Sounding First Nations Storytelling in Sydney, Australia

by

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this thesis contains references to and names of people who have passed.

Abstract

This thesis studies how Indigenous storytelling through sounds, musics, and music-making actively reasserts Indigenous presence as a form of political resistance in the urban context of Sydney, Australia. It scrutinises the city's sonic stimuli and how Indigenous musicians, activists, and storytellers position themselves within their urban environment. Built on the lands of various Indigenous populations, such as the Gadigal, the Wangal, the Bidjigal, and many more, Sydney is a place with vibrant Indigenous music scenes, yet it is often not perceived as an Indigenous place due to its urban character. Western imaginations often perceive Indigeneity as situated outside of the city, associated with "the outback" and nature. Moreover, research concerning Indigenous musics in Australia often focuses on music practices in remote community settings. While insights on these practices are highly valuable, to date, however, there have been few academic studies of Indigenous musics in urban contexts. This thesis aims to show how listening to both Indigenous musickers and the city offers insights about the Indigeneity of the city, and how Indigenous individuals navigate urban life through music and sound.

By reflecting on the role of contemporary musical storytelling by Indigenous musicians in urban settings through in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations, this thesis further aims to de-romanticise perceptions of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous ways of life. By examining urban space, music, sounds, and the links between those, this thesis demonstrates how Indigenous musicians and storytellers reclaim spaces in the city with an emphasis on Indigenous presence, politics, and storytelling. This research lies on the intersection of ethnomusicology and urban studies, and is strongly informed by postcolonial critical thinking. Following ethnomusicologists and sound artists such as Brandon LaBelle and Matt Sakakeeny, I demonstrate how music and sound have agency as they have the ability to challenge norms and reconfigure space. Therefore, an important notion in this project is space-reclaiming, which, unlike space-making, emphasises Indigenous sovereignty.

Walking as both a concept and a method, inspired by Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum, has helped me to shape this dissertation's focus on experience. Soundwalking provides insights into Indigenous storytellers' daily lives in Redfern, the heart of Aboriginal activism in Sydney. Working with Indigenous hip-hop artists in Sydney during the Black Lives Matter protests, I draw on Halifu Osumare's idea of hip-hop's Indigenisation to demonstrate how experiences of colonialism and racism connect marginalised populations globally, and how hip-hop storytelling plays a role in protest and in celebrating local Indigenous traditions.

As Indigenous storytelling is a central theme throughout this thesis, I foreground Linda Tuhiwai Smith's claim of research's responsibility to share knowledge, and the importance of mutually beneficial outcomes between all parties involved in the research. This focus resulted in the digitisation of interviews in podcast format as a second research output. I reflect on the accessibility of cultural

expression through a framework of archiving to compare and scrutinise the implications of this podcast project. This shows that, sometimes, content refusal is a way to retain agency.

Finally, I research urban Indigenous performance in environmentally conscious settings. These performances highlight the ways in which climate change and displacement of Indigenous peoples are interconnected, and how contemporary performance conveys this message while advocating for action. Through this range of frameworks, I aim to showcase how an ethnomusicological study of Indigenous musics and sounds in an urban context provides insights into Indigenous urban experiences and the political significance of Indigenous musicking.

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List of Acronyms

ANT   Actor-Network-Theory

ARIA   Australian Recording Industry Association

CALD   Culturally And Linguistically Diverse

CBD   Central Business District

IUCN   International Union for Conservation of Nature

NAIDOC National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee

NCIE   National Centre of Indigenous Excellence

NSW   New South Wales

NT   Northern Territory

UNSW   University of New South Wales

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis focuses on the political quality of Indigenous storytelling through sounds, musics, and music-making in Sydney, Australia. It scrutinises the city's sonic stimuli and how Indigenous musicians, activists, and storytellers position themselves within their urban environment. I use the words "Indigenous" or "First Nations" interchangeably, depending on the particular section or sentence. Both terms are products of colonial systems and are problematic on their own terms. At the same time, these terms can be powerful tools in advocating for Indigenous rights. "Indigenous" may sometimes signify a broader national or global idea that counterposes "non-Indigenous." "First Nations" may sometimes be more suitable when stressing the multitude of communities across Australia. "Aboriginal people" refers to the Indigenous peoples of mainland Australia, and "Torres Strait Islander people" refers to the Indigenous peoples of the islands in Zenadth Kes/the Torres Strait. Wherever possible, I will refer to a person's specific cultural group (i.e. "Wiradjuri," "Bidjigal," "Yuin," etc.) to refrain from using colonial terms and to highlight the person's connection to the topic it concerns.

Built on the lands of various Indigenous populations, such as the Gadigal, the Wangal, the Bidjigal, and many more, Sydney has vibrant Indigenous music scenes. Yet, it is often not perceived as an Indigenous place due to its urban character. Eurocentric imaginations often perceive Indigeneity as situated outside the city, associated with "the outback" and nature (Shaw 2007, 46). We see such portrayal in various media, such as the 2008 film "Australia" by director Baz Luhrmann, set on a remote cattle station which ticks stereotypes such as the Aboriginal mysterious "magic" man and knowledge-keeper who wanders the land or the young Aboriginal boy who eventually has to go on "walkabout" through the land.

In this thesis, I aim to show how listening to both Indigenous musickers and the city offers insights into Indigenous politics in the city and how Indigenous individuals navigate urban life through music and sound. I use the word "musickers" by Christopher Small (1998) to highlight acts of engaging with music, such as listening, playing instruments, or dancing, and to move away from centring a "piece" of music. Rather, I am interested in all agents that engage with music and sounds and how they relate to the world through music and sounds.

By reflecting on contemporary music-making – and the political it represents – by Indigenous musicians in urban settings, this thesis aims to resist perceptions of Indigenous peoples as "damaged," "defeated and broken" (Tuck 2009, 412). By looking into urban space, music, sounds, the links between those and what they represent, this thesis demonstrates the ways in which Indigenous musicians and storytellers reclaim spaces in the city with an emphasis on Indigenous presence and storytelling.

As Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith has illustrated, Indigenous peoples have systematically been portrayed as less human due to the belief that Indigenous cultures "lack" the "virtues of civilisation," such as arts and institutions (Smith 2013, 67). Yet, throughout various interviews, this research has found that Indigenous artists in Australia enhance their identity as storytellers and use music as a political tool to work with, alongside, or against institutions. Here, music and sounds are used to express frustrations over the ways neo-colonisation affects Indigenous lives today. The use of neo-colonisation here emphasises that while Australia, since 1901, is officially not a British colony anymore, the nation's dominant structures derived from Europe are still in place today and heavily suppress Indigenous ways of life. At other times, music and sounds are used as a way of celebration, as well as to make a living working professionally in the music and creative industries. Even when the focus deviates from political engagement, the inherent political agency of and within Indigenous music-making is a significant aspect of this thesis.

This is illustrated through reflections on Indigenous sounds and musics encountered in Sydney, strongly focused on what these signify politically, and how Indigenous musicians and storytellers interact with and relate to these sounds. This represents people's intentions behind the sounds and the effects people think these sounds may have on the broader society. I reflect on this through interviews with Indigenous musicians, activists, and people working in the creative industries, complemented by soundwalks, ethnographic observations and digital ethnography. The thesis lies on the intersections of ethnomusicology, urban studies, and cultural studies, in which it enhances reflections on literature from a combination of these fields.

1.1 First Nations Music Research

Often, research concerning Indigenous Australian musics focuses on music practices in remote community settings. Authors such as Aaron Corn, Sally Treloyn and Linda Barwick have extensively researched rural community music. This significant research has contributed to intercultural approaches to university education, enabling a shift from a Eurocentric focus on written text in Corn's (2009) "Garma fieldwork" research project. This project brought students to the annual Garma Festival in East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Here, students learned directly from Yolngu Elders about Indigenous law and customs through song and dance. This research explores non-textual ways of knowledge documentation and expression.

Treloyn and Charles evidenced how the repatriation of recordings has increased the well-being of community members through the practice of the endangered dance-song genre Junba, a performance

tradition practised in the Kimberley in Australia's North West (Treloyn and Charles 2015). Rona Googninda Charles detected many archival sources about her community, family, and traditions in an archive and Canberra, which have been transferred to a local archive in her community. This allowed community members to not only listen to the archival recordings holding songs by their ancestors but also to learn and sing these songs themselves, bringing the past into the present and bringing new vitality into the junba practice.

Moreover, Linda Barwick has illustrated how adopting new technologies in music practices encourages social organisation established in pre-colonial times in Wadeye in Northwest Australia (Barwick 2017). Focusing on funeral songs composed by the deceased woman's family, and recorded by Barwick, her study shows how the introduction of new technologies – such as, at the time, CD burning – pre-colonial organisation structures specific to the Kungarlbarl clan continued. This was evidenced through, for example, "brother-sister avoidance" (where the brothers' songs had to be copied on a separate CD from the sisters' songs) and identity tied to place expressed through the songs.

While insights on remote community music performances are precious, to date, however, there have been few academic studies of urban Indigenous musics in Australia. The uneven ratio of attention to rural/urban community music-making upholds a focus on perceiving Indigenous Australian musics in terms of traditionality rather than contemporaneity and the rural instead of the urban. Yet today, the majority of Indigenous peoples live in urban centres in Australia, having adopted a "Western" way of living while simultaneously identifying with Indigeneity. This dissertation, therefore, focuses on music-making in Sydney, with styles ranging from soul to songlines and from (Western) classical music to hip-hop.

Emphasising important exceptions to the smaller attention to urban community musics described above, Daniel Fisher's (2016), Peter Dunbar-Hall and Chris Gibson's (2004), Chiara Minestrelli's (2017), and Amanda Harris' (2020) contributions to Indigenous urban musics are a starting point for this thesis, which in turn aims to continue the conversation.

Dunbar-Hall and Gibson delve into various contemporary Indigenous musical expressions in Australia. While they do not focus on urban musical activities per se, they hold a significant portion. The authors' focus on "contemporary Aboriginal music" is particularly valuable for my research. It aids in delving into popular musical styles and, at the same time, looking into various local contexts within Australia. Local contexts are specifically significant in relation to ideas of place, in particular Country. In Indigenous ontologies Country is known as a place of belonging, which includes all elements that are part of that place, such as plants and stories. Country is central to Indigeneity in Australia, as is continuously evidenced by contemporary music by the Warumpi Band, Yothu Yindi, or Kev Carmody (Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004, 137-147). Highlighted by Dunbar-Hall and Gibson, these artists are,

again, associated with rural areas. In contrast, my research will complement this field by highlighting musical practices by artists such as Kobie Dee, DOBBY, and Mi-kaisha, who live and perform in urban areas and whose connection to Country is just as significant, though often overlooked.

While Fisher reflects on the interconnectedness of Indigenous peoples in Australia and not solely on urban settings, he does reflect on attitudes toward Indigeneity. Fisher explains how Indigenous radio stations preferred participation from remote Indigenous communities over Indigenous people living in urban settings (2016, 46). As subjugated by colonisation most intensively, Indigenous identity is often questioned of those living in urban Indigenous communities (2016, 63). This is one of the reasons why urban communities highly value kinship, expressed by slang phrases such as "we are all one mob," to be able to identify as Aboriginal and to identify with Blackness on a transnational level (2016, 45-46, 63, 69). Enhanced by digital technologies, Indigenous communities can now connect globally through the worldwide circulation of musical styles. This is seen particularly in hip-hop, as I demonstrate in Chapter Five.

Minestrelli (2017) offers rich insights into Indigenous hip-hop in Australia, a genre that will take up a significant portion of this thesis. Throughout my research, hip-hop has proven to be a valuable expressive form in Indigenous contexts in Australia. Minestrelli illustrates how hip-hop can be a tool for Indigenous artists to position themselves in the world and a vehicle for staging authority and self-narrativization. I develop her argument that highlights hip-hop's ability to forge empowerment amongst Indigenous rappers. I also explore her claim that Indigenous hip-hop plays a key role in First Nations' political identity and, with that, the importance of representation.

