A Peaceful Death?:
Kamilaroi French ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ for
‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’

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With the permission and involvement of Gamilaroi French ‘family’

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Abbreviations

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous
ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADR – Alternate Dispute Resolution
AECG - Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group
AHRC – Australian Human Rights Commission
AIATSIS - Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Islander Studies
ALRC - Australian Law Reform Commission
APB - Aborigines Protection Board
AWB - Aborigines Welfare Board
BAAC - Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative
BHN – Basic Human Needs
CAEPR - Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CPACS - Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies
CR – Conflict resolution
DoCS - Department of Community Services
FBO – Faith-Based Organisation
HREOC - Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
HTT - Historical Trauma Theory
ICGP - Indigenous Community Governance Project
IFaMP - Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project
IM – Indigenous Methodologies
IR – International Relations
MAKO - Movement Against Kindred Offenders
NADRAC - National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council
NAPLAN - National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
NNTT - National Native Title Tribunal
NSW – New South Wales
NT – Northern Territory
NTER - *Northern Territory Emergency Response, 2007* (NT)
NTRB - Native Title Representative Body
NTRU - Native Title Research Unit
PAR – Participatory Action Research
PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
QLD – Queensland
RA – Reconciliation Australia
RCIADIC - *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991*
SA – South Australia
SFNTB - *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill, 2011* (NT)
UHV – Upper Hunter Valley
VACCAC - Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Cooperative
WA – Western Australia
YAP/GAP - Young Ambassadors for Peace / Genuine Ambassadors for Peace
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This thesis is written for the Gamilaroi French ‘family’, towards eliminating all forms of prejudice, and towards a world that celebrates unity in diversity.
Abstract

This thesis addresses two fundamental questions: First, what are the root causes of Aboriginal experiences of violence in Australia today? Second, what cultural resources can be drawn upon to promote ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in response to this violence?

This thesis provides new insights into the extent and types of violence Aboriginal peoples are facing today. It draws out implicit Aboriginal frameworks and resources for addressing and transforming violence on an everyday level.

The research for this thesis is based upon Participatory Action Research and Indigenous Methodologies with an explicit applied anthropological focus. It was conducted with Gamilaroi French ‘family’ in the Upper Hunter Valley, NSW. Due to the contentious and confidential nature of the topic, explicit details of the local conflict and local Aboriginal experiences of trauma are not disclosed. Instead, an original methodological and conceptual framework is developed – ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ – as a framework designed to both uncover continuing settler colonial genocide, and to value and articulate resources for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. This thesis finds that there are vital ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ resources embedded in Kamilaroi French everyday sociality, implicit values, and historicised experiences, and argues that these need to be articulated in order to begin to redress ongoing settler colonial violence.

This thesis presents the first systematic, in-depth application of peacebuilding insights to Aboriginal experiences in Australia. It finds that Aboriginal peoples in Australia continue to experience significant levels of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence under settler colonialism. Silence continues to surround ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence and its effects. Consequently, most mainstream efforts to address Aboriginal experiences of violence fail to acknowledge underlying systemic causes; deny both Aboriginal trauma and resilience; and inadvertently exacerbate settler colonial violence. While some commentators recognise the need to address such shortcomings, to date no comprehensive, sustainable, integrated approach has been developed. This thesis presents ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as a valuable new methodological and conceptual framework to meet this need. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is modelled here to both make present settler colonial violence and associated Aboriginal trauma, and to recognise vital Aboriginal resources for addressing and transforming everyday violence.
“Aboriginal owners”¹

We aren’t Aboriginal
We are Aboriginal
We is what we believe
Or what others deceive

We don’t descend
Do we decrease
We must be all
For mankind to increase

We may of been born
Of Aboriginal descent
But I had to sustain
To inherit the rent

What is the payment
Of our decree
Proof condescending
Or responsibility?

Don’t let others
Show you the way
Their law tangible
Our land to play

Freeda Archibald

¹ Freeda wrote this poem shortly after the passing of the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) (NTA). She describes it as being “about native title, responsibility, what it means to be Aboriginal”.
Preface

It is racial, patriotic, religious and class prejudice, that has been the cause of the destruction of Humanity.


This thesis came about as a response to a call for support from a close Aboriginal friend and long-term research colleague, Freeda Archibald, to address new and intensifying forms of ‘internal’ Aboriginal conflict developing in her community in the Upper Hunter Valley, New South Wales (NSW). Such a call and response arose within the context of a relationship of twenty years with Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

The local conflict I refer to here does not centre on what might be called expected tensions over native title, male ‘family violence’, or alcohol ‘epidemics’, all currently prominent in the literature on violence in Aboriginal communities. Rather, this background conflict is more akin to the Halls Creek conflict described in Bauman and Pope (2009); a localised conflict arising

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1 I first met Freeda, her ‘family’, and other local Aboriginal ‘families’ in the Upper Hunter Valley as an undergraduate via Professor Richie Howitt of Macquarie University, in 1996. I conducted honours research there when Freeda was Coordinator of the Local Aboriginal Land Council (see Durney, 1999), and Social Impact Assessments in coordination with Freeda and the Land Council. We have kept in touch over the years since.

2 From the outset, Freeda Archibald has been the primary collaborator in this research. Over the years Freeda has been involved for decades, along with much of the rest of her ‘family’, in working to support and champion Aboriginal people generally in a wide range of educational, health, and justice capacities. From her record of active support, Freeda has a significant level of support across the community as a whole, but is naturally seen as more closely aligned with her own ‘family’.

3 Participants do not generally refer to themselves as the ‘Kamilaroi French’. Rather, they tend to use the word ‘Murris’ and to refer to groups of Aboriginal people more particularly according to their ‘family’ name. However, they know they are Gamilaroi and possess sophisticated knowledge of complex linkages between various ‘families’. The phrase ‘Kamilaroi French’ signals to the French ‘family’ that I am writing to those who do not know them, and in a broader native title context which is emphasising ‘clan’ connections. Although there are diverse spellings of this group name - Gomeroi, Gamilaraay, and so on - I use the spelling Kamilaroi or Gamilaroi interchangeably throughout the thesis since these are the spellings the participants use (without clear consensus on one ‘correct’ spelling). Throughout the thesis I swap between the two spellings, not necessarily precisely taking turns, but enough to unsettle the notion that these people are one thing, are easily ‘definable’, and that I have the right and expertise to ‘define’ them. Further, I do not prioritise one form of spelling over another since spelling itself can be a strong signifier of authority and identity for some participants.

4 Reference to ‘family’ is inverted throughout the thesis to signify the unique, complex nature of Aboriginal ‘families’ (see Chapter 5).

5 However, over the last ten years local community relations have deteriorated considerably due to native title, and today a White CEO runs the Land Council (see Chapter 5).

6 I use the term ‘Aboriginal’ rather than ‘Indigenous’ because this term – as well as ‘Black’ and ‘Blackfellas’ - is preferred by participants.
among three generations of women from two ‘families’, with menfolk initially “standing back”. Previous attempts to address the local conflict had proven unsuccessful when I began this project. When the “big brawl” erupted (with estimates of about 150 people involved), the police simply allowed the fighting to continue uninterrupted and prevented anyone from entering or leaving the pub where it was taking place. Police subsequently imposed pub curfews on all townspeople for some weeks. Despite having previously promised not to press charges, the police ended up charging\(^7\) one man alone from the entire group involved. Later, the police called for mediation, and both major parties attended. However, neither party was well-informed of what this would involve; and the police (possibly inadvertently) reportedly favoured one party more than the other during the process and did not seem very experienced in mediation. Consequently, the mediation in fact reportedly exacerbated the conflict, and both parties felt estranged from the police.

Freeda approached me when she began to fear that since first-time mothers were being attacked, they would leave the community and this would leave them without proper support and could possibly destroy future cultural wellbeing. Her substantive goal was to enable dialogue between the conflicted parties to try to address the conflict and to find a way for both parties (particularly the young mothers) to live together peacefully, with all parties being respected and having their needs met.

My first response to Freeda’s request for support (after exclaiming in shock “But I don’t know anything!” – about peacebuilding, about the local conflict…) was to contact experienced peacebuilder Joy Balazo whom I knew from previous work supporting Indigenous peoples affected by mining in the Philippines\(^8\), as well as emailing and telephoning peacebuilders at Bradford University, UK and University of New England, Armidale. All of these experts kindly gave me advice and referred me to others, providing invaluable encouragement and advice.

Joy obtained permission from her organisation to trial a Young Ambassadors for Peace / Genuine Ambassadors for Peace (YAP/GAP)\(^9\) peacebuilding workshop in the Upper Hunter.

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\(^7\) This man is from the Aboriginal ‘family’ the police are not so familiar with, and which has fewer ties with White institutions generally in the town.

\(^8\) Here (1994-1996) I was introduced to ‘peacebuilding’ via the Tri-Peoples Peace Agreement (between Muslims, Christians and Indigenous peoples) in Mindanao, Philippines.

\(^9\) Joy Balazo began YAP/GAP workshops in the Asia Pacific in 1994 (Balazo, 2010, UnitingWorld, 2010, 2011, UCAWA, 2008). These are long-term, grassroots, community-building peacebuilding workshops focused on transforming conflicted group relationships through indirect, embodied and ‘playful’ processes, recognising local capacity, and facilitating increasingly cooperative joint action projects. YAP/GAP is thus similar to the psychosocial micro-level emancipatory, sustainable and transformative peacebuilding approaches outlined in Lambourne and Gitau (2013, pp.31-32). However, trauma is not
Valley. Freeda and I visited the two respective local ‘families’, particularly the elders, on several occasions in their homes to assess potential interest in the peacebuilding workshop, and also made ourselves publicly visible and accessible in the town in case anyone wanted to discuss things further\textsuperscript{10}. Initially, after lengthy discussion, both ‘families’ agreed to participate. At this stage, apart from those directly involved in the conflict no-one else was working on this issue locally\textsuperscript{11}. Joy, her Aboriginal work colleague, Pearl Wymarra, Freeda and myself then visited local families in the area together. However, by this time an influential member of one of the ‘families’ had decided that they did not want to be involved, and other ‘family’ members soon followed suit. As a result, the notion of attempting to run a YAP/GAP peacebuilding workshop had to be abandoned.

Freeda and I continued to search for possible ways forward. Freeda had ideas of using humour and music to attract people to be involved; providing a forum for people to tell their stories of how they came to be in that town\textsuperscript{12}; and a separate nurturing retreat for each ‘family’\textsuperscript{13}. Thus, Freeda seemed to intuitively know how to address some of the emotional and procedural elements of successful mediation (cf. Bauman and Williams, 2004c, p.5). We attended a \textit{Creators of Peace}\textsuperscript{14} conference\textsuperscript{15} and went to the ‘Knockout’\textsuperscript{16} in Armidale to see if anyone – particularly those involved in the ‘elders’ circuit’ in Armidale – could advise us on how they deal with conflict. No-one wanted to discuss conflict. In the end, Freeda and I decided to focus on how her ‘family’, the Kamilaroi French, deal with conflict and what they might see as ‘peace’ and ‘justice’. Freeda was concerned that I may prefer to work with ‘remote’ Aboriginal people instead, but I assured her that I wanted to work with her people. Such a concern reflects the explicitly addressed; rather, opportunities for emotional healing and building trust are integrated into the workshop programs themselves. This would have been the first Australian YAP/GAP workshop.

\textsuperscript{10} Freeda said that since we had made the first move, it was then up to the others to approach us if they wished, but that we needed to make ourselves accessible if they did want to approach us.

\textsuperscript{11} Further, no researcher has been involved with Gamilaroi French ‘family’ during this time.

\textsuperscript{12} To demonstrate broader hardships impacting both groups, rather than presuming people are just there because they ‘want’ to be.

\textsuperscript{13} Since both groups were intensely stressed and anxious – Freeda and her mother Aunty Chrissy had experienced such a retreat through services supporting carers.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Creators of Peace} international women’s conference, 30 September – 4 October, Collaroy, Sydney, 2009. Unfortunately, Freeda experienced prejudice here when her group facilitator stopped her from sharing her views because a group of Aboriginal people (unrelated to Freeda) had “already spoken” at the conference.

\textsuperscript{15} I also attended the International Peace Research Association conference in Sydney, 6-10 July, 2010; the Parliament of World Religions Melbourne, 3-9 December 2009; and the “Transforming Habits of Thought” Association of Bahá’í Studies 35\textsuperscript{th} Annual Conference, San Francisco, 11-14 August, 2010 and shared my learnings with Freeda.

\textsuperscript{16} This Aboriginal rugby league ‘Knockout’ was held in Armidale 2-5 October, 2009, attendance reached 15,000 people overall (NSW Fair Trading, 2009). The ‘Knockout’ is the largest annual gathering of Aboriginal people in NSW, and is a major social event (e.g. Norman, 2009).
ongoing assumption in mainstream society that Aboriginal peoples in NSW have ‘no culture’ (see Introduction). It is telling that such a stereotype of Aboriginality nevertheless had the power to unsettle even such a strong and pro-active Black woman as Freeda.

Freeda particularly wanted to focus on what brings her people a sense of “inner peace” in the context of what she calls “psychological warfare” by mainstream society (see Chapter 1). Thus, even though we could not engage in overt action to address the conflict, we still felt that learning about peace and conflict would in itself be a form of useful and empowering action. For this purpose also, we attended a six-day YAP/GAP Indigenous peacebuilding workshop in Gonzalo, Ambon, Indonesia, to experience the workshop firsthand and to see whether any aspects may be useful for our context at a later stage. Given the high success rate of YAP/GAP in the Asia-Pacific with a diverse range of Indigenous peoples; its grassroots relationship-focused and community-building aspects; and its experiential and indirect, rather than formal ‘negotiation’ style approach, we hoped that such a workshop might aid us in understanding the unprecedented conflict that was occurring in the Upper Hunter Valley, and taking preliminary steps to address it.

The YAP/GAP workshop proved inspiring, but many aspects remained problematic for the Hunter Valley context. Firstly, there is a dramatic difference between settler colonialism in the Upper Hunter Valley, and the colonialism experienced in Ambon, Indonesia. The Haruko participants speak their own language; retain their traditional chieftain structures; and possess an unquestioned sense of belonging to their land and people. In Australia generally, however – and particularly in urban/regional areas such as the Upper Hunter Valley – the impacts of colonialism are more intense, all-encompassing and engrained (see Chapters 1 to 3). The sharp distinction between the experience of the Haruko people and her own people, in fact, proved highly traumatic for Freeda, as she reported to me, as she saw more clearly the magnitude of what her people are suffering.

Secondly, YAP/GAP workshops are promoted over many years through Joy’s contacts with local religious or political organisations, with local peoples forming mutual support groups to promote the peacebuilding processes. In the Upper Hunter Valley, there is no clear religious or organisational affiliation shared by the majority of local Aboriginal people. Furthermore, Joy is unknown to the local communities, and at this preliminary stage Freeda had no local support group to promote the peacebuilding processes.

\[17\] Not to be confused with Western concepts of ‘inner peace’; here Freeda was referring more to how her people as a whole, as a people, can experience ‘peace’ in the context of ongoing White violence.
Thirdly, while Joy is responsive to participants’ capacity to engage with the workshop process and tailors it accordingly, the program is pre-determined by Joy. It may be that the hierarchical forms of social organisation of the Asia Pacific peoples Joy has worked with previously, and their tendency to honour outsiders, are well-suited to Joy’s approach. However, in the Upper Hunter Valley, local Aboriginal people tend to be very wary of outsiders and, most decidedly, do not follow hierarchical forms of decision-making and action (see Chapter 5).

Finally, the YAP/GAP workshop involves a significant degree of commitment to the unknown and to the (potentially) frightening; workshops involve a minimum of 6 days with only workshop participants allowed during this time (no children or other ‘family’), spending all this time in close proximity with your ‘enemies’. This, in itself, may be a major deterrent to people who are already highly traumatised. In particular, the exclusion of other ‘family’ members goes against fundamental Aboriginal cultural imperatives, as well as practical needs.

Despite these qualms, Freeda still felt that a ‘home-grown’ version of peacebuilding is vital to address internal Aboriginal disputes that are affecting many communities in NSW. Thus, on returning to Australia we tried to engage the interest of the State Land Council and other regional actors in the notion of incorporating peacebuilding into organisational development, training and focus, but without success.

At this point a further expert in peacebuilding offered to provide from among a range of less intensive, more locally suitable and flexible peacebuilding services. However, at this stage, impacts of trauma arising from broader issues were affecting the ability of participants to be involved in any way. Thus, the research took more of a ‘back seat’ and less of a ‘participatory’ approach, since participants were fully occupied with just trying to survive. So, although the research arose in response to an urgent community need, and although the intention was for the research to be as ‘action-orientated’ and ‘participatory’ as possible, in the end local conditions did not allow overt ‘action’\textsuperscript{18} basis nor highly engaged, broad-based participation and collaboration. Instead, the project became more focused on the thesis as it now presents itself – a vital, if preliminary, ethnography of core Kamilaroi French cultural resources for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

My first assumption was that it would be possible to study the local conflict as a fairly ‘self-contained’ phenomenon, and that focusing primarily on Aboriginal interactions, rather than

\textsuperscript{18} Tillett and French (2006) point out that for certain disputes, not taking overt action can in itself be a valid and useful strategy (Spencer, 2007, p.2).
White impacts, would be an empowering political strategy. However, the more I learnt, the more I realised that the conflicts appearing within this Aboriginal community are intimately connected to past and continuing settler colonial injustices. Thus, I came to see the crucial need for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ to address ongoing settler colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples in Australia.

Having previously successfully used Indigenous Methodologies\(^{19}\) (IM) and Participatory Action Research\(^{20}\) (PAR) in my honours\(^{21}\) work with Aboriginal ‘families’ in the Upper Hunter Valley I assumed that such an approach would be critical for this research to address power imbalances and to encourage reflexivity around my influence on research processes and ‘findings’. Indigenous Methodologies (IM) address the politics and sociology of settler-colonial (and other colonial) knowledge, power and identity relations. As Brigg (2015, p.8) points out, much settler-colonial ‘engagement’ with Aboriginal people is actually premised on “the prosecution of the settler politicoexistential agenda”. The settler imaginary, and other crucial aspects of settler colonial power and identity relations, are only just beginning to be examined (Brigg, 2015, p.2). Further, the very tools of scholarship undertaken to engage in such critique are themselves steeped in discursive-productive imperialist knowledge-power relations (Foucault, 1980, 2000, 2004, Brigg, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, pp.7-8, Rose, 2001, pp.252-253). Indigenous Methodologies aim to decolonise research epistemologies, processes and outcomes, by responding to and recognising Indigenous knowledges and imperatives, rather than treating Indigenous peoples as “specimens for (Western) hypothesis testing and theory building” (Rose, 2001, p.259). While there can be no singular approach in IM, and while there are ongoing discussions around how ‘Indigenous’ is defined in IM, IM provides a valuable corrective to the ongoing predominant White bias of tertiary research, education and

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\(^{19}\) New Zealand “Traditional Knowledge Conferences” and, particularly, the work of Tuhiiwai Smith (1999, 2012), promote Indigenous Methodologies (IM) which go beyond Participatory Action Research (PAR) in decolonising not only the research process, but the very epistemological framework within which research is conducted. IM challenges Western assumptions around what research is possible, what questions can be asked, and what constitutes legitimate research and knowledge (Tuhiiwai Smith, 2012, pp.63, 186).


\(^{21}\) Prior to native title the Local Aboriginal Land Council enjoyed wide-ranging support, thus for my honours research I was able to communicate with a wide range of Aboriginal ‘families’; to obtain a significant level of authorisation for the research; and to discuss and negotiate the research openly with a range of interested parties.
employment. In effect, Indigenous Methodologies constitute a form of ‘affirmative action’\textsuperscript{22} at the level of research.

The principles of Indigenous Methodologies and Participatory Action Research (PAR) inform this thesis, from the topic to its methodology to the form of its writing. Collaboration has characterised my approach as far as possible\textsuperscript{23}, and issues of power have been both explicitly and implicitly addressed in multiple ways in the thesis. Following Indigenous Methodologies has enabled greater political recognition of Aboriginal epistemologies, methodologies and priorities. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars are referred to throughout the thesis. The thesis proactively respects Aboriginal English by transcribing interviews in ways that reflect participant tonality and grammar. Great effort has been undertaken to alert readers to potential areas of pseudo-intelligibility regarding key terms participants use and Western understandings of such terms, including ‘family’, ‘equality’, ‘respect’, ‘care’, ‘inner peace’.

Gamilaroi French ‘story-telling’ modes of pedagogical and political discourse have been utilised and elaborated throughout the thesis. That is, whereas most of the thesis is required to follow Western debating style of discourse to create ‘legitimate’ knowledge as recognised by Western academia, significant space – both literal and political – has been provided in the thesis for Gamilaroi French stories and everyday perspectives. A key question under IM is how does a so-called ‘expert’ researcher respond to participant “folk-theories” if they differ from anthropological accounts (Harrison, 2000, pp.49-50)? This thesis has taken the approach of ‘listening’ and ‘learning’ in order to identify key aspects of Gamilaroi French ways of speaking, attitude and orientations. Gamilaroi French terms and perspectives are provided via the transcripts and rather than shredding these with ‘expert’ analysis, room has been left for these transcripts to ‘speak for themselves’ as per Aboriginal cultural prerogatives. At the same time, the thesis draws on these same terms and themes to weave these perspectives into broader theoretical arguments.

\textsuperscript{22}Harrison (1998, p.16) reminds us that “Affirmative action is premised on the idea of compensatory opportunity and justice provided during a transitional period of constructive race cognizance to achieve a nonracist and nonsexist society.

\textsuperscript{23}Consequently, the research processes, focus, and planned outcomes varied considerably during the course of the research as we brainstormed, trialled various approaches, and responded to discussions with others both in the community and internationally. It was frequently necessary to revise timeframes and proposals, and to allow time and space for processes of unstructured, unpremeditated “delayed enlightenment” (Sansom, 2001) to take their course. This necessitated a significant degree of trust in the unknown and the unplanned; patience with how much we did not know; and flexibility and responsiveness to how things eventuated. In this sense, the research can be said to be “self-selected” (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.9).
In a similar manner, following PAR principles has facilitated participants directing the research to produce outcomes desired by themselves. The very focus of the thesis is a response to participant priorities. The section on ‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’ was specifically requested by participants. Key collaborators reviewed drafts of the thesis and their requests to remove certain parts, as well as general instructions on what knowledge to share, were respected. The very title of the thesis was chosen by a primary collaborator.

The elicitive model of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ presented in this thesis recognises local expertise and resources to define and enact ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ for themselves, rather than imposing an external, top-down, Western liberal democratic capitalist model of so-called ‘peacebuilding’. Significant attention has been paid to broader social, political and economic aspects of power in the thesis via analysis of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence in settler colonial Australia, and contextualising these within historic and ongoing genocide against Aboriginal lifeworlds. Intra-Aboriginal issues of power, including within ‘families’, has been addressed via the discussion on lateral violence (including domestic violence); and via the discussion around the ‘penetration’ and ‘fragmentation’ forms of ‘structural violence’.

These concerted efforts notwithstanding, as discussed above, due to the impacts of the very issues this research addresses, it was not possible to undertake as participatory and action-focused research as I would have liked. Indeed, the apparent ‘failure’ of our initial approach brought the realisation that ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ does not have to be done formally, by an external party, via overt, rational discussion about a particular conflict. The existence of local trauma provides further rationale for pursuing less direct, more empowering and more sensitive forms of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding.’ This thesis, then, represents one form of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in action, that is collaborative research that can produce new knowledge between the research and the community on what kinds of Aboriginal peacebuilding practices.

Research methodology, then, has included participant observation over the past eighteen years with about 100 local Aboriginal people across diverse NSW locations, including intensive visits with Gamilaroi French ‘family’ most school holidays over the last four years; specifically several qualitative, undirected interviews with three ‘family’ members; and general discussions with numerous other ‘family’ members. As detailed in Chapter 5, Kamilaroi French ‘family’ live across many geographical locations in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, but with highest concentrations of ‘family’ in Moree, Port Macquarie and Muswellbrook. Precise
details of ‘family’ connections are not provided here, since knowledge about ‘family’ is highly prized by Gamilaroi French, and is not free for all to access.

For the purposes of this thesis, Gamilaroi French ‘family’ are traced from Aunty Chrissy’s parents, Pop and Nan French, and their parents, siblings, uncles and aunts, and children across many generations and levels of connections. Pop French – James Allan French - was a quiet man with great musical talent, particularly with the accordion, who composed many songs and was well-liked and respected among local Aboriginal people. Nan French - Violet French, née Groves - was the daughter of respected Aboriginal shearer Robert William Groves and Toomelah Kamilaroi woman Alice Jane, née Fox, and was sister of distinguished Aboriginal activist, Uncle Bert Groves. Nan French won NAIDOC Female Indigenous Elder of the Year in 2003 for her work with the League of Mercy in Moree (ABC, 2003). Pop and Nan French had eleven\(^24\) children, all of whom are still alive today, with Aunty Chrissy being the oldest. Aunty Chrissy had five children with Uncle Errol Smith, and now has 15 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. ‘Family’ are traced up to four levels of cousinship. If anyone is more than four times removed from your family, it is possible to marry them. ‘Family’, therefore, also includes grandparents’ siblings and their descendants. Apart from ‘bloodline’ connections, ‘family’ is defined by the quality and style of relationship that is upheld (see Chapter 5). Non-Aboriginal spouses are accepted as part of ‘family’ once they have children, but White perspectives, practices and priorities of a ‘nuclear family’ can clash with Kamilaroi French imperatives of ‘family’, causing tension and distress. ‘Family’ probably amounts to some 300 or so people, but my connections over the past 18 years have been with about 80 ‘family’ members (and about 20 Aboriginal people from other ‘families’), and with most intense interactions being with Aunty Chrissy and her closer ‘family’ members.

Research methodology has also included transcript analysis\(^25\); joint regional and international fieldwork; international and inter-city teleconferences; an extensive interdisciplinary literature review; articulating ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as a new conceptual and methodological framework; and ethnographically elucidating Kamilaroi French ‘family’ principles and practices as fundamental resources for articulating and promoting ‘Aboriginal peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. This thesis suggests principles of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ drawn from my research with Gamilaroi French ‘family’. While not pretending to define a model for all Aboriginal peoples (nor, even, a comprehensive model for Kamilaroi French), these principles

\(^{24}\) Pop and Nan French actually had twelve children, but one died at birth.

\(^{25}\) Substantial transcript sections are often included, to provide political and literal ‘space’ for Kamilaroi French ‘family’ voices to be heard in this thesis (see Durney, 1999).
are offered as potentially useful considerations for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ processes elsewhere.

Clearly, no matter how much I work to listen and try to understand, I will never know what it is to be an Aboriginal person. Nor can I speak for Gamilaroi French ‘family’. Rather, I see this work as my response to what has been shared with and entrusted to me by Kamilaroi French ‘family’. It represents part of my ongoing work to identify and transform the ‘self-colonising conundrum’ (McAllan, 2010) – the hidden ‘cultural violence’ in myself as much as in my society that I have unconsciously imbibed growing up as a member of ‘mainstream Australia’

Thus, the primary motive of this thesis is to bear witness, to “speak truth to power” (Rustin in Long, 2012), through a reciprocal, ongoing relationship with Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

26 Albeit as a ‘first generation’ Australian with a Spanish mother and Scottish-English father.
Introduction

*Life was so different now that the white man had taken the lot. It was like a war, an undeclared war. A war with no name. And the Aboriginal man was put into prison camps, like prisoners in the two world wars. But nobody called it a war: it was simply the situation, that’s all.*

Wright (1997, pp.74-75)

*Such subtle covenants shall be made,*

*Till peace itself is war in masquerade.*

Dryden and Kinsley (1911, Part I, lines 268-269)

Australia is at war. However, this is an invisible, undeclared war with no name, with no overtly identified enemies, with no media coverage, with no official start date, and with no end date in sight. Since this ‘war’ does not meet the usual European understandings of ‘war’, how is it to be understood? What does ‘war’ look like and feel like in this context? What is being attacked? What forms of ‘violence’ are evident and what are their interrelations? In turn, what might ‘peace’ mean for Aboriginal peoples? Are ‘peaceful’ Aboriginal ways of pursuing ‘Aboriginal peace’ possible, and if so, what might they look like?

In order to address these questions, this thesis adopts two primary tasks. Firstly, drawing on insights from international peacebuilding, I investigate major forms of violence against Aboriginal peoples in Australia, and their root causes and interrelations: I give the war a name. Secondly, adopting a phenomenological anthropological approach, I elicit core cultural principles, practices and priorities of Gamilaroi French ‘family’ in the Upper Hunter Valley, NSW. I explore how these core principles are both under attack, and how they constitute crucial potential resources for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

**Australia’s invisible war**

The different etiologies of ‘war’ and ‘peace’ in the colonies have encouraged the denial that war ever took place in the colonies, even during times of violent frontier conflict. Hokowithu and Page (2011, p.14) point out that since frontier violence was not considered to be violence between *humans* (“civilised Europeans”) in the colonies, and since colonial sovereignty arose from “the exercise of a power outside the law (*ab legis solutus*)”, typical European fictions
around war did not apply (Hokowithu and Page, 2011, p.14). As Mbembe (2003, p.24) illustrates:

*colonies are similar to the frontiers. They are inhabited by ‘savages.’ The colonies are not organized in a state form and have not created a human world. Their armies do not form a distinct entity, and their wars are not wars between regular armies. They do not imply the mobilization of sovereign subjects (citizens) who respect each other as enemies. They do not establish a distinction between combatants and noncombatants, or again between an ‘enemy’ and a ‘criminal.’ It is thus impossible to conclude peace with them.*

As a consequence, war in the colonies was “not considered war at all” (Hokowithu and Page, 2011, p.14). To name colonial war as war was, in fact, a matter of ridicule and shame for the colonisers (Scott in Milliss, 1992, p.60):

*the Governor [Ralph Darling] is afraid the people in England will laugh at him for declaring war against the blacks.*

Thus, the prevailing attitude in Australia is that even to describe the times of direct frontier conflict against Aboriginal peoples, “the term ‘war’ is rather overblown” (O’Rourke, 2009, p.3).

Colonial control of the processes of ‘remembering’ and ‘forgetting’ has also encouraged the denial that Australia is or ever has been at war with Aboriginal peoples. Reynolds (2013, pp.149-150) demonstrates that frontier violence began within a few weeks of first ‘settlement’ and lasted altogether for about 140 years across Australia as a whole. Such frontier violence was perceived by some to be ‘war’. However, due to “that partisan and discriminatory history”, it has been ‘forgotten’ that the “war of conquest…made the nation”, with armed conflict being “the central feature of the relationship between settlers and the Indigenous nations” (Reynolds, 2013, pp.6, 120). The fact that historical works are still being produced

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1 While colonisation did not take place in a uniform manner across Australia, and in some contexts relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were relatively amicable (even if not equally powerful), it must be recognised that on the whole violence played a significant role in early Black-White relations (e.g. Reynolds, 2001, 2006, Evans and Ørsted-Jensen, 2014, Kiernan, 2007).
2 For instance, in 1826 Threlkeld (in O’Rourke, 2009, p.52) said “war has commenced and still continues against the Aboriginals of this land” regarding organised colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples in the Hunter Valley, NSW; and Reynolds (2013, p.85) demonstrates that in the 19th century frontier violence was at times openly acknowledged by the colonisers as ‘war’, particularly in the fringe areas.
3 See also Lo and Kanamori (2013), Bottoms (2013) and Churchill (1997), for instance, on ‘forgetting’ and the ‘conspiracy of silence’ around colonial violence.
today to address such biased representations, speaks volumes of the depth of ongoing denial around violent White Australian history.

In order to recognise so-called ‘postcolonial peace’ as, in fact, ongoing ‘war’, it is important to understand that colonies evinced “arbitrary fluidity in the movement from colony to country”; occupation of Aboriginal lands has never ended (Hokowithu and Page, 2011, p.14, von Sturmer, 2009). Thus, for Hokowithu and Page (2011, p.14), the “physical, spiritual and cultural devastation” that Aboriginal peoples as a whole are experiencing mirrors the impacts commonly associated with ‘war’. Whereas from a settler colonial perspective Australia is in a ‘peaceful’, ‘postcolonial’ condition, with Aboriginal peoples having moved from ‘resistance’ to ‘acceptance’, for Aboriginal peoples such so-called ‘peace’ in fact represents a “paradigmatic shift from a temporary to eternal physical and epistemological occupation” (Hokowithu and Page, 2011, p.14). It is European ‘peacetime’ life that characterises such settler colonial ‘peace’ – with the normalisation of European ways of doing, being, and thinking imposed on Aboriginal peoples through the “violent cultural synthesis” of assimilation and ‘biopower’ (Hokowithu and Page, 2011, p.14). This thesis takes the position, therefore, that such so-called ‘postcolonial peace’, in fact, constitutes ‘war without end’ (Mbembe, 2003).

**Naming the war: genocide**

This thesis names the invisible war taking place against Aboriginal peoples in Australia today as, in fact, genocide. There is widespread denial in Australia that genocide against Aboriginal peoples has ever taken place. Public debate about genocide in Australia is strongly marked by its adversarial, partisan nature (Macintyre and Clark, 2003). Given the fraught political context, many Australian scholars are reluctant to use the term ‘genocide’ in their analyses of settler colonial-Aboriginal relations (Levene, 2005). Conceptual discussions around genocide “have barely begun” in Australia, and largely ignore the international literature on genocide (Curthoys and Docker, 2001, pp.3-4). Those that deny genocide in Australia, deny the Stolen Generations, and deny colonial frontier violence generally, assert that evidence is scanty and often present opposing views as politically biased and psychologically questionable (Bolt, 2005, Brunton, 1998, Minogue, 1998, Windshuttle e.g. 2002, 2010a,b). However, such assertions fail to account for the fact that Australian recorded history has been dominated by colonial writers, and that massacres and other genocidal activities were typically covered in secrecy

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4 ‘Biopower’ is the biopolitical management of ‘postcolonial’ populations as a generalised context of war waged by the colonial state in ‘peacetime’, aimed at ‘normalising’ Indigenous populations (Foucault in Hokowithu and Page, 2011, p.15).


Following the definition of genocide as originally presented by Polish-Jewish jurist Lemkin (1944), it is clear that genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Australia most certainly has occurred and continues to be enacted today. Lemkin (1944) understands genocide as having two broad phases – firstly, the destruction of the ‘national pattern’ of the oppressed group, and secondly, the imposition of the ‘national pattern’ of the oppressor onto the oppressed group. In contrast to popular understandings of ‘genocide’ that are orthodoxy today, Lemkin (in Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.6, emphasis added) stresses that historically genocide “does not usually or necessarily involve mass killing, though it certainly can”. Rather, genocide is in fact composed of a wide range of actions impacting on the oppressed group in “political, social, legal, intellectual, spiritual, economic, biological, physiological, religious, and moral” ways, including targeting “health, food, and nourishment”; “family life, care of children, and birth as well as death”; “the honour and dignity of peoples”, including by separating families; and targeting the cultural, moral and spiritual institutions and well-being of the oppressed group (Lemkin in Curthoys and Docker, 2001, pp.6-10, Staub, 2013). Genocide also has not only immediate, but also longer-term aims, such as increasing the biological power of the perpetrators for future generations in terms of numerical, physical and economic superiority. Lemkin (in Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.10) argues that genocide also impacts on humanity as a whole, since destroying any ‘nation’ diminishes the “future honour and diversity of humanity

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3 This thesis follows Lemkin’s (1944) definition of genocide, since it was political pressure, not rational argument that led to the current anemic definition of ‘genocide’ adopted by the UN. Under pressure from the US, the UN Convention in 1948 “diluted, reduced, and distorted” Lemkin’s (1944) original complex and inclusive definition of genocide, creating a very reductive and simplistic definition of genocide as limited to “mass killings of an entire population” undertaken with “demonstrable intent” (nearly impossible to prove); omitting political groups from the victim list; and ignoring the role of the state in perpetrating genocide (Ward in Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.12, Tatz, 2001, p.21).
itself”. As we shall see, similar aspects of genocide have been and are being perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples in Australia.

Lemkin (1944) recognises colonialism as being particularly relevant in the second phase of genocide: imposing the ‘national pattern’ of the oppressor on the oppressed group during or after the first phase of destroying the oppressed group’s ‘national pattern’. This second phase of genocide is seen as occurring whether the oppressed group still remains in the area, or whether they have all been removed from that area (Curthoys and Docker, 2001, pp.10-11).

In Australia, even the watered-down UN definition of genocide has not been incorporated into Australia’s domestic legislation⁶ (Behrendt, 2001). That is, Australia has not yet officially admitted that genocide as mass killing has occurred in Australia. Such silence around genocide and White violence generally in Australia arises both from the colonisers’ desire to transform their usurpation – “of land, of space, of power, and of bodies” - into legitimacy, and from the normalisation⁷ of White domination in Australia (Menmi in van Krieken, 2004, p.144)(see below). Nevertheless, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, even under the narrow UN definition, Australia is clearly culpable of genocide against Aboriginal peoples on several grounds (Tatz, 2001). In fact, as Wolfe (2006) and Docker (2004, 2008) argue, the very structures and constitutive rules of settler colonial Australia are inherently genocidal.

‘Direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence

Thus, I name the war against Aboriginal peoples being enacted today as genocide, composed of the two overarching phases of destroying Aboriginal peoples’ ‘national patterns’, and imposing the settler colonisers’ ‘national pattern’. To gain a deeper understanding of these genocidal forms of violence and their interrelations, I draw on the work of leading international peacebuilder, Galtung (1969, 1981, 1990, 1996). Galtung is an inaugural pioneer of the field of peace research, both in terms of founding the discipline of peace and conflict studies - including founding the first academic journal devoted to peace studies and the first international peace research organisation – and in terms of founding key conceptualisations in peace research, including ‘peacebuilding’, peace journalism, ‘structural violence’, and ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace. He has published more than 1000 articles and over 100 books.

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⁶ Further, debate on the privately introduced Anti-Genocide Bill has been indefinitely adjourned, and, if ever debated, is considered unlikely to pass (Tatz, 2001, p.29).
⁷ Because the ethnocentricity of liberal democracy is normalised, its “problematic effects (are) much harder to perceive, let alone respond to” (van Krieken, 2004, p.145, Behrendt, 2001). See Chapter 3.
Galtung (1996) identifies three major over-arching and interwoven categories of ‘super-types’ of violence manifesting in the world today: ‘direct violence’, ‘structural violence’, and ‘cultural violence’. These ‘super-types’ of violence are distinguished primarily in terms of their time scales, as well as their general causal relationship (Galtung, 1996, p.199). ‘Direct violence’ takes place as an event, ‘structural violence’ occurs as a dynamic process, and ‘cultural violence’ constitutes a permanent condition, similarly to an earthquake event, movement of tectonic plates, and fault line, respectively. While each of these ‘super-types’ of violence can each legitimate and act as sources for each other in a dynamic triangular fashion, Galtung (1996, p.199) proposes a general causal flow from ‘cultural violence’ to ‘structural violence’ to ‘direct violence’. In this thesis, Galtung’s (1996) three categories of ‘super-types’ of violence are applied to help articulate and identify settler colonial genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Australia.

‘Direct violence’ is the most obvious, ‘surface’-level ‘super-type’ of violence, and is the type of violence most recognised by governments, ‘peacekeeping’ forces, and general publics in the international community today. ‘Direct violence’ refers to visible, often measurable and physical forms of violence such as diverse forms of abuse and assault; homicide; suicide; massacres; and torture. Chapter 1 provides evidence of Aboriginal experiences of ‘direct violence’ in Australia today, with a particular focus on lateral violence, including ‘family violence’ and suicide, as outcomes of historic and ongoing genocide. In so doing, this chapter also challenges common misunderstandings in anthropology and in wider society generally around the root causes of such ‘direct violence’ in Aboriginal communities today and their traumatic repercussions.

Chapter 2 highlights the prevalence of ‘structural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples in Australia. ‘Structural violence’ is fundamentally characterised by exploitation of oppressed groups by more powerful groups (Galtung, 1996, p.198). While the oppressors benefit from the structures, the target group either dies or is left in a “permanent, unwanted state of misery”, including of illness, malnutrition, alienation, trauma, marginalisation, and fragmentation (Galtung, 1996, pp.198-200). ‘Structural violence’ is more difficult to identify and articulate than ‘direct violence’ because it happens “within complex structures and at the end of long, highly ramified causal chains and cycles” (Galtung, 1996, p.198). It is also difficult to pinpoint because “A violent structure leaves marks not only on the human body but also on the mind and the spirit” (Galtung, 1996, p.199). In particular, ‘structural violence’ attacks the identity and freedom needs of the oppressed group. While the notion of institutionalised
racism\(^8\) has been generally accepted across much of anthropology, the \textit{continuous and ongoing} nature of both the \textit{sources} and \textit{symptoms} of such ‘structural violence’ is generally not recognised. Chapter 2, therefore, condenses a broad array of literature to demonstrate the systemic, chronic and accumulating nature of ‘structural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples in the context of ongoing genocide.

Chapter 3 addresses the most difficult ‘super-type’ of violence to articulate, recognise, and verify, yet the form of violence which in fact feeds the other two ‘super-types’ of violence: ‘cultural violence’. ‘Cultural violence’ goes to the very heart of what Macdonald (2013) calls ‘personhood’, and what others call ontology, subjectivity, ideology, ‘metaphysics’ (Strauss, 2006, pp.324, 326, Galtung, 1996, p.201, Richards, 2011). ‘Cultural violence’ is engrained in the ‘national pattern’; cultural norms and values; or \textit{constitutive rules} of a people, ‘society’ or ‘civilisation’ (Richards and Swanger, 2008, pp.44-64, Lemkin, 1944, Labuschagne and Heidema, 2011, p.55, Galtung, 1996, p.201). ‘Cultural violence’ can therefore arise from such cultural areas as ‘religion’\(^9\); and ideology; language and art; and empirical and formal science (Galtung, 1996, p.201). It is important to note here, however, that ‘cultural violence’ is different from \textit{explicit} and consciously held ideologies. Rather, ‘cultural violence’ arises from the ‘symbolic sphere’ which is held \textit{collectively and unconsciously} by its members (Galtung, 1996, pp.viii, 253). Because of ‘cultural violence’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct violence’ can “look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong” to members of the oppressive society (Galtung, 1996, p.196).

\(^8\) Wolfe (2006, p.387) reminds us that while the concept of ‘race’ did not become “discursively consolidated” until the latter part of the eighteenth century, European prejudice against Jews, Muslims and ‘Negroes’ (amongst others) existed long before the ‘scientific’ notion of ‘race’ was conceived. See also Gardner (2009). After Harrison (2000, pp.48-49), this thesis defines racism as follows: 
\textit{Racism is a global yet not a universal phenomenon. It emerged from historically specific conditions of European colonial expansion and the varying modes of social/legal differentiation and politico-economic development that formed in that context of empire and its postcolonial legacies. In view of this history, culturally diverse racial orders can be found in varying degrees of crystallization in various parts of the formerly colonial world...racism’s scope remains extensive in part because of the powerful influence of Western—and specifically US—hegemony and the worldwide circulation of meanings and norms anchored in a worldview and foreign policy that white supremacy continues to inform.}

Wolfe (2016) provides a global historical comparative work on race, investigating the pervasive legacy of race and racism, and foreshadowing ways to overcome this legacy.

\(^9\) While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address this subject in depth, this thesis makes the point that too often Western critiques around ‘religion’ are based on wide-sweeping generalisations that do not distinguish between the fundamental teachings of various religious founders and the subsequent actions of their supposed followers. Too often what is being glossed as ‘religion’ is in fact exploitation of religion for political and economic ends of particular groups, often directly contrary to the teachings of the Founders (e.g. Juergensmeyer, 2000, de Silva, 2000, Sev’er and Yurdakul, 2001, Goodenough, 1999, Muslim Women’s League, 1999, Glazer and Abu-Ras’, 1994, p.283). Increasingly it is being recognised that there are many positive aspects of ‘religion’ which can be drawn upon to support peacebuilding, and that so-called ‘religious’ groups must be analysed in terms of their commitment or otherwise to living harmoniously with diverse others (e.g. Religions for Peace, 2009, Landau, 2003, Juergensmeyer, 2003, Kurti et al, 2004, Clark, 2008, p.345, Le Touze et al, 2005, Eslahpazir, 2008).
Consequently, ‘cultural violence’ works to implicitly legitimise and justify ‘direct’ and ‘structural’ violence, and *accumulates* in potency over time (Galtung, 1996, pp.196, viii). ‘Cultural violence’ is, therefore, the most powerful and the most difficult ‘super-type’ of violence to identify and address. Chapter 3 distils, from a wide range of literature, evidence of what settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples looks like in Australia, and how it underlies ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence against Aboriginal peoples.

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’

Chapters 1 to 3, therefore, articulate and discuss the key ‘super-types’ of violence that shape and reproduce genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Australia today. However, I was not asked simply to describe Aboriginal experiences of violence. Rather, I was asked by Kamilaroi French ‘family’ to help address the new, increasing levels of intra-Aboriginal conflict that are occurring in the Upper Hunter Valley. In response to this request, I draw on Galtung’s (1996) ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace concepts, and on the elicitive, transformative, integrated peacebuilding model presented by internationally renowned peacebuilder, Lederach (e.g. 1997) to model ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

Peacebuilding is defined here as an interweaving of dynamic social, cultural, political and economic constructs, processes and activities that address root causes of violence and promote conditions for sustainable transformation of conflict to meet the fundamental needs of all parties. In order to understand peacebuilding, the concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ first need to be examined. The following sections argue for an elicitive, transformative model of peacebuilding that recognises both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace, rather than the dominant Western liberal democratic model of so-called ‘peacebuilding’. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is defined here as a form of elicitive, transformative peacebuilding that is shaped by fluid, complex Aboriginal understandings and practices of ‘peace’ and ‘violence’, as well as their own cultural imperatives and expertise. As stated in the Preface, this thesis does *not* offer concrete strategies for how to enact ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ at broader, intercultural policy and institutional levels. Rather, the thesis focuses on introducing the conceptual framework of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ and key principles of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ drawn from my work with Gamilaroi French ‘family’. The concrete details of how to proactively engage ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ would vary with the local people involved, the nature of the conflict, and the extent to which they would like to involve external (Aboriginal and/or non-Aboriginal) third parties, if at all. A core argument of this thesis is that local Aboriginal capacity and expertise around their own needs and priorities must be recognised and respected if ‘Aboriginal
peacebuilding’ is to address deep-rooted genocidal structures and discourses in Australia. The following sections elaborate further on the core elements of ‘peacebuilding’ and of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ modelled in this thesis.

‘Negative peace’ and ‘positive peace’

Galtung’s (1996) notions of ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace have developed over the last five decades as challenges to narrow concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ followed by International Relations (IR) theory. Dominant IR theory implicitly defines ‘peace’ in terms of what Galtung (1964) calls ‘negative peace’ - the absence of visible, ‘direct’, violence or ‘war’ (Richmond, 2008). This notion of ‘negative peace’ arises from the Roman concept of pax (Galtung, 1981), and from deeply engrained notions of ‘human nature’ as inherently violent. ‘Negative peace’ is still the prevailing Western concept of ‘peace’ today, including in anthropology (Hiroshi, 2007, Kalisch, 2011), with ‘peace’ seen as singular, passive, static, silence, absence. Those pursuing ‘negative peace’ tend to have the short-term, narrow focus of (often violently) stopping ‘direct violence’ (often by oppressed groups). The liberal-realist synthesis of ‘peace-as-governance’ is typically imperialistic, undermining local power structures and interests, and upholding structural violence, poverty and oppression (Richmond, 2008, p.96, 2006a, 2006b). Pursuing ‘negative peace’ alone, and without addressing systemic underlying issues, therefore, tends to serve the interests of the powerful in society and to maintain the structurally violent status quo (Galtung, 1969, 1981, Burton, 1990a, Ramsbotham et al, 2011, p.122, Christie, 1997, p.323). That is, while ‘negative peace’ can produce useful and necessary outcomes, without its complement of ‘positive peace’ deep conditions of violence remain.

Galtung’s (1964, 1990, 1996) ‘positive peace’ goes beyond ‘negative peace’ to non-violently address ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence as well as ‘direct violence’, and to create conditions for ‘cultural’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ peace, including through improved understanding, education, and cooperation. Thus, in line with key developments in conflict transformation over the last two decades (e.g. Ramsbotham et al, 2011, Miall, 2004), Galtung’s (1996) ‘positive peace’ aims for deep and profound long-term cultural and structural changes to oppressive systems. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as presented here addresses both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace.

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10 IR focuses primarily on conflict as statist war, viewing only states as having sovereignty over ‘war’ or ‘peace’ (Richmond, 2008, Griffiths, 2013, p.59, Forget, 2003). See also Cortright (2008) and Adolf (2009) on peace movements.

11 Rapoport (e.g. 1995, 1997) challenges IR assumptions around the ‘evolutionary’ origins of violence, arguing that the current scale and severity of global violence disproves ‘survival of the fittest’ through violence.
Elicitive ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’

Crucially, rather than imposing ‘solutions’ from ‘above’ or ‘outside’, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here is also *elicitive* – it recognises and draws on the imperative of Aboriginal peoples defining and deciding for themselves what ‘peace’ may be at a particular time and place, and how it may be lived, cultivated, sustained. Lederach (1997, p.94) emphasises that:

*The greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture.*

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, then, does not assume that Aboriginal understandings of ‘peace’ mirror – nor simply ‘oppose’ - dominant Western understandings of ‘peace’. The so-called ‘postcolonial peace’ discussed above tacitly follows a definition of ‘negative peace’, with ‘peace’ implicitly defined as *pacification* - metaphorical and literal ‘death’ - where the excluded “assume their own exclusion” and “become silent”, embodying a violent “silent space” (Kalisch, 2011, pp.394-395). In contrast, ‘peace’ can mean something very different for Aboriginal peoples. Perhaps, as for the Enlhet, ‘Aboriginal peace’ may be a ‘peace’ of laughter, with many voices, within movement - everyday actions and responsibilities rather than an abstract idea (Kalisch, 2011, pp.394, 406).

This thesis does not assume, however, that Aboriginal understandings of ‘peace’ are homogeneous and static, nor presume at the outset what values and methods around ‘peace’ may be preferred by a particular Aboriginal group and context. Rather, as for other fundamental aspects of culture, I envisage that ‘Aboriginal peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ would be living, growing processes, yet informed by deep historical-cultural principles and shared practices. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as depicted here sees ‘change’ (and conflict) as ‘natural’ and ongoing. ‘Aboriginal peace’ is not an end state or an ‘event’, but rather is an interweaving of ongoing, dynamic processes. This thesis not only recognises that Indigenous cultural meanings are embedded in social contexts - and are thus “continually transforming and reconfiguring” (Bauman, 2010a, pp.2-3) - but goes further by pro-actively fostering *Aboriginal*- directed and -envisioned change via ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. Elicitive ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here is organised by and responds to Aboriginal peoples, their priorities, and ways of being. In this way, elicitive ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ aims to facilitate “a vision of positive peace owned by the communities that have been affected by the conflict” (Spence and McLeod, 2002, p.63).
‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as imaged here thus concurs with the work of many Indigenous authors, practitioners and their colleagues over the last few decades calling for a community development framework that builds on community capacity and knowledge of “what works” in Indigenous affairs to be used in addressing Aboriginal experiences of violence and disadvantage (e.g. McGinty, 2002, Vinson, 2007, Hunt and Smith, 2006, Glanville, 2003b, Calma, 2008, Reconciliation Australia, 2004, 2007a, 2007b). Such principles of elicitive ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ also resonate with Ife’s\(^\text{12}\) (2010, p.140) dynamic, pluralist, (culturally, ecologically and otherwise) contextualised, ethical, participatory, dialogic, community- and relationship-focused, ‘human rights from below’ that aim to increase mutual understanding, recognition of shared (not ‘common’) humanity, and where “any ideas of universality must be grounded in day-to-day lived experience and defined in those terms”.

Thus, eliciting ‘Aboriginal peace’ is not a straightforward, direct process. While there is always an extent to which direct access is denied to implicit cultural realms (for both persons and whole cultures) (Quinn and Strauss, 2006), in the context of ongoing genocide, it is even more difficult for Aboriginal peoples to reflexively access their own visions and forms of sustaining ‘peace’. Western epistemic violence - “ideologies of subjugation” - can ‘invert’ and ‘pervert’ Aboriginal conceptions and practices of ‘peace’ since Aboriginal ‘habitus’ is constantly under attack (Kalisch, 2011, p.389, Cowlishaw, 2003, 2013). Consequently, as Mary (in Atkinson, 2002, pp.207, 211) says, “Murris don’t understand they have their own healing mechanisms…I had in-built skills that were always there, but I hadn’t recognised they were a skill in the first place.”

Articulating ‘Aboriginal peace’, therefore, entails conscious creativity. Defending and maintaining deep-rooted Aboriginal cultural principles increasingly requires a “determined personal decision” by Aboriginal peoples (Kalisch, 2011, p.403, Cowlishaw, 2013, Macdonald, 2013). It also involves paying attention to everyday lived experience (Macdonald and Bauman, 2011, pp.7-9, 14). Aboriginal mediators-facilitators in Behrendt and Kelly (2008, pp.124-125), for instance, understand volumes of meaning from Aboriginal body language, of which non-Aboriginal people are generally oblivious.

Eliciting ‘Aboriginal peace’ also requires a safe space. Many forms of Aboriginal knowledge have had to go ‘underground’ in the context of ongoing genocide. Decisions around how much and what knowledge to share, therefore, need to rest with the Aboriginal peoples and persons to whom the knowledge belongs. Safe spaces are different for different people and different

contexts, and can change. Aboriginal feelings of what is ‘missing’ and what is ‘wrong’ are also critical resources in identifying and articulating ‘Aboriginal peace’. Aboriginal feelings of disjuncture with mainstream society; desire for change; and even feelings of rage, loss and despair can be important signifiers to begin from, not end points, in articulating ‘Aboriginal peace’. Chapters 4 and 5 elicit core Gamilaroi French ‘family’ cultural practices, principles and priorities as articulated and lived by them - ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ - and explore both how these principles are under attack, and how they comprise potential resources for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

**Transformative ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’**

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here also draws on Lederach’s (1995, 1997, 2003) theory of conflict transformation. Lederach’s (2003) recognises the mutually ‘dialectic’ interaction between conflict and relationships (across diverse contexts), and aims to transform how conflict is expressed, including through non-violently addressing the ‘root causes’ or ‘epicentre’ underlying manifest conflict. ‘Conflict’ is recognised as being inevitable and omnipresent, which although it can lead to violence, it does not necessarily do so (Tillett and French, 2006). Rather, conflict can be harnessed - ‘transformed’ - in creative, non-violent and productive ways to produce enriching outcomes for all (e.g. Lederach, 2003, pp.3-6, 1995). In contrast to Burton’s (1990a) notion of conflict resolution as a short-term, bounded process, Lederach (2003) views conflict transformation as an ongoing process, led and defined by local actors through grassroots empowerment. Lederach’s (2003) conflict transformation praxis is also holistic and ‘integrated’ (collaborative), enabling diverse actors to cooperate and complement each other across different dimensions, scales, levels, types, actors, timeframes, issues and stages of ‘conflict-in-context’ via the principle of ‘interdependent co-origination’ (Miall, 2004, pp.17-18).

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ here is not against governance, but rather has the ultimate goal of “second-level indigenisation” (Richards, 2011, p.203) – transforming what is seen as ‘the sensible’ (Feldman, 2012) - where Aboriginal peoples, Whitefellas and many other cultural groups in Australia come together as diverse equals to decide how ‘government’ should be constituted, run, make decisions, act as a “non-authoritarian authority” (Richards, 2010, Nadler, 2002, p.591).

In this sense, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is visionary and context-responsive; recognising existing power imbalances, working peacefully to transcend them, and helping build a society
Violence as needs deprivation

From the discussion above, it is clear that violence studies form an indispensable part of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ research and practice. Violence studies investigate different cultural and contextual understandings of violence and the legitimation of that violence (Galtung, 1996, pp.196-197). At its broadest level, ‘violence’ is defined in this thesis as “avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally to life” (Galtung, 1996, p.197, original emphasis). Burton (1969, 1979, 1990a, 1990b) championed the notion that at the heart of destructive conflict lies the “systemic or structural deprivation of non-material human needs” (Tillett and French, 2006, p.224). For Burton (1990a), Basic Human Needs powerfully motivate people; are ontogenic (built into the organism); are non-negotiable; and persist despite external efforts at coercion, control and ‘deterrence’ (Tillett and French, 2006, pp.224-225). For instance, fear of group extinction underlies many ethnic and religious conflicts, with ‘identity’ – here defined as “the separation of self from other” – often being seen as the most fundamental need of a person (Christie, 1997, pp.318-320, Azar, 1991).

Both Burton (1990a) and Galtung (1990) go beyond Maslow’s (1954) Eurocentric hierarchy of needs; and while acknowledging political, moral, historical and cultural influences on how needs are experienced and addressed, Lederer et al (1980) and Galtung (1990) still hold that it is possible to distinguish ‘needs’ from ‘wants’ when “people in large enough numbers desire something intensely enough for a long enough period of time to sacrifice other desired ends for it” (Rubenstein, 2001, unnumbered).

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13 See also Lederach (2010) for an exploration of creative approaches to conflict via engaging ‘moral imagination’.

14 Many forms of ‘violence’ are identified: struggles over semantics and resources (Ball-Rokeach, 1980, Riches, 1986); ‘symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu, 1977); ‘mental violence’ against categories or identities (Corbin, 1977); ‘extreme violence’ (Taussig, 1984); ‘legal violence’ (Hastrup, 2003); cultural forms of ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’ (Herdt, 1986); violence defined according to victim or perpetrator relationships or characteristics (Rutherford et al, 2007a); and diverse forms of warfare. Azar’s (e.g. 1985, 1990, 1991) intrastate ‘Protracted Social Conflict’ is the leading form of warfare globally (, 2013, 2104, Ramsbotham et al, 2011), often arising from collective needs for security, identity and recognition in ‘post’colonial contexts (Azar, e.g. 1991).

15 Drawing on pioneering social psychologists Maslow (1943, 1954) and Sites (1973, 1990), and responding largely to significant ‘identity’ and ‘security’ conflicts arising in postwar decolonisation contexts, Burton (1990a) developed a multi-disciplinary, analytical, problem-solving approach to conflict resolution addressing the needs of conflicted parties, rather than the statist IR ‘balance of power’ approach. Burton (1990a) argues that while most conflict follows predictable patterns and cycles, the resolution of conflict is deeply complex and unpredictable, and must draw on principles rather than formulaic methodology. See also Burton’s (1990a) ‘provention’.
From dialogues across many cultures over many years, Galtung (1996, p.197) suggests five classes of basic needs shared by all peoples: survival needs, well-being needs, identity needs, freedom needs, and the need for ‘ecological balance’. Such needs are non-hierarchical and are non-negotiable (Griffiths, 2013, p.63) and Galtung (1996, p.197) proposes that “The sum of all five, for all, will define ‘peace’”.

Galtung (1996, p.200, original emphasis), therefore, warns that “Violence is needs-deprivation; needs-deprivation is serious”. Needs deprivation can lead victims to enact and experience massive ‘direct violence’, and to overwhelming reactions of ‘hopelessness’, self-directed aggression, apathy and withdrawal (Galtung, 1996, p.200, Burton, 1990a, Azar, 1990, 1991). A key tenet of the peacebuilding theory followed in this thesis is that “violence breeds violence”, and that it is therefore not possible to eliminate violence by violent means (Galtung, 1996, p.200). Instead, Galtung (2004, unnumbered), proposes an approach of identifying the conflicted parties; identifying their goals; evaluating whether these goals attack or support Basic Human Needs; and trying to bridge legitimate goals. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as rendered here aims to embody non-violent, emancipatory processes to meet Aboriginal peoples’ needs, as defined by Aboriginal peoples (e.g. Richmond, 2008, pp.163-165).

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as presented here, then, does not accept the notion that Indigenous action is necessarily violent; that there is no ‘outside’ of violence; and that ‘identity’, change, and decision-making are inherently ‘violent’ (e.g. Foucault and Derrida in Hokowhitu and Page, 2011). Such a perspective (Kumar, 2011, p.1567):

> unwittingly reduces the native person to a caricatured imprint of the coloniser’s image —as one who cannot be imagined in his own terms, but only in oppositional violence to the latter.

Even the biased historical records repeatedly show that far from exhibiting an “ever-present desire to kill” the coloniser - or a tendency to risk their own lives (Hokowhitu and Page, 2011, pp.15-16) - Aboriginal peoples – in marked contrast to early colonisers – did not attack White people wholesale in retaliation for their violence, but rather only responded with violence towards particular perpetrators and in accordance with their misdeeds; frequently built positive (albeit not equally powerful) relationships with Whites who proved themselves

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16 See Sen (2005, pp.153, 155) for discussion on the process aspects of ‘freedom’, as well as the role of capability in ‘freedom’ – opportunities to act and, for instance, to escape destitution.

trustworthy – both with early settlers and later with missionaries, miners and anthropologists; and, rather than adopting the Western notion of ‘revolution’ or ‘rebellion’, have tended to adopt more diplomatic, strategic and pragmatic choices, depending on what options were available to them (e.g. Macdonald, 2007, O’Rourke, 2009). ‘Differences’, then, are not inherently violent. Further, fashionable notions of ‘contrapuntality’, ‘hybridity’, and “other cosmopolitan consolidations” as ‘ontological resistance’ to Eurocentric notions of ‘human’ (Kumar, 2011, pp.1559-1560), overlook the very real and potent ongoing forces of assimilation – of genocide - in Australia and elsewhere. As Butler (in Collins, 2010, p.66) argues:

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as offered in this thesis makes perceptible the field of genocidal violence against Aboriginal peoples.

