presence marked the landscape; I read the land-culture and traces of previous generations. The imprint/framing of our approach to the Bronze Age Stone Circle on Stanton Moor remains as a photographic image in reality in an album but also in one's mind's eye in imagination: as an imprint, that is instantly accessible as is the excitement and expectations I felt. I read and was guided by the language available in land and material culture, on Stanton Moor: climbing over stiles, taking a worn pathway, avoiding trees and rocks, following a crude rail track, opening a gate, heading for a clearing, touching the nine stones even sitting on one. Although I could not translate the markings on a rock, or understand the purpose of large up-standing stones in the stone circle, I read them as evidence of human activity based in some sort of forgotten sacred ritual. There was also evidence of their use in the current era given by the recently placed items hung in an adjacent oak tree as tree-dressings.

Davidson said that "people also routinely reconstruct events"… when "memory is inherently revisionary" and "illustrate the 'subjective meanings of historical experience'" (Eng & Davidson, 2008:27). In the familiar places I visited with my sister for example, on her recent first visit to Australia, particular locations have been reconstructed with significance and memories revised to accommodate new information and perceptions. There is a similar awareness when walking the pathway that one's ancestors might have walked: the synecdoche that Tilley (1994) referred to. To walk along a pathway in a forested area is an interaction with only a part of the forest yet this stands for the whole in our memory (1994). When I walked along a small designated pathway as required in the trope of walking on Stanton Moor in Derbyshire, it was also to follow the approach from the proscribed direction – retracing the steps guided by previous walkers and markers such as stiles and pathways.

The "very act of identifying the place presupposes our presence" is the view of Schama (1995:7) with the implication that we situate ourselves in the landscape by simply looking at it, or naming it or comparing what we see to somewhere else. Schama said "even if we attempt not to intervene in the process", in what he calls minimalist landscape, "the organizing move of the artist, the hand on the paintbrush, the finger on the shutter" (or the descriptive writer with the blank page) "invokes old culture – creatures re-emerge from their lair trailing the memories of generations behind them" (1995:12). It is a story of place: reading the traces left behind as Lawrence Kruchner reiterated as an explanation of the notion of 'dreamtime', questioning "whether humans can imprint the land they cross in some way" (in Harwood, 1997:7). Kruchner noticed how his footprints remained even after the snow had melted and wondered if "perhaps there are traces people leave behind them in space and time as they make their way through the universe… traces that cannot be eradicated" (1997:7).

Taking a photograph also records a pathmark but at times I chose not to take a photograph on my field trip as a record of being there, such as at the squatters' camp in my old home town of Krugersdorp in South Africa. I did not want to be seen to intrude or be a voyeur of the misery of other

people, but found a photograph from a REUTER's news site to document their plight instead. In the Cape at Paternoster, when the little fishing boats all painted in similar bright colours went out to sea, I used a telephoto lens which I recognised as the perfect 'voyeur's tool' concerned that I may be harassed as a tourist seen to be preying on the local people just living their everyday lives. Other photographs are included as visual data. My experience was visual, and they elicit the memory and re-living of a particular day's events—a photo journal—of what I saw, while the written word is an interpretation. In some cases photographs also speak of what my forebears may have seen and elicit stories of my heritage, images and memories that they may have carried with them from that place when they migrated. It may have been the picture that came to mind for them, perhaps, when they were talking of a particular place but previously I did not have the benefit of knowing but now I have filled in a little more of the image space that had stood open. In reality many spaces were partially filled, as there are many photographs in our family collection as my paternal grandfather was a professional photographer who did his own film developing and processing. While serving in the armed forces during the World Wars I and II, he was also an aerial photographer. Photography is thus not just a method but an aspect of my heritage.

Visiting the *Placemark* that is my paternal Grandmother's previous home in Brighton, England for the first time, is both an imprint of place and records an embodied experience, but it also represented a stretchmark as a home that I am drawn back to in my mind when it had an unexpected apprehension as I suddenly was aware of the doorway to the house as a metaphorical birth canal giving me birth. Birkeland said that "The house becomes the topography of intimate being, and by remembering all the houses humans have inhabited, they learn to live at home with themselves, and thus the important task is to protect the affective relations between place and human beings" (2005:109). I briefly inhabited my grandmother's childhood house appropriating it to my purposes briefly but now remembered as a significant place. I was also able to do what Klett advised, namely to "examine, change and document the passage of time" juxtapose the surroundings when my grandmother lived there with my experience and the layers of meaning that I ascribed to the place (2011: 114). I took a photograph of the street where the house is located but from a different vantage point than that of the old family photo that I had, not having the photo with me, I forgot that it was taken from the bottom of street rather than the top and missed the opportunity to re-photograph as coined by Mark Klett (2011). It hardly matters though as it achieves what Klett describes when "the photographs act like bookends to the time in between, and the combination raises questions about what is not seen as well as what is seen in either photo" (2011: 114).

*Stretchmarks* included home, house, mother, feeling homeless, abandonment, migration and the continuing attachment I feel to the African landscape. I have previously proclaimed that I am a child of the African plains, recognising my need to see into the distance in a broad-skyed horizon. Choosing to live in the forested hills in the Dandenongs in Melbourne perhaps a mistake in 1982, a decision made on an aesthetic level rather than on what would have suited my psychological needs in a more open setting.

Driving to work down the hill and out of the Dandenong Ranges, I often felt a sense of relief as I left the tall Mountain Ash trees and the intense energies of fern-filled gullies for more open vistas.

The view from where my niece now lives across the deep blue bay at Kommetjie includes the landmark that is Table Mountain. The landscape in the Cape is breath-taking. I feel the warmth and poignancy keenly of my mother's love of the Cape welling up and the holidays that we spent there, pulling me back to my childhood. My mother would speak of *Kaapstad* (using the Afrikaans for Cape Town as words in that language sometimes function for English speakers to express emotion, perhaps a bonding terminology). It was where she had spent time as a child with her Aunty Flora (her mother's sister) who lived in Sea Point. As the view to the mountains changes, the clouds form and disperse, I can just make out the outline of the cable car and the docking station on the edge of the mountain, the flat-topped, iconic geographic feature that dominates the skyline above Cape Town with Lion's Head an adjacent landmark. Travelling up the steep surface of the mountain together with my family on my recent visit, despite the updated, state of the art cable car, I had to sit down and kept my eyes closed for some of the perilous journey, as I remembered my mother had done many years before while we hung out of the glassless window openings to look down the sheer precipice or to take photographs.

Driving through the Cape in South Africa and the stunning mountain passes, I felt the pull back to my homeland and a deep concern for the environment: who would care for the wild places and the wild animals now, the sense being that in reality it is no longer my country, or my (white) peoples' country, it is up to the new majority government and black people. This presumes a colonial superiority that I have to acknowledge, but I can in my own defence point to the experience of Zimbabwe and what has happened to the environment and animals there given the corruption of the Magabe regime and the sheer numbers of people trying to eke out an existence as in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Surprisingly I am told that the present government in South Africa has a stronger track record for environmental protection than did the previous 'white' governments. In Johannesburg there is an imminent threat of groundwater pollution as the residue of substances such as arsenic from gold mining is rising. On the journey to where my brother lived we would pass the most appalling landscape degradation with widespread deep-grooved mine dumps leached white and yellow as far as the eye could see. How could I possibly think that the present industries and government could do much worse? The mine dumps too are landmarks of my childhood in Krugersdorp: the Uranium capital, as described previously. The vista now seems more stark and ugly especially with the removal of treed areas recently.