The recent book by Amanda Harris, "Representing Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance 1930-1970," focuses on how Aboriginal music and dance have been represented by non-Indigenous cultural institutions and creatives and the (political) effects these representations have (had) on Aboriginal peoples. Harris's work has been particularly useful for this thesis as it often highlights cultural expressions performed in Australian cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, moving away from the focus on rural community musics – though the performances she discusses are often derived from those. Her historical account lays out the foundations of the conditions that many Indigenous artists who have contributed to this thesis find themselves in and build upon today, such as the ways in which NAIDOC week – an acronym for National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee, a week with events celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures – has been utilised for its opportunities for Indigenous performers (Harris 2020, 95-98). It also discusses examples of misrepresenting Indigenous cultures in the past – such as seen in the Burragorang Dreamtime production performed during the first visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1963. This performance ill-portrayed Aboriginal concepts by non-Aboriginal performers and showed little regard for Aboriginal people's

"continuing existence" (Harris 2020, 107-108). Over the course of the interviews conducted for this thesis, I came to understand how productions that have misrepresented Indigenous people have been part of colonial agendas. Today, many Indigenous artists aim to rectify such ill-portrayal through self-determination and self-narrativization.

This thesis draws on ethnomusicologist Thomas R. Hilder's work. In his book "Sámi Musical Performance and the Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe" (2015), he studies the musical genre *joik* of the Sámi in Norway. Hilder studies how this vocal tradition represents "pan-Sámi-ness" to non-Indigenous audiences similarly to, for example, the didjeridu in Australia, which is often seen as a pan-Aboriginal instrument. Hilder also argues that Indigenous populations globally have positioned themselves against principles formed by the European Enlightenment. He describes experiences common among Indigenous people around the world, such as the dispossession of land, genocide, cultural oppression, and political exclusion. Various national Indigenous rights movements developed over the twentieth century. It is the neglected histories of the effects imperialism has on First Nations communities that these movements have shed light upon (Hilder 2015, 16).

Though not exclusively focusing on Indigenous expressive traditions, performance scholar Diana Taylor argues for the distinctions between "ephemeral" traditions – the repertoire – and traditions stored in documents in buildings – the archive. Even though the repertoire is not tactile, Taylor argues for the embodied knowledge and information it holds. In her case study of the Peruvian Yuyachkani theatre group, she proposes performance can be used to negotiate political situations. Her research centralises embodied knowledge as opposed to archival, "tangible" knowledge. In the case of the Yuyachkani theatre group, performing in a particular place is more important than what is being performed. As the group is a mix of people from a variety of ethnicities – white, mestizo, and Indigenous – the usage of various languages, for example, emphasises Peru's multiethnic reality, which pushes against the government's nationalistic agenda. Thus, focusing on embodied behaviours, rather than national boundaries, can help us understand performance traditions by focusing on "doing" rather than focusing on "what is" (Taylor 2003, 1-2, 16, 191-192).

Furthermore, Stó:lō music scholar and artist Dylan Robinson focuses on colonial and Indigenous modes of listening in Canada in his book "Hungry Listening." He critiques academia's focus on the content of Indigenous music, while there is a reluctance to incorporate Indigenous structures. Ethnomusicology still heavily relies on epistemologies with foundations in colonialism while addressing problems of colonialism – such as inclusion – content-wise (Robinson 2020, 5). This also applies to cultural institutions, such as Western classical music spaces in which an Indigenous musician is invited to play. Using a performer's Indigeneity as a token is what Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson calls "inclusionary music" or "inclusionary performance" (6). Robinson poses that, at times, Indigenous

performers are expected to perform in ways that suit that institution, therefore sustaining, if not deepening, existing unequal power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous performers and enabling institutions (Robinson 2020, 5-6). Besides, Robinson remarks that popular discourse often refers to Indigenous music as a past practice "rather than understanding its continuance" (12). As Indigenous Australian scholar Tiriki Onus explained during the SEM conference on October 25th, 2020, there is a tendency to perceive the European invasion of Australia as a rupture point for Indigenous Australian musics and arts. In reality, cultural expressions have always been subject to change. Focusing on Indigenous musics in Australia does not necessarily entail focusing on musics that emerged in pre-invasion times.

1.2 On Indigenous Sovereignty

Australia has a painful history shaped by colonialism: Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their lands, and children were taken from their families to be raised without their cultural traditions—an era known as the "Stolen Generations." Additionally, assimilation policies restricted Indigenous peoples from practising their cultural beliefs and customs (Corn 2009, 23). After years of protests, political activism like the founding of the Tent Embassy in 1972, and efforts to secure land rights, living conditions have gradually improved. In 1992, for example, Meriam activist Eddie Koiki Mabo, together with a group of fellow Mer Islanders, won a legal claim that acknowledged their ownership of their land, actively rejecting the false idea of Australia as "terra nullius", as claimed by the British meaning "land belonging to no one." This case is famously known as "the Mabo Case." Following this legal case, the "Native Title Act 1993" was established through which Indigenous people could make claims over their lands (n.d.a). As Aileen Moreton-Robinson points out, however, this idea of making "legal claims" to land are white structures that do not align with Indigenous concepts of sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2020, 4).

It is, therefore, that "sovereignty" plays an essential role throughout this thesis. It has been a fundamental principle and the idea that Indigenous people are sovereigns over their lands was an understanding that formed the basis of every interview, without exception. However, sovereignty is not a static concept, and is practiced or becomes important in various manners. This section will explore specific theories on sovereignty that I will draw on throughout this thesis. Robinson (2017), for example, stresses that sovereignty is an *act*. Instead of a static notion, Robinson shows how Indigenous sovereignty is affirmed in actions such as using one's voice, gestures, or through arts (2017, 85-87). Hopi ethnomusicologist Trevor G. Reed further explores the idea of "sonic sovereignty" (2020). He

studies how the creation and performing of Indigenous traditional songs exercise authority over Öngtupqa, a place now also known as the Grand Canyon National Park. Reed argues for the sonic materiality through which the Hopi govern their territory, even though this territory has been "claimed" by the settler-colonial government employing the written word (510). Similar to Indigenous practices in Australia (Corn 2009), rules about – and law that concerns – the land, are embedded within Indigenous song and dance among the Hopi. Reed explains how Indigenous expressions "that activate and generate relations between individuals and between people and other actors in the world—no matter their form—may be sovereign acts" (2020, 514). Therefore, separating Indigenous artistic expressions from an act of sovereignty furthers colonial thinking.