Anthropology in ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’

As Dominguez (2013) argues, the study of violence is also of central importance for anthropology. Although not often defining or framing their work in terms of ‘violence’ - but increasingly and more explicitly doing so in recent years - anthropologists have long been concerned with issues of violence such as human rights, torture, ethics, and sexual violence (Dominguez, 2013). Anthropology, then, can and does legitimately highlight and frame ‘violence’ as central to its exploration, rather than simply thinking in terms of ‘culture’ or ‘cultural difference’ (Dominguez, 2013). However, to date few anthropological works explicitly address “systemic injustice, ideologies that support them, and practices that reproduce them” (Dominguez, 2013, unnumbered).

Despite some peacebuilders acknowledging the need for “the anthropology of peace” to increase understanding and peaceful coexistence within and between diverse cultures (Ramsbotham et al, 2011, pp.333-334), there is little anthropological contribution to the fields of peace and conflict studies. Consequently, many conflict theorists rely on outdated dualistic, static, homogeneous and simplistic categorisation of cultures as, for instance, either ‘high’ or

18 Anthropologists first viewed ‘aggression’ in biologically essentialist terms, but later viewed ‘violence’ as influenced by interpretation; as a “social and cultural resource”; but rarely ‘tactical’ because it is mostly “implicit meanings” that are being contested or defended (Brown and Schuster, 1986, Krohn-Hansen, 1994, p.369-371, 374, Ross, 1986, p.175, Schuster and Hartz-Karp, 1986, pp.191-192). Cashman (1993) and Rapoport (1995) also present theories of violence, including anthropological.

There is an urgent need for diverse grounded ethnographies to help recognise and support collective security, identity and recognition ‘societal needs’ in contexts of intrastate conflict (Azar, 1991); to pluralise and contextualise understandings of basic human needs in order to defend minorities at risk (Gurr, 1993, 2000); and to promote cultural analysis and transformation of the hegemonic discourses and institutions sustaining and reproducing violence (e.g. Brigg, 2015). Anthropology can play a valuable role in ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ by honouring local wisdom and cultural ontologies including story-telling and narrative (Tashima et al, 2012, p.34); by rendering diverse material and discursive forms of remembering and forgetting (Casey, 2012, p.6); by illustrating the “plurality of overlapping voices, ideas and histories” (Civico, 2012, p.9); and thus underlining the humanity and subjectivity of diverse peoples in order to disrupt social silencing and to “overcome simplifications and reifications of the other; the enemy to be eliminated” (Civico, 2012, p.9, Casey, 2012, p.6). Phenomenological anthropology can play a particularly valuable role in articulating and validating diverse, dynamic and often *implicit* Aboriginal understandings of ‘peace’ and conflict management (Bauman, 2002, 2009, Behrendt, 1995, Behrendt and Kelly, 2008, Brigg, 2007, 2008, 2011) as vital resources for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ (Hiroshi, 2007). Far greater research remains to be done to explore these intersections between anthropology and peacebuilding. This thesis provides a valuable interdisciplinary, path-finding analysis that enriches both anthropology and peacebuilding.

**Not Western liberal democratic ‘peacebuilding’**

It must be stressed that ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as presented here does *not* follow the prevailing Western liberal democratic model of so-called ‘peacebuilding’. The dominant liberal democratic model has taken the name ‘peacebuilding’\(^{20}\) without embodying its nonviolent

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\(^{19}\) Bauman (2009) challenges such simplistic analyses. Ramsbotham et al (2011, pp.333-334) accepts the categorisation of ‘high’ and ‘low’ context cultures and the categorisation of some cultures as more or less violent than others, but also draws on Avruch and Lederach to argue for the need to recognise local, Indigenous understandings of conflict and processes of resolution. Korostelina (2009, pp.108, 111) adheres to a dualistic definition of individualistic/collectivist cultures. Cook-Huffman (2009), however, urges the need to consider issues of ‘voice and power’, to recognise diversity *within* collective groups, and to avoid stereotyping terms of identity and of intergroup relations. For further discussions on culture and conflict see, for instance, Kimmel (2000), Sharp (1998), and Volkan (1997).

\(^{20}\) In dominant discourse and practice ‘peacebuilding’ is often “miscast...as a subset of a military-peacekeeping (‘enforcement’) ‘operations’” (Bush, 1996, p.77); restricted to short-term elite-level statist
principles, or addressing its original scope and complexity (Spence and McLeod, 2002, p.62, Spence, 2001). As MacGinty (2010), Darby and MacGinty (2008), Bush (1996), Spence (2001), Spence and McLeod (2002), Lambourne (2004), Mitchell (2010) and others testify, the liberal democratic model of so-called ‘peacebuilding’ is formulaic, Western-centric, top-down, short-term and ‘crisis’ focused. It views capitalism as necessarily “a core component of peace” (MacGinty, 2010, p.156). It often prioritises the dominant international community’s interests; concentrates on the individual rather than kin, community or identity groups; does not address the root causes of violence, the needs of the local peoples as articulated by themselves, nor the imperative to collaboratively build just and sustainable social, political, economic structures; and (perhaps inadvertently), it sustains instrumental violence such as “warlordism, political corruption and human or drugs trafficking” (Mitchell, 2010, p.664, Spence and McLeod, 2002, p.62). Further, the liberal dominant model of so-called ‘peacebuilding’ often ignores international, regional, and local economic and political influences; ignores the affective, cultural, psychosocial and relational aspects of conflict; does not focus on preventing violence; fails to reintegrate security and paramilitary personnel into normal society; ignores the complexities involved in genocidal contexts; typically excludes women and refugees; and ignores or undermines culturally diverse understandings of peace, justice, economy and law (MacGinty, 2010, Spence, 2001, Lambourne, 2004). Hegemonic so-called ‘peacebuilding’ also leads to intellectual impoverishment as reflected in the lack of analysis in dominant discourse around the concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘violence’; lack of understood understandings of complex relationships; and the prevalence of research focused on post-conflict ‘peace agreements’ rather than other diverse strategies and local understandings (Lambourne, 2004, MacGinty, 2010).

In contrast, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as understood here embodies its aims, including non-violence, through being “principled in practice and revolutionary in orientation” (Spence and McLeod, 2002, p.62). ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is also considered in this thesis as needing to be aware of and trying to cater for traumatised populations (Zelizer, 2008); to acknowledge but move beyond fear (Lederach, 1998, p.189); to not pressure victims to forgive and reconcile (Forget, 2003, p.122); to collaborate rather than compete with diverse peacebuilding approaches (Nkuuhe, 2006); be ‘just’; and, ultimately, to contribute to global peacebuilding diplomacy and humanitarian crisis response; and thus is ill equipped to deal with prevalent intrastate conflict or to promote the relationship-building necessary to prevent war (e.g. Lederach, 1997, p.29).

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22 Diverse aspects of ‘justice’ include legal justice (such as retributive, restitutive, restorative, and procedural justice); political justice (involving structural and systemic transformation); socioeconomic or

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ can include, but is not limited to, the potentially useful tools or processes of mediation\(^\text{23}\); Alternate Dispute Resolution\(^\text{24}\); reconciliation\(^\text{25}\); conflict analysis\(^\text{26}\), reducing ‘dividers’ and enhancing ‘connectors’ (Anderson, 2004); and ‘dilemma framing’ and ‘paradoxical intentionality’ (Lederach, 1997, pp.13-15, 132, 2008, p.39).

**International ‘Indigenous peacebuilding’**

In the international arena, however, ‘Indigenous peacebuilding’ is still a relatively new area of focus. Indigenous peoples need to be recognised as epistemological equals – *theorists* - with their own unique forms of knowledge and practice which Westerners do not possess, not simply as *objects* of Western research (Speed, 2010, Brigg, 2015, pp.2, 7-8). Through its elicitive nature, therefore, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here represents a valuable addition to the international peacebuilding literature, as well as to Australian anthropological and peacebuilding literatures.

Forms of Indigenous peacemaking approaches identified in the literature include Aboriginal forms of mediation and conflict management across Australia, such as *makarrata* and *wergild* among the ‘Murngin’, *prun* in northern Queensland, Warlpiri fire ceremony, and Mäwul Rom in Arnhem Land; the *Mato-Oput* ceremony among the Acholi in northern Uganda; *Kgotla* in Botswana; complex Maori understandings of ‘peace’; *Gacaca* in Rwanda; and Inuit forms of distributive justice (such as fair distribution, economic justice, and social justice or social equality); and symbolic justice (which involves public verbal or symbolic acknowledgement of injustice) (Lambourne, 2004, pp.16, 22). This is a far deeper understanding of ‘justice’ than typically understood in Western liberal democracies. Also, ‘justice’ and ‘reconciliation’ are not competing objectives (Lambourne, 2004, pp.5-7).


\(^{24}\) Restorative justice is one of the most popular forms of Alternate Dispute Resolution. It draws on culturally diverse jurisprudential principles to restore community management of conflict (rather than viewing a ‘criminal’ as a ‘slave of the state’); balance ethics of justice and care; and problem-solve rather than blame (Forget, 2003, pp.113-118, Moore et al, 1995). For feminist and diverse cultural critiques see, for instance, Balfour (2009), Jin Choi and Severson (2009), and Albrecht (2010). See Bishop (2009 a,b) for suggested adaptations of ADR for Aboriginal peoples.

\(^{25}\) The broad discussion around ‘reconciliation’ in Australia cannot be reproduced here. Dodson (2008) demonstrates persuasively that the dominant Australian discourse on ‘reconciliation’, ‘justice’, ‘peace’ and ‘friendship’ has not been based on philosophical notions of fairness and equity, but rather on assimilation and coercion. For Lederach (1998, p.189), “True reconciliation is to remember and change”. See also Grattan (2000), Short (2008), and Veitch (2007).

\(^{26}\) See, for instance, Tillett and French (2006).

MacGinty (2008) also argues that it is important to not romanticise Indigenous peacemaking practices, or to attribute to them greater coherence and power than they possess. On the one hand, Indigenous peacemaking practices can involve grassroots, relationship-centred, cost-effective, sustainable, adaptable, participative, inclusive, “highly sophisticated mechanisms that are finely calibrated to suit local norms and expectations”; can address the affective dimensions of conflict; can “accommodate multiple-actors”; and “may rest on sophisticated and complex definitions of ‘peace’” (MacGinty, 2008, pp.122-123). On the other hand, Indigenous peacemaking practices can also be fragmented; undermined by civil war; exclusive of women and others; be only locally relevant; perpetuate a “culture of impunity”; and – sometimes – be co-opted by international donors (MacGinty, 2008, pp.122-123). Thus, rather than deifying Indigenous peacebuilding and demonising all Western approaches to peacebuilding, MacGinty (2008, p.129) contends that “It is important to match the conflict with the conflict management tool”. While many of MacGinty’s (2008) concerns are valid, nevertheless, his argument seems to imply that it is still, at base, a (Western) donor who decides which “conflict management tool” to select. Instead this thesis advocates the freedom for diverse Aboriginal peoples to draw on their own, Western, and other diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches in their peacebuilding work as they see fit. That is, in their own work, the decision of whether, how, when to employ what sorts of approaches to ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ must lie with the Aboriginal peoples involved. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as presented here, then, is based not on romanticisation, but on respect.

**Australian context of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’**

Through this research I discovered that far greater understanding is needed of what ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ might look like, with different Aboriginal peoples in different

contexts in Australia. While peacebuilding is a relatively young field internationally, it is perhaps at toddler stage across Australia as a whole. To date no established field of anthropological peacebuilding exists in the world (Hiroshi, 2007), and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is almost unheard of in Australia. While there are dedicated peacebuilders working with Aboriginal peoples in Australia, including Aboriginal peacebuilders (Spence, 2009, Kingham and Bauman, 2005, pp.8-10, Brigg and Tonnaer, 2008, Wild, 1986), there is little published information available about their work, and no institutional frameworks to promote and sustain specifically Aboriginal peacebuilding.

Most relevant work to date has been conducted within legalistic paradigms; has implicitly focused on ‘negative peace’; and has centred around Aboriginal dispute management and agreement making in contexts of native title (Behrendt, 1995, Behrendt and Kelly, 2008, Hall, 1981, Agius, 1995, Bauman, 2006a, NADRAC, 1997, 2001, Brockwell et al, 2005). In particular, the ground-breaking *Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project* (IFaMP) drawn from extensive discussions with a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations and communities across Australia from 2003-2006, has made substantial advances to the field of mediation, facilitation and other aspects of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) affecting Indigenous peoples in Australia in native title contexts (Bauman, 2006a, 2007, 2008, 2010d, Bauman and Close, 2004, Bauman and Williams, 2004a, 2004c, 2005, Macdonald and Bauman, 2011, NADRAC, 2006, Ross, 2003). However, although many of the IFaMP arguments for improving the efficacy and justice of native title processes are highly relevant to ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, to date little has been written specifically about ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ models or practices in Australia, either by anthropologists or by peacebuilders.

This literary opacity is not due to the irrelevance of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in Australia. An urgent need for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ exists across Australia as a whole, and matters

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28 Dispute resolution centres and community justice centres exist across Australia (with only a pilot Community Justice Centre in NT), and independent Australian peacebuilders work in both Australia and overseas (AIATSIS IFaMP, 2007, Spence, 2009). While a range of academic institutes across Australia offer relevant legal, international relations, human resource management courses and specific conflict resolution skills, only the University of Queensland (which pioneered peace studies in Australia), University of Sydney, the University of New England, La Trobe University, and the University of Western Sydney directly teach peace studies (AIATSIS IFaMP, 2007, Lambourne, 2014).

29 Cross-disciplinary understanding of peacebuilding in Australia is very poor; Bauman (2009), Bauman and Pope (2009), and Kingham and Bauman (2005, pp.8-10) for instance, are the only Australianist anthropological works I could find referring in any detail to peacebuilding. Brigg (2003, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2015) and Brigg and Tonnaer (2008) provide a refreshing political science analysis and highlight the central role that establishing relations of reciprocity, openness, responsiveness, and mutual respect play in Aboriginal intercultural reconciliation and decolonisation strategies.
relating to ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ affect a wide range of actors, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Bauman and Pope’s (2009, pp.xv-xvi) seminal Solid Work You Mob Are Doing draws attention to the fact that the pressing need for effective, long-term, flexible and properly resourced Indigenous dispute management processes is not being met despite high demand across the nation; despite specific governmental responsibilities at federal, state and territory levels; and despite the priority of this area for “all who do business with Indigenous communities”. In sum, despite such high relevance and necessity, in most areas successful, adequately funded and responsive Indigenous dispute management processes simply do not exist (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.xv, ALRC, 1986, paragraphs 693, 125, Crawford and Thwaites, 2013).

Further, prevailing approaches to Indigenous dispute management do not sufficiently recognise or promote diverse Aboriginal capacities, experiences and expertise around ‘conflict management’ (Kingham and Bauman, 2005, Behrendt and Kelly, 2008, Bishop, 2009a,b)\(^\text{30}\). Native title processes, for instance, are perceived by many as being ‘artificial’, ‘structurally violent’ and as creating new conflict within Aboriginal communities (see Chapter 2). In contrast, Indigenous mediators view ‘peacemaking’, ‘peacekeeping’\(^\text{31}\) or ‘peacebuilding’ as empowering of, and resonating with, Aboriginal relational processes and priorities (Kingham and Bauman, 2005, pp.8-10). In contrast to mainstream Indigenous dispute resolution approaches, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as presented here recognises and builds on Aboriginal capacities; explores the root causes of Aboriginal experiences of ‘direct violence’; and challenges the genocidal conditions and ‘constitutive rules’ of settler colonial society.

Some may object that such an ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ approach – or peacebuilding itself - is naïve and unrealistic. Certainly such changes will not occur easily or quickly. However, Lederach (2008, p.43) reclaims naiveté as the art of the possible, and as an especially valuable peacebuilding resource of grounded optimism. This thesis argues that the broader and more

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\(^\text{30}\) Bishop (2009a) proposes greater Indigenous representation and decision-making in government policy through Aboriginal capacity-building in Alternate Dispute Resolution processes and opportunities at community and government levels. Bishop (2009b) proposes an adaption of mainstream Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes by incorporating three additional steps between the ‘intake’ and ‘mediation’ phases: clarifying local interests and communication priorities and constraints; identifying key local conflict contributors and problem-solving resources; and drawing on Aboriginal ceremonies and other cultural activities to promote more effective and empowering cross-cultural ADR approaches.

\(^\text{31}\) Many Aboriginal people prefer the terms ‘peacemaking’, ‘peacebuilding’ or ‘peacekeeping’ when discussing broader dispute resolution frameworks compared to the more restrictive mainstream notions of mediation or conflict resolution (Bauman, 2006a, p.18). These terms are seen to resonate with traditional Indigenous “peacemaking” rituals and with Christian spirituality. However, Aboriginal understandings of ‘peacekeeping’ differ to international understandings of ‘peacekeeping’ as military measures to enforce ‘negative peace’.
ambitious (‘naïve’) conceptual and methodological framework of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is in fact necessary to recognise and transcend the ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence prevailing in dominant approaches to addressing conflict and violence in Aboriginal communities. Here ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ puts Whitefellas back into the equation by turning the gaze back on those who “control the processes with which they expect Indigenous people to engage”; to visibilise the ‘cage’ not only of native title (Bauman, 2010a, pp.4, 11), but of settler colonial systems and assumptions more broadly. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as offered here thus meets the call for elicitive, participatory, long-term, holistic, sustainable, dynamic, and coordinated approaches to Aboriginal conflicts that recognise the “deep structural issues, underlying social inequities and systemic problems” at the root of Aboriginal conflicts, and mainstream efforts to address them (Mayer in Bauman, 2006c, p.13, Bauman and Williams, 2004b, p.vi, 2004c, p.3, Bauman and Pope, 2009, pp.xix-xx, 109-110, 135, 137, Kingham and Bauman, 2005).

**Scope of the thesis**

This thesis, therefore, represents the first in-depth, systematic application of the conceptual and methodological framework of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in Australia. No other study has as yet analysed Aboriginal experiences of violence in Australia in terms of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ peace; in terms of Lederach’s (1997, 2003) elicitive, integrated, transformative peacebuilding framework; and in terms of applying Galtung’s (1996) tri-fold analysis of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence to Aboriginal experiences of genocide.

Every aspect of this thesis has necessarily involved working in little understood, hazy and often inarticulate conceptual and phenomenological areas. All the major theoretical areas of focus of this thesis are in fields which are very new, and poorly supported or recognised. Not only are these areas poorly appreciated, they are also highly contentious, fraught and unpopular for discussion – in both Black, and White, circles. Very little research exists - particularly from Aboriginal perspectives - on Aboriginal suicide; on Aboriginal lateral violence; on Aboriginal ‘family violence’; on Aboriginal cultural trauma; on Australian genocide against Aboriginal peoples; and on Aboriginal experiences of violence in general.

Not only am I working in an area of anthropology that is poorly understood, I am also writing about a people whom anthropology does not even know exist – Kamilaroi French ‘family’. Macdonald (1998a, 1998b, 2001, 2010), Hansen and Butler (2013) and others testify to the historic and continuing bias against ‘urban and regional’ anthropology compared to ‘remote’ area anthropology. Anthropological literature on the Kamilaroi is almost non-existent. Fison (in
Fison and Howitt, 1991, pp.68–75) studies matrilineal descent amongst the Kamilaroi, highly flavoured by evolutionary anthropology arguments and priorities. Mathews (1894/1895, 1896, 1898, 1903, 1907, 1917) analyses Gamilaroi bora, language, and so-called ‘class system’. Reay (1949, 1951), and Reay and Sitlington (1948) provide assimilationist, if keenly observed, accounts of Aboriginal peoples in Moree – core Kamilaroi French ‘country’ - which overlook genocidal structures and cultural ‘continuity’ in change. My honours thesis Actively Aboriginal: Mythology as action research explores issues of power in oral history research. Apart from these, no anthropological works exist around the Kamilaroi people.

Other works are relevant in terms of their ‘urban’ or ‘regional’ anthropological focus, or for their focus on localities relevant to Kamilaroi French ‘family’, including Moree, the Upper Hunter Valley, and regional NSW generally. Beckett’s (1958) ground-breaking work on Aboriginal ‘beats’, kinship, and work in Wilcannia illustrates the persistence of Aboriginal cultures in regional NSW, in contrast to prevailing notions of NSW Aboriginal peoples as ‘having no culture’. While focused on VIC, Barwick’s (1962, 1963, 1964, 1972) pioneering historical anthropological works are relevant for combining analysis of European historical records with contemporary Aboriginal understandings in order to address the “gaps and silences in the written records” (Kijas, 1997, p.58). Particularly valuable, also, is Macdonald’s (1988, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2013) prolific work on Wiradjuri economies; personhood; fighting; kinship; history; territories; and life under the ‘soft knife’ and ‘ontological violence’ of settler colonialism in Australia. Macdonald (e.g.1998, 2001) challenges still popular notions of the supposed ‘cultural deficit’ of Aboriginal peoples in NSW, and the privileging of ‘remote’ Aboriginal peoples in anthropology.

Non-anthropological works include the sterling Moree Mob series by Briggs-Smith and McGregor (1997) and Briggs-Smith (2003, 2006), detailing some histories of Moree Kamilaroi ‘families’ - especially valued for their photographs of local people - as well as highlighting Aboriginal rugby league players. Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative (BAAC) (1989) also introduces works of Moree Kamilaroi artists. Some Kamilaroi French ‘family’ members have produced unpublished works around genealogy and trauma, but due to their highly personal and confidential nature, it is not appropriate to share these here. The late, highly respected member of Gamilaroi French ‘family’, Uncle Bert Groves (Aunty Chrissy’s maternal uncle) was a

32 Barwick (1962, 1963) distinguishes urban Aboriginal peoples from White working class peoples, and illustrates the centrality of kinship for Aboriginal socialisation, economy and identity.
33 Some Gamilaroi French ‘family’ members, however, assert that there are genealogical errors in these works.
34 See Macdonald (2003).
self-taught and highly prolific writer who worked tirelessly for the benefit of his people, and many of his exploits and articles appear in *Dawn*\(^\text{35}\), among other publications.

Works relevant to the Upper Hunter Valley region generally include studies of colonial records by Brayshaw (1986) and self-published works by amateur historian O’Rourke (e.g. 1997, 2005, 2009) which largely relay - and at times make dubious interpretations around – early settler colonial accounts in the Upper Hunter Valley. Such works are increasingly influential since they are among the only resources available online, and are often considered authoritative sources by school students (Kamilaroi Forum, 2015). Idriess (1953) is also often treated as an authoritative source regarding Gamilaroi culture, despite being a fictional account (Kovacic, 2006).\(^\text{36}\) Blyton’s (2009, 2012) work on the Upper Hunter Valley challenges ‘exotic disease theory’ and calls for the recognition of Aboriginal guides in “Australian exploration history”; and Blyton and Ramsland’s (2012) work on the Upper Hunter Valley, implicitly conceptualises so-called ‘mixed race’ children as cultural ‘hybrids’, and expresses a somewhat functionalist and determinist view of White male violence against Aboriginal women.

This thesis, therefore, not only addresses vital and much-neglected conceptual fields, it also presents valuable primary data and cultural analysis around a group of Aboriginal people who, from an anthropological perspective, do not exist. Not only are Gamilaroi French ‘family’ unheard of in anthropology, they are also – still today – predominantly understood as possessing ‘no culture’. Uncovering so many layers of invisibility and silencing has been the biggest challenge of this thesis.

My findings, however, are necessarily provisional, given the very emergent field of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in Australia, and of anthropological peacebuilding both in Australia and internationally. The discussions around ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence in Chapters 1 to 3 are designed as an introduction to applying Galtung’s (1996) trifold analysis of violence to Aboriginal experiences of genocide in Australia. Far greater depth and breadth of analysis and exploration is needed on these critical issues, particularly given the pervasive silence around, and normalisation of, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence in Australia. With regards to

\(^{35}\) *Dawn* was a magazine published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board primarily to promote Aboriginal assimilation. However, Uncle Bert and some other Aboriginal people were able to contribute to the magazine for their own purposes, and today *Dawn* constitutes a valuable primary source of family information for some Aboriginal people. *Dawn* is not an anthropological journal.\(^{36}\) It is also presumed that the *Ewing Manuscripts* which inspired Idriess (1953) – ‘oral history’ recordings made of a Kamilaroi elder by a police sergeant and his son – simply present ‘neutral facts’; no consideration is given to the role of the interviewers and the interviewing process in the production and interpretation of such ‘facts’. See Durney (1999) regarding issues of power and ethnocentrism in the recording, transcribing and interpretation of ‘oral history’.
Lederach’s (1997, pp.79-85) model of ‘integrated peacebuilding’, this thesis restricts its focus to preliminary investigation into ‘root causes’ of the violence, and Kamilaroi French ‘family’ contributions to the ‘transformation’ role of integrated peacebuilding. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to also pay detailed attention to the other aspects of integrated peacebuilding - ‘crisis management’, ‘prevention’, and future ‘vision’ - despite their signal importance.

The complexity of Aboriginal cultures, contexts and experiences of violence across Australia, and the paucity of anthropological discussions around Kamilaroi French ‘family’ in particular, also mean that this thesis is necessarily both partial and preliminary. The phenomenological anthropological analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 is also intended merely as a starting point to eliciting and supporting ‘Aboriginal peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ with Gamilaroi French ‘family’. Thus, rather than being a thesis which can hone in on one speciality area of an already vigorously discussed and established field, this thesis has necessarily undertaken an exploratory, inaugural approach.

This thesis will not offer recommendations for policy makers; such is not the target audience. Rather, the intent of the thesis is to argue the case for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ to anthropologists and peacebuilders in the hope of stimulating broader discussion, and to offer critical conceptual resources for Aboriginal peoples in their ongoing, daily struggles against genocidal violence as it manifests in Australia today.

Nor does the thesis provide detailed practical suggestions for process managers and peacebuilders. Given local constraints and imperatives, we were not able to undertake overt ‘peacebuilding’ work in the Upper Hunter Valley. Further, the very Indigenous Methodologies PAR approach undertaken and recommended here precludes ‘knowing beforehand’ what process to follow. While vital principles inform the ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ modelled here, every conflict context must be approached creatively on its own terms.

It is also important to note that this thesis does not provide detailed evidence of the local conflict. Firstly, I do not disclose details of the local violence as a matter of respect for local people; because the conflict is still ongoing and is highly sensitive; and because I have not been granted authority to publicly discuss such issues by the local Aboriginal peoples involved. Secondly, given that the broader, currently hostile, political context against ‘Aboriginal violence’ could easily misconstrue any data I provide about the local Aboriginal conflict, I

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37 Even using pseudonyms would not afford sufficient protection since any actions and relationships recorded would still be patently evident to any local Aboriginal readers.
considered it safer, for the political and social wellbeing of the participants, to not disclose such information publicly.

Lastly, readers may well wonder – does this thesis focus on ‘intra-Aboriginal’ or ‘inter-cultural’ forms of ‘war’ and ‘peace’? While accepting that categorising processes as exclusively ‘intra-Aboriginal’ or ‘inter-cultural’ is highly problematic given the complexity, diversity and nuanced nature of the contexts we are trying to understand (e.g. Bauman, 2002, Bauman and Williams, 2004c, pp.9-10, Macdonald and Bauman, 2011), nevertheless, for the purposes of uncovering the genealogies of and repercussions of settler colonial genocide, it must be recognised that vastly uneven political, economic, social, legal, discursive and material ‘playing fields’ are still manifest today.

Recent anthropological debates over the ‘intercultural’ reflect broader philosophical, anthropological and postcolonial interest in cosmopolitan ‘hybridity’ of ‘identity’\(^\text{38}\). The intercultural is presented as mutually constitutive ‘mimetic exchange’ between polyethnic, culturally hybrid, temporal and contingent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal personal and group identities (e.g. Martin, 2015, Dalley, 2015, Dalley and Martin, 2015). The broad intention of intercultural studies is to deconstruct stereotypical, ‘essentialist’ dichotomies between Black and White and to assert forms of connection and relationship beyond these categories.

Many would agree with the importance of challenging White stereotypes around Aboriginality as primordial, pre-‘human’, romantic utopian ‘savage’, and of culture itself as static, homogenous, and unchanging, along with the historic and ongoing material ramifications of these stereotypes in settler colonial polity. Clearly, neither Aboriginal nor non-Aboriginal peoples in Australia constitute a homogenous group without diversity of class, religion, historical experiences, personality, gender, employment, education, residence and so on. Evidently, relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples exist in Australia.

However, whether most Aboriginal people would agree with the notion of a ‘happy hybridity’ (Bell in Brigg, 2015, p.3) of ‘relational intimacies’ with settler colonisers as a whole is another matter. What is the nature of these diverse Settler-Aboriginal relationships? How significant are they in shaping ‘selves’ and communities? What are the power differentials between those interacting? With what purpose are they engaging with one another? What role does behaviour and attitudes - demonstrable commitment towards reciprocity and respect,

\(^38\) These discussions also reflect implicit ongoing and unresolved poststructuralist debates around dichotomous notions of self-society, agency-dominance, local-broad-scale, and the contingent-structural.
openness and responsiveness to colonial ‘not knowing’, long-term friendship and regard - play in shaping the mutual efficacy and significance of these interactions? There is no ‘natural’, neutral, or deterministic 39 ‘cultural hybridity’.

The move towards ‘the intercultural’ coincides with a growing tendency in anthropology and postcolonial studies towards a “norm against noticing” race (Harrison, 2000, pp.46-49). At broader public levels there has been a shift towards presuming a ‘postracial’ 40 colour-blind, levelled and gender-neutral playing field; portraying expressions of racialised experience as ‘cultural fundamentalism’; and perceiving the legacy and ongoing import of generations of collective White privilege, unequal opportunity and exploitation of Black labour as deserved White individual achievements (Harrison, 1998, p.16, 2000, pp.49-52). Thus, race and racism are becoming erased from social analysis (Harrison, 2006, p.47).

Undoubtedly, it is important to be wary of the pitfalls of essentialising discourse, where stereotypical and static notions of ‘culture’ can take the place of ‘race’ in dominant discourse (Harrison, 2000, p.53). However, erasing ‘race’ and racism from critical social analysis hides the ongoing injuries of racism (Harrison, 2000, p.47). *Multiplicative* effects of race, class and gender persist in reproducing asymmetrical relations of life expectancy, wealth, employment, earning value, criminalisation, education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. At legal, political, military-justice-system, economic, education, employment, media and other social discourse levels, ‘Whiteness’ constitutes an ongoing and decisively controlling factor in coercively shaping relations between diverse peoples, particularly Indigenous peoples, at local, regional, national and global levels. Further, rather than acting as ahistorical, apolitical ‘fragmented’ subjects, “actors make choices in historically specific contexts shaped by the vested interests of transnational capital” (Harrison, 2000, p.52).

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39 There is a materialistically deterministic flavour to Dalley and Martin’s (2015) discussion. The physical fact of residential proximity, the demographic numbers of ‘Black’ and ‘White’, even the physical proximity of bodies in government-claimant native title meetings, are presumed to of themselves create ‘relational intimacies’: add bodies and stir, and voila! - ‘the intercultural’ arises. Insufficient attention is paid to the *nature, quality* and denseness of such interactions. While many factors influence ‘identity’, some relationships are far more salient and meaningful in the production of diverse ‘selves’. Notably, interactions with primary caregivers and interactions during early childhood are seen as the most significant in establishing an enduring experience of ‘personhood’ (Quinn, 2006). Discussions on ‘the intercultural’ tend to overlook the relative *significance* of the interactions for participants, focusing instead on their mere actuality.

40 Race is being reworked in ambiguous and unmarked ways through “subtle ideological and cultural mechanisms of denial and social censorship” and through a dominant cultural logic that erases race (Harrison, 2000, p.49).
Aboriginal peoples are constituted in settler-colonial legislative and policy frameworks as an excluded-inclusion, as negative referents of the “exceptional, other, or abnormal” against which Australian biopolitical order is constituted and defends itself (Brigg, 2015, p.16). A continuing pattern of excluded-inclusion permeates settler-Aboriginal political relations, with increasing emphasis in recent years on coercing Aboriginal self-regulation towards Western political ontology and values41 (Brigg, 2007, p.17). Overt racial reference has been replaced in recent years by characterising Aboriginal communities as exceptional “zones of crisis”, meriting, through their ‘exceptionalism’, an intensity and ubiquity of coercive governance not experienced by non-Aboriginal peoples (Brigg, 2007, pp.17-18). Such ‘exceptionality’ of Aboriginal peoples is not acknowledgement of the legitimacy and existence of diverse Aboriginal lifeworlds and political ontologies, but rather is the target for elimination and ‘inclusion’ in the dominant Western political order (Brigg, 2007, p.18).

Thus, Aboriginal and settler-colonial political ontologies coexist in “an unequal and antagonistic relationship characterised by domination rather than positive or productive exchange” (Brigg, 2007, p.18). The particular contexts described in Dalley and Martin (2015) are not neutral, peaceful, “dialogic encounters” (Dalley and Martin, 2015, p.2) between intimate equals, as presumed in concepts of gradual cultural change over time, or in philosophical discussions around a child’s developing awareness of its distinctiveness and connectedness to significant others. Supposed settler-Aboriginal ‘relational intimacies’ have been, and continue to be, profoundly shaped by relations of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ settler colonial violence.

Dalley and Martin (2015) acknowledge the need to not view only Aboriginal peoples as ‘intercultural’, nor to presume a naïve and utopian view of interculturality that ignores broader political and historic forces. Yet, even as they make such admissions, Dalley and Martin (2015) persist in having defining Aboriginality as their primary focus, ignore ‘White’ interculturality, and overlook the vital import of political-economic-social settler colonial processes at local and particular levels. With no sense of irony, Dalley and Martin (2015, p.16) claim - of the contexts described in their book as being shaped in enduring and decisive ways by frontier colonial violence, by native title and other legislation, and by perspectives of non-Aboriginal state employees - that “These interactions are not those in which the state figures heavily”. Rather, merely by shifting the frame and ‘scale’ of focus to the ‘local’ and to ‘personhood’, it is

41 Including self-reliance, employment in the market economy, economic ‘responsibility’, and private land ownership (Brigg, 2007, p.17)
presumed that ‘the state’ magically holds no sway in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships. Even in the genuinely emotionally and personally ‘intimate’ relationship of the interracial marriage Dalley (2015) describes, the influence of ‘the state’ is apparent in the legacy of the general suspicion and hostility between Black and White in the locality, and in the residential constraints on local Whitefellas.

It is possible to recognise Aboriginal ‘agency’ and survival even as one recognises the ongoing reality of settler biopolitical dominance in Australia. However, this ‘agency’ may not take the form of the public, formalised, governmental level, as ‘agency’ is often understood in Western liberal democracy. Even though Aboriginal peoples are increasingly involved in governmental agencies, responding to legislation to achieve the most benefit from a constrained and constraining system, Aboriginal influence on government policy and legislative development can be overstated. While some positive developments have been made, often Aboriginal desires, priorities and funding are appropriated or watered down in government legislation, and new forms of marginalisation arise (Tauri, 2013, Lea, 2012).

Adopting a lens of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ reveals that continued settler-colonial eliminatory-assimilatory biopolitical dominance precludes addressing underlying Settler-Aboriginal conflict, or preventing ongoing crises in Aboriginal governance policy. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here ultimately provides a transformative framework enabling settler-colonial responsiveness to, respectful exchange with, and regulating their selves in relation to Aboriginal political ontologies and values called for by Brigg (2007, p.19). However, detailed examination of such intercultural and reconciliatory projects is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In sum, Gamilaroi French do not see their identity as ‘provisional’, ‘ontologically blurred’, ‘partial’ and temporary. Acknowledging the possibility and reality of respectful and productive relations between ‘Black’ and ‘White’, and acknowledging a complex diversity of experiences of being ‘Black’ or ‘White’, does not mean that ‘difference’ does not exist or that it needs to be obliterated. How are people ‘the same’ and why does this matter? Who is asking the question and for what purpose? Is the desire for regulatory efficiency, for denial of the relevance of ‘race’ and the undoing of supposed ‘minority privileges’, for establishing points of connection and recognition of mutual ‘humanity’, for affirming the validity and existence of Aboriginal lifeworlds, for absorbing Aboriginal ‘difference’ into (ostensibly ‘neutral’ and culture-less) ‘mainstream society’? Recognition of ‘difference’ does not necessarily entail conflict. Aboriginal peoples do not see all White people as ‘the enemy’, and as beyond capacity for
relationship. Aboriginal peoples have frequently made efforts towards establishing enduring relationships of reciprocity, diplomacy and ‘equality’ with non-Aboriginal peoples. As chapter 5 discusses, recognition of nuanced layers of ‘difference’ (and ‘sameness’) in ‘relative autonomy’ can in fact promote respectful, collaborative relationships, when the underlying premise is that we are all equally valuable, and all responsible for diverse cultural and community well-being.

Thus, at the broader political and economic levels, and at local, personal levels, ‘intra-Aboriginal’ and ‘inter-cultural’ domains do, most decidedly, exist. While this thesis firmly holds that Aboriginal peoples are most certainly the moral equals of non-Aboriginal peoples, this thesis also argues that, most patently, Aboriginal peoples are not recognised as such in Australia today. To deny the existence of such ongoing inequalities is, in fact, a prevalent form of ‘cultural violence’ occurring in settler colonial society today.

I was asked to try to help address new forms of violence arising within a local Black community – ‘intra-Aboriginal’ violence. However, in order to do so, I found that it is necessary to first address the invisibility and silencing of settler colonial violence which lies behind Aboriginal experiences of violence – how ‘inter-cultural’ violence is leading to ‘intra-Aboriginal’ violence. By naming and externalising the root causes of violence against Aboriginal peoples today, it is hoped that this will enhance ‘connectors’ among local Aboriginal peoples, and will help reduce ‘dividers’ such as Aboriginal peoples simply blaming each other for the violence they are experiencing. The current focus is not on trying to promote ‘inter-cultural’ reconciliation at this introductory stage of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

This thesis offers two major findings: firstly, the vital role that ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ can play in helping uncover and address the ongoing genocide Aboriginal peoples face daily; and secondly, the crucial resources Gamilaroi French ‘family’ already possess, already enact that can be harnessed as creative, transformative resources to promote ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ on Aboriginal terms.
Chapter 1: ‘Direct violence’ and Aboriginal trauma

Everybody dies n ... it’s *how you choose* to die... I believe that’s what our people are doin...choosin how, how they’ll die out ... y’know?....we can wait til govment policy, y’know ...til they move a policy that says we’re *dead*... ... you want dignity better to *die* a happy person rather than enslaved to ...conditions that... *fuck* ya up anyway, you know?

Freeda Archibald, Wauchope, July 2011

AC: *Where do you go*...honestly ... we’re just a small minority of people n here we are now fightin with one another n nobody’s doin anything about it... the govment want us to *kill* one another *off*, they’d be happy about *that*, *wouldn*’ t they? ...

F: We don’t *exist* then

Aunty Chrissy and Freeda Archibald, Wauchope, April, 2010

Aboriginal peoples are defined as ‘violent’

‘Direct violence’ is the best known ‘super-type’ of violence facing Aboriginal peoples in Australia today. However, mainstream media and other dominant discourse misrepresents Aboriginal experiences of ‘direct violence’. It fails to acknowledge ‘direct violence’ is an outcome of settler colonial ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence.

Aboriginal peoples are characterised in the media1 and official discourse today primarily in terms of ‘direct’ violence’. The following comment by Maddison (2009, p.187) is representative:

*pilfic violence in Aboriginal communities is tearing apart the fragile social fabric that in some areas has barely survived 220 years of colonisation*

Aboriginal peoples are stereotyped as violent or as victims, in mainstream media and official discourse highlighting intra-Aboriginal violence and ignoring non-Aboriginal violence against Aboriginal peoples. ‘The Intervention’ – the *Northern Territory Emergency Response 2007 (NT)*

1 See, for instance, Danalis, Koori Mail and Qiang (in Korrf, 2015a) on media stereotypes around Aboriginal peoples.

2 While not using this term, commentators describe forms of violence referred to by Galtung (1996) as ‘direct violence’.

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(NTER) (later renamed *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011 (NT)* (SFNTB)) - is the most dramatic current example of how Aboriginal peoples as a whole are characterised in terms of ‘direct violence’\(^3\). On 21 June 2007, the federal government presented the NTER as a package of widespread measures to be introduced into Aboriginal communities in order to address what it termed a “national emergency confronting the welfare of Aboriginal children in relation to child abuse and family violence” (Brough, 2007). The NTER was deliberately intended to “shift the social, cultural and legal landscapes of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory” (AHRC, 2007, unnumbered). Aboriginal communities were presented as being swept away by “rivers of grog” and as locked into a down-spiralling “breakdown of Aboriginal culture and society” (AHRC, 2007, unnumbered). Much public discussion around the Intervention revolves around allegedly widespread violence by ‘Aboriginal men’ against Aboriginal women and children. In particular, unprecedented levels of child sexual assault by ‘Aboriginal men’ is the purported reason for the Intervention\(^4\). Significant media coverage has been given to claims that such violence is rooted in ‘traditional Aboriginal culture’, and that Aboriginal women and children would be safer in ‘mainstream society’ (e.g. Jarrett, 2013a, 2013b, Devine, 2006, Kimm, 2004, Sutton, 2009). Public discussions around the Intervention focus on the supposed gravity (‘crisis’\(^5\)) of the problems necessitating immediate action without consultation; the deception that Aboriginal peoples have been actively practising ‘self-determination’\(^6\) so increased social distress is of their own making; and resulting claims that therefore Aboriginal ‘culture’ is inherently dysfunctional, dangerous, and unable to cope with modern society.

However, such claims are directly contradicted by the very inquiry upon which the Intervention is supposedly based (Wild and Anderson, 2007, p.6)\(^7\):

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\(^3\) ‘Structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence implications of the Intervention are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

\(^4\) See, for instance, Korff (2015c). While the Intervention portrayed Aboriginal child abuse as an ‘unprecedented’ ‘national emergency’, thirteen inquiries – three of them federal - into the sexual abuse of Aboriginal children already held during that federal government’s time in office had been ignored (Korff, 2015a, unnumbered). Further, Langton (2008, p.143) describes the graphic and very public debate on Aboriginal child abuse as “war porn” that parodies Aboriginal suffering.

\(^5\) In fact, the government has been aware of Aboriginal social distress, including the devastating impacts of alcohol abuse on Aboriginal communities, since at least 1977 (D’Abbs, 2010, pp.505-506).

\(^6\) Rose (1986, p.26) sees ‘self-determination’ as “a very bad joke...precisely because the term so thoroughly contradicts what it purports to express”. One of the most debilitating and crazy-making aspects of such policies is that it presents the fiction that Black people have sufficient political power to create policy and manage their own affairs (Tauri, 2013) whereas it is in fact a “front for assimilation and exploitation” (Langton in Rose, 1986, p.26); it is in effect White ‘self-determination’ (Cowlishaw, 2003, 2010, Sullivan, 1986, Black, 2010, Beckett, 2010).

\(^7\) Pilger (in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2013), in fact, says that NT has one of the lowest rates of child abuse reported in Australia.
It is a very important point...that the problems do not just relate to Aboriginal communities. The number of perpetrators is small and there are some communities, it must be thought, where there are no problems at all.

Silence around causative White ‘direct violence’

What public discourse fails to mention is that most perpetrators of sexual violence against Aboriginal women and children - both historically and today - are in fact White men. The dominant myth that most sexual assault is committed by strangers – here ‘Aboriginal men’ - hides the fact that high, engrained levels of family sexual violence exists within Australian society generally (George, 1993). In mainstream debates around intra-Aboriginal sexual violence, it is ‘forgotten’ that the sexual violence inherent in the settler colonial patriarchal system have been enacted on the frontier against Aboriginal women and children for generations (Atkinson and Woods, 2008, p.10, Atkinson 2002, Thomas, 1993). Widespread sexual abuse has been perpetrated by White men against Stolen Generations Aboriginal children in White households and institutions, as recently as the 1970s (Read, 1981, Atkinson and Woods, 2008, p.10, Langton, 2009, p.22, Korrf, 2015a). Further, many White police sexual assaults have been enacted against Aboriginal women, including during the 1980s and 1990s (Thomas, 1993, p.140). Still today significant levels of sexual violence are committed by the “state controlled apparatus of prisons and police” (George, 1993, pp.211, 214, Paul, 2009, pp.84-85).

As Atkinson (in Chandler, 2007, unnumbered) notes, of the over 800 Aboriginal victims of child sexual abuse she has worked with, most perpetrators are White men. When White men commit such atrocities, the colonial system turns a blind eye. In NSW, for instance, it is well

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8 See also Yu (2012a, 2012b), Robinson (1993), MAKO (1999) regarding the prevalence of child sex tourism and violence against mail-order brides by Anglo-Australian men; Australia has the second highest number of prosecutions under the Child Sex Tourism law in the world (MAKO, 1999, Yu, 2012b).

9 See Smith (2003, 2005) on Western sexual violence as a tool of genocide.

10 It is reported that at least 10% of Stolen Generations Aboriginal children were sexually abused by White institutions; one in eleven Stolen Aboriginal girls became pregnant while apprenticed, one in twelve died, and one in seven ran away (Korrf, 2015a, unnumbered). While the Sydney Morning Herald (in Korrf, 2015a, unnumbered) describes how Roy Stewart was traumatised for life by having to bury fellow Aboriginal boys who had been bashed to death by the drunk White supervisor of Kinchela Boys home, the public was told that in Kinchela Boy’s home “A certain standard of discipline is maintained, but it is emphasised that this discipline is one of respect and not of fear” (Aborigines Welfare Board, 1953, p.5). Denial of abuse of Aboriginal peoples by Whites continues today (e.g. Windshuttle in Feneley, 2013).

11 Further, the Western criminal justice system often denies the importance or reality of rape; subsequently most cases are not reported, and of those reported in only 6% is the offender charged (Stuart, 1993, p.97).
known by many authorities that White male truck drivers are systematically sexually exploiting Aboriginal children all along the NSW coast. Kamilaroi French family inform me that this has been occurring for decades and continues unabated today\(^\text{12}\). The authorities know which motels and caravan parks are being used in which towns, but claim that they cannot intervene due to legal issues of ‘personal privacy’. In contrast, intra-Aboriginal child sexual assault in NSW received its own NSW Attorney-General Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce in July 2004 (Wild and Anderson, 2007, p.16). Freeda was originally on the committee set up supposedly to address issues of Aboriginal child protection in her region. She resigned in disgust after realising that all of the White authorities were aware of the situation, but were not prepared to intervene to stop the White sexual abuse of Aboriginal children. Thus we can see the ‘cultural violence’ in dominant discourse both of silence around White ‘direct violence’, and of defining Aboriginal peoples in terms of ‘direct violence’.

The ‘cultural violence’\(^\text{13}\) of defining Aboriginal peoples as ‘violent’ is a form of ‘false witness’ (Lifton, 1995) which creates and justifies extreme ‘direct violence’\(^\text{14}\). In the Upper Hunter Valley, for instance, convicts and settlers typically circulated stories of great fear and hatred of Aboriginal people in the frontier era, expecting a violent, mass revolt (e.g. O’Rourke, 2009). However, such fears were not realised. Nevertheless, White hysteria led to the infamous violence of police troops and such gruesome White deeds as poisoning flour, waterholes, and proudly displaying the bodies - and even collections of ears – of Black people (O’Rourke, 2009).

Thus, settler colonisers themselves came to embody the brutality they ascribed to Aboriginal peoples.

**Anthropological perspectives on ‘direct violence’ in Aboriginal cultures**

Whereas mainstream discourse openly stereotypes Aboriginal peoples as (directly) ‘violent’, until recently there has been a general silence in Australianist anthropology around ‘direct violence’\(^\text{15}\) in Aboriginal communities. Currently, however, anthropologists hotly contest to what extent Aboriginal cultures are inherently ‘violent’, and whether a ‘crisis’ of violence is currently widespread in Aboriginal communities. It is widely known that Aboriginal Law often involves administering physical punishment, thus some earlier works view ‘raw conflict’ in

\(^{12}\) See also Sen and Jowsey (2013).

\(^{13}\) See Chapter 3.

\(^{14}\) See Taussig (1984), on colonial ‘stories’ creating ‘inconceivable violence’ and a ‘cosmos of doubt’ in Putamayo. See also Glazer and Abu-Ras’ (1994), and Schuster and Hartz-Karp (1986) on the lethal potency of ‘gossip’.

\(^{15}\) While not using this term, the violence discussed by these anthropologists corresponds to Galtung’s (1996) ‘direct violence’.
Aboriginal communities as proof of cultural continuity and vitality (e.g. Morton, 1997, Langton, 1988, Macdonald, 1988). Aboriginal women, also, are known to participate in physically violent activities (Burbank, 1994). However, only one prominent author has characterised an Aboriginal people as ‘warlike’. Further, Meggitt (1962, pp.245-246) stresses that the use of physical punishment does not necessarily make a people ‘warlike’.

Today, while some anthropologists consider current levels of ‘direct violence’ in Aboriginal communities as endemic, others argue that new forms of violence are arising in the communities they know, which were not occurring in earlier times (e.g. McKnight, 2005, Merlan, 2009, Macdonald, 1988, 2010). Some consider that levels of physical violence have reached ‘epidemic’ proportions in many Aboriginal communities (Pearson, 2001, Wild, 2008, Sutton, 2008, Langton, 2008). Others, however, argue that although culturally unacceptable incidents of violence are occurring, this has not become the general condition in the communities with which they are familiar (Cowlishaw, 2010, Mahood, 2008).

Taking these articles on balance, it appears that within some Aboriginal communities and/or particular Aboriginal ‘families’, ‘direct violence’ is a significant issue today. However, it must be stressed that in many Aboriginal ‘families’ and in many communities there is no ‘epidemic’ of violence or of alcohol abuse, including among Gamilaroi ‘family’, and among ‘families’ who are in conflict in the Upper Hunter Valley. However, new forms of violence and increasing levels of conflict intensity, are arising in the Upper Hunter Valley.

Anthropological discussions often unwittingly conflate different types and sources of Aboriginal ‘direct violence’. While specific forms of corporal punishment for particular transgressions have been traditionally employed according to transparent, equitable processes aimed at maintaining order and harmony within and between social groups (e.g. Meggitt, 1962, Williams and Taylor in ALRC, 1986), much of the ‘family violence’ or lateral violence occurring in some Aboriginal communities today is generally not acceptable to Aboriginal

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16 The keyword index of Oceania from 1930 to 1990, for instance, shows only one entry under ‘warfare’ for Australian Aborigines, that of Warner’s (1958) work on the ‘Murngin’ in Arnhem Land (Hiatt and Merlan, 1990).

17 The very ‘people’ Warner (1958) characterise as ‘warlike’ – the ‘Murngin’ – were an invention of his; the ‘Murngin’ were in fact groups of distinct Aboriginal peoples who had been forced into close proximity to each other due to colonial processes. Insufficient attention is paid by Warner (1958) to colonial and other inter-cultural contributing influences on so-called ‘Murngin’ ‘warfare’.

18 For Sutton (in Langton, 2010, p.91), for instance, “deep-rooted Aboriginal cultural practices...contribute to the escalating rates of alcohol and drug abuse, violence against women and children, and child neglect”. Also, Mahood (2008) partly attributes ‘direct’ Aboriginal violence to local Aboriginal understandings of masculinity.
people; does not maintain harmony; and is not being done according to Lore\textsuperscript{19}. It is important to distinguish, therefore, between Aboriginal performative physical violence as social expression and constraint\textsuperscript{20}, and new patterns of ‘direct violence’ in some Aboriginal communities and/or within particular Aboriginal families, arising in contexts of ongoing settler colonial genocide.

**Aboriginal lateral violence**

The most significant new form of ‘direct violence’ to arise in Aboriginal communities – including the Hunter Valley -, especially over the last few decades, is lateral violence\textsuperscript{21}. Lateral violence is a cyclical, multi-faceted form of violence perpetrated by victims of oppression against their fellow-sufferers. As we shall see, lateral violence includes ‘family violence’ and suicidal behaviour, and arises due to intense, cumulative and intergenerational trauma in contexts of massive oppression. However, while the general concept of lateral violence has been recognised for some decades, lateral violence among Aboriginal peoples is a vital, but little-researched area in Australia (Fforde et al, 2013, pp.163, 165, Gooda, 2011, pp.53, 83). Most work on Aboriginal lateral violence is Canadian. To date the most substantive work on lateral violence among Aboriginal peoples in Australia has been conducted by Frankland et al (2010) for the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Cooperative (VACCAC)\textsuperscript{22}. Gooda (2011) reiterates much of this work and contextualises it within a broader Australian political context. Fforde et al (2013) provides a much-needed exploration of the role of deficit discourse in promoting lateral violence. In particular, little work has yet been done on the impacts of lateral violence on Aboriginal “social and emotional wellbeing”, and on Aboriginal involvement in the criminal justice system (see below) (Gooda, 2011, pp.92-97). As Gooda (2011, p.98) says:

\textit{Lateral violence draws power from being nameless and invisible. The first step to tackling lateral violence is naming it and exposing the ways it impacts our communities.}

\textsuperscript{19} Kamilaroi French use the term ‘Lore’ to refer to what others call Aboriginal Law and/or Dreaming. ‘Lore’ is the underlying supranatural, ontological reality from which ‘Law’ emanates as concrete obligations and practices. Gamilaroi French tend to view Lore and Law with great respect, not as unfounded ‘folklore’ or ‘myth’ as early colonisers would have it, but as something powerful and alive today.


\textsuperscript{21} Aboriginal lateral violence is also sometimes referred to as ‘internalised colonialism’ or ‘internalised racism’ (Gooda, 2011, pp.52, 69).

\textsuperscript{22} See also Frankland (2010).
While there is often a tendency to associate lateral violence with direct physical violence, Gooda (2011) stresses the need to recognise verbal, cultural and emotional abuse as core aspects of lateral violence that are frequently overlooked. Bullying – at school, in the workplace, and cyber-bullying – is seen as one of the most “common and destructive” aspects of lateral violence (Gooda, 2011, pp.84-92). Thus, lateral violence is not just physical and is not just between individuals. Rather, Aboriginal lateral violence can be group-based and can include: gossiping; jealousy; bullying; shaming; social exclusion; family feuding; organisational conflict as well as physical violence (Gooda, 2011, p.54). In particular, the “mental assault” of “malicious gossip” can be “just as damaging as physical violence” (Liddle in Gooda, 2011, p.54)

Lateral violence includes suicide and self-harm (Gooda, 2011, pp.93, 103) (see below). Lateral violence also refers to acts of omission as well as commission, and arises from the abuse of a relationship of power. What distinguishes lateral violence from other forms of violence is that it arises due to consequences of oppression, powerlessness and negative stereotypes, at both personal and cultural levels (Gooda, 2011, p.94, Fforde et al, 2013, Wingard, 2010, p.14, Bennett, 2014, Galtung, 1996, p.200).

Lateral violence is cyclical; has recognisable stages; and its consequences can be latent and can last for years (Gooda, 2011, p.68). In particular, (Gooda, 2011, p.56):

_The normalisation of violence, as well as the harm and trauma caused by all forms of violence, fuels the cycle of lateral violence_

There is some recognition, then, that inter-cultural violence leads to intra-Aboriginal violence; Aboriginal cycles of lateral violence arise and are perpetuated through “powerlessness, unmet needs and disadvantage” in settler colonial contexts (Gooda, 2011)

The lateral violence which is ‘normalised’ here is distinct from the ‘traditional’ forms of performative violence familiar to earlier anthropologists. However, as discussed above, recent backlash against such a notion claims that violence in Aboriginal communities is primarily due to individual and cultural pathology (see also Collins, 2010, p.66). While Gooda (2011, p.53) does acknowledge the historic and ongoing role of settler colonialism in causing Aboriginal lateral violence, he prefers to discuss this “without apportioning blame”. Further, Gooda (2011) does not name the historic and contemporary drivers of Aboriginal lateral violence as, in fact, constituting genocide. Nevertheless, reading between the lines, it appears that Gooda (2011) would agree with the position argued in this thesis. While not using Galtung’s (1996) terms of ‘super-types’

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24 See Taonui (2010) for an excellent overview of settler colonial causes of Maori lateral violence.
of violence, Gooda (2011) provides evidence of settler colonial ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence against Aboriginal peoples – both historic and continuing – and while he points out that currently government does not have a deliberate agenda to create lateral violence, he stresses that nevertheless it often perpetuates “the conditions of conflict that result in lateral violence”.

Gooda (2011), Bennett (2014), and Wingard (2010) also raise important points regarding aspects of lateral violence relating to ‘identity’ and ‘authenticity’. However, such discussions are not sufficiently contextualised within ongoing settler colonial attempted assimilation and genocide. Governments continue to create new “hierarchies of power” in the way they control and enforce definitions of, and resources for, ‘Aboriginal’ peoples (Macdonald, 2013) (see Chapters 2, 4). Hence, in discussing lateral violence, it is important not to assume that all forms of physical and verbal ‘violence’ demonstrated by Aboriginal peoples are simply a mechanistic outcome of feeling powerless. As Chapters 4 and 5 discuss, certain qualities and styles of demonstrative physical and verbal ‘violent’ display are implicitly valued by Kamilaroi French ‘family’ as critical ways to defend and maintain ‘culture’ in genocidal contexts.

‘Family violence’

A particularly significant aspect of Aboriginal lateral violence today is what many Aboriginal people call ‘family violence’. Blagg’s (2000) work on ‘family violence’ is outstanding in the field, incorporating a national survey based on extensive interviews with a broad range of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal groups, especially Aboriginal women’s groups. During the 1980s and 1990s there has been increasing recognition of Aboriginal ‘family violence’ in some communities, particularly among youth and Stolen Generations (Blagg, 2000, p.4). Blagg (2000, p.12) found that within the Aboriginal communities he consulted, Aboriginal women and children are “the most likely to be the victims of repeated, multiple forms of violence and abuse, and amongst the most marginalised from mainstream service provision”. Contrary to Western criminological assumptions, then, it is women, not men, who are most at risk of violence in these communities (Blagg, 2000, p.12). Blagg (2000, p.23) emphasises that from their consultations it is clear that Aboriginal people – particularly women – “take family violence very seriously”. Almost unanimous in these consultations, is the view expressed by Aboriginal people that (Blagg, 2000, p.24):

25 Aboriginal women tend to prefer the term ‘family violence’ to ‘domestic violence’ (Blagg, 2000).
the cycle of abuse was perpetuated through the marginalisation of indigenous (sic) men, leading to binge drinking as a way to dull the pain. Many said the men were generally only dangerous when they were drunk.

Many Aboriginal peoples, then, consider that alcohol abuse plays a critical role in the perpetuation of ‘family violence’, and that such alcohol abuse often arises, in turn, due to ongoing Aboriginal experiences of oppression and marginalisation. Blagg (2000, p.14) claims that most Aboriginal women, although not wanting the violence, tolerate high levels of repeated abuse in order to prevent their men being funnelled into the criminal justice system, and in order to follow vital cultural imperatives around upholding ‘family’ (see Chapter 4).

As with Gooda’s (2011) discussion on lateral violence more generally, Blagg (2000) also raises the issue of the importance of non-physical aspects of ‘family violence’, including social violence (not being allowed to mix with others because of jealousy, attempts to isolate partners from contact with kin); verbal violence (putting down, swearing, blaming, bossing, threats); sexual violence; economic violence (not sharing); and psychological violence (being made constantly fearful) (Blagg, 2000, p.6).

Thus, we can see that ‘family violence’ is a significant, undesired form of ‘direct violence’ experienced by some Aboriginal people, particularly women. Such ‘family violence’ has been occurring for decades; has cumulative, intergenerational, social, psychological, verbal, economic, and sexual elements; and is rooted in Aboriginal experiences of ongoing genocide in settler colonial Australia. However, the precise extent of such violence is unknown (Spangaro et al, 2011).

Aboriginal suicide as a major and neglected form of ‘direct violence’

Aboriginal suicide and suicidal behaviour is also a major – and grossly neglected – form of ‘direct violence’ experienced by Aboriginal peoples in recent decades. Elliott-Farrelly (2004, p.139) illustrates the paucity of Aboriginal specific research on suicide, including comparative rates between Aboriginal communities; between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples; and in terms of “Aboriginal understandings and definitions of suicide and self-harm behaviour”. Tatz (2005, pp.35, xi) discloses that there is no systematic study of Aboriginal suicide in NSW, and that today most mainstream suicide institutes know little about Aboriginal suicide. Similarly, Taylor et al (2013) reveals the absence of any systematic database and coordinated referral

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26 See also Brennan (2013, p.7).
pathways for Aboriginal suicides and suicide attempts in Central Australia. Suicidology continues to be dominated by Anglo middle class suicide profiles. Further, suicidology’s biomedical outlook de-socialises and de-contextualises suicide, viewing it as a medical (mental health) issue, rather than as a socio-cultural and political issue (Tatz, 2005, p.vii). The majority of suicidologists do not go into the field, and do not consider social, political or philosophical aspects of suicide, but rather tend to draw conclusions from existing, very unreliable, suicide statistics (Tatz, 2005, pp.vii-xi). Thus, suicidology today does not sufficiently recognise the critical role of the “legacy of history” including the Stolen Generations, or the ongoing, daily, pervasive repercussions of racism, marginalisation and grieving in Aboriginal suicide and suicidal behaviour (Tatz, 2005, pp.2, 8, 12-14, 34, 87-89). Taylor et al (2013)

Even with this limited insight, however, the increasing role that suicide plays in premature Aboriginal mortality is clearly evident (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.139). Suicide was unknown in ‘traditional’ Aboriginal societies, and from first colonial contact until the 1960s was a “rarity” (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.139). From the 1970s, however, suicide and suicidal behaviour has increased, becoming ‘endemic’ in some Aboriginal communities by the 1980s, and becoming a “significant contributor” to Aboriginal death during the 1990s (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.139, Tatz, 2005, p.220). Further, Elliott-Farrelly (2004, p.140) suggests that completed suicides provide only a small indication of the current extent of “increasing mental distress and disorders experienced by many Aborigines”.