The stretchmark is registered when I feel myself called back to live in South Africa especially to provide a home for my brother. Could I live here, I ask myself in Kalk Bay as he and I had breakfast at a restaurant that juts out into False Bay in the Cape? We fantasised about buying a small place together and my moving back to South Africa but then I immediately juxtaposed my desire to live in this beautiful place, with fear. I think of the levels of crime and murder and the only route available to my niece's

home, past a slum township and of the accounts of the 'xenophobic riots', as they were dubbed, that took place there. Pollsmor jail where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned is also en-route and what had been his home for nearly two decades lies across the water on Robben Island. Pollsmor, as Mandela says is "located on the edge of a prosperous white suburb ... amid the strikingly beautiful scenery of the Cape" (1994:611). It epitomises the experience of South Africa where such beauty butts against such sorrow.

The visit to my childhood home in South Africa was yet another house to interpret as a psychic space: a crossmark, stretchmark and placemark, was recorded there. Certainly it held many memories and in retrospect I wandered how my brother felt looking at the swimming pool where my mother was found. He came back home on the day that she died while I was in the States: how different were our memories – his real, mine imagined. It was the loss of mother and house, as my father would sell that house within a year of her death. I recognise now that much of my loss of 'a sense of place and belonging' in pursuing this fieldwork for my research, is connected to unresolved issues with the loss of that "first place", what Irigaray (1993a) speaks of when she said that the first place is the mother. Mother as place and house as psychic space, is discussed by Birkeland (2005) (in reference to Bachelard, 1994 and Tuan, 1974) and indicates the intimate and affectionate ties that are created between ourselves and a place when it is a field of care (2005) and ties in with Barry Lopez (2002) who spoke of the experience of vulnerability when there is intimacy in place. Some ideals, values and behaviours are embraced but what is carried over from a culture of origin can create stress/tension for both the individuals and society in general as was stated previously by Schwartz (2005).

I realised that from a critical perspective that how one confronts place and landscape is carried over as gendered as well as cultural and can be more threatening for a woman and especially for a woman travelling alone depending on the political situation, socialisation and previous experience. I re-entered places in South Africa with fear as a result of a political situation that I grew up immersed in, but also because of the crime rate and residual tensions and racism. My fear of getting lost in unfamiliar places possibly based on actual previous experience continues to influence me wherever I live. My sense that I am being watched while walking in the woods in Drenthe or the forest in the Dandenong Ranges for example, may in reality stem from ingrained socialisation as identified by Berger (1985) who described the allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men that women are born to thus to venture from this space is threatening. He also recognised that women are socialised to be watched, to always be aware of how they look in the eyes of men. My sense of being watched was further instilled by fairytales such as *Little Red Riding Hood,* a story I drew on in my attempt to come to terms with fear. Irigaray stresses the need to give the relationship between place and woman a positive value, and argues that we cannot ignore thinking of place as feminine. The consequence is that it is not possible to think space and place without thinking sexual difference. Any discourse on place is simultaneously a discourse on sexual difference" she said (2004:141). Irigaray says Birkeland is arguing for an inclusion of the female principle

in spiritual and symbolic life, with the starting point for rethinking place, being the body (2005). It is why an embodied method was called for in my methodology.

*Crossmarks* were read in metaphysical space and included religious influences and uncanny experiences; the legacy of Apartheid and war; spirituality; death and sadness; nature and sacred space; spirit of place and contested land. As I have stated previously, finding my spiritual understandings in the places of my forebears, I believe, enables me to respect those of indigenous peoples such as the Aborigines in Australia or the !Kung, in Southern Africa. It is also a gender-based spirituality that is important when women have been so degraded within the confines of Western religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

The experience of going to the cemetery in my old hometown of Krugersdorp and the photographs I took of the graves served another purpose as well: it was to memorialise an important aspect of my forebears' history. I could not verify their involvement in the Anglo-Boer Wars or whether any direct family members had been incarcerated in the concentration camp established by the British to hold the Boer women and children in my hometown but there were people with the name of Theunissen listed. After the event, the photographs also serve to memorialise the experience of going to the graveyard with my brother not knowing that within 6 months of our visit that he would be dead. Recently my sister and I went back to the cemetery in Krugersdorp as well after the death of our father. I wanted her to experience the impact of the child-sized graves and this aspect of our hometown's history that we had discovered. Strangely it has become a holding place for both these deaths in my family although none are buried there as I have tied the two events to my visits to the cemetery. It is a more concrete place than are the ashes buried beneath the trees in my nephew's garden.

It was in going to an insignificant (by some standards I am sure) stone circle in Derbyshire that I felt a connection to a lost tradition of spiritual practice that aligned with what I have felt drawn to over the years. My encounter with *The Nine Ladies*, as described in Chapter 3 (Fabric-ating 2: Literary/Spiritual/Biographical Places in England) was just a beginning and there are many places to go from there.

As *Stitchmarks* I have incorporated arts-practice; writing; fabric art and women's handiwork as representations of domestic history. Although I write in a masculine tradition, I express the feminine through traditional arts and crafts in order to present a comprehensive thesis response to my question. Building relatedness to place through direct experience is expressed in writing and art and is a way to move closer and be stitched in to the subject. I have no way of 'proving' it but I believe that the *artwords* that I produced to help me to leave my home in Belgrave, allowed me to come to terms with the loss of what would be left behind. I took my memories enclosed within the pages of an altered book: representations of their essence (like haiku) including flowers, birds, possums; the beautiful fireplace surround that I restored; a ceiling rose I had painstakingly painted, a crystal chandelier from a bygone

era. It encloses my *Melbourne House* (the title of the book I cut through) as a unit of memory. I paid homage to and said goodbye to the small detail in that landscape and took the book to my new home like coals carried from one hearth to another. I also believe that stopping to look at and touch road kill and then making knitted representations of the dead creatures assisted me in grasping the reality of the death of my brother – making physical and embodied what was unreal, hearsay at a distance from South Africa. Although I have made a Memorial Sampler for my paternal grandmother and my visit to Brighton, the poem that I wrote and printed on my first school embroidery project to commemorate my mother's death is the closest I can get to an expression of that particular pain.

I had previously used sewing and poetry to represent my maternal grandmother's heritage in Richmond, Victoria and took note of the connection thus established but also the response of others to my work. Sometimes they seemed confused that this was part of an academic study so schooled are we to only think of a thesis as words on a page but perhaps too it was not really what could be defined as 'Art' with a capital 'A. When I incorrectly typed *artwords* rather than artworks, this slip of the fingers produced a good descriptor. People seem to readily remember my cut-up books, or funny old cloth covered in words, embroidery and a variety of ephemera although they may forget leafing through or attempting to read a long document. As one friend asked referring to my Honours thesis: do I have to read it all? When people have such busy lives, art is a fast-food form of communication. My sense is that I am trying to build relatedness to place through various art forms – to come closer to the subject in an intimate way.

