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Images of Australian Colonialism : Interpretations of the Colonial Landscape by an Aboriginal Historian

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Images of Australian Colonialism: Interpretations of the Colonial Landscape by an Aboriginal Historian

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Using Indigenous Australians' oral histories as primary sources, this paper seeks to explore the Aboriginal peoples' image of self (the colonised) and other (the coloniser) within the dimensions of the Australian colonial landscape. I begin by contextualising Aboriginal landscape and history within anthropological and historiographical arguments. However, the main aim is not to present my investigation of Aboriginal history, but rather to introduce and reflect upon historical analysis by an Aboriginal historian.

COLONIAL HISTORY, ABORIGINAL LANDSCAPE

The issue of 'place' or 'landscape' has recently been brought to light by anthropologists. *Landscape*, edited by Bender [1993] and *The Anthropology of Landscape* edited by Hirsch and O'Hanlon [1995] are examples of the most extensive studies on this subject. For instance, Hirsch writes: "Unlike 'exchange', 'ritual', 'history' and other concepts which have featured centrally in anthropological debates in recent years, landscape has received little overt anthropological treatment" [HIRSCH 1995: 1]. To sum up the characteristics of 'landscape', Hirsch points to two related ways of understanding landscape: first, the 'objective' standpoint or anthropologist's view of landscape, and secondly, the 'subjective' standpoint or the meaning of landscape imputed by local people [HIRSCH 1995: 1]. Therefore, the word 'landscape' implies not only physical 'objective' features, but also local people's metaphysical meanings or images of their land. The editors of *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* suggest using the word 'place' instead of 'landscape' for the features of post-colonial discourse because "the idea of 'landscape' is predicated upon a particular philosophic tradition in which the objective world is separated from the viewing subject. Rather, 'place' in post-colonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment" [ASHCROFT et al. 1995: 391]. However, in this paper, I will use the word 'landscape' more often than 'place'. This is because the word 'landscape' is more appropriate to indicate the *placeable* features of both 'objective' and 'subjective' views. As I shall discuss later, the purpose of using 'landscape' is not to separate the 'subjective' view from the 'objective' world, but rather it points to the desire to integrate the physical and metaphysical features of 'place'.

Indigenous Australians' culture is so strongly related to their land that numerous attempts have been made by scholars to understand the Aboriginal meaning of landscape, or 'mythological' (Dreaming) geography. In the anthropology of Australian Aboriginal societies, 'land relationships' have been at the centre of many debates [STRELOW 1947; ELIADE 1973; MYERS 1983]. Nevertheless, it seems to me that most of the earlier studies have been devoted to the relationship between Aboriginal 'religion' or Dreaming and its geographical meaning rather than to a depiction of the colonial landscape in Aboriginal societies.

On the other hand, one of the features of recent arguments about Aboriginal landscape is discussion of the (post)colonial landscape [CLARKE 1991; MORPHY 1993; SWAIN 1993; ROSE 1996]. These works help us understand the influence of colonialism on the Aboriginal landscape. Historians have also become concerned with the history of the Australian cultural landscape. Carter's *Road to Botany Bay* is well known as one of the attempts to explore a spatial history of Australia [CARTER 1987]. McGrath suggests the validity of a colonial landscape history based on Aboriginal oral evidence [MCGRATH 1987]. Through these recent works of historians and anthropologists in Australian Aboriginal studies, we come to recognise that 'landscape and history' in a (post)colonial context is certainly one of the major issues in Australian Aboriginal studies.

Before we explore the relationship between colonial history and Aboriginal landscape in more detail, I would like to address the concept of 'history' and 'landscape' in a more abstract way by asking: what are the Aboriginal concepts of 'time' and 'space'? If 'time' and 'space' have particular connotations in Aboriginal epistemology and ontology, the relationship between 'history' and 'landscape' must be based on the Aboriginal time-space concept: history as in a temporal dimension, and landscape as in a spatial dimension.

Indigenous Australians' understanding of 'time' and 'space' is well argued in Swain's controversial book, *A Place for Strangers* [1993]. Through comparative studies of Aboriginal concepts of being across the Australian continent, he emphasises the ontological importance of place or space in 'original' Aboriginal world views.¹⁾ Morphy also emphasises the 'subordination of time to space' in the Aboriginal Dreaming landscape [MORPHY 1995: 188].

Swain's and Morphy's arguments present us with two different approaches toward the subject of colonial history and Aboriginal temporal-spatial structure. First, their arguments arouse our interest in the historical change in Aboriginal ontology or their concept of time and space. The Aboriginal mode of being is grounded in the spatial dimensions. Therefore, Heidegger's ontology, that assumes time to be the distinctive ontological function [HEIDEGGER 1993: 61], that may represent European modes of being, cannot represent Aboriginal modes of being [SWAIN 1993: 2]. On the ontological level, Australian colonisation can be regarded as a conflict between space-oriented modes of being and time-oriented modes of being.