Goenpul scholar and professor of Indigenous Studies Aileen Moreton-Robinson emphasises the idea that Indigenous sovereignty is an embodied sovereignty and is a product of deep connections between humans, land, and ancestors. This differs from "Western" concepts of sovereignty, which she argues are rooted in "contract models" and one overall authority (2020, 2). When, she furthermore demonstrates, Indigenous people are permitted to claim Native Title over "vacant Crown land," this is all contained within the structures set up by the dominating "Western" model of land rights, which do not align with Indigenous, embodied concepts of sovereignty (2020, 4). It is essential, however, that Indigenous sovereignty is discussed by Indigenous people, and that this thesis, therefore, holds tension in discussing this concept. As Goori scholar Tracey Bunda asserts, "Our sovereignty is embodied and is tied to particular tracts of country, thus our bodies signify ownership and we perform sovereign acts in our everyday living. Writing by Indigenous people is thus a sovereign act" (2020, 75). Aligning with Robinson and Reed discussed above, Bunda highlights the active practice of sovereignty. She also claims that representations by white people of Indigenous women, and thus of Indigenous sovereigns, always contrast Indigenous writings about themselves. It is therefore important to highlight that I write about Indigenous sovereignty to emphasise its centrality in this research, yet without claiming authority over epistemological knowledge, and embodied experience, about it.

Seneca Indigenous studies and American literature professor Michelle H. Raheja (2011) coins what she calls "visual sovereignty," describing how Indigenous filmmakers and actors use self-representation as a way to reclaim control over their own narratives. Besides, she demonstrates how it opens up discussions on Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge production (2011, 6). Raheja echoes Reed's argument to grapple with sovereignty outside of "western" legal discourses, and, instead, include the arts, culture, while emphasising the idea of it being a process that is situated within ever-evolving contexts (2011, 194). This also highlights that there is not one coherent idea of Indigenous sovereignty and that it can emanate through various avenues. Raheja's focus on the visual in films is one such avenue, but her ideas may be applied to musical performances: she argues for "the space between

resistance and compliance wherein Indigenous filmmakers and actors revisit, contribute to, borrow from, critique, and reconfigure ethnographic film conventions, while at the same time operating within and stretching the boundaries created by these conventions" (2011, 193). This is applicable to Indigenous musicking in Sydney, whereby Indigenous artists use the, sometimes "mainstream," platforms they have worked to obtain, to then further conversations about, and advocating for, Indigenous sovereignty. Chapter Four will further elaborate upon this.

Politics scholar Raia Prokhovnik, in turn, has shown how European settlement has imposed British forms of sovereignty onto Indigenous lands in what is now known as Australia. By Australia becoming its own nation-state in 1901, without ever acknowledging Indigenous sovereignty, Prokhovnik argues that, therefore, Australian sovereignty is "incomplete" (2015, 428). Her take on the current "sovereignty in Australia" (as opposed to "Australian sovereignty", which it has not reached yet) as flawed is important, as this argument shows that including Indigenous sovereignties into a rethought model of "Australian sovereignty" is not only beneficial for Indigenous populations, but the society in Australia as a whole. This, in turn, is important as discussions on Indigenous sovereignty are, within dominant systems, sometimes seen as something that might threaten non-Indigenous sovereignty. Prokhovnik shows, however, that including Indigenous sovereignty and, therefore, rethinking Australian sovereignty is necessary and benevolent for wider Australia.

1.3 Challenging Stereotypes

Following Dunbar-Hall and Gibson, I, too, will use the term "contemporary" for practical use – that is, music that people play today. Dunbar-Hall and Gibson argue for continuity in Indigenous musical expressions, and they refrain from a strict dichotomy between the "traditional" and the "contemporary" (Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004, 16). Musics, and cultures in general, have constantly been subjected to change (Abu-Lughod 1991), and Australia is no exception.

Cultural change, as Ulf Hannerz claims, is often tied to "the global," while continuity is often aligned with "the local" (Hannerz 1996, 19). This idea alludes to the above in which the traditional, a continuation, is contrasted with the contemporary, or that which changes over time. However outdated these concepts may be, they play a genuine part in popular discourses and everyday representations of Indigeneity in Australia, which typically imply that "real" Aboriginality is only to be experienced away from globalised city centres. Fig. 1.1 shows an example of how tourism campaigns advertised in Sydney use Aboriginal culture to attract tourists in remote Northern Territory, depicting a laughing Aboriginal woman who teaches a white woman how to weave with palm trees in the background.

Figure 1.1 Photo of a bus stop ad of Northern Territory Tourism, 2020.
https://indigenousx.com.au/support-all-indigenous-tourism-culture-spans-the-continent-islands/.

This also reflects what Fisher describes as the significance for urban Aboriginal communities to distinguish themselves from non-Aboriginal peoples as it is the urban areas where Indigenous cultural expressions have been subjected to the consequences of colonisation, and thus, change, the most (Fisher 2016, 63). However, despite this, communities in urban centres still identify as Indigenous while adopting non-Indigenous cultural elements, encouraged by solidarity practices such as attending and creating festivals or mobilising groups of people to protest. In short, in this research project, contemporary Indigenous music-making refers to musical activities by Indigenous peoples performed

today, in which hybridisation – where various musical cultures meet, adapt, or become adopted – is also valued. For example, Gumaroy Newman, a Gamilaroi and Wakka Wakka man, combines traditional Indigenous Yiḏaki-playing with classical orchestral settings in his collaboration with British Australian composer and musician Keyna Wilkins.

Anthropologist Craig Proulx, too, discusses how often Aboriginal people living in cities are perceived as "less" Aboriginal. Although Proulx focuses on Indigenous groups in Canada, his ideas apply to the situation in Australia. Proulx states:

> The non-Aboriginal perception that Aboriginal people become somehow less authentically Aboriginal when they move from reserves to cities and beyond, or when ways of being in the world change in reserves, continues the limit of opening up of new spaces for, and acceptance of, changing forms of expressing and living aboriginality (Proulx 2010, 39).