In *Bookmarks* I have looked to the literature of place, and the manner in which landscape is described in works of literature; there are also significant stories bookmarked for future reference. In reading some of the literature of South Africa, I felt a sense of regret at what I had missed and wished that I had had the chance to have inculcated as a young person the different landscapes perspectives exposed in books such as Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (1883; 1976). Coetzee (1988) however, describes it as fitting into the genre of literature of the 'unsettled settlers' – those whites with an uncertain future in South Africa. It may be about a farm but is anti-pastoral, he says with the landscape portrayed by Schreiner as "rock and sun, not soil and water and cannot be domesticated ... this landscape remains alien, impenetrable, until a language is found in which to win it, speak it, [and] represent it" (1988:7). In fact I wondered if he was insinuating that it is with the advent of Afrikaans that the landscape could be described and thus domesticated. There is an atmosphere that I felt in reading *Story of an African Farm* that is captured in English, however, including a spiritual response to place that I found captivating. In Bessie Head's books she describes Botswana, where she is a migrant (born of mixed race parents in South Africa). As an outsider, she can appreciate the landscape in a different way to the long-term residents. Her book *Where Rain Clouds Gather* (1986) is essentially a love story between a man and woman and of her growing love for a beautiful, evocative landscape, having arrived there as she did

as a refugee. It is good literature without a particularly strong political voice to justify its publication or to attract an overseas audience, and I could read it without the emotional upheaval of guilt and shame that lies at the heart of so much of 'Black writing'. Another work of English fiction that is set in the Karoo is by Pauline Smith entitled *The Little Karoo* (1925). How I wished these works were included as set works school rather than books such as *John Halifax, Gentleman* – a proscribed book for English by Dinah Murlock Craik published in 1856 that was an account of an orphan boy in the changing conditions in England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries). Smith's book has been identified as fitting within a genre that represents the very essence of what is the White South African story of struggle, settlement and defining experience (Plomer in the Introduction, Smith, 1925: 17).

I consider that I have broadened my knowledge and understanding of South Africa through reading literature: classics of my childhood and more recent works by black writers. I was reading their works with one aim: to find out how landscape had been represented and the imprints it made on past generations especially my forebears arriving in South Africa from different corners of Europe and Australia. Reading a book is to enter an intimate sphere: You are one-on-one with the author as they expose their attitudes and opinions in their stories, just as I have done with this work. I had grown up as though I lived in Britain with the literature at school the classics of English: Dickens, Shakespeare and Austen apart from those written in Afrikaans and not my first language. The history of South Africa was of the landing of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English; the refreshment station at the Cape to serve the ships travelling to the East, the Great Trek, The Zulu Wars and the Boer War. By reading the iconic literature of South Africa, I hoped to broaden my view of the landscape as my forebears experienced it and to add other dimensions to what had been a narrow education. I was aware that while I wished to learn more about Aboriginal culture in Australia, I was largely ignorant of the indigenous people of South Africa and had read very little literature by black writers there. Although I had included an entire chapter devoted to the South African fiction that I read while there, I have had to delete it from this document given the required word count but it has informed my thinking regarding that landscape and land-culture as well as going partway to filling the gap in my education.

In The Netherlands it was difficult to find English translations of classic Dutch fiction, or non-fiction for that matter. I was told that very little has been translated into English by one second-hand book dealer. I did find one book that was illuminating, luckily, and I was able to glean some interesting insights into such notions as space, the perception of the physical area that surrounds a town or small area, that was under control as familiar and local, beyond which was unknown and therefore unsafe. It was an indication of the extent of what was humanised in comparison with the vastness of wilderness in Australia or Africa. Parents had little concern for the safety of children getting lost such as the fear instilled in the Australian psyche; children were told just to go and play and to be back at a certain time.

The background sounds were entirely different to what we may have been encountered the places I have lived in, in Australia or South Africa. This is the sort of detail that is not included in history books.

I often did find books in appropriate places to inform my research process: Basho's book of haiku turned up at a market stall in South Africa and a book about the *kabouters* (gnomes) was also at a second hand bookstall in The Netherlands. It linked the gnomes mythical location depicted in the book to the reality in the landscape in Drenthe as were the illustrations of *hunebedden* (dolmens) in an old Drenthe school reader to what still stands in the landscape. Although I had previously read Margaret Drabble's fictional works, I was excited to find her book, entitled *A Writer's Britain: Landscape in Literature* (1979) on a fund-raising table at a school museum in the UK, in which she identified landscape representations in the classics of English literature thus linking my expectations and perception of places I encountered in England to the literature I have read over the years.

In conclusion then I come to Benchmarks: Where am I up to? What more can I do? What are the current trends in migratory studies, and the gaps that others have recognised in the research?

Looking back then to what this study has achieved, of most relevance is the building of a self-creating identity in relation to the landscape/place through direct engagement – creating a space in daily living for an experience; to evoke a feeling – an emotional reaction given expression through art practices such as story-telling, writing and art. Eleanor Park helps in legitimising the practice of Place Studies, when she said in her novel *A Timeless Land,* and quoted by Mulligan and Hill (in their consideration of *Australian Ecological Thought and Action*, 2001) that "she clearly set out to show that people intuitively search for their identity in a better understanding of the land", and although, "the word 'ecology' was not in vogue in her time, her interest in the relationships between people and landscapes could be described as 'human ecology'" (2001:5). Mulligan and Hill define human ecology as a: "Comprehensive way of looking at the earth's fabric of life… all living organisms of the earth as an interacting whole" (2001:5). What we learn from relating to place, I have termed 'land-culture' and what we take away is a landscape imprint and our place stories that are at the core of a self-creating identity practice towards enhancing a sense of place and belonging.

I set out to write this thesis with a conceptual framework that encompassed embodiment through kinaesthetic learning: travel and physical in-place landscape experience, art-in-place, and art-of-place, I have found an affinity in Place Studies and phenomenology. Our relationship with landscape/place I believe falls under five broad categories: historical, cultural, geographical, spiritual and an emotional/creative expression of the previous four. My travelling to locations where my forebears originated from as well as local history where I now live is in the historical/cultural domain. The concerns I have regarding the ecology of the environment and gaining knowledge about the geographical features are of importance in my connection to landscape. On a spiritual level I want to acknowledge Indigenous

beliefs in Australia but also to acknowledge the influence, history and beliefs of the black population in South Africa that surrounded me as a young person. I discovered spiritual landscapes in the United Kingdom and Ireland that brought an awakening to a Celtic Paganism that spoke to my innate desire for my own indigenous spiritual tradition. My emotional connection relates to a social group and the stories we create in landscape that I feel supports me, or am sometimes challenged by, such as friends and of course, my family. All of these dimensions demand time and energy to sustain and if I am to express my creativity in writing and art, that emerge from all of the previous four dimensions. There needs to be balance in the five dimensions, I believe, and like all place theories it is not a cookie cutter or template that can necessarily apply to all migrants or others seeking a stronger connection to where they live but is a methodology and a set of tools that could be useful.

# Conclusion

An example of what has been called 'yarn bombing': An anonymous artist made this crocheted piece attached to a gate that opens to the site of what was the first coal mine in Wonthaggi. There is a generous sharing of this art-form in an open gallery – a type of graffiti that raises questions that are open-ended as is my thesis.
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 2012]

Looking back then, my sense of identity as a migrant of 31 years to Australia was flawed. I continued at times to feel more like an observer than a participant in this society and culture. Although I had progressed my Australian story and heritage to some extent with the work I did in my Honours Thesis (2007), I recognised the potential of this methodology. Could I establish a broader identity further afield by looking back before I could move forward? In any case, in order to observe the space where you are standing, you have to move your feet out of the way and my travels overseas were to find out where I am and how I came to be here. I went back to my birthplace and childhood places to retrieve, re-remember, re-write and fabricate my story; using an embodied-kinaesthetic methodology from a Place Studies/phenomenological stance. I wished to draw a clearer picture of identity in terms of the influences that continue to colour my world. These include my upbringing and education in South Africa where I was born, and the political situation and Apartheid system which so strongly shaped the population as a whole and most importantly led to our migrating. In addition there are the influences of my parents who were a mixture of colonial backgrounds: my mother whose father was a Scot and her mother, of Irish origins but born in Australia in the 1880s. They subsequently immigrated to South Africa. As regards my father, his father was mostly likely to have had Dutch/Belgian forebears and his mother English/French.