The second approach is to set the Australian colonial history *within an Aboriginal time-space concept*. Since the Aboriginal time-space concept is different from the Western temporal-spatial structure, Aboriginal understanding of colonial history is likely to be different from the Western understanding. If, as Morphy says, 'time' is subordinated to

'space', it is possible that 'history' is subordinated to 'place' in Aboriginal cosmology. Instead of studying how colonial history changed Aboriginal cosmology, one may also be able to study how colonial history was included in Aboriginal cosmology.

With the above points in mind, we may apply two different approaches to the relationship between colonial history and Aboriginal landscape. The first approach can be called the 'history of landscape' whereby the Aboriginal view of landscape may have been altered through colonial history. For example, it is reasonable to assume that the physical transformation of the landscape, especially environmental changes, may affect the space-oriented Aboriginal cosmology. Due to the intrusion of white people and their industry, landscapes were visually altered over the years. Aboriginal people may have had to confront unexpected and uncontrollable changes to their view of landscape which they could never accept without acknowledging of adopting a new temporal structure or 'time-oriented history'. It is also possible that due to Christian influence, Aboriginal landscape came to include the Western concept of 'history' or linear time. There should be a study on the historical change of the Aboriginal view of landscape. 'Colonial history of Aboriginal landscape' will be one of the approaches in the question of history and landscape. For example, Baker's work on the historical transition of Aboriginal cultural geography should be given more attention [BAKER 1999]. My study on the historical transition of the Gurindji people's economic and cultural geography also represents another such attempt [HOKARI 1996].

I would now like to introduce another approach to my discussion - the 'landscape of history'. Morphy suggests that the Aboriginal 'ancestral past' is reproduced in their Dreaming landscape [MORPHY 1995]. In the same way, the 'colonial past' may also be reproduced in the Aboriginal landscape. However, this assumption must first confront the fundamental differences between Dreaming story and colonial history: while Dreaming is sacred, colonial history is not held to be sacred in Aboriginal cosmology and geography. That being said, what is the nature of Aboriginal narratives of their colonial histories?

There are 'mythological stories' of colonisation among Aboriginal oral histories. Recent articles have been devoted to the subject of the so-called "myth as history, history as myth" [SUTTON 1991]. Although the aims and conclusions of these works are not consistent, their common theme is the intricate relationship between 'history' and 'myth' within Aboriginal narratives [MORPHY and MORPHY 1984; BECKETT 1994; RUMSEY 1994].

One of the most famous examples of Aboriginal 'mythological' colonial histories is probably the Captain Cook history [KOLIG 1980; ROSE 1984; MACKINOLTY and WAINBURRANGA 1988]. It is common knowledge in the Victoria River district, Northern Territory, that Captain Cook came to Darwin and invaded Aboriginal land. Rose argues that although Captain Cook never personally appeared in the area, the story accurately represents the local understandings of the 'immorality' of colonial invasion and colonial 'law'. White people's law, which allows them to go into another people's country, to start shooting people and stealing their land, represents a total lack of 'morality' in terms of Aboriginal law [ROSE 1984]. For Aboriginal people of many places in Australia, moral law comes from Dreaming geography. Land is the origin and evidence of the existing world. Therefore, invading other people's (sacred) land and killing indigenous people is fundamentally 'immoral' from the

Aboriginal perspective.

There is a strong contrast between Aboriginal law with morality and European law without morality. From this Captain Cook history, one may infer that Aboriginal people make clear distinctions between Aboriginal law and European law in terms of its moral value. In most instances, Aboriginal stories of the European intrusion into the Australian continent are immoral histories. Consequently, most colonial stories are not Dreaming stories.²⁾ Therefore, it is not difficult to assume that it is academics, not Indigenous Australians themselves, who categorise both Aboriginal colonial histories and their Dreaming stories as myths. For Aboriginal people, it is not a question of a story being a myth or history. Instead, there is a strict difference between Dreaming stories (sacred and moral stories) and colonial histories (ordinary but immoral stories). As I discussed above, it must be understood that Dreaming stories and colonial histories are not the same type of stories. If so, is it possible to consider Aboriginal Dreaming landscape and colonial history in the same dimensions?

In searching for a key to solve this problem, let us consider how, or to what extent, Aboriginal people put these stories into different categories. In fact, we can see that Aboriginal people consider colonial histories to be on the same level as Dreaming stories when they examine and assess the moral ground of European law. Through the Captain Cook history, Aboriginal historians make a comparative study of two different laws. While Dreaming and colonial history are different types of stories, we can also say both stories can be situated in the same 'moral dimension'. In the process of their examination, Aboriginal Dreaming stories (Aboriginal law) and their stories of European colonisation (European law) both fall within one dimension in terms of 'moral philosophy'.