Elliott-Farrelly (2004, pp.140-141, 144) suggests that Aboriginal suicide differs markedly from mainstream suicide in that it is often ‘impulsive’; victims are rarely seen as having a psychiatric illness; it is often enabled (rather than caused) by a “context or aftermath of intoxication”; and it occurs in contexts of extremely high levels of racism and discrimination which are not experienced by mainstream society. Among the many unique pressures on Aboriginal peoples which are not experienced by White Australians, are daily conflicted expectations, roles and

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28 Johnston (1991) provides valuable insight into underlying historic causes of Aboriginal deaths in custody, but largely neglects the extent and possible causes of Aboriginal suicide outside of custody (Tatz, 2005, p.33).
29 Suicide first became a notable issue among the Inuit, Maori and Aboriginal peoples in Australia after 1960 (Tatz, 2005, p.xiii).
30 Suicide rates among Indigenous peoples are at least 40% higher than the national average – actual rates may be 2 to 3 times higher than figures suggest - and while Aboriginal men have higher rates of suicide deaths, Aboriginal women have higher rates of suicide attempts (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.139).
31 Tatz (2005, p.79) stresses that while it is impossible to document and quantify attempted Aboriginal suicides, there are many. The fact that self-harm is a common Aboriginal behaviour often done “with an intent to provide a ‘release’”, and with the result that “after their wrists are cut, they often feel calm and at peace for awhile” (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.139), speaks volumes about intense levels of anguish and pain experienced by many Aboriginal peoples.
responsibilities and restricted acceptance for those crossing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures; increased awareness of socioeconomic disparity between their own and non-Aboriginal circumstances; historic and ongoing “scientific and institutional racism” creating Aboriginal dependence on the State (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, pp.140-141). Aboriginal peoples also face widespread racism in the media and from mainstream society generally, including “during school, when seeking employment or housing, in their contact with police or other public officials, and in their daily contact with other members of the Australian non-Aboriginal population” (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, pp.140-141). All of these “negative looking-glass” pressures from non-Aboriginal society create “considerable insecurity about self and culture” and are significant contributive factors to the ‘direct violence’ of Aboriginal suicide (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.143).

Further, in contrast to White experiences of suicide, Tatz (2005, p.74) argues that for Aboriginal peoples, a focus on social status; having a “decent job” and “good living”; and changing roles of women are not significant factors contributing to suicide. Also, White suicide services are often inappropriate for Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal peoples are unlikely to make appointments within White health institutions with White personnel, and do not respond favourably to direct, personal White middle-class questions such as “How do you feel?” (Tatz, 2005, p.79) (see also Chapter 5).

Aboriginal suicide is also unique in that the high extent of violent and premature Aboriginal deaths causes an almost constant state of grieving among those left behind (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.142). This ongoing and cumulative cycle of frequent and complex Aboriginal grief and loss is generally not recognised by mainstream society, nor resolved (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p.142).

In addition, Elliott-Farrelly (2004, pp.141-142) identifies “a sense of emptiness and a general loss of culture, particularly ritual and spirituality” expressed by many Aboriginal youth as being a significant factor in Aboriginal suicide. After Wekstein and Frankl, Tatz (2005, pp.71-72) suggests that Aboriginal suicide is most characterised in terms of ‘chronic’, ‘neglect’ and ‘sub-intentional’ forms of suicide, and that the lack of having a “purpose in life” is also a

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32 “Grieving is common and constant; there is no opportunity to deal with the grief that follows one death before another occurs, and access to any form of grief counselling is minimal” (Elliot-Farrelly, 2004, p.142).
33 For instance, there is a widespread lack of either Aboriginal-specific suicide prevention strategies or ‘postvention’ (after a suicide death has occurred) projects, despite the extremely high need (Elliot-Farrelly, 2004, p.142).
fundamental factor. Tatz (2005, p. 75, after Farberow) argues that, in fact, the most important factor in Aboriginal suicide is “feelings of worthlessness,helplessness and hopelessness”.

Aboriginal suicide is also distinct from mainstream suicide in its often symbolic and collective nature. Hanging is often chosen as a pointed form of redress and challenge to colonialism (Elliot-Farrelly, 2004, p. 141). One suicide can “often spark a cluster of suicides in Aboriginal communities, of similar methods, gender and age groups, suggesting an observational learning, modelling, imitative, catalytic role” (Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, p. 141). Tatz (2005, p. 75, original emphasis) notes that “patterned, ritualised and even institutionalised, perhaps even contagious” forms of suicide are arising amongst homeless Aboriginal youth in Taree. Also, recently there have been forms of Aboriginal suicide conducted deliberately in front of family members, which appear to be “an effort to move someone, or something, to a response” in the context of real or perceived family neglect and disrespect (Tatz, 2005, pp. 83-85). Further, while in some cases funerals can be sites of significant contention, at other times suicide can be a unifying event where “funerals of the young are places of mutuality and of common grief” (Tatz, 2005, p. 102).

Thus, Aboriginal experiences of suicide are highly complex, culturally charged, often collective experiences common among Aboriginal communities in general across Australia. Aboriginal suicide is one of the most significant occurrences of ‘direct violence’ among Aboriginal peoples, and reflects deeper experiences of anguish in the face of ongoing settler colonial genocide and perpetual, highly complex grieving. Given its importance, the relative silence around Aboriginal suicide in public discussions of Aboriginal experiences of ‘direct violence’ is marked.

**Aboriginal trauma**

Just as little research exists on Aboriginal lateral violence, including ‘family violence’ and suicide, so a general silence exists around Aboriginal trauma in Australia and its root causes. Over twenty years ago O’Donoghue (1993, unnumbered) spoke out about Aboriginal trauma:

> Aboriginal culture has been subjected to the most profound shocks and changes. It is a history of brutality and bloodshed. The assault on Aboriginal people includes massacres, diseases, dispossession and dispersal from the land . . . I cannot overstate the traumatic consequences of policy and the destruction of Aboriginal and community life that resulted.
Nevertheless, apart from Atkinson (e.g. 1991, 1994, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2012), few people have paid sustained attention to Aboriginal trauma in Australia. Additionally, Aboriginal perspectives of trauma are only just emerging (Atkinson, 2002, p.24). The thickness of this silence in itself reveals mainstream denial. Such structurally violent ‘segmentation’ conceals the source and existence of Aboriginal trauma, leading Aboriginal peoples to blame themselves and each other for their traumatised behaviour, thus exacerbating Aboriginal lateral violence (see Chapter 2).

Therefore, here I aim to portray at least something of the immense, multiplex, pervasive levels of trauma that many Aboriginal peoples in Australia live with today. This is a radical effort to render visible that which, by definition, lies outside representation. Trauma is normalised and invisibilised in society generally and even within Aboriginal communities to an extent. However, to do justice fully here to Aboriginal experiences of trauma in this country, is not possible. Firstly, by its very nature, much trauma is invisible, unremarked, beyond thought and representation for both perpetrators and victims (Herman, 1997). As Caruth (1995, p.viii) argues, trauma is a complex interweaving of psychic-physical “unclaimed experience”; it arises not solely due to an objective ‘event’, but due to the fact that such experience cannot be integrated into thought and memory in the usual manner.

As Atkinson (2002, p.269) argues:

There are things that are provable, tangible and real; and there are things that are unprovable, intangible and just as real.

Presencing this trauma is of primary importance because the very silence around the causes, existence and legitimacy of Aboriginal trauma are core contributing aspects of its severity and perpetuation. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here, then, posits that in order to investigate how settler colonial ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence against Aboriginal peoples – both historic and continuous – cyclically interrelate and create new forms of violence in Aboriginal communities, it is crucial to acknowledge the intense, cumulative and intergenerational nature of Aboriginal trauma.

‘Muteness’ is thus a common response to trauma by traumatised persons themselves (e.g. Herman, 1997, Caruth, 1995, 1996, Bennett, 2005). Such muteness can lead to intergenerational trauma and unconscious ‘acting out’ of trauma, including forms of Aboriginal

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34 Consequently, Halloran (2004) and O’Loughlin (2008) draw on overseas Aboriginal experiences of trauma to try to understand Aboriginal trauma in Australia.
‘family violence’ (Humphrey, 2002, O’Loughlin, 2008, pp.182-183). While parents may try to shield their children by keeping silent, at times it is “this very silence, this unspeakability, that causes the child to receive the trauma unconsciously” (O’Loughlin, 2008, p.184). Gamilaroi French ‘family’ often remark on how the Old People stopped speaking. Most obviously, they stopped speaking the lingo (at least in front of the missionaries, and often, in front of the children). However, they also stopped speaking about certain things that happened. Pop French, for instance, never spoke about what happened when he was taken away from his family to work on a chicken farm when he was twelve years old. However, this did not lead him, nor his children or grandchildren, to ‘act out’ in violent ways. Lauw et al (2013) notes that many Aboriginal peoples today are unaware of the root causes of the ‘family violence’ they are experiencing. Brennan’s (2013) ground-breaking autobiography Lani’s Story: Not a victim. A survivor also reveals the gaps and silences both in her own traumatised memories and in terms of how undisclosed intergenerational traumatic experiences in themselves create further ‘family violence’ and trauma across the generations.

While damaging in itself, such muteness is greatly compounded, however, by silence around Aboriginal trauma at broader social scales (O’Loughlin, 2008, p.183):

Silence...is greatly exacerbated if society at large chooses to deny the catastrophic events that led to the traumatic consequences for a particular group.

Denial of trauma and victim-blaming

Over the last 150 years, Western psychological studies of ‘hysteria’ or ‘trauma’ have often been plagued by denial and victim-blaming. Whereas early key movements within psychology have understood ‘trauma’ as resulting from horrific external events, political backlash - influenced primarily by politico-economic issues around traumatised soldiers - challenged such understandings, denying the reality of trauma, and blaming and punishing victims for their supposed biological, social, or moral pathology (van der Krolk et al, 1996, pp.48-51). Also, for many decades subsequently, Freud’s ‘unacceptable impulse’ model of trauma has been

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35 Brennan (2013, p.35) reveals that she has no memory of her life up until she was six years old (during which time her father was often physically violent); that she did not learn of her parents’ and grandparents’ experiences of violence and trauma until she viewed the joint documentary they had made – Lani’s Story - triggered by her own revelations of trauma; and that she also has many large gaps in her memory due to the impacts of alcohol, including times when she was actively violent without any recollection of the events.

36 Freud came, outrageously, to claim that the testimonies of child sexual assault victims were “fantasies which my patients had made up” because of their “Oedipal sexual and aggressive ideas and impulses” – their supposed ‘hidden wishes’ had come true (Freud in van der Krolk et al, 1996, p.54).
ascendant, with psychologists neglecting to consider the role of horrific ‘external reality’ in causing trauma37 (van der Krolk and van der Hart, 1995, p.166, van der Krolk et al, 1996, p.55). Public discourses around trauma, then, have been strongly shaped by the ‘cultural violence’ of the political desire to justify war; to avoid compensating trauma victims; and to deny the inherent, prevalent violence of the patriarchal capitalist nation state.

Today trauma is still commonly denied. As Herman (1997, pp.8-9) reveals, many trauma victims often continue to be blamed for their suffering:

> After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened, the victim lies, the victim exaggerates, the victim brought it on herself and in any case there is time to forget the past and move on. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality and the more completely his arguments prevail... In the absence of strong political movements for human rights, the active process of bearing witness inevitably gives way to the active process of forgetting. Repression, dissociation and denial are phenomena of a social as well as individual consciousness.

Victim blaming is evident in Australia in populist and official calls for Aboriginal peoples to exercise ‘responsibility’38, and punitive attempts to curtail Aboriginal ‘deviance’, that effectively deny Aboriginal trauma, including its impacts on everyday functioning and interactions. Recent government comments made to Atkinson (in Chandler, 2007, unnumbered) regarding Aboriginal trauma are telling: “you don't think that all this talk about child sex abuse is just false memory syndrome, do you?” and “can't your people just get over it?” As O’Loughlin (2008, p.183) notes, settler colonial Australia fails to “examine root causes39 or to take seriously Aboriginal trauma, memory, history or viewpoints” and consequently views traumatised Aboriginal behaviour as “symptoms of individual pathology, thereby providing a rationale for punitive, militaristic and coercive interventions”.

When expected ‘supporters’ blame victims, this can be even more traumatic than the originary trauma (McFarlane and van der Krolk, 1996, p.27):

37 See also Dudgeon, Milroy and Walker (2014) regarding the colonising role of the discipline and practice of psychology in influencing the mental health of Indigenous peoples in Australia.
38 Rogers’ (in Jones, 2006, unnumbered) is a typical populist comment: “Aboriginal people choose not to take responsibility for their own actions”.
39 Rather than acknowledging the ongoing and root causes of Aboriginal trauma today, Australia avoids this “moral dilemma” and conceals it within an assimilationist version of ‘reconciliation’ (O’Loughlin, 2008, p.201).
Many personal testimonies of trauma survivors indicate that not being supported by the people they counted on, and being blamed for bringing horrendous experiences upon themselves, have left deeper scars than the traumatic event itself.

Thus, it is important to recognise that in Aboriginal trauma what is remembered may be ‘unspeakable’ because of the muteness of trauma, or because it is culturally or politically silenced (Humphrey, 2002). That is, trauma in general, but Aboriginal trauma in particular, is ‘unrepresentable’ in that (Herman, 1997, p.237):

The study of psychological trauma is an inherently political enterprise because it calls attention to the experience of oppressed people.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that where Aboriginal trauma can best be ‘seen’ is in Aboriginal art, literature and film. However, even in such films as *Samson and Delilah*, subjectivities of violence cannot be expressed directly and fully (Collins, 2010, p.74):

The slow build towards a culminating violence takes place as if before our eyes, but is driven by something that is just out of frame.

The film can only intimate “something like the ontological reality of a formative violence” - which is not simply “the residue or afterlife of colonial violence” (Collins, 2010, p.74). Nevertheless, such poetic approaches are able, at least in some ways, to transcend the ‘cultural violence’ of the discursive and political constraints of Western hegemonic prose.

On the other hand, claiming to fully understand the victim—or the trauma— even better than do the traumatised themselves—is a form of “false witness” (Lifton, 1995) that often occurs in contexts of trauma. Some Holocaust survivors feel that “to understand all is to forgive all” and “There are moments when understanding is pure madness” (Lanzmann in Prager, 2003, p.200). However, (partial) explanation does not compel justification (Prager, 2003, p.198). Further, it is important to remember that in Freud’s psychoanalytic dialogue “the doctor’s testimony does not substitute itself for the patient’s testimony, but resonates with it, because...it takes two to witness the unconscious” (Felman, 1995, p.24, original emphasis). Lifton (1995, p.145) offers a form of dialogic, rather than ‘therapeutic’, witnessing that involves listening deeply at many levels, and seeing oneself as different but equal to the survivor, such that the understanding of the “survivor-by-proxy” resonates with that of the survivor. Thus, there is a need, when

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40 See also, for instance, Argenti and Schramm (2010) on the role of memory in reconstructing popular histories of violence and trauma in the face of official silence or denial.
listening to Aboriginal experiences of trauma, to not assume that one ‘already knows’ about the trauma, or that one can ‘understand’ it better than the person themselves because of one’s anthropological, political or psychological ‘expertise’ (Macdonald, 2005). There is also a need to ‘listen’ to the distinct ways that Aboriginal peoples ‘speak’ – not only in terms of ‘Aboriginal English’, but also in terms of ‘speaking’ through action, indirectness, and distinct epistemologies (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Aboriginal trauma as a chronic, everyday socio-political phenomenon

Currently, while public denial and victim-blaming are still common, today there is general recognition of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in psychology-related fields, and fledgling awareness of long-term effects of trauma (van der Kolk et al, 1996, p.419, Humphrey, 2002). Nevertheless, trauma studies still predominantly focus on White, male, middle class individuals as trauma ‘subjects’ (Brown, 1995, Herman, 1997, van der Kolk et al, 1996, p.61). Studies on ‘social’ or ‘collective’ trauma tend simply to extrapolate from the ‘individual’ to the ‘collective’ level, and focus overwhelmingly on the United States and the Holocaust (e.g. Erikson, 1995, Felman, 1995, Alexander et al, 2004, Eyerman, 2002, 2004, Halas, 2010, Lifton, 1995). Thus, diverse cultural experiences and understandings of trauma need to be explored (Sack, Clarke and Seeley, 1997, Robben and Suárez-Orozco, 2000, Terheggen et al, 2001, Duran and Duran, 1995, and Stamm et al, 2004) 41. Historical Trauma Theory (HTT) goes some way towards recognising unremitting massive group trauma and grief experienced over the lifespan and across generations in response to collective experiences of violence, including its relationship with lateral violence (Desjarlais, 2012, pp.55-58). However, HTT is still largely theoretical and needs to be supported empirically (Desjarlais, 2012, p.63). In this regard, Theidon’s (2013) pioneering ethnographic work on how peoples as a whole experience and recover from trauma is particularly valuable 42. What must be recognised is that ‘trauma’ is not simply an ‘individual’- ‘psychic’, but is very much a socio-political, phenomenon (Humphrey, 2002).

There is also an urgent need to better appreciate the import of the chronic, collective, normalised, cumulative, multifaceted, everyday nature of ongoing Aboriginal trauma, rather than assuming that trauma necessarily arises due to a (one-off, historic) discrete, recognisable

41 Washington (2002, p.691) also argues that cross-cultural comparisons of populations traumatised by extreme violence – as diverse as Armenians, Native Americans, ‘Tutsis’ and Japanese - are needed in order to highlight how “the affected group’s political power, cultural capital, wealth, and size...determine the form and influence of its cultural trauma in the larger public arena”.

42 Theidon’s (2013) ground-breaking ethnography explores collective trauma and resilience amongst peoples of the highlands of Ayacucho, Peru, in the aftermath of extreme civil violence. See also Meertens and Zambrano (2010) on addressing violence against women land claimants in Colombia.

Colonization was not a moment. It is an ongoing experience with multiple persistent contemporary traumatizing events continuing to impact daily on Aboriginal families and communities. These include the ongoing colonizing practices of social marginalization, incarceration and racism in all its forms, and the retraumatization associated with family violence, sexual abuse, self-harming and substance misuse.

For Aboriginal peoples, trauma is embedded in, and perpetrated by, the very structure and constitutive rules of settler colonial society (Wolfe, 2006) (see Chapters 1 and 2). Barsalou’s (2001, p.1) discussion of societies that have been deeply traumatised by “psychological distress caused by exposure to armed conflict” resonates greatly with Aboriginal experiences of trauma. Compared to trauma resulting from natural disasters, such societies experience a greater sense of shame and “loss of basic trust in the order of things, difficulty in mourning, and difficulty in reversing a sense of helplessness and humiliation” (Barsalou, 2001, p.3).

It would be expected, then, that issues of shame, trust, grief, and a sense of helplessness are also likely to be particularly acute and distinctive in Aboriginal experiences of trauma. Volkan’s (in Barsalou, 2001, p.3) work on shared traumas caused by a common enemy also relate to Aboriginal contexts of trauma. Such trauma contexts are greatly concerned with group identity and with marking boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Barsalou, 2001, p.3):

Victims may also become preoccupied with borders and boundaries of all sorts that separate them from their real and imagined enemies, and they may adopt minor differences in their behavior or dress to subtly but clearly mark their separateness from the enemy.

Such traumatised societies have a great need to “maintain their separate identities” and create an “unambiguous psychological border” between themselves and their persecutors (Volkan in Barsalou, 2001, p.6). Thus, making and acting out boundaries – including ‘violently’ - between ‘Black’ and ‘White’ may be a vital aspect of Aboriginal responses to trauma in contexts of ongoing settler colonial genocide. It would be helpful to re-examine the loss of trust, difficulty in grieving, sense of helplessness and humiliation, and increasingly narrow drawing of boundaries.

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43 It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the importance of ‘shame’ in Aboriginal societies. However, it would be important to identify autochthonous Aboriginal practices around ‘shame’, and how these differ from and interact with the sense of trauma-derived shame referred to by Barsalou (2001).
boundaries within certain Aboriginal contexts noted by some commentators in the light of Aboriginal experiences of trauma, rather than simply in terms of ‘culture’, ‘politics’, or individual pathology, as often occurs in dominant discourse.

‘Psychological warfare’: the lived experience of Aboriginal trauma

Freeda uses the term ‘psychological warfare’ to describe the ongoing traumatic experiences of her people, and Aboriginal people generally, in everyday life. As a matter of respect and confidentiality I do not discuss here specific details of Kamilaroi French experiences of trauma. Instead, I present a more generalised picture of ‘psychological warfare’ drawn from personal observation, from my knowledge of recent and older history of Gamilaroi French ‘family’, and from many discussions with Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

‘Psychological warfare’ as a term as Gamilaroi French use it can be understood to refer to the everyday, interwoven, ubiquitous, cumulative and multiplex impacts of the ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural violence’ of settler colonial society against Aboriginal peoples. In ‘psychological warfare’ Aboriginal peoples are blamed for their oppression; their realities are denied; their ways of thinking and doing are attacked and undermined; and – most devastatingly – confusions, recriminations, self-doubt, shame, disgust and fear can be internalised. In this sense, ‘psychological warfare’ constitutes a “battle for the heart and mind” (Macdonald, 2010, p.59) of Aboriginal peoples. It goes to the very source of Aboriginal ways of being, living, interacting, seeing the world. As Pearson (2009, p.57) notes:

The overwhelming force of the external culture, and its capacity to destroy our native cultures and identities, makes engagement in the wider culture a matter of great uncertainty and psychological trepidation.

‘Psychological warfare’, then, is contemporary Aboriginal lived experience of genocide. The notion of ‘psychological warfare’ corresponds closely with the colonial period of “psycho-social domination” described by Baker and Harre (in Atkinson, 2002, pp.59, 69), where the oppressors deny the existence or validity of the identity, humanity, culture of the oppressed.‘Psychological warfare’ is clearly an “affliction of powerlessness” (Herman in Atkinson, 2002, p.54) where, as Langton (2008, p.156) argues:

To expect that people who reel from one traumatic event to another can enjoy the much-lauded Aboriginal ‘rights to self-determination’ while their own community and the larger society repeatedly fail them is an indulgent fantasy.

Seeing what needs to be done, giving everything to try to do it, but still not being able to enact the necessary changes, is therefore a significant aspect of Aboriginal trauma, particularly given the imperatives around performative action in Aboriginal cultures (e.g. Myers, 1986, Sansom, 1980). ‘Psychological warfare’ is knowing what needs to be done (politically, culturally), but not being able to do it, and then questioning whether this signifies that one is not supposed to do what needs to be done; one is not fit/worthy/authorised to do what needs to be done; or one is perhaps mistaken in what needs to be done...all the while with an intense sense of urgency and responsibility, combined with despair and rage at seeing what needs to be done and being unable to help make it happen. Then, ‘psychological warfare’ is this situation compounded as one remembers and takes in historic and ongoing injustices and interacts with so many others who are suffering in a similar way, interacting in such a way as to try not to add to their pain, by withholding your own, which compounds and intensifies it.

‘Psychological warfare’ is also evident in the high levels of chronic, cumulative, vicarious trauma compounding personal experiences of trauma, for those Aboriginal people who work professionally or informally to assist other Blackfellas. It is young people seeing the “early deaths and ill-health that go with all that stress” of Aboriginal leaders and workers, and being afraid of undergoing the same pressures (Hayward in Maddison, 2009, p.178). It is also the lack of support for these leaders – both in mainstream society and often in their own communities.

The everyday genocide of ‘psychological warfare’ is also evident in the increasing pressure on Aboriginal women, especially elders, to care for increasing numbers of people with increasingly complex needs, as younger parents turn to yarni (marijuana) or alcohol to numb their pain and anger, and have ‘drug and alcohol babies’, and as men often leave the home or are left because of their violence or infidelity.

‘Psychological warfare’ arises in the daily life of microsurveillance and discrimination by White neighbours, by White people in the street, supermarket, chemist, real estate, at school, church, work, and by police and other authorities, including unfair charges, regardless of whether you are an innocent victim of crime. It is the never-ending obsession of White people with the fiction that Aboriginal people receive unmerited material goods. As White co-workers

46 At a deeper level, in terms of the teachings and power of the Lore.
asked Kamilaroi French ‘family’ member, Brigette, “Where did you get your car? Did you steal it?”; “Is it true that all Aborigines get a house and a boat?” It is White people taking over Aboriginal Land Councils, medical services, and housing services; taking Aboriginal-identified traineeships and jobs; claiming Aboriginal identity in order to usurp hard-won, equal opportunity services Aboriginal people have fought for, for decades.

At broader social levels ‘psychological warfare’ is the many multi-generational tragedies with parents dying young and/or being compromised as caregivers due to alcohol and other substance abuse, especially those who were Stolen children; and young people dying in car or other accidents or from suicide. ‘Psychological warfare’ is having fifty funerals to attend in one year – five within one week – many in tragic circumstances, seven hours drive away. ‘Psychological warfare’ is anxiety over what may happen to the young people who do not believe the reality of racism until it happens to them; of not being able to protect your children from it; anxiety over young people not following culture properly; and is young people blaming older people for teaching them to stand up for themselves, because of severe repercussions if they act as equals in White society. ‘Psychological warfare’, then, is seeing what has been taken and is still being taken; is expecting and fearing further loss; and is feeling that to grieve is for even more to be taken – your sanity, your hope, your sense of there being a purpose in living.

In sum, the lived experience of the kinds of ‘psychological warfare’ expressed as experience by Gamilaroi French ‘family’ is complex, multifaceted, daily and incessant. The pressures of the ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence of settler colonial society are omnipresent.

‘Psychological warfare’ is also fuelled by the very “presentist and materialist” orientation of White society that ignores “community and ancestral memory” and invisibilises “sociohistorical links to cultural memory” (O’Loughlin, 2008, pp.195, 197-198, McFarlane and van der Krolik, 1996, p.560, Fitzgerald, 1997, p.410, and Williams, 1998). The culturally violent secular materialist discourse silences ‘symbolic’ or ‘spiritual’ impacts of trauma - such as the crisis of meaning, hope and purpose that is often associated with severe trauma, and trauma related to violence against religious entities, icons or rituals (McFarlane and van der Kroik, 1996, p.560, Turner et al, 1996, p.551, Terhegen et al, 2001). A focus on religious aspects of Aboriginal trauma is thus particularly critical. It is well-known that often missionaries forced Aboriginal peoples to abandon their religious ceremonies and practices, and to stop speaking their languages. Simultaneously, until the 1950s Aboriginal peoples were not deemed to possess ‘religion’; anthropologists viewed religion as ‘pre-scientific’, and so-called Aboriginal
‘magic’ and myths as the most infantile of all forms of human consciousness (Charlesworth, 1984, pp.1-4, Thompson, 2002). While in more recent decades anthropology has come to recognise the complexity and sophistication of Aboriginal religions, ironically, privileging ‘The Dreaming’ often further marginalises Aboriginal peoples in native title contexts (Charlesworth, 1984, pp.9-12, Macdonald, 1998b, 2001, 2013).

It is vital, therefore, to recognise the collective, cultural, political, and chronic nature of Aboriginal trauma. Aboriginal trauma arises as a result of everyday, patterned, implicit, ongoing violent sets of conditions impacting on Aboriginal peoples as whole collectives in settler colonial Australia. Much (circumspect, respectful, long-term and trust-based) research remains to be done to identify underlying systemic causes of Aboriginal trauma.

Aboriginal resilience

At the same time, it is equally important to challenge the settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ of silence around Aboriginal resilience in contexts of trauma. Settler colonial commentators that do acknowledge Aboriginal trauma tend to succumb to the ‘cultural violence’ of positing Aboriginal peoples as absolute victims. For instance, in discussing Aboriginal trauma, O’Loughlin (2008, pp.201, 183, 179) opines that “The symptoms we see are the death throes of Indigenous cultures and ways of life” and the “collapse of the possibilities of (Indigenous) subjectivity”. Similarly, Greer’s (in Langton, 2009, p.12) assertion that “they can’t get over it and it’s inhuman to ask them to get over it” also portrays traumatised Aboriginal peoples as victims without agency. Even Macdonald’s (2010, p.62) discussion of contemporary ontological violence against Aboriginal peoples characterises Aboriginal peoples as absolute victims where she says:

What they could not adapt to was the manipulation of their selves. No one can; this is the ultimate violence.

While the desire to emphasise the severity of the situation facing Aboriginal peoples is understandable, particularly given the ongoing silence, euphemism, and distractions present in

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47 Resilience is broadly defined as the ability to respond creatively and constructively to threat and adversity at personal and community levels, and the capacity to develop new trajectories for the future (Lambourne and Gitau, 2013, pp.26-27). Little research exists globally on resilience in contexts of violence, particularly long-term and national-level resilience (Rutherford et al 2007b, Silove and Zwi, 2005), reflecting the greater need for research underpinning this thesis.
official Australian discourse around Aboriginal trauma (O’Loughlin, 2008), such ‘dying race’ overtones are violent in themselves (see Chapter 3).

Resilience through ‘witnessing’

In response to silence around Aboriginal trauma, testifying to the reality of their traumatic experiences, while not always appropriate, can play a vital role in supporting Aboriginal resilience and facilitating recovery for traumatised Aboriginal peoples. The survivor’s recognition of their responsibility as a witness can constitute one of their most powerful sources of healing and ‘agency’ (Lifton, 1995, p.138). Such ‘witness’ is particularly vital for Aboriginal peoples since specific forms of ‘witnessing’ are vital for determining the ‘truth’ of ‘happenings’ in Aboriginal societies. In Aboriginal cultures ‘witnessing’ has crucial importance for shaping social cohesion and regulating behaviour, and is a fundamental source of power and accountability enabling proper functioning of Aboriginal Lore (e.g. von Sturmer, 1981, Sansom, 1980, Myers, 1986, Grieves, 2008, p.291). In this way, Aboriginal witnessing to trauma can potentially help restore and maintain the very means of social regulation, justice and accountability in Aboriginal societies.


“while I do still bear scars, to me now they are like badges of courage. They don’t just show the bad things I went through, they are testament to the fact that I survived it all...I feel I’ve been put on this earth to achieve something, to help other people...I’m here to try to stop kids from making the same mistakes I did.”

In contexts of Aboriginal trauma, bearing witness and receiving validation at an Aboriginal ‘public’ level is therefore likely to be more effective than at an individual level with a (White)

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48 The ‘false witness’ of associating victims with the ‘death taint’ can take both subtle and more extreme forms of converting one’s own death anxiety by (physically and in other ways) ‘killing’ victims (Lifton, 1995, pp.140-142).

49 Although complete or absolute testimony is not possible (Lifton, 1995). Contrary to Foucault’s (1980, 1993) reading of the confession, testimony began in a country with “a strong Roman Catholic tradition of confession and trust in the confessor, under a regime in which torture was widespread, (and) includes a strong political as well as a psychological component” (Turner et al, 1996, p.552).


51 See also Humphrey (2002).
counsellor, alone in a room, as is typical in Western approaches to trauma. This, may, however, depend on the nature of the trauma. Some people may prefer individual style counselling in contexts of family violence, or may prefer more anonymous forms of collective witnessing, similar to Alcoholics Anonymous.

However, Aboriginal ‘witnessing’ to trauma must be done in safe spaces, so as to avoid further abuse and trauma, and to prevent the parodying of Aboriginal suffering (Atkinson, 2002, p.230, Langton, 2008, p.143, McFarlane and van der Krolk, 1996, p.35). Clearly, settler colonial society does not currently offer such a ‘safe space’. So far, Aboriginal public efforts to ‘testify’ – such as through the Bringing Them Home report and “Little Children are Sacred” report – have often resulted in settler colonial disbelief, defensiveness and attack. It must be recognised that, in contrast to the Jews who testified to their US allies after the Holocaust, Aboriginal peoples today are testifying to the perpetrators (Nettheim, 1996) in a context of ongoing genocide. The finding or building of such ‘safe spaces’ for Aboriginal ‘witnessing’ is highly complex and is in itself an important goal of Aboriginal peacebuilding as modelled here.

Shared Aboriginal resilience

While Aboriginal experiences of trauma are social, so, too, is Aboriginal resilience in the face of trauma a cultural, collective experience. Trauma studies are beginning to recognise the importance of supportive relationships as a critical source of defence against and healing from trauma (e.g. van der Krolk et al, 1996, p.64, McFarlane and van der Krolk, 1996, p.44). The typically strong, dense, multifaceted, interwoven, everyday nature of Aboriginal relationships is an especially significant source of strength and inspiration for Aboriginal peoples.

Empowering, positive behaviours are able to be communicated, transferred and taken on at the group level with remarkable efficacy in Aboriginal contexts. In Lani’s Story, going ‘straight’ (sober) has been a cumulative, interactive process for her ‘family’ across several generations where friends and ‘family’ have encouraged and inspired each other to do this. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings are also often markedly successful in Aboriginal contexts (Brennan, 2013), and this may be at least partly due to AA’s inherently collective and egalitarian processes. Similarly, the success of Atkinson’s (2012) ‘educaring’ healing strategies may lie partly in their move towards group-based bearing witness, and collectively pursuing ‘solutions’.

Thus it is likely that the common Western approach of promoting healing from trauma via

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52 See also Chapter 6 on not disclosing ‘inner worlds’.
53 For instance, significant retraumatisation occurred in Rwanda where survivors provided witnessing in public, official contexts without social trust, and with marked dishonesty, and collusion and violence against survivors (Lambourne and Gitau, 2013, p.29). See also Bulman and Hayes (2011).
enhancing ‘self-esteem’ (e.g. Desjarlais, 2012) would be most effective when done at a cultural, not so much an ‘individual’, level for Aboriginal peoples. It is, after all, their legitimacy and desirability as distinct peoples, which is most targeted by settler colonial genocide.

Indeed, there is a growing international awareness of the need for collective resilience-based capacity building conflict resolution, sustainable community development and transformative peacebuilding in contexts of massive trauma (Barsky, 2009, Ryan, 2012). Lambourne and Gitau (2013, p.24) argue that peace and resilience are mutually defining and enabling. As Gasana (in Lambourne and Gitau, 2013, p.30) emphasises, in contexts of massive trauma “without healing, there can be no lasting peace and therefore no genuine development after conflict”. Typically, in contexts of massive violence, while humanitarian services are provided to meet physical needs, traumatised peoples often lack the energy, hope, and sense of security to effectively utilise such services. Fostering resilience enables traumatised peoples to “reimagine and re-engage productively in life and work” (LeBaron in Lambourne and Gitau, 2013, p.26).

Thus, Lambourne and Gitau (2013) advocate incorporating psychosocial services as an integral part of “a comprehensive approach to social services” to promote personal and community resilience, social cohesion and sustainable development in contexts of mass violence. Using Rwanda as a case study, Lambourne and Gitau (2013, pp.28, 31) point to successful community-level psychosocial services addressing collective trauma and promoting community-building, such as group-level counselling (rather than Western individual-style counselling); joint “Personal Development Workshops” to share emotions and build trust; economic programs to support vulnerable groups and promote unity and reconciliation; and collectively drawing on spirituality to restore hope and to promote meaning, resilience and social cohesion. While clearly there is an ongoing need to provide and expand such services, so far Rwanda has achieved remarkable social and economic success as a result of these reforms (Lambourne and Gitau, 2013, p.28). Similarly, there is a clear prerogative to pro-actively acknowledge trauma and to promote personal and collective resilience in ongoing Aboriginal experiences of massive violence.

**Criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples and ‘direct violence’**

However, far from recognising the root causes of contemporary Aboriginal distress and lateral violence - let alone acknowledging Aboriginal resilience - settler colonisers typically view Aboriginal responses to trauma in terms of individual and cultural violent pathology.

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54 Ultimately, society as a whole must accept collective moral responsibility for atrocity and trauma (Humphrey, 2002, pp.106, 144).
Consequently, the predominant approach has been to address Aboriginal responses to genocide through punitive, coercive mechanisms via the criminal justice system (Rutherford et al 2007b, p.767) (see Chapter 2).

Given such intense and pervasive pressures on Aboriginal peoples, and given the entrenched levels of injustice Aboriginal peoples still experience today, one would expect recent criminological research to indicate a high proportion of violent crimes by Aboriginal people. However, Stubbs (2013) and recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2013) data indicate that relatively few Aboriginal people are imprisoned for violent crimes compared to non-Aboriginal peoples. From the most recent statistical data, although the total percentage of Aboriginal prisoners sentenced for “acts intended to cause injury” is almost double that for non-Aboriginal people, the Aboriginal rate of homicide is about half of that of non-Aboriginal prisoners; proportionally fewer Indigenous people are sentenced for sexual assault than non-Indigenous; and the percentage of indigenous prisoners sentenced for illicit drugs is less than a quarter the rate of non-Indigenous convictions in this area (ABS, 2013). In particular, most Aboriginal women (54%) are in custody for “good order offences” as their most serious offence, and Non-Aboriginal women have conducted more serious offences than Aboriginal women (in WA) (Stubbs, 2013, pp.252, 255). Among the most common Aboriginal offences named are “disorderly conduct” (19 per cent), “breach of a justice order” (14 per cent) or “assault” (19 per cent)(WA Aboriginal women); “acts intended to cause injury”, “public order”, “offences against justice procedures” (NSW, WA); and “road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences” and “breaches of justice orders” (NSW local courts) (Stubbs, 2013, pp.250, 254).

Such comparative lack of ‘direct violence’ by Aboriginal peoples compared to non-Aboriginal peoples is particularly remarkable given the extreme psychological pressures Aboriginal peoples face. While overall there are fewer Indigenous deaths in custody since the mid-1990s, there has been a 50% increase in Indigenous prison deaths in NSW and QLD (Stubbs, 2013, p.255).

55 Aggregate Indigenous sentence lengths for “acts intended to cause injury” was about half the length of non-Indigenous prisoners (less than 2 years) suggesting that such Indigenous acts were less violent than the equivalent Non-Indigenous acts (ABS, 2013). Bartels (in Stubbs, 2013, p.252) suggests that Aboriginal women’s “acts intended to cause injury” often relate to alcohol or their responses to family violence. Blagg’s (2000, p.9) discussion around police charging Aboriginal women for “disorderly conduct” and “assault” for fighting back during family violence, may also help to explain at least some Aboriginal women’s charges of “assault”.

56 Stubbs (2013, p.252) points out that most Aboriginal women prisoners are officially recognised as “victims as well as offenders”, who “pose little risk to public safety”.

57 Whereas most Aboriginal women died in police custody (79%), most non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men died in prison (Stubbs, 2013, p.255).
The most common cause of death of Indigenous men in custody in Australia is “self-inflicted injury”, whereas for Aboriginal women it is “natural causes” (Stubbs, 2013, p.255). Aboriginal women prisoners, in particular, are seen as having “more complex commitments and higher rates of ‘co-morbid chronic mental health disorders and trauma’ than men”; having poor physical health; and as often being “victims of violent crime” (Stubbs, 2013, p.257).

Thus, despite massive pressures, including unique mental health pressures, faced by Aboriginal peoples, particularly Aboriginal women, - which non-Aboriginal people do not experience - and despite increasing over-representation in the criminal justice system largely due to unjust policing and sentencing laws, Aboriginal people proportionally commit less serious crimes than non-Aboriginal people. Contrary to widespread public claims of ‘Aboriginal culture’ being inherently violent then - and this is critical - recent criminological data demonstrate that Aboriginal people as a whole are not more violent than non-Aboriginal people, despite facing ongoing genocide.

**Conclusion**

As discussed in the Introduction, an adequate appreciation of violence is a core requisite of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here. The settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ of defining Aboriginal peoples in terms of ‘direct violence’, and of denying historic and ongoing White violence, conceals the root causes of Aboriginal lateral violence. Such silence also results in, and is maintained by, the ‘structural violence’ of ‘segmentation’, where knowledge gaps and misrepresentations plague areas of central concern to Aboriginal well-being – including Aboriginal ‘family violence’, suicide, lateral violence in general, trauma, resilience, and criminalisation. The failure to articulate a ‘perceptible field’ of the unrelenting genocidal roots of Aboriginal lateral violence encourages both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples to blame Aboriginal victims of violence for their traumatised behaviours. Thus, the ‘cultural violence’ of hegemonic discourse both silences and attacks Aboriginal lifeworlds, failing to recognise the ‘eventfulness’ of Aboriginal trauma even as it creates it. Simply being Aboriginal, in itself, is constituted as a crime under settler colonial regimes of surveillance, discipline and genocide. A fundamental premise of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here is that it is not possible to stop violence through enacting violence. As this chapter has shown, enacting punitive violence

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58 Aboriginal women prisoners face extra logistical, mental health, family responsibility and “mandatory child protection obligations” pressures, and are particularly marginalised by prison ‘support’ programs aimed at White men (Stubbs, 2013, p.257).
in fact exacerbates and compounds the originary settler colonial genocidal impacts against Aboriginal peoples.

This thesis, then, provides a valuable addition to current analyses of Aboriginal lateral violence in Australia. The ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ modelled here draws on Galtung (1996) to offer a nuanced and reflexive analysis of settler colonial ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence against Aboriginal peoples – both historic and continuous – and, in turn, how these ‘super-types’ of violence interrelate cyclically and create new forms of violence in Aboriginal communities. It thus provides a clear framework to facilitate exploration of the root causes and ongoing effects of Aboriginal lateral violence, including ‘family violence’ and suicide, trauma and resilience, and criminalisation. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as rendered here also goes beyond the notion of settler colonial violence as necessarily intentional. Further, rather than viewing Aboriginal victims of violence in terms of ‘lack’, here ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is premised on the assumption that Aboriginal peoples possess significant expertise and resilience, even in contexts of extreme violence. While much Aboriginal trauma is collective, chronic and ‘normalised’, by the same token, Aboriginal peoples can demonstrate great collective - as well as personal - strength and resilience. Addressing the root causes of settler colonial violence is not Aboriginal responsibility. Nevertheless, Aboriginal peoples are best placed to understand their own “unmet needs”, realities and priorities in order to transcend such violence. Settler colonialism, however, persists in enacting ‘structural violence’ that undermines Aboriginal capacity, as Chapter 2 demonstrates.

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58
Chapter 2: ‘Structural violence’

*Genocide occurred more frequently in Australia than perhaps anywhere else*

Moses (in Campbell, 2009, p.166)

Most anthropologists acknowledge, at least to a degree, the legacy of violent Australian colonial history and its traumatic impacts on Aboriginal peoples (e.g. Lattas and Morris, 2010, Rose, 1986, Sullivan, 1986, Atkinson, 2002, O’Loughlin, 2008). Some also point to institutionalised racism and structural injustices such as government neglect and the creation of new intra-Aboriginal forms of conflict due to Western political and legal systems (e.g. Povinelli, 2011, Martin, 1997, Finlayson, 1997, Sullivan, 1997, Austin-Broos, 2003a, 2009, Bauman, 2009). However, the notion that this situation represents an ongoing violence or structural warfare is not articulated by many. This thesis, however, argues that this is in fact the case.

Tatz (2001, p.24) reveals a vast range of historic Australian ‘protection’-segregation practices that fulfil the “bodily and mental harm” criterion of the UN definition of genocide. While a handful of commentators agree - and a strident backlash denies - that historically, Aboriginal peoples have faced genocidal policies and actions, few recognise that genocide against Aboriginal peoples continues unabated. ‘Structural violence’ plays a seminal role in allowing genocide against Aboriginal peoples to still be perpetrated – invisibly – *today*. Lemkins’s (1944) second phase of genocide - imposing the ‘national pattern’ of the oppressor onto the oppressed group – relies heavily on ‘structural violence’.

Galtung (1969) models ‘structural violence’ as a form of avoidable violence inherent in particular social structures and institutions that prevents (certain) people from meeting their fundamental needs, including through causing poverty, social rifts, illness, premature death and preventable disabilities. It is through the ‘structural violence’ of political, legal and economic strategies that settler colonial privilege and dominance is maintained, and Aboriginal peoples are marginalised and displaced (e.g. Eckermann, 1999). Thus, in order to recognise ‘structural violence’ we need to consider historical, political, economic contexts and to recognise forms of violence arising from Aboriginal marginalisation beyond personal assault or police-related reported ‘incidents’ (Austin-Broos, e.g. 2010a, 2010b, pp.137-138, 140-141).
‘Structural violence’ inherent in settler colonial society

‘Structural violence’ is evident in the political, economic and social makeup of the settler colonial nation state itself. In Australia, as elsewhere, understanding of the violence inherent in the modern nation state has been slow to develop. Until the 1960s, many anthropologists were influenced by Durkheim and Parsons (after Weber1), and later Marx, in terms of understanding the Western industrial state as inherently ‘peaceful’ (Krohn-Hansen, 1994). Violence was seen as being due to a ‘deficit’, an upset in ‘social equilibrium’. However, it is increasingly recognised that Western social structures are structurally violent, with inequitable power relationships resulting in an unstable and oppressive social system where the more powerful group uses violence to maintain higher status (e.g. Hardt and Negri, 2000, Povinelli, 2002, 2011, Kuokkanen, 2008, Smith, 2003, 2005, Burton, 1990a, Lynch, 2009, Nordstrom, 2004). Wilkinson (2005, 2006) highlights the violent impacts of engrained economic and social inequality in hierarchical, liberal-democratic societies such as the United States. Such inequality corrodes social capital and trust and has devastating effects on marginalised people’s lives and communities. Being devalued and disrespected is a major source of chronic stress, homicide and other violence for marginalised groups (Wilkinson, 2006). ‘Structural violence’ consequently occurs whenever there are systematic inequalities in the distribution of economic and political resources in a society (Galtung, 1969, 2002, Christie, 1997, p.323), and leads to - and is upheld by - ‘direct violence’.


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1 Krohn-Hansen (1994, p.379) points out that Weber did in fact recognise the violent role of the state, showing that the state’s means is violence, hence the modern state and violence are “clearly linked”.

2 Even the most cursory review of popular entertainment illustrates the normalisation of competition and violence in Western society. For instance, highly popular computer ‘casual games’ and ‘horror games’ are played by millions of children, where the child acts out brutal murder scenes, sexualised domestic violence, and repeated torture (e.g. Bakan, 2011, pp.14-17). The ‘kid marketing’ promoting such games is itself culturally violent (Bakan, 2011).
‘cultural violence’ both in the way they define the ‘problem’, and in the way they try to resolve it, they unwittingly perpetuate ‘structural violence’ (see below).

In order to better understand how genocide continues to be enacted against Aboriginal peoples today, I delve further into Galtung’s (1996) exposition of ‘structural violence’. Galtung (1996, p.199) explains that ‘structural violence’ creates and maintains inequitable relations between the oppressor and the oppressed by four different, inter-relational techniques: ‘penetration’, ‘segmentation’, ‘marginalisation’ and ‘fragmentation’. These maintain the overall exploitative complex - ‘structural violence’ - while also acting as structurally violent agents in their own right. As illustrated below, each of these critical facets of settler colonial ‘structural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples is evident in Australia, both historically and today.

‘Penetration’

The ‘structural violence’ of ‘penetration’ occurs historically when Aboriginal people uphold settler colonial priorities at the expense of the general expressed interests of their peoples. They are rewarded political and economic power in settler colonial institutions and structures by doing so. ‘Penetration’ can be seen in the way of any number of Aboriginal spokespersons who claim to represent the best interests of their people, but who in fact follow processes and decisions which are an anathema to broadly-accepted Aboriginal cultural philosophies and methodologies. Langton (2008, p.144, 2009), for instance, describes the development of patriarchal Aboriginal political organisations which uphold (White and Black) vested interests of ‘Big Bunga’ men at the expense of the well-being of Aboriginal women and children. Black (2010, pp.92, 153, 169) describes colonial influences clouding and undermining Indigenous forms of leadership and jurisprudence, and how working through these is an ongoing task. Trigger (1997, p.115) discusses how mining exacerbates conflicting Aboriginal views about what is in the best interests for their people and who decides. Jones and Hill-Burnett, Hill, Scott, and Petrick (in Maddison, 2009, pp.170, 176, 183) note many self-professed young Aboriginal ‘leaders’ following Western activist approaches and dismissing the knowledge of Aboriginal elders. And Bauman (2009, pp.51-53) provides a nuanced exploration of legislative influences on Aboriginal negotiations around ‘authentic’ identity – via the “active practice of differentiation” – in contexts of disputed, inter-subjective meaning-making shaped by dynamic “configurations of power and conditions of possibility”.

61
Enforced bureaucratisation of Aboriginal peoples

‘Penetration’ can also be seen in the enforced bureaucratisation of Aboriginal peoples. As Macdonald (2005, p.98) eloquently describes, the “soft knife of state policies”, particularly so-called ‘self-management’, have led to Aboriginal peoples becoming “increasingly incorporated within a progressive nation state”. Sullivan (1997, p.139) demonstrates that corporate law is resulting in the regulation of “entire (Aboriginal) social communities” according to Western political principles. Since the 1960s most work available to Aboriginal peoples has been in the government sector (Macdonald, 2000, p.107, 2010, p.60, Peterson and Taylor, 2003, p.106). Further, due to ongoing severe economic marginalisation, most Aboriginal peoples are placed in a position of economic dependence on government funding and welfare to try to meet their needs (e.g. Hunter, 2000, 2008, Povinelli, 2011, and Austin-Broos, 2009). ‘Structural violence’ is evident in the fact that in order to receive government funding, Aboriginal peoples must follow settler colonial capitalist bureaucratic structures, organisations and values. Such values include capital accumulation; “hierarchised, representative and centralised authority”; ‘first-in, first-served’; placing people in bureaucratic roles toward each other; and individualism (Macdonald, 2013, pp.407-408, 2010, p.62). Further, for unemployed Aboriginal peoples, small and individuated welfare payments are not easily amenable to the imperatives of the allocative economy (Macdonald, 2000, p.108). Such ‘structural violence’ has led to ontological, political, economic and social upheaval for many Aboriginal peoples (Macdonald, 2000, 2010, 2013). Late capitalist bureaucratic institutions, structures and mindsets directly undermine Aboriginal kin relationships; respect for elders; Aboriginal allocative economies; “locally-based authority structures”; Aboriginal cultural forms of “autonomy-responsiveness”; Aboriginal ontologies of reciprocity, care, and equitable distribution of goods; Aboriginal “mutually-reinforcing and shared understandings of self-making”; and create intra-Aboriginal division and “social trauma” (Macdonald, 2000, pp.97, 109, 2013, pp.407-408). Such ‘penetration’ has led to the dismantling of independent Aboriginal organisations, and the weakening of Aboriginal economic and political well-being and autonomy (Tatz, 2005, p.9, Macdonald, 2010, p.60). Further, vastly uneven power relations are created between those who control resources “but do not enter into a ‘looking after’ relationship” (Macdonald, 2000, p.100).

The ‘penetration’ of imposing settler colonial bureaucratic systems on Aboriginal peoples not only undermined, but often actively attacks, Aboriginal lifeworlds. Under government

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3 Some Aboriginal groups such as the Ngarrindjeri are proactively resisting both Western forms of corporate governance and the imposition of narrow so-called ‘traditional’ structures, by insisting on their own forms of collectivity (see p.181).
legislation, government funds are deemed ‘public funds’, hence Aboriginal ‘demand sharing’ via the allocative economy, and autonomy-responsiveness, are often deemed illegal (Macdonald, 2000, p.108, 2013, p.405). Rather than recognising that all forms of economy are ‘moral’ (Peterson and Taylor, 2003, p.116), for settler colonisers, the morals embedded in their own form of economy are at once, invisible, neutral, best, and simply reflect ‘reality’. Thus, they remain blind to the ‘cultural violence’ of imposing settler colonial morals and principles on Aboriginal peoples, including via the ‘structural violence’ of economics, law and politics.

Under the structural violence of ‘penetration’, settler colonial micromanagement and surveillance of Aboriginal peoples has thus become more extreme and pervasive yet also more subtle, hidden and taking on new forms (Macdonald, 2010, p.59, 2013, pp.406, 408, Foucault, 1980). Not only is settler colonial bureaucracy imposed on Aboriginal peoples, but such imposition is far more intense and all-encompassing for Aboriginal peoples than for the broader population (Macdonald, 2000, p.109).

The ‘structural violence’ of ‘penetration’ is underpinned by settler colonial economic measures – both historical and continuing – that encourage the restriction of Aboriginal thinking to survival thinking, and profoundly destabilise Aboriginal institutions of governance, law and society while simultaneously imposing settler colonial systems. Such actions come under the definition of genocide (Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.8). To paraphrase Curthoys and Docker (2001, p.8), the ‘structural violence’ of ‘penetration’ is evident in the fact that in Australia:

\[
\text{Participation in economic life (is) made dependent upon one’s being (settler colonial) or being devoted to the cause of (settler colonialism).}
\]

‘Segmentation’

‘Segmentation’ is a form of ‘structural violence’ that impedes consciousness formation and political mobilisation of Aboriginal peoples by giving Aboriginal peoples “only a very partial view of what goes on” (Galtung, 1996, p.199). ‘Segmentation’ has been operationalised through the under-education of Aboriginal peoples for some 100 years via policies of segregation and neglect until the 1970s, influenced largely by the racist ‘deficit discourse’ (Eckermann, 1998). Even today Aboriginal peoples experience discrimination by teachers and White students in school, including assumptions that Aboriginal children are not able to learn, should leave school, and are good at sport but not intellectual pursuits (Eckermann, 1999, pp.14-15, Bowers, 2010). Generations of Aboriginal peoples have consequently been relegated to marginalised economic, educational, health and political roles (Eckermann, 1999). In NSW
the Public Instruction Act 1880 was influential until the 1970s in readily allowing settler colonisers to exclude Aboriginal peoples from ‘White’ schools (Tatz, 2005, p.25). Darker-skinned Aboriginal people were only allowed on reserve schools. Consequently, often lighter-skinned Aboriginal people were excluded from both Black and White schools (Tatz, 2005, p.25). Eckermann (1998) points out that settler colonial education today still follows assimilationist approaches. It does not recognise the need or possibility for Aboriginal forms of education; and continues to constrain Aboriginal life chances despite the fact that most overt forms of institutional racism have been formally abolished.

Not only Aboriginal peoples, but broader society also experiences some level of ‘segmentation’ since despite some recent improvements, there is still an overall ‘conspiracy of silence’ in the public school system and in public discourse around the reality of colonial brutality and its ongoing formations (Bottoms, 2013, Reynolds, 2013). Due to ongoing state control of the processes of national ‘remembering’ and ‘forgetting’, many Aboriginal people have not been told or are enabled access to the sources of the violence they experience in their own lives (Lauw et al, 2013, Atkinson, 2002)(see Chapters 1 and 3).

‘Segmentation’ can also be seen in the lack of holistic approaches and, indeed, lack of whole-of-government approaches to Aboriginal issues. ‘Segmentation’ is thus relevant to the governance of government. Poor governance denies the kinds of information that people need to make informed choices in relation to their interests within the bureaucracy. Further, poor governance can create great uncertainty and can saturate Aboriginal communities with its negative impacts.

‘Segmentation’ is clearly evident in the appalling paucity of research and data around issues of key concern to Aboriginal peoples, including Aboriginal experiences of genocide, suicide, family violence, lateral violence, criminalisation, trauma and resilience (e.g. Stubbs, 2013, Elliott-Farrelly, 2004, Gooda, 2011, Blagg, 2000, Curthoys and Docker, 2001, Atkinson, 2002).

‘Segmentation’ is also evident in the lack of transparency and translation (literally as well as figuratively) of government services and Western legal processes for Aboriginal peoples (e.g. Cowlishaw, 2010, Blagg, 2000, Thomas, 1993, Bauman and Williams, 2004b, 2004c, 2007). The ‘structural violence’ of ‘segmentation’ thus also occurs through benign neglect, through the very poor resourcing of Aboriginal knowledges in Australia, not only compared to Whites, but

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4 For instance, regarding the court system, as one Aboriginal woman says “It is foreign to non-Aboriginal people so it is another planet to Aboriginal women” (Thomas, 1993, p.142).
5 See Povinelli (2011) for a nuanced analysis of the violence of government neglect of Aboriginal needs and interests.
also compared to Indigenous peoples overseas (Grieves, 2008, p.288). In such a context Aboriginal peoples in Australia are “still battling to have their voices heard” at the most basic levels (Grieves, 2008, p.295, original emphasis). That is, they are facing ongoing, epistemic warfare. This “conceptual exclusion” is clearly also political exclusion, and is “more ethically and cognitively demanding than commonly recognised” (Morgan-Olsen, 2010, p.241).

‘Segmentation’, then, is a potent form of ‘structural violence’ that constrains access to knowledge, thus limiting the ability of Aboriginal peoples and their colleagues to gain comprehensive awareness of the settler colonial system and how to transcend it.

‘Fragmentation’

‘Fragmentation’- keeping Aboriginal peoples away from each other - is a form of ‘structural violence’ strongly evident both historically and today. Australia has a long history of attempted ‘fragmentation’ of Aboriginal peoples. ‘Fragmentation’ was evident when settler colonisers used Aboriginal people from one group as guides and trackers against other Aboriginal groups. Particularly obvious forms of ‘fragmentation’ are early dispossession practices, where Aboriginal peoples were often forcibly moved out of their traditional lands, either at gunpoint or due to pressures of severe racism and economic hardship (e.g. Tatz, 2001, p.24). Across Australia Aboriginal peoples were incarcerated on reserves, settlements and missions, and denied freedom of access to land as well as movement. People were prevented from joining family members at these localities, often for life. The Aborigines Protection Board (APB) and Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB) controlled where people could live, what rations they might be allocated, what work they could do and whom they could marry were all regulated (Macdonald, 2010, p.56).

During the 1960s to 1970s, many regional and urban Aboriginal peoples across eastern Australia faced forced physical assimilation - in some cases with the bulldozing of Aboriginal fringe settlements (Eckermann, 1999, p.11). Aboriginal peoples were compulsorily ‘resettled’ in ‘salt and pepper’ patterns, with Aboriginal households being surrounded by White households. Such enormous intentional changes – attempted ‘inclusion’ - brought significant social upheaval and traumatic impacts, with many Aboriginal peoples experiencing “continuous culture shock, the realities of living with non-Aboriginal neighbours day and night” and having to come to terms with “life in a largely foreign environment - socially, culturally and

6 While some trackers may have agreed to provide this service for their own ends, there are many references in the early literature to trackers being unwilling to perform this task, in particular, being unwilling to enter other Aboriginal groups’ areas uninvited.
educationally” (Eckermann, 1999, pp.11-12). Although life on the missions and reserves was typically politically and materially oppressive, despite such constraints Aboriginal peoples generally managed to maintain their own particular cultural, social and economic forms and activities and saw themselves of preserving a “measure of moral independence” (Macdonald, 2010, pp.58-59). However, with the more intense ‘fragmentation’ of forcibly relocating Aboriginal peoples into White-dominated localities, such shared Aboriginal “corporate identity” has come under increasing pressure (Macdonald, 2010, p.59).

Pearson (2001) identifies the imposition of settler colonial practices and structures such as payment by alcohol, binge drinking, and ‘gammon’ principles in the welfare economy as undermining Aboriginal principles of reciprocal support and responsibility, and as resulting in significant violence and subsequent ‘fragmentation’ of Aboriginal families (see Chapter 1).

**Stolen Generations and the Apology**

A particularly excruciating form of ‘fragmentation’ was the removal from their families, and institutionalisation, of so-called Stolen Generations children from the 1880s to the 1970s. Some Stolen Generations “assimilation factories” closed only as recently as the late 1980s7 (Tatz, 2005, pp.12-13). Read (1981) was the first to write about the Stolen Generations in NSW. It is estimated that “between 1883 and 1969 more than 6,200 children were stolen in NSW alone” (Korff, 2013, unnumbered). The Aborigines Protection Board was authorised to remove Aboriginal children from their families on such spurious grounds as not living in a conventional house – defined as “neglect”8 (Macdonald, 2010, p.56) – or simply for “being Aboriginal” (Eckermann et al, 2010). Settler colonisers imagined that lighter skinned Aboriginal children would be more capable of being trained as manual labour for Whites due to their supposed ‘White blood’ (Macdonald, 2010, p.56). Hence we can see that the ‘cultural violence’ of White racism led to the ‘structural violence’ of ‘fragmentation’ through the removal of Aboriginal children from their families.