He exemplifies this idea with "the pizza test," in which the practice of eating a pizza instead of "native" food disqualifies this practitioner from "being" Aboriginal according to dominant ideas about Aboriginality (Proulx 2010, 39). Aboriginal professor in Indigenous studies Bronwyn Carlson describes from her own experiences how others often see Aboriginal people:

> [Some] are accused of not behaving or thinking Aboriginal, even if they look Aboriginal. The term 'coconut' — brown on the outside and white on the inside — is a standard accusation against an Aboriginal person, used derogatively in attempts to surveil behaviour and thinking and to regulate what being Aboriginal means. (Carlson 2016, 11)

In music, this same idea manifests when Indigenous peoples adopt globalised ways of musicking. Hip-hop, for example, may find roots in Black American communities, but it is simultaneously a globally recognised musical form that is appreciated and appropriated in many places. Indigenous traditions such as oral knowledge generation and transmission are not "less Aboriginal" when influenced by external practices (Proulx 2010, 39-40). This thesis will focus on music practices in which external influences are apparent, though adopted by Indigenous peoples who have made it their own. For example, Gomeroi artist Kobie Dee uses hip-hop to express his ideas and values.

1.4 Indigenous Becoming and Creativities

Humanities professor and anthropologist James Clifford calls externally influenced Indigenous practices "adaptive traditions," in which approaches beyond pre-invasion traditions allow cultural persistence (Clifford 2013, 7). Clifford argues for a focus on "becoming." He states:

> Most well-informed people assumed that genocide (tragic) and acculturation (inevitable) would do history's work. But by the end of the twentieth century it became clear that something different was going on. Many native people were indeed killed; languages were lost, societies disrupted. But many have held on, adapting and recombining the remnants of an interrupted way of life. (...) Cultural endurance is a process of becoming. (Clifford 2013, 7)

Here, Clifford stresses the importance of adaptation over static ideas of cultural expressions to survive and reconfigure life after, in the case of Australia, European invasion. Powerful institutions, he claims, such as universities and courtrooms, are places where "ethnographic and historical realism" are now being translated to challenge outdated perceptions of Indigeneity (Clifford 2013, 7). This is what this research will bring attention to as well: to acknowledge the reality of a neo-colonial situation – in which European structures are still dominant even though Australia is not a British colony anymore – in which First Nations peoples adopt "globalised" cultural articulations, hybridise those and make them their own, either without losing connection to or re-connecting with their Indigeneity. Cultural institutions, such as venues, museums and festivals, become sites for challenging dominant yet obsolete ideas about Indigenous cultures.

Anthropologist Mark K. Watson's case studies on memorials in Melbourne, Australia, and Tokyo, Japan, indicate how artworks have the ability to rethink a city's (hi)stories by including monumentalised fragments or details of Indigenous lives throughout urban spaces. He, too, highlights a "western imagination" of Indigenous peoples being "out of place" in the cities and the tendency to portray Indigenous peoples as "out there, back then" (Watson 2014, 390, 403).

Watson emphasises a migration in which First Nations peoples leave their traditional lands for the city, though I would also stress the city's Indigenous "traditionality" and simultaneously its cosmopolitanism. Traditionality can be a problematic concept when focusing on music. Essentialism, for example, must be avoided. In the city, however, traces of Indigenous traditions still mark the land today. Rock art is to be found in Sydney's Iron Cove and North Bondi areas, for example (Clegg, Barry, and Susino 1996; Attenbrow 2010) (Fig. 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Photo of Aboriginal rock art at Iron Cove, Go-mo-ra, Sydney. Taken by author on 26-10-2018.

Sonic cultural expressions such as songs are more complex to trace back due to their ephemeral nature. However, many Indigenous artists that will appear in this thesis explicitly invoke notions of Indigenous traditionality in the context of their performances of globalised musical genres such as hip-hop. Musician and playwright Richard Frankland, who is a member of the Aboriginal Gunditjmara people, confirms this idea when he refers to his country music. He states:

> I love songs that tell a story. That's the prime thing about our culture. My songs are just as traditional a part of our culture as the culture from pre-contact days. By that I mean that our culture is amazingly strong and resilient, and that is has the ability to adapt and evolve. My songs are part of my dreaming path and that's important. (Frankland, in Koori Mail 2002, in Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004, 84)

This explains how contemporary musicians, such as Richard Frankland, base their musical Indigenous identities on the idea that no musical form excludes one from being traditional. As my research will demonstrate, many musicians I have interviewed and listened to evoke similar sentiments about their music genre and art form of choice.

1.5 Indigenous Storytelling

Storytelling is a concept central to Indigenous identities in Australia. To discuss why storytelling is a pivotal concept, I will start with the notion of "Dreamtime." Caution around this term, and those that will follow here, is advised as these English words have been introduced after the colonisation of the Australian continent. There are myriad beliefs reflecting the diversity of the Indigenous communities living around the continent, which are therefore irreducible to one all-encompassing concept. Christine Judith Nicholls writes, for example, that the Warlpiri people in the Tanami Desert live by the principle of Jukurrpa, and the Kija people in the East Kimberley use the concept Ngarrankarni, also Ngarrarngkarni (Nicholls 2014). One of the people who have helped shape this research – during a soundwalk elaborated upon in Chapter Three – Luke Patterson, a Gamilaroi poet and musician, uses the term Dreamtime to talk about spirit world. Combined with the idea of Indigenous Country, he also refers to Dreamtime as a "fabric of reality" (Luke, soundwalk recording with author, 20-07-2022). What has come to be known as Dreamtime is a form of creation myth. It is the moment in which ancestors and spirits create life.