Here again, I remind you of our original question: what is the relationship between colonial history and Aboriginal landscape? Do the colonial histories have spatial or geographical location in the Aboriginal landscape? Can the space-based Aboriginal world views assimilate the time-oriented colonial 'history'? The key to answering this question is not that Dreaming stories and the colonial narratives of Aboriginal people are both 'mythological'. This does not reflect the Aboriginal view. For the Aboriginal people, the issue is most probably the *spatial dimensions of morality* as they stem from two different laws. If one can *see* the moral value within the landscape, it may be possible to find the 'location' of colonial immorality in the same landscape. Are there any relationships between colonial immoral history and Aboriginal landscape? If so, how are they connected? I believe that Aboriginal historians must be the ones to answer these questions.

It was on January 1997 that I visited the Victoria River district in the Northern Territory of Australia for the first time, in order to collect Aboriginal oral histories. The Gurindji people, living mainly in Daguragu and Kalkaringi, are historically famous because of their 'walk-off' episode which played a significant role in the Aboriginal land rights movement [Hardy 1968; Doolan 1977; Hokari 2000].

During my field work in the community, I was introduced to a very old man, Jimmy Manngayarri (Old Jimmy). Using sand drawings, he showed me how to analyse and 'visualise' the colonial history of Australia within an existing Dreaming landscape. Old Jimmy has considerable knowledge of, and talent in analysing Australian colonialism. The

following discussion is based on Old Jimmy's teachings of Aboriginal history which I learnt during my fieldwork in January, June-December 1997, and January-March 1999.

SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF MORALITY

A significant feature of Old Jimmy's story telling is that by using sand drawings, he visualises the morality or 'right way' that we all should follow. He often said to me, "you must follow the right way." Naturally, whenever I had a chance to talk with him, I focused on knowing what the 'right way' was. However, understanding the 'right way' was not an easy task because it was not clear to me if the 'right way' was a geographical track or a moral rule. First of all, he draws three straight lines from the west to the east on the ground.

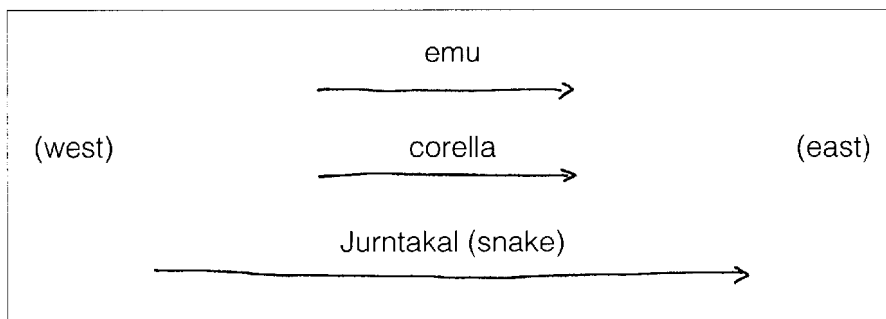


Fig. 1.

Figure 1 represents those Dreaming tracks of the Gurindji people and their neighbours' cultural geography. Old Jimmy explained that emu, corella, and 'Jurntakal' travelled from the west sea to the east sea. Of the three, the most important Dreaming in this discussion is Jurntakal, a very powerful and dangerous snake. The general idea of Jurntakal is that Jurntakal is a snake whose species is normally not specified. It is known to have originated from the sea near Wyndham (Western Australia) and then travelled to the west. There are many secret sites related to Jurntakal.³⁾

Old Jimmy often drew only a single line and explained it was Jurntakal. I would like to emphasise that wherever he sat and whichever direction he faced, Old Jimmy drew a line from the west to the east, and then told me this was the 'right way'. To confirm this, I always brought a compass to check the directions of his sand drawings, and there were no exceptions. Therefore, for the moment, we may conclude that the 'right way' is a geographical track of Jurntakal Dreaming. The 'right way' is not an ideological idea, but a track, which has a spatial direction with a particular geography.

However, the question reminds: why is the Jurntakal Dreaming track the 'right' way? We know this geographic track is a 'way', but we do not know how this track or 'spatial direction' can be 'right'. Old Jimmy told me that Jurntakal rose from the earth and through his travelling, he shaped landscapes, and created the people and law of each country:

“Jurntakal knows a lot. Jurntakal can tell you the right way. Jurntakal is the boss of people. He is the only one boss. You cannot run over the law. Law from him. He made all law, people, everything.”

He also told me that the Jurntakal law is the earth law. Jurntakal rose from the earth, and furthermore, he said the earth itself is alive:

“*Yunmi* [we] come from this dirt, earth is alive just like you and me. Everything don’t matter what it is, everything is from this earth, dirt. You born in the ground. Earth know. ... You don’t know the earth, earth tell you, that’s why you born.”

One may express his idea briefly in this way: Jurntakal is ‘right’ because he rose from the earth and gave people the law. In the beginning, the earth was alive and conscious. Then ‘movement’ occurred. According to Old Jimmy’s philosophy, this single line representing the ‘movement from west to east’ opens up the ontological and moral dimensions of the world. Jurntakal is the one who made the countries, law and living beings. Everything comes from Jurntakal’s movement. Every living being is born, exists and lives under the earth law. You can find similar expressions from other Aboriginal people as well. Hobbles Daniyarri of Yarralin told Rose, “Everything come up out of ground—Language, people, emu, kangaroo, grass. That’s Law” [ROSE 1992: 57; 1996: 9]. An Aboriginal person in the Kimberley told Kolig that the ground is like ‘a huge battery’ that maintains life [KOLIG 1987: 128]. Rose explains that “in many parts of Australia, the ultimate origin of the life of country is the earth itself” [ROSE 1996: 9] (see also Rose [1992: chap. 3]). In Old Jimmy’s view, the Jurntakal track is the ‘right way’ because through his travels, he has been making law or ‘everything’ that came from the earth.