The best-selling *Bringing Them Home* report concludes that Australia perpetrated genocide by deliberately removing Aboriginal children from their families with the intention of eliminating Aborigines as a distinct group of peoples (Wilkie, 1997, Tatz, 2001, pp.25-26, van Krieken, 1999, Barta, 2008). Concerted efforts were made by governments in Australia during the 1830s

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7 Retta Dixon home in Darwin closed in 1980; Sister Kate’s home in Perth closed in 1987; Bomaderry closed in 1988 (Tatz, 2005, pp.12-13)
8 Reay (1949, p.115) observes that according to Aboriginal values, a ‘good’ mother takes her child with her everywhere, whereas from a European perspective “material comfort” is seen as more important.
and 1840s, and 1930s and 1940s, to prevent Aboriginal “births within the group” by actively separating so-called ‘half-castes’ and ‘full-bloods’, and by encouraging intermarriage with the White community (Tatz, 2001, pp.24-25). Further, informal evidence also points to governments sterilising Aboriginal women without their consent - via Depo-Provera in Western Australia, and via ‘non-explained’ tubal ligations causing permanent sterilisation in Queensland (Tatz, 2001, p.24). Such “humiliations”, including destroying “family honour” by separating families, are a critical aspect of genocide as defined by Lemkin (Curthoys and Docker, 2001, pp.6, 10). The ‘fragmentation’ of Aboriginal families promotes the longer-term genocidal aim of increasing the numerical, physical and economic superiority of the settler colonisers (Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.8).

Such genocidal practices have many profound traumatic impacts both on the children who were removed\(^9\) and on the families who were left behind, with the effects still being felt dramatically today (see Chapter 4). A long-overdue formal apology has been offered by the federal government in 2008 to the Stolen Generations (e.g. Parliament of Australia, 2008, Barta, 2008). However, the removal of Aboriginal children continues today. Five years after the Intervention there has been a 69% increase in Aboriginal children being removed from their homes compared to 2007 (Korrf, 2015c, unnumbered). Under the NTER/SFNTB, Aboriginal kinship systems and forms of family are targeted because they are seen by settler colonisers as creating barriers to relocation, economic participation, and the adoption of Western individualistic principles (Sutton, 2009, Lattas and Morris, 2010, Cowlishaw, 2003, 2013); thus ‘cultural violence’ leads to the ‘structural violence’ of the ongoing removal of Aboriginal children from their families.

**Native title and land claims**


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It is not ‘cultural difference’ as such that lies at the root of conflicts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal actors in native title contexts, but rather, continuing power imbalances and unaddressed historical and enduring injustices and trauma (Dodson, 1996, p.8). The fundamental structural flaw remains not only in the fact that “we cannot legislate for goodwill” (Bauman, 2010b, p.142), but in the reality of the massive silence around (ongoing) settler colonial ‘cultural’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence against Aboriginal peoples. As a result of this silence, the fact that Whitefella actions - from invasion until today - markedly shape the “conditions of possibility” (Bauman, 2010b, p.139) for Aboriginal socio-cultural transformation is largely invisible in native title discussions. ‘Structural violence’ is evident in how Western legal “common sense” concepts around ‘tradition’, ‘continuity’, ‘change’, ‘society’, ‘fact’ and ‘opinion’ dominate native title claim processes and misunderstand Aboriginal realities (e.g. Macdonald and Bauman, 2011). While ostensibly redressing the fiction of terra nullius, dominant native title processes effectively penalise Aboriginal peoples for changes imposed on them by the colonisers and for the strategies they have adopted to survive as peoples in the face of genocide. As Ritter (in Morton, 2010, p.22) says, native title ignores colonial “agency in the process of dispossession” and is deaf to “historical injustice”.

The high levels of resources at stake in land claim and native title processes – whether fiscal, political, or in terms of identity - increases the intensity of ‘fragmentation’ between and within Aboriginal groups (Altman, 1997, Munster, 1997, Macdonald, 1997). Further ‘fragmentation’ arises when Aboriginal people respond with varying degrees of resignation or challenge to these assimilatory processes. For instance, some Aboriginal people may respond to such ‘structural violence’ with opportunism11, trying to gain what benefits they may from the dominant system (Galtung, 1996, p.200). In the structurally violent contexts of ‘segmentation’ and ‘fragmentation’, it is understandable that some Aboriginal peoples would not be able to envisage viable alternatives and so would try to extract what benefits they may from the existing system, no matter how unsatisfactory or unsustainable it is.

10 See also Croft (2015) on Aboriginal forms of mediation in Yuendumu, Yorta-Yorta, East Arnhem Land, Tiwi Islands, and Northern Territory more generally, and its particular application in Aboriginal ‘family’ mediation contexts.

11 In this sense, ‘fragmentation’ caused by native title can lead in turn to ‘penetration’ as some Aboriginal people reshape themselves and their identity by reverting to earlier colonial documentation and genealogies.
'Marginalisation’

The structurally violent tool of ‘marginalisation’ – keeping Aboriginal peoples on the ‘outside’ - is a well-recognised phenomenon in anthropology, sociology, and postcolonial studies. For instance, Bauman (2006a), Bauman and Macdonald (2011), Cowlishaw (2010, 2013) and Bailey (2008) point out that it is structural factors – that is, legislative, economic-industrial, cultural-social and geographic conditions in ‘remote’ Australia – not simply ‘Aboriginal culture’ - that hugely impact on Aboriginal agency, subjectivities and behaviours. Aboriginal people, then, are marginalised from public decision-making and from having the power to access and manage a broad array of material and discursive resources in Australian society. Some Aboriginal people are more marginalised than others and, in contexts of lateral violence, may marginalise each other. However, within this diversity, it is still the case that Aboriginal peoples as a whole are significantly more marginalised than White people as a whole in Australia. ‘Marginalisation’ is a form of ‘structural violence’ that fosters systemic frustration of the aspirations of Aboriginal peoples (Eckermann et al., 2010, p.74).

Government initiatives have attempted to address Aboriginal ‘marginalisation’ via policies of assimilation and ‘inclusion’, such as the recent ‘Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage’ framework and ‘Closing the Gap’ initiatives. However, these approaches fail to acknowledge the ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence inherent in the settler colonial political, economic and social systems which are the targets of such ‘inclusion’ (e.g. Hunter, 2008). For those Aboriginal peoples who do manage to gain some small influence in settler colonial political and economic institutions, it is sobering to realise both that White people hold most or all of the power in Aboriginal government agencies, and, moreover, that Aboriginal agencies “rank low in the public service hierarchy” (Tatz, 2005, p.10).

The ‘structural violence’ of ‘marginalisation’ is also evident in the institutionalised racism and structural barriers which create public education as a “sorting machine” that maintains Aboriginal disadvantage (Pearson, 2009, pp.24-25, 89-90). Grieves (2008, p.297) further identifies the assimilatory impacts of an Australian education system dominated by White epistemology, pedagogy and staff. The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a particularly problematic aspect of settler colonial education systems today, exacerbating Aboriginal disadvantage and hindering vital priorities such as Aboriginal second language learning needs (e.g. Angelo and Hanlon, 2011, Beresford et al, 2012, Wigglesworth et al, 2011).
Criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples and deaths in custody

Criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples and deaths in custody are significant markers of the ‘structural violence’ of ‘marginalisation’ of Aboriginal peoples. Cowlishaw (2013, p.235) identifies common theories around crime and criminality that systematically produce an over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. Fergie (1997) illustrates how Western, rather than Aboriginal, moral evaluations are prioritised in settler colonial legal processes. Lloyd and Rogers (1993, p.156) demonstrate how the adversarial, inconsistent, and unaccountable aspects of Western law especially marginalise Aboriginal victims of sexual assault. In particular, women living in contexts of extreme conflict and crisis face increased risks if they disclose their experiences of sexual violence, due to “lack of protection, stigma and retaliation” (Spangaro et al 2013, p.1). ‘Structural violence’ is also evident in the invisibilised, condoned and belittled nature of sexual violence in dominant so-called ‘peacebuilding’ processes, and official decision-making generally, where women and their concerns are typically excluded, specifically concerning around sexual violence (Spangaro et al 2013, Lloyd and Rogers, 1993, p.162). Thus, contrary to assumptions of the liberal democratic judiciary, due to engrained ‘structural violence’, Aboriginal women are typically further marginalised if they publicly disclose their experiences of sexual violence.

Currently, Australia has “a rate of Indigenous incarceration higher than that of apartheid South Africa” (Pilger, 2014, unnumbered), and criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples is increasing (Stubbs, 2013, Schwartz, 2010). Table 1 indicates the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system, with most data available for Western Australia (WA). Please note: I have collected data from Stubbs (2013) and presented them in a table for ease of understanding. However, there is no uniform comparative between the data, since the data are extremely inconsistent across different jurisdictions and variables.

From Table 1 it can be seen that many more Aboriginal people are arrested, ‘offend’, and are defendants in court compared to non-Aboriginal people; that the contrast is particularly marked between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women; and that this pattern is increasing (Stubbs, 2013). The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) in 1991 has been ground-breaking in its attempt to highlight and address the widespread and deeply

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12 Typically the prosecutor can claim that sexual violence is acceptable under ‘Aboriginal customary law’ without giving any proof; Aboriginal Legal Services often defend Aboriginal men rather than women; and varying criminal injuries compensation legislation across Australia disadvantages Aboriginal women who are often highly mobile and move frequently (Lloyd and Rogers, 1993, pp.156-158).

13 The extremely patchy nature of such data provides further strong evidence of ‘segmentation’.
entrenched criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples. However, correctional authorities have generally failed to implement RCIADIC recommendations, so “many of the circumstances leading to deaths in custody...are still routine occurrences” (Cunneen in Stubbs, 2013, p.255). Stubbs (2013, pp.255-256) demonstrates that harsher laws, policies and practices recently exacerbate the levels of over-representation of Aboriginal people in custody, particularly women. Tatz (2001, p.151) also reveals “increasing incarceration of Aboriginal youth, even for petty offences”. Since 1999 there have been notable increases in arrests for “offences against the person” and “justice and good order offences”, both reflecting changing police practices (Stubbs, 2013, p.249). In several jurisdictions, particularly NSW, harsher bail decisions have increased the number of unsentenced Aboriginal people, particularly women, in custody over the last decade (Stubbs, 2013, p.255-256). Such harsher bail decisions defy RCIADIC recommendations (Stubbs, 2013, p.255). Further, five years after the Intervention there has

Table 1: Criminal justice intervention into the lives of Indigenous peoples in Australia
(data from Stubbs, 2013)

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<tr>
<td>Women: 35.2%</td>
<td>Men: 40.7%</td>
<td>Women: 29.4%</td>
<td>Men: 44.5%</td>
<td>NSW: 9.3</td>
<td>NT: &gt;7/10</td>
<td>Indigenous: 65%</td>
<td>Aboriginal women: 58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men: 40.7%</td>
<td>(45.6% WA)</td>
<td>Men: 8.0%</td>
<td>(44.1% WA)</td>
<td>SA: 16.3</td>
<td>NT: 11.2</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous: 35%</td>
<td>Aboriginal men: 35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>Other states: No data</td>
<td>Other states: No data</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Non-Aboriginal women: 22.4</td>
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<td>% Increase in imprisonment rates (from 1991 to 2010)</td>
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<td>643</td>
<td>Non-Aboriginal men: 3.6</td>
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14 Stubbs (2013, p.254, original emphasis) stresses that growth in the Aboriginal remand population is due not to “more serious offences but rather to harsher bail decisions”, particularly in NSW over the last two decades. For example, in WA “Over two-thirds of Aboriginal women prisoners had breached an order, most commonly bail” (Stubbs, 2013, p.253). Being on remand and having a prior record, increase chances of imprisonment, in both higher and lower courts (Stubbs, 2013, p.253).
been a 40% increase in Aboriginal incarceration (Korrf, 2015c, unnumbered). Such a system “daily increases the rates of arrest” while trying to avoid further royal commission inquiries (Tatz, 2001, p.151) – and without acknowledging underlying settler colonial genocidal attitudes and root causes. It is important to stress that, arguably, settler colonial surveillance and discipline of Aboriginal peoples produces ‘criminals’\textsuperscript{15}. That is, in the context of historic and ongoing settler colonial genocide, Aboriginal peoples are defined as criminal in advance – guilty without trial as it were - at cultural and structural levels. Aboriginal economies, laws, socialities are both targeted by, and seen as threats by, settler colonialism (Macdonald, 2000, 2010, van Krieken, 2004, Tatz, 2001, Eckermann et al, 2010, Cowlishaw, 2003, 2013). For instance, Havnen and Pilger (in Korrf, 2015c, unnumbered) reveal that in 2012 the Northern Territory government spent more than $80 million on “the surveillance of families and the removal of children compared with just $500,000 on supporting the same impoverished families”. New South Wales “super’ surveillance systems” monitor every move of inmates through 24-hour video monitoring of Aboriginal youth in their “perspex cage” (Tatz, 2001, p.151). Australia’s newest jail, near Gatton in southeast Queensland, is the “most advanced prison in the world”, employing body scanners, vehicle scanners and state-of-the-art 360 degree motion sensor cameras to monitor inmate movements (O’Neill, 2011, unnumbered). There has also been an increase in post-release surveillance (Cunneen, 2011), including monitoring devices attached to, or implanted in, prisoners’ bodies (Black and Smith, 2003).

The Intervention

The NTER provides a telling contemporary example of dramatic ‘marginalisation’ of Aboriginal peoples. Under the Intervention, Aboriginal peoples were not consulted; Aboriginal peoples have undergone additional dislocation, displacement, and economic micromanagement; Aboriginal economic, housing, and land rights possibilities have been further eroded; and Aboriginal men have been politically marginalised by being stereotyped as child abusers (e.g. Fieldes, 2010, Saban and Curtis, 2010, Korff, 2013, Llewellyn, 2013). As Chapter 3 outlines, settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ of the ‘deficit discourse’ has played a key role in producing such ‘structural violence’.

Galtung (1996, p.200) points out that in structurally violent contexts, those who benefit disproportionately from the inequitable structures will act to maintain these structures including ensuring against resistance from those they marginalise. Further, apathetic ‘governability’ is preferable to ‘boiling’ ‘anarchy’ (Galtung, 1996, p.200). Such a preference for

\textsuperscript{15} See Foucault (1977) on surveillance, discipline and criminalisation.
covert rather than overt forms of Aboriginal anger in response to genocide may help explain mainstream outrage against Aboriginal violence against others and against property (see Chapter 4). In contrast, public discourse is markedly silent around Aboriginal suicide.

The NTER/SFNTB provides dramatic evidence of settler colonisers trying to coerce the submission of the Aboriginal peoples in order to achieve ‘stability’. Sutton (2008, pp.77-78), for instance, claims that the coercive force of the army and the “supremacy of Australian law” under the NTER are necessary to address supposed Aboriginal “petty fiefdoms”, “the hegemony of local men”, and “corruption and abuse” because:

the feared needed something to fear, otherwise behavioural change was just pie in the sky.

Mahood (2008, p.98), on the other hand, argues that:

while coercive measures may get short-term results, in the end what they produce is resistance, and there’s probably no people on earth more accomplished in the art of obdurate passive resistance than the fringe and community dwellers of Aboriginal Australia.

Behrendt (2008, p.73) also shows that there is no evidence that coercion produces behaviour reforms, and that in fact it can be counter-productive:

there is evidence to suggest that the imposition of such punitive measures in an already dysfunctional situation will exacerbate the stress on a household.

Punitive measures adopted by the NTER/SFNTB include income quarantining; forced acquisition of Aboriginal lands via imposed leases; removal of Aboriginal people into town ‘hubs’; and channelling Aboriginal offenders into the criminal justice system, rather than addressing the root causes of the violence in some Aboriginal communities and promoting the healing, education, and empowerment of often already highly traumatised people (Fieldes, 2010; Saban and Curtis, 2010; Korff, 2013; Blagg, 2000; Atkinson, 2002).

Thus it is evident that the settler colonial ‘structural violence’ of ‘marginalisation’ of Aboriginal peoples takes myriad forms, most notably criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples; ongoing failure to address the root causes of Aboriginal deaths in custody; and punitive responses to

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16 See also discussion on Burton’s (1990a) human needs theory in the Introduction; basic human needs for identity, security and freedom cannot be eliminated through coercive force.
Aboriginal distress that increase Aboriginal ‘marginalisation’, particularly under the
Intervention. Such ‘structural violence’ involves sociopolitical, economic, and legislative
measures that prevent Aboriginal peoples from meeting their crucial needs, and from
mobilising to transform the genocidal settler colonial system.

‘Structural violence’ creates lateral violence

All of these major forms of settler colonial ‘structural violence’ play a critical role in promoting
Aboriginal lateral violence (see Chapter 4). In contexts of ‘structural violence’, “experiences of
violence may become embedded in the everyday lives of marginal groups” (Das and Kleinman
in Macdonald, 2005, p.98). New forms of conflict arise, and due to the power of
‘segmentation’ Aboriginal people often blame each other for the pressures they are facing
(Macdonald, 2013, p.407, 2010, p.61). Thus, in response to the reality of ‘structural violence’ in
its many forms, Aboriginal peoples can respond with rage (Galtung, 1996, p.200). Le Touze et
al (2005) emphasise that in contexts of extreme violence and ongoing oppression, collective
anger at injustice as ‘unfinished business’ is a major issue, not ‘simply’ Post-Traumatic Stress
Disorder (PTSD) (see Chapter 4). Le Touze et al (2005) argue that in violent contexts anger
should be expected, not pathologised, and health workers should try to address explosive
anger, in order to prevent, as far as possible, further damage to victims, their families,
workplace and community.

In a related way, Cowlishaw (2003, pp.105, 115-116, 118) insists that some Aboriginal ‘public
disorder’ is in fact “radical political analysis and response—a refusal to accept the promises of
liberal progress” (or perhaps a refusal to accept what is already a refusal); an effort to “redress
humiliation” and restore honour lost by police aggression and interference; “a counter to
expected deference and a response to fear and hatred, as well as a justification of it”; and a
“symbolic challenge” to the hegemony of the White system, including notions of ownership
and propriety, in the face of White fear of (Black) violence. In this way (Cowlishaw, 2003,
p.121):

*Rioting can be seen as expressing rage consequent on the recognition that true
recognition never occurs.*

Cowlishaw (2013, pp.237-240) argues that in some regards, for some Aboriginal people,
maintaining a form of “marginalised identity” - economically; in terms of “everyday
demeanour and manners”; and in terms of criminal activity (particularly against property\(^{17}\)) - is a “systematic orientation to the power of the state that has emerged in specific conditions”; an effort to resist “erasure”; a “defiant response to being marginalised”; and a deliberate defence of their ‘habitus’ in response to White contempt and social engineering efforts. Settler colonial society typically responds to such Aboriginal expressions of anger and defiance with more coercive behaviour (Cowlishaw, 2003, 2013). At the same time, Cowlishaw (2003, p.110, 114) suggests, public commentators do not acknowledge Aboriginal “manifestations of rage” because they do not deem anger and violence as worthy of analysis.

Thus, in response to settler colonial ‘structural genocide’ Aboriginal peoples often express rage, as is typical in contexts of extreme violence and ongoing oppression elsewhere. However, rather than viewing such rage as an understandable response to ‘structural violence’, and working to address underlying issues, settler colonial society generally pathologises Aboriginal anger and responds with further punitive behaviour.

Sutton (2005), however, critiques Cowlishaw (e.g. 2003) as failing to account for intra-Aboriginal lateral violence. Sutton (2005, pp.36, 40) also considers that Cowlishaw’s (e.g. 2003) recognition of racism in Australia today “provides fuel for racial separatists” and presents White people as “one-dimensional objects of racist thought”. It appears that Cowlishaw (e.g. 2003) and Sutton (2005) are discussing different forms of violence. Cowlishaw (2003) is discussing Aboriginal performative forms of violence in the face of ongoing settler colonial oppression\(^{18}\). While Cowlishaw (2003) identifies such behaviour as being due to ‘rage’ and ‘resistance’, this thesis would identify such behaviour as a defence of ‘relative autonomy’, that is, as culturally distinct from typical Western understandings of ‘resistance’ (see Chapter 5). Sutton (2005), on the other hand, is more concerned with contemporary intra-Aboriginal violence. However, since Sutton (2005) does not recognise historic or ongoing genocide in Australia, he does not recognise intra-Aboriginal violence as lateral violence. Instead, Sutton (2005, pp.40-41) attributes such intra-Aboriginal violence to deep-rooted Aboriginal ‘traditions’ of violence, policies of ‘self-determination’, and ‘racial separatism’. For Sutton (2005, p.40), the solution would be to intervene to address crisis issues, and to treat Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the same way, so that all live in the same places, have the same forms of employment, and so that Aboriginal people do not receive special services and

\[^{17}\text{It is interesting that such defiant criminal activity particularly targets White property and thus, implicitly, both the core focus of settler society, and the \textit{terra nullius} ‘claiming’ of land by establishing property.}\]

\[^{18}\text{Brigg (2003, p.290) views performative Aboriginal conflict as \textit{politically constitutive} of Aboriginal peoples in their interactions with police and other White authority figures.}\]
support. That is, Sutton’s (2005) ‘solution’ involves the structural elimination of distinct Aboriginal lifeworlds.

From the ‘negative peace’ perspective of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here, both forms of violence raised by Sutton and Cowlishaw need to be recognised and understood. Acute intra-Aboriginal violence may indeed merit crisis intervention according to processes and priorities identified by experienced Aboriginal workers in these areas, not by the punitive, reactive, politically-driven methods engaged under the NTER/SFNTB. The performative violence Cowlishaw describes needs to be understood not simply as ‘resistance’ or as ‘rage’, but as an expression of ‘relative autonomy’ with deep cultural roots.

Both groups of behaviour need to be recognised as existing in contexts of ongoing genocide in Australia against Aboriginal lifeworlds. The intra-Aboriginal violence Sutton (2005) describes needs to be understood as ‘lateral violence’. Attributing intra-Aboriginal violence to ‘tradition’ fails to explain the similar forms of lateral violence occurring in colonised Indigenous cultures across the world, despite their markedly diverse cultures. Something greater than ‘culture’ is occurring here.

Conclusion

Drawing on Galtung’s (1969, 1981, 1990, 1996, 2013) peacebuilding analysis, then, we can see that ‘structural violence’ is a major factor in what Lemkin (1944) identifies as the second primary phase of genocide: imposing the ‘national pattern’ of the oppressor onto the oppressed. While genocide may not involve mass killing of people, nevertheless ‘structural violence’ takes on myriad political, social, legal, economic, ontological, spiritual, and biological facets (Lemkin in Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.6).

All four major aspects of ‘structural violence’ – ‘penetration’, ‘segmentation’, ‘marginalisation’ and ‘fragmentation’ – are evident in both historical and contemporary settler colonial treatment of Aboriginal peoples. Although unseen, ‘structural violence’ is thus very real as the

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19 There is insufficient evidence for Aboriginal precolonial ‘traditions’ of violence. The only available nineteenth century records have been written by non-Aboriginal observers, often with very short-term, limited direct contact with the people they were observing, if any, and often with no knowledge of Aboriginal languages and cultures. While archaeological evidence may indicate cranial fractures in Aboriginal women, it is not clear why these fractures occurred. Sutton (2005, pp.38-39) implies that such fractures were caused by men’s violence against women. However, it is possible that these fractures were enacted by women against other women, or were self-inflicted due to grieving customs (Webb, 2009, p.205, Plante, 2007, p. 49).
Aboriginal experiences of Stolen Generations, deaths in custody, native title, and the Intervention testify.

Chapter 3 draws on further peacebuilding and anthropological insights to explore the primary source underlying ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence: ‘cultural violence’.
Chapter 3: ‘Cultural violence’

‘Act like civilised ... human White fellas...and you’ll be saved ... if not...die’ ...that theory has not changed ...one little bit... we’re all getting killed out, y’know...accordin to this govment’s policies n their definitions n their interpretations n their... their views n their opinions... what’s different between Hitler n these bastards...what’s different? Freeda Archibald, Wauchope, July 2011

in the beginning we create the enemy...We think others to death and then invent the ...ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them

Keen (1986, p.10)

‘Cultural violence’ is the most potent, but also the least recognised, ‘super-type’ of settler colonial violence. ‘Cultural violence’ is the deep social constructions that underpin and endure within a given historical era (Galtung, 1996, 2013). It is the implicit or shared collective unconscious ideas that lead to repression, exploitation and exclusion\(^1\). ‘Cultural violence’ lies at the heart of ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence, and is thus the ‘uber’ source of settler colonial violence.

A major aspect of ‘cultural violence’ is that it desocialises people away from their own culture to resocialise them into another, particularly via language (Galtung, 2013, p.44)\(^2\). As flagged in the Introduction, settler colonial genocide is comprised of two major phases: firstly, the elimination of Aboriginal lifeworlds; and secondly, the imposition of an established ‘national pattern’ of settler colonialism. Such genocidal forces not only physically impact on Aboriginal peoples, but saturate all aspects of Aboriginal life (Lemkin in Curthoys and Docker, 2001, p.6). The remainder of this chapter focuses on three key areas of settler colonial ‘cultural violence’:

\(^1\) ‘Cultural violence’ is the most recent major concept introduced by Galtung. Galtung (1996, pp.212, 214) warns that his presentation of ‘cultural violence’ is “very broad brush indeed”. He acknowledges the need for detailed studies - “specifications” – to better understand ‘cultural violence’. Galtung (1990, p.303) also calls for input to peace studies from a broad range of disciplines – including the humanities, history of ideas, philosophy, theology, and ‘culturology’ (anthropology of all societies not simply the ‘exotic’) – because “Peace research has so much to learn”. What Galtung (1996, p.221) aims for with his concept of ‘cultural violence’ is “an overview, yet rich enough to have some specificity”. ‘Cultural violence’ remains a very important and very difficult field for future peace research (Galtung, 2013, p.56).

\(^2\) Galtung (1996, pp.273-274) proposes instead that each people have control over their own “language, religion, ideology, and idiom (...education), ...policing, and courts for self-policing and self-adjudication, and...some aspects of the economy”.

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the ‘logic of elimination’ - fed by the deficit discourse; the imposition of settler colonial cultural forms; and the role of silence in facilitating ‘cultural violence’.

‘Cultural violence’ masks the fact that violence is socially created and preventable (Rutherford et al, 2007b, p.768, Rapoport, 1997). Consequently, settler colonialism makes little effort to prevent violence, relegating the management of violence to the criminal justice system (Rutherford et al, 2007b, pp.767-768). Since such underlying metaphysical assumptions are rarely challenged, ‘cultural violence’ continues to shape and legitimise ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence unseen.

The ‘logic of elimination’

A ‘logic of elimination’ continues to comprise the foundation of Australian settler society (Wolfe, 2006, p.388):

elimination is an organizing principal of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off (and superseded) occurrence...invasion is a structure not an event...settler colonizers come to stay.

According to this ‘logic of elimination’, Aboriginal peoples must be eliminated - apart from in a symbolic way - as determined by settler society. Apart from those who would deny violent Australian colonial relations generally (see p.3), some commentators question Wolfe’s (1999, 2006) thesis.

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4 In Australia, colonisers desire some level of symbolic indigeneity – defined by colonisers - in order to differentiate themselves from their British mother country (Wolfe, 2006, p.389).

5 Wolfe (2006, pp.392-393) demonstrates that a “comprehensive range of agencies, from the metropolitan centre to the frontier encampment” work to eliminate Indigenous societies with or without formal state apparatus, and “Rather than something separate from or running counter to the colonial state, the murderous activities of the frontier rabble constitute its principal means of expansion.”
use of the concept of ‘settler colonialism’. Krautwurst (2003) objects to Wolfe’s (1999) portrayal of Australia’s colonialism as monolithic ‘settler colonialism’. Settler “migration” inland from the coast occurred at “different speeds, times and intensities”, and prior to federating Australia was “a series of separate colonies and territories” (Krautwurst, 2003, p.66). Thus, different aspects of ‘settler’ and ‘dependent’ colonies may have manifested at different times and places across Australia. Nevertheless, Krautwurst (2003, p.66) agrees with Wolfe’s (1999, p.2) portrayal of Australia’s colonialism as “a structure not an event”. While colonialism in Australia is not a ‘totality’, since there are contradictory and fluid fissures, interests and subject-positions among colonisers, still colonisers have a “unity of purpose in imposing and maintaining a structural presence” (Krautwurst, 2003, pp.68-69).

Krautwurst (2003) objects that Wolfe’s (1999) dichotomising analysis into ‘Black’ and ‘White’ overlooks the experience of, for instance, Chinese and Indian labourers. While the racial status of these latter groups did not depend directly on the consequences of invasion and expropriation, still Australian ‘settler colonialism’ was made possible by the indentured labour of these British colonial or semi-colonial ‘dependent colony’ subjects (Krautwurst, 2003, p.71). Krautwurst (2003, p.67) also argues that more attention needs to be paid to the issue of identity formation among colonisers, rather than assuming ‘settler colonialism’ was only about land.

On the other hand, Rose (2001, p.253) argues that Wolfe (1999) does not sufficiently recognise the centrality of the appropriation of Aboriginal lands through warfare for Australia’s nationhood. It is “blood and land” that lies at the heart of a fictive Australian citizenship, closely entwined with warfare, sacrifice and nationhood (Rose, 2001, p.254). Yet, Wolfe’s (1999) structural analysis helps to explain the colonial desire to clearly distinguish themselves from Aboriginal peoples (Rose, 2001, p.254):

*Hyperseparation...between colonist and native was crucial to sustaining identity in relation to the metropole.*

This colonial desire for separation must be distinguished from Aboriginal desire for separation from the colonisers. The former have the power to enforce separation via myriad policies and practices, and have the ultimate goal of complete separation through extinguishing Aboriginal

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6 Krautwurst (2003, pp.68, 70) warns against assuming that such a structural presence is a ‘unity’; “A relation of equivalence is not a relation of identity among objects”.

7 Wolfe (2006) does pay more attention to the role of warfare and colonial identity formation in Australia’s settler colonialism. See also Wolfe (2016).
lifeworlds. Aboriginal peoples desire separation in the interests of *survival* in the face of such genocidal logics.

Rose (2001) also appreciates Wolfe’s (1999) dexterity in revealing the self-referential and contrived nature of imperialist anthropological logics. The positivist development of construing only physiology as ‘the real’ for identity, together with the assumption that transition to “fully human (transcendent) sociality” depends on male control of female sexuality, has direct repercussions for colonial concepts and policies around gender relations, territoriality and property (Rose, 2001, pp.254-255). Such positivist, racist, classist and patriarchal logics contribute significantly to maintaining the ‘logic of elimination’.

As Chapters 1 and 2 illustrate, this elimination takes many forms - physical, geographical, legal, bio-cultural, definitional - but is continuous in its purpose. Wolfe (2006) expressly does not prioritise physical elimination as the only or the most important – or ‘real’ – form of elimination; all forms of elimination constitute a kind of death.

Wolfe (2006, p.397) points out that it is removing Indigenous ‘tribal’ or *collective identity* and *connection to land* that is the primary target of the ‘logic of elimination’. Assimilation policies were expressly aimed towards such outcomes (Wolfe, 2006, p.397, Tatz, 2001, Eckermann, 2010, Macdonald, 2001, 2010, 2013). Victorian government policies, for instance, explicitly and consistently targeted the “disappearance of the Aboriginal minority ‘as a separate population’” (Barwick in Kijas, 1997, p.51). Any improved material benefits for Aboriginal peoples were to come through their separation from kin and their rejection of kinship ties (Barwick in Kijas, 1997, p.51). As Chapter 2 demonstrates, similar sentiments are being echoed under NTER/SFNTB imperatives to ‘free’ Aboriginal people from their social-cultural obligations in the interest of participation in the market economy. Removal of Aboriginal peoples as *peoples*, therefore, is an implicit core focus of the ‘logic of elimination’. As *terra nullius* upheld the fabricated ‘doctrine of conquest’, so disavowing Aboriginal ‘nations within’ fantasizes culturally homogeneous settler colonial ‘nationhood’ (Fleras and Elliott, 1992, Macdonald, 2010, p.56). Still today, Aboriginal peoples are not recognised as ‘peoples’ under Australian law (e.g. Macdonald, 1998b, p.169).

At first glance, it may appear that the ‘logic of elimination’ is driven by notions of ‘race’ and an imperial ‘civilising’ mission. ‘Civilization’ was lauded as the express, central object of the colonial, imperial project (van Krieken, 1999, p.299):
Civilization was colonialism’s most central organizing concept, quintessentially what imperialism and the colonial project was meant to achieve.

Rather than indicating the disintegration of state and society caused by forces ‘outside’ or ‘beneath’ civilising processes, the ‘barbaric violence’ of genocide in Australia occurs “explicitly within civilization and state formation” and “in the name of civilization” (van Krieken, 1999, p.299, original emphasis). Even supposed ‘tolerance’ and ‘multiculturalism’ in liberal Australia - including recognition of Aboriginal ‘difference’ - in fact constitute “an exercise of dominion” and “a relatively benign version of the formula for ethnic cleansing” (Merlan, 2006, p.99).

Liberalism pretends universalism but in reality persists in making “power-laden distinctions” to exclude and eliminate Aboriginal peoples (Merlan, 2006, p.99). Thus, as Chapters 1 and 2 highlight, only settler-defined forms of ‘Aboriginality’ are permitted; Aboriginal ‘habitus’ and resistance is criminalised.

However, according to Wolfe (2006, p.388) the fundamental motive underlying the ‘civilising’ ‘logic of elimination’ is not ‘race’, but access to territory and resources:

_Whatever settlers may say - and they generally have a lot to say - the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element._

As late as the 1970s, the Victorian government has been defining Aboriginal peoples as racially ‘incapable’ of farming, palpably ignoring its role in forcibly dispossessing Aboriginal people from lands they were successfully farming, in order to benefit White people (Kijas, 1997, pp.56-57). Similarly, while most Wiradjuri gained economic self-sufficiency through farming and other employment in the early twentieth century, during the Great Depression their land allocations were revoked and given to White people, forcing the Wiradjuri onto reserves (Macdonald, 1998b, pp.167-168). Currently native title processes implicitly favour settler colonial access to resources, and expedite “economic development, government or industry schedules” (Bauman and Williams, 2004c, p.12). Even successful native title claimants still have very little influence over resource development, including exercising their “right to say no” (Bauman, 2006d, unnumbered). Those Aboriginal peoples living on the lands most desired and populated by Whites have been most subjected to the ‘logic of elimination’ (see below). Thus,

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8 However, more recently the Victorian Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 provides for Aboriginal people entering into negotiations and undertaking activities similar to farming, such as the management of national parks.
9 See also Tatz (2001), Eckermann et al (2010), Miller (1985), and Aboriginal commentators in Reay (1949).
it is the ‘cultural violence’ of ‘depth grammar’ (Chomsky in Richards and Swanger, 2006, pp.16-19, 35-36) – the violent ‘operative rules’ promoting capitalism – that underlies and legitimates diverse forms of ‘direct’ and ‘structural’ violence.

Historically, the ‘surface’ language of ‘civilisation’ and racial superiority played a key role in upholding culturally violent ‘operative rules’. Today, however, there seems to have been a reversal: the elimination of Aboriginal lifeworlds is now implicitly rationalised in terms of spurious notions of the ‘national interest’, the ‘economy’, and neoliberal ‘meritocracy’. Nevertheless, deeply-engrained concepts around Aboriginal ‘loss’, ‘lack’ and ‘inferiority’ continue to shape settler colonial genocidal forces.

**The discourse of deficit**


*By our lack, we provided proof of their abundance and the achievements of ‘progress’; by our inferiority, we proved their superiority; by our moral and intellectual poverty, we proved that they were indeed the paragons of humanity, products of millennia of development.*

Given such presumed inadequacy, the removal of Aboriginal peoples and their ‘national patterns’ are conceived of by settler colonisers as both ‘natural’ and desirable.

By defining Aboriginal peoples in terms of deficit, settler colonialism dismisses Aboriginal epistemologies, capacity and resilience. Still today there are widespread settler colonial assumptions that Aboriginal peoples are not saying anything legitimate, realistic, currently relevant, valuable, “genuine, intelligent”¹⁰, or practical” (Rose, 1986, p.27); that what they do say is “out of date, unreliable, antithetical to modernity or primitive and dangerous” (Grieves, 2008, p.291); and hence their social life deserves to be rendered in “entirely negative terms” (Cowlishaw, 2013, p.242). Langton (2008, p.157) points to the assumed “inevitability of our incapability…(to) transition from settler colonialism to modernity” and the dominant failure to imagine Aboriginal peoples as “economically empowered, free-thinking, free-speaking”.

¹⁰ Dominant discourse assumes that ‘intellectualism’ is not authentically ‘Aboriginal’ (Pearson, 2009, p.59).
Further, late liberalism views Aboriginal spiritual understandings and kinship relationships as ‘deontology’ (Povinelli in Cowlishaw, 2003, p.108). In sum, as Rose (1986, p.27) stresses, “at the local level Aboriginal peoples’ articulation of their own position is frequently and persistently denied legitimacy” and this ‘deafness’ constitutes “an extraordinarily powerful tool of denial” by settler colonial society.

It is precisely by the “ideological power of the definition” (Dodson, 2003, p.35) that settler colonial ‘protection’, ‘management’ and control of Aboriginal peoples is legitimised and supported\(^{11}\). Whereas mainstream discourse conflates the genetic with the cultural, asserting that Aboriginal ‘differences’ are ‘natural’, the capacity of the dominant society to formally ‘define’ Aboriginal peoples is clearly an expression of political power (Rose, 1986, pp.26, 28, Brough et al, 2006, p.407). The ‘cultural violence’ of settlers defining ‘Aboriginality’ in terms of deficit leads to complex relations of exclusion, appropriation and exploitation in ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ forms. The long tradition of settler colonisers “observing, analysing, studying, classifying and labelling Aborigines and Aboriginality”, and of claiming that White representations of Aboriginality are authoritative, are “both weapons and symptoms of the oppressive relationship that exists between Indigenous peoples and colonising states” (Dodson, 2003, pp.27, 32, Macdonald, 1998b, p.162).

Settler colonisers not only control, but also have the power to structurally enforce their own definitions of ‘Aboriginality’ (Atkinson, 2006, unnumbered):

> The Western legal system has the capacity to redefine, reconstruct, and re-create [Aboriginal] culture and tradition.

It can be seen, then, that the more implicit ‘cultural violence’ of White control of and enforcement of definitions of ‘Aboriginality’ has many ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violent consequences for Aboriginal peoples\(^{12}\). To be defined as Aboriginal has been, in most part, to be subjected to “exclusion, denigration and denial of civil rights” by settler colonisers (Macdonald, 2010, p.56). As Chapter 2 highlights, settler colonisers controlled Aboriginal movement, rights, access to resources, and other freedoms, including where (and if) Aboriginal people could live; whom they could marry; their rations; what premises, schools, and towns they could occupy; and what sort of employment they could have, if any (Macdonald, 2010, unnumbered, Langton, 2009) (see Chapter 2).

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\(^{12}\) For instance, it is the Western legal system and practitioners that have defined ‘Aboriginal customary law’ as condoning sexual violence against women, not the Aboriginal community in general (Lloyd and Rogers, 1993, Atkinson, 2006, unnumbered, Behrendt in Fieldes, 2010, unnumbered, Langton, 2009) (see Chapter 2).
p.56). Settler colonisers removed many Aboriginal children from their families, often to be brought up as manual labour for Whites (e.g. Read, 1981, Wilkie, 1997, Macdonald, 2010, p.56, Korff, 2015a). Such genocidal behaviour was further compounded by the fact that contradictory definitions of ‘Aboriginality’ were enforced across different local contexts, towns and states (Macdonald, 2010). Today, rather than blood quantum notions, official discourse such as native title relies on spurious notions of ‘traditional’ ‘culture’ in order to define Aboriginal peoples (Macdonald, 1998b, p.162). Thus, the ‘cultural violence’ of deficit discourse takes diverse forms, but remains consistent in its ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ outcomes of eliminating Aboriginal peoples and privileging White access to resources.

Social Darwinism and the ‘dying race’ theory

As early as 470 BCE Greek Sophists such Protagoras and Thrasymachus argued that ‘might is right’; that no ultimate ‘truth’ or justice exists; and that the best course of action is to pursue self-interest (Osborne and Edney, 1992, p.11). These deep metaphysical orientations in Western cultural ethos underpin Spencerist-Darwinist versions of evolution, as well as Social-Darwinist theories of racial superiority. While such models have been officially discredited in anthropology, biology and psychology, it can be seen that the foundational assumptions of a (problematic) Darwinian version of evolution continue to shape the assumptions of Western primary values, particularly in relation to ‘race’ (e.g. Anderson, 2007, Anderson and Perrin, 2007, Bin-Sallik, 1992, Cowlishaw, 1988, Hiatt, 1996). From such a perspective, violence is viewed as intrinsic aspect of ‘human nature’, and the demise of Aboriginal peoples is viewed if not as ‘natural’ progress, as ‘inevitable’ historically.

The deficit discourse continues to be strongly shaped by Social Darwinism. In settler colonial Australia, both the influential ‘dying race’ theory and later assimilation policies saw Aboriginal cultural ‘loss’ and Aboriginal adoption of White culture as inevitable due to the supposed superiority of White culture and the alleged inferiority of (the) Aboriginal ‘race’. Because of supposedly innate ‘racial’ qualities, Aboriginal peoples were thought by settler colonisers to be less intelligent, trustworthy and capable than White people.

13 The Sophists taught people to “win court cases through the use of paradox and twisted argument” (Osborne and Edney, 1992, p.11). The parallel with today’s Western adversarial legal system is telling.

14 Dominant scientific teachings in Western schools teach that the universe was created by random chance, that there is no ‘purpose’ to creation or evolution, and that ‘species’ arise through ‘natural selection’, competition, and ‘survival of the fittest’ (e.g. Calleman, 2009, Rapoport, 1995).

15 While the deficit model is also applied to marginalised peoples more widely (El Ansari et al, 2002, Eckermann, 1999, p.6), it is unique in its representation of Aboriginal peoples in Australia as the least developed of all ‘races’ in supposed ‘evolutionary’ terms.
Such tacit ‘cultural violence’ arguably led to the more overt inequity, or ‘structural violence, of inferior schooling\(^{16}\) and the lack of educational opportunities available for Aboriginal people today, linked directly, in turn, to Aboriginal poverty, and further economic and social inequality. Today the deficit model continues to influence approaches and attitudes to Aboriginal education, with so-called ‘dysfunction’ being attributed as Aboriginal fault (socialisation, family patterns, cultural traditions and socio-economic situation [e.g. Eckermann, 1998, 1999, p.6, Eckermann et al, 2010, Bowers, 2010]). The culturally violent deficit discourse is also identified as a core underlying, and \textit{ongoing} source of ‘direct’ lateral violence among Aboriginal peoples today (Fforde et al, 2013) (see Chapter 1). Hence, under implicit Social Darwinism, the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples is perceived as the inevitable outcome of the superiority of Western ‘civilisation’ and the process of modernism (e.g. Macdonald, 2001, pp.193-194).

Culturally violent native title

Native title arguably is another critical arena of intrinsic ‘cultural violence’. In earlier decades structuralist and materialist understandings of culture predominated in anthropology, and although since refuted, such narrow perspectives are reappearing in native title (Macdonald, 2001, p.189). Currently, legal prejudice in native title contexts employs obsolete anthropological concepts and other hegemonic ‘common sense’ Western concepts of ‘tradition’ that privilege both functionalism and ‘the Dreaming’ as markers of cultural ‘authenticity’; ‘society-as-nation’\(^{17}\); a presumed Aboriginal ‘settled’/‘remote’ binary; the “dogma of descent”\(^{18}\); change\(^{19}\) as assimilatory ‘deficit’; and reliance on old, flawed, White anthropological accounts rather than contemporary Aboriginal lived experience and implicit knowledge (Macdonald and Bauman, 2011, pp.3, 9, 12, Macdonald, 1998b, 2009, p.64, 2013, pp.410-411). Not only do hegemonic ideas abound in native title contexts, but Correy et al (2011) argue that native title is in itself a ‘hegemonic idea’. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, native title concepts and processes often promote the ‘structural violence’ of ‘segmentation’ and ‘penetration’, which in turn impact on Aboriginal economic, political and identity needs. The ‘cultural violence’ of deficit discourse, therefore, has a complex, iterative relationship with

\(^{16}\) Aboriginal education up until the 1940s was limited to segregated and inferior schooling, if any, and focused on training Aboriginal people to provide manual labour for Whites (Eckermann, 1999, p.10).

\(^{17}\) Macdonald (2011, p.64) therefore argues for the need to distinguish between ‘social’ and ‘spatial’ identities.

\(^{18}\) See p.146.

\(^{19}\) In contrast to change as deficit, this thesis argues that deep-seated cultural principles can change \textit{form} while still maintaining similar systems of significance (Macdonald, 1998a, 2001, pp.184-185, 2005, p.100, 2013, pp.400, 406-408, Bauman, 2010a, pp.2-3).
many other culturally violent metaphors and assumptions, and also leads to manifold processes of ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence.

The deficit discourse under the NTER/SFNTB

The NTER/SFNTB represents a clear, contemporary example of the deficit discourse in action. Here ‘cultural violence’ is evident in how Aboriginal peoples are being defined as dysfunctional, dangerous and incapable of addressing their ‘own’ problems. As Chapters 1 and 2 outline, diverse forms of ‘direct’ and ‘structural’ violence are both created and exacerbated by such ‘cultural violence’. The Intervention’s heavy-handed, blanket approach can increase Aboriginal social distress and disintegration by eroding existing Aboriginal ‘social capital’. As Rutherford et al (2007b, p.766) emphasises, it is vital to recognise that “individual and collective agency exists even in the midst of devastating violence” - particularly in contexts of extreme violence - because otherwise:

levels of social trust and social capital may be so eroded that the lack of community support in itself is a major contributor to violence.

It is well known that the NTER/SFNTB has not been carried out as a joint effort between government and local Aboriginal peoples. Rather, NTER staff are outside ‘experts’ “who expressly do not live locally and often are from interstate” (Musharbash, 2010, pp.223, 218). Intervention staff are under instructions to “not engage with locals”, and thus there is a “refusal to engage at the local level with local people in local ways”\(^{20}\) (Musharbash, 2010, pp.223, 218, Lattas and Morris, 2010). Such an approach both dehumanises local Aboriginal peoples and has led to an escalation of fear\(^{21}\) and mistrust in Black-White relations since the Intervention (Musharbash, 2010, pp.213, 223). Thus, the Intervention violates the principle of “first do no harm”\(^{22}\) by failing to acknowledge and support Aboriginal worth, capacity and agency (Brown\(^{23}\) in Sweet, 2007, p.691):

\(^{20}\) Subsequent efforts to address such exclusionary processes remain inadequate (Korrf, 2015c).
\(^{21}\) The Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses point out that the Intervention is causing “fear, confusion, and uncertainty”, and a spokesman for the Australian Indigenous Doctors’ Association said that the Intervention was making many Aboriginal people “worried sick” (Sweet, 2007, p.691). These people do not argue against child protection – a problem which they state has been on the agenda for twenty years or more – but rather against the social, cultural, emotional and psychological impacts the NTER is exerting on Aboriginal peoples with its brazen “declaration of war” (Sweet, 2007, p.691).
\(^{22}\) Pynoos et al’s (1996, p.335) discussion of a UNICEF program to help traumatised children provides vivid contrast with the inept and damaging approach of the NTER/SFNTB.
\(^{23}\) Dr Ngiare Brown is a prominent Indigenous doctor.
We don’t empower people by removing their control...We don’t overcome poverty bystripping them of their land and assets. It is patent fiction to link land rights to child
protection.

While some Aboriginal people have worked towards their own aims in the NTER – within the
existing constraints, and while there has been mixed response among Aboriginal peoples to
various aspects of the NTER, it is clear that Aboriginal capacity and expertise in the very
matters the Intervention purports to address are ignored. Defining Aboriginal peoples in terms
of deficit has concrete ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ implications of thwarting Aboriginal initiatives
and increasing Aboriginal social distress and lateral violence. Contrary to mainstream
assumptions, many Aboriginal organisations have been working on these ‘crisis’ issues for
decades. Rather than passively awaiting White intervention, Aboriginal peoples have been
persistently and actively lobbying governments to restrict alcohol access and sales; promoting
Aboriginal grassroots consultation, education and social cohesion programs; and working to
prevent alcohol-related violence in their communities (D’Abbs, 2010, pp.514-519, Behrendt,
2008, pp.73-75). Aboriginal peoples have maintained such strenuous efforts in the face of
persistent opposition from the liquor industry and sometimes the NT Liquor Commission, and
with little, if any, government funding (D’Abbs, 2010, pp.516, 519, Behrendt, 2008, pp.73-74).
Even in communities where there are severe problems, many Aboriginal people have been
working for a long time to support local initiatives, despite long-term government apathy
(Dwyer, 2008). In contrast to this clear evidence of sustained Aboriginal capacity and expertise,
the NTER has presented Aboriginal communities as places where social control has completely
“collapsed”, with Aboriginal women and children helplessly awaiting the redemptive power of
the White state to ‘solve’ their problems (D’Abbs, 2010, p.516). The issue here is not simply
whether ‘consultations’ with Aboriginal peoples have taken place, or the nature of the
consultations. At heart, the antagonistic deficit-based approach of the NTER/SFNTB denies
Black capacity and agency, creating further ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence in the context of
ongoing genocide.

24 Far from being ‘solutions’, the NTER proposals for moving Aboriginal people off communities and into
town camps fails to recognise that “communities...provide a far better alternative than town camps”; that
country is important to people’s “health and stability”; and that currently Aboriginal town-dwellers
are not accessing supposed employment opportunities – issues Aboriginal peoples have known of for
decades (Mahood, 2008, p.103).
Urban/regional Aboriginal peoples and the deficit discourse

‘Cultural violence’ is particularly entrenched with regards to those Aboriginal peoples living in so-called ‘settled’ areas. Deficit notions of urban/regional Aboriginal ‘cultural loss’ have been dominant in anthropology over the last sixty years, presuming Aboriginal assimilation despite evidence to the contrary (Macdonald, 1998b, pp.167-169, 2001, pp.177-178). Such ‘cultural violence’ has led directly to the ‘structural’ violence of dispossession, exploitation and attempted assimilation, which in turn produced the ‘direct violence’ of poverty, illness, and (White and lateral) physical violence.

Anthropological research in ‘remote’ areas has been prioritised historically, due to narrow definitions of Aboriginal culture, and partly so as to avoid tensions with assimilation policies and agencies (Macdonald, 2001, pp.179-180). In particular, emphasis on Aboriginal ‘high culture’ - religious ‘beliefs’ and practices glossed as ‘the Dreaming’ – has become pivotal to defining ‘authentic’ Aboriginal society, with political, economic and social aspects either of Aboriginal cultures or of colonial pressures being largely ignored (Macdonald, 1998b, pp.170-176, 2001, pp.180-181, 2013, pp.410-411). While anthropological progress has been made since the 1980s, there remain widespread assumptions that urban/regional Aboriginal domains are primarily a “product of colonial relations”, defined by their ‘resistance’ and opposition to White ways and their ‘failure’ to assimilate properly (Macdonald, 2001, pp.179, 181). Thus, many still follow the assumptions of Reay (1949, pp.117-118), who assumes that it is “common membership in a rejected minority” that determines regional Aboriginal identity. Such deficit discourse has huge implications for Aboriginal lateral violence, as outlined in Chapter 1.

Those aspects of so-called ‘settled’ Aboriginal culture that were observed were framed in terms of loss and lack: the maintenance of kinship has been attributed to Aboriginal poverty; matriarchal Aboriginal households were seen as having arisen due to ‘broken down’ nuclear families; and areas of resonance between ‘traditional’ and Christian religion were viewed simply as ‘assimilation’ (Macdonald, 2001, p.180, Schwarz and Dussart, 2010, Austin-Broos, 2003b, 2009, Magowan 2001, 2003, 2005, Tonkinson 2004). Consequently, today regional and urban landscapes are read as the ‘disappearance’ of Aboriginal peoples, despite the fact that Aboriginal peoples still live on such lands, and despite the fact that such ‘landscapes’ were created through Aboriginal dispossession and labour (Macdonald, 1998b, p.163). Whereas previously urban/regional Aboriginal peoples were ‘invisible’ to settler colonisers due to their forced segregation, today they are ‘invisible’ because their cultural distinctiveness is denied -
even as they continue to face racism daily. ‘Cultural violence’ here, then, denies the very existence of urban/regional Aboriginal people, with profound ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ ramifications.

In contrast to such notions of Aboriginal cultural loss and lack, Beckett (e.g. 1958, 1965), Barwick (e.g. 1962, 1963) and Macdonald (2000, 2010, 2013, pp.399-401), among others, demonstrate that Aboriginal peoples in regional and urban areas are not just like poor Whites. They follow distinct cultural behaviours and prerogatives including the ‘allocative economy’ and the centrality of kinship, and do not uphold White status-based notions around employment type, house presentation and ownership, and capital accumulation. Some anthropologists also argue for recognising as equally valid Aboriginal forms of economy, ‘work’, ‘well-being’, ‘society’, ‘governance’, ‘habitus’, rather than assuming that all must (want to) conform to Western capitalist bureaucratic norms and values (Hunt and Smith, 2006, pp.68, 72-73, 77, Altman, 2009, Altman and Hinkson, 2010, and Rowse, 2010, p.173, Rose, 1986, Cowlishaw, 2003, 2013).

Nevertheless, the potency of the model of cultural ‘loss’ and discontinuity in ‘settled’ areas is entrenched in the legal and judicial system (Macdonald, 2000, p.108):

*Policy in this State [NSW] has been based throughout the twentieth century on compensation for loss rather than recognition of difference.*

By claiming that Aboriginal peoples in ‘settled’ areas have ‘lost’ their culture, settler colonisers are then able to deny Aboriginal rights to land - and even to their own identity – in an effort to legitimate settler colonial access to land and other resources (Macdonald, 2001, p.195). In so-called ‘settled’ areas the failure to recognise customary law leads to increased criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples; the denial of Aboriginal identity leads to acute collective cultural trauma; and geneticised notions of ‘Aboriginality’ exacerbate ‘born Black’ political and economic marginalisation (see Chapters 4 and 5). It is imperative that such supposed ‘fragility’ of urban/regional Aboriginal cultures be recognised for what it is: a “myth of colonial justification” (Macdonald, 1998b, p.176, 2010).

**Imposing the settler colonial ‘national pattern’ on Aboriginal peoples**

The second fundamental genocidal impulse of settler colonialism is the imposition of a settler colonial ‘national pattern’ on Aboriginal peoples. As with the desire to eliminate Aboriginal peoples as peoples, such ‘cultural violence’ takes place largely unconsciously, including
through *silences* around White deficiencies and particularity. Settler colonial Australia is generally oblivious to the fact that its taken-for-granted ‘habitus’ and understandings of law, religion, and economy (specifically) constitute only one cultural form and are not necessarily *universal* (e.g. Cowlishaw, 1999, 2013). Such deep-seated ‘cultural violence’ has manifold repercussions. Thus, for instance, settler colonisers structurally impose their own notions around industrial linear time, moral habits, housing, and privacy on Aboriginal peoples, undermining Aboriginal forms of flexible interaction, communication, accountability, kinship links and sociality (Cowlishaw, e.g. 1999, Macdonald, e.g. 2013).

In particular, entrenched settler colonial concepts around ‘self’ and ‘society’ - and how they relate - play a critical role. Despite recent transformation in understandings of ‘the self’ as not atomistic or individual (Quinn, 2006, pp.363-364, Quinn and Strauss, 2006, pp.269-271)\(^{25}\), the notion of *homo clausus*\(^{26}\) (Elias, 1994, pp.471-472) underpins colonial thought. Deep-rooted European legal doctrines of ‘natural rights’ and ‘natural law’ continue to view the ‘individual’ as isolated from, and antecedent to, ‘the family’, ‘the state’ or ‘society’ (e.g. Kumar, 2011, p.1563, Rapoport, 1995). Under ‘natural law’ ‘individuals’ are in aggressive competition with each other, and in order to obtain “peace, security, governance, and civic organisation”, ‘individuals’ “delegate their sovereign right to exist freely, independent of law or custom, to the state” (Kumar, 2011, p.1563). ‘Rights’, in this context, are essentially “legal constructs that limit state action” (Clinton in Kumar, 2011, p.1563). Merlan (2009, unnumbered) questions such a notion of ‘rights’ as “pitting the individual against forms of collectivity”; as “boundaries against intrusions, rather than as the means of preserving or fostering kinds of connections”; as non-coercive, ahistorical and asocial; and as the only solution. Similarly, Black (2010, p.142) notes that the Western concept of ‘justice’ is aligned with human rights, and that it “fail(s) to examine just why we need justice if there is a just system”. Such notions of ‘rights’ attack complex Aboriginal collective forms of sociality.

Under late liberalism there has in fact been an accelerating focus on the ‘individual’ via the privatisation of property; the loosening of “sociomaterial ties”; the rejection of government ‘interference’ in the “right of property” in the name of ‘liberty’; and ‘religion’ seen as a matter of “private practice” and as irrelevant in ‘economic’ relations (Merlan, 2006, pp.100-101).

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\(^{25}\) See also, for instance, Mitchell (in Frank, 2006, p.297) for ‘self’ as multiplex, creative and interactive; Jessop (1996, pp.124-126) for dialectically relativising notions of ‘structure’ and ‘agency’; and Spiro (1993) for a concise review of definitions of ‘the self’ across many disciplines.

\(^{26}\) Elias (1994, pp.471-472) illustrates that in (Western) “society at large and the human sciences” a pre-conceived image of “*homo clausus* (little world in himself independent of the ‘outside’ world)” persists which ignores the influence of interdependence and long-term social processes.
Since the late 1980s, there has also been an increasing association between corporate capitalism and competitive individualism (Wright in Kumar, 2011, p.1564). In such a context, (Aboriginal) cooperative and collective forms of identity and economy are seen as both ‘unrealistic’ and dangerous (Wright in Kumar, 2011, p.1564). Thus, it still remains the case today that enshrined in settler colonial law and economy is a ‘naturalised’ notion of the self as characterised by “a radical individualism that strips off all ‘communal responsibilities’” (Kumar, 2011, p.1564). The ‘cultural violence’ of axiomatic individualism and ‘society-as-nation’ (Macdonald, 2010, p.64) undercuts Aboriginal conceptions and practices of ‘personhood’ that centralise connections with ‘family’ and work to uphold ‘relative autonomy’ (e.g. Macdonald, 2000, 2003, 2013) (see Chapters 4 and 5 for further discussion). Such ‘cultural violence’ has manifold legal, economic, political and social ‘structural’ implications, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Settler colonisers impose “sedentarist metaphysics” (Cresswell, 2009, p.8). Western ‘sedentarist metaphysics’ remains strongly shaped by seeing the world in terms of “deeply rooted, fixed places with clear boundaries and stable associated identities” (Cresswell, 2009, p.8). From the perspective of ‘sedentarist metaphysics’, those who - by choice or by force – lead “mobile lives” are viewed as “a threat to place and the moral values associated with it” (Cresswell, 2009, p.8). The ‘sedentarist metaphysics’ of trying to delimit, ‘fix’ and ‘order’ Aboriginal relationships to place is evident in Western constructions and regulations of Aboriginal land rights and native title, which pressure Aboriginal peoples to adopt exclusionary, bounded approaches to identity and connectedness to land (e.g. Bauman, 2001, 2002, 2009, 2010a,b, Bauman and Williams, 2004c, Macdonald and Bauman, 2011).

Settler colonisers impose their own cultural prerogatives on Aboriginal peoples in terms of the very materiality of the places they create. Gieryn (2000) and Macdonald (e.g. 1998b) illustrate how places ‘emplace’ difference, hierarchy, domination and control. For instance, colonial housing aims to demonstrate ‘control’ and ‘ownership’; Western monuments “assert with ‘superior’ engineering or decor that indigenes simply lacked the civilization to do the same for themselves” and “Capitalist industrial strategies are unavoidably territorial strategies, as geographic patterns in production and consumption create places of growth and decline” (Gieryn, 2000, pp.476, 469). Such places facilitate or inhibit collective action and interaction. In the case of the generic construction of settler colonial housing, for example, occupation by a Western, nuclear family is presumed. Such housing styles have historically excluded Aboriginal forms of ‘family’ where large central areas for common gathering are required, together with
more ‘private’ areas, as well as the need to cater for frequent and varied visitors (see Chapter 4). Recent efforts have been made to design Aboriginal houses in more culturally sympathetic ways (Memmott, 2007). However, few of these policies have been implemented.

Settler colonial places reflect moral judgements and stances (Cowlishaw, 2003). The experience and expression of specific forms of attachment, identity, memory and loss are fostered or hindered by culturally regulated and determined places. Settler colonisers create their own “mnemonic places...specifically designed and constructed to evoke memories, trigger identities, and embody histories” (Gieryn, 2000, p.481). Such “Place attachment facilitates a sense of security and well-being, defines group boundaries, and stabilizes memories against the passage of time” (Gieryn, 2000, p.481). However, Aboriginal peoples are typically excluded both from such histories and from settler colonial mnemonic places, in a settler colonial effort to buttress their own precarious identity (Macdonald, 1998b, pp.166, 170). Settler colonial places, then, in themselves constitute ‘cultural violence’. They “embody(ing) in visible and tangible ways the [implicit] cultural meanings variously ascribed to them”, enabling their perpetuation or resistance (Gieryn, 2000, p.474).

Thus, distinct Aboriginal moral priorities; everyday habits and language; forms of governance, law, social order; ecological stewardship; education; subjectivities; ways of seeing; and economies are invisible to or undermined by the Australian nation state (Grieves, 2008, p.296, Cowlishaw, 1999, p.16, 2003, pp.108, 121, Dodson, 2003, pp.36-37, Black, 2010, Merlan, 2006, p.86). All of these can be understood as implicit ‘cultural violence’. As Sullivan (1986, p.17) observes:

Few Whites are prepared to concede the concept of Aboriginal culture as an autonomous system of power, responsibilities, and rights that structure people’s relations with one another and which is expressed through relationship to land.