Dreamtime is heavily tied to place as the ancestors and spirits created pieces of land and have shaped it further by practising activities there (Gibson and Dunbar-Hall 2000, 51). The "Dreaming" is the explanation of how the creation manifested in the Dreamtime; it is what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways are based upon and is lived daily. The "stories," or "Dreaming stories," explain these ways, such as how to live on a particular piece of land, how to deal with deceased people, or how to have visitors on one's "Country" (Aboriginal Contemporary 2021). "Country" for Indigenous peoples in Australia does not refer to a nation-state, but it refers to a particular place of belonging and the natural elements, such as plants, the people, the seasons, and stories, that are part of it (Aboriginal Art & Culture 2021). This concise explanation is not exhaustive, yet it is a starting point to understand this thesis further.[1]

With stories and the act of storytelling as crucial concepts within Indigenous cultures dating back to pre-colonial times, it is not surprising that today, many Indigenous musicians and artists emphasise their identity as Indigenous storytellers. This is particularly evident in music genres, such as hip-hop and rap, in which lyrics are an important component of the music due to the central role of the MC (Neate 2004, 4). As Chiara Minestrelli argues:

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[1] Not only is it not my place, as a non-Indigenous person, to try to give a firm definition of Country, this term is understood differently within Indigenous communities in Australia. Chapter Three will delve further into the intricacies around the term and some ways in which it may be used by those who have helped shape this thesis.

The storytelling quality of rap music constitutes another important reason behind the Indigenous youth's preference for this genre and lies at the basis of claims of ownership in relation to Hip Hop, which is often described as a continuation of Indigenous cultural practices. (Minestrelli 2017, 9).

This can also be seen as a way of localising the global hip-hop genre, tailoring it to Indigenous situations while reflecting on, as Halifu Osumare states, "connective marginalities" (Osumare 2001, 172). These are best described as "social resonances between [B]lack expressive culture within its contextual political history and similar dynamics in other nations" (Osumare 2001, 172). As illustrated further in this thesis, many research participants have made similar connections, relating to both Bla(c)k expressions, as well as identifying as Indigenous storytellers continuing Indigenous practices.

Storytelling, furthermore, is emphasised in relation to agency. As Helen G. Gould and Mary Marsh summarise in the Creative Exchange report 2004, a project focused on public education in relation to arts and funded by the UK Department for International Development: "Expression is fundamental to self-determination, community engagement and to imagining futures" (Gould and Marsh 2004, 14). Creative expressions offer self-determination in that it is a way of self-narrativization, unlike seen in formal education, which is highly dominated by a narrative around a peaceful European settlement in Australia in which colonisers are seen as heroes (Hoosan 2019).

As stated at the start of this section, stories derive from a particular place and are therefore heavily tied to place. Today, in the face of the current climate crisis, this also manifests in musical expressions related to environmental awareness. For example, by using performance as a tool, Noongar ethnomusicologist Clint Bracknell hopes to engage the broader Australian society in reinvigorating care for the environment (Bracknell 2022, 14). Not only is storytelling meant to reach human ears, but as this thesis will demonstrate, the practice of storytelling (in language) is also intended to have an impact on Country itself (Davison 2021). Furthermore, storytelling on Country in native language by Indigenous populations is an act that has been diminished by colonial systems, such as the written word, and can be seen as a refusal of those colonial systems (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 100).

1.6 Place-Reclaiming through Music and Sound: From Hip-Hop to Songlines, from Stages to Streets

This thesis aims to show sound and music's crucial, political role in place-reclaiming. From the sounds on the streets of Redfern – an inner-city area of Sydney home to an Indigenous community – to musical performances, and from the playing of songlines – "A series of songs that refers to the travels of an ancient cultural hero and that can be mapped to specific areas" (Koch 2013, 11) – in busking sites to

chants in the streets during a rally: how sound and music reclaim Indigenous spaces in the city is a central enquiry within this thesis. Music reclaiming a space, rather than space-making, is highly political and essential to emphasise in this context to highlight First Nations sovereignty over the continent that is now known as Australia.

First Nations artists often counter and subvert dominant narratives that emphasise stereotypes that consider First Nations peoples. These counternarratives can be seen as a form of self-narrativization, protest, and encouraging cross-cultural debate (Clapham and Kelly 2019; Minestrelli 2017). For example, Hutchings and Rodger (2018) demonstrate how hip-hop duo A.B. Original used the name of far-right Australian nationalist group Reclaim Australia as their album name, aiming to start conversations about matters concerning First Nations communities (Hutchings and Rodger 2018, 88) and reframing the discourse of reclamation.

Because of the political nature of space-reclaiming, activism is a central topic throughout this thesis. As interviews throughout my fieldwork continued to demonstrate, the political quality of the musical expressions was often of the highest importance and the reason for my strong focus on the political significance of these expressions, which were often seen as musical activism. I have noticed the usage of the word "activism" pan out into various expressions, both explicit and implicit. As Minestrelli (2017) sheds light on, Indigeneity has become a political identity – even at times when not attempting to make political statements (2017, 109). I use the word activism broadly: encompassing notions of resistance. As David McDonald argues:

> To conceptualize resistance as a diagnostic of historically changing structures of power moves the discussion beyond the simple binary of powerful and powerless and serves to interrogate acts of resistance within the shifting relations from which they emerge. (McDonald 2013, 26).

This means that acts of resistance can take on many different forms depending on each occasion and the agency each actor holds within each specific occasion. This will be a connecting thread throughout this research project. I have employed Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory as a theoretical framework to discuss this, as I will elaborate upon below.

Activism can manifest through celebration as well. As revealed in interviews, achievements such as professional success, recognition within communities, and even the presence of Indigenous individuals on a stage provide occasions for celebrating Indigenous peoples. These moments signify forms of resistance against the idea that colonisation has succeeded in eliminating Indigenous peoples from the continent. Referring to the notion of agency, a celebration may occur when, within a particular setting of actants, an Indigenous artist may flourish despite the hardships one may (have) face(d). Notions of resilience – the capacity to overcome challenges – and celebration can overlap and, in many instances, are happening simultaneously. The idea of celebrating Indigenous survival, for example, is a common

trope during political days such as January 26th, the day marking the arrival of Captain Arthur Phillip on the lands of various Eora groups (today Sydney's Port Jackson), declaring the area the British colony of New South Wales, officially referred to as "Australia Day" though often referred to as "Invasion Day" or "Survival Day" by Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous allies.