However, another question to solve is: what does he mean that we must ‘follow’ the right way? So far, we understand the ‘right way’ as a spatial and geographical track. Therefore, following the ‘right way’ may mean to physically follow the Jurntakal track of the Dreaming geography. In a ritual sense, this explanation may be correct. Nevertheless, this is not always what Old Jimmy means by “follow the right way”. Rather, in most cases, his use of the word ‘following’ refers to our moral behaviour. In this sense, the ‘right way’ comes to mean moral behaviour rather than the geographical track. According to Old Jimmy, Jurntakal teaches the ‘right way’ through dreams:

J (Old Jimmy): When I sleep, I never forget this. He (Jurntakal) tell me and I can speak with him. Just like a telephone.

M (Minoru): You talk with Jurntakal?

J: Yes, just like telephone, that is just like a dream.

M: He tells you right way?

J: Yes, he teach you the right way. You wake up, you had dream, just like a telephone. You might study at school. You might write a paper, teacher tell you. Just like this. Same way.

M: So, can I have a right way? He tells me the right way?

J: Yes, that's the why I tell you. Do the right thing.
 You study at school, high school. Just like this, you learn right way.

From this viewpoint, one may conclude that Old Jimmy uses the word 'way' in two different senses: the 'way' as in the geographical track of Jurntakal Dreaming, and the 'way' as in the moral rule of the earth law.

However, Old Jimmy also told me another story which makes us realise that the conclusion is not as simple as that are stated above. Old Jimmy sometimes called the earth law 'high school' when he emphasised the educational aspect of Aboriginal law. Using a sand drawing, Old Jimmy explains that there are differences between European school education and the Aboriginal way of training:

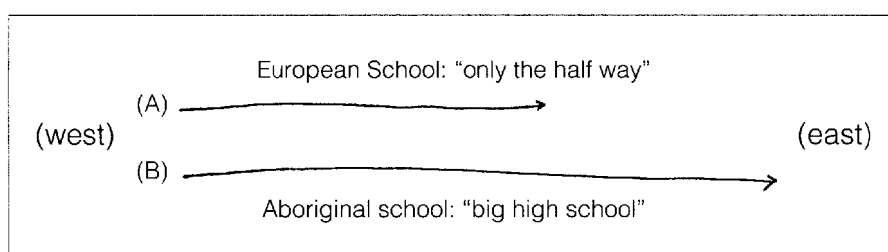


Fig. 2.

Old Jimmy drew two lines from the west to the east (Fig. 2). He explained line (A) is European schooling, and line (B) is Aboriginal schooling. He said he belonged to line (B), an Aboriginal school, or as he calls it, a "big high school". He told me that the European school is "only the halfway". Old Jimmy taught me why a European school is only the half way in several different aspects. This can be summarised into three main reasons:

- 1: A European school is based on books, but an Aboriginal school is based on the earth.
- 2: A European school requires only a decade to complete but an Aboriginal school takes a life-time to complete.
- 3: An Aboriginal school is 'physically' bigger than a European school.

First of all, a European school is based on books and pencils. These have, according to Old Jimmy, nothing to do with the earth law. He said, "My book is on this earth. ... I never use pencil. I got more experience on this earth." Even though you may be able to read and write, you are only 'half way' without knowing the earth law. For Old Jimmy, a European school is a place to learn how to read and write which may be useful skills but never as valuable as knowing the earth law. Without learning the earth law, education is incomplete.

This view brings him to his second reason: a European school finishes too early. From Old Jimmy's point of view, European education starts when a child reaches the age of five, and most pupils finish school by 15-17 years of age. If one compares this period to the process of being a fully initiated man in Aboriginal society, Aboriginal school is a life-time

of education.⁴⁾ Billy Bunter, a middle aged community member, told me that he still had “thirty, forty years to go. For old people, I’m still child. Old people, they know every song and dance. I am blind.” From this viewpoint, it is reasonable to say that an Aboriginal school is a ‘big school’ and the European school is only a ‘halfway school’.

Furthermore, according to Old Jimmy, an Aboriginal school is bigger than a European school not only because of the education period, but also in terms of its *physical size*. Old Jimmy said an Aboriginal school is much bigger than a European school because an Aboriginal school is from the western sea to the eastern sea. Since Aboriginal law is the earth law, an Aboriginal ‘school’ itself is also the earth or Dreaming landscapes of their land. From Old Jimmy’s point of view, the geographical Dreaming track *is* the Aboriginal school. In comparison to the physical length of the Jurntakal track, it is logical that a European schoolhouse is a lot smaller than an Aboriginal school.