Despite our mixed heritage, my father has said that we were "fiercely British". I do not feel fiercely British. My sense is that our heritage is much broader and manifests in a number of different ways. The logic I contrived is of a self with different physical and emotional characteristics derived from different cultures and landscapes/places and in each of those places I was retrieving it. While a topo-analysis requires an analysis of the places one has experienced and inhabited throughout life, and "a narrative construction of self with a stronger focus on place" (Birkeland, 2005:110), my analysis was of the places not only I had inhabited but where my forebears had lived.

When I read back over my application for an American Field Service scholarship as I finished high school in 1965, written on an old Olivetti typewriter with a blue ribbon, I was reminded of what had been my goals for the future: I wanted to write my way around the world and paint – the idealism of youth! The scholarship enabled me to attend high school and live with a family in the United States for a year as an exchange student. It was a life-changing experience at the impressionable age of 18 and I went home with new ideas and a broader worldview. Writing my way around the world may have been a self-fulfilling prophecy, when I set this down as my life goal but in the end I have travelled a great deal and lived in many different places. I am aware now that my forebears were from different countries because they too were migrating people, they all left their homes to go to faraway countries, and sometimes the rest of the family followed them. It is in my genes to go. The Bible story of the prodigal son, I recognise, too may have influenced me: I found my place in the family by leaving and was feted on my return. I was the much-loved daughter/sister returning to the fold, the centre of attention for awhile as the second-born girl wanting recognition.

To travel overseas, is to reinforce the sense of being 'other' - as a migrant in Australia I already feel 'other' and so to travel is just to validate this condition. According to Anna Smith "writers and artists are permanent travellers because travel is a permanent condition in a way where life is an extraordinary existence at the edges of meaning" pointing to the liminal space of travel as inspiration for creativity (cited in Birkeland, 2005:93). Armando, the Dutch writer and filmmaker who Suleiman (1998) discussed, chose exile saying that one should write or paint that which hides itself between knowing and understanding (not what one knows). My going to new heritage places and back to old landscapes was in some respects the pursuit of Armando as he circled as a silent witness – in his case it was the unspeakable results of war that he did not write about – but had a privileged viewpoint as an outsider to read the traces of what was there like footprints (Suleiman, 1998).

My theory of being-in-place physically to experience the landscape, and using my hands in sewing or knitting or to write haiku, as an extension of that performance is to express an emotional response as a method of "fabric-ating" – a form of what I have termed *embodied-kinaesthetic* learning. My samplers are of different places embroidered in a form of script, to materialise and hold down memories, *stitched into place* before they are lost in the overwhelming onslaught of images, information

and daily experience. The threads created in writing, sewing, embroidery and knitting, also serve as lines that I can follow back and forth – like the songlines of Aboriginal belief systems – they connect me to my heritage and anchor me in place where formerly I felt I was floating and unattached. As my work is about landscape and land culture, I can revisit places in memory where I incorporated my story into the bigger story as well. Although there is an increasing interest in tracing one's genealogy, the relevant information may not be available, or it may just be names and dates with little context. They are the connections to be uncovered and worked on: *fabric-ated* in an embodied-kinaesthetic approach to relate to landscapes and land cultures that shaped one's forebears and played a role in forming the person one has evolved to be.

I am reminded that one of the first books I read as I commenced my research was Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines* (1987) and return thus to his assertion, that we are by nature, nomadic. Nomadism is a state of mind I believe: it is the urge to be 'on the move' but cannot always be obeyed as one's life is complicated by relationships, employment and possessions, resulting in a restlessness and dissatisfaction with where one is. Chatwin said that

> psychiatrists, politicians, tyrants are forever assuring us that the wandering life is an aberrant form of behaviour; a neurosis; a form of unfulfilled sexual longing; a sickness which, in the interests of civilisation, must be suppressed ... people with wandering in their genes, like Gipsies and Jews, the Nazis said had no place in a stable Reich. Yet in the East, they still preserve the once universal concept: that wandering re-establishes the original harmony which once existed between man and the universe (1987:199).

Despite my nomadic urgings, my flimsy root development, like that of the Karoo Ice plant, now has a stronger hold on the land sending down a deep tap root like the Karoo bush, the contrasting species identified by Schreiner in South Africa, in describing their adaptation to the harsh environment (1923; 1976). I know that I have found my *Oude Kerk* – what I wished for in The Netherlands – it is the call of the Kookaburras, synonymous with my previous home in Belgrave but also audible where I have moved to in Wonthaggi. When I was in South Africa it was the 'Bottle Bird', the call of Burchell's Coucal sounds like water being poured from a bottle. I feel enriched by the experience of doing this thesis and identifying my seven marks of place identity in landscape and land culture. I am excited, too about the prospect of sharing my methodology as innovative and transformative with others who share an interest in this field as well as those members of society who feel displaced and are seeking to connect and find a greater sense of place and belonging in Australia.

## Postscript:

There was mystery surrounding my paternal grandfather's heritage (we did not know whether his forebears come from Belgium, Scandinavia or the Netherlands – there appeared to be no way to find out what the true story was as he had been raised by relatives). More information has recently (2014) come to light when a distant family member found me on *Facebook* and requested that I contribute to the family tree he has assembled. It was exciting to discover our descendant, Martinus Aegidius Theunissen who left Maastricht in Limburg, The Netherlands 250 years ago to go to South Africa as an employee of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). I also discovered that the family had owned a well known winery for four generations: the Vergelegen Winery in the Cape (Somerset West, South Africa) which still exists and is most likely to be the site of a family reunion to be held in October, 2014. Going right back to the 1700s, it turns out that our Theunissen family origins which my father maintained was Belgian is true with the genealogy traced back to a Petrus Theunissen in Limburg, Belgium. It is sufficient now to have links to Maastricht and Limburg where I recently visited with my daughter and family but to have the names of over 3000 extended family members is less significant. My father who passed away not knowing any of this information, would have loved to know about the family history of wine-making, a keen interest he had. He was always reluctant to speak of family history (my grave-digging he called it) and ironically his reluctance to uncover the possibly unsavoury details of his forebears prevented his knowing a history that he could have been quite proud of (apart from some of the less than savoury activities of the Dutch East India Company).

Artist unknown, yarn bombing has now filled the gate and the message is: Be Inspired! On the Wonthaggi Rail Trail that runs adjacent to the Mc Bride's coal mine site. The old mine rescue station building is in the background.
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 2014]

# Appendices

## Everyday Embodied-kinaesthetic Performance of landscape and land-culture practice

Fern frond painted on fabric and on adjoining page words are highlighted to write a new story in an altered book
[Photo and artwork: F.B. Dent, 2010]

### Introduction

The following examples indicate the variety of approaches that can be performative of an embodied-kinaesthetic methodology as an everyday practice in place-making. Prior to leaving my home in Belgrave to move to the coast after the fires of 2009, I decided to make transitional objects to assist in my relocation; the second, was a response to the horror of road carnage and my attempts to find an outlet for the emotions that arose; the third, expressed my interest in the intriguing history of Harmers Haven beach, close to my new home in Wonthaggi.