Similarly, Black (2010, pp.172-173) points out that for settler colonisers:

the mention of legal pluralism is an unthinkable thought – if not an act of terrorism – for it terrorizes the judiciary to think that their law may be wanting, that it is beyond what they determine as its weaknesses. There is no room for a witnessing of its weaknesses, only a self-satisfied knowing that it is not perfect. The judiciary of this law thinks itself gracious in its willingness to consider customary law, generously allowing the natives to have their customs and practices as long as these fit within its idea of the law.
In resistance to ‘cultural violence’, many Aboriginal peoples assert the legitimacy and existence of distinct lifeworlds. They emphasise that Aboriginal knowledges “spring from an entirely different social and cultural base; they are not just...variations on a theme within western epistemologies and pedagogies” (Grieves, 2008, p.291). Dodson (2003) expresses the need for Aboriginal peoples to come together to create their own definitions and act for themselves. Grieves (2008, pp.294-295) identifies the need for “Indigenous philosophies” in research and education in order to address Western epistemic violence. Black (2010) speaks of the need to place Indigenous jurisprudence27 on an equal footing with Western jurisprudence, and to promote dialogue between them. In this way, therefore, in the context of ongoing epistemic ‘cultural violence’, Aboriginal subjectivity in itself is a “site of resistance”, and “self-presentation” by Aboriginal people is a “political act” (Dodson in Moreton-Robinson, 2000, p.30).

Black people, then, are reclaiming their own symbols, cultural practices, languages and intellectual landscapes in the face of the ‘cultural violence’ of White stereotypes, identity policing, and silencing. It is critical, therefore, to distinguish between Aboriginal ‘difference’ as defined by settler colonial society – in terms of loss, lack, deficit - and Aboriginal Aboriginalities – that is, diverse lifeworlds as articulated, enacted and negotiated by Aboriginal peoples themselves28. In this way, recognising Aboriginal peoples’ prerogative to ‘speak for themselves’ is a powerful way to combat settler colonial epistemic ‘cultural violence’.

Prior to the NTER/SFNTB, some public consensus appeared to have been reached around the need for locally-developed and locally specific ways to pursue Aboriginal needs and interests (e.g. McGinty, 2002, Reconciliation Australia, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, Hunt and Smith, 2006)29. In practice, however, governmental approaches to ‘building Aboriginal capacity’ in Australia often maintained paternalistic and controlling attitudes, failing to see the need for governmental capacity building (Reconciliation Australia, 2007b, pp.14-15, Hunt and Smith, 2006, pp.75-76, McGinty, 2002, Glanville, 2003a, 2003b, Tedmanson, 2005, Howitt and Suchet-

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27 Dodson (in Chandler, 2007, unnumbered) also promotes Aboriginal legal principles by explaining the fact that in Aboriginal law “nothing is inexplicable, no injury can happen to a person without fault”, and this can help address Western legal limitations of creating “blame, mitigation or excuse”, while other aspects of Aboriginal law, such as the death penalty for serious transgressions, could be discarded.

28 The focus here is on what Black people bring to the intersubjective field that is ‘Aboriginality’ (Langton, 1993, p.31).

Pearson, 2004). As Chapters 1 and 2 reveal, under the NTER/SFNTB there has been retrogression away even from lip service around recognising local capacity, to viewing Aboriginal peoples as irresponsible, dangerous and the cause of their own problems.

For settler colonisers, what is at stake when Aboriginal peoples enact and defend their lifeworlds are the very foundations of settler colonialism – notions of ‘self’ and ‘society’ engrained in all aspects of settler colonial Australia. Therefore, it is Aboriginal imperatives around reciprocal, collective, individuated but not individualised, non-hierarchical cultural forms that are implicitly at stake in the face of settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ of imposing their own ‘national pattern’ on Aboriginal peoples.

The potency of silence

The kinds of ‘ontological genocide’ I describe here, however, are not self-evident. They largely take place silently, without comment or recognition, below the surface of the observable, the evident, or the ‘eventful’, for dominant society (Povinelli, 2011, Black, 2010, p.107). A peculiar and foundational characteristic of liberalism, according to Laski (in Merlan 2006, p.101), is that it is bound by “a special logic unaware of its inherent limitations”. For this reason, much of the “cumulative and interactive” aspects of ‘cultural violence’ inherent in late capitalism remain largely invisible to settler colonisers; and liberal efforts to address Aboriginal disadvantage fail to see how liberal political and economic systems themselves create Aboriginal marginalisation (Merlan, 2006, p.101, Pearson, 2009, p.44). ‘Governmental technologies’ such as land claims occur within a system that tenaciously promotes property relations favouring the already wealthy, and according to liberal definitions of ‘indigeneity’ that exclude the majority of Aboriginal peoples (Merlan, 2006, p.99, 101, Macdonald, 1998b, p.165).

Even within its own terms of accountability, late liberalism fails to address or acknowledge its limitations (e.g. Lea, 2012, Robertson, 2000). Lea (2012) reveals ongoing, widespread and routine corruption and ineptitude amongst ‘State’ representatives supposedly supporting Aboriginal peoples, including in their official statistical ‘evaluation’ reports, and in cutting or usurpation of funding to Aboriginal organisations and services in order to profit White industries, governments, organisations and individuals. Pearson (2009, pp.27, 30-31) points out that there is public silence around the fact that “most policy fails”30 with policy makers not

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30 Policy failure is also due to ignorance and uncertainty. Thomas (1993, p.143) points out that many sexual violence counsellors “do not know anything about Aboriginal people”; and that there is White uncertainty around their role when they learn of violence in Aboriginal communities: “they will not do anything because they see it as a black problem or they do not want to step on Aboriginal toes”.
looking at the history of previous similar attempts nor addressing issues of implementation. Similarly, regarding ‘direct violence’ in Aboriginal communities, Anderson (2002, p.409) shows that:

*Despite their often-stated intentions, policy makers in Aboriginal affairs have not built an effective inter-sectoral framework for developing strategy for issues such as this*

Although bi-partisan, the NTER/SFNTB does not provide such a holistic, thoughtful inter-sectoral framework. It is the very silence around settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ that gives it such devastating potency: oppression is more powerful when it is hidden (Foucault, 1978, Herman, 1997, Rose, 1986, Macdonald, 2013, Bowers, 2010).

Currently the normalisation of White dominance in all aspects of settler colonial social practices and structures is merging with the discourse on ‘postracialism’ to create yet more “invisible systems of deep colonising” (McAllan, 2011, pp.2, 18, Kessaris in Bennett, 2014, Bowers, 2010). Due to ongoing blindness around its own ‘cultural’, ‘structural’, and ‘direct’ violence, settler colonial society views contemporary Australia as ‘post racial’, with ‘equality as achieved’ between distinct cultural groups (Hastie and Rimmington, 2014). Because the unremitting, and in fact, *increasing* violence against Aboriginal peoples passes unnoticed, there is a growing movement within settler colonialism to oppose Aboriginal reparative policies due to spurious arguments around meritocracy, favouritism and White disadvantage (Hastie and Rimmington, 2014). That is, supposedly anti-discriminatory liberal principles of ‘equality’, ‘justice’ and ‘fairness’ are being used to intensify prejudice and discrimination against Aboriginal peoples (Hastie and Rimmington, 2014). It is the culturally violent discourse of ‘postracialism’ - ‘colour-blindness’, multicultural ‘inclusiveness’, and individual meritocracy – that allows the ongoing hegemony of Whiteness in Australia, and continuing deep colonising, to go unnoticed (McAllan, 2011, pp.1,3). Far from seeing the excruciating enormity of White privilege, settler colonisers claim the opposite: that *Aboriginal peoples* are a ‘privileged minority’ (Augoustinos and Every, 2007).

What is agonising and crazy-making is the so-called ‘logic’ of ‘cultural violence’. Western thought defines war as ‘peace’, hatred as ‘religion’, colonialism as ‘advancing life’, White paternalism and control as Aboriginal ‘self-determination’, the destruction of Aboriginal families as ‘rescuing children’, and so on.\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\) Such duplicitous or hypocritical ‘forked tongue’ settler colonial power-knowledge relations “secure liberal advantage even if nobody is orchestrating them” and are most effective when ostensibly addressing humanitarian concerns (Brigg, 2014, unnumbered).
Since Australian society remains largely blind to its own systemic failings, it possesses comparatively little knowledge about the \textquotedblleft causal relationships between poverty, inequity and violence\textquotedblright{} (Rutherford et al, 2007b, p.768). Australia as a whole does not even notice its \textquoteleft structural\textquoteright{} – let alone \textquoteleft cultural\textquoteright{} - violence, and how these in turn create \textquoteleft direct violence\textquoteright{}, still less does it consider how to address these \textquoteleft super-types\textquoteright{} of violence. Instead, (Rutherford et al 2007b, p.767):

\textit{The problem of [\textquoteleft direct\textquoteright{}] violence is conceptualised as one of \textquoteleft moral failure\textquoteright{}, where free agents have chosen to behave immorally.}

Hence, the \textquoteleft cultural violence\textquoteright{} of silence around White deficiencies, particularity and dominance in turn creates further manifold violence, as Australian law continues today to impose additional punitive \textquoteleft structural\textquoteright{} and \textquoteleft direct\textquoteright{} violence on Aboriginal peoples enacting or defending their lifeworlds. The very invisibility around settler colonial \textquoteleft cultural violence\textquoteright{}, then, acts as a formidable “discursive constraint”, magnifying and compounding its influence (Rose, 1986, pp.24, 26).

\textbf{Conclusion}

It is evident that settler colonial \textquoteleft cultural violence\textquoteright{} is a hidden, \textquoteleft super-type\textquoteright{} of violence. The \textquoteleft cultural violence\textquoteright{} that lies at the heart of settler colonial genocide has two fundamental compulsions: the elimination of Aboriginal peoples\textquoteright{} own \textquoteleft national patterns\textquoteright{}; and the imposition of the settler colonial \textquoteleft national pattern\textquoteright{} on Aboriginal peoples. The \textquoteleft logic of elimination\textquoteright{} embedded in settler colonial concepts around, and relations towards, Aboriginal peoples most particularly targets the \textit{collective} identity of Aboriginal peoples in order to legitimise and prioritise White usurpation of land, authority, identity and other resources. Settler colonial control and enforcement of their own definitions of \textquoteleft Aboriginality\textquoteright{}, primarily framed in terms of \textquoteleft deficit\textquoteright{}, is a particularly pronounced form of the \textquoteleft logic of elimination\textquoteright{} and is most intensely enacted against those Aboriginal peoples whose lands Whites \textit{most} desire – those living in so-called \textquoteleft settled areas\textquoteright{}. As with the \textquoteleft logic of elimination\textquoteright{}, the imposition of the settler colonial \textquoteleft national pattern\textquoteright{} on Aboriginal peoples takes place unconsciously, arising from the very \textit{constitutive rules} of colonial society. Such \textquoteleft cultural violence\textquoteright{} arises from deep-seated Eurocentric concepts and practices, including notions around \textquoteleft self\textquoteright{} and \textquoteleft society\textquoteright{}, and how these relate to each other. The epistemic warfare of \textquoteleft cultural violence\textquoteright{} enacted historically \textit{and} today gains much of its potency through its invisibility, and in what it \textit{silences}. Silence around White particularity, flaws, and dominance, together with silence around Black capacity,
epistemologies, and resilience both reinforce and compound White privilege and control. Such silence also leads to new forms of ‘cultural’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence’. ‘Cultural violence’, therefore, is an ‘uber’ form of violence that feeds the ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ ‘super-types’ of violence. A central concern of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here, therefore, is to articulate and investigate settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples and its complex, iterative relationships with ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence. Since settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ is so deep-rooted, implicit and complex, and works in such an unrelenting, accelerating and cancerous fashion, such a task is clearly both enormously challenging and an ongoing process.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide much-needed ethnographic detail on the needs and priorities of Gamilaroi French ‘family’ as articulated, enacted and defended by them, as potential resources for fostering both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.
Chapter 4: ‘Family’ for Gamilaroi French peacebuilding

‘Home’ is ‘family’, not a building, where you feel comfortable and safe in the environment, with people. Home is like justice, how justice should be.

Freeda Archibald, Wauchope, July 2011

Much of this thesis has so far focused on the ‘negative peace’ aspect of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’; uncovering myriad chronic, pervasive, cumulative forms of settler colonial genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Australia, in their ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ configurations.

The following two chapters now elucidate the ‘positive peace’ aspect of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. That is, as flagged in the Introduction, ‘peace’ is not defined in this thesis as simply silence, stillness, absence of war. ‘Peace’ is not pacification and enforced conformity with violent settler colonial ontologies, practices and institutions. Rather, ‘peace’ is defined as both the stopping of violence (‘negative peace’) and the fulfilment of the fundamental needs of survival, well-being, identity, freedom and ‘ecological balance’, for all peoples (‘positive peace’). However, while this thesis presents a model of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ shaped by certain fundamental principles, it does not presume at the outset what these needs (‘peace’) and processes (‘peacebuilding’) may look like for Kamilaroi French ‘family’. Chapters 4 and 5 thus focus on how and what my research elicited as ‘peace’ and ‘peacebuilding’ processes and institutions for Gamilaroi French, as per Lederach’s (e.g. 1997) elicitive, integrated peacebuilding approach, by identifying critical intellectual, implaced, socialised Kamilaroi French cultural principles that comprise potential crucial resources for modelling ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

Simply asking Gamilaroi French ‘family’ directly “What does peace mean to you?” is unlikely to be successful. Such direct, abstract questioning jars with Aboriginal cultural forms and processes where knowledge must be earned, and must be taught in concrete, embodied ways (e.g. von Sturmer, 1981, Sansom, 2001, Eades, 1985, 1991, Macdonald, 2011, p.74, Myers, 1986). Also, as discussed in Chapter 6, for all people, but particularly for Aboriginal peoples in Australia, dominant language and reified, abstract conceptualisation can constrain knowing, and can potentially misconstrue and overlook that which is implicitly understood and lived.
Thus, I approach this radically difficult task by tracing a Kamilaroi French “conceptual complex”\(^1\) – what I call ‘Gamilaroi French peace’ - drawn from in-depth ethnographic observation and analysis of what matters for them as they have taught, articulated and shown me through research. Such an exercise is impossible without participating in reciprocal, respectful relationship with Kamilaroi French ‘family’. I have needed to prove my trustworthiness and commitment over the long term; recognise and follow Aboriginal protocols around indirectness, disclaiming and ‘witnessing’; understand and respect ‘Aboriginal English’\(^2\) and be particularly wary of ‘pseudo-intelligibility’\(^3\); appreciate messages portrayed through everyday, performative action in lived context; and value the importance of stories as a critical mode of Kamilaroi French expression and pedagogy (Durney, 1999). Particularly vital and complex has been the challenge to also try to uphold Gamilaroi French imperative of not speaking for others throughout this research process.

According to the requirements of Indigenous Methodologies (IM) and Participatory Action Research (PAR), in eliciting ‘Gamilaroi French peace’ I have also needed to constantly work at reflexively uncovering my own assumptions and expectations, as well as the hidden power imbalances in my interactions, relationships, and ways of writing, speaking and interviewing throughout this research (Durney, 1999). For instance, rather than marginalising Kamilaroi French language in transcripts by editing it into ‘proper’ English, this thesis recognises Aboriginal English as a legitimate and complete language in itself (Harkins, 1994, Shnukal, 1988, Eades, 1985, 1991, 2000, 2004). Interviews are transcribed as phonetically as possible, preserving participants’ own forms of grammar and indicating tonal emphasis with italics (see Durney, 1999, pp.50-65).

Finally, in elucidating ‘Gamilaroi French peace’ I have needed to be open to ‘listening’ to the anger and pain of trauma. Rather than judging, advising, appropriating, or presuming superior knowledge my aim has been to testify to Kamilaroi French experiences of both trauma and resilience, by allowing my understanding to ‘resonate’ with theirs (Lifton, 1995, p.145):

\[\text{you must in some significant psychological way experience what they experience. You can never quite do that...you’re not exposed to what they were exposed to, but you}\]

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\(^1\) See Kalisch (2011).
\(^3\) Where superficial structural similarity between Aboriginal English and Anglo-Australian English can disguise semantic differences (Durney, 1999, p.52).
must take your mind through, take your feelings through what they went through, and allow that in.

In sum, since ‘peace’ is defined in this thesis as the fulfilment of fundamental ‘human’ needs, how social well-being, cohesion, functioning, sustainability - at the personal-family and broader social levels – is articulated and lived as normative social practice by Gamilaroi French is the primary focus of the following two chapters. The deeper, affective, relational aspects of Kamilaroi French culture - ways of thinking, behaving, valuing, commonly demonstrated attitudes, expectations, and standards, including expressions of what is ‘missing’, what people are angry or anxious about – are drawn upon to elicit core Gamilaroi French values and structures. Extracts from open-ended interviews with Kamilaroi French family members are analysed, not as quantitative, representative ‘samples’, but to provide political and literal space for, and in-depth qualitative insights into, seminal Gamilaroi French outlooks and cultural processes. Phenomenological anthropological participant observations were also undertaken and analysed to identify ritualised, repetitive, rule-bound, formal, and normative forms of sociality that are enacted, performed and linguistically signified in nuanced, complex ways.

The aim of the following two chapters, then, is to honour both the existence of Kamilaroi French agency, epistemologies and resilience, and to highlight the capacity they bring to the potential for modelling ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

**Reclaiming what matters: Gamilaroi French “principles” and “rules”**

Through actions as well as direct references, Kamilaroi French repeatedly emphasise particular forms of behaviour, relationship, attitude which really matter in material terms to them for maintaining Aboriginal culture now and in the future. In conversation, they refer to these conditions, relationships, processes as “rules”, “standards”, “discipline”, “morals”, “principles”, “respect”. Such lived qualities are not overtly articulated as belonging to ‘peacebuilding’ as such, but rather are seen as fundamental Aboriginal cultural attitudes, outlooks, and ways of doing and being. Elucidating structural and conceptual possibilities for ‘Aboriginal peace’, then, relates to processes of both identifying and upholding such Gamilaroi ‘principles’, ‘rules’, ‘morals’. These are as yet, as this thesis argues, resources of ‘hidden’ (Hiroshi, 2007) ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. But what are these major ‘principles’ and ‘rules’? How is ‘respect’ enacted? From observations of everyday, repeated and emphasised Kamilaroi French actions and attitudes, as well as from many conversations and qualitative in-depth interviews, the two
most important Gamilaroi French ‘principles’ elucidated in this research are maintaining ‘family’, and what I call ‘relative autonomy’. Writing about what is most targeted, and what is also most fiercely protected and ‘private’ for Kamilaroi French, is a fraught exercise in the contemporary context of White surveillance and genocide. The intention of this chapter, then, is not simply to provide primary anthropological data for non-Aboriginal people (e.g. Tuhiiwai Smith, 2012, Churchill, 2011), but rather, to acknowledge aspects of Kamilaroi French life which are hugely important, invisible, and under attack. The following two chapters, then, define ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’; outline how these are targeted by genocide; and explore the implications of ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ for modelling Gamilaroi French ‘peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’.

‘Family’: modelling ‘Gamilaroi French peacebuilding’

For Kamilaroi French, ‘family’ is the elemental form and marker of sociality, identity, culture. The need to uphold ‘family’, both in its concrete sociality and in the quality and style of relationships it embodies, is thus a key component for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here. The following sections explore ‘family’ as implaced relationships; present direct phenomenological evidence for the importance of family in everyday Kamilaroi French life; and analyse explicit discussion on the importance of ‘family’ by Gamilaroi French.

‘Family’ as implaced relationships

The pivotal importance of ‘family’ for Kamilaroi French is evident in a wide range of ritualised, rule-bound and taken-for-granted everyday forms of Gamilaroi French sociality. It is ‘family’ as lived relationships - rather than as abstract concept - that matters to Kamilaroi French.

The vital importance of this principle is evident firstly in the fact that ‘family’ relationships are maintained no matter how far away members live. Distance, then, does not deter ‘duty’. Contrary to implicit native title assumptions of how Aboriginal people live – or should live – in one localised community (Merlan, 1996, Sullivan, 1997), Kamilaroi French ‘family’ is not restricted by location. Gamilaroi French do not live in ‘one’ ‘country’ alone, linked only to specific totemic affiliative sites. Due to the ‘direct violence’ of displacement, dispersal, and extreme racism; the ‘structural violence’ of economic pressures; and the expanding nature of contemporary kin networks, Kamilaroi French ‘family’ members now live in many distinct communities, often separated by hundreds of kilometres, including interstate. Gamilaroi French ‘family’ live in places as distant or proximate to each other as Walhallow, Moree, Kempsey, Muswellbrook, Port Macquarie, Wauchope, Karuah, Raymond Terrace, Tweed
Heads, Boggabilla, St George, QLD, Dubbo, Naromine, Murray Bridge, SA, Bourke, and Blacktown. ‘Family’ can also include the spouse’s ‘family’, who in one case live in Armidale, Teralba and Newcastle, among other areas. Further, ‘family’ members are often very mobile, moving in and out of different areas at any one time.

Gamilaroi French ‘family’, then, cannot be classed as either ‘urban’ or ‘regional’. Rather than Yamanouchi’s (2012) assumption that kin relationships become progressively less relevant as one moves from ‘remote’ to ‘urban’ areas, among Kamilaroi French, members are ‘family’ regardless of where they live. Dion⁴ and his children and grandchildren live mostly in Sydney, for instance, whereas his sisters and their children and grandchildren live in regional areas. All siblings are equally considered ‘family’, and those living in the city do not value ‘family’ less than those living in regional areas. Indeed, Dion and his children and grandchildren often spend considerable periods of time (months) living with ‘family’ in regional areas, and otherwise maintain connection through frequent visits.

Having said this, there are certain areas where more ‘family’ are living, and where there is a longer history of what Sarah⁵ calls “people connecting Country” (see below). Also, people often move to be closer to each other. It is particularly important to note that feeling ‘at home’ and ‘in place’ differs greatly depending on the proximity and denseness of ‘family’ conglomerations. On several occasions over the years Freeda described how she feels very different in Muswellbrook compared to how she feels in Moree. Many Kamilaroi French live in Moree, her people have a long connection with that area, her grandparents and older ancestors were ‘native’ to that region⁶. Uncle Errol and Aunty Chrissy, Freeda’s parents, moved to Muswellbrook, however, in order to escape the extreme racism in Moree and to look for work. Several other ‘family’ members now live in Muswellbrook, but when her parents first moved there, they were the only members of their respective ‘families’ to live there. When she is in Muswellbrook Freeda says she feels more “on the defence”, she is “louder”, she has to “fight” more. However, when she is in Moree – surrounded by many more members of her ‘family’ - she feels “quieter”, she is able to “listen” rather than “speak”, she does not feel that she has to fight so hard to defend herself because she has support and “protection”. Thus, although ‘family’ live in very diverse areas, often many hundreds of kilometres apart, there are

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⁴ Pseudonym.
⁵ Pseudonym chosen by her.
⁶ In mainstream native title understanding, the Moree region would constitute primary Kamilaroi ‘traditional country’, however, Gamilaroi French also express deep connection to other areas also.
some areas where more ‘family’ reside, and where there is a longer history of ‘connection’ and security.

For Gamilaroi French, then, ‘place’ is intimately connected with dynamic experiences of being with ‘family’. ‘Country’ or ‘home’ is not a geo-physical or naturally occurring place of primary residing. It is a ‘place’ of practice and of relationships made through activity – life lived ‘in place’. Such a social-geographical reality reflects Myer’s (1986, pp.55-56, 92-93) observation of how it is social relations among waltyja (family) that make a ngurra (camp and country); ngurra is the physical embodiment - the implanation (Casey, 1997) - of sociality, relatedness, ‘family’, and “country represents the projection into space of (one’s) social relations with kin”. ‘Place’ or ‘home’ is thus made by material, physical associations and networked ‘paths’ of lived engagement. Both the experience of ‘place’ and the regular journeying from place to place, revolve around lived ‘family’ relationships for Kamilaroi French. It is the relationships that make ‘space’ a home, familiar, known, secure – a ‘place’ one knows and where one is also known.

‘Family’ as the core focus of everyday sociality

The central importance of ‘family’ for Kamilaroi French is amply illustrated by a myriad of attitudes, actions, relationships and practical arrangements, around which daily life revolves. The following sections focus on five core areas of everyday sociality that demonstrate the central importance of ‘family’ for Gamilaroi French: sharing time; sharing space; travelling together; bingo; and telephoning.

Sharing time

‘Family’ is the major focus of daily life for Kamilaroi French. The majority of time is spent together with ‘family’ on a day-to-day basis. Over the years that I have spent with Gamilaroi French ‘family’, I have never known anyone to stay completely on their own in their ‘own’ house even for one day. People visit each other daily, often several times a day, coming and going between houses, depending on what they are doing that day and on which house is bigger. For instance, if shopping or going to appointments at Port Macquarie they will spend time at Sarah’s house which is in town. For larger gatherings, the biggest house is used, not the one that ‘belongs’7 to the most senior person. Apart from everyday sociality, family also

7 Referring to these houses as if they ‘belong’ to certain individuals alone – or even smaller groups of individuals - is problematic because that is not the way the spaces are used or perceived. This is not
frequently get together for special occasions such as birthdays, or having a picnic or BBQ at the river, beach or dam. These are lengthy, relaxed occasions, with people coming and going when they please, and bringing food to share for all. At one such BBQ my husband bought individual chip packets and drinks for each of our children, and I hadn’t noticed before how we do this without thinking until I realised that all Kamilaroi French bought large packets of chips and bottles of drink for all to share – I never saw ‘individual’ portion types of food being bought or shared. Thus, ‘family’ is a collective unit of practice, not a sum of parts. Geographic distance does not define or exclude ‘family’. Nor do the individuated houses imposed by settler colonialism - and deliberately separated according to ‘salt and pepper’ policies. The Gamilaroi French ‘family’ live communally today, distributing themselves across these houses.

**Sharing space**

Within houses Kamilaroi French ‘family’ also share space as an everyday practice. While being together at a certain house, most of the time people congregate in a common area, talking over cups of tea or watching television. Television is most definitely secondary to the main ‘business’ of being with ‘family’: rather than being the central focus, television is a background accompaniment to conversation; no-one asks others to be quiet so they can watch a program, for instance.

It is very rare that someone is ‘alone’ while at home. Unless someone is not well or is sleeping, people do not spend long amounts of time in their ‘own’ room with the door closed, not interacting with other family members. Even sleep is often time shared, since the common practice of *blowin’ through* (see below) means that certain ‘family’ members often have to share the same room and bed to make room for visitors. In contrast, in most White middle class homes, particularly those with teenagers, children often have their ‘own’ room, spending much time separated from the rest of the family, with the door closed. It would be unusual for a White teenage daughter to share a bed with her mother to make room for guests, whereas such a practice is customary for Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

However, despite most time being spent together in shared space, amongst Gamilaroi French, ‘privacy’ is still available in the sense that bedroom doors are kept closed (whether or not someone is in there). At the beginning, as an undergraduate living at Freeda’s place in Muswellbrook, whenever I left ‘my’ room, I would leave the door open, as is my practice at simply due to the fact that almost all these premises are social housing rental properties; similar behaviour was also displayed with the only ‘privately owned’ dwelling.

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8 See Chapter 2.
home. I would come back and find that Freeda had closed the door. This happened repeatedly, until I learnt to keep the door of my bedroom closed. It would seem that similarly to Kamilaroi French circumspection around disclosing or discussing ‘inner worlds’ (see Chapter 6), so, too, ‘family’ members have private places within shared spaces which are their ‘own’ domain, which are not publicly available to all ‘family’.

A very different form of ‘privacy’ is upheld. In all of Gamilaroi French homes I visited in all the different towns, people keep windows covered – even if it is daytime, and even if there is a stunning view (such as by the river in Karuah) – and not just for bedrooms and bathrooms, but also for lounge rooms, kitchens, etc. As indicated by frequent comments by Kamilaroi French about insulting and invasive White microsurveillance, including by (often hostile) White neighbours, curtains are kept closed as a means of creating a ‘safe space’ for ‘family’ away from prying White eyes. Such a practice sets a clear boundary between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. Only ‘insiders’ come inside the house, or see inside the house. Inside of peoples’ homes is one area where settler colonisers are least able to control and intervene in Aboriginal peoples’ lives. Coming uninvited into a person’s private residence is viewed as a crime in settler colonial society. Although settler colonisers have perpetrated such crimes against Aboriginal peoples, nevertheless in the current genocidal context, the ‘safest’ area for Gamilaroi French ‘family’ is still within their own homes, out of sight of White people. Through the practice of covering windows, Kamilaroi French protect the intimate politics of ‘family’.

Thus, the practice of sharing space within homes – away from White interference - is a central mechanism for maintaining and protecting ‘family’ for Gamilaroi French.

**Travelling together**

Time is also spent together day to day in travelling from one place to another, usually by car or by foot. In Kamilaroi French world, as a general practice people travel together. Typically it is only when White requirements of work dictate, that an Aboriginal person will travel alone. For instance, Keeden is required to get up very early and drive alone for an hour to his apprenticeship job; and Brigette and Joe often frequently travel across the state alone, because their jobs require extensive travelling, and government funding has not been provided for Aboriginal co-workers.

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9 And perhaps also from other local non-‘family’ members.
10 Any police who ‘visit’ are usually kept at the door – although in one case, one ‘family’ in Muswellbrook proudly told me that they ensured that the police did not even pass the front gate since they did not have a search warrant and were harassing that ‘family’ for no reason.
In Moree, Gamilaroi French – whether men or women - do not walk from one place to another alone – even if it is only a few minutes’ walk away. People walk in groups of two or more. I noticed that this is a general practice and a few times I noticed that this is expressly referred to in conversations – that it is important to walk together in groups for safety reasons. It also appears to be an essential factor of sociality – why would anyone want to walk by themselves? One who is alone is to be pitied, and is also suspect. For Kamilaroi French it is not ‘natural’, healthy, trustworthy or safe to be alone.

Bingo

Gamilaroi French ‘family’ routinely share daily activities, such as eating, shopping, going to the club, or to bingo. I have been surprised to find that bingo is a very popular activity among young and old, Black and White in Muswellbrook, Wauchope and Port Macquarie, the places where we played it. Kamilaroi French ‘family’ have been playing bingo for generations. Aunty Chrissy remembers all the adults playing cards and bingo on Moree mission, despite this being forbidden by police and by the ‘mission manager’. Someone would keep a lookout and call out when they saw the police, and all players would then disperse, only to drift back to playing again when the police had left. Aunty Chrissy remembers the police’s deep enjoyment in scattering everyone. Reay and Sitlington (1948, p.186), Reay (1949, p.95), and Macdonald (2000, p.105) also refer to bingo and gambling as a vital form of economic redistribution amongst Aboriginal peoples in Moree, and Wiradjuri communities. In line with the principles of the Aboriginal allocative economy, gambling helps to maintain a ‘level playing field’ among people, with all equally likely to ‘win’ or ‘lose’. Bingo and card playing have been one context where otherwise disparate so-called ‘classes’ of Aboriginal people in Moree – some with comparatively higher economic and social standing in White society – would interact (Reay and Sitlington (1948, pp.185-186). Reay and Sitlington’s (1948) analysis, however, focuses too much on ‘class’ and the supposed desire for assimilation among Aboriginal people in Moree. Reay and Sitlington (1948) overlook ‘family’ as the more powerful connective force for most, and too easily relegate entire locations in Moree as ‘high’ or ‘low’ ‘class’. Most of Gamilaroi French ‘family’ lived in ‘Bottom Camp’ or ‘Middle Camp’. Aunty Mary - Aunty Chrissy’s sister – lived for some time in ‘Top Camp’, but in marked contrast to Reay and Sitlington’s (1948)

Sansom (1980) also notes such ‘leveling’ practices among ‘Wallaby Cross’ drinkers being equally subject to the impacts of alcohol and to potential harm from ‘poison’. See also Pasquaretta (1994, p.700, 2003), Luna-Firebaugh and Tippeconic Fox (2010), Gabriel (1996), Momper (2010) on ‘traditional’ Native American gambling countering the “centralization of authority” and resources. In contrast, Reay and Sitlington (1948) focus predominantly on wealthier Moree Aboriginal people, some of whom did want to become part of White society.
assumption, Aunty Mary and her ‘family’ have always been proactively against ‘assimilation’. What is evident, however, is that, both before and today, Aboriginal gambling provides a way to combat the move towards segregation according to ‘class imposed by White society’. In bingo, all – Black and White – know and agree with the ‘rules’ of behaviour, and all receive the same treatment.

Playing bingo is an enjoyable, relaxing way of being together. In contrast to typical White middle class forms of social organising – overtly negotiating clashing time commitments, choosing the specific date and time to meet, arriving separately in individual cars, viewing the event as a rare occasion of being together – with Gamilaroi French, being together appears less deliberated. We knew bingo was on, some wanted to go, so those people went (in one or at the most two cars). If one person did not want to go this was not a big drama – there would always be other times. Being together in companionable silence and focus as we played bingo and in brief banter between the rounds, seemed to have a visceral sense of being a ‘thing’ in itself. As Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.140, original emphasis) says, such living relation with others is “an actual structure in its own right”. Sharing everyday activities such as bingo is a core aspect of everyday life that demonstrates the importance of and makes ‘family’ both in its specific economic, moral, political ‘style’, and in its concrete relationships. Interestingly, bingo would appear to be one shared area where Black and White ways of being ‘family’ correspond more closely.

**Telephoning**

Frequent telephoning is another key way to maintain close relationships with a wide range of ‘family’. Every day, calls are made to ‘family’ despite limited phone credit. Young Gamilaroi French are actively involved with social media such as facebook via mobile phones - there are few computers among Kamilaroi French - and with multi-media via shared ipads. Email is rarely used. Texting is common among the young people, even at times permitting more intense forms of communication than direct face-to-face verbal exchanges allow. For example, one teenage son is able to express more to his mother in a text than face to face. Similar to the remote Aboriginal youth described by Kral (2010, 2011, 2014) and Johnson (2013), the primary focus of such digital media is for maintaining sociality with ‘family’, and also with friends.

While not using communal spaces such as youth programs or media centres, Kamilaroi French

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13 As a recent example, coal mining is creating disparate ‘classes’ in the Upper Hunter Valley with some Aboriginal people having considerably higher incomes than most other Aboriginal people, causing frictions and tensions. Kamilaroi French today still feel that it is important that all have enough, that all are equally recognised.
youth still often share similar communal ‘digital bedroom’ experiences to remote Aboriginal youth (Kral, 2010, p.6, original emphasis) in that such social media is often used with ‘family’, in public ‘family’ spaces, and is directed towards ‘family’. Mobile phones are ubiquitous, everyone seems to have one. However, while extremely literate, Aunty Chrissy rarely texts.

The general tendency among her generation, and among her children, is a preference for the more nuanced and in-depth exchanges that are made possible through verbal phone calls. The fact that such phone calls are long (at least half an hour) and frequently made, regardless of the high cost and extremely limited budget marks the vital significance of activating and maintaining connections with ‘family’ (and close ‘family’-like friends). While some White families maintain frequent contact through telephone and texting, it is common to find White families who rarely telephone each other – particularly their more ‘distant’ ‘extended’ family members – apart from for special occasions, to organise events, or as scheduled calls.

However, maintaining telephone and texting contact with a wide range of ‘family’ on an everyday basis – regardless of expense - is typical for Gamilaroi French.

At the beginning of this research, I noticed that whenever I telephoned Freeda, she would spend much of the conversation asking about my family, including my parents and parents-in-law. At first I would be a little nonplussed and would have to think a bit to remember what was happening for my various family members. I tended to say, “Yeah, they’re all well” and then dive straight into what I thought was the point of the conversation – something about the research, say. Now I have learnt how much asking about ‘family’ matters. Asking about ‘family’ expresses closeness of the relationship. It shows that you know the different ‘family’ members, that you know what is happening in their lives, and in this way you are a loyal ‘insider’ who cares about what matters most. Knowledge about what is happening to a wide range of ‘family’ is a marker of authority; if people are told what is happening, this is a major indicator that they are worthy of trust and respect. Thus, telephoning is a major way to maintain ‘family’ by maintaining knowledge about events, experiences, circumstances in which ‘family’ are involved, what is ‘going on’ for them. It is not secondary to what people are doing, but is itself a form of doing and being ‘family’. The focus is on the relationship for its own sake, not for achieving some desired end. Within Gamilaroi French ‘family’, belonging does not have to be earned – you are born with belonging – but you are expected to contribute to respecting and valuing this belonging through your everyday actions (see Chapter 6).
Thus, ‘family’ share time, space, occasions, travelling, activities and conversations as a normative, repetitive, enactment to value and to activate networks and maintain close, living, sustained relationships.

**Affective qualities of ‘family’ relationships**

A particular style and quality of relationships signify relations between ‘family’. Here I consider six fundamental affective qualities expected and embodied in Kamilaroi French ‘family’ relationships: showing ‘care’; unbreakable connections; sharing; reciprocity; and the open-doored generosity of blowin’ through.

**Showing ‘care’**

Demonstrating ‘care’ for each other is the proper, expected characteristic of Kamilaroi French ‘family’ relationships. ‘Caring’ is not a feeling, it is an activity. Enacting ‘caring’ demonstrates the ‘closeness’ of the ‘family’ relationship. The role of ‘caring’ for children is especially vital. Aunty Chrissy reports having ‘cared’ for over three hundred children during her lifetime so far. Such a reality is unfathomable from a White perspective. These children have often been ‘family’ members, including the children of cousins, nieces, nephews, and so on, as well as her direct children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. However, Aunty Chrissy has also frequently ‘cared’ for children who were not directly part of her ‘family’. The children she has ‘cared’ for have stayed with her for extended periods of time, sometimes for years, sometimes coming and going. The highly valued and vital Aboriginal cultural work of ‘caring’ is unseen by settler colonial discourse promoting assimilation Aboriginal peoples into the “market economy”. This ‘caring’ load is increasingly placed on fewer Aboriginal women, and competing demands make ‘caring’ for ‘family’ more difficult. The Department of Community Services (DoCS) adds to this pressure by requesting Aboriginal people to care for increasing numbers of Aboriginal children removed from their homes - requests that culturally are very difficult to refuse. In discussing her own situation – where at one point she was ‘caring’ for her mother, ‘caring’ for her “drug and alcohol baby” nephew (as well as her own teenage children), and trying to get work - Freeda describes this situation as “the killing of three spirits”. The situation is such that the spirits of all main protagonists are being “killed” by impossible demands and by their fundamental needs not being met. Dominant society is perceived as doing the ‘killing’, even as it remains oblivious or indifferent to its impacts.

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14 See also Finlayson (1991).
15 This is the term Aunty Chrissy used, and refers to what Western medicine calls Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (e.g. O’Leary, 2004).
Despite these genocidal pressures, Gamilaroi French persist in enacting and prioritising relationships of ‘care’ as a prime marker and mainstay of ‘family’.

**Unbreakable connections within ‘family’**

Unbreakable connections are another prime signifier and quality of Kamilaroi French ‘family’ relationships. Some anthropologists today appear to view Aboriginal ‘family’ as a problem to be overcome, or as possessing contradictory elements which are denied and repressed by Aboriginal people\(^{16}\). However, my experience leads to different interpretations. Although tensions and conflicts are evident, and although some family members are seen as not “pulling their weight”, and even when the behaviour of certain people is very challenging, there persists a fundamental understanding that family members are “born with belonging”. This belonging can never be broken. Freeda describes such unbreakable connections using the metaphors of a rubber ball or balloon on a string or rubber band, and of a “bubble”. Here Freeda explains that there are consequences\(^{17}\) for poor behaviour, but the family member always has the opportunity to try again, they are not “exiled”, the string is not “cut”:

F: like um...because Leila\(^{18}\) didn’t wanna share ‘er food, she was told to step out’ve the circle

A: mmm\(^{19}\)

F: you know?

A: mmm

F: you’re not gonna share, go

A: mmm

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\(^{16}\) Sutton (2009, p.67), for instance, assumes that “lack of emotional mobility...is the key immobiliser for these younger (Aboriginal) people” and that kinship ties and “the emotional problems of relatives all wanting to come and stay” act as barriers for the involvement of young Aboriginal people in the market economy.

\(^{17}\) Negative consequences for wrong behaviour is described by Freeda as the transgressor being “told” to “step out of the circle”, being “pushed out”, and subsequently being “let back in”. Someone can be kept out by people not telling them things; by not giving them money, even when they ask directly; and by either not going to the place where this person is, or leaving the place where this person is staying, for the day, or for several weeks in order to “get a bit of peace and quiet” and to avoid tensions.

\(^{18}\) Pseudonym.

\(^{19}\) In this conversation, the minimal nature of my responses is marked. Nevertheless, such responses indicate interest and agreement and allow Freeda to continue speaking with authority on this critically important topic. My quietness also reflects my interest, my wanting to ‘listen’ and learn, and also a sense of sadness as I realise my culture does not have what Freeda is talking about, and I wish it did.
F: you know? …if you’re – if you’re…if you’re not gonna care about everybody’s kids, go

A: mmm

F: you know? until you learn to …do it

A: mmm...mmm

F: oh...they’ll always – it’s like a rubber ball...they’ll always have the opportunity to bounce back in

A: mmm

F: but it’s not til they get it right that you’re …you’re allowed back in

A: mmm

F: and that’s very strong

A: yeah?

F: it’s – that’s very strong, if you do the wrong thing by …by an Aboriginal community, they’ll push you out...until you get it right...and then you can come back in, you know, you can come back in n try and if you don’t get it right, they’ll push you back out again (coughs)...so, you know –

A: so most places-

F: but they’ll never stop you from tryin!

According to Freeda, then, there are “very strong” cultural processes that protect the quality and style of ‘family’ relationships. Only if ‘family’ members’ behaviour conforms to the agreed ‘family’ relationship characteristics of ‘sharing’, reciprocal ‘care’, ‘respect’ and so on will they be fully accepted into the ‘inner circle’. That is, they will be seen and treated as a ‘close’ ‘family’ member when they demonstrate ‘care’ and ‘respect’ for ‘family’. However, just like a “tennis ball on a rubber band”, a “balloon on a rubber band”, or trying to “bust ya way into a bubble”, “there’s always that connection”. So, despite their transgressions, ‘family’ members will always belong:
F: once you have ya kids you’re part’ve the family, you know, and you’ll always remain part’ve the family because that’s their identity, you know?...you know...it’s...

A: so the identity is stronger than the behaviour type of thing?

F: yeah! yeah, the identity is-

A: so the identity is there, like fixed, sort of thing?

F: yeah...yeah

I observed many instances of such ‘unbreakable connections’. I remember being surprised to see a couple who had divorced decades earlier due to the husband’s severe domestic violence, often sitting in their daughter’s lounge room at the same time, and occasionally speaking briefly to one another. Another time, a woman gave her soon to be ex-husband a lift for the six hours drive to Sydney to sign their divorce papers, and the ex-husband still comes over to help with gardening, home maintenance, and so on. In contrast, while there are exceptions, it is common to find White divorcees not wanting to see each other again, let alone spend any significant time in each other’s company or assist each other in any way. I know of many White families where even ‘direct’ White family members such as children and parents or siblings have permanently ‘cut each other off’, often over minor disagreements. Thus, I found these Gamilaroi French incidents markedly divergent. They seem to me to indicate that ‘family’ continues, despite misdemeanours. Having said that, it appears there is variation on to what extent ex-spouses remain ‘family’. For instance, when trying to set up the Waabi-Gyngil Aboriginal corporation to “maintain family connections”\(^{20}\) and “strengthen culture”, Freeda left it up to the various ‘family’ members to decide whether they would include former spouses as part of the family when recording family “connections”. However, it is taken-for-granted that any children from former relationships are still part of the ‘family’, whether or not their parent ‘officially’ is. Further, if a ‘family’ member ‘marries’\(^{21}\) someone with children from a former relationship, these children are seen to belong to the new ‘family’ just as much as any children subsequently born to the new couple. Thus, both the enactment of ongoing belonging, and negative responses to behaviour that attacks this, indicate certain lived “unbreakable connections”.

\(^{20}\) Listed as the first priority of the group.
\(^{21}\) These are often not formal marriages, but de-facto relationships.
Today, the attitude of ‘unbreakable connections’ is being undermined by Western legal and social influences, with some Kamilaroi French beginning to follow Western ways of ‘exiling’ family members and “cutting off” from them. In some cases, White in-laws who follow a settler colonial ‘nuclear family’ approach – keeping their spouse and children to themselves, not making or accepting visits to/from other ‘family’ members - make the maintenance of ‘unbreakable connections’ and everyday sociality more difficult. However, the drive to keep ‘family’ intact, and the belonging it entails, is evident.

**Sharing with ‘family’, not accumulating for self**

As indicated in the discussion above, ‘family’ relationships are indicative by the quality of *sharing*; Kamilaroi French ‘family’ members are expected to equally ‘share’ resources, here exemplified by ‘food’. Such Gamilaroi French ‘sharing’ holds many similarities to the ‘sharing and caring’ among the Wiradjuri described by Macdonald (2000). Different levels of ‘sharing’ indicate the ‘closeness’ of the ‘family’ relationship. However, I have never witnessed Gamilaroi French vociferously *demanding* anything of each other, in contrast to Myers’ (1986, p.115) and Macdonald’s (2000) analyses of the Pintupi and Wiradjuri demanding as a *sign* and negotiator of ‘closeness’. It may be that the many normative practices and attitudes for maintaining ‘family’, together with corrective ‘shame’ practices, generally ensure that ‘family’ is properly cared for. That is, while Kamilaroi French do not demand things, this may be because unspoken expectations and habitual ‘family’ behaviours already tend to ensure that their needs are met. Alternatively, it may be that indirectness rather than overt demands helps to sustain ‘family’ in the context of increasing pressures on fewer carers where one simply is not able to respond adequately to the needs of even ‘close’ family members (see Chapter 6). Then again, ‘demanding’ may take place in a more subtle way.

On several occasions the issue of *improper* ‘sharing’ became apparent. When someone takes food to another’s place to ‘share’, but brings a smaller version of this food back home for themselves, this is improper ‘sharing’. Instead of bringing home food for themselves, ‘proper’ ‘sharing’ requires that all of the food is left at the place where it has been taken to be ‘shared’. Asking ‘family’ for money and then buying expensive presents for one’s child alone which others cannot afford also goes against the proper principle of *sharing*. Thus, a core characteristic of proper ‘family’ relations is that all have access to more or less the *same* amount of resources and that distribution follows suit. Closely tied to this, a fundamental element of proper ‘sharing’ involves not having money, material issues, and saving for the

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22 See also Altman (2011) and Cowlishaw (2012, p.413).
future as a primary focus, but rather making sure that the needs of all are met as best as possible at this moment. Freeda and Sarah discuss this below:

F: but then you got, you know ... the times are hard and people have [marijuana] habits and, and uh things like that but - but the old way is you know if – if somebody needed somethin you just - you just give it to ‘em, you know?

A: yeah

F: you know, didn’t matter whether you ... done without next week

A: yeah

F: it’s...

A: yeah

F: it’s at that time

A: yeah

F: you know what I mean?

A: yeah

F: it’s ... like ... Blackfullas don’t plan for the future, its’ about today ... it’s not about ...

... ... ...

F: but that was the old way, eh it was about today you know, it’s never about next week

S: never thought about tomorrow n yeah you got today then you got tomorrow then ...

F: yeah... yeah ... so you didn’t –

... ... ...

F: n that’s ... that’s ... that’s basically it! you know? you make do with what you got n ...

A: yeah

F: n share out what you have got
A: yeah

F: make do with what you haven’t got, you know?

It is important to recognise that Sarah and Freeda are speaking poetically here. They do not mean literally that Blackfellas never plan for the future in any way. For many years Sarah has worked at the local hospital and is clearly experienced in planning for the future in terms of negotiating shifts and time off, and so on. However, what Sarah and Freeda are pointing to here is the sharp contrast between Western individualistic material accumulation at the expense of others – as individual financial safeguard for the future – and Black ways of ‘sharing’ with valued others so that all have enough at that time.

Freeda’s “make do with what you haven’t got” is a very eloquent expression of this cultural economy. Whatever is available is shared and distributed, resources are therefore not ‘owned’ by ‘individuals’ in this sense. For this reason, Freeda speaks against native title legislation on the grounds that it is insinuating into Aboriginal communities the notion that only some should have, whereas in contrast, “I was brought up to believe that if not everyone can have it, then I shouldn’t have it”. Although in ‘traditional’ Aboriginal societies clearly different groups and persons possess distinct forms of authority, knowledge, responsibility, including for different Dreaming stories and associated lands, still no-one - no person, no group – is left with not having sufficient to live well; even a visitor or stranger is entitled to food, water, shelter (e.g. Meggitt, 1962)23. Therefore, a fundamental quality of ‘family’ relationships is proper ‘sharing’ among ‘family’ members so that all have enough and are understood as ‘cared’ for.

Reciprocity and mutual responsibility

In a similar way, ‘family’ relationships are characterised by the ‘sharing’ of responsibilities. Aunty Chrissy describes how ‘care’ and discipline of the children was ‘shared’ by all adults, growing up on Moree mission:

[23] Thus, whereas some groups may distinguish roles according to complex aspects of one’s ‘traditional’ or ‘historical’ status (Macdonald, 1997), others may prefer what Freeda terms a ‘post-Mabo’ approach where Aboriginal peoples themselves collaboratively determine their own prerogatives for distinguishing levels of authority, decision-making and action, distinct from native title imperatives. See Weir and Ross, 2007 on the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations alliance. Also, the Right People for Country Project, instigated in response to the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010, Victoria allows greater agency and regional agreement-making for traditional owner groups, and non-litigated native title outcomes (Bauman et al, 2015). See Rossingh (2014) for collaborative inter-Aboriginal whole-of-community and cross-cultural collective joint action programs to promote core cultural structures and priorities such as skin groups and respect for elders, together with Tiwi youth leadership and capacity building.
F: so did – did everybody on the mission sort of have the same sort of belief or ...
(Dylan walks in, whistling) or belief system on how to deal with conflict so everybody believed that if a kid stepped out of line they got a swift kick up the bum

AC: yeah

F: n then that was it

AC: yeah, that’s right, n if you – well the kids weren’t game enough to back chat to grown ups because they’d get dealt with straight away and it was good too because you felt safe and protected? you know if you got out of line or you were out after dark when the sun was goin down n you wasn’t home you’d get into really big trouble, yeah... because Mum n Dad didn’t know where you was n ... if the neighbours, my neighbours saw any of us where we shouldn’t be... mightn’t’ve been dangerous to us but to them it was so they’d grab us by the butt of the ear n take us home to our parents! and we’d get another clap! (laughs)

A: yeah

AC: so we got dealt with twice (laughs)

A: so everybody was lookin after – keepin an eye on the kids –

AC: the whole mission was lookin after all the kids, yeah... it was safety reasons, I spose, you know? ...

F: so there was more or less consensus, you know, everybody seemed (Dylan whistling) to have the same thinkin...the same laws applied... amongst everyone

AC: it was about family lookin after...not only their own children... (Dylan making noises) well all the kids on the mission belonged to all of us ...

A: yeah

AC: you can say it like that ...

A: yeah

AC: you know... it wasn’t my kid or my child or your mum or my mum, was everybody’s mum n dad n children and uh ... it was a good uh ... it was a good solution to all those, you know why they – the girls used to have punch ups too, you know, you know girls
are bitchy n they bitch on one another then they’d go home n whinge to their mum n dad n they’d say well the way to solve a problem is not go near them, you know? … smack em under the ears, see we always got smacked for whatever…yeah…the strap

F: so family really has a … role to play

AC: ‘course they have

F: in disciplining their kids

AC: yeah family’s got the biggest role …

Thus, Aboriginal ‘family’ in this case were all the people living together on Moree mission; “it wasn’t my kid or my child or your mum or my mum, was everybody’s mum n dad n children”. Such a sense of ‘shared’ responsibility - and thus shared connection - was evident in the fact that all adults would discipline all children, and also in the fact that all adults ‘shared’ the same understanding of what was expected behaviour. Although injustices were faced at the hands of police, mission managers and the broader White population, this era is still remembered as one where the Aboriginal residents had a much greater degree of moral independence and social cohesion compared to today.24

However, in the generation below Aunty Chrissy, there now exist different attitudes towards discipline and ‘shared’ ‘care’ of children. One ‘family’ member will not accept any other ‘family’ members disciplining her children. Another ‘family’ member maintains a firm and unambiguous discipline with her children, but received criticism for this from a different (more distant) ‘family’ member. Although changing, there is still overall agreement within Kamilaroi French ‘family’ of the importance of ‘sharing’ responsibilities, and as discipline being a duty of older ‘family’ members.

Also pointing to the importance of reciprocity and mutual responsibility in ‘family’ relationships is the fact that failure to enact this is a prime source of conflict today:

F: you know, like we have a conflict with Jessie n Dean25 … because they never pull their weight with their kids

AC: Tylor26

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24 See also Macdonald (2000).
25 Pseudonyms.
26 Pseudonym.
F: yep … so we have a conflict there, you know, it’s a *family* conflict, you know … and um because they continue to do the *wrong* thing by their *kids* so we … have a conflict with them n they *know* that, so it’s a *fine line* you know

A: (agreeing) mmm

F: we tread very sen-*carefully* with them you know ‘you’re not pullin your *weight*, you’re not doin the right thing by your *kids*, blah blah blah, you need to do that before we can *trust* you, we *talk* to em?

Although she is pointing out that “pullin your weight” is a fundamental value of ‘family’, Freeda is also disclaiming here – “blah, blah, blah” – to undermine any perception that she is morally *superior* to Jessie and Dean. Thus, all are *equally valued* despite misdemeanours, but for the well-being of the ‘family’, a proper style of relationship, of ‘sharing’ responsibilities and ‘care’, must be followed.

‘Blowin through’ to maintain ‘family’

Reciprocity and mutual ‘sharing’ of resource and responsibilities is evident in the taken-for-granted practice of ‘blowin through’. That is, it is *expected* that ‘family’ members (and some friends) can turn up at any time unannounced and stay at one’s house for extended periods of time. Such stays can last from days to weeks, and in some cases months. This cultural ability to ‘blow through’ is a fundamental way to support ‘family’. It allows ‘family’ to travel large distances in an affordable way, in order to attend important occasions such as funerals (and less commonly, weddings and other special occasions). It also enables ‘family’ to withdraw from situations of conflict, moving to different towns, even interstate, and then moving back ‘home’ when tensions have receded. In this way Gamilaroi French practice of ‘blowin through’ implicitly supports Tillett and French’s (2006) notion that not all conflict can be ‘resolved’; rather, conflict can be contained both through enacting avoidance relationships, and by conflicted parties physically moving away for a time (e.g. Myers, 1968, Beckett, 1965, Macdonald, 2000). ‘Blowin through’ thus *enables* the vital, ongoing work of maintaining lived connections – and living relatedness to - ‘family’, no matter how far away they live and regardless of tensions.

The ability to ‘blow through’ also provides significant security for ‘family’ in the face of ongoing ‘structural violence’ such as unfair treatment by police and difficulty finding employment. To know that however ‘outside’ society treats one, one has somewhere to stay, and places and
people with whom one belongs, is an aspect of Aboriginal resilience which cannot be underestimated. However, it is expected that if one is staying for a significant period of time that one contributes towards food, bills, rent, housework and so on, as much as possible. I learnt this from many conversations where various ‘family’ members commented negatively if some other ‘family’ ‘blow ins’ were not contributing - “pullin their weight” – properly. Thus ‘blowin’ through’ is a normative, expected, ritualised Gamilaroi French ‘family’ practice that embodies and enables the qualities of mutual ‘sharing’ and reciprocity that are ‘proper’ for ‘family’ relationships.

In order for ‘blowin through’ to function smoothly, front or back doors are left unlocked. The notion of an “open door” is very evocative for Sarah and Freeda as a major contrast between Black and White ways. A Blackfella’s open door (literally and symbolically) is “sending a signal...people are welcome”. In the interview below I asked for more details about how ‘blowin through’ works:

A: how would you, how would you describe that n how ... like for example say you see these house magazines, how to decorate your house n all that n they’ve got a thing ‘Oh, the guest room!’ n they have (sing song tone) ‘so when the guest comes you put special towel -

S: (small laugh)

A: - n this n that n la la la la’ it’s some big deal when someone comes to stay you gotta organise it n it’s all this huge thing, whereas ... your people, people are comin n goin all the time

S: (laughs)

A: n it’s you know?

S: if you wanna stay it’s up to you, stay! (laughs)

A: yeah! yeah

F: yeah...n you know, you... you make room

A: yeah

F: you know?
S: yeah we don’t – you don’t –

F: you don’t *turn* anyone away! you just...

S: you don’t ring up n say (quiet child voice) ‘can I stay at your place?’ (laughs)

A: (laughs)

F: you just *blow* in

S: *blow* in, that’s it

From Sarah’s tone and comments it is clear that the notion of ‘asking permission’ (“making an appointment”) to come and stay at someone’s house – as is the usual White practice, for visiting, let alone staying – is seen as somehow ridiculous. Even among close White friends – even within White families – there is typically the cultural expectation that one needs to ask permission to stay, one does not simply turn up unannounced. In such a situation, the relationship between the ‘owner’ of the house and the person asking to stay is one of a subtle power imbalance. Sarah ridicules and rejects the implicit power imbalance of such an arrangement. Thus, Blackfella way is “if you wanna *stay* it’s up to you, *stay*!” In this arrangement the so-called ‘owner’ of the house and the person staying both have equal power, since the visitor can choose to stay if they like, and the ‘owner’ understands that the house is there to ‘share’ as necessary.

After learning about the cultural practice of ‘blowin through’, I decided to try it for myself. Usually when I come up to visit, I call Freeda beforehand and see if she will be there, and let her know if I am bringing the kids, and for how long, and so on. The last time I visited, with my husband and all the kids, I let her know what day I would be coming, but did not elaborate on whether we would be staying overnight or not, nor for how long. It was quite funny to see that because I had not specified, it was assumed that we would not be staying and Freeda felt very chagrined that we could not stay at her place because she already had a full house. However, Sarah was happily able to accommodate us at her place, so there was no problem. I laughed with them about how I was trying out Blackfella ways of doing things, and they did not expect it. Whitefellas do not practice ‘blowin through’; such a practice sets clear boundaries between Whitefellas and Blackfellas. Hence, by practicing ‘blowin through’ I was unsettling cultural expectations of Whites.
Thus we can see that both everyday sociality and particular qualities of relationships revolve around and define proper ways of being ‘family’. Showing ‘care’, unbreakable connections, ‘sharing’ with all and not accumulating for self, reciprocity and mutual responsibility are all emphasised in normalised behaviour, in conversation, and in negative sanctions when incorrect practices are followed. ‘Blowin through’ embodies all of these proper ‘family’ qualities and clearly distinguishes Blackfella ways from Whitefella expectations.

**Ritualised respect to protect ‘family’**

The final illustration provided here of both the central importance of ‘family’ for Gamilaroi French, and of proper signifiers of ‘family’, is ritualised “respect”. Proper “respect” is shown in many culturally specific ways, including through proper marriage, and verbalising, enacting and engendering respect.

Proper marriage

Marrying correctly is one way of showing respect, and knowledge of ‘family’ connections is critical to ensure that proper marriages are carried out. Freeda and Sarah spoke about how their mother and grandparents taught them to whom they were connected for up to four generations to ensure that they married correctly. In classical anthropological literature, such lived knowledge of ‘kinship’ is a key marker of Aboriginality. The fact that the Gamilaroi French maintain and privilege such in-depth kinship knowledge clearly marks them as ‘Aboriginal’ despite settler claims to the contrary: Whitefellas do not possess such knowledge.

Freeda notes that in Moree there is much inter-marriage between certain families and so there is a strong focus on knowing one’s ‘bloodlines’ to ensure one marries properly. A key question to ask a prospective partner is: “Who are your grandparents?” If one’s grandparents are siblings with another’s grandparents, then that person is considered a cousin and not an eligible marriage partner. One is not supposed to marry cousins up to four times removed. Any relationship more distant than that is considered acceptable. Thus, “respect” in this case is demonstrated both by maintaining knowledge of ‘bloodlines’ and through following the rule-bound conditions around ‘proper’ marriage. Anthropology abounds with similar data on structural forms of kinship, avoidance and ‘proper’ marriage in other parts of Australia.

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27 The study of Aboriginal forms of kinship, particularly among the Kariera of north-western Australia, contributed significantly to social anthropology methodology and theory. Radcliffe-Brown (1913, 1930, 1952), Levi-Strauss (1949), Evans-Pritchard (1951), Romney and Epling (1958), Rose (1962), Hiatt (1965) and Turner (1980) are but a few of the relevant sources.
Verbalising “respect”

Respect for elders must be illustrated both linguistically and performatively. Throughout this research I learnt that one needs to use ‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ not only as a term of reference when speaking of an elder, but also when addressing them directly, even in the minutiae of everyday interactions, such as “Would you like a sandwich, Aunty?” Such terms were used both as ‘reference’ – that is when speaking of someone to another – as well as ‘address’ – when speaking to someone. Hence, these terms are sociocentric rather than egocentric – they are followed by all Kamilaroi French ‘family’ members. While other terms such as ‘tidda’ for sister, ‘bro’ for brother and ‘cuz’ for cousin are also sometimes used by Gamilaroi French, these are less common and are not a sign of ‘respect’, but rather simply a sign of familiarity and belonging. Rather, age, and life stage, are the primary signifiers for ‘respect’ among Kamilaroi French. It was when I was an undergraduate and became pregnant for the first time, that Aunty Chrissy told five year olds Kiah and Keeden to call me ‘Aunty’. Becoming pregnant moved me from the stage of ‘childhood’ (even though I was in my late twenties) to ‘adulthood’, via motherhood.