Through the above stories, we find that, for Old Jimmy, geography (space) and education (morality) are not discrete concepts. I would like to provide another example of the spatial dimension of morality. Old Jimmy drew line from west to east (Fig. 3), and said, “We longa [belong to] this high rise. ...this is the good way.” Then, he also drew other lines; one from south to north, and the other from north to south and said, “This way is down. ... Go down, no good that way. ... You go this way, you drown (losing the right way)”.

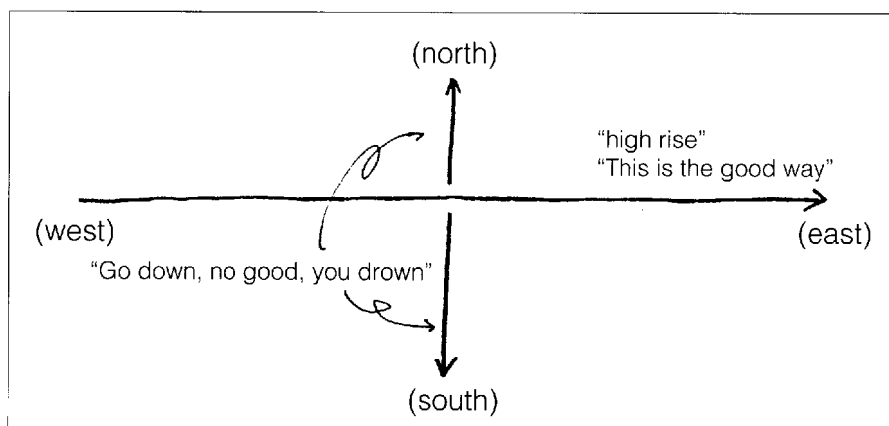


Fig. 3.

The way to the north as well as to the south is ‘bad way’ or he as also said, ‘bad move’. If you follow that way, you lose the right way. Old Jimmy also explained that the right law is like a twig. If you break it you can never join it again:

J: See this (a twig), only one way. When you broke it, can you join again?

M: No, no.

J: See, you throw away. You never do this. You must keep our way, never broke. If you broke the law, what can you do? That’s why you do the right way to go.

Once you break the law, you can never follow the right way, you lose it. Using a twig to represent the earth law (because a twig comes from the earth), Old Jimmy explained that you should not break the law. The landscape itself represents the nature of Aboriginal law as well. Billy Bunter of Daguragu often told me that Aboriginal law is “that hill and this river”, so you cannot move that hill to another place. This means you cannot change the law. A small portion of nature (a twig) or the landscape (hill and river) represent Aboriginal law.

Before exploring Old Jimmy’s analysis of colonial history, I would like to summarise his basic idea of the ‘right way’: from Old Jimmy’s perspective, spatial direction and morality are *undifferentiated*. The earth, Jurntakal or his movement from west to east shows us the ‘right way’. The ‘right way’ includes a geographical Dreaming track *as well as* moral behaviour. In Old Jimmy’s philosophy, the ‘right way’ does not involve a separation or dichotomisation of the physical and metaphysical. The ‘right way’ is spatial as well as behavioural; landscape includes a moral dimension.

‘VISUALISING’ COLONIAL OTHERNESS

In the above section, I have examined Old Jimmy’s basic ideas of Aboriginal law, landscape, and the spatial directions of morality. Even though one still cannot describe Old Jimmy’s thoughts as a whole, we have learnt that Old Jimmy considered both morality and the landscape in the same dimension. The aim of this section is to learn Old Jimmy’s perspective on Australian colonial history. During my stay in Daguragu, Old Jimmy often taught me the nature of European people, their law, and colonisation. Let us learn how Old Jimmy, as a historian, understands Australian colonial history.

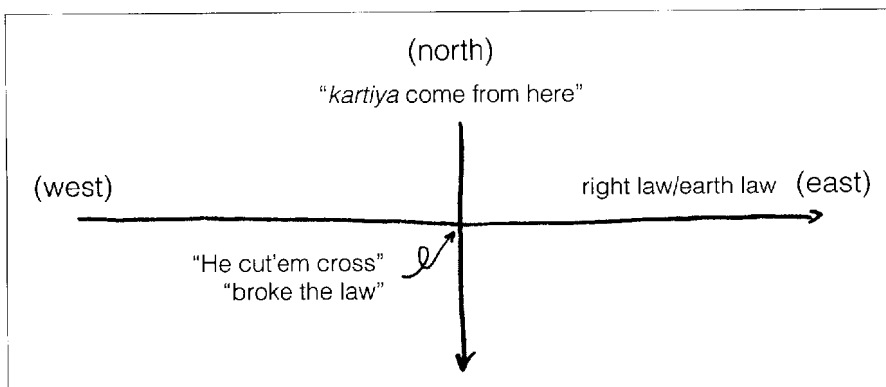


Fig. 4.