In making transitional objects to leave my home in Belgrave, I decided to experiment with the art-form described as altered books. I first came across this art-form in a tiny shop in the small village of Puhoi on the North Island of New Zealand. While selling art materials, the owner also had her work on sale that were examples of altered books and she referred me to websites devoted to the topic. I was so

motivated both by the novelty and the aesthetics of what she had achieved that I had to try my hand at it as well. The practice of altering books is described as a form of post-modern art that varies from art journal to book sculpture in a mixed media artwork that changes a book from its original form, into a different form and usually also alters its meaning. If they are to be displayed in the public arena they need to be out of copyright or altered beyond recognition. The practice of 'upcycling' has led some artists to reflect on the changing nature of books in our society through this medium. One of the earliest examples was by Tom Phillips (1966) who used a book entitled: *The Human Document* to make his book *A Humument*. Phillips changed all 367 pages of a book inserting intricate colourful designs leaving a stream of connected words that were not obliterated with paint. There is an International Society of Altered Book Artists as well as a magazine to link and support people who are interested in the medium.

Altering books is a practice that involves different processes such as cutting into, burning, tearing, sticking things over text, drawing and painting, and in my case, incorporating embroidered fabric into the pages. Holly Harrison (2003) in introducing altered books speaks of the emotions that surface regarding our relationship with books when some are quite appalled at the idea of drawing in a book much less cutting it up – in fact as she says we probably all have memories of being admonished as children when we did such things and there is an element of deviance even subversiveness in the practice as a consequence. Having worked with an organisation establishing Opportunity Shops, however, I knew about the numbers of books that end up in recycle bins or even garbage and was able thus to overcome my reluctance to cut into a book. Although I did stop short when it came to the book that I purchased in The Netherlands, I could not bring myself to put my work over the text or cut into it. In fact I used my stitching as it is used in bookbinding, to repair the pages that were falling out. Its fragile, decaying pages would not take much punishment and I carefully stitched my work on the blank pages instead, feeling quite guilty about defacing this historical document but bought at a market for only five Euros. I have attached Dutch dressed dolls to the covers to give it stability in standing as a bookend now with a new purpose. What is interesting in Harrison's (2003) discussion of the medium is that it enables one to produce a body of work all 'under one cover' and I would add that it is also an alternative form of framing and safe-keeping for precious work.

## Embodied-kinaesthetic Practice 1: *Artwords*: On Leaving Belgrave

Early on in my research, I moved from Belgrave in the Dandenong Ranges to Wonthaggi, 6 km from the coast. There were aspects of the house, the garden, the animal and birdlife that were special and I would miss when we left. I took photographs but also decided to make small mixed-medium representations using patchwork fabrics, paints and embroidery cottons to take with me as transitional objects to help me to leave and make a new home elsewhere. I started with a leaf from a tree-fern, then flowers from other trees and shrubs that had bloomed each year such as the magnificent Rhododendrons. I then set about trying to represent them in some art-form. There were also aspects of the building itself that I loved. It is a beautiful majestic house built in 1927 with many of the original features such as paper wallpaper, crystal chandeliers, and an open fireplace. Given that the house stood on a hill surrounded by enormous Mountain Ash Eucalypts, we lived amongst the birds and the possums. The kookaburras were our closest friends although the Crimson Rosellas, King Parrots and Rainbow Lorikeets were glorious too. The possum that was the most remarkable was an albino and when she had her grey/brown baby clung to her back in stark contrast to her white colouring.

It is, I believe, an illustration of what Barry Lopez (in Craig, 2002) spoke of as the need to become vulnerable to a place in order to build intimacy. This intimacy is risky however, as one can feel an intense sadness in terms of the loss that will eventuate as was my case in embroidering aspects of my home and realising that I would be leaving them. They would be vulnerable to others who may not appreciate their innate beauty, may be ripped apart and destroyed in some modernisation project for example, possum traps might be set to get rid of them, or plants pulled out to make way for pathways. Leaving is inevitable eventually, we only are custodians of place for awhile after all and one can only deal with the here and now. I took with me the essence of my previous home to make a new home, enclosed in a book and sharing it with others enables them to feel something of what I felt far more than a photograph could do, I believe. These embroideries and poetry in what I call *Artwords* are incorporated into the pages of an old book appropriately entitled *Melbourne House,* by Susan Warner (1913 approximately). I highlighted certain words on the page to write a poem:

A little girl, coming down a flight of stairs,
her feet pause on each stair, her hand on the rail, thoughtful,
out of the house, looked wistfully, the open door,
the sunlight came in and looked at her, thoughtful eyes,
the sunlight which poured all over her,
trees and flowers, the sunlight, wistfully, breezy,
on a couch, a book,
of lavender, a cushion, dainty with roses,
white dress, know something, mother,
sound in the woods, by an open window,
the large porch,

crunching of the gravel, into the house,
gravelled road, under the great trees,
great beautiful trees, overshadowed the ground,
a flowering bush, green, white, red flowers.
The beautiful grass and the trees, grey rock
(Derived from the full text of *Melbourne House* by Warner, 1913: 1-3)

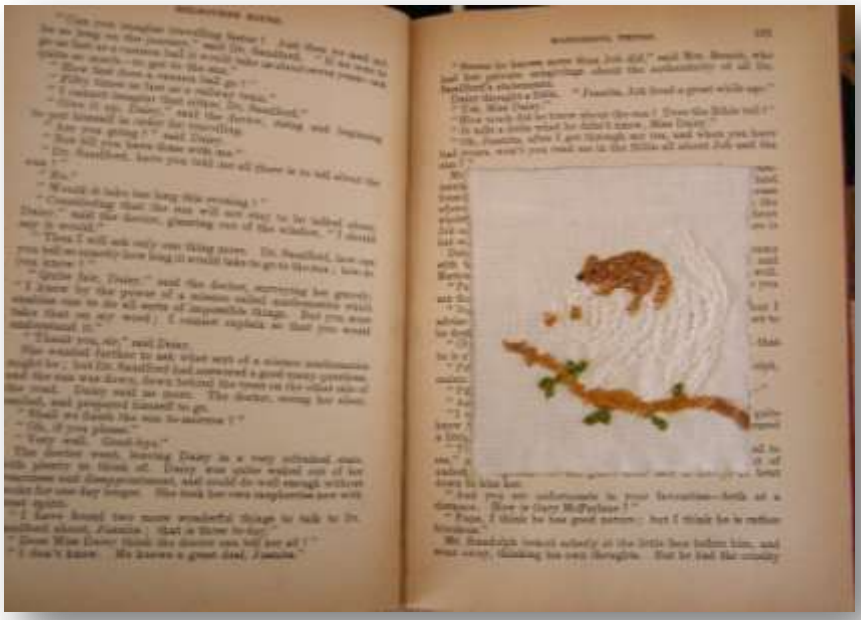
And ...