Concerning music, this means that the musical form to express notions such as Indigenous resilience and celebration is often less critical than the socio-political movement the music is part of (McDonald 2013, 5). Therefore, this thesis does not focus on one specific music or genre. More important, instead, is where this music sounds: on an open-air festival stage, in the streets, in a music venue, or any place that comprises the soundscape of Sydney. This plurality of musics reflects the diversity of Indigenous peoples living and musicking in Sydney. It is a place where people from all over the continent (and beyond) have come to find opportunities, such as work or education, or have family ties.

The inclination to include a broad range of musics also came from my experiences living in Sydney prior to this research. Whenever I found myself at an event by an Indigenous artist, I often noticed that musicians (or any creatives, for that matter) celebrated other musicians for their creative expression, no matter their differences in musical styles. This also translates into collaborations between musicians, bringing various musical styles together. Hip-hop artist MC Munk, also MunkiMuk, for example, has been a part of Ngarra-Burria. This initiative invites Indigenous musicians to work in a classical music setting, while these musicians, in turn, also teach how they work in their "own" settings, such as hip-hop in Munk's case. Another example is the Blak Box: Precarities show, which brought together a variety of musicians, such as Eric Avery, who plays Western classical music on the violin; hip-hop artist DOBBY as the percussionist; and Lorna Munro as spoken word artist and poet, among others, to convey Indigenous stories from Indigenous points of view.

While this thesis includes a range of musical expressions, hip-hop is the one musical culture that stands out. Sydney is a hub for Indigenous hip-hop, and it only deserves to be foregrounded – in Chapter Five – to give it ample recognition. Sydney is home to significant hip-hop figures such as MC Munk, who helped establish the scene, and others today thriving as hip-hop artists, such as BARKAA, DOBBY, and Kobie Dee. During Indigenous celebrations, such as the annual NAIDOC week – further elaborated upon in Chapter Four – one will not find a stage without at least one hip-hop act. Furthermore, hip-hop is a medium historically used by marginalised groups of people. Therefore, regarding space-reclaiming in the city, hip-hop often speaks directly to issues affecting Indigenous peoples' displacement, a result of policies referred to as the "Stolen Generations" explained in section 1.2.

As Matt Sakakeeny states: "Making public sounds in public spaces is, quite literally, a practice of being heard" (Sakakeeny 2010, 25). In his research on jazz funerals in New Orleans, Sakakeeny reflects on space-making by focussing on funeral marches accompanied by brass band music. Similar to the

situation in Sydney, council-regulated activities such as city planning, often resulting in gentrification, sustain the marginalised position of African Americans in New Orleans (Sakakeeny 2010, 1, 3). In Sydney, this is seen in places such as Redfern and Waterloo, affecting First Nations residents (Morgan 2012). In other places, such as Barangaroo, gentrification may have targeted various populations, such as families descended from the first European settlers who worked in this area when it was still an industrial site. Whoever is displaced due to gentrification, any place on the Australian continent is unceded Indigenous land – urban spaces as much as rural spaces.

1.7 Sound, Space, and Meaning

The process of gaining knowledge through sound is known as "acoustemology." While soundscapes typically present sounds without questioning the role of agency, acoustemology, as Steven Feld explains, "favors inquiry that centralizes situated listening in engagements with place and space-time" (Feld 2015, 15). This means, according to Feld, that we must think of sound in relation to the context of the sound, as well as ourselves. Coined by Feld in 1992, the term combines the words "acoustics" and "epistemology" to describe not only the acquisition of knowledge through sound, but also to challenge what we know and how we come to know it through sound (Feld 2015, 12). The concept of acoustemology emphasises situated listening, which is deeply connected to specific locations, making it particularly useful for studying Indigenous music and the political act of space-reclaiming through performance and sound.

Dominant European Enlightenment thinking has resulted in ocularcentrism, in which information perceived by the eye is privileged over information picked up by other senses (Sykes 2019, 208). Ana María Ochoa Gautier tackles this issue in her book, in which she discusses the lack of attention to local expressions in nineteenth-century Colombia, a lack that is still palpable today (Ochoa Gautier 2014, 1-13). Reflecting on Santiago Castro-Gómez, Ochoa Gautier describes:

> "For Castro-Gómez such an emphasis on the gaze is crucial to the relation between colonialism as power and coloniality as knowledge because it gives an external observer the power to universalize its categories of knowledge and posit its own point of view as a despatialized omniscience" (Ochoa Gautier 2014, 13).

Ochoa Gautier highlights the idea that the "Europeanness" of Eurocentric ways, such as scientific methods that have come about in seventeenth-century Europe – and with that, the privileging of what is seen (such as the written word) rather than what is heard (such as oral storytelling) – has almost become invisible, allowing us to perceive the methods as "neutral" ways applicable to any society.

European invisibleness – European structures that have become the norm and are therefore not often noticed but perceived as a "standard" - is a recurring theme throughout this dissertation. The idea of soundscapes alluded to above mediates between hierarchies of sound by taking into account all sounds in the scape, instead of solely focusing on the Western qualification of particular sounds often referred to as music. Music, as opposed to sound, is often believed to be "organised." While there are many ideas of what music may be, the study of music has had a particular focus on Western classical music, therefore reconfirming "Western musical norms" as just "musical norms" (Sakakeeny 2015, 113). This implies that any "music" not complying with this norm is not worthy of attention or not worthy of the title "music" at all.

Sound studies may offer a solution to this Eurocentrism as they do not rely as heavily on Western classification systems that music studies, and even ethnomusicology, strongly depend on (Wong 2014, 351). However, I will point out that even in sound studies, there is no complete elimination of Western dominance either. As Jim Sykes points out, sound studies often depend on Western concepts of sound, mainly rooted in secularism (Sykes 2019, 209). While ethnomusicologists may benefit from what sound studies have to offer, my thesis will not wholly dismiss Western concepts of music either. The musicians involved in my research use Western concepts of music and make it their own. However, it is helpful to be mindful of the potential implications this may have for Indigenous aural and oral traditions.