Norm and Freeda discuss how there is a different use of ‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ in their respective ‘families’ from Armidale and Moree. On Norm’s side (the Archibald ‘family’) anyone older – even if only by a few years and even if only a cousin – was called ‘Aunty’ or ‘Uncle’:

N: you know, ‘You’re older, you’re respect, you get Aunty n Uncle’, you know

F: yep

N: n I couldn’t believe that Freeda’s family never done it! you know whereas in my side of the family it was just – open slatter! you know if you didn’t call anyone Aunty or Uncle well you got – ‘Bang!’ you know you got slapped for it! you know

Even people who were “no relation” are called Uncle and Aunty if you grow up with their children in Armidale. On Freeda’s side, however, older Aboriginal people who are not relations are called Mr and Mrs, and if people are about the same age and grow up together they do not call each other ‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ even if they are in this relationship officially. For example, Freeda’s sister Brigette grew up with her mother’s sister, Aunty Louise, but does not call her ‘Aunty’. Freeda muses about possible reasons why this may be the case. She suggests it might have been a way to help maintain knowledge of ‘bloodlines’ to prevent confusion, given the high rate of inter-marriage between Aboriginal families in Moree. Thus, for Freeda’s ‘family’,
‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ are used to address significantly older ‘family’ members, not necessarily those who are biologically an aunt or uncle. ‘Respect’ is also shown to older non-‘family’ members by addressing them as Mr or Mrs. For Norm’s ‘family’, however, all older Aboriginal people, whether ‘family’ or not, and even if only slightly older, are called ‘Aunty’ or ‘Uncle’. Thus, different patterns of showing ‘respect’ via terms of address exist in Norm and Freeda’s ‘families’.

Freeda and Norm both admit that at times it is very difficult to keep track of who certain relatives are, if one does not see them very often, especially if they are in-laws and if you meet somewhere such as the Aboriginal rugby-league “knockout” where there are no ready reminders available as to who they are. However, Norm’s family in Armidale seem to know very well who Norm and Freeda are:

F: Norm’s first cousins were sayin ‘you’re my Aunty Freeda’

N: yeah! n Freeda singin ‘who are you?!”

F: (laughs) I couldn’t work em all out cos there’s so many of em

N: well see I don’t know em neither! you know but yet they’ll walk up n they’ll say who you are, they’ll

F and N: know who you are

N: ‘how ya goin Unc?’ sweet n you just leave it at that n you think (quiet voice) ‘who are you?’

(all laugh loudly)

F: n especially when you go to knockouts?

A: yeah

F: you got people comin up n sayin ‘hello Aunty n Uncle’… ‘which one are you?’

A: (laughs)

Of course, no indication is given to these family members that Norm and Freeda cannot remember who they are – this would be a great insult – but a transgressive sort of humour can be enjoyed at the failing.
Norm and Freeda discuss how difficult it is to maintain this respect for the elders amongst the younger generation, even in something as simple as terms of address, when this is being counteracted by White society. For example, young Aboriginal family members often visit their White friends’ homes where the White parents urge the young people to call them by their first name. Freeda tries to find a way around this by saying to her kids ‘who do you have to call *Aunty and Uncle*?’, and clarifying with them that this is nearly all family members who are older than them (grandparents have different terms of address, such as ‘Nan’ and ‘Pop’).

**Enacting “respect”**

Apart from *linguistic* demonstration of respect, respect is also ritually *enacted*. Freeda and Norm speak about how strong the importance of visiting the elders first is, with Norm’s aunties in Armidale:

F: what were some of the *rules*...like with the old *aunties* that you’d get in trouble for

N: oh! the *rules* was, you know, as *soon* as you went to *town* you ‘ad to go n see the *aunties* n you had to go n say *hello* to em n if you walked *past* em – even in the *street* – even if you –

F: if they knew you were in *town* for more than an *hour* n

N: yeah!

F: without seein them

N: yeah! ... that’s – you know

F: you’d *get* in trouble

N: you know... *and* ... you know... ‘Oh, *Frank*’s in *town*’ you know...I’d be walkin up the *street* – *bang*!

A: (laughs)

N: you get a clobber cos you *never went n seen anyone!* ... you know...it’s the *first* thing you gotta *do* you gotta go n see em, say hello

F: let em know you’re in *town*
N: let em know you’re in town n then you go... you know... n what happens after that...then...that’s the next day so if you get in trouble that night then they catch up with you the next day but if- you gotta go n see em...n that’s – that’s something that I always try to instil in Joe (their son) eh?

F: (agreeing) mmm hmmm

N: ‘soon as you enter Armidale’...Aunty Grace – she’s the only one left on the Archibald side... ‘go n see Aunty Grace’ that’s the first thing that e ‘ad to do ... (coffee machine in background) I don’t know whether he does it now or not now but I used to always say to im, eh, ‘Go n see Aunty Grace’ you know...you know... ‘er – ‘er – ‘er sons are my brothers uncles – Uncle Rowley but you always gotta see Aunty Grace, doesn’t matter if you see Uncle Rowley n that but if you see Aunty Grace, then you’re sweet but if you don’t go see ‘er, that’s it...

In this case, Uncle Rowley is a cousin, not an elder, whereas Aunty Grace is the last of the older generation. Visiting elders first is not only a clear sign of courtesy and respect, but also enacts ritualised relatedness so that, in turn, if you get in any ‘trouble’ elders will be willing and able to help you, as they know you, your whereabouts, and won’t accuse you of just trying to ‘use’ them:

N: you don’t worry if you don’t meet with ya cousins it doesn’t matter, but you always see the elders first...you always see the elders...just to say, ‘hello I’m goin into town here I am’ so that they know...because you know, Freeda knows, eh? ... if you come into town n you get into trouble...without tellin them that you’re in town –

F: don’t expect them to help

N: you get drunk –

F: don’t expect their help if you’re in trouble

N: yeah don’t expect – cos they – they won’t, yeah, you don’t get no help from em...

F: why didn’t you come n see me first instead of comin to me when you’re in trouble, you know

A: yeah

F: yeah that type of ... attitude? you know not bein used then
A: exactly, exactly, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

F: so ... that – that was sort of – you know they sorta knew when they were bein *used* then you know? if the person never come near em until they were in trouble then ‘hhnnn’ (disapproving sound) all *hell* broke loose, you know?

Thus, *enacting* “respect” by visiting elders first, demonstrates that you acknowledge them as important ‘family’ members; that your relationship *matters*. If one wants to benefit from other aspects of being ‘family’ – such as support and protection when one is in trouble – then one must demonstrate “respect” as an ongoing, ritualised matter of course *before* the trouble arises. The expectation of ‘trouble’ with the young and of assistance by the elders, are further evidence both of the structural, disparate nature of the relationship between these sets of ‘family’ members and of the ‘structural violence’ that is part of everyday life for them in settler colonial society. Kinship means more than simply ‘trouble assistance’, but life under occupation renders kinship as still, and increasingly, important.

Engendering “respect”

“Respect” is *engendered* in that both men *and* women elders are greatly respected in Norm and Freeda’s ‘families’, and have unique and complimentary roles in maintaining the well-being of ‘family’. In fact, often it is the elder women who in some ways seem to have *more* power than the men, because they *direct* the men on how to discipline the younger people. Norm describes the power of his Granny Arch as follows:

N: … Granny Arch was more...more *rules* you know like Granny Arch she know the rules n she *ruled* the roost, you know, she goes, you know

F: enforced them

N: she enforced them you know... you know she’d say ... you know ‘C’mon Frank get them boys ‘ome’ you know ‘them boys’ve gotta go t’work’ you know n bang bang typical *mother* bang, bang...

Thus, for Norm, a “typical mother” is one who is very sure of herself, who makes sure that her children behave properly, and who directs her husband to discipline the boys as required. Norm also describes how his Granny Arch possessed strong knowledge of “women’s business” and that this assisted her in her work of maintaining order and proper behaviour in the family:
N: well see she – she knew all the women’s ... um stuff all the initiation for women... and you know...and I’m pretty sure n in that, you know, man mucked up, they’d come into initiation part you know you’d tell that yer a man muckin up...

F: mmm

N: you know

F: (mumbling, mouth full) women’s business

A: (small laugh)

N: women’s business see

F: mmm so s’

N: you know soon’s they – all the boys’d come back you know ‘You been muckin up’

A: (laughs)

N: ‘You been muckin up” (pause)

F: yeah

N: but she wouldn’t say nothing just put it over t’ Grandfather...

F: tell Grandfather n Grandfather’d –

N: yeah ‘Fix them boys up’ they went out, you know ‘muckin up’...you know ‘settle em down’...

So, the women’s business knowledge Granny Arch possessed was complemented by Grandfather’s ability to physically discipline, and both aspects worked together to ensure the well-being of the family. In a similar way, Aunty Chrissy often speaks of how her father, Pop French always supported and performed the requests of his wife, Nan French, in maintaining discipline in the family, and in other ‘family’ matters. Hence, on both Gamilaroi French side and the Archibald side there were very strong grandmothers whose verdict was very powerful. Amongst Kamilaroi French ‘family’, women elders are in fact the mainstay and strongest source of support and guidance for the rest of the ‘family’\(^{28}\), in concord with classical

\(^{28}\) Fison and Howitt (1991) and Mathews (1896, 1907) refer to Kamilaroi matriarchal structures in terms of matrilineal moieties. This may be distinct from matrifocal ‘families’ and matrilineal descent as definitive of roles, including relationships to land.
anthropological literature regarding Kamilaroi matriarchal structures (Fison and Howitt, 1991, Mathews, 1896, 1907).

For Kamilaroi French, then, ‘respect’ is demonstrated in structural, normative practice - linguistically, performatively, and in terms of following ‘proper’ marriage ‘rules’. In particular, ‘respect’ focuses on ‘proper’ behaviour from younger people towards elders. ‘Respect’ is demonstrated through utilising respectful terms of address and terms of reference regarding elders, and so is a sociocentric phenomenon among Gamilaroi French ‘family’. ‘Respect’ is also performed by younger ‘family’ members. When first arriving at a place, elders must be visited first. Such behaviour demonstrates that the visitor values and ‘respects’ the elder, not for instrumental reasons, but for the sake of the relationship itself. Gamilaroi French also ‘respect’ elders for their power – the power to guide, to ‘care’, and to help in times of trouble (which are expected and everyday occurrences under occupation in settler colonial society). While both men and women elders are shown ‘respect’ and are seen as having complementary areas of expertise, knowledge, and authority, women elders are especially powerful and knowledgeable within Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

‘What matters’: ‘family’ as theorised by Kamilaroi French

Apart from implicit, everyday, normalised ways of demonstrating the pivotal importance of ‘family’, Kamilaroi French explicitly name ‘family’ as what matters most. Here, rather than the assumption that only my own phenomenological interpretations are valid as a (supposed) outsider anthropological ‘expert’, this section takes seriously Gamilaroi French’s own explicit theorising of the central importance of ‘family’. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here holds that Indigenous peoples need to be recognised as epistemological equals – theorists - with their own unique forms of knowledge and practice which Westerners do not possess, not simply as objects of Western research. As Speed (2010, p.284) notes:

That indigenous people might theorize their own social processes, and that these analyses might be as equally valid as the scholarly ones, remains a novel idea to most in academia.

In line with fundamental requirements of Indigenous Methodologies, and with the principles of elicitive peacebuilding, rather than treating overt Kamilaroi French discussions around the importance of ‘family’ as either ‘biased’ or ‘unproven’, here such discussions are drawn on to develop embedded critical theory and “local” theoretical positioning” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, pp.63, 186, emphasis added).
Kamilaroi French expressly name ‘family’ as ‘what matters’ most. In conversation, in myriad ways, the importance of ‘family’ is reiterated. When asked to rank what matters, Figures 1 to 3 illustrate the central importance of ‘family’ for Kamilaroi French, as voluntarily and overtly expressed by three family members. Each ‘family’ member was independently asked to indicate on a drawing of concentric circles “what matters” to them, with no suggestions given as to potential categories, and without seeing what other ‘family’ members had drawn before they drew their own, but with the suggestion that the most important thing would be in the middle. Note: this activity took place in the context of general conversation and daily life intentionally, so as not to alienate the activity, and without any pre-emptive focus on ‘family’ as an interview or conversational topic. Once presented with the blank diagram of concentric circles, each of the ‘family’ members immediately expressed their thoughts visually with no hesitation whatsoever. Such alacrity suggests more open-ended and less directive visual and embodied forms of ‘discussion’ and communication may allow for expression beyond the constraints of hegemonic verbal and written discourse.

Figure 1 shows that Aunty Chrissy put ‘God’ as ‘what matters’ most to her, surrounded by ‘family’ which she specified as the four sub-groups of ‘children’, ‘brothers and sisters’, ‘sisters-and brothers-in-law’, and ‘nieces and nephews’. From other conversations it is clear that each of these ‘family’ sub-groups also has their own children, grandchildren, and all their respective in-laws and in-laws’ brothers and sisters, children, nieces and nephews, and so on. Thus, what is characterised here is a huge interwoven ‘web’ of relationships spanning many generations vertically (‘direct’ ancestors and descendants), horizontally (brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews), and possibly three- and four-dimensionally (vertical and horizontal in-law relationships). Similar to the Wiradjuri, then, Gamilaro French ‘family’ networks are extensive, involving hundreds of people, including “up to eight or nine degrees of genealogical distance” (Macdonald, 2000, p.92). Aunty Chrissy’s late mother, Nan French, and her oldest daughter Sarah, are well-known in the ‘family’ as being especially gifted in not only remembering names and relationships, but also birthdays, anniversaries and so on for a staggering number of ‘family’

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29 A version of this exercise was suggested to me by a sociologist colleague – Dr Arini Beaumaris. This exercise was undertaken at an early stage of the research, prior to discovering Lederach’s (1997) ‘elicitive’ peacebuilding approach. A more elicitive approach would be to invite participants to choose their own manner of visually representing ‘what matters’ to them, rather than pre-empting this by presenting a set of concentric circles. Nevertheless, valuable insight was still gained through this exercise.

30 On many occasions in conversation, Gamilaro French used physical items – condiment bottles, salt and pepper dispensers, and bodily movements - to illustrate a point.
members. Sarah finds it amusing that Whitefellas are astounded at her knowledge of what for Blackfellas is ‘obvious’, basic level ‘family’ knowledge: “they get amazed that you know all your cousins ... n all your aunts!”

It is important to note that Aunty Chrissy’s diagram is specific to her; it does not reflect a generic, abstract concept. Aunty Chrissy’s diagram reflects her own social location. Further, Aunty Chrissy’s diagram only portrays those who are living now. While many of her stories refer to those who are no longer alive, she has chosen to ‘write’ only about the living. What matters in this sense are those who are alive now, those with whom she has an active, current relationship in the present.

‘Aboriginal Christianity’

The complex and vital matter of Kamilaroi French spiritual understandings deserves in-depth investigation, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, to briefly contextualise Aunty Chrissy’s reference to ‘God’ as the most important thing that matters, an albeit truncated discussion of ‘Aboriginal Christianity’ is necessary. It is important to stress that this thesis does not follow the ‘inverted lack’ argument that Aboriginal peoples possess all spiritual knowledge whereas Western people possess none (Hamilton, 1986, Sunderland, 2007). Nevertheless,

Figure 1. Aunty Chrissy’s ‘what matters’ diagram

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31 In this thesis, contrary to classical anthropological methodologies, I do not extensively identify ‘family’ members and illustrate their connections because of the ‘secret’ nature of such relationships in the current context of usurpation of identity by ‘outsiders’ for native title purposes. See Durney (1999).
many Aboriginal peoples profess some experience or knowledge of the supranatural or of ‘everyday transcendence’ (Calleman, 2009, p.294, Crapanzano, 2006, pp.387, 394, 399-400), and thus the question of ‘metaphysics’ cannot be ignored when trying to understand ‘what matters’ to Aboriginal peoples.

Today, positivist and isolationist anthropological stances ignore the relevance of ‘Aboriginal Christianity’ to many Aboriginal peoples, and many anthropologists continue to privilege knowledge of the ‘Dreaming’ as marker of ‘authentic’ Aboriginality (Swain and Rose, 1988, Schwarz and Dussart, 2010, Macdonald, 1998b) (see Chapter 3). Anthropologists tend to view ‘Christianity’ as inevitably individualistic, hierarchical, universalist, transcendent, future and ‘other-worldly’ focused and thus depolitical, anti-materialist, anti-body and sexist, in contrast to Aboriginal collectivist, egalitarian, localised, immanent, present and ‘this-worldly’ focused, political, embodied ontologies and cosmologies (e.g. Schwarz and Dussart, 2010, p.6, Rose, 2000, p.232, Sunderland, 2007, Casey, 2001, pp.720, 722). Eurocentric theological notions of ‘conversion’, ‘belief’ and the ‘transcendent’ not only misunderstand and misrepresent Aboriginal perspectives, but also undermine Aboriginal power in native title processes (Schwarz and Dussart, 2010, Trigger and Asche, 2010).


> exposed to them the hypocrisy of its own teaching through the gap between white practice and beliefs. Christianity served as a tool of resistance in some contexts by contributing to moral grounds for protecting Indigenous women’s rights and value as human beings

‘Aboriginal Christianity’ can serve as a form of decolonisation via “disidentification” – which neither assimilates within nor simply opposes dominant ideology, but rather “works on and

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32 For instance, relatively little acknowledgement has been made regarding “widespread conversion to Christianity” by ‘remote’ Aboriginal peoples over the last forty years (Schwarz and Dussart, 2010, pp.3-4).
against...dominant cultural logics, (and) internally subverts them, using the logic against itself” (Smith, 2010, p.577).

Some Aboriginal people are wary of ‘Christianity’ due to the history of ‘mission managers’; the demonisation of ‘traditional’ spirituality by narrow-minded missionaries; Church complicity in the Stolen Generations; and from the knowing of Aboriginal ministers who have committed suicide. However, rather than seeing ‘Christianity’ and ‘Blackfella law’ as irreconcilable, separate entities, many Aboriginal peoples see key elements of ‘Christianity’ as commensurate with ‘traditional spirituality’, something which anthropologists historically have found hard to understand (Bos, 1988, Austin-Broos, 1996, Trigger and Asche, 2010, Schwarz and Dussart, 2010). Christianity is however seen as the “foundation of the Aboriginal way of life” by many Aboriginal people today. It is not ‘new’, but is in fact part of ancient law (McIntosh and Bos in Trigger and Asche, 2010, pp.93, 103). Further, it is not seen as ‘belonging’ to the colonisers, but as being revealed through them (Trigger and Asche, 2010, p.104). Such perspectives are in line with Aboriginal “epistemic openness”, with emphasis on renewal, revival, and movement from, and between, the ‘unseen’ and the ‘seen’ (Merlan, 1997, p.8, Biddle, 2007, 2012, Deger, 2011). Others may not be actively involved in ‘Christianity’, but do not see it as harmful (Cowlishaw, 1999, p.23, Macdonald, 2010, p.63). There are also Aboriginal people who follow Muslim or Bahá’í understandings and practices (Onnudottir et al, 2010, Stephenson, 2010, 2011, Obah, 2002). Thus, rather than seeing ‘Dreaming’ and other forms of spirituality as separate, bounded entities, some Aboriginal people insist that there are deep-rooted commonalities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ‘beliefs’, ‘traditions’ and practices.

Aboriginal Christians tend to differ to mainstream Christians in how they live their ‘faith’, emphasising kin-relatedness rather than ‘individual salvation’, and enacting faith through relationship rather than focusing on ‘interiority’ (Schwartz and Dussart, 2010, pp.7, 9-10). That is, typically Aboriginal spiritualities do not emphasise an ‘internal belief system’ prioritising individual ‘belief’ and ‘feeling’, but rather are demonstrated through practice, through actions. In so doing, by their very bodies and lived lives, Aboriginal Christians constitute public ‘signs’, ‘pointing’ to, and ‘socialising’ possibilities, making ‘the beyond’ everyday, explicit, shared (Sjørslev, 2012, pp.217-218). In this sense the ‘unseen’ or ‘God’ not only enables but requires

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33 Recent misappropriations of ‘Christianity’ include contemporary individualistic, capitalist versions (Berlant, 2004, pp.2-6); political twisting of the Christian notion of sacrifice (Povinelli, 2011); and the attempted destruction of Aboriginal languages, cultural and spiritual practices - and Aboriginal ‘families’ - in the name of Christianity (e.g. Eckermann et al, 2010).
social agency and is very much “in the world”\textsuperscript{34}. Also, rather than seeing ‘spirit’ and ‘matter’ as mutually exclusive, here “matter is and can be but a form or aspect of Spirit” (Lord, in Sweet and Harris, 2006, p.314); the Source of life is not a symbolic concept, but rather is revealed through its physical manifestations (Calleman, 2009, pp.13, 268).

Many of Gamilaroi French elders are strong Christians. For Kamilaroi French ‘family’ Christians, their ‘faith’ is a way of holding White people to account; a source of ‘peace’; and a source of power and strength for fighting to see ‘justice’ done now, here, not simply waiting passively for ‘heaven’. One time Aunty Chrissy shared some extremely difficult times she had, when she was under great pressure and felt very troubled, worrying about her family and her ability to protect and ‘care’ for them. She “handed them over to the Lord” and at the same time kept doing all she could to ‘care’ for them in her own everyday life. Aunty Chrissy repeatedly emphasises that now she has no trouble going to sleep; she can get into bed and fall asleep straight away. For Aunty Chrissy, “That’s a clear conscience and peace in your heart.”

Whether Christian or not, the widespread view seems to be that there are strong parallels between what people call ‘spirituality’ and Christianity. Gamilaroi French use the term “spirituality” to refer to ‘traditional’ Aboriginal ‘religions’, and use the term “the Lore” to refer to the fundamental, irrevocable rules associated with Aboriginal cosmologies. As Aunty Chrissy says, there is a “fine line” that distinguishes Christianity and ‘spirituality’, but they share some fundamental moral principles.

From Aunty Chrissy’s diagram, these foundational ‘morals’, ‘principles’, ‘rules’ – what matters – have their source in ‘God’. That is, the qualities, attributes, relationships of ‘God’ are mimicked, echoed, in ever-widening ‘ripples’ of relationships, from ‘family’ (in its various elements) to more distant social, economic, political structures – “education”, “housing”, “jobs”. In other words, all of the wider circles mimic – or should mimic - the qualities of the originating Source of these subsequent circles. Thus, to a degree, non-‘family’ members, including non-Aboriginal people, can be treated according to the principles of ‘family’, if they demonstrate similar commitment to ‘family’-style ‘respect’ and ‘sharing’\textsuperscript{35}. One might say, then, that for Aunty Chrissy ‘God’-like qualities or attributes are what characterise the proper

\textsuperscript{34} In contrast to, say, Sunderland’s (2007, p.70) narrow reading of ‘transcendence’.
\textsuperscript{35} However, only ‘close’ ‘family’ members are expected to demonstrate intensive ‘care’ and ‘sharing’ of resources, time and responsibility.
nature of, and relationships within, ‘family’, and indicate what principles should be manifested in relationships in society more broadly.36

Such a perspective coincides with more classical anthropological discussions of ‘traditional’ Aboriginal spiritualities as having a foundational role in setting the terms and means of physical, social, economic, political order (Stanner, 1984, pp.144-145, Berndt and Berndt, 1981). Rather than the contemporary Western practice of people defining the law, in ‘traditional’ Aboriginal religions it is the more than human, uncreated, yet “born out of their own eternity” Ancestral Beings – who lay down Dreaming Laws for all created things37 in an “everywhen” (Berndt and Berndt, 1981, Strehlow, 1978, pp.14-16, Sansom, 2001, p.2). Thus it is the Lore itself – not ordinary people – that provides the structure, relationships, and mechanisms of maintaining social cohesion and well-being. Ancestral Beings are able to lay down the Law precisely because they are above or outside the Law (Berndt and Berndt, 1981, p.337, Strehlow, 1971, Swain, 1993, Morton, 2000, pp.577-578). All created things must therefore follow – enact, not simply ‘believe’ - these Dreaming laws (Berndt and Berndt, 1981, p.342):

The creative beings established that pattern, and expect people to follow it: if they do not, the consequences are on their own heads

Such an attitude is echoed in Pop French’s comment to Aunty Chrissy regarding unjust White people:

They’ll get their own, Daught.38

Thus, rather than the Durkheimian notion that society’s need for functional social structures creates or causes religion (e.g. Durkheim, 1965, Thompson, 2002), Aunty Chrissy has very much the opposite view: it is ‘God’ that causes and creates ‘family’, that teaches the correct moral principles, and that shows how they should be enacted and embodied in social structures. In ‘traditional Aboriginal spirituality’, the Ancestral Beings, the Dreaming, the Lore

36 It is important to clarify that applying such ‘principles’ more widely would not undermine primary allegiance to ‘family’ in concrete terms, nor the distinctiveness of ‘family’. Rather, it is understood that such ‘principles’ characterise relations between ‘families’ and between diverse peoples in distinct ways, and each ‘family’ and people would still have their own areas of knowledge, support and responsibility.
37 Most created things are ‘inspired’ by Dreamings (Sansom, 2001). ‘Natural’ phenomena rarely fail to act lawfully, and so some ritually knowledgeable Aboriginal people understand that “non-human beings are more under the control of dreamtime law than are ordinary people” (Meggitt, 1962, p.252). Ordinary humans, on the other hand, do sometimes fail to follow the Lore properly and so need to be repeatedly taught how to follow the Dreaming Law. It is only people who are required to pro-actively, ritually, renew and maintain the Law (Stanner, 1984, p.147).
38 Daughter.
play a similar function to ‘God’ here. Thus, somewhat similar to the Dinka (Lienhardt, 1961), ‘Divinity’ is not something abstract, distant, separate to the social and physical world – although it does have mysterious, unknowable qualities – but rather, is intimately associated with, guiding, and evident in the visible, inspired, corporeal personal-social-natural-cultural world nexus. Thus, in the proper order of things – if all are acting correctly and following ‘God’s Law’ – ‘family’ and broader social and ‘natural’ structures reflect the characteristics of ‘God’; they embody and enact God’s Law.

For Aunty Chrissy, then, ‘God’ is the Source of her specific ‘family’ both in its physical sense, and also in the style, and quality – “standards”, “rules”, “principles”, “discipline” - of relationships. It is following such Law – first with ‘family’ and then in relationships with wider society – that forms the core of Aunty Chrissy’s epistemology and ontology, and so is her source of being and action in the world.

The importance of reciprocity

Aunty Chrissy’s diagram implicitly refers to the ‘cultural’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence of settler colonial society, and the importance of ‘resistance’ by upholding ‘family’ principles of ‘reciprocity’. In her verbal explanation of her diagram, Aunty Chrissy revealed manifold forms of ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ settler colonial violence, and Black perspectives on what needs to take place instead. Firstly, Aunty Chrissy defines ‘equality’ as “fairness, treating us with respect, having people treat us the same and seeing us as ‘human’”. As the discussion in Chapter 3 on the ‘logic of elimination’ and the deficit discourse clearly indicates, settler colonial society is far from treating Aboriginal peoples with ‘equality’. AuntyChrissy defines ‘education’ as “learning from each other” and as being “important for our kids”. Aunty Chrissy frequently emphasised that you learn from every person you meet, and they learn from you (see Chapter 6).

Aunty Chrissy points to the ‘structural violence’ of ‘penetration’ and ‘marginalisation’ where she qualifies ‘justice’ as “a two-way street” and says that “we need justice with our Land Councils because they are being run by Whites”39. Blacks should have an equal say in deciding what constitutes ‘justice’, and should have control of their own means for political, economic, social expression - for enacting ‘justice’ - rather than have these usurped by White people.

Aunty Chrissy reveals the ‘structural violence’ of ‘segmentation’ by saying that often kids today do not understand that there is a “difference between Black and White”, and the older people

39 Here Aunty Chrissy may be referring to ‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’ (see pp.147-159).
try to warn them because “police target the Blackfella”. Wider society denies its profound racism and White privilege, and so the elders need to counter this by warning young Black people of this ‘invisible’ reality, to try to protect them. This is not simply an instance of generational disjunction or friction; Aunty Chrissy is well loved and respected by younger Kamilaroi French. However, on the surface, younger Gamilaroi French receive greater acceptance than Black people did when Aunty Chrissy was young. Sometimes it is only when young Kamilaroi French have experienced overt racism themselves – particularly at the hands of the police and the court, and particularly the young men - that they realise that such racism continues today. In one instance, a young man was taken to court four times in one year for crimes of which he was totally innocent. Afterwards he upbraided his mother for teaching him that he had rights, because, he said, he clearly did not.

Thus, here, it seems to me, Aunty Chrissy is implicitly referring to settler colonial ‘structural violence’ of the under-education of Aboriginal peoples, as well as the ‘cultural violence’ that continues to deny Black epistemologies, capacities and experience. When discussing the significance of ‘jobs’ on her diagram, Aunty Chrissy described how when Aunty Denise was applying for jobs she would see employers throwing her applications in the bin without even looking at them. Today, a similar pattern of exclusion happens in the fact that often “White people get Black jobs”. Thus, the ‘logic of elimination’ is at work here in different forms, but with the same intent: before, Black people were excluded from employment in a more obvious way (applications being thrown in the bin in full view); today they are still being excluded, but this time by Whites claiming to be Black. Regarding ‘housing’ Aunty Chrissy elaborates that White people live in most Aboriginal homes because “the boys get involved with White girls, and then the White girls get the houses” if the relationship breaks down, which happens often. The ‘structural violence’ of ‘marginalisation’ is thus evident in the fact that Blacks are often excluded from accessing Black housing when relationships with White girlfriends/spouses break down because the White mother is the one who is more entitled to housing under White law.

In response to such pervasive settler colonial ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence of repeated White usurpation, appropriation and exclusion of Aboriginal peoples’ entitlements and capacities, Aunty Chrissy emphasises the need for reciprocity. That is, rather than the notion of wanting to ‘take over’ White realms or enact revenge - respond to violence with further violence – Aunty Chrissy is calling for Aboriginal peoples to be recognised as diverse ‘equals’. Aunty Chrissy is not demanding that her people be treated as White people. Rather, Aunty

**Intimate connections between ‘peace’ and ‘family’**

When asked to draw ‘what matters’, Freeda lists “family” as what matters most, and which she verbally clarifies as being comprised of “parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, ‘extended family’” (see Figure 2). Freeda describes the relationships in her diagram as follows:

Their (‘family’s’) health attributes to your health and happiness. ‘Home’ is ‘family’, not a building, where you feel comfortable and safe in the environment, with people. Home is like justice, how justice should be. Fair, honest, open, a safe environment. The environment provides for your learning; you will learn more if you feel safe and comfortable. Respect is respecting elders, their teaching you, with that respect comes Lore and stories because you’re listening, that’s your growing process. Then you get more involved in the learning process, look at language, culture, history because to go forward you need to look backward. Language, culture, history, connections are solid foundations. Connections are how you’re related, parents, siblings, marriage and so on, your history, where you come from. Employment and so on come from this solid foundation, you can do it on your terms. Kids need to feel safe and comfortable to do well at school, be treated fairly. That’s what’s missin with schools.

In Freeda’s diagram and explanation, the first thing I noticed is that each of the ‘dimensions’ circling ‘family’ – happiness, home, health, elders - have equivalent and interchangeable significance and, in fact, comprise ‘family’:

Elders = home, happiness, health
Home = elders, happiness, health
Happiness = home, elders and health
Health = elders, home and happiness

For Freeda, when the ‘family’ is healthy and happy, its members can be healthy and happy - ‘peaceful’. Further, in her description of ‘home’, Freeda explicitly distinguishes between typical

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40 In this sense the ‘person’ and ‘family’ are intertwined, part of each other. As Freeda has said on several occasions “There is nothing individual about Aboriginal culture”; there is no such thing as an Aboriginal person without ‘family’ (see below). What Freeda is speaking against here is the Western
Western notions of ‘home’ which focus on the “building”\(^{41}\) and her understanding of ‘home’ as being ‘family’, being “with people”, feeling “safe and comfortable”\(^{42}\).

Freeda compares ‘home’ (and thus ‘family’) to ‘justice’. Therefore, in effect, ‘family’ ensure a “Fair, honest, open, a safe environment” which “provides for your learning”. It is possible to learn in this environment because you feel “safe and comfortable”. A primary source of learning is through “respecting elders, their teaching you”. When you listen and shows respect you are taught “Lore and stories” – “that’s your growing process”\(^{43}\). In this way, for Freeda, ‘respect’, ‘Lore’, and ‘stories’ are closely interwoven and are the result of being with ‘family’. That is, it is through ‘family’ that you learn ‘respect’, hear ‘stories’ and learn how to follow ‘Lore’.

\(^{41}\) And, one could add, other material characteristics of ‘home’ such as the garden, interior decorations, value, location and so on as indicative in popular Western lifestyle magazines and TV series.

\(^{42}\) Cowlishaw (2013, p.237, quoting Lasch) also sees the sense of ‘home’ and ‘family’ being “havens in a heartless world” as a critical aspect of Aboriginal ‘habitus’.

\(^{43}\) Such a focus on the importance of ‘listening’ in order to grow and become a responsible, responsive adult is also emphasised among remote Northern Aboriginal peoples (Sansom, 2001) and the Pintupi (Myers, 1986).
This first learning with ‘family’ is also the base for future stages of learning. The next stage of learning also involves ‘family’, but this time a more expanded understanding of ‘family’ drawn from knowledge of how ‘family’ is located with respect to “connections”, “culture”, “language”, and “history”. This second stage of learning, therefore, involves drawing on your roots as a “solid foundation”, in contexts which are ‘wider’ in terms of time, place, focus, “connections”, equipping you to deal with ‘employment’ and ‘schools’ “on your terms”. The outermost circle in Freeda’s diagram, then, appears to refer to interactions of ‘family’ with broader non-Aboriginal society: “career”, “employment”, “education”, “travel”. From her discussion, Freeda clarifies that to maintain happiness, health, home, elders - that is, to maintain ‘family’ – one must engage with broader society from the principles and everyday lived reality of ‘family’.

For Freeda, Black children often do not feel safe or comfortable at school, and are not treated fairly there; it is clear to them that this is not ‘home’, ‘justice’, ‘family’. Older generations have vivid memories of overt racism at school. Theresa once commented on the difference in her children’s eyes in school photos as the years progressed. For her, this tells a story. In the early years, their eyes are bright, shining, happy. As school progresses their eyes become serious and wary as her kids lost their sense of freedom, joy, and confidence in a caring environment around them, as they become more involved in wider society. While some young Kamilaroi French children enjoy school and are doing well at school, others today have experienced clear discrimination and disproportionately punitive attitudes for minor misdemeanours (see pp.178-179). Much depends on how proactive and supportive school principals are of Aboriginal priorities and needs (e.g. Purdie and Wilkinson, 2008).

In this respect – and similar to Aunty Chrissy’s interpretation - to improve the broader world for Aboriginal people would be to transform it such that it would feel more like “home”, where people would relate to each other more as ‘family’. This may partly explain the success of ‘Rural Town’ school in Eckermann (1999). In clear contrast, so-called ‘solutions’ typically

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44 However, while Freeda drew ‘career’ and ‘travel’ on the periphery of her diagram, she did not mention them further in the subsequent discussion, possibly indicating that they were even less important to her than the diagram may suggest.

45 See also Raible and Irizarry (in Gebhard, 2013, p.7) on the need for teachers to question the legacy of their professional role of “ongoing surveillance, discipline and management of youth...who belong to socioeconomic and racial subgroups that have been deemed problematic and ‘undesirable’”.

46 As discussed earlier, it is beyond the scope of the thesis to explore the broader application of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in depth, particularly with regard to inter-cultural social relations. The thesis limits its focus to justifying the need for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ and to eliciting core principles of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as lived by Kamilaroi French; future research can explore the potential application of such principles in diverse contexts.
envisioned by Western policy-makers, such as the NTER/SFNTB, stress equal opportunity and advantage ‘freed’ from obligation. Thus, for Freeda, ‘family’ is the critical medium, source, vector for identity, safety, ‘home’, ‘justice’, education and engagement with the broader society.

Figure 3 shows how “family” is also ‘what matters’ most to Sarah, followed by “Aunts, Uncles” and then “cousins”. It appears that three levels of ‘family’ relationships are important to Sarah. Sarah’s subsequent categories all emphasise the importance of relationships with other distinct Aboriginal peoples – with the “Aboriginal community”, with “links between tribes” and lastly with “People connecting Country”. Sarah makes no mention of ‘material’ aspects of existence such as jobs, education and so on, or of engagement with the broader society as being issues that ‘matter’ - in sharp contrast to dominant ‘social inclusion’ ‘Closing the Gap’ discourse. Nevertheless, in her daily life and in frequent conversation, Sarah demonstrates that she does value access to paid employment, education, apprenticeships and so on for Aboriginal peoples. However, notably these are not to come at the expense of ‘family’.

It could be said, then, that for Sarah, the significant social world, the world that matters for the survival of her people, is only that which involves Aboriginal people, and within this social world ‘family’ is the most important. That is, Sarah’s diagram illustrates that as well as diverse ‘families’ there exists a “network” of Black families who communicate with each other, understand each other, and understand the White world in ways of which most White people are oblivious. Thus, for Sarah, too, ‘family’ is ‘what matters’ most, situated within broader connections with diverse Aboriginal peoples who, while not precisely ‘family’, certainly share many of its core outlooks and who altogether qualitatively shape ‘country’.

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47 One of which is a more intimate version of ‘family’, but still probably broader than the Western nuclear extended family.

48 Interestingly, the growing use of ‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ in NSW to address any elder (not just one’s closer ‘family’) expresses both respect and a coded sense of being ‘insiders’ in the broader context of settler colonial society negating and attacking Aboriginal culture (especially in regional and urban areas). This is not to say that NSW Aboriginal peoples simply see themselves as “one mob” (although there may be strategic uses of such an approach depending on the political context) (Macdonald, 1997).

49 This broader sense of being ‘family’ was also reflected at the Armidale ‘Knockout’; the commentator’s style of conversation was very familiar and was primarily a medium for messages between crowd members: “Joey Smith says he is waiting next to the kebab stall and needs his jumper ‘coz its freezing”, “Marcy Ferguson if you want a lift they’re waiting for you outside the front, this is your last call, there are no trains to Sydney from Armidale”. Broader connections between Aboriginal ‘families’ can occur, therefore, through shared activities such as sport, work, conferences, organisational meetings and events, as well as through social events at a range of scales.
Thus, in slightly different ways, Figures 1 to 3 illustrate how ‘family’ is ‘what matters’ most for Freeda and Sarah, and is also of central importance for Aunty Chrissy, with her seeing only ‘God’ as being more important than ‘family’. For Aunty Chrissy, ‘God’ in fact is the Source of ‘family’ - and all people - physically and in terms of how they are supposed to relate qualitatively.

**Genocidal impacts on ‘family’**

‘Family’ is the primary consideration for considering what (‘negative’ and ‘positive’) ‘peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ might look like. Firstly, it must be remembered that ‘family’ has been a major target of settler colonialism from first contact, and continues to be targeted today (see Chapters 1 to 3). Centuries of ‘direct’ settler colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples have seen the attack of ‘family’ via any number of means -- outright killing; death from starvation and (sometimes deliberately) introduced diseases; widespread and entrenched settler colonial sexual abuse of Aboriginal women and children; and sterilisation of Aboriginal women. The removal of Aboriginal children from their ‘families’ in epidemic proportions across
Australia has been particularly highlighted as an intentional form of genocide, aimed at eliminating Aboriginal peoples as distinct peoples. Lemkin (1944) views such destruction of “family honour” by separating families as a critical aspect of genocide. Under the NTER/SFNTB, surveillance of Aboriginal ‘families’ has astronomically increased and there is accelerating removal of Aboriginal children from their ‘families’ today. New, cyclic forms of ‘direct violence’ are arising in Aboriginal communities as a consequence of centuries of genocide, including ‘family violence’, suicide, and lateral violence more generally. Such forms of settler colonial ‘direct violence’ and their derivatives have massive collective, cultural traumatic effects on, and grossly undermine the stability and well-being of, ‘family’.

Settler colonial ‘structural violence’ also profoundly undermines ‘family’. Settler colonial laws exiled Aborigines without their ‘families’; controlled Aboriginal marriages; controlled guardianship of Aboriginal children – even while natural parents were present; and broke down familial patterns (Tatz, 2001, p.24). Institutionalised racism and structural injustices continue today, including government neglect of fundamental Aboriginal-defined priorities; enforced bureaucratisation of Aboriginal communities, including Aboriginal ‘families’; forcibly relocating Aboriginal ‘families’ into White-dominated localities; and promoting ‘certificates of Aboriginality’ via State-sanctioned organisations at the expense of ‘family’ and those ‘born Black’ (see below). Such ‘structural violence’ undermines local Aboriginal ‘family’ authority systems; shared “corporate identity”; and fundamental qualities of ‘family’ such as reciprocity, ‘care’, and equitable distribution of goods; and perpetuates poverty, illness, marginalisation, and premature death in ‘families’. Silence around the reality of genocide and its ongoing impacts, and consequent increasing criminalisation of traumatised Aboriginal peoples - particularly women - has massive impacts on Aboriginal ‘family’. Primary caregivers are removed from ‘family’, and ‘families’ are increasingly hindered in their ability to care for children given their extreme levels of grief, illness and trauma.

Settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ also targets Aboriginal ‘family’. The engrained Eurocentric model of ‘self’ and ‘society’ places the State in a centralised power relation to homogeneous ‘citizen-isolates’, failing utterly to acknowledge the pivotal economic, political, social and cultural relevance of ‘family’ for Aboriginal peoples. Instead, the discourse of deficit views ‘family’ ‘habitus’ in strongly negative terms; under the NTER/SFNTB Aboriginal ‘family’ ‘habitus’ is targeted as a perceived barrier to relocation, economic participation, and the adoption of Western individualistic principles. Further, normalised settler colonial late

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50 As discussed on pp.62-63.
capitalist thought views economic relations purely in terms of exchange and accumulation, and both actively and implicitly attacks Aboriginal ‘allocative economies’ that uphold the political and economic independence and strength of ‘family’. Thus, settler colonial ‘cultural violence’ lies at the root of the genocidal processes that attack Aboriginal ‘family’ and impose White forms of economy, politics, society, nuclear family, and personhood.

**Implications of ‘family’ for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’**

Since genocide particularly targets Aboriginal ‘family’ – both in its concrete materiality and in its economic, political, social, cultural *quality and style* – a fundamental requirement of Gamilaroi French ‘negative peace’ is to stop such violence against ‘family’. Correspondingly, a central requirement of ‘positive peace’ is to actively uphold, and to find creative ways to build upon, the strength of ‘family’ in the context of ongoing genocide and its repercussions, including lateral violence. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ does not mean working just with a particular ‘family’, although this can be a powerful focus. Figure 5 in the Conclusion (pp.191-193) points to a more integrated model of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ where relationships with others, whole of community, and systems are accounted for, and where ‘uber’ forms of violence are taken on, adapted, and transformed. However, the focus of this section is to highlight that ‘family’ lies at the heart of how Kamilaroi French define and enact ‘peace’ and resist ‘violence’. ‘Family’ is the strongest source of political, social, economic and cultural capacity and expertise for Gamilaroi French. In this regard, ‘family’ must be recognised not only as seminal in how ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is understood and enacted by Kamilaroi French, but also how it corresponds to the integral, transformative, coordinating role in Lederach’s integrated peacebuilding model (see p.191). For Gamilaroi French, ‘family’ lies at the very heart of what it means to be ‘Aboriginal’. The fact that for some Aboriginal people ‘family’ is *not* a safe space, or is not a familiar and empowering experience, reflects the ongoing impact of genocide on Aboriginal peoples today, and its manifold consequences, including lateral violence.

Aunty Chrissy and Freeda stress that maintaining Gamilaroi French ‘principles’ and ‘standards’ - of ‘family’ specifically - is a matter of Aboriginal *survival*. It is not a matter of ‘individual choice’ or personal ‘preference’:

AC: and that – *really* that - the *honest* truth of it *all* is that ... Aboriginal people wanna survive they’ve gotta go back to the ol’ *standards* they ... the *principles* they had ... when we were *kids* growin up... not about –
F: no rules! ... there’s no rules today

AC: got no rules or discipline today, no! ... any – everything goes n anything goes ... n that’s how the world is unfortunately

A: (agreeing) mmm!

AC: if we wanna survive n there’s only one ... percent majority of us

F: what happened to – what happened to those roles n rules n discipline

AC: government made a lot of ... decisions for the parents! n parents - stead of lookin at it wisely ... sayin I got this kid in my – like with Dylan I say to im I got Dylan, I’m his parent, I look after im, I make sure ‘e’s safe, he’s clean, he ... has a good meal, I’m – that’s my duty to discipline im ... n I slap im whether youse like it or not I told DOCS that ... n they said ‘yeah’ ... n it’s not about slappin or ... s’ about

Thus, rather than obsolete or distant values from a romantic past as dominant discourse presumes, Aboriginal ‘rules’ and ‘ol’ standards’ are concrete, tangible and understood as central requirements for survival into the future as a people\(^5\). Such practice-based ‘rules’ constitute core forms of Aboriginal resilience in the face of genocide. As Freeda points out, the very erosion of shared ‘morals’ and ‘rules’, and the failure to follow\(^6\) these rules, is a primary source of “conflict” in itself\(^7\). In particular, Aunty Chrissy identifies government usurpation of the legitimate role of Aboriginal ‘families’ to socialise and educate their children as a key cause of the erosion of these Aboriginal ‘rules’, ‘standards’, and ‘principles’. Thus, what is at stake here is the very stability of the moral Aboriginal structure, as a key mechanism for sustaining this structure is removed.

In a comparative manner, Baumel (1999, pp.332-333, 342) illustrates that in the Bergen Belsen Nazi death camp, Jewish women drew upon traditional Jewish values of hesed (kindness) and pre-Nazi connections and experiences to create “networks that acted as substitute families” as

\(^5\) Naturally, such ‘rules’ and ‘standards’ cannot be replicated in precisely the same manner as in previous decades. What Aunty Chrissy and Freeda are referring to here is upholding the principles underlying these ‘rules’ and ‘standards’, which can fluidly adapt to changing circumstances.

\(^6\) What Freeda signifies as ‘believing’ in the rules here is actually enacting, following the rules: “you gotta ... live up to these morals n rules”. Such an Aboriginal emphasis on enacting rather than simply believing moral laws has been frequently noted in the literature on both ‘traditional Aboriginal spirituality’ and ‘Aboriginal Christianity’ (Berndt and Berndt, 1981, Stanner, 1984, Schwartz and Dussart, 2010, Trigger and Asche, 2010).

\(^7\) As discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, this correlates with academic perceptions that it is failure to follow Lore that causes conflict, and that the erosion of shared ‘conceptual complex’ and Aboriginal ‘habitus’ is a primary source of conflict for Indigenous peoples.
a survival strategy. The creation of ‘family’ was vital in providing an “illusion of normalcy”, “positive role identification”, and cooperative networks, all of which acted as a “psychological survival mechanism... when practical”⁵⁴ empowerment was impossible” (Baumel, 1999, pp.342-344). Without such ‘family’, there was no continuity of the complex system that is Jewish culture, Jewish being-in-the-world. Thus, within what possibilities for action were available to them some Jewish prisoners were able to resist the intended “atomization and human fragmentation” of the camps by “creating group solidarity”, illustrating, particularly among Jewish women, “the depth of communal bond in crisis” (Baumel, 1999, pp.343, 345). Even in contexts of high trauma, forms of resilience can subvert and transcend perpetrator designs⁵⁵.

Similarly, Aunty Chrissy and Freeda emphasise that it is both possible and vital for Aboriginal peoples to take a stand and uphold their ‘morals’ and ‘rules’:

AC: I said to ‘er Jessie⁵⁶, you know, ‘if you want your kids you gotta fight for em’ meanin that she gotta stop drinkin n stop smoking marijuana n ... not go around pubbin or clubbin with the kids- with the girls n stuff like that

F: so had to set down rules ... you know?

AC: she never –

F: n see we believe in those rules... that’s ... that’s what it is I think with our families is our families have morals n rules ... you know that you gotta live up to ... you know, you gotta - you gotta ... live up to these morals n rules in order to stop conflict ... right? ... wouldn’t you say? like

AC: no, yeah –

F: like Nan n Pop had rules you know when you walked in the house you say hello to ... you say hello to your elders as soon as you walked into the house you know ... n you go to bed n you don’t steal n you don’t swear n you don’t do this n you don’t do that ...so, you know ... n ... when people don’t have those rules ... they tend to get into conflict a

⁵⁴ It must be remembered that in Nazi policy impacts on Jewish women were especially great since women were killed if pregnant or accompanying small children, and survivors were often “subjected to conditions that were worse than those of men” (Baumel, 1999, p.343).
⁵⁵ Even the Holocaust did not control its victims deterministically: there were “rescuers” and “resisters”, and Jewish responses to the Holocaust are diverse, including incorporating Holocaust survivorship into their identity; contextualising it within broader history of Jewish victimization; or objecting that focusing solely on the Holocaust diminishes the experiences of czarist pogrom victims (Stein, 1993, pp.499-500).
⁵⁶ Pseudonym.
lot easier ... I think, you know? when they don’t have respect for other people, it’s teachin em to have respect for other people

AC: that’s what it’s about it’s not about rules, it’s about respect... one for another, isn’t it, you know

F: respectin human life... I spose

While settler colonial forces are attacking the heart of Aboriginal culture and its means for survival, Gamilaroi French insist that it is possible to consciously resist; Aboriginal people can “fight” by upholding their rules of ‘respecting’ other people and ‘caring’ for their children. That is, the intensification of politics and ‘Aboriginality’ occurs in specific spheres, not anywhere and everywhere. Aboriginal peoples experience intimate agencies in marginal spaces. What matters, then, is what is closest - ‘family’ is paramount in the politics of proximity. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here, then, would necessitate combating in particular the discourse of deficit around ‘family’, and the structural violence of ‘segmentation’ underlying much lateral violence today. Such ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ would involve recognising the richness of existing contemporary Gamilaroi French culture, and how unique Kamilaroi French ‘family’ epistemologies, methodologies, insights, and practices can promote resilience, address trauma, and contribute to positive, sustainable, empowering change – as defined by Gamilaroi French.

‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’

One last point must be made regarding what Kamilaroi French ‘family’ call “White people pretending to be Aboriginal”. Gamilaroi French distinguish between “born Black” people who have grown up in Black families; Stolen Generations people who want to connect with their Black ‘families’ (see, for instance, Everett, 2006, 2010); and “White people pretending to be Aboriginal”, “Wannabes”, “wanna be Blackfellas”, “Johnny-come-latelies” – people who have grown up White and have all the priorities, assumptions, and motivations typical of White people. For Kamilaroi French, such White priorities and assumptions typically include individualistic attitudes focusing on self-gain rather than respect for and commitment to a wider group; nuclear family practices rather than ‘family’ as lived by Gamilaroi French; centralised, hierarchical ‘representative’ leadership rather than internal and inter-group relations of ‘relative autonomy’ (see Chapter 5); and often unquestioned, implicit support for

57 The precise mechanisms and processes for upholding ‘family’ ‘standards’ would need to be fleshed out by particular people, as appropriate to their specific context and priorities.
White systems of governance, police, the justice system, education, employment, language, as well as a social preoccupation with the appearance of one’s house, car, and career status. This issue is hugely complex, little researched, and what I present here is simply a broad-brush depiction gleaned from discussions with Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

Contrary to recent lateral violence commentaries that discuss verbal abuse and racism against some lighter-skinned Aboriginal people (Gooda, 2011, Bennett, 2014, Wingard, 2010), skin colour is not the determining feature for identity for Kamilaroi French. Rather, as this chapter has demonstrated, living, ongoing commitment to ‘family’ – in both its embodied and ontological senses – is the key primary signifier of ‘Aboriginality’. Colour of skin is of little importance. It is actions that must be constantly demonstrated to maintain, negotiate, activate ‘family’ relationships and qualities. That is (paraphrasing Quinn, 2006, p.375), Aboriginal people do not just learn to think of themselves and represent themselves as Aboriginal people; they learn to be Aboriginal people through cultural socialisation as ‘family’. Meaningful practices are always “produced and negotiated out of the conditions in which they are embedded” (Bauman, 2010a, p.2).

The issue of the Stolen Generations is a separate matter to ‘Wannabes’. Kamilaroi French have commented approvingly on so-called Stolen people who are looking for their ‘families’, or who join local Aboriginal organisations and genuinely try to learn about and respect Aboriginal cultures. Stolen people have become part of Gamilaroi French ‘family’ by being brought up by them and through marriage. What is not tolerated are those people – whether Stolen or not - who claim to be Aboriginal and who take control of Aboriginal organisations and who claim to speak on behalf of local Aboriginal peoples, while in reality following the priorities and mindsets of White people. What is expected is that Stolen Generations people would be wanting to find their ‘families’, and would take a humble, “back-seat” approach to Aboriginal organisations, and not try to “put themselves forward” in matters of which they have no experience or authority. However, after demonstrating sustained commitment and increased understanding over the years, such people are accepted into the community and are able to participate more fully.

In contrast, ‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’ claim that they can be ‘Aboriginal’ without having anything to do with their Aboriginal ‘family’ (or community). Such an attitude is a heated topic of discussion among Kamilaroi French, as Freeda and Sarah illustrate:
F: but *this* is what I don’t understand, you know, these *so called* … Johnny-come-latelies or wannabes or wanna be Blackfullas right, you know, if you *really* wanted to be Aboriginal what would you - be your priority, knowin who your mob were?

A: (quietly) mmm

F: knowin who your family were? but when a *kid* takes an apprenticeship n e says my Mum says … my Dad’s Black my Dad’s Aboriginal from Moree I don’t know who he *is* or -

S: yeah! (laughs)

F: – I don’t know who he *is* but I want this *job*

A: (quiet laugh) *yeah*

F: doesn’t that –

A: that *shows* you

F: that *shows* you doesn’t it!

A: *yeah*

F: you know?! but I’m gonna take this Aboriginal apprenticeship!

A: yeah

F: ah I don’t *care* who ‘e *is*

A: yeah

F: … you know?

A: *yeah*

F: that – *that* shows you ...

A: shows you because - ... recognition n knowin who your *people* are is so *important* isn’t it

F: it – it *is*!

A: it’s who *you* are
F: it’s who you are!

S: yeah ... yeah

F: you know?

F: and how can you identify as Aboriginal if you don’t know

S and F: who you are

S and A: yeah

F: who your people are, who your father is!

A: yeahhhh

S: (long laugh)

A: (small laugh)

F: how can you identify

A: yeah

F: what are you identifying with

A: yeah ... they still think that ... blood stuff ...

F: like – like

A: (ironically) ‘fifteen percent’

S: (disgusted tone) ah yeah

F: Kiah worked in the ... bank ... n there was two other girls there that were on Aboriginal traineeships too ... n she said to em ‘where – where are your people from’ n they said ‘we don’t know’ ... (pause)

A: yeah

F: well how in the hell do you identify

A: yeah
F: with … ‘oh, we don’t know’, ‘oh, yeah, I know that mob! We Don’t Know they come from Timbuctoo don’t they!’

A and S: (laugh)

A: yeahhh

F: you know what I mean! … ‘oh I don’t know my Dad’, ‘oh, I know I don’t know me Dad!’

A and S: (laugh)

F: isn’t that down near Tasmania somewhere?

A: (laughs) yeahhh

F: you know? … how blatant is it

For Freeda and Sarah, the notion that one can be ‘Aboriginal’ and have no relationship with or commitment to ‘family’ is both absurd and dangerous. Such a notion threatens the political, economic, social and cultural well-being of ‘family’ at ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ levels. In the context of ongoing genocide, claims by ‘wannabes’ to be ‘Aboriginal’ are a form of ‘false witness’ that denies the collective, cultural trauma of ‘born Black’ people, and undermines their need for clear, separate boundaries from settler colonisers (see Chapter 4).

In contrast to common assumptions of ‘wannabes’, one cannot erase a lifetime of socialisation of being brought up in White society as a White person. Cliff (in Yamanouchi, 2012, p.62) misunderstands this cultural reality as “racism”, claiming that “Aboriginal people are racist”. Cliff becomes angry when his own ‘individual’ ‘choice’ to suddenly ‘declare’ himself Aboriginal is not accepted by the broader Aboriginal community. There is no sense of ‘shame’ of asserting oneself against the group, no sense of having to earn the authority to speak, no sense that he is in effect ‘speaking on behalf of’ others (and that this is unacceptable) by claiming to be Aboriginal when he has not been brought up in an Aboriginal ‘family’. One cannot suddenly ‘become’ Aboriginal by receiving a piece of paper. The notion that social reality can suddenly be created by abstract, formal means, orchestrated by elites, and far removed from the reality on the ground, is mirrored both in the issuing of government-sanctioned ‘Aboriginal’ ‘certificates of identity’, and in the concocting of ‘peace agreements’ and ‘peace accords’ at elite government levels while ignoring Implaced, relational aspects of peacebuilding (e.g.
Lederach, 2003). In this sense, as Durkheim (in Thompson, 2002, p.102) says, ‘modern man’ has a ‘primitive’ conception of social facts, believing “that a legislator can create an institution out of nothing by a mere injunction of its will”. We cannot simply will or declare certain things to be social realities. Instead, relationships, shared time, experiences, activities, being-in-place together are critical both for the creation and reproduction of Aboriginality and for the creation and perpetuation of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. However, relationships cannot simply be approached in an instrumentalist way (Lederach, 2008, pp.41-42); one cannot simply spend a little time with Aboriginal people and then claim to be Aboriginal. Similarly, developers and government cannot simply ‘engage’ with Aboriginal people in contexts of negotiated native title agreements and pretend that such ‘relationships’ are durable, disinterested, or aimed towards anything other than access to resources. Particularly in a genocidal context, attention must be paid to implaced Aboriginal metaphysics, ontologies, epistemologies and the concrete political, economic, social conditions that attack them.

The notion of having an ‘individual’ ‘right’ to identify as ‘Aboriginal’ clearly has its roots in liberal democratic thought, not in Aboriginal cultures (see Chapter 3). Yamanouchi (2012) appears to tacitly accede with such assumptions. Her focus is on how Cliff may be enabled to ‘integrate’ his ‘self’ so that he does not experience so much internal contradiction. Yamanouchi (2012, pp.70-71) suggests that Cliff’s participating in the activities of Aboriginal organisations, spending time relating with Aboriginal people may help him to become, in effect, more fully ‘Aboriginal’. Yamanouchi (2012, p.62) assumes that:

\[\text{While the Aboriginal self has been usually conceived as forged through relationships with kin, in the contemporary world, Aboriginal lives are constrained by a genealogical understanding of Aboriginality, that is, one based on descent.}\]

Such an assertion directly contradicts what Gamilaroi French ‘family’ repeatedly emphasise – through their actions as well as words – and what, according to Yamanouchi’s (2012) own observations, many other Aboriginal people also understand. This thesis has argued not only that Kamilaroi French ‘family’ and their ways are very much part of the “contemporary world” – even while dominant society ignores, invisibilises, and attacks them – but also that their core ‘principles’, ‘standards’, ‘rules’ can be drawn on to inform and transform the contemporary world via ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. Thus, “relationships with kin” are not only still seminal in defining ‘Aboriginality’ according to Black people, but also the quality and style of ‘family’

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58 See also Introduction regarding the top-down, elite-focused dominant liberal model of peacebuilding.
relationships comprise vital resources for promoting ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace in contexts of ongoing settler colonial genocide.

Determining ‘Aboriginality’ by ‘certificates of identity’ via state-sanctioned ‘Aboriginal’ organisations\(^{59}\) must be recognised as a culturally violent practice. Here it is government processes and worldviews – not Aboriginal ways of being ‘family’ – that is determining who is ‘Aboriginal’ and how in these contexts. In her discussion, Yamanouchi (2012) ignores power and history; she overlooks – and so silences - the long history of Western hegemonic control, policing, containment of ‘Aboriginality’ which has occurred from the outset of first contact and which continues today in myriad legislative and discursive forms (e.g. Macdonald, 2010, 2013, Dombrovski, 2010, p.137, see Chapters 1 to 3).

The notion of ‘Aboriginality’ based purely on ‘genealogy’ and ‘descent’ is a form of biological essentialism – the “ideology of the gene” (Kressig, 2012) - closely linked with earlier ‘blood quantum’ notions followed by the Australian nation state prior to native title. Goldbeck and Roth (2012) demonstrate the increasing prevalence of previously non-Aboriginal identifying people wanting to identify as Aboriginal, and using genetic testing to do so, in North America. Genetic essentialism and “scientific imperialism” is also evident in the mushrooming ‘genome biocolonialism’, although Aboriginal peoples in Australia are strongly resisting this ‘Vampire Project’\(^{60}\) (Kressig, 2012, Berthier-Foglar, 2012, Kowal, 2012). Appropriation and misrepresentation of Indigenous identities is evident in romanticised, reductive, essentialising and stereotypical cyberworld blogs (Iseke-Barnes, 2002). Kamilaroi Forum (2015), for instance, reveals persistent ‘blood quantum’ assumptions in defining ‘Aboriginality’ even as it presents Kamilaroi peoples as no longer existing – despite occasional strong protests by living Gamilaroi.