He explained the ‘immorality’ of European colonisation through his sand drawing (Fig. 4). When I asked Old Jimmy from which direction the English came, he drew a line from north to south, and said, “*Kartiya* [the English] bin come from here [the north]. ... He cut’em cross (the right way). ... He broke the law.” For Old Jimmy, the concept of morality-

immorality is related to a spatial direction. As I already discussed, from the local Aboriginal people's perspective, Captain Cook came to Darwin and started to invade Aboriginal land. Captain Cook arrived in Darwin harbour and proceeded towards to the south. In his advance, Captain Cook cut across the Jurntakal Dreaming track. Captain Cook came from the wrong direction and moved in the wrong direction, and in doing so, he broke the 'right way' or the earth law. Here, the colonisers' spatial movement accurately represents the immorality of Australian colonialism.

It seems that for Old Jimmy, directions, either north or south, are not important. The significant point is that England is *not* located on the 'right way', and they came to Australia and cut across the 'right way'; they broke the earth law.

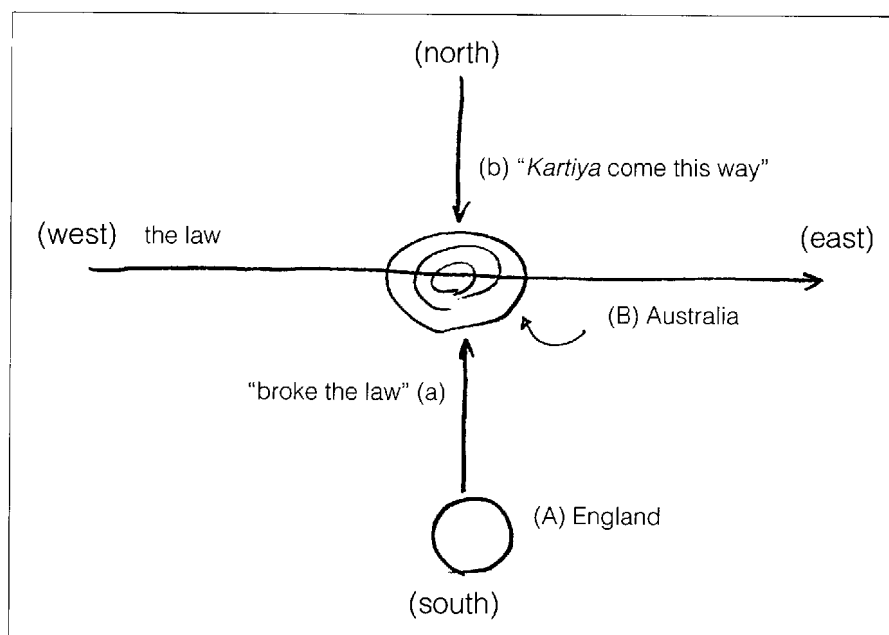


Fig. 5.

In this drawing (Fig. 5), Old Jimmy drew a circle (A) indicating England: "Maybe England here." He also drew another circle on the 'right way' or the 'earth law' and said, "This island for *yunmi* [us]". While he drew a line (a) from south/England (A) to north/Australia (B) and said English people had broken the earth law, he also drew another line (b) from north to south and told me the English came this way. In this way, spatial direction implies morality.

The colonisers' behaviour and movement are both perceived as immoral and contradictory to the earth law. There is no separation between spatial and behavioural morality in Old Jimmy's analysis. Thus, the conditions of colonialism are interpreted through the colonisers' spatial direction and movement. Old Jimmy repeatedly criticised the colonisers' immoral attitude:

“Captain Cook that fella come. He came to this country and put them (Europeans) everywhere. We never do it. It’s no good. We live together. ... See, Captain Cook done wrong thing. He shoot the people, steal women. We never do it. Only white fella did it. You should live together. ... They came here and do wrong thing but we never go England.”

“*Kartiya* [the European] never understand. He maybe think *ngumpin* [Aboriginal people] stupid. He think he can do whatever he like. *Kuya, wangaji* [like this, very bad]. ... *Kartiya* never ask people. *Kartiya* must ask people. ...you know, all this idea from fuck’n Captain Cook and Keen Lewis.”

Keen Lewis, or Jacky Pantarmarra is one of the historical figures among the local people. According to Old Jimmy and other people of Daguragu, Keen Lewis is the origin of European colonisers. Keen Lewis is infamous for claiming Australian land as his own, and commanding Captain Cook to carry out the invasion of Australia by killing the Aboriginal people [HOKARI 1999]. Aboriginal people never went to England, but Captain Cook came to Australia without permission. White people stole Aboriginal women without permission. In Old Jimmy’s view, a core of the immorality of Australian colonisation is that Europeans never asked for permission to enter Aboriginal land. He even suggests an acceptable mode of co-habitation.