The parable, sparkle, bright, home
sun is almost down, home
taking care, house, sundown
alone, wood, home
sense, an unknown, unexpected
reason had little to do with it
thoughts, wishes, free, truth
[Derived from the full text of *Melbourne House*, by Warner, 1913: 1-3]

## Embroideries in an Altered Book

### Birds and Animals

Kookaburra embroidered on calico using variegated cotton [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]



Albino possum and baby at our house at Belgrave embroidered on linen
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

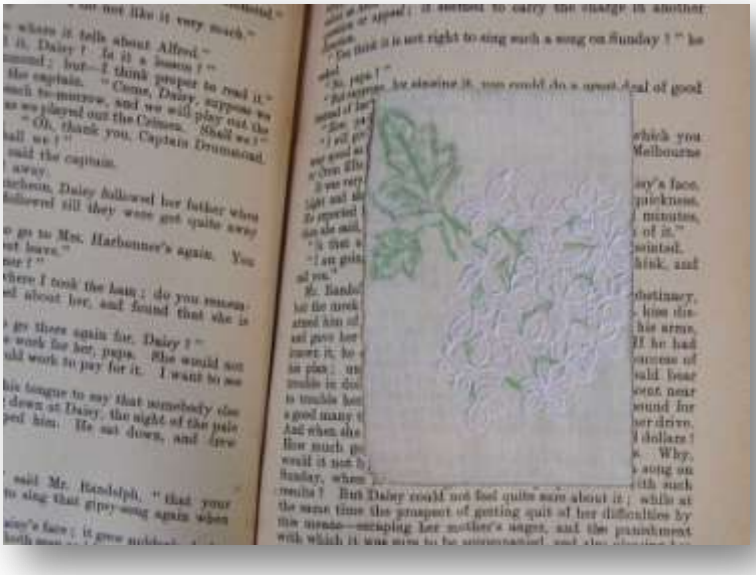
## Flowering Shrubs and Trees

This beautiful tree blossomed each spring outside the kitchen door [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

The English tree-palms were as tall as the second-storey of the house, on 1800s replica fabric
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Rhododendrons, the size of tall trees filled the beautiful old garden, 1800s replica fabric
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

A white-flowering shrub [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]



Another white-flowering shrub [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

# House Features

The fireplace I appliquéd/embroidered on 1800s replica fabric that echoed the old wallpaper
[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

Crystal chandelier and Pressed Ceiling
[Photo: F. B. Dent, 2010

## Conclusion

I believe that making this book helped me to leave my beautiful home – it is an example of transitional art but also a way of becoming more intimate with aspects of place. As one attempts to know something well enough in order to make some sort of representation of it, there is a close encounter which is not present with the usual casual glance.

## Photo Journal: Belgrave

Kookaburras posing to be photographed and embroidered [F.B. Dent, 2010]

Our previous home at Gully Crescent, Belgrave [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2010]

## Embodied-kinaesthetic Practice 2: Interrogating Australian Place: Road Kill

Another example of my methodology as an everyday practice concerns the issue of 'Road Kill' or road carnage which was also the subject of a presentation that I gave to my fellow PhD candidates at Spring School (2011). First I will briefly review the conceptual approach, background, the methodology, the data collection process and findings.

### Background

Road kill was an issue that confronted me in all its graphic gore travelling between Wonthaggi and Churchill since I moved from Belgrave on a monthly basis to go to Monash University. There are places where I enjoy the view, see the rosellas pecking on the side of the road, observe the progress of nature's recovery from the bushfires, the properties for sale, the small towns along the way. I have a relationship of 'moving through' these sites. But that August I was shocked that there were so many dead animals beside the road, dotted along the journey. On the return trip, I decided to stop and to take photographs. It was a deliberate attempt to force myself to confront the sadness and fear I felt for looking at something that was dead. Smith describes Road Kill as a "… a quivering expression of a crumbling world of lost attachments" (2009:22). The animals caught between development and their habitat are losing their world of attachment although some mange to eke out a living in the narrow space between the farmers field and the road. Probably we are all conscious of the break in fluidity of the road and surrounding landscape by the sight of a dead animal on the side of the road. We are not desensitized as yet, one hopes. Smith "feels the same apprehension at every approaching shape lying on the morning's roadside, the same 'relief'" when it turns out to be an old sack (2009:23). In one instance, a dead kangaroo that I saw was marked with a bright pink cross and had a beer bottle beside it insinuating that both were just litter to be collected from the roadside. The X marks it as checked and ready for removal (see photograph). It set me thinking about my prior experience of the death of animals.

### Prior Experience of Animal Death

I have had to deal with many domestic animals dying over the years including the horrendous experience of running over my dearly beloved old cat not realising he had followed me down to the car from where he had been asleep on the verandah as I walked past. Living in South Africa, the death of wild animals is an everyday occurrence although I never had the misfortune of killing a wild animal on the road. Recently when I was there, the early morning news broadcasts frequently included accounts of rhinos killed for their horn to supply the demands of the Chinese aphrodisiac market. Without fencing regulations there were always domestic animals killed by cars lying beside the road that I remember as a child. In the Kruger National Park, we would drive around looking for a 'kill' – it was the experience everyone was seeking. On visiting the Whaling Station at Durban as a child, I remember the smell of a

whale that was being cut up for its blubber and feeling horrified when at the age of 17, I saw a warehouse full of elephant feet from those culled ready for the production of various curios to sell to tourists.

At first I felt sad as I stopped to take photographs on the road back from Churchill but caught myself feeling angry with 'Australians' in general, wanting someone to blame. The profile of the driver who kills an animal took form in my mind: a young, Caucasian, Australian male driving a Ute too fast at night after drinking with his mates following football practice. He would not even stop to move the animal off the road or to check if there was a joey in its pouch. In fact he would laugh and tell the story the next day at work where he would be the hero and point to the damage to his car with irritation. Later people told me that it is the 'milk trucks' that kill animals (not the drivers). "It came out of nowhere…" Smith reminds us is what people say when they have hit an animal but is also a means to deflect our responsibility and place it on the animal which presumably should have been coming out of somewhere (2009:32). Geography is defined as excluding the emotional, he says (2009) but when one decides to confront and come face-to-face with death, the response is emotional. On the road, what lies between the dots on the map … "is an emotionally charged middle ground …" as Smith says (2009:21) but it is only when we stop that we become aware of it.

### Primary Research: Direct experience and taking photographs

[Photos: F.B. Dent, 2011]

This data was just to illustrate what occurred in a brief two week period on the local roads that I travel on. Between Wonthaggi and Churchill on 26th August 2011, there were four dead wombats and one dead kangaroo. Between Grantville and Pioneer Bay on 17th September 2011, there was one dead kangaroo. On the road between Cape Paterson and Inverloch on 29th August 2011, there were two dead wombats.

[Photo: F.B. Dent, 2011]

"Others are permitted to share so little of our world" (Smith, 2009:21) [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2011]

Framing and representation: a beautiful photograph that hides the carnage on the road.
It was the only 'tourist' photo I took [Photo: F.B. Dent 2011]

## Secondary Research Sources

I went on the internet to find out more about wombats. I could not remember if they had tails? Where was their pouch? Which way did it face? Why were so many killed at this time of the year? I found a program that had been on *Catalyst* ("Road Kill", 2003) concerning Road Kill and experiments that involved the use of synthetic dog urine sprayed on identified hot spots. There were also volunteers who were monitoring road carnage organised as a research program by Dr Daniel Ramp at University of NSW. I found out that there is a Wombat Protection Society.