The Kamilaroi Forum largely involves White people seeking knowledge of their ‘Aboriginal’ ‘ancestry’ in order to claim ‘Aboriginality’. According to Gauthier-Labourot (2012), such genetically essentialist notions of identity undermine the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. The Cherokee, for instance, define identity in terms of relationship, including through adoption (Gauthier-Labourot, 2012). Thus, in line with Gamilaroi French insistence that ‘Aboriginality’

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59 Here I do not decry the valuable political role that Land Councils and other such Aboriginal organisations can play. They are in fact one of the few areas where Aboriginal peoples have any political influence. However, it cannot be denied that they are required to ‘manage’ themselves according to White organisational principles and legislative constraints and are still financially structured by and otherwise ‘accountable’ to government, despite ongoing efforts to decolonise these organisations (Macdonald, e.g. 2000, 2013, Hunt and Smith, 2006).

60 The ‘Vampire Project’ is how some Aboriginal people describe The Human Genome Diversity Project which wants to ‘biomap’ - take blood and hair samples - of Indigenous communities from around the world to research the genetic make-up of Indigenous peoples (Kowal, 2012).
depends on, and revolves around ‘family’, Goldbeck and Roth (2012), Berthier-Foglar (2012), and Gauthier-Labourot (2012) demonstrate that identity is cultural, not genetic. Identity is socially constructed, not biologically essentialist.

However, what Kamilaroi French insist on here through their everyday actions, the vital importance of ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ in being Black, must not be misinterpreted as lateral violence. As discussed in Chapter 1, lateral violence is broadly understood as stemming from the internalisation of colonial discourse, and the subsequent imposition of colonial notions and behaviours on oneself and one’s own people. Gorringe et al (2011) provide a valuable discussion around settler colonial notions of Aboriginality and ‘authenticity’ and associated deficit discourse, delineating potential Aboriginal internalisation of such notions and subsequent lateral violence. Gorringe et al (2011) is concerned that binary discourse around ‘Black’ and ‘White’ leads to social exclusion and the ‘tall poppy’ syndrome of Aboriginal people not striving for, or aspiring to, ‘success’. However, it is important to recognise here that not all Aboriginal people may want to be ‘included’ in mainstream society. While many Aboriginal people may want education, employment and a broad range of services and opportunities, they may not necessarily want these at the cost of their core cultural values and priorities. In the context of ongoing genocide, the desire for clear separation between ‘Black’ and ‘White’ can also be understood as a response to massive trauma on the part of some Aboriginal people (see p.48). Most significantly, it is critical to distinguish between the lateral violence discussed by Gorringe et al (2011) and Kamilaroi French speaking against ‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’. In the first case, engrained settler colonial concepts of Aboriginality, authenticity, deficit are being imposed upon Aboriginal people and internalised. In the second case, Kamilaroi French ways of being and seminal cultural imperatives around living Black are being upheld in the face of genocidal forces, here settler colonial definitions of Aboriginality and their material, structural, cultural repercussions. Thus, Gamilaroi French actions here do not constitute lateral violence, but rather the defiance and challenge of the ‘relative autonomy’ of ‘speaking for themselves’, being themselves, against settler colonial ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence (see Chapter 5).

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61 Settler colonial deficit discourse and notions of Aboriginal identity and ‘authenticity’ promoted by big business and government, particularly, but not only, in contexts of native title, play a significant role in promoting and sustaining Aboriginal lateral violence (Gorringe et al, 2011, pp.8-9). The genocidal context of competition for scarce resources and high financial and ontological stakes, increase the likelihood of Aboriginal people adopting exclusivist settler colonial notions of identity and ‘authenticity’ to undermine their competitors. Gamilaroi French have themselves at times been victims of such lateral violence.
What Gamilaroi French object to, then, are those White people – or indeed, other non-Aboriginal people – who claim Aboriginal identity simply in order to access Aboriginal-identified resources. Kamilaroi French also object to those White people who ‘discover’ their ‘Aboriginality’ – defined in an often distant, biologically essentialist way – and who maintain a romanticised and condescending understanding of Aboriginality. Gamilaroi French also object to these people then coming in to claim connections to land and assuming control of Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal-identified employment: ‘Oh, I just found out I’m 1/16th Aboriginal, so I’m going to claim Abstudy…run the Land Council…take this scholarship…etc’.

These objections are not based on faceless prejudice, but on repeated lived experience of such behaviour in local contexts. More than twenty years ago, Aboriginal activist Huggins (1993, p.461) made similar objections that genetic inheritance is not sufficient to ‘make’ someone Aboriginal, and that:

> Aboriginality cannot be acquired overnight. It takes years of hard work, sensitivity and effort to ‘come back in’. Forgotten people will tell you so. The debt has to be repaid in various ways. It’s a socialized learned pattern of behaviour and while the blood and spirit are fixed categories, there are protocols and ethics to adhere to when ‘becoming Aborigines’ again.

It is precisely the ‘protocol’ and ‘ethics’ of ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ that Kamilaroi French are defending.

According to Kamilaroi French the core focus of most ‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’ is accessing material benefits, as illustrated in Figure 4. In contrast to Figure 3 with its focus on embedded and interconnected relationships with people, Sarah drew Figure 4 to show ‘what matters’ to ‘wannabes’ and to White people in general:

F: it’s all about money

A: (drawing circles)

S: what they think they get

F: where are all these rich Blackfellas?

S: (laughs)

Sarah laughs because it is so clear from Kamilaroi French experience that most Aboriginal people are, in fact, highly marginalised economically. Figure 4 is an evocative, insightful (and
also cutting, cheeky and political) succinct comment on the primary objectives underlying White society, government, ‘civilisation’ (see, for instance, Richards and Swanger, 2008, Merlan, 2006, and Povinelli 1993, 2002, 2011, also Chapter 3). Whereas Figures 1 to 3 are populated with meaningful “connections”, and lived experiences with diverse peoples in vibrant communities; the single dollar sign in the centre of Figure 4 looks lonely, sterile and oblivious to the reality that truly ‘matters’ – ‘family’ and other living relationships. As discussed above, equitable ‘sharing’ is a key moral expectation of Kamilaroi French ‘family’. The attitude of ‘wannabes’ who simply want Aboriginal-identified resources – money, housing, apprenticeships, scholarships, jobs, services - for themselves triply opposes the ‘family’ imperative of ‘sharing’: firstly by taking for themselves without ‘sharing’; secondly by taking from those who have already been robbed, who already have too little; and thirdly, by taking what does not belong to you. The assumptions of ‘wannabes’ – that they are equally entitled to Aboriginal-identified benefits – arise from the ‘cultural violence’ of deficit discourse - that no culturally ‘authentic’ Aboriginal people persist in ‘urban’ areas (hence any ‘Aboriginality’ is due solely to ‘ancestry’) - and of postracialism – claiming that there is currently a racial ‘level playing field’ in settler colonial society (see Chapter 3). Such ‘cultural violence’ denies the need for pro-active, reparative and affirmative action policies to meet the needs of ‘born Black’ people who continue to face the impacts of genocide daily. Some ‘wannabes’ admit that they

Figure 4. Sarah’s ‘what matters’ to “Wannabes” (and other White people)
have experienced little, if any, racism\textsuperscript{62}, and that they are exposed to only mild forms when they disclose their ‘Aboriginality’ (e.g. Bennett, 2014). In contrast, ‘born Black’ people face racism and myriad forms of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence every day, as well as the intergenerational, cumulative, escalating repercussions of these\textsuperscript{63}.

By usurping Aboriginal resources and identity, ‘wannabes’ impact not only on the current generation of ‘born Black’ people, but also impact on the future of their people. Once again ‘born Black’ people are denied the opportunity to earn a decent wage, to be educated as they choose, to have a say in wider society and make social changes. By publicly claiming ‘Aboriginality’ and claiming to speak on behalf of and represent Aboriginal people in public positions (in government, educational institutions, in Aboriginal organisations and so on) ‘wannabes’ further undermine Aboriginal cultural priorities when these people think, behave, speak, write, imagine, assume, relate, value things according to White priorities. In one town, a ‘wannabe’ has become the CEO of a Local Aboriginal Land Council. It is well known that this man is “working the books” for his own financial benefit, while supplying poor quality whitegoods to Aboriginal families. When he came back from an Aboriginal housing meeting he made the racist comment (about the Aboriginal people in a particular town), “They’ve all got Holdens and a boat” (which also happens to be untrue). He has encouraged local Aboriginal people to put in \textit{individual} native title claims with the result that by 2009 there were thirty-seven individual competing native title claims, five from one ‘family’ alone. Such behaviour clearly divides the community further, undermining their capacity to work constructively together as separate but respected ‘families’ (e.g. Behrendt, 2008). This thesis has clearly demonstrated that the areas where Aboriginal people may ‘speak’, where they may be ‘heard’ by dominant society are painfully small, hedged about, and constrained within Western hegemonic discourse. If ‘wannabes’ usurp even these small spaces, they are again robbing ‘born Black’ Aboriginal people of their discursive power, of their chance to speak and to be heard in broader society.

‘White people pretending to be Aboriginal’ also impact on access to and cultural safety of supposed Aboriginal organisations for health, education, housing, and so on, for those ‘born Black’. Aunty Chrissy, Sarah and Freeda often recall a recent incident when Aunty Chrissy was

\textsuperscript{62} Commentators in Bennett (2014) refer to ‘racism’ as overt negative verbal and behavioural discrimination. In this regard, some other Aboriginal people may also say that they do not experience much ‘racism’. The Kamilaroi French, however, \textit{do} experience overt racism daily. Further, this thesis defines ‘racism’ more broadly as evident in settler colonial ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence.\textsuperscript{63} See, for instance, Brondolo et al (2009) and Ziersch et al (2011) on racism as a unique stressor; and on the need to investigate impacts of racism over the lifecourse.
waiting for an appointment at the Aboriginal Medical Service in Moree, her home town. A young White woman was waiting there for an appointment as well. Aunty Chrissy asked her “Where’s your mob from?” As is well known, this is one of the most basic, fundamental forms of communication amongst Black people – to introduce themselves according to their people and country so that connections can be made (e.g. Behrendt and Kelly, 2008). When Sarah does this in her role as receptionist at Port Macquarie hospital, Black people will feel “happy” to be asked this question, it helps them to feel “comfortable”, welcomed and acknowledged. However, when Aunty Chrissy asked this question in a friendly way, as is polite, right and proper according to Aboriginal culture, the young White woman felt threatened and went to the Board of the Moree ‘Aboriginal’ Medical Service and accused Aunty Chrissy of “harassment”. The Board then wrote Aunty Chrissy a letter and banned her from using the ‘Aboriginal’ Medical Service in the future. It is noted with special irony that when this White woman complained about racial discrimination (even when unfounded and actually a form of discrimination itself, and when conducted in a place ostensibly created to combat institutionalised racism), it was immediately acted upon, but when a Black person protests about genuine discrimination, “no one will back you”. What is happening where ‘born Black’ Aboriginal people are being excluded from supposedly ‘Aboriginal’ services for practicing even the most fundamental Aboriginal cultural practice? How is it that the view of a White woman – who, in the interests of affirmative action, should not be using the service in the first place – dictates who is and who is not allowed to use the supposedly ‘Aboriginal’ service? The issue here is not one of Aunty Chrissy misunderstanding the rules of the Aboriginal Medical Service. The issue here is that White perspectives are taking precedence over Black cultural forms, even in supposedly ‘Aboriginal’ domains.

‘Wannabes’, therefore, can have real, concrete impacts on Black access to vital services, and on the cultural ethos, expectations and values of supposedly ‘Aboriginal’ organisations. Thus, the actions and attitudes of ‘wannabes’ comprise a form of settler colonial ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural violence’ that attacks ‘family’ both by denying its importance and by opposing its key tenets. Particularly in the current context of ongoing genocide, attention must be paid to implaced Aboriginal metaphysics, ontologies, epistemologies and the concrete political, economic, social conditions that attack them.

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64 Unless, of course, she is married into a Black family.
Conclusion

‘Family’ is at the core of ‘what matters’ for Gamilaroi French collective well-being and resilience - as demonstrated both through normative social practice and through explicit Kamilaroi French theorisation. ‘Family’ is thus central for defining and enacting Kamilaroi French ‘peace’: expressing and defending fundamental Gamilaroi French needs – as defined and enacted by them - for ‘survival’, ‘well-being’, ‘identity’ and ‘freedom’ in the face of genocide. Kamilaroi French ‘principles’ of knowing who your ‘family’ is; of maintaining and activating dense, complex networks of lived relationships with ‘family’ as your first priority; and of having ‘family’ as the most important aspect of everyday sociality, and of metaphysical and moral focus, provide the basis for their survival as a people in the context of ongoing settler colonial genocide. Through ‘family’ one feels at ‘home’, upholds ‘justice’, learns, connects with others, understands, experiences and engages with the world. ‘Family’ is pivotal for Kamilaroi French personal and social ‘well-being’. ‘Family’ ‘principles’ include people ‘speaking for themselves’ - particularly regarding who they are – not having their identity usurped. Upholding and enacting the centrality of ‘family’ - by demonstrating both knowledge of and ‘care’ for ‘family’ - is the core focus of Gamilaroi French ‘identity’. ‘Family’ is also a primary, ongoing target of myriad forms of settler colonial ‘cultural’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence. Thus, for both the ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ aspects of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, ‘family’ must remain a central focus and goal.

‘Family’ is also the critical Aboriginal ‘institution-process’ for learning, mutual support, healing, resilience, political and economic action. In this way, ‘family’ can be seen as a fundamental, self-sustaining ‘platform’ (Lederach, 1997) for ‘positive peacebuilding’ for Kamilaroi French, and is the base from which further growth and development and engagement with wider society takes place.

From these findings it is clear that ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here does not occur simply through declaring certain relationships and social conditions as existent. Rather, such relationships and social conditions must be enacted. Nor can ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ rely on merely the instrumental use of relationships (Lederach, 2008). Rather, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in itself revolves around relationship with ‘family’ as a core requirement for Kamilaroi French ‘peace’ both as experience, ‘institution’, and process, and as ‘goal’ and aspiration.
Chapter 5: ‘Relative autonomy’ as a core element of Kamilaroi French peacebuilding

Ever since the seeking of preference and distinction came into play, the world hath been laid waste. It hath become desolate
Bahá’u’lláh (in UHJ, 1996, p.376)

Nothing will induce [the Kamilaroi] to acknowledge any human being their own age their superior, or to show any mark of deference
Hale (in Wood, 1972, p.151)

Within the fundamental context and focus on ‘family’ arises the second major element for sustaining and building ‘Kamilaroi French peace’ elicited in this research: ‘relative autonomy’.

‘Relative autonomy’ is linguistically signified by Gamilaroi French by phrases such as not letting someone “stand over” you; “standing up” to unjust behaviour; and the ridiculing of “big noters” - those with a “big mouth” who “put themselves forward”, that is, those who see themselves as superior to others. ‘Relative autonomy’ is not a term Gamilaroi French use, but rather my own term fashioned from ethnographic research. Subsequently, I discovered that others have used a very similar term – “relational autonomy” (Parson, 2012) - as well as “differentiation” (Myers, 1986) to describe similar Aboriginal cultural and social phenomena across Australia. However, I retain the term ‘relative autonomy’ in the hope that it will circumvent assumptions of such ‘autonomy’ entailing ‘individualisation’ or separation, or involving women only.

‘Relative autonomy’ is the normative Kamilaroi French attitude and expectation that every person and group is equally important and so, although ‘family’ is of paramount importance, each ‘family’ member is free to choose their own actions and interpret things for themselves.

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65 For instance, Atkinson (2002, pp.49, 41-43) uses the term “assertive aggression” to describe a similar concept of structured assertion of autonomy through the “expression of self-restrained anger or distress”, but views this as signifying conflict between “the rights of the individual and responsibility to the group”.

66 Finlayson (1997 p.146) ignores Myers’ (1986) primary stress on relatedness as the core of Pintupi sociality, with ‘differentiation’ occurring within relatedness, instead claiming that Myers identifies “autonomy and independence as paramount qualities in Aboriginal sociopolitical relations”.

67 For Parson (2012, p.15) ‘relational autonomy’ is based on “a feminist ethic of care” in contrast with “neoliberal values of individualism, self-efficacy, and self-responsibility”, and Smith (2010, p.576) also refers to Native feminist principles of “horizontal authority, interconnectedness…and mutual respect and responsibility”.

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However, as we shall see, this is not the same as the typical Western understanding of ‘autonomy’ and ‘equality’. ‘Equality’ does not entail *sameness* or uniformity. ‘Relative autonomy’ does not signify *separation* from or *independence* from others; it does not signify persons having or being a ‘law unto themselves’. Rather, all are responsible for the well-being of ‘family’ and all are free to make their own choices within this responsibility. In this sense, ‘relative autonomy’ entails one having *degrees* of autonomy – not absolute autonomy. This autonomy is always ‘relative’ in that it takes place in *relationship* with ‘family’ and within the wider commitment to the style, principles and well-being of ‘family’ (see below).

Through investigating rule-bound, ritualised, linguistically signified aspects of everyday Gamilaroi French conversation, practices, and in-depth interviews, three overall aspects of ‘relative autonomy’ and their implications for resilience and for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ are explored in this chapter: ‘equality’; deciding for yourself; and protecting ‘relative autonomy’.

### ‘Equality’ – the importance of each, the ascendance of none

Firstly, the sense and significance of ‘relative autonomy’ can be seen in the widespread focus on ‘equality’. In everyday actions, in general conversation, and in interviews Gamilaroi French repeatedly insist on what they call the “equality” of each person. In contrast to liberal democratic thought, ‘equality’ does not mean *sameness*, homogeneity, and equal, interchangeable roles and responsibilities. Rather, ‘family’ members have distinct roles and responsibilities according to age, kin relationship, and character. In Aboriginal political ontologies, authority is contingent upon ongoing demonstration of skills, capacities and commitment to the well-being of the group, as well as the consent and respect of others (Brigg, 2007, pp.13-14). Traditionally, different groups have differential access to distinct aspects of Law - men and women, senior people, particular kin and moiety identities. Authority is contingent and negotiated in everyday interactions, demonstrating attention to the needs of others and to general collective wellbeing by “carry(ing) out responsibilities for each other and for Country” (Brigg, 2007, p.13). Authority is thus enhanced by *extending relatedness*, not through the “‘rule of the elders’ based upon the simple criterion of age” (Brigg, 2007, p.14). Gamilaroi French relationships with ‘family’ are clearly distinguished from relationships with non-‘family’, particularly Whitefellas. This differential model of autonomy allows for a distinct Kamilaroi French sense of ‘equality’. That is, no person – regardless of age, kinship, character, ‘family’, cultural background – is *superior* to another, is *worth more* than another.

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68 Brigg (2007, p.4) presents a heuristic delineation between ‘ideal types’ of Settler and Indigenous political traditions in Australia: such characterisations are not mutually exclusive, fixed or totalising.
In contrast, as discussed in Chapter 1 to 3, settler colonialism is clearly predicated on enacting coercive hierarchy, particularly against Aboriginal peoples. In Western political ontology, individuals relate with the sovereign (including via extensive self-regulation) in an ossified pyramidal political hierarchy; authority is vested in the sovereign (Brigg, 2007, p.14). The sovereign has the capacity to reduce or remove the protection of life by law (Brigg, 2007, p.14). Under this worldview, it is necessary to defend the social body via an internal biopolitical struggle or ‘war’ “which proceeds through the casting out and abandonment of those marked as abnormal or other”, including those marked by race (Foucault, 2000, 2004; Brigg, 2007, p.15). Settler-colonial ‘civilisation’ forms through “hierarchy, internal societal struggle, and exposure to violence”. According to early settler-colonial thought, Aboriginal peoples should expect White violence as a necessary corrective to their own lack of ‘superior society’ or class to maintain suppressive internal order (Brigg, 2007, pp.15-16).

In sum, Aboriginal political ontologies rely on pluralistic “dispersion and embeddedness” and reciprocal, manifold, “relationship and relatedness” rather than “aggregation and abstraction” (Brigg, 2007, pp.9-11). In contrast, Western political ontology presumes a single sovereign, with a singular, top-down relationship to “the rule of law, or the nation” and homogenous, interchangeable subject-citizens (Brigg, 2007, p.10).

While Kamilaroi French notions of ‘equality’ are not merely a reaction to colonialism (see below), settler colonial genocide throws Aboriginal ‘equality’ into stark relief, and actively attacks the practice and defence of ‘relative autonomy’. Gamilaroi French normative actions, well-worn stories, and overt discussions illustrate the meaning and importance of ‘equality’ and ‘relative autonomy’ that, in fact, differentiates and constitutes clear boundaries between Blackfellas and Whitefellas.

Aunty Chrissy often relays how her father, Pop French, taught her to never think of herself as better, or worse, than any other person. At that time, Moree – where they lived - was thoroughly saturated with overt White racism; Black children were not allowed to swim in the pool, go to school with Whites, go to the same church as Whites, go to the same hospital as Whites, and so on. In the face of this racism, Pop French encouraged Aunty Chrissy to not accept notions of White superiority, and to not hate the White people for their racism. Rather,

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69 Some White people – including exceptional people in early contact periods – also follow the view that all peoples are of equal worth. It must be recognised, however, that it is far easier for one to follow this view when one is in the position of power in society. It is far more difficult to believe in one’s people’s equal worth in the face of engrained, ubiquitous racism and cultural violence, and far more challenging to not respond to such hatred and prejudice with hatred in turn.
he said, one should feel sorry for them because they are sick in the mind. Sadly, his wife, Nan French, did not see herself as equal to White people. Recognising her ‘equality’ has been an ongoing process for Aunty Chrissy, involving great anger and pain. Aunty Chrissy describes how the turning point for her was what she was learning at church in contrast with how she was being treated as a young Black woman growing up in Moree:

F: why did you used to fight? where did you develop that anger for to fight for your rights?

AC: I think through the – cos I was always in the church from sixteen, and I think that the ... God showed me lot of stuff that was right n wrong you know? and ... I think the ... really thing that got me in the gut was when I wanted to go to the pool, that’s the - I think that was the beginning of it all ...

F: right

AC: they used t’ take us over t’ the pool let us dangle our feet down ... not in the water (VERY ... LONG ... LAUGH ...)

F: you had to sit n watch the White kids swim

A: it’s ridiculous!

F: yeah ... and – and your – your determination not to allow Whitefellas to think that they’re better than you

AC: nuh, that was – yeah, that was all ...

F: all come from the pool, stemmed from the pool

AC: I think that was from –

F: Moree, Moree pool

AC: yeah, n the hospital see? ... they had –

F: ward

AC: they had our people in tents ...they had big general hospital, it’s still there today ... just modified a bit, they had the general hospital there (uses condiment bottles to show arrangement of hospital), the sister’s ward was there, uh ... laundry here...
isolation there, n right at the back of all that they had the Masters ward built, (sadly)

mmm

F: n that was the Aboriginal hospital

AC: Aboriginal hospital ... and uh, that’s where I nursed, yeah... so they’d ‘alf a dozen of
us they asked, we went n applied for the job and uh... so after six years I wanted to...
train? n they said ‘no you can’t cos you’re Black’ (small laugh) I wanted to be obstetrics
sister, mmm

F: so you had anger, you was angry, you... but you – you used your anger
constructively ...

AC: that’s right, yeah

F: didn’t ya

AC: anger’s not bad, it’s good

F: to advance yourself

AC: yeah, I think everybody needs to be angry to uh ... to survive, really!

F: (part smiling) but how do you - how do you ... teach young ones to use their anger
constructively today, you know ... like, you ... you used your anger in determination in
– you changed the anger into determination ... you know what I mean?

A: about justice

AC: no that’s right ... that’s right, that’s the right word because you’re determined
you’re gointa do better for yourself n not let-

F: people downtrod ya

Aunty Chrissy, therefore, has worked very hard all her life to challenge this notion of White
superiority, as have the majority of her ‘family’. Aunty Chrissy often speaks of how she has
changed compared to when she was young; before she would tolerate racist behaviour in
Moree - for example, White people pushing in front of her to be served at the shops - now she
directly challenges such behaviour.
Ongoing, everyday events – and particularly, shared experiences of ‘trouble’ - also prove the underlying reality of ‘equality’ despite settler colonial actions to the contrary, as Aunty Chrissy and Freeda discuss below:

F: you know, n don’t matter where they come from, they’re a human bein n they deserve to ... equal respect, you know whether they come from the gutter or ... or whether they’re rich or high n mighty, you know, they’re all equal, you know? they’re all human beins n –

AC: it’s true!

F: they need to be treated –

AC: and that’s true!

F: they need to be treated as a fellow human bein!

AC: you know my best friend was a prostitute ... yeah ...and uh, she had a such a lovely heart, yeah, and uh ... she’d used to always come n see me when she come back from Sydney, you know, tell me what was goin on with her ... and uh ... just ... got into that in - when she went to Sydney, you know?

A: mmm

AC: couldn’t get a job

A: mmm

AC: cos she never had skills, all she’d done was scrub floors n that n ... she just couldn’t – ended up at King’s Cross, prostitution, she was a lovely – I used to love Leall ... n just goes to show, n the drunks, I love the ol’ drunks, you know? you can sit down n have a decent yarn to em and uh, Mum used to live opposite the park? n I’d sit down n I’d work with ... Al Anon for a long time, yeah, n uh ... n they’re human beins that you can talk to, you know?

A: mmm

AC: they’re not stuffy n ... they don’t pretend to be what they’re not...

A: yeah
AC: just simple human bein n I found that with the – with the Al Anon thing n AA, Freeda worked with them too for a long time

F: (agreeing) mmm

AC: n they uh … doctors n lawyers, you know people think they just gutter people, they’re doctors n lawyers n ministers n …right across the board … with the alcohol n that’s why I just loved that n I recommend that to anybody who’s drinkin a lot I used to say to our people –

F: and the same in the refuge,

A: ‘go in Al Anon, go to AA’, you know … yeah

F: you know the refuge movement?

AC: yeah

F: you know, these are the women who are in conflict with their husbands

AC: yeah

F: and they’re all type of women?

A: yeah

F: you know, they’re rich n poor n –

AC: yeah

F: all different cultures n backgrounds so you learn that man’s equal to you, you know?

AC: but they’re branded too, they put a brand on people, you know?

F: they’re all classes n that… but, but when they come into the refuge

AC: yeah

F: we treat em as equal, you know? and – and because they’re equally in trouble you know?

Here Gamilaroi French insist on an ‘equality’ which mainstream society patently denies. Aunty Chrissy and Freeda explicitly point out the ‘equality’ of people White society typically rejects:
prostitutes, poor people, battered women, alcoholics. These people are a “best friend”, have a
“lovely heart”, are people you can have a “decent yarn” with, who “don’t pretend to be what
they’re not”. In contrast, White society has “put a brand on people”, and as Freeda discusses
below:

F: society’s put – said in order for Aboriginal people to be accepted we’ve gotta class
them, you know? ...

AC: yeah... yeah

F: we’ve gotta class em ... you know n we’ll only accept the best of the best ... is it?

It is White society that expects people to “only accept the best of the best”. Classism is a well-
known, centuries-long reality in Western societies. Further, it is well known that colonisers
have, in fact, treated Aboriginal peoples as ‘the worst of the worst’, as the shameful history of
Social Darwinism proves. Thus, whereas White society ‘brands’ people by typology, Kamilaroi
French stress the ‘equality’ of people70. Aunty Chrissy and Freeda emphasise that the reality of
‘equality’ persists despite and in the midst of colonialism, no matter what Whitefellas say.
‘Trouble’, in the way of alcohol addiction or domestic violence71, has the unexpected value of
demonstrating this ‘equality’ of all people. Whitefellas learn the reality that “high class”, well-
educated White people (those Whites respect) can just as easily suffer from this ‘trouble’ as
poor, Black people (those Whites reject). Thus, ‘reality’ — experienced firsthand72 through
working with people in ‘trouble’ — validates Gamilaroi French understandings of ‘equality’ as a
true, unavoidable, underlying fact despite settler colonial actions to the contrary.

Deciding for yourself

In everyday Gamilaroi French sociality ‘relative autonomy’ is ritually enacted through the
expectation of “deciding for yourself” by choosing your own actions without apology,
justification, or explanation; interpreting ‘signs’ and stories for yourself; and respecting the
privacy of people’s ‘inner worlds’. In this sense, “to be a mature adult human being is to

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70 This Gamilaroi French emphasis on ‘equality’ contrasts sharply with some other Aboriginal people in
Moree (often Stolen) who chose to ‘pass’ as White, adopting White practices of classism and exclusion
of Blacks, sometimes even towards their own family members (Reay and Sitlington, 1948).
71 Here ‘trouble’ is caused by unbalanced relationships, with either alcohol and/or violent men
dominating. Paradoxically such domination ultimately demonstrates the reality of ‘equality’.
72 In a similar way to Merleau-Ponty’s (1962, pp.444-447) understanding of how the working class
become aware of themselves as a group through shared experience - as a preliminary move towards
‘freedom’ — here Gamilaroi French emphasise the shared experience of all peoples in the face of
‘trouble’ — possibly as a step toward freedom for all peoples from such injustice.
exercise freedom of choice” (Rose, 2000, p.168). However, as we shall see, ‘deciding for yourself’ does not equate with Western notions of individualism and ‘uniqueness’.

Choosing your own actions

Actions are undertaken without overt discussion with, or justification to, others. ‘Family’ do not expect that one must do as another requires or directs. For instance, when Aunty Chrissy, Freeda and I decided to visit Brigette, there was no directly negotiated ‘time contract’ ‘drawn up’ between her and the visiting party (or indeed, between the visiting party members) in terms of obtaining permission to visit, setting an agreed arrival time, and overtly signalling the departure time. We simply drove over there, spent time together, and left in a similar unhurried and organic way. Before visiting Brigette, there had been some general discussion of going to bingo in the afternoon with Aunty Louise. When we got back from Brigette’s house, bingo had already started and, not having her own transport, Aunty Louise had been unable to go. No apology was made or demanded. In contrast, if I turned up later than I assumed I was expected or if I was unable to do something Aunty Chrissy, for instance, would seem to have liked, my automatic response was to apologise and provide reasons for the delay or omission. Each time Aunty Chrissy responded firmly and emphatically, “You don’t have to apologise to me. You decide what you’re goin to do”. Not apologising to others for your choices, then, is an important aspect of Kamilaroi French ‘relative autonomy’ of ‘deciding for yourself’.

Even children experience a high degree of ‘relative autonomy’ in Gamilaroi French ‘family’ by being far more autonomous in determining their actions for themselves. There are no set meal times and a child is allowed to help themselves to food when they are hungry. Similarly, there are no set bed times; small children run around until they tire themselves out and fall asleep in an adult’s lap. Adults do not closely supervise the children’s play although they ensure safety – children find their own entertainment with little interference from the adults.

Being autonomous is seen as a means to develop, and in turn express, unique character. Kamilaroi French do not expect everyone to respond to things in the same way. Each person has their own character - with one not being better than the other – and with the implication that that is just “how they are”. Certain actions may not be very wise, or may not be ‘proper’, but this does not equate with the person being judged worth less than others.

Aunty Chrissy often tells a collection of stories that describe a turning point in her life, where she ‘decided for herself’ by expressing her own character. These stories revolve around Aunty Chrissy’s first experiences of paid work from age fourteen, cleaning houses and providing
laundry services for White people in Moree. In all of these jobs Aunty Chrissy experienced exploitation. In each case she “stood up” for herself and demanded fair wages for fair work. In each case the (White) employer objected that the previous (Aboriginal) workers had tolerated those conditions, and each time Aunty Chrissy said that she was not that other person, and refused to do the unfair work. Aunty Chrissy was therefore effectively challenging the White employers’ implicit racism of expecting all Aboriginal people to be the same and of imposing unfair conditions on Blacks. Her experience with Mrs Armstrong stands out particularly:

AC: n you had to get down on ya hands n knees n put the polish down on the stupid verandah n polish it (laughs)

A: ahhh

F: mmm

AC: then I went did ironin for Mrs Armstrong? Mum worked for her for years ...

F: yeah

AC: ohhhhh! I blew ‘er up! stupid ol’goat!

A: (small laugh)

F: yeah

AC: Mum used to walk two mile ... Mum only stopped workin for her when she was ...

seventy? five?

A: wow...really?

AC: yeah, she used to walk all the way from eastern Moree, all the way over ...you know where [I couldn’t catch name]--- used to live?

F: yep

AC: over near there

F: yep

AC: dry cleaners or ...

F: north Moree, eh
AC: yeah

F: headin towards Boggabilla

AC: over near the bridge

F: yeah

AC: yeah and uh ... (singing tone) Mum’d go ov- walk all the way over there...do big basket like this (shows very large size) for the ironing n then she’d say to – n I’m sure she used to hang the clothes out...

F: yeah

AC: yeah, for ‘er ... and uh...the day I – which – Mum was sick, and I went over there, I said (calling out) ‘don’t worry about Mrs Armstrong, I’ll go over there this morning Mum’ ... so I got a ride over, I never walked ... and uh ... n she wasn’t – she had a car n everything n all?!

A: yeah

AC: n that minji bitch ... she coulda picked Mum up! ... n ... I said ‘I come from Mum’ – cos she knew me, I said ‘I come from Mum this morning’ ... and then after I did this big ironin and it was all - she coulda dry cleaned it! [they were dry cleaners]

F: yeah

AC: the silly bitch (small laugh)

A: (small laugh)

AC: (laughing) all these shirts, kids clothes n that! n then she said uh... I said ‘I’ve finished now thanks’ and uh ... she said ‘like a cuppa?’ n I said ‘yeah I’d like a cup of tea thank you’ so I ‘ad a cup of tea with ‘er n she said um ‘Would you like to ... (taps table) wash the floor in the laundry for me?’ I said ‘No I wouldn’t like to wash the floor in the laundry for you’ (small laugh) I’d done a heap of ironin...

A: yeah

AC: n she goes ‘oh, your mother always does it’ n I said ‘Well, I’m sorry, I’m not my mother ... and I object to my mother walkin all the way over here doin your ironin n
where you could pick her up’...and uh she wasn’t very happy with me, she told Mum what I said to ‘er ... and uh... Mum said ‘you shouldn’t’ve said that to ‘er, you know, you’ve been really rude to ‘er’ n I said ‘I certainly was, I shoulda been ruder to ‘er’ said (scornful tone) ‘they think you’re gonna walk over there n do all the ironin n mop their floor’, I said ‘I wouldn’t mop ‘er floor Mum!’ ... Mum was stubborn, eh

F: mmm

From a White perspective the above arrangement may not seem unusual or unfair (apart from, perhaps, better wages). The Western assumption is that the employer is not responsible for assisting the employee, the relationship is generally impersonal, based purely on the exchange of money for services, and that of a superior towards an inferior. As Macdonald (e.g. 2000) explains, Western economies are based on exchange rather than on Aboriginal allocative economies of ‘caring and sharing’ (see Chapter 5). However, whereas Macdonald (2000, p.102) surmises that entering into ‘exchange’ relationships may indirectly protect the ‘sharing’ economy by restricting it to only certain people, Aunty Chrissy expresses disapproval of those – even non-kin – who blatantly decry any form of ‘caring and sharing’ cultural principles. Such an ‘exchange’ arrangement grossly contradicts ‘family’ principles of all having equivalent levels of resources and demonstrating ‘care’. According to ‘family’ tenets, since Mrs Armstrong had a car she should assist Nan French who did not have one, particularly since Nan French was elderly and had a very long way to walk in the hot sun carrying a heavy basket. Further, although it may be acceptable to provide a service in exchange for money, this should be a fair, meaningful exchange. Thus, both the manner of Aunty Chrissy’s description, and the actions being described, clearly indicate Aunty Chrissy’s disapproval to the listeners around Mrs Armstrong’s anti-‘family’ attitude and behaviour.

Aunty Chrissy’s story about ‘deciding for herself’ is particularly pointed and poignant because Aunty Chrissy was ostensibly acting in the same position as her mother – doing Mrs Armstrong’s ironing, having tea with her, being expected to wash the laundry floor. However, through her words and actions Aunty Chrissy distinguishes herself and implicitly defends Kamilaroi French ‘family’ imperatives. She retorts “I’m not my mother”; verbally challenges the injustice her mother receives; and goes home without mopping the floor. Here expressing her

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73 Despite improvements in conditions for staff by some employers, such as crèches and other human resources assistance, Western labour history shows that improvements to staff conditions have been hard-won and are at risk of erosion, and that workplace relations are often hierarchical and impersonal.

74 Nan French, however, did not share this broader perspective and protested when Aunty Chrissy challenged Mrs Armstrong.

75 Not something considered ridiculous, like polishing a verandah which all walk on.
unique character supports the ‘principles’ of mutual ‘care’, ‘respect’, and responsibility as ‘family’ – ‘relative autonomy’ occurs within, and defends, ‘family’.

**Indirect requests and refusals**

‘Deciding for yourself’ is facilitated by ‘family’ requests and refusals generally being made *indirectly* (Durney, 1999). In contrast, ‘standing up’ to injustice is done very overtly (see below). As Theresa says, if a Black person does not have any money (or food etc.), “they’ll come over and sit down and have a cup of tea and ask how are things going. They’ll never ask for anything. You have to give it. If you don’t give it, they’ll just go on their way. Black people don’t ask for things”.' Theresa commented positively on how Freeda and I arrived at her house, looked surreptitiously in her fridge and then went to the shops and bought some food for her. On the other hand, if we’d seen that she did not have much food and had then had lunch at someone else’s house we would have been the “fuckin worst bitches in town”. Instead I came back and put food in the fridge, without her saying anything or me saying anything. Thus, indirectness is shown in making requests and in granting (implicit) requests. Although indirectness in Aboriginal communication has been discussed previously (e.g. Eades, 1985, 1991, 2000, 2004, von Sturmer, 1981) it has not been analysed in the context of ‘relative autonomy’. Here I argue that such indirectness facilitates choosing your own actions without giving offence or undermining the cohesion of ‘family’. In contrast to typical understandings of ‘demand sharing’ (see Chapter 5), among Gamilaroi French indirect requests and refusals help ensure that no one has the authority to demand that a person act in a certain way; no-one has authority over another person’s actions. It may be that unspoken expectations and habitual ‘family’ behaviours generally ensure that ‘family’ is properly ‘cared’ for. Alternatively, it may be that indirectness helps to sustain ‘family’ in the context of increasing pressures on fewer ‘carers’ where one simply is not able to respond adequately to the needs of even ‘close’ family members. Whatever the underlying reason, indirect requests and refusals enable the closeness of ‘family’ to be upheld while simultaneously enabling autonomy without explanation.

**Constraints on choosing your own actions**

Although one is - relatively - autonomous, this does not mean that one has wholly free choice. There are always consequences. If one were to enact improper actions, oneself and one’s

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76 While Theresa herself does at times ‘ask for things’, it seems that here Theresa was referring to typical Kamilaroi French indirectness in asking, particularly asking things of non-‘family’ members.
‘family’, and in some cases all things generally, would suffer consequences\textsuperscript{77}. Hence, ‘autonomy’ is always ‘relative’, not absolute. However, while a person may act in a transgressive way and so bear certain consequences, it still is not the case that one person has greater authority over another. The authority to correct and punish wrong-doing lies in the Lore, not in individual persons (see below).

**Protecting ‘relative autonomy’**

‘Relative autonomy’ is protected and upheld by Kamilaroi French ‘family’ through ritualised, rule-bound cultural praxis around ‘owning’ particular knowledge; reading ‘signs’ for yourself; interpreting stories for yourself; and through verbally and physically ‘standing up’ for ‘relative autonomy’.

**‘Owning’ particular knowledge**

Within Aboriginal societies, knowledge is not freely available to all, but rather, constraints on people and groups means permission and responsibility to access, speak about, perform, paint, display specific forms of knowledge (e.g. Macdonald, 2000, p.101, Rose, 2000). While not focusing on mythological knowledge associated with totemic sites, Gamilaroi French ‘family’ follow similar ‘rules’ concerning knowledge about ‘family’ connections and ‘family’ history, as well as more general, everyday knowledge about ‘family’ members. ‘Relative autonomy’ is protected by a person having any number of socio-cultural constraints (age, gender, classes) on whom share their knowledge, if any; by the imperative of not speaking for others; and by the reality that each person and group possesses their own particular, complementary forms of knowledge. In contrast to settler colonial society, then, Gamilaroi French access to and control of knowledge is less centralised and hierarchical.

**Interpreting ‘signs’ for yourself**

Aboriginal cultures have no centralised authority or hierarchy to dictate meaning, or to control access to, and interpretation of, ‘spiritual’ or moral knowledge\textsuperscript{78}. Rather, Gamilaroi French are

\textsuperscript{77} See, for instance, Meggitt (1962), Burbank (1994, pp.122, 171-173, 177-178).

\textsuperscript{78} While some Aboriginal myths do have clear morals and teach how to live properly, including in terms of relationships and proper behaviour between kin, often these lessons are only available to those who understand the broader framework and meanings portrayed in the stories. Further, more in-depth knowledge can only be earnt by those entitled to such knowledge and who demonstrate consistent trustworthiness through their behaviour.
expected to be aware of and to read “signs”\textsuperscript{79} for themselves. ‘Signs’ are almost everywhere, showing what you need to do, what ‘the Lore’ (or ‘God’) is telling you. Aunty Chrissy describes the Queensland floods as a ‘sign’: Queensland had been trying to dam the Murray and stop states lower down from receiving water; the floods were a consequence of their greed and injustice\textsuperscript{80}. Young people are supposed to learn to watch out for ‘signs’ and follow them. When Freeda was a child if her mother slapped her for something, she was supposed to know what it was for. If she asked, “What was that for?” she was slapped again, because she should have been taking notice and learning the proper behaviour. ‘Signs’ are evident in everyday life and relationships, as well as in more unusual and uncanny experiences. How much someone is told is a ‘sign’ of their trustworthiness and capacity. Parkie Boy explains that when the elders are talking to you, you should not ask questions. If you do, they “clam up”. You are supposed to ‘listen’ and learn from what they are saying and then try to follow what you have learnt. If you show that you are not ‘listening’ - by not showing the right actions - then you will not be told anything. On the other hand, if you ‘listen’ by showing the right behaviour, you may be told more, little by little, over a long period of time. This same process holds regardless of whether one is Black or White, ‘family’ or not.

Stories themselves stress the need to keep looking for ‘signs’ in order to understand the partial story that has been received\textsuperscript{81}, and in order to remain alert and vigilant for potential danger. Over the past eighteen years I have been told many stories of ‘signs’ which warned people; which people ignored at their own cost; and which if ‘listened’ to protected the people involved. I relay two of these stories here. Both stories reveal an atmosphere of impending violence; Kamilaroi French expectations – and, indeed, everyday experiences - of ‘trouble’ highlight the ubiquity of settler colonial violence.

\textit{Parkie Boy’s story}

Parkie Boy in Moree shared an overwhelming experience he had of the critical importance of taking note of and following ‘signs’. He is a man in his fifties who – as he describes himself – does not normally take notice of such things, does not normally think about spiritual things. Parkie Boy is not one to make up such stories. He was also reluctant to share this story with me because he was not sure I would believe him. However, with Freeda’s encouragement, he

\textsuperscript{79} While not exchanged in ‘rite’ (Merlan in Stanner, 2014, p.11), Gamilaroi French ‘signs’ are crescively symbolic and communicative (Stanner, e.g. 1965, pp.213, 215, and Sansom, 2001).
\textsuperscript{80} See also Black (2010) on contemporary environmental ‘signs’.
\textsuperscript{81} Similar to Sansom’s (2001, pp.12, 14) ‘delayed enlightenment’.
agreed to tell his story, although he did not want it taped. He also stressed that he wanted everyone to know that this is not “bullshit”.

Parkie Boy describes a recent time when he was employed driving trucks carrying weapons from one area to another, sharing the driving with a White man. One of the first ‘signs’ were his feelings of discomfort, and his thoughts that he had better stop this job soon, because it did not feel right to be bringing weapons from one area to another. However, he convinced himself that he would keep the job a bit longer because he needed the money. The next clear ‘signs’ were birds. As he was driving he saw all these birds – all different types of birds – flying towards the windscreen. Parkie Boy had driven many times and had never seen birds behave in this way. He commented on the birds in surprise to the White man, but the White man had not noticed them. Parkie Boy understood that these birds were warning him to stop what he was doing. However, he kept driving. When they stopped to sleep, Parkie Boy started hearing the sound of Aboriginal men chanting in a language he did not know. The White man was asleep and unaware of what was happening. After some time of hearing the chanting, Parkie Boy saw Aboriginal men painted up, ready to fight. He saw them in great detail, and describes it as very real. Parkie Boy became really afraid. He felt desperate and tried to run away. As he was trying to run away a truck hit him. When he was taken to the doctor, and he described what had happened (only in terms of the truck hitting him) the doctor was amazed because he only had two small wounds – one in his shoulder and one in his leg. They were small, round, neat wounds. The doctor could not understand how this happened. Parkie Boy understood that these wounds were the shape of spear wounds. After this happened Parkie Boy gave up the job of transporting the weapons and has not been attacked in this way since.

It is interesting to note that every time Parkie Boy noticed the ‘signs’ (his feelings, the birds, the chanting, the spear wounds) the White people around him (the other driver, the doctor) did not notice or understand the ‘signs’. It was only when Parkie Boy ‘listened’ to his own understanding of the ‘signs’ and carried out the proper actions, that the problems stopped.

After Parkie Boy shared this story, I commented directly that all I want to do is to find out what is the right thing to do and try to do it. Parkie Boy and his niece both immediately responded that I need to find this out for myself, no-one can tell me. Interestingly, Berndt and Berndt (1989, pp.215-216) describe how across Australia, Aboriginal myths are often silent on moral issues, allowing the audience to decide on who should be ‘condemned’. However, often the stories are framed such that knowledgeable listeners already understand their implications.
Thus, both through his story and through direct explanation, Parkie Boy emphasises the importance of reading and responding to ‘signs’ for yourself.

**Baiame and the bikies**

In the mid to late 1990s, I was undertaking undergraduate and then honours work with Aboriginal ‘families’ in the Upper Hunter Valley. Freeda was then the Coordinator of the Local Aboriginal Land Council. Freeda relayed an uncanny experience from that time. She was on the way to a meeting with a farmer to discuss the care and protection of the painting of Baiame which was on a cave on the farmer’s property. One of the issues was that motorbike races were held at the property and the dust was affecting the painting. As she was driving down the main road towards the direction of the farmer’s house, Freeda suddenly felt as if she had “hit a wall of ice”. She had to stop the car; she could not go forwards or backwards. After some time Freeda was finally able to move, and drove back home. She had not been able to keep going forwards. Freeda got back to the Land Council and phoned the farmer to apologise for not being able to come. The farmer was glad to hear from her. He earnestly explained that he had been trying to get in touch with her and tell her not to come. A group of bikies had come to his property and were in a very dangerous mood and had guns, and he had been afraid that they would attack her. By ‘listening’ to the ‘signs’ through enacting proper behaviour Freeda had been protected.

Being aware of and interpreting ‘signs’ for oneself is thus a vital part of everyday life – in both its uncanny and its more mundane aspects. The ‘relative autonomy’ of ‘deciding for yourself’ by ‘listening’ and reading ‘signs’ for oneself is important for the well-being of the person, their ‘family’, and, in some instances, whole regions and beyond.

**Interpreting stories for oneself**

The very method of how stories are told upholds the ‘relative autonomy’ of the listener. Standard ways of telling stories recognise that the listener is free to interpret actions and events as they choose. In contrast to Western ‘debating’ style discussions, there is no assumption that one person’s interpretation is ‘right’ and another’s is ‘wrong’, and that the speaker must convince the listener of the validity of their own interpretation. Rather, actions and events are described in terms of who did what and said what and went where with whom and so on, all without overt interpretive commentary. Actions and events are described in greater detail and at a slower pace where the information is more important. The following
section demonstrates the ‘relative autonomy’ of the listener ‘deciding for themselves’ by interpreting a story for themselves.

**Freeda, Tylor and the principal**

At the time of this conversation, Freeda was looking after her eleven year old nephew, Tylor. Freeda knew that I was familiar with Tylor and with previous poor treatment he had received at other schools, which were lacking capacity and interest in trying to work constructively with him as a “drug and alcohol baby”. The schools did not acknowledge Tylor’s needs; adopted an overly harsh, punitive approach to Tylor; automatically blamed Tylor if he got into conflict with White children (overlooking the fact that these children were harassing Tylor); and refused to change their processes in any way when Freeda had discussed Tylor’s needs with them. Freeda also knew that I was aware of the background context that some older local White boys were taking advantage of Tylor’s vulnerabilities and were exploiting him to steal and so on.

Before beginning the story, Freeda first relayed previous actions and words she had undertaken in relation to this principal, to demonstrate her position and show that she had done what was ‘proper’ in terms of trying to start a positive relationship with, and settle Tylor into, his new school. Freeda then described a phone conversation and some face to face interactions that happened between herself, the principal of the local primary school, and Tylor, on his first day at the school. She recounted words and actions in chronological and geographic detail, slowing down and repeating phrases – such as, “it was his first day” – where the story was more significant.

Freeda introduced the story by mentioning that Tylor had started school and saying, with reference to the principal, “She tested me straight up”. I didn’t understand. By asking how the principal tested her, I indicated my interest and so Freeda continued to tell me more. She described how on the morning of Tylor’s first day at school the principal had phoned Freeda, introduced herself, and then straight away asked could Freeda and Tylor enter the school by the back gate and go to her office. I didn’t know why Freeda was telling me about the way they entered the school. I knew it was important because she was slowing down, repeating things and giving lots of detail, but I didn’t ‘get’ the meaning. Because Freeda and I are good friends, because she has known me for many years, because she knows my position from previous actions (and probably because she knows as a non-Aboriginal person I can’t ‘help’ my

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82 Stories are often started with a general, lead-in comment. If the listener does not show interest, they are told no more.
ignorance), when she noticed my lack of understanding she said “I felt some patronism from it”\textsuperscript{83}. I indicated my agreement by asking (partly rhetorically) why would the principal want them to go in by the back gate? Freeda then said that the principal told her that Jeremy\textsuperscript{84} (an older, local White boy who is known as a troublemaker) was waiting outside the front gates. When I heard this, I thought to myself that maybe that was ok then (that is, maybe the principal’s intentions were better than I had thought), but was soon disabused of this notion. Freeda said that if she had known Jeremy was there she would have walked in the front gates, looked him in the eye, and walked past. I interpreted this as meaning that she would not have been afraid, her gaze would have challenged him as a warning, and that it was important that she should show her freedom from his control by walking past.

Continuing the story of how she and Tylor had gone in the back gate and then to the principal’s office, as requested, Freeda relayed, “She walked us into the room. I went and sat in an adult chair. She said, ‘No not that one, can you sit here so you can be next to Tylor.’ So there was I sitting next to Tylor in a kid’s chair with the three of them across the table sitting in the high chairs lookin down at us.” My reaction was – how outrageous! It’s bad enough that White people do stupid, offensive things because they are ignorant, but how terrible to do it on purpose or to be so clueless as to treat people that way. I indicated my outrage and said how insulting it was to do such a thing.

Freeda then described how the principal then shouted at Tylor, “Why is Jeremy waiting outside the front gates? You know why he’s there, you told him to meet you there!” and more along those lines. Freeda said how Tylor got red in the face and flustered and started fidgeting. She didn’t give her interpretation of Tylor’s behaviour. I knew, however, that this meant that he was getting very worked up inside. I indicated my interpretation by saying that Tylor reminds me of my middle daughter and that loud voices are very damaging. I also again indicated my outrage, saying that this was Tylor’s first day at school, and the principal should be making an effort to welcome Tylor to the school on his first day, to focus on his strengths and to show she thinks him able to behave well, to show respect and try to build rapport with both Tylor and Freeda. Instead, she had taken a directly hostile approach immediately, without any evidence that Tylor had in fact organised such a meeting.

\textsuperscript{83} In no conversations between Black people themselves did I see such direct explanatory qualifiers. Further, a Black person would have known a mile off that the behaviour was patronising, because of a strong lived history of such treatment.

\textsuperscript{84} Pseudonym.
Freeda then described that as this was happening, she sat there and didn’t say anything. I could tell that she felt very bad about this. Freeda went on to say that she felt that she had betrayed Tylor because she didn’t stand up for him. I indicated my understanding of her situation by saying that the difficulty is that she did not want to risk them (DoCS, via the school) taking Tylor away from her. Also, I said to her “It must have been a bit of a shock”. Later on, it’s easier to think of what to say and do, but in such a situation Freeda was doing her best to protect him. I knew that it was also an especially difficult position for Freeda because she was trying to build a relationship with Tylor since she had not been looking after him for very long.

Freeda then described that in response to what the principal said, Freeda turned to Tylor and said, “Tylor, if you come to school and don’t go off with these boys we won’t have to have any more of these meetins – whaddaya think about that?” Then she’d held out her hand to high five with him and he’d high fived and “They all just sat there lookin on”.

I laughed and showed exultation at this. Even though I didn’t say it directly, I thought that this was a very neat way of showing solidarity with Tylor in a way that the authorities would not be able to target. It was also in my view a show of collective Aboriginal defiance since, one would assume, high-fiving is itself a way of lowering the ‘official’ status of the meeting by its casual nature, and also is a form of resistance against expected forms of behaviour in a Western meeting with authorities (in this case deference towards the school executive).

Thus, it can be seen that in this story, apart from one response to my evident confusion, Freeda did not provide her own interpretation of why certain behaviour was occurring. Freeda as speaker did not attempt to impose a single, authoritative interpretation on me, the listener. One person’s view is not considered more authoritative than another’s just because of who they are. Moreover, for someone to simply express their judgment there is nothing to back it up; it is just one person’s view and has no truth to it (see below). Instead, Freeda precisely described the scene in terms of words and actions in place and time. It was as if Freeda was presenting a ‘movie’ in my mind of what was happening. All I had to do was watch this ‘movie’ and then I would know what was really going on, what the meanings were behind these actions and words. In this way, my ‘relative autonomy’ as listener was respected; it was up to me to ‘decide for myself’ by making my own interpretations. Such a way of telling stories may also be a way to protect knowledge. In complex, subtle ways of speaking and acting a listener

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85 See also Alfred (in Smith, 2010, p.575) on Indigenous governance based on “primacy of conscience” rather than centralised coercive authority.
shows whether they are capable of being told more. If they are told, they must understand it for themselves; they are not told the ‘secret’ of its meaning.

Privacy of one’s ‘inner world’ as an aspect of ‘relative autonomy’

Not only in stories, but in general everyday conversation, a similar method of upholding interpretive ‘relative autonomy’ through ‘deciding for yourself’ is intuitively followed. Certain topics are freely discussed and other topics are never discussed. Gamilaroi French often talk about people’s actions, their whereabouts, what they said, and other outwardly observable aspects of day-to-day life. However, possible motivations for behaviour and possible hidden feelings of others are not discussed. In contrast, settler colonisers explicitly speculate on their own and others’ motives, often employing amateur psychological interpretations around why someone did such and such. Asking and answering this question why assumes that it is acceptable to pry into the ‘inner world’ of another person, to uncover their closest thoughts and feelings. No-one asks another why they or someone else did something. Such privacy accorded to people’s ‘inner world’ is another way to uphold ‘relative autonomy’. Inner thoughts and feelings are not shared; they are not public property. By not having to disclose this ‘inner world’ and by knowing that others are not openly discussing your ‘inner world’, there is greater autonomy to act appropriately (or not) without justification or apology, including through indirectly making or refusing requests.

Protecting ‘relative autonomy’ verbally and physically

According to everyday Aboriginal praxis, the dual reality of ‘relative autonomy’ – of each being important yet none ascendant – is proactively defended and maintained. Sutton (in Finlayson, 1997, p.146) considers that “Aboriginal sociality tends toward atomism and fission”. Finlayson (1997) stresses Aboriginal ‘localism’, and Munster (1997, pp.197-198) remarks on the normalcy of Aboriginal “Debates and disputes about country”. Here I argue that such behaviour can in fact be read as verbal and physical defence of ‘relative autonomy’. The alacrity with which ‘relative autonomy’ is defended by Kamilaroi French demonstrates its importance. Many Gamilaroi French stories depict effective verbal and physical defence of ‘relative autonomy’.

86 ‘Inner world’ here implies ‘selfhood’ as defined by Quinn (2006) (see Chapter 5), not dichotomous Kohutian interiority/exteriority.
87 See, for instance, Rose (2000, pp.149-150).
‘Proper’ fighting on Moree mission

Aunty Chrissy, Aunty Louise and Aunty Denise discuss how fights were managed when they were growing up. Aunty Louise speaks of what a proficient fighter she was as a teenager, even against the boys. However, Aunty Chrissy and Aunty Denise recount how Nan and Pop French were “very strict against fighting” and used to punish the kids for fighting. It may be, then, that although fighting was accepted if necessary, the first option was to prevent fighting by disciplining young people to restrain themselves. Aunty Chrissy and Freeda outline ‘proper’ fighting below:

F: like you grew up on Moree mission ... was there much conflict on Moree mission?

AC: (pause) yes there was (clears throat) especially ... the ol’ boys used to get on the grog on Saturday night? ...n then they’d have a punch up? ... and next day they go n ... pull em out as they used to say, pull em out n then they’d have two or three rounds n shake hands n that was the finish of it ...

F: so conflict –

AC: so that was –

F: so you could say conflict was dealt with swiftly

AC: yeah it was

F: so

AC: yeah

F: so get the conflict out of the way quickly

A: the next day, yeah

F: the next day ... and it was dealt with quickly and – and it was forgotten with –

AC: say –

F: - the shakin of the hands

AC: say a kid gave back chat to an ... mother or father, anybody older than themselves, then the parent’d go n tell their parent n they’d get a hidin n that’d solve that straight

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away, knock it in the head straight away, yeah, no more ... bickerin n goin on all about it for the next week or fortnight or month? like -

F: so did – did everybody on the mission sort of have the same sort of belief or ...

(Dylan walks in, whistling) or belief system on how to deal with conflict so everybody believed that if a kid stepped out of line they got a swift kick up the bum

AC: yeah

F: n then that was it

‘Proper’ fighting, then, takes place free from the influence of alcohol and where there is proper ‘witnessing’ – and whether one feels like it or not. It is “finished up” quickly, with amicable relations resumed as soon as possible. Elders also speak of limits around fighting such as no weapons, equitable one on one fighting, and nobody getting too hurt. Such physical aggression is more performative than intended to cause injury, and often targets objects\(^\text{89}\) rather than people. The aim, then, is not for conflicts to irrevocably separate and divide people, but rather for disagreements to be managed in such a way that overall group cohesion and well-being is restored. Such an approach resonates with the approach to conflict resolution described by Tillet and French (2006) where the focus is on containing the conflict so as to enable the rebalance of relationships between the conflicted parties (Spencer, 2007, p.1). A key factor in the success of this process formerly – as Freeda emphasises – is that all adults followed the same “belief system” around ‘proper fighting’ and how to discipline children. Today, however, Aunty Denise points out that people “hold onto it and hold onto it”, and everyone gets involved and “won’t let it go”. Thus, often fighting is not being done the ‘proper’ - witnessed, restrained, bounded, performative - way today,\(^\text{90}\) to readjust imbalance and re-engender active collectivities.

\(^{89}\) For instance, Burbank (1994, pp.75-76) relays how physical displays of strength and ‘anger’ stop wrong-doing: “In the same year, a man hurled a spear at another whom he accused of hitting his little boy. The spear didn’t hit him, I was told, but stuck about six inches into the tractor on which he had been riding.”

\(^{90}\) However, in one town recently young men from both parties had paired, evenly matched fights in a neutral place to try to “finish up” the conflict - even without elder guidance or witnessing (and even when one elder was in fact causing much of the conflict and holding onto grudges for decades).
The hammer, the postmaster, and kids up trees

There are many other ‘well-worn’ stories Gamilaroi French tell about successfully ‘standing up’ – that is, using verbal and physical aggression to defend ‘relative autonomy’. Three popular stories are relayed here.

During marching practice at her Moree primary school one day, the teacher asked Aunty Chrissy to lift her knees higher so that her skirts were highly raised. Aunty Chrissy knew that he was doing this to look up her dress, and refused to obey. The teacher then expelled Aunty Chrissy for the day. When she got home, Pop French asked Aunty Chrissy why she was back so early, and she explained what had happened. Immediately, Pop French marched back to the school with Aunty Chrissy. He stormed into the teacher’s office, brandishing a hammer, and said that if anyone tried to do that to his daughter again they would “get this in the forehead”. The teacher apparently never again harassed Aunty Chrissy. This action was particularly remarkable because Pop French was a very mild mannered man who tolerated a great degree of injustice with equanimity, including being taken away as a child to work on a chicken farm from the age of twelve; and repeated police ridicule and harassment of his family in Moree.

At about the same time, Aunty Chrissy recounts, Aboriginal men in Moree received their pay via the post office. The postmaster, however, would hold on to their pay cheques and refuse to hand them over for days at a time. This happened repeatedly. Then one payday, the Black men as one jumped the counter, punched the postmaster, and forcibly retrieved their pay. After that, the postmaster reportedly had their cheques out and ready to hand over to them straight away as soon as he saw them coming.

Uncle Jimmy also tells the story of a time (some decades later) when a group of Aboriginal children at school were up in a tree throwing rocks at teachers and students. The White people were flummoxed. Uncle Jimmy was the Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group (AECG) representative at the time. As soon as he arrived, and the White teachers told him what was happening, Uncle Jimmy went straight up to the children in the tree and threw rocks at them. The White staff were shocked, but Uncle Jimmy explained that this was how the children needed to be corrected. Sure enough, it worked. The children all came down from the tree and

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91 On Moree mission the police would regularly come around in the middle of the night and order Pop and Nan French and all their children out of bed. The police would then laugh uproariously as they shone their torches on all the teenage girls in their nightgowns, and would make belittling comments to Pop French.
treated Uncle Jimmy with great respect. The AECG was then able to get on with its work of educating the children.