“Why he say: ‘Oh, come on mate, you and me live together. You and me living together, mates together.... Mate together. Live together. One *mangari* [food]. One table. Cart up wood together. No more fighting one another.... But you never do that. You decided to clean the people out from their own country. *Ngumpin* [Aboriginal] never went and kill you there longa England. He never made a big war longa you there, finish you there. No! You did the wrong thing, finishing up *ngumpin*. Like that now, no good that game. Well, you made it very hard.” [ROSE 1991:265]

Old Jimmy explains this in the following sand drawing (Fig. 6). Old Jimmy said that circle (C) is ‘another man’s country [land]’, and explained that whenever they come to our country, “you need commission [permission]”, which Captain Cook or the English never sought. ‘Another man’s country’ is not necessarily located on the Jurntakal track in the geographical sense. As long as people maintain morality, their land and behaviour are accepted as following the ‘right way’ in Old Jimmy’s moral geography. In contrast, an immoral land (England) is located outside the line because their law does not come from the earth. The localities and attitudes of different people have their position in Old Jimmy’s moral geography.

It should be noted that for Old Jimmy, and also for other Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district, ‘England’ and the ‘English’ represent an immoral locality and people. That being said, if you are ‘good *kartiya* [European]’, you are not from ‘England’. Therefore, we should understand Old Jimmy’s terminology of ‘English’ as the immoral colonisers who invaded the Australian continent, and ‘England’ as the geographical origin of

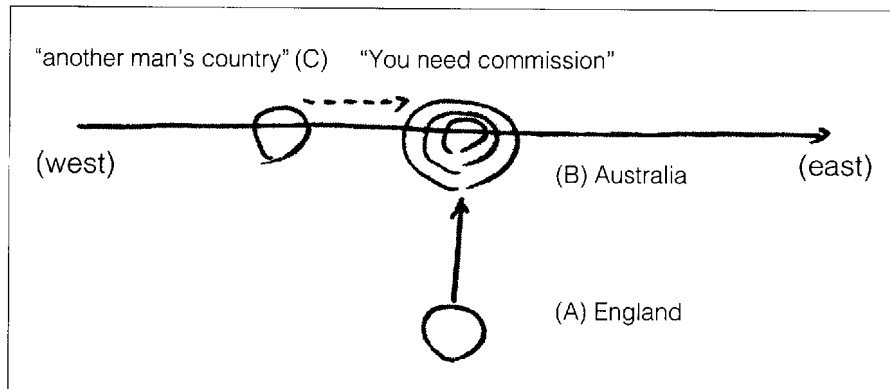


Fig. 6.

these colonisers. Old Jimmy explains this view as follows (Fig. 7).

Drawing (A), he explained as follows:

J: Other thing I tell you. (Aboriginal) People there.

—drawing a big circle—

This one, this one, this one, this one, this one, this one, this one.

—drawing six small circles—

This is Japan, this is Afgan, this Java, this is India, this is (Labour) Union mob, this is (another) island.

—erasing the drawing (A) and drew one line (B) from west to east—

All from this earth (B). You are in the one law. But we don't know England. We don't know what made England.

—scooping sand—

You come out of on this earth you come from earth.

M: *Yunmi* [you and me] came from earth?

J: Yes, *yunmi* came form earth but English is not from earth. We don't know him. I don't know him. We don't know what made him.

M: But you explained, this one, this one, this one, this one, but all come from the earth?

J: Yes, don't matter what land, it's same earth. You got different fruit and that land you gotta different fruit and different land, different land, different land. But we are on the same earth. You understand now. Different fruit, different fruit, different fruit, different fruit, different fruit, but we are (all) on one earth.

In this figure, it is clear that the earth or the line from west to east represents morality. Even though one might be living in a different country or island, all people are “on the one earth law”. The exception is ‘England’ because, from Old Jimmy’s viewpoint, ‘England’ or the place of Captain Cook’s law cannot represent the earth law.

In contrast, the ‘labour union’ is regarded as a country and, even though most unionists are European, they are from the earth law. The labour union is highly regarded as ‘good

Kartiya [European]' among the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district. This is because of their strong support for the Gurindji walk-off at Wave Hill station in 1966 and their land rights movement. The union members supported Indigenous Australians and fought against the colonisers' dispossession of Aboriginal land. Therefore, it is logical for Old Jimmy that the union members did not come from immoral 'England' but from the moral earth:

"Union mob and Captain Cook different country. ... He [Unionists] help people. Put land back. ... Tommy Vincent ⁵⁾, union mob all right law. ... English man *nomo* [never] longa *yunmi* [us]."

Every moral person comes from the earth, but an immoral person must have come from 'England' because his/her law is different and wrong. Therefore, for example, even though 'Japan' is regarded as another moral land in Old Jimmy's sand drawing, we should understand that the Japanese who were colonisers could be regarded as the 'English'. Old Jimmy's image of 'self (people of the earth law)' and 'other (people of Captain Cook's law)' is characterised by moral difference rather than racial difference.