## Invitation to Action

Jeremy Foster speaks about the invitation to action, when we open ourselves up and take personal action. In his view our perceptions of the physical world are "neither a passive registering nor an active imposing of a meaning"... to sense something is to coexist or commune with it, to open oneself to it and make it one's own prior to any reflection is a personal act that becomes "a perceptual field that is an invitation to action" (Foster, 2008:82).

I investigated measures that are taken to protect wildlife and took photographs of relevant signage on roads. I asked a friend who works at the community house if she could organise a workshop so that we could learn what to do should we hit an animal or find it dead. I also looked for a course to take so that I could learn to care for injured wildlife. I found some literature that I had about wombats: *Death*

*of a Wombat* by Ivan Smith with illustrations by Clifton Pugh (1972); and the children's book: *The Muddle-headed Wombat is very bad* by Ruth Park with illustrations by Noela Young (1981). I wanted to know how the wombat was represented in these stories. Ruth Park's wombat is rather selfish and stupid while the story by Ivan Smith is tragic pointing to the Australian experience of bushfire, but in this instance is the result of human selfishness and stupidity – a broken bottle that sparks the fire. In this story the wombat is a victim just as it is in road carnage. I also had a copy of *Wombat Stew* by Marcia K. Vaughan (1984). In this story a dingo catches a wombat and all the other animals offer ideas as to what to contribute to the pot to make a good stew – the suggestions are all in an effort to save the wombat of course and the stew is inedible before the wombat is even put in the pot. It indicates that the other Australian animals are united against the predator and obviously the wombat is well-liked amongst his colleagues in the bush. I guess the dingo is a more recent migrant in any case.

The issue of road kill was the subject of a number of studies that I found online (accessed - 16/09/11):

- In South Africa: [*www.roadkillresearch.wordpress.com/*].
- Another in Tasmania presents data that indicates that this state has the worst road kill numbers in the world [*www.gadling.com/2009/04/02/tasmania-roadkill-capital-of-the-world/].*
- Another asked the question: What happens in the "road effect zone?" The *road-effect zone* is the area in which ecological effects extend outward from a road [*www.esajournals.org ›* Feb 11, 2011].
- A co-student gave me a print-out from a blog entitled *art and etc: little birdie*, written by a book artist, Rhonda Ayliff (rhondaayliff.blogspot.com/2011/07 little-birdie.html) who had the misfortune of hitting a Boobook owl, she expressed how she felt about the unfortunate event in a poem with a photograph of the injured animal. Other bloggers commented on the experience of hitting an animal as "a sickening thud" and another said that "rural life holds some hard things".

Coincidently there was an article in the local newspaper (20/09/2011) that week that reported on a roadside memorial that a driver put up after he hit a kangaroo:

# Was this sincere?

roadside remembrance

Profile of driver: plumber working at the Desal plant. What did his mates think?

Surprisingly then in this week's local paper was a memorial to a dead kangaroo and article about the person who hit it:

As a result of the article and viewing the memorial I felt slightly less anger towards the profiled drivers who commit road kill although this particular driver was not entirely redeemed as he had not shown respect for the kangaroo by leaving one of its feet sticking out of the ground – just a touch of humour for his mates I imagine.

In confronting the reality of the dead animals that I photographed, I sensed that I became 'other' to myself as Kristeva had said (1991). I moved into the space of the other and confronted what is abject. My stopping to take the photos of animals was not predictable or planned. Other people were not doing the same thing – it was not my usual behaviour not that of others in fact it was quite dangerous, some would say even reckless. I am usually afraid of death. I only watch animal documentaries until there is some threat of death and then switch channels. On this occasion I had to force myself to touch the kangaroo, the smell on my hands did not wash off that day. It was a performance that with each subsequent dead animal became a ritual. Foster, spoke of "the landscape encounter [that] becomes the ontological event of identity formation, a performance in which terrain and the (cultural) body-subject are conjointly characterised" (2008:84) and I was writing the performative script – there was no usual way of photographing dead animals as a cultural practice and I was risking my status as an acceptably behaved older woman in society, who carried the burden of stereotypes

regarding women-drivers, and to add to the stigma, I was driving of all cars, a Volvo! Being a migrant could have been on the radar too, when most Australians perhaps hardly notice dead animals along the road. They have been de-sensitised over the years 'seeing they're only Roos' after all. A performative action is not predictable from the elements that were there to start with, Foster says, it is the landscape itself that engenders a certain way of moving, "a spatial choreography that is a characteristic and integral to its affective meaning as its visual appearance" he said (2008:88). The passing motorists were staring from their cars and one driver hooted – it was a performance with unknown consequences but luckily I did not add to the road toll on that occasion or subsequently during other journeys as I stopped at each such event, when it seemed safe enough to do so. During the next few days, I brought up the topic of road kill in conversations with various groups of people and was open for the reaction. I was even moved to attempt to write poetry:

Road Carnage, road-kill
Warm fur, warmed by the sun
I gently stroked the kangaroo
It felt alive
Dried blood, staring eyes
No – the warmth was deceiving
I told it 'I was sorry' that its life had ended.
I marvelled at its physical body – so strong, so perfect, buck teeth for chewing grass.
I returned to my car, tearful, upset, powerless
I stopped further on to speak to a wombat
He was on his back, exposed, excretion interrupted, half way out
I went home and decided to knit a wombat
I stayed with the experience

I decided to attempt to knit representations of the dead animals. It would be like a memorial to their passing, and I would not forget them – in fact if other people saw my attempts they might be moved to take some action on the passing of these beautiful creatures. I had no pattern to follow of course and had to study the anatomy of the animals in pictures when I could not remember for example if the wombat had a tail or not. The kangaroo looked more like a squashed possum when I was finished but as they are also frequently victims of road kill, it did not matter.

"Still Life" by F. B. Dent [Photos: F.B. Dent, 2011]

## Analysis of my Actions

Not only did I build intimacy with the dead animal but I built intimacy with the places where the animals lay dead by stopping and made myself vulnerable to the issue of Road Kill on these occasions, rather than just feeling sad as I drive by, and trying not to look as I usually do. Now when I drive by those particular places, I remember what happened there. By extension will others feel an intimacy and vulnerable to place by what I write and what I make as a visual cue as Lopez suggested (2002). Knitting animals helped me to express my grief, I believe as an emotional release. I called them 'Still Life' – a play on that art form, and the suggestion that there may still be life in an animal hit on the road. Information including the contact numbers for Wildlife Rescue is on the tag attached to its foot like a cadaver in the morgue. When I presented 'Road Kill' as a talk at a Doctoral Intensive Spring School event at Monash University, I was asked about the notion of "abandonment" and I realised in retrospect perhaps I had been confronting the death of my brother – he was found alone dead beside his bed. The other question I was asked was how knitting the dead animals had helped my 'knowing'. This was another good question to help me to think about my method in practice. My knowing was a deeper relationship with wombats and their place in the Australian landscape, I learned about programs to prevent road kill and realised I was not alone in my concern. I had confronted what is 'abject' in this project. I recognised the opposing images of cuddly toy with dead animal.