The point that ‘standing up’ to injustice verbally and physically works and is proper behaviour is repeatedly made in these Kamilaroi French stories. In each of these stories, physical and verbal aggression was used to defend ‘relative autonomy’ principle of the ascendance of none – Pop French stopped the tyrannical behaviour of the school teacher; the Moree men stopped the unjust and controlling behaviour of the postmaster; and Uncle Jimmy stopped the controlling behaviour of the kids up in the trees by actions that enacted ‘standing up’ as a display or performance. Pop French only threatened to use the hammer, but his actions made very clear that he would tolerate no further wrong-doing by the teacher. These acts, then, constitute clear ‘statements’ that wrong-doing is under challenge. The challenger makes their identity and actions very clear and public. The type, severity and context of the ‘standing up’ all provide a wealth of detail for ‘witnesses’ to interpret the incidents for themselves and understand who has done what incorrectly, and what has been done to redress the situation.

Today, Gamilaroi French still often use verbal and physical aggression to ‘stand up’ to injustice. One time Sarah’s White neighbour had been swearing at Aunty Chrissy and trying to bully her. Sarah went out onto her verandah and swore roundly at the man in return and threatened further action if he continued. He has not bothered them since. Toddler Ariannah was biting her young cousins and pulling their hair. In order to correct her, her grandmother bit her and pulled her hair. There was repeated confirmation amongst Kamilaroi French that such a practice works. When Dion was a young man, he sat around smoking yarndi at home despite Aunty Chrissy’s protestations. After many times of trying to get him to stop, she called the police and directed them to remove him from her house. Neither he nor they could believe that she was serious. However, she was, and so they took him away from the house. This was a turning point for Dion and since then he has shown respect for Aunty Chrissy’s rules. Thus, ‘standing up’ to injustice verbally and physically is still a common Kamilaroi French ‘family’ practice today.

Preclusion of verbal and physical aggression today

However, the effectiveness of verbal and physical aggression in defending ‘relative autonomy’ is being increasingly eroded today. Firstly, such continuity of Aboriginal ‘customary law’ in the Upper Hunter Valley and urban/regional areas generally is not recognised by White law

92 Kamilaroi French also knew that this man was violent and abusive towards his mother.
(Cowlishaw, 2003, Macdonald and Bauman, 2011), and is also not being correctly followed by some Aboriginal people. As a result, Gamilaroi French and other Aboriginal people who try to uphold such ‘duty of care’ in NSW are often heavily penalised by the White system. Seventeen year old Marty, for instance, was jailed for a year because of standing nearby to ensure a friend was not hurt in a fight, and for defending a friend against deliberate and repeated provocation. Warrin, the oldest male youth in his ‘family’ - and therefore particularly responsible for their protection - was charged with ‘affray’ for defending a female cousin against repeated, ‘gang-style’ attacks by Aboriginal women from another ‘family’. The police expelled him from town and obsessively controlled his movements, whereas the attackers were left uncharged and continued to bully people. In one town, a young boy went with a few young cousins to the house of an elder who was the primary instigator of much of the unjust violence against their ‘family’, and threw rocks and verbal abuse at her windows. When she looked out and saw them, she asked the boy what his name was. He unhesitatingly proclaimed his name. It can be seen that the boy’s actions were in accord with public, performative Aboriginal forms of ritual display of aggression to challenge wrong-doing. However, instead of acknowledging her wrong-doing, the elder reported the boy’s name to the police. The manner in which this woman used the police for intra-Aboriginal efficacies is regarded with disapproval by those who relate this story: here the police were being used against Aboriginal ‘proper’ fighting and norms. Elsewhere, when people use the police to support the principles embedded in Lore, this is viewed as just and ‘proper’.

Another case was when Ramone was trying to ‘stand up’ for her ‘drug and alcohol baby’ niece who was being harassed, unjustly punished, and improperly cared for at primary school. Firstly, Ramone tried to address these issues via all the accepted White ways, attending multiple meetings with the school; with over seven different government agencies ‘responsible’ for her niece’s ‘welfare’; and by contacting the various levels of Department of Education, all to no avail. Ramone was under increasing psychological and emotional pressure with her inability to see justice done for her niece, compounded by many other

93 Pseudonym.
94 The White man portrayed in the case as an assault ‘victim’, later acknowledged to Marty (after the charges and sentence had already been determined) that he had deliberately provoked them because he wanted the compensation money (a certain amount of money is given to the assault victim depending on the number of ‘attackers’).
95 Pseudonym.
96 These forms of attack were not following ‘proper’ fighting protocol; they involved a group of adult women of several generations collectively attacking one young woman, in one case a young woman in her first pregnancy.
97 Pseudonym chosen by her.
responsibilities, traumas and pressures in her life. After many months, Ramone was finally granted an appointment with the regional Department of Education Aboriginal Liaison Officer; this felt like her “last chance” to see justice done for her niece. The role of this supposedly ‘Aboriginal’ officer was to be pro-actively advocating on behalf of Black people to address such injustices. Ramone explained the situation to the woman, all the efforts she had made, and all the injustices her niece was facing. However, the woman simply showed a “blank face”, rejecting Ramone and what she was saying. In her frustration, Ramone then used Black ways of ‘standing up’ for injustice. She shouted at the woman and pushed a microwave onto the floor. A Black person is expected to understand and respond to such performative verbal and physical display as per customary understandings and practices. However, far from acknowledging her wrong-doing, the woman charged Ramone with being threatening and out of control. At no point in this whole saga did any White representative acknowledge the efforts and cultural costs Ramone was making by following White bureaucratic processes or the injustices she was facing; let alone that in failing to achieve justice via the White system, Ramone then employed the Black system of ‘standing up’ to injustice. Ramone’s niece was simply expelled from the school and sent to a program with very poor level tutoring for a minimal number of hours per day, and Ramone had to face court charges. Thus, today Kamilaroi French often cannot receive justice and address wrong-doing, either with the White system or with the Black system. In particular, when they employ customary Aboriginal physical and verbal ‘standing up’ to challenge wrong-doing they are often heavily penalised and criminalised.

One last story will serve to illustrate the difficulty in employing verbal and physical aggression to defend ‘relative autonomy’ today. When we went to the Aboriginal ‘knockout’ in Armidale in 2009, I was appalled to see several coach-sized police vehicles as well as many other ‘people-mover’ and van-sized police vehicles prominently displayed nearby. I had never seen even one such massive police vehicle in my life and here were multiple hyperbole-sized vehicles sending a clear message. Firstly, they signified that the Whites were very afraid of a few thousand Blacks gathering together for innocent enjoyment. Secondly, they signalled coercive power, ‘shouting’ their determination to control any Blacks who – in their opinion – “stepped out of line”. When I have been to (predominantly White) soccer matches with many thousand more spectators, there may be one ordinary-sized police car, if that. As we walked around the town I noticed some shop windows displaying identical posters declaring that they welcomed the knockout. They struck me as having an air of nervous appeasement about them: “Don’t attack us, we’re with you!” At the end of one of the days, we repaired to a nearby pub
to socialise. As we walked in the foyer there were at least ten police standing in the entrance. Other times, when I have been to pubs with Whitefellas, I have not seen any police. As soon as the Blacks walked in, there was a loudspeaker announcement that all drinks would now be served in plastic cups. The police were standing constantly just a few metres away throughout the whole of our stay there. I was amazed at how the Blackfellas managed to ignore them and enjoy themselves anyway. When I voiced my outrage at this collection of insulting behaviours, Freeda agreed and said that it made the Blackfellas want to “play up”. Clearly, however, the Blackfellas knew that here it was not possible for them to verbally or physically defend their ‘relative autonomy’ and resist the tyrannical ‘stand-over’ tactics of the police. The best way they could maintain their ‘relative autonomy’ here was to pretend the police were not there. I was duly impressed with their self-restraint in the face of such overt racism, and learned that ‘relative autonomy’ can be defended indirectly as well as directly.

It is unlikely that the combination of racially biased ignorance, fear, and the failure of the White legal system to recognise Aboriginal ‘customary law’ in NSW will change in the near future (Cowlishaw, 2003). Thus, verbally and physically defending ‘relative autonomy’ is increasingly not an effective option for Kamilaroi French ‘family’ if they wish to stay out of jail (and they do). However, it is still possible to defend the principle and practice of ‘relative autonomy’ in myriad non-aggressive forms. This thesis suggests, then, that a valuable focus of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ would be to explore possibilities for how to enact and protect such ‘relative autonomy’ in non-violent ways – at personal, ‘family’, and broader social levels (see Chapter 7). In sum, while verbal and physical defence of Kamilaroi French ‘relative autonomy’ principle of the ‘equality’ of all and the ascendance of none may not be so effective today, it is still vital to recognise the importance of this principle and to explore new ways to promote it.

### Genocide against ‘relative autonomy’

These stories eloquently reveal unspoken, yet clearly visible, White ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence. Whereas ‘relative autonomy’ acts to prevent dominance, ‘standing over’ is normalised and vigorously enacted in settler colonial institutions, cosmology and everyday life.

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98 Although, in the family area of the pub, one Black father stayed constantly within one metre of his toddler. From my experience, many White parents would have felt free to keep an eye on their child from more of a distance – say, from a nearby chair. It seemed to me that this Black father had to go to ridiculous efforts to ‘prove’ he was taking care of his child in the face of the police surveillance.

99 Contrary to what Cowlishaw (2013, p.237) seems to imply, Gamilaroi French ‘family’ do not see jail as a requisite rite of passage to authentic ‘Aboriginality’. While there is no stigma attached to those who go to jail, they are very angry about the injustices which lead them to being jailed. However, it is not felt that much can be done about these (they do usually appeal charges, largely without success).
relations. Genocidal forces attack Aboriginal reciprocal, collective, individuated but not individualised, non-hierarchical cultural conceptions and practices. Settler colonial ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence undermines Aboriginal cultural forms of “autonomy-responsiveness” (Macdonald, 2000); create intra-Aboriginal division and social trauma; and weaken Aboriginal economic and political power. Settler colonial genocide thus strikes at the very heart of Aboriginal ‘relative autonomy’. Far from being shown ‘respect’ by being able to autonomously act for themselves and having their own valuable forms of knowledge and experience recognised, Aboriginal peoples face unremitting, systemic obstruction of their aspirations. For centuries settler colonisers have controlled where (and if) Aboriginal peoples can live (and with whom); what sort of education and employment they can have, if any; whether they may raise their children and how they must keep their house. Today, in minute, everyday levels, as well as broader social, political and economic levels, Aboriginal peoples are consistently obstructed in their efforts to uphold ‘relative autonomy’ and ‘family’ by helping their people as they would choose. Due to engrained ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence, even well-meaning redemptive government measures unwittingly perpetuate genocide in both how they define, and try to resolve, the ‘problem’. In the face of punitive settler colonial responses to Aboriginal social distress; accelerating criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples; and failure to recognise and address Aboriginal collective, cultural trauma, the widespread, collective reality of Aboriginal suicide can be partially read as a drastic effort to enact ‘relative autonomy’ no matter what.

‘Relative autonomy’ for ‘negative peace’

Yet, even as it is targeted by settler colonialism, ‘relative autonomy’ comprises a powerful potential pre-emptive ‘negative peace’ resource for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as rendered here. The expression of ‘relative autonomy’ helps to visibilise the inexorable genocidal forces impacting on Aboriginal peoples, and their repercussions. It is ‘relative autonomy’ that is being expressed when Aboriginal trainees decide how and when they work, do not report absences, and prioritise sociality and ‘family’ over paid work for White society (Gibson in Cowlishaw, 2013, pp.239-240); when young Black boys boast of their ability to steal an expensive ‘big noter’ - BMW (Cowlishaw, 2013, p.235); when Bourke Blackfellas performatively resist coercive police aggression (Cowlishaw, 2003). Hence, what some may see as signs of Aboriginal social disintegration – verbal and physical ‘fighting’ over who can speak about what, who is responsible for what – can in fact be understood as vigorous efforts to prevent the ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence of coercive settler colonial hierarchy.
Upholding, not challenging, Law

‘Relative autonomy’, however, must not be read simply according to typical Western understandings of ‘resistance’ and ‘agency’. Since Western law upholds and perpetrates coercive hierarchy, ‘agency’ is understood as independent, self-sufficient ‘individuals’ acting against ‘society’; and ‘resistance’ as opposition to coercive authority. Aboriginal resistance to the genocide of settler colonial society may indeed have elements of resisting tyranny because it is in fact addressing oppressive settler colonial structures, institutions, relationships. However, within Gamilaroi French ‘family’, ‘relative autonomy’ is not about opposition to coercive power. The justification for the resistance of ‘relative autonomy’ within Gamilaroi French ‘family’ and between other Aboriginal families does not come from Western notions of ‘individual’ ‘rights’, revolution, overcoming unjust governments. Freeda says ironically that these days her people have more ‘rights’ than they did traditionally. Before, her people had the “right to obey!” - to follow Lore, not to challenge it\(^{100}\). Adopting the Western practice of protesting against government in order to address structural injustices has led some young Aboriginal people to protest against Aboriginal non-authoritarian\(^{101}\) authority figures (parents, elders) which, according to Freeda, is leading to further breakdown of Aboriginal society. Freeda stresses that not only does such an anti-authority stance undermine the very basis of social cohesion, but it is also encouraging a focus on the ‘individual’ rather than on the well-being of the group into the future.

Whereas the West focuses on challenging law to address tyranny, Gamilaroi French uphold Aboriginal Law to prevent tyranny. Instead of being the target of resistance and ‘relative autonomy’, for Gamilaroi French ‘family’, the Lore is the source of such resistance and ‘relative autonomy’. Aboriginal Law is egalitarian, upholding the ‘equality’ of each and the ascendance of none\(^{102}\). Hence, one in fact enacts Lore\(^{103}\) by resisting tyranny. While there is not an “exact balance” in kinship relations, ‘hierarchy’ in Aboriginal societies signifies the ‘responsibility to

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\(^{100}\) According to Uncle Philip Obah (2010, p.262) in Aboriginal societies “You can ask as many questions you like about the principles of lore, but you cannot question the lore itself.” While people may have transgressed in earlier or pre-contact times, punishments for going against fundamental principles of Law were severely punished.

\(^{101}\) See Richards (2010).

\(^{102}\) See, for instance, Rose (2000, p.121, 149, 213) on ‘symmetrical’, not dominating, Aboriginal metaphysics; Morton (in Turner et al, 1989, p.523) on Aranda totemic metaphors celebrating others as distinct, complementary, and morally equal; and Sullivan’s (1997) critique of early European hierarchical interpretations of ‘headman’ and gerontocracy in Aboriginal societies.

\(^{103}\) Such resistance may not be overtly conceptualised by all Kamilaroi French as enacting ‘Lore’; what is supported by Aboriginal people may go beyond constrained definitions of Lore. However, it is the position of this thesis that deep-rooted Gamilaroi French principles underlie everyday practices of ‘resistance’.
nurture’ rather than European ‘hierarchy of power’ (Sullivan, 1997, pp.133-134). For instance, adults have the responsibility to teach, discipline, and respond to children’s needs; children have the responsibility to ‘listen’, learn, and express their needs. While only adults can “grow up” a child, such an imbalance maintains the overall system of reciprocity and relatedness, as children work to ‘repay’ this ‘care’ (Myers, 1986, pp.173, 175-177), and then become parents and grandparents themselves. ‘Relative autonomy’ is thus a key factor distinguishing Aboriginal societies, reproducing relations of ‘care’, ‘responsibility’ and reciprocity. ‘Agency’, therefore, need not involve ‘resistance’ or resignification in response to coercive power, but instead can take many diverse forms, including non-individualistic forms and even the desire to submit to recognised authority (Frank, 2006, pp.282, 293). Thus, in the context of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, it is important to look at how Gamilaroi French ‘agency’ arises through ‘relative autonomy’ and with what qualities; and how it is shaped by historical, cultural and social contexts as well as personal “registers of corporeality” (Frank, 2006, pp.285-288, 296-299). ‘Relative autonomy’ is thus a vital form of Kamilaroi French ‘negative peace’ that – even when addressing settler colonial genocide – involves a pro-active assertion of Lore, Law, Aboriginality, not simply oppositional resistance.

‘Relative autonomy’ through, not against, ‘family’

Similarly, ‘relative autonomy’ does not aim towards being independent of and therefore unanswerable to others (and so, likely to dominate them). ‘Agency’ or “the capacity for authority” does not originate from the person, but rather from Lore (Sullivan, 1997, p.134). The ‘relative autonomy’ of deciding, speaking, acting for oneself - arises through dense and empowering connections with ‘family’ (Myers, 1986). The source of one’s ‘agency’ is ‘external’ to the ‘subject’ – one can perceive, think, act in the world because of one’s relations with others, and these relationships and ‘selves’ are created by ‘the Lore’, or ‘God’, not by the individual. It is the very ‘externality’ of the Law itself, then, which enables overall relationships of moral ‘equality’ among Aboriginal peoples (Myers, 1986, Sullivan, 1997, Rose, 2000, Meggitt, 1962).

A phenomenological approach helps us to appreciate this ‘externality’ of Lore, authority, ‘agency’ in ‘relative autonomy’. As Dodson (2003, p.37) says, a relationship involves equal interchange between ‘different’ parties, “not just one and its mirror”. That is, autonomous distinctiveness nevertheless connects all bodies and activities between people in a society.

104 A child is born with a certain quality of ‘relative autonomy’, but is not born knowing how to ‘listen’ (Myers, 1986, pp.107, 110).
reciprocally together (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp.118-120, 135). Yet, “I am from the start outside myself and open to the world” and it is through this incarnate, relational existence - through my specific nature, history, culture - that I can communicate with others and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.456, 2003, pp.530, 508, 517). That is, as Casey (1997, pp.8, 16, 2001b, p.718) also shows, whereas creation (life, thought, action itself) proceeds from ‘implacement’ - from progressive ‘differentiation’ “of one place from another” - at the same time, body, ‘self’, place ‘linger’ in/through each other via processes of coimplacement, diffusion, and extension\textsuperscript{105}, and so together create “a common place-world”. Our concrete experience is drawn not just from us locally, and idiosyncratically, but ‘outside’ us in localised places and in ‘other selves’. Such processes of mutual ‘lingering’ of place, body, ‘self’ is evident in Pintupi walytja and ngurra in both their ordinary and Dreaming aspects (Myers, 1986, pp.109, 55-59), and in Gamilaroi French praxis of ‘relative autonomy’ within the connectedness of ‘family’.

However, Casey’s (1997, pp.175, 238) assumption of “the wild” - the supposed absence of the ‘human’, of religion, of ‘things’ (Morris, 1999, p.42) – as the source of “dwelling” jars with ‘traditional’ Aboriginal understandings, and does not adequately account for the fact that mining and other Western forms of “building” and “cultivation” can in fact destroy Aboriginal embodied values of identity and cultural “dwelling” in manifold senses.

Malpas (2001) emphasises the abiding – yet simultaneously fragile and dynamic - ‘narrative’ quality of ‘place’, with ‘journey’ as its foundational ‘grammar’. It is only through the repetition of ‘narrative’ that, for instance, the “cultural and personal” ‘history’ of place can be articulated and its central role in constituting the identity of places recognised (Malpas, 2001, p.236). Malpas (2001, p.236) draws on Aboriginal understandings of ‘place’ and ‘narrative’\textsuperscript{106} to account for both the changing nature of place as well as its sense of ‘unity’:

\textit{the unity that I argue belongs to places, and to human lives, would also seem best expressed through the unity that is characteristic of narrative—a complex and dynamic unity in which different elements are preserved in an ongoing and developing interrelation.}

Through the concept of journey within ‘narrative’ one can better articulate the interplay of phenomena within and between places, and can recognise historical, cultural, and geopolitical re-mapping and ‘re-membering’ of place (Malpas, 2001, pp.237-238). Such an outlook

\textsuperscript{105} Extension “ties thing, place, and space together”; a bodily thing extends its qualities into a given place, resulting in space as “the scene of coexisting things” (Casey, 1997, p.171).

\textsuperscript{106} Narrative can be expressed variously – as (Aboriginal) ‘spatialised’ and ‘placed’ rather than (Western) primarily temporal (Malpas, 2001, pp.236-237).
supports Gamilaroi French ‘family’ insistence on the durability and cohesiveness of ‘family’ even as they simultaneously uphold each ‘deciding for themselves’ - within the ‘narrative’ of ‘family’; and also recognises the broader ‘journey’ of connections between distinct Aboriginal ‘families’ that take shape in a context of high mobility and trans-migration (see Chapter 4).

Among Gamilaroi French, then, the ‘agency’ of ‘relative autonomy’ is derived through following ‘proper’, witnessed, teachings, not as a matter of individual ‘ego’. One afternoon at Moree pool, Kiah’s aunt commented that Kiah’s tattoo - which read ‘Kamilaroi’ - should be spelt ‘Gamilaroi’, because according to her aunt there is no ‘k’ in their lingo. Kiah (fifteen at the time), who is a fairly quiet, sometimes shy person, responded strongly that she was doing what she was taught, and that she was keeping it that way. She freely expressed her view, had a strong sense of her own self and right to decide for herself, and did not feel pressured by her aunt. However, Kiah’s justification for her actions lay in what she had been taught, not just on what she “feels like”, or on her “personal” opinion. Similarly, if challenged on a particular point of fact when telling a story, for instance, Gamilaroi French ‘family’ will back up their version with references to what other people (particularly elders) have told them: “I had that from Pop French”. When Aunty Alana and Aunty Correen shared their version of the intense conflict occurring in a particular town before Freeda, Joy Balazo and I, Freeda commented to me afterwards that just by ‘listening’ to people we were helping; Aunty Alana and Aunty Correen had expressed great relief and had calmed down considerably after sharing their stories with us. When I remarked that we were ‘witnessing’ Freeda agreed emphatically. It was through broadcasting their words and actions, and having these publicly validated, that Aunty Alana and Aunty Correen experienced relative-autonomous ‘agency’.

Finally, in contrast to popular notions of ‘subjectivity’ (e.g. Luhrman, 2006, pp.348-349, 356-359), Gamilaroi French do not experience ‘oppression’ due to so-called ‘internal fragmentation’. ‘Relative autonomy’ demonstrates that not only are people capable of, but pro-actively focused on, negotiating highly diverse relationships and asserting their own place, role, knowledge in contrast to others. Not only does this not produce a ‘fragmented’, marginalised internal state, but asserting, differentiation – ‘relative autonomy’ - is in itself strongly powerful and empowering. However, never-ending ‘fragmentation’ and ‘differentiation’ is not empowering; the destruction of ‘family’ would entail the destruction of ‘self’. Thus, resistance for Kamilaroi French ‘family’ is not conflict between the ‘individual’ and

107 Pseudonym.
108 Pseudonym.
‘society’; rather, ‘relative autonomy’ occurs within the abiding ‘narrative’ and ‘unity’ (Malpas, 2001) of ‘family’. Gamilaroi French ‘family’ is thus characterised by a ‘unity’ (not uniformity) that is premised on, upheld by, and enables ‘diversity’ (‘relative autonomy’) within – not against - ‘family’.

‘Relative autonomy’ for ‘positive peace’

‘Relative autonomy’ is also a vital aspect of maintaining and expanding Gamilaroi French ‘positive peace’: facilitating constructive change to meet their needs as envisaged, desired and enacted by themselves. However, ‘relative autonomy’ is not equivalent to settler colonial assimilationist policies of ‘self-determination’ or ‘self-management’ (e.g. Macdonald, 2010, p.61, Rose, 1986, p.26). Rather, ‘relative autonomy’ can be seen in terms of what structures, arrangements, outcomes are generally supported by Aboriginal peoples. In settler colonial society, ‘level playing fields’ are rare. It is telling that Aboriginal peoples participate and excel in the spheres of bingo, card games, sport, football, athletics – social arenas where racism in principle is less likely to exist, where the ‘equality’ of each has better chance of being structurally enabled.

Successful Indigenous governance organisations demonstrate strong “cultural match” by following Indigenous “codes of behaviour and values” and “representation and relational autonomy” via consulting broadly and adopting “dispersed” yet coordinated governance facilitating both the “autonomy of sub-groups” and broader, strategic networking (Hunt and Smith, 2006, pp.71, 74, emphasis added). Bailey (2008, p.95) notes the success of an Aboriginal organisation where each ‘family’ group is represented, rather than following the “Western legal hierarchical way of doing things”. The Ngarrindjeri have developed the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority (NRA) to “represent the interests and concerns of the clans”, whose governing body is appointed from “existing Ngarrindjeri community organisations, each of which manages and promotes a particular cultural or social issue” (IBA, 2010, unnumbered). More successful native title claim approaches in the Kimberley reflect the “reciprocal nature of Aboriginal authority”, encouraging claims by “relatively large groups within which smaller groups may remain in conflict but be assured of having their needs addressed” (Sullivan, 1997, p.129, pp.133-134, emphasis added).

109 Racism clearly does still persist in these arenas – see, for instance, Klugman and Osmond (2013) regarding overt racism against Aboriginal AFL players. However, structurally at least, there is greater potential for support of ‘equality’ here than many other social contexts.

110 Although of late the more centralised Indigenous Land Corporation appears to not be divesting lands or authority to local native title groups (Redmond, 2007, p.84).
Similarly, while Altman (1997) attributes the former success of the Gagudju Association to skilled and authoritative leadership, it can also be seen that their equitable membership\(^{111}\), decision-making\(^{112}\) and outcomes\(^{113}\) - all of which support ‘relative autonomy’ – were critical to their success. Freeda suggests that a positive way forward to address intense local intra-Aboriginal conflict would be to enable each distinct ‘family’ group to be responsible for a specific aspect of overall community well-being; different ‘families’ would variously be responsible for childcare, sporting, medical, housing services and so on, depending on their skills and interests\(^{114}\). Each would thus have a respected and valued role with significant ‘relative autonomy’ to make decisions for themselves, and each would be contributing to the well-being of the whole. Kamilaroi French ‘relative autonomy’, then, can be seen as facilitating a vital aspect of ‘positive peace’ – the need for ‘freedom’ (Galtung, 1996). Such freedom is not only the ‘negative peace’ of freedom from genocidal settler colonial structures and mindsets, but also the ‘positive peace’ of the freedom to decide for oneself – not apologising, autonomously enacting, interpreting ‘signs’ for oneself, protecting one’s own knowledge. Kamilaroi French ‘positive peace’, then, entails not egotistic rebellion and resistance, but rather upholding and defending ‘relative autonomy’ through ‘family’ in both its concrete materiality and in its deep-seated ‘principles’.

**Conclusion**

This chapter finds that Aboriginal peoples themselves and their lifeworlds are key to ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. Aboriginal capacities, resilience and expertise - even in the context of massive trauma - must be acknowledged. ‘Relative autonomy’ is a complex, highly nuanced cultural life form that is enacted and performed ritually and repetitively, and that implicitly contributes to both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ ‘Aboriginal peace’. Everyday, normative Kamilaroi French sociality, linguistic signifiers, rule-bound practices and implicit attitudes uphold and defend ‘relative autonomy’: ‘equality’; deciding for oneself; deriding ‘big noters’ and ‘standing up’ to those who would dominate; with one’s own ‘agency’ being constrained and made possible through ‘witnessing’ and the consequences of one’s actions. Such ‘equality’ is not a vague wish, but is viewed by Gamilaroi French ‘family’ as a true, unavoidable fact, despite

\(^{111}\) Membership included both ‘historical’ and ‘traditional’ peoples (Altman, 1997, p.181).

\(^{112}\) Decision-making was shared between the two major family groups; and power was shared in that people could do what they liked with their cash payments (see next footnote) (Altman, 1997, p.181).

\(^{113}\) The Gagudju Association invested in Aboriginal-controlled businesses, regional community development services, and equitable distribution of cash payments to all members, including children (held in trust) (Altman, 1997, p.180).

\(^{114}\) And because she knows the different ‘families’, Freeda already has suggestions for what would perhaps interest a particular ‘family’ more.
settler colonial eschewal and opposition. ‘Relative autonomy’ thus upholds both the importance of each, and the ascendance of none in sharp contrast to settler colonial genocide. Through ‘relative autonomy’ family members are respected and valued and all are responsible for maintaining the well-being of the whole. Kamilaroi French ‘relative autonomy’ does not, however, originate from dichotomous notions of the ‘resistance’ of ‘self’ against ‘society’, ‘individual’ against ‘group’, opposition to coercive authority. Rather, in practicing ‘relative autonomy’ one is in fact ‘resisting’ by enacting and upholding the non-authoritarian authority of Aboriginal Law and is protecting the well-being of ‘family’. It is the very ‘externality’ and ‘beyond-human’ nature of Aboriginal Lore which protects distinct forms of knowledge and relationship and ensures that all are equally valued and cared for. Thus ‘relative autonomy’ occurs not only at the personal level, but also through Gamilaroi French ‘family’ and broader cosmological understandings. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as envisaged here respects Aboriginal peoples’ prerogative to ‘speak for themselves’, and to creatively pursue and enact dynamic, creative and empowering ways to support and build upon the core Kamilaroi French principles and practices of ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’.
Conclusion

Whatever is to be done must be done quickly, and this time, from the Aborigines point of view. White man’s point of view has too often ended in failure...as I see it a change of attitude towards each other seems to be the fundamental need...I hope and pray that it will be a world without prejudice, a world where Black and White can live in harmony, and work out their true destiny in life. We must have a clear insight into past conflicts, the many problems that confront Black and White...The co-ordination of individuals and groups is a must. The platform must be the establishment of right human relations and the eradication of all controversial barriers...My firm belief is that a new spirit is abroad in Australia to-day, and that a new illumination has come to all who love justice.

Uncle Bert Groves (1956, p.1)

This thesis has argued that Aboriginal peoples in Australia are living under occupation. However, the ‘war’ they face daily is undeclared, invisible, ubiquitous and without clearly defined enemies or strategies. Drawing on insights from both international transformative peacebuilding and phenomenological Australianist anthropology, this thesis has addressed two questions: “What are the root causes of Aboriginal experiences of violence in Australia today?” and “What cultural resources can be drawn on to promote ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in response to this violence?”

Through following Indigenous Methodologies (IM) and ethnographic Participatory Action Research (PAR) principles with Gamilaroi French ‘family’ in the Upper Hunter Valley, NSW, this thesis has come to see the need for a new methodological and conceptual framework – ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ - to both identify and confront settler colonial genocide, and to elucidate and support existent Kamilaroi French cultural capacities to create transformative, vibrant futures, they themselves model and desire.

Given the young nature of peacebuilding internationally and, particularly, in Australia, and given the non-existence of anthropological peacebuilding as a coherent field anywhere, this thesis has taken an inaugural approach, establishing valuable groundwork for future directions. This thesis offers the first in-depth, systematic application of Galtung’s (1996) tri-fold analysis of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ ‘super-types’ of violence, and of ‘negative’
and ‘positive’ peace; as well as Lederach’s (1997, 2003) elicitive, transformative and integrated peacebuilding framework, to Aboriginal peoples’ experiences of violence in Australia. Such a focus on violence is a vital pre-requisite for the ‘negative peace’ aspect of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ – stopping violence – and is also a central focus of anthropology in its own right. Crucial new insights have been gained into settler colonial genocidal violence and associated Aboriginal experiences of trauma, as well as into ongoing Aboriginal capacities, resilience and epistemologies in the face of genocide. In particular, new, primary data is provided around a much-neglected group – the urban-regional Gamilaroi French ‘family’ – not simply for academic interest, but as a resource to support them in their ongoing struggle against the violence of the contemporary frontier Australian nation state. Thus, both in terms of its core conceptual areas, its interdisciplinary focus, and in terms of its data, this thesis makes significant, innovative contributions to both anthropology and peacebuilding.

‘Direct’ violence against Aboriginal peoples

‘Direct violence’ is the best known ‘super-type’ of violence facing Aboriginal peoples in Australia today, and is, in fact how settler colonisers define Aboriginal peoples. Chapter 1 has tested public assertions around the supposedly inherently ‘violent’ nature of ‘traditional Aboriginal society’ against a range of anthropological, health and criminological evidence, and has found them to be distorting and hypocritical. In fact, Aboriginal peoples proportionally commit less violent crimes than non-Aboriginal peoples, despite facing unique, extreme pressures. While new forms of lateral violence are arising in Aboriginal communities – most notably ‘family violence’ and suicide – these are not the outcome of ‘traditional’ performative physical violence as social expression and constraint. Rather, such lateral violence is arising due to chronic and compounded Aboriginal experiences of everyday, multifaceted trauma and marginalisation in settler colonial society. Aboriginal trauma is not simply an ‘individual’, ‘psychic’ or biological-medical phenomenon, but is very much a socio-political phenomenon, arising from the very structures and ‘constitutive rules’ of settler colonial society. Kamilaroi French ‘family’ have to cope on an everyday level with intense, continual surveillance via the settler colonial modus of ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence. Dominant discourse ignores historic and, particularly, ongoing settler colonial violence, and thus fails to recognise either Aboriginal trauma or Aboriginal resilience.
'Structural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples

Chapter 2 has addressed the inherent violence and instability of the Australian hierarchical, colonial, capitalist ‘nation state’, and the normalisation of violence in its social, economic and political processes and institutions. Such ‘structural violence’ is strongly implicit in Lemkin’s (1944) second phase of genocide - imposing the ‘national pattern’ of the oppressor onto the oppressed group. Each of Galtung’s (1996) forms of ‘structural violence’ - ‘penetration’, ‘segmentation’, ‘marginalisation’ and ‘fragmentation’ – has been found to be clearly evident in Australia, from first contact until today. ‘Penetration’ actively undermines Aboriginal lifeworlds including allocative, distributive economies; local forms of authority and accountability; and Aboriginal political and economic ‘relative autonomy’, with resulting significant intra-Aboriginal conflict and social trauma. ‘Segmentation’ impedes consciousness formation and mobilisation against settler colonial genocide by preventing access to knowledge, particularly around areas of high significance for Aboriginal survival and well-being. Australia has a long history of ‘fragmentation’ - dividing Aboriginal peoples – as demonstrated by the Stolen Generations, ‘self-management’, native title, and the NTER/SFNTB (often deliberately) targeting Aboriginal population growth, ‘family honour’ (Lemkin, 1944), and kinship.

‘Marginalisation’ is a widely recognised form of settler colonial ‘structural violence’, entailing political and economic Aboriginal disadvantage, and systemic frustration of Aboriginal aspirations. Settler colonial surveillance, criminalisation of Aboriginal peoples, and deaths in custody are increasing despite the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC), particularly under the NTER/SFNTB. In response to Aboriginal social distress due to ongoing genocide, the Australian nation state enacts punitive economic, political, and legislative measures aimed at coercing Aboriginal conformity and ‘stability’. Critically, even when governments try to rectify Aboriginal marginalisation and displacement – as through recent policies of ‘shared responsibility’, ‘inclusion’, and ‘Closing the Gap’ – they inadvertently perpetuate ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence.

‘Cultural violence’ against Aboriginal peoples

Chapter 3 has addressed the most potent, and the most hidden, aspect of settler colonial genocide – ‘cultural violence’. ‘Cultural violence’ is the ‘deep culture’, ‘cosmological principles’, ‘constitutive rules’ at the heart of settler colonialism, used to legitimise and justify ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence. It has been found that two fundamental impulses underlie settler colonial ‘cultural violence’: First, the elimination of Aboriginal peoples’ ‘national patterns’. Second, the imposition of settler colonialism onto Aboriginal peoples. In particular, the ‘logic of
elimination’ targets Aboriginal collective identity and connection to land, in the interests of securing resources for settler colonisers. Eurocentric political, metaphysical, legal, social, cultural, and economic mindsets are also being imposed upon Aboriginal peoples, leading to nuanced, iterative forms of ‘cultural’, ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence. Genocidal forces are legitimised via the discourse of deficit that posits Aboriginal peoples in terms of loss, lack and dysfunction. The deficit discourse silences Aboriginal capacity and expertise, as well as settler power, particularity and privilege. It is the very silence around ‘cultural violence’ that, in fact, amplifies its potency, making it enormously difficult to identify and address.

Elucidating ‘Kamilaroi French peace’ and ‘hidden peacebuilding’ principles

Chapters 4 and 5 have developed embedded critical theory and “‘local’ theoretical positioning” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, pp.63, 186) by elucidating core cultural imperatives of Gamilaroi French ‘family’ in the Upper Hunter Valley, as potential resources for modelling ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. ‘Peace’ is defined in this thesis not as statist ‘balance of power’, nor simply as the absence of ‘direct violence’, but rather as both the defense of, and promotion of, ‘basic human needs’ for all peoples. While this thesis agrees that ‘humanity’ broadly shares the fundamental needs of identity, well-being, security, freedom, and ecological health (Galtung, 1996), this thesis has not presumed to know at the outset how such needs are defined and championed by Kamilaroi French ‘family’. Following phenomenological anthropology, this thesis has elicited ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ as the core normative, lived ‘principles’, ‘morals’, ‘rules’ that matter for Gamilaroi French.

‘Family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ have been identified as both the primary targets of genocide, and as core potential components and processes of ‘Aboriginal peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ in both their ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ aspects (Galtung, 1996). ‘Family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ comprise fundamental qualities and structures of the ‘national pattern’ of Aboriginal peoples; they lie at the heart of what it means to be ‘Aboriginal’ for Kamilaroi French ‘family’. Upholding, and pro-actively defending ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’, therefore, is crucial for the survival and well-being of Kamilaroi French, according to their own explicit theorising and everyday lifeworlds.

‘Family’ - both in its materiality and style – is the core focus of Gamilaroi French everyday sociality. It is the performance, the making, of everyday lived relationships that embody reciprocal ‘care’, responsibility and ‘respect’ – as well as ‘bloodlines’ – that defines ‘family’ for
Kamilaroi French. ‘Peace’ can only be activated when long-term, everyday, genuinely valued ‘family’-style relationships are upheld. Geneticist ‘wannabe’ praxis undermines ‘family’ at manifold levels. It thus constitutes significant settler colonial violence against those ‘born Black’.

‘Family’ is not simply an anthropological reality, but rather it is the fundamental ground for defining, building and sustaining Aboriginal just ‘peace’. It is at the level of ‘family’ where most potential resources, practices, and experiences for ‘peacebuilding’ lie. ‘Family’ is the critical core for survival, justice, and well-being. It is also Aboriginal ‘family’ that is most threatened in contexts of ongoing genocide. It is particularly critical, then, to address ‘family violence’ – via empowering, non-violent ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ approaches – since it attacks the very foundations of Aboriginal resilience and survival. ‘Family’ comprises an inspiring model for a sustainable, transformative, peacebuilding platform that can cope with – and aim beyond - changing contexts, conditions and actors over time.

The Gamilaroi French cultural complex of ‘relative autonomy’ is characterised by ‘equality’: not sameness, but the expression of complementary difference within relationship. It is also characterised by the principle of dominance by none, which is vigorously defended, verbally and physically. However, ‘relative autonomy’ must not be misread as liberal democratic ‘agency’ and ‘resistance’. Western and Gamilaroi French forms of ‘resistance’ and ‘agency’ differ according to their respective cosmological principles. ‘Lore’, or ‘God’s Law’ – not individualism - is the source and justification of ‘agency’ and ‘resistance’ for Kamilaroi French ‘family’. The very externality of ‘agency’, in this sense, in fact sustains moral ‘equality’ and connectedness among Gamilaroi French ‘family’. Rather than atomistic ‘self’ and ‘society’ as opposing forces, ‘relative autonomy’ upholds, and is expressed through, ‘family’. Kamilaroi French ‘resistance’ can thus be read as the desire to submit to – rather than rebel against - recognised authority.

Far from acknowledging Aboriginal peoples as diverse ‘equals’, settler colonial society aims towards the obliteraton of Aboriginal ‘national patterns’ and the imposition of settler colonial ‘national patterns’, as Chapters 1 to 3 testify. ‘Relative autonomy’ is thus a core target of genocide. Yet, the culturally violent discourse of ‘postracialism’ vehemently denies such violence and pretends tolerance. Aboriginal defence of ‘relative autonomy’ thus helps to distinguish a ‘perceptible field’ of the unremitting genocidal forces Aboriginal peoples face daily, and their traumatic repercussions. ‘Relative autonomy’ is thus a vital pre-emptive aspect
of ‘negative peace’ among Kamilaroi French ‘family’ undertaken not to enact, but to prevent domination.

‘Relative autonomy’ also implicitly defines Aboriginal ‘positive peace’. Deep principles of ‘relative autonomy’ are evident in the types of structures, relationships, and organisations being supported by diverse Aboriginal peoples across Australia. In such arrangements each person and group speaks and acts for themselves, and plays a valued, complementary role within their sphere of authority and decision-making. ‘Relative autonomy’ illustrates how the basic human need of ‘freedom’ is understood and practiced by Gamilaroi French ‘family’. A valuable focus of future ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ would be to further articulate and explore creative, non-violent ways to uphold the principles and praxis of ‘relative autonomy’.

The importance of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here strives to embody non-violent and transformative principles by eliciting and supporting Aboriginal perspectives, expertise, visions, processes and interests around ‘justpeace’. Here ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ performs the reciprocal dialogic movement of learning from global peacebuilding expertise and expanding current understandings of ‘peace’, ‘justice’ and ‘peacebuilding’ by drawing on Gamilaroi French ‘hidden peacebuilding’ epistemologies and praxis. While elicitive peacebuilding calls for relationship-centric conflict transformation, this thesis takes one further step back. It asks, first and foremost, what sorts of relationships matter for Kamilaroi French ‘family’? How do these relationships operate today?

Current dominant approaches to Indigenous dispute management often unthinkingly perpetuate ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ and ‘direct’ violence by ignoring the power imbalances that mask historical and ongoing settler colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples. Settler colonialism fails to understand violence as socially created, preventable, and as largely shaped by its own engrained assumptions and practices. Subsequently, mainstream approaches to Aboriginal experiences of violence typically fail to acknowledge and address White violence in its many intense, interwoven forms, and associated Aboriginal trauma.

Dominant efforts to address Aboriginal disputes are generally legalistic, punitive, and implicitly focused on ‘negative peace’. Such approaches are often constrained within native title domains that prioritise White economic, government and industry schedules at the expense of Aboriginal needs and interests. They are often inconsistent, intransigent, dominated by ignorance, and unaccountable even on their own terms. Settler colonial dispute management
processes typically ignore, and so fail to learn from, Aboriginal resilience, experience, commitment, metaphysics, lifeworlds and jurisprudences. They do not foster collaboration, creativity, dynamism, and experimentation in problem-solving. Instead of identifying needs that all peoples share, they rely on individualistic or commercial interpretations of ‘rights’. Such dominant approaches fail to offer safe spaces for Aboriginal peoples to be themselves and to work together. By participating in such processes Aboriginal peoples pay significant costs in terms of their time, resources, energy and cultural integrity, and are subject to new, increasing forms of conflict and social trauma. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is of vital significance, therefore, for the survival and well-being of Aboriginal people themselves, and is also of critical importance to those who ‘do business’ with Aboriginal people across a broad range of areas and sectors.

However, while it is important to acknowledge the limitations of current dominant approaches, it is also important to recognise that those working within the settler colonial system can still play a valuable role in ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, and have much to offer in terms of their detailed, practical knowledge and experience (see below).

Limitations of this research

From the outset this thesis has clarified that it does not intend to provide recommendations for policy makers, nor to provide a practice ‘blueprint’ for process managers or peacebuilders. This thesis does not pretend to provide an exhaustive discussion of experiences of violence, trauma and resilience for Kamilaroi French ‘family’, let alone the many other diverse Aboriginal peoples in Australia. In many respects, this thesis and its research limitations (by necessity) are indicative of how very new, fraught and vulnerable the area of so-called ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is today. As outlined in the Preface, I have not been able to conduct the more applied approach to peacebuilding originally intended. No local core group has been developed to continue and expand peacebuilding processes; many local Aboriginal people still do not know what the term ‘peacebuilding’ entails; and it is too early to engage with stakeholders at broader levels. Kamilaroi French and related Aboriginal people are already overloaded with their own traumas and responsibilities and are reluctant to discuss conflicts and violence. There is a need, therefore, to consolidate Aboriginal common ground before dealing with other stakeholders, through supportive, safe processes that allow Aboriginal people to direct the pace and focus, and which aim towards concrete outcomes while also clarifying at the outset limitations and the long time frame required.
While this thesis provides valuable new insights from ethnographic research with Kamilaroi French ‘family’ into implicit ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ principles, it is not possible to generalise these results to all Aboriginal peoples in Australia, nor to Indigenous peoples internationally. As peacebuilders have been arguing for decades, every conflict context is unique – even one with the ‘same’ people in the ‘same’ place, at different times. Thus, this thesis does not suggest that the model of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ presented here is the only or the best model possible. My hope is simply that it leads to more research, discussion and action. In particular, while I have endeavoured to promote participatory and collaborative research with Kamilaroi French ‘family’, the understandings presented here are still my interpretations of what I have (implicitly) been taught about ‘Gamilaroi French peace’ and ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. I need to stress again that I do not claim to speak on behalf of Kamilaroi French ‘family’.

To those who are suffering settler colonial genocide on the ground, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ may appear as a preposterous pipe-dream. Understandably, hope for positive change is sparse in such contexts of chronic ‘crisis’. Claims have repeatedly been made by dominant society around change and improvement – especially in the discourse around reconciliation and the Apology – yet governments persist in acting in ways contrary to such avowed sentiments. Consequently, there is a vital need to connect with those at grassroots and middle-range levels with substantive experience in detailed, practical aspects of implementing the ideals of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, both at the ‘crisis management’ and at the ‘prevention’ levels (Lederach, 1997, pp.79-84) in order for Aboriginal people to gain some trust and confidence that ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ can actually be realised, albeit over the long-term. Ingenious lateral thinking needs to be undertaken around how to obtain (at least relatively) independent sources of funding in the longer term in order to activate ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ (possibly through Non-Governmental Organisations, Faith Based Organisations and educational institutions) (Fitzduff, 2004, p.12, Religions for Peace, 2009). At the same time, we can work to transform existing settler colonial structures and capacities (including via the ‘shadowlands’) (Bauman, 2010, pp.5, 11, Burke, 2010), with the ultimate aim of enabling Aboriginal economic and political ‘relative autonomy’.

In sum, this thesis represents a germinal effort to promote the dialogue and collaboration required for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. As Rose (2000, p.237) says, “As long as there are people talking, listening, and acting, there can be no final closure.” While the particulars may not be generalisable, the principles of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ presented here in terms of its collaborative, elicitive ethnographic approach, can potentially be applied to diverse Indigenous
contexts across the globe. The mutual relevance of peacebuilding and anthropology as presented here, and the enriching of conversations within anthropology and peacebuilding offered by this research, can have broad-ranging, productive impacts.

**Future work**

Myriad opportunities lie ahead, therefore, for future work around ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. There is an urgent need for adequately funded and responsive Indigenous dispute management processes in Australia (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.xv). In the global context there is a vital need to better understand and meet the needs of diverse peoples facing ‘ethnic’, ‘religious’, ‘identity’ and ‘security’ conflicts (Burton, 1990b, Azar, 1991). Contemporary transformative peacebuilding literature points to the urgent need for ethnographic case studies to explore concepts and processes around ‘peace’ and ‘peacebuilding’ for diverse peoples. While there is general agreement that a ‘shared humanity’ possesses the ‘basic human needs’ of survival, identity, well-being, freedom and ecological health, there is little exploration of what these needs mean and how they are enacted in dynamic and distinct local contexts. Further, while Historical Trauma Theory (HTT) offers valuable insights into intergenerational trauma, it is still largely conceptual; there is a strong need for ethnographic studies, particularly to address collective cultural trauma (Desjarlais, 2012, Theidon, 2013). Recent anthropological commentary highlights the legitimacy of ‘violence’ as a core focus of study for the discipline. Yet few anthropological works explicitly address systemic violence and how it is reproduced discursively and materially (Dominguez, 2013). In sum, both internationally and – especially - in Australia, ‘Indigenous peacebuilding’ is a vital new area of focus, yet without institutional frameworks to sustain specifically Aboriginal peacebuilding.

As this thesis has demonstrated, none of the major theoretical and practical areas of concern for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ are well understood in either peacebuilding or anthropology. Significant new work awaits, therefore - particularly from Aboriginal perspectives - in the crucial areas of Aboriginal suicide; Aboriginal lateral violence; Aboriginal ‘family violence’; Aboriginal cultural trauma; Australian genocide against Aboriginal peoples; and on Aboriginal experiences and perceptions of the concepts and practices of ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ themselves. For this research to embody non-violence, Aboriginal peoples must be acknowledged as epistemological equals possessing unique forms of knowledge and experience, not simply as objects of Western research (Speed, 2010). There is also a strong need to learn from other peacebuilders - particularly Aboriginal peacebuilders - and others
committed to transforming unjust systems around what ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ might look like in different contexts with different peoples.

While both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have valuable roles to play in promoting ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’, safe spaces need to be created - free from public scrutiny and control (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.111) - where Aboriginal peoples are free to experiment, disagree, make mistakes, discuss and dream, without the constant microsurveillance of White judgement and appropriation, and without having to waste their time on educating Whites and justifying themselves. Education of and collaboration with non-Aboriginal peoples are also important, but can occur in other spaces.

Valuable future work would also lie in further investigating nuanced theoretical and practical implications for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ of everyday ‘practice’ (de Certeau 1984, Bourdieu, 1977); and working from where and who we are (‘immanence’) (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Bignall, 2008). New, synergistic ways of thinking - utilising aesthetic, relational ‘indirect languages’ - could be employed in an effort to overcome constraints of hegemonic thought (Imbert, 2011, Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.112). Much can be further explored, phenomenologically and ethnographically, around ‘relative autonomy’ as a particular style of ‘implacement’ and ‘agency’ resting on diversity within connectedness.

Drawing inspiration from Lederach (1997, especially p.80), Figure 5 models valuable areas of future research. Figure 5 draws on relevant existing skills and interests within anthropology and peacebuilding, but situates them within an ‘integrated’ (collaborative) framework to enable complementarity and mutual learning across different potential ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ approaches. Of particular interest to me are the ‘transformation’ and ‘root causes’ areas of future research into ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. How might a deeper understanding of Kamilaroi French ‘family’ lend itself to a transformative ‘institution’ or ‘platform’ for peacebuilding that could be locally owned, developed, and sustained over time? How might a deeper appreciation of the creative and open-ended structural, political, economic implications of ‘relative autonomy’ for Gamilaroi French contribute to such a platform? How could ‘unity in diversity’ be supported by a shared commitment to treating all as equally valued, and none as ascendant? The principle of ‘unity in diversity’ can be applied across innumerable contexts, including between: men and women; different generations; different cultures; different religions; different geographies; different economies; and different epistemologies.
Figure 5: Suggested future work for integrated Aboriginal peacebuilding

**Root causes**
- Continue to investigate 'cultural', 'structural' and 'direct' settler colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples, and their interconnections (Galtung, 1996).

**Transformation**
- Further investigate the practices and principles of 'family' and 'relative autonomy' as potential resources for 'negative' and 'positive' Aboriginal peacebuilding.
- Explore the potential of the principle of 'unity in diversity' in diverse contexts and applications.
- Harness valuable role of middle-range leaders (Lederach, 1997).
- Develop sustainable Aboriginal peacebuilding platform drawing on 'family', as well as existing governmental and non-governmental facilitation, mediation, leadership expertise, coordinated across different disciplines, sectors, scales, with training and employment opportunities, and eventually developing shared process standards and monitoring and evaluation procedures (Bauman, 2007, Bauman, 2010, Bauman and Williams, 2004a, p.v).
-和 education processes standards and monitoring development and institutional and organizational capacity development and institutional and organizational capacity development (Lederach, 1997).
- Develop sustainable Aboriginal peacebuilding platform drawing on family, as well as existing development and institutional and organizational capacity development (Lederach, 1997).
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**Crisis management**

**Prevention**
- Community educare workshops (Atkinson and Woods, 2008).
- Build systematic support for Aboriginal peacebuilding, including via legislative, institutional or policy structures (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.30, Bauman and Williams, 2004a).
- Build sustainable Aboriginal peacebuilding momentum from the 'family' and community level upwards, coordinated regionally and nationally.
- Work to improve current legislative and criminological approaches (Bauman and Williams, 2000, Bauman, 2001, 'Aboriginal and Williams, 2002).
- Community educare workshops (Atkinson and Woods, 2008).
- Build systematic support for Aboriginal peacebuilding, including via legislative, institutional or policy structures (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.30, Bauman and Williams, 2004a).
- Build sustainable Aboriginal peacebuilding momentum from the 'family' and community level upwards, coordinated regionally and nationally.
- Work to improve current legislative and criminological approaches (Bauman and Williams, 2000, Bauman, 2001, 'Aboriginal and Williams, 2002).
- Community educare workshops (Atkinson and Woods, 2008).
- Build systematic support for Aboriginal peacebuilding, including via legislative, institutional or policy structures (Bauman and Pope, 2009, p.30, Bauman and Williams, 2004a).
- Build sustainable Aboriginal peacebuilding momentum from the 'family' and community level upwards, coordinated regionally and nationally.
- Work to improve current legislative and criminological approaches (Bauman and Williams, 2000, Bauman, 2001, 'Aboriginal and Williams, 2002).
- Community educare workshops (Atkinson and Woods, 2008).
The collaborative ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ model presented in Figure 5 in itself illustrates the principle of ‘unity in diversity’. Diverse approaches to peacebuilding – in terms of different scales, levels, roles, working styles, approaches, sectors, actors and areas of focus - can each contribute to and be enriched by the ‘transformation’ role in a collaborative, synergistic manner.


The new conceptual and methodological framework of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ developed in this thesis represents the first in-depth, systematic application of the concepts of ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace; of Lederach’s (1997) elicitive, transformative, integrated peacebuilding framework; and of Galtung’s (1996) tri-fold analysis of ‘direct’, ‘structural’ and ‘cultural’ violence to Aboriginal experiences of violence in Australia. While I was initially asked to help address ‘intra-Aboriginal’ violence in the Upper Hunter Valley, I have found that in order to do so I must first understand how ‘inter-cultural’ violence continues to create ‘intra-Aboriginal’ violence today in complex, hidden ways. This thesis has fulfilled its double aim: First, it has articulated significant forms of settler colonial violence against Aboriginal peoples and their traumatic impacts. Second, it has validated Aboriginal capacity, epistemologies and resilience in the face of such violence, through elucidating the fundamental Gamilaroi French principles and practices of ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’. Such ‘deep culture’ and ‘constitutive rules’ comprise both potential resources for ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ and are key elements in how Kamilaroi French ‘family’ define and enact ‘cultural peace’.
This thesis has thus laid rudimentary groundwork for developing anthropological peacebuilding as a systematic field. It has made a significant contribution towards meeting the call from Bauman and Pope (2009, pp.131, 135) and others to identify systematic causes of Indigenous conflict, and to promote Aboriginal-directed change. However, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ is modelled here on the level of principle, and does not advocate a specific methodology or formula for addressing Aboriginal experiences of violence. Even with the ‘same’ Aboriginal people, the specifics of what is needed and prioritised at any particular time will change depending on the context, actors and resources available. Thus, ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ does not envisage an ‘endpoint’ to ‘bounded’ conflict, but rather sees ‘Aboriginal peace’ as everyday, culturally-grounded, open-ended, dynamic and creative processes activated by Aboriginal peoples themselves.

In an effort to redress the ‘cultural violence’ that denies the existence and authenticity of urban-regional Aboriginal peoples, this thesis has also provided new primary data around a much neglected and invisibilised Aboriginal group, the regional-urban Kamilaroi French ‘family’. New insights have been gained into the unique collective nature both of Aboriginal trauma, and of Aboriginal resilience, in the face of genocide. This thesis has highlighted the *micropolitics of intimate spaces* in the cramped, restricted, remaining areas of independence available to Aboriginal peoples *under occupation*. This thesis, therefore, is about *witnessing* Aboriginal trauma and genocide, within the limitations of representation and incomprehension as they manifest. It is about ‘visibility’, drawing on the cramped spaces afforded, left, for Aboriginal occupation; the dramatisation(s) of dehumanisation, of ‘naked’ or ‘bare’ life (Agamben, 1995). ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here is not just about the persistence of tradition, or dwelling on some nostalgic pre-colonial Aboriginal past of (political, cultural) atrophy. Nor does this thesis aim to render up a transparent reality that can simply be grasped by providing counter history or logical explanation. I do not promote a romanticised notion of plenitude or an idealised intact version of Aboriginal tradition today, but rather I attest to the dissonance and resonances of testimonial efficacies of painful presents for Gamilaroi French today. This thesis also recognises Aboriginal strengths and capacities in the midst of extreme settler violence. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as developed here recognises that Aboriginal peoples can and do draw on personal and *collective* capacities to catalyse healing. Particularly through responsibility as *witness*, Aboriginal peoples are able to facilitate trajectories toward ‘positive peace’, as defined by themselves.
Thus, whereas some anthropological works discuss similar cultural phenomena to the ‘family’ and ‘relative autonomy’ elucidated in this thesis, here such phenomena are contextualised in the broader analytic frame of ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’. Such a broader frame of reference enables the ongoing nature of settler colonial ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ violence to be identified, including in ostensibly ‘benign’ redressive or redemptive settler colonial measures. Hegemonic liberal democratic discourse, in fact, lies at the heart of the problems facing Aboriginal peoples. ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as rendered here, however, is not against governance as such, but rather calls for dialogic “second-level indigenisation” (Richards, 2011, p.203) to transform existing biased and inequitable institutions and structures.

‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ as modelled here develops understanding of Aboriginal experiences of violence. It helps to elicit and articulate desired Aboriginal futures, and promotes a sustainable, collaborative, transformative approach to move from crisis to empowering change (Lederach, 1997, p.108). ‘Aboriginal peacebuilding’ offers a hopeful, practical way for moving forward beyond images and realities of Aboriginal ‘death’ and dysfunction, towards a just, sustainable, vibrant world where all can, as Freeda puts it, “thrive, not just survive”.

**Freeda’s final reflections**

As primary collaborator, Freeda’s reflections over the course of this research have been vital. I summarise her final reflections thinking back across the research project, and forward towards the future of Aboriginal peacebuilding, as the final words on the subject.

Freeda comments that a real “eye opener” for her was the willingness of the Haruko YAP/GAP Indigenous participants to resolve conflict. For her, the primary question is simply “How do we get that willingness to cooperate and participate in peacebuilding, as the very first step?”

She was impressed with the capacity of Joy’s peacebuilding approach to gain the support of external parties, such as local government. Nevertheless, in Freeda’s account, peacebuilding will be stronger and more successful if it arises from “the grassroots”. What is needed, Freeda says, is for Aboriginal people to unite in order to “build some common ground” with each other. Native title has created new, intense, pressures on people, and “conflict around the unknown”, as she calls it. The retreat by people to “go into a little hole and stay there with their families” is understandable. People are hesitant to ‘unite’ with other Aboriginal people because – particularly in current contexts of ‘wannabes’ – they are unsure of “who they would be joinin’ forces with”.

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Another key question is “what sort of leadership do we want?” So many Aboriginal leaders are criticised by their own people that they hesitate to lead. Freeda remembers Joy saying that “It is ok to be different. It is ok to have a different understanding as long as we agree on some fundamentals – such as all having the right to ‘happiness’”. What is needed is “sharing without judging”. It is the judging and criticism that makes people “hesitate from disclosing their experiences and perspectives”.

Freeda points out that a lot of conflict goes unresolved, and lies dormant in Aboriginal communities for a long time, because there is no peacebuilding. Conflict then “raises its head, and history comes up again”. All the unresolved issues come to the surface because they have never been resolved. For Freeda, “unless a treaty is gained, nothing from the past will be resolved” and disharmony in Aboriginal communities will continue. In the absence of peacebuilding, governments are repeatedly using the excuse of “disharmony in Aboriginal communities” to justify their failure to deliver just, adequate services to Aboriginal people. Freeda comments (emphasis added) that until it is recognised that “we are a peaceful people” and until her people stop being classed as “second class, second rate people”, nothing will change for the better.

Freeda stresses that at the heart of much intra-Aboriginal conflict is ‘family’ members “doing the wrong thing”, failing to “comply” with the ‘principles’, ‘morals’, ‘standards’ that protect and uphold ‘family’. ‘Family’ is at the heart of all well-being. Freeda wants the young people to know that ‘family’ is not just your parents. ‘Family’ is all of your cousins, aunties, uncles, grandparents across many connections. Freeda insists that “family grows” – and that it can even incorporate non-Aboriginal people who enact ‘caring’ and ‘respect’.

Thus, even though no overt peacebuilding action was possible in the Upper Hunter Valley, Freeda is adamant that learning about peace and conflict has been a valuable process in itself. The joint international research of participating in the YAP/GAP workshop was particularly valuable, triggering lots of inspiration and questions, and raising important questions for the future about the importance of exchange-based projects. A positive vision has been gained around what different peacebuilding processes and approaches might be possible in Australia. A recent text from Freeda summarises neatly:

I know i don’t want to just survive anymore but live with the dignity and belief that my people have no need to deny who and what they are in order to satisfy others orders.

We may not get justice and our legacy won’t be acceptance. Are we slaves to the white agenda, or do we have the freedom to choose. You know my people are not the stolen
generation. We are who our parents brought into this world no less no more than any other human being
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