Old Jimmy knows and can draw spatial directions of morality. Through this process, colonialism is interpreted and assessed through his metaphysical *as well as* geographical sand drawings. By considering the geographical direction of morality that has been created by the great transcontinental travel of Jurntakal Dreaming, Old Jimmy found the immoral directions on the same geography. Using the image of moral-immoral geography, he succeeded in analysing and *visualising* the history of Australian colonisation in the Dreaming

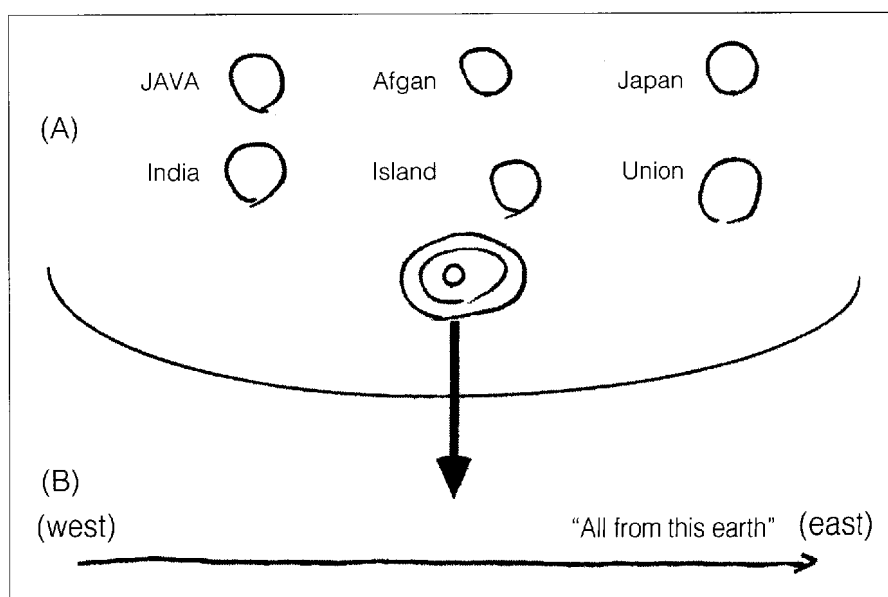


Fig. 7.

landscape; the colonial history is transformed into the Aboriginal landscape.

CONCLUSION

Jimmy Manngayarri of Daguragu demonstrated to me that Aboriginal history is within the moral-immoral landscape. As we have seen, a distinguishing characteristic of Old Jimmy's ideas is that he has a sense of 'locality' on the moral geography; he can find a spatial place and direction of different people, countries, and attitudes. Through this process, historical events are interpreted, assessed and allocated certain geographical locations and directions in his metaphysical yet geographical landscape.

Before concluding, it should be noted that my discussion in this paper does not intend to generalise the Aboriginal perspective on Australian colonial history, instead it introduces a distinctive historical analysis made by an Aboriginal historian, namely, Jimmy Manngayarri of Daguragu. It would also be emphasised that during my fieldwork, Old Jimmy was the only person who used the sand drawings to explain Australian colonial history. Most of his methods of analysis and expression are attributed to his personal talent. As each academic historian has her/his own distinct approach, different Aboriginal historians have different forms of analysis. Even though Old Jimmy's story-tellings are highly original, his expression is widely accepted and appreciated among local people. I often heard people say to Old Jimmy, "That's very good story, *marluka* [old man]." Old Jimmy's originality is *within the Gurindji mode of cultural practice*.

As an Aboriginal historian as well as a moral philosopher, Old Jimmy's consideration was not a 'history of landscape' but a 'landscape of history'. Morphy's argument about the 'subordination of time to space' may be applied to the Gurindji perspective of colonial history as well. From Old Jimmy's viewpoint, histories are more space-oriented events rather than time-oriented. Colonial events are understood through spatial directions of morality in Aboriginal cultural geography. The images of 'others' (colonisers' movement and immorality) are *visualised* in contrast to the image of 'self' (moral movement of the earth law). The colonial past is integrated into the landscape; history becomes landscape. Or in a stricter sense, for the Gurindji historians, history *is* landscape.

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NOTES

- 1) A review symposium on *A Place for Strangers* is in *Social Analysis* 40 [AUSTIN-BROSS 1996; BECKETT 1996; LATTAS 1996; MORTON 1996]. See also Keen [1993].
- 2) One of the exceptions may be the story of Ned Kelly. Among the Aboriginal people in the Victoria River district, Ned Kelly is a moral European. It is important to notice that Ned Kelly's story is a Dreaming story for local people. Ned Kelly is even located in a geographical space at Crawford knob in Karangpuru country. Immoral Europeans, such as Captain Cook, cannot be Dreaming, but if he/she is regarded as a moral European, even an European can be Dreaming [ROSE 1994].
- 3) Most Jurntakal sites are dangerous places that should be treated carefully. I heard many stories of people dying because of their mistreatment of Jurntakal Dreaming sites. I am not permitted to discuss the specific Jurntakal stories here because many of these stories are men's secrets.
- 4) Old Jimmy's view of European education reflects the schooling program in the community. It is rare for a person from the community to go to a high school or even higher education which is away from the community.
- 5) Tommy Vincent Lingiari was a leader of the Gurindji walk-off movement.

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