## Embodied-kinaesthetic Practice 3: Sedge, the feral cat at Harmers Haven

The following is a piece of creative writing that I wrote after seeing a feral cat on the way to my favourite walking beach (it is too rocky for swimming) in the Bunurong Marine Park. Sedge is a native grass that grows there but I adopted it to name an over-sized grey feral cat that slunk down into the drainage pipe as I drove down the dirt track leading to the beach. I was torn between feeling in awe of its heroic struggle to survive and the threat that feral cats hold for the endangered Hooded Plovers (referred to as HP's in the story) that nest right on the beach as well as all the other native wildlife, of course. I tied in the intriguing history of the area as a Communist settlement, the wreck of the *Artisan*, a Canadian cutter, the Aboriginal history of the area and the shacks that stood along the beach built by the coal miners from nearby Wonthaggi where they spent their summers.

### Sedge – The feral cat of Harmers Haven

Large, grey tangled furred head, scrawny tail and matted body, Sedge was about the size of a red fox a help in many a fray with those aggressive critters. He lived 'on the edge' between Viminaria Road and the field, in that no man's land where the last vestiges of native bush are allowed to grow. When a car approached Sedge moved down into the ditch that took care of the water drainage along the road. He was a descendent of a long line of outcast cats, like many of the people who from time to time had found refuge at HH (Harmer's Haven) and he knew all about cars. He'd lost a few mates flattened on the road as well as wallabies and wombats reduced to road kill for those loud crows and squawky magpies to gorge on and that wasn't a fate he relished.

At one time, in those long ago days before Sedge was even a tiny kitten, there were only rough tracks for horses or jinkers and people came on foot mostly to camp at HH. Sometimes it was the sacked miners whose illegal holiday huts were more permanent homes when they couldn't afford to live in rented houses in Wonthaggi, home of the State Coal Mine or they lived there over Christmas when they got no holiday pay. Some young men were sacked when they turned 21 to avoid the payment of higher wages, and had to move out of their parental homes to get the meagre dole. No wonder the unions were strident then, fighting for better conditions and pay. People came to breathe the fresh air at HH a break from the dangerous fumes of the coal mines.

But Sedge knew nothing of this... most of the time now the row of holiday homes stood empty, built when the huts were demolished in 1956. Their owners lived in Melbourne on the whole and only spent time in the holiday period in their 'beach shack'. He did quite well then food-wise, picking up scraps, bait from the fishermen, bits and pieces strewn around the rubbish bins. The beach BBQ was often fruitful when bones and leftovers were tossed in the bushes. The rest of the year he lived on bird's eggs, lizards, rats and mice even the occasional baby snake. Children used to come out to 'The Wreck' his

mother's mother said, to play for hours around the Coal Creek looking for flotsam and jetsam from the *Artisan*, the Canadian cutter that ran aground in a violent storm, on the rock platform down this part of the coast. They used to build shelters out of t-tree and spend the night there – horror of horrors! Sedge mostly had the dunes to himself now as the children weren't allowed to roam. The water in the creek was too brackish to drink and Sedge had to find fresh water, sometimes the soak that had supplied the early residents was okay to drink and lately with all the rain he could just drink at the puddles on the beach track.

The children even then did not swim in the sea, it was too dangerous, they had a good swimming hole they'd made by damming up the creek, but of course they had to remake it every time they came down for a swim, as the sea would have washed it away. Sedge's only contact with the sea was the hope that a fish would be washed up in the tide and left stranded in between the huge clumps of seaweed that littered the high tide mark. Then there was the best delicacy, Hooded Plover Eggs. Those dumb birds laid their eggs right on the beach and then scurried around trying to keep them safe but Sedge was too clever for them, he'd wait until they were hungry and went off to search for food and he'd dive in. The baby birds were just as tasty. If Sedge didn't get them the tide would so he reckoned they were endangered either way so he may as well get a feed.

Sometimes Sedge found live shells: abalone was a favourite although that was quite rare now too. He'd gouge out the contents with his claws. He had no idea why there were piles of shells left in some places, these middens had been made long ago when the Bunurong people lived here but he had never seen a Bunurong person, they were long since wiped out from this part of the coast. If Sedge had been alive in the days of his mother's-mother'-mother, it would have been much more exciting living in HH and he'd have had more to look forward to than just HP season. This place was called 'Commie's Corner' once, oh dear, imagine that: people with strong political opinions – wanting to change the world and make it a better place for the ordinary worker (and didn't give a hoot about feral cats or Hooded Plovers then). There had even been a camp here once where people came to debate the big questions for the greater good even although their particular philosophy proved to be as flawed as the rest. Nowadays all people talked about was, how many investment properties they had and how many more tenants they could accommodate by dividing and dividing the small properties into a patchwork of tenements, or how their superannuation was performing or who was winning the 'footy' or Masterchef on TV. It was boring-boring -boring and Sedge didn't even bother to do what his mother's mother's-mother and her mother had done, hang around the humans listening to them going at it hammer and tongs (or hammer and sickle to be precise).

He remembered the story of Trugannini who lived on the dunes in this area, she was kidnapped at the age of only 18 from Bruny Island, was brought from Tasmania to civilise the local indigenous people and was arrested along with four others for murder. She and the other woman in the group were

sent to Flinders Island after the trial but the two men were the first Aborigines to be hanged in Melbourne for their crime in December 1841. At their trial the men were not permitted to give evidence or tell their side of the story because it was believed that they did not understand the notion of God and so could not swear to tell the truth on the Bible. There was a public outcry when the men were forced to climb a ladder to the gallows with their hands tied behind their backs. One of the men was Jack of Cape Grim who had had an axe to grind given that thirty of his tribe were thrown over a cliff in retaliation for the theft of sheep.

As his mother had always said, the Aborigines were treated like outlaws on their own land just as the feral cats were, although cats had come along with the white settlers on ships. Sedge like the miners, the whalers and the sealers was an interloper as were the cattle that grazed on the boggy, badly drained land that surrounded HH. Once there had even been a coal mine in HH although Sedge and his ilk had never seen the purpose of this dangerous business, chipping at black rocks in deep holes in the ground although some of the black rock was also in the rock platform and in Cape Paterson, there were spikes in the rocks where the railway line had run right down to the sea to load the boats.

There'd been a good feed once when an enormous whale beached itself at the Cape and Sedge remembers the stories of little kittens trying to gnaw on bits of blubber. The man who registered the find, processed the enormous creature right on the beach and Sedge had heard from one of the other feral cats that at Wonthaggi, 10k's away, a hotel had the whale jaw as part of the structure of its verandah.

HH was named after Eddie Harmer and Sedge's 2x mother's mother had said that he was a good guy as was his wife, Bessie. They'd always thrown their food scraps for the cats, unlike some of the other hut dwellers who shoo'd them away or locked them up in roughly made T-tree cages. Nowadays people were trying to do that too and the cats they caught just went away and were never seen again. Sedge got the impression that it was to do with the Hooded Plovers. It was usually when there were eggs or chicks that the humans started fussing around trying to look after them and Sedge thought that he ought to give up eating them, that way they'd give him a break too. So Sedge made a few mental notes:

1. Try not to get shot at, poisoned or trapped by Hooded Plover lovers.
2. Try not to eat Hooded Plover eggs and chicks.
3. Keep out of sight of Hooded Plover lovers.

## Fabric-ating Experience at Harmers Haven

Tea Cosy: The Beach at Harmers Haven, the Hooded Plovers and Sedge the feral cat with the white foaming water rushing up the shell-strewn sand; the volcanic rocks are represented by the grey base with a large orange crab and star-fish that are figurative rather than realistic
[Artwork & Photo: F. B. Dent, 2012]

Cliff-face at Harmers Haven [Photo: F.B. Dent, 2012]

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