In Chapter Three of this thesis, a person's ties to a place are highlighted through their experiences within or in regard to this place. It is here where I also focus on sound. I challenge ideas of Indigenous sounds that draw on stereotypes denouncing Indigenous people living in the city as "less" Indigenous. Instead, I attend to the sounds of the space itself – of urban environments – and the ways in which Indigenous residents relate to and move within this space. It requires attentive listening that focuses on the shifting "acoustical agency" (Rice 2015, 100), that is, the agent holding the attention through sound, of humans, nonhuman animals, Country, and technical devices.

As Dylan Robinson notes in Hungry Listening (2020), how humans listen is culturally formed, while Deborah Kapchan notes how listening itself can be a political act (Kapchan 2017). Bearing this in mind, this thesis considers listening positionalities while acknowledging that some forms of listening, such as listening to amplified instruments on a stage, have become the norm. This is significant in Indigenous environmentalism, where "listening to Country" is a common trope used to encourage a sense of care for the environment. Indigenous peoples' displacement means that individuals are often restricted from practising environmental caring for a place, such as backburning, a type of controlled burning used to look after Country. Consequently, Indigenous displacement further exacerbates the degradation of the environment. I aim to demonstrate how music and sound are part of a holistic way of life that is not

only interconnected with the environment, but is environmentally conscious and promotes environmental awareness.

In her study on the sounds of slums in Govindpuri, South West Delhi, sound studies scholar Tripta Chandola explores the meanings of these sounds by outsiders – non-residents of these slums. Moreover, she scrutinises how the slum residents make sure outsiders listen to their sounds. Chandola states:

> Listening is a political act. It can only be enacted from a position of power, but it is precisely on this account, that this act is also laden with the possibilities of disrupting, challenging and dismantling the mesh of the intersectionalities of the performative, and eventually insidiously existing, hierarchies of power relationships. (Chandola 2020, 45)

The act of listening derives from a position of power, as one first must acknowledge "the other" in order to hear their sounds. In the case of Govindpuri's slum residents, Chandola researches how the residents' sounds are often considered "noise" by non-residents, which in turn is a process of "othering" (Chandola 2020, 102). In my research, I will further explore the notion of sounds of the "other" as noise by focusing on how Indigenous activists use sounds to reclaim power in Sydney during protest, further explored in Chapter Four.

Sound scholar David Novak introduces noise as something that disturbs "the norms of everyday life" (Novak 2015, 125). This is how I approach noise. Unlike Novak's focus on noise as a form of "underground music," as described in his book "Japanoise" (2013), I use noise in a metaphorical sense. I draw on the comparison of "noise" as "dirt:" Dirt is seen as "matter out of place" (Douglas 1995 [1966], 36) like noise is heard as sound out of place (Pickering and Rice 2017). I follow Douglas's stressing that dirt – in my case, noise – is relative to the place – or "system" – in which it finds itself: "Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements" (Douglas 1995 [1966], 36). Here, I employ Douglas's words to explain why I chose the application of the word "noise" in this thesis. As dirt does for Douglas, noise embodies sounds rejected by the bigger system in which they exist. I am not referring to Indigenous sounds as noise to refer to a disturbance. I use the word noise to emphasise the disenfranchisement of Indigenous peoples and the ways in which sound and the city are used during protest to reclaim power.

1.8 Walking

Walking served as a fieldwork method, as well as a way to reach places, and as a metaphor through which I approached research among Indigenous individuals. Ethnomusicologist Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum states:

> We learn by trekking along different paths, interacting with people on our paths, building relationships along the way, asking questions while we walk with others, and engaging with the landscape. We walk because we are human. (Aduonum 2021, 223)

Without conscious effort, I would always choose to walk from place to place within the city, even though my location in Sydney was well-connected in terms of public transport. I found myself engaging with the place this way: I saw flyers attached on lanterns on First Nations affairs; I walked past billboards that reminded passer-byers the Indigenous place name; I listened to the Indigenous man busking in front of my nearby train station; and I found myself talking to strangers, because they were wearing a jumper with artwork by my favourite First Nations painter, or because a sudden rain shower prompted me to share my umbrella. My flatmate once remarked with a confused face: "You love walking," pointing towards the fact that I would choose a one-hour walk back home at night over a 10-minute train ride. It made nothing less than sense to me as, as Brandon LaBelle argues, walking can be seen "as an emblem of the everyday practices of urban space" (LaBelle 2010, 88) as it materialises an individual encounter with a structured, built environment. As I situate my research focus in urban settings where close attention to surroundings is essential, not walking would mean missing out on valuable fieldwork experiences.

Not only did walking provide insights during the act of walking. As a metaphor, walking helped me approach the notion of embodied knowledge. In De Certeau's work, the walker is the protagonist who holds agency because of their practised experiences. De Certeau approaches walking as a way to realise possibilities. While at times the walker in the city follows routes and systems that are predetermined (by strategic city-planning), other times the walker invents possibilities by cutting a route short (seen as a tactic) by walking over grass, for example, instead of following the paved path around it (De Certeau 1984, 98). In this thesis, the idea of the walker became a metaphor for how First Nations musicians and activists navigate life in Sydney. By combining existing research with the interviews conducted for this research, as well as observations while on fieldwork, I have learned about how to privilege the knowledge of the practitioner (the walker), highlighting the importance of experience and embodied knowledge from the people "down below" (De Certeau 1984, 93). The idea of knowing by doing is

further emphasised by Tim Ingold (2013), drawing on his experience working with Saami[2], who encouraged him to learn by "going along" rather than giving him instructions on what to do. Movement, Ingold states, is a way of knowing: "not that you know by means of movement but that knowing is movement" (Ingold 2013, 1). This is a recurring thread throughout this thesis, particularly emphasised in Chapter Three where I engage in soundwalks, and is applied through various methods and approaches, as well as participant observations.

I put this approach into practice by conducting soundwalks, during which I walked with people in Sydney's Redfern. How this translated into action is outlined below in the methods section. The soundwalks aimed to understand how First Nations residents of the area of Redfern experience sound, space and place. Derived from the notion of the landscape, a soundscape is a recording of a particular moment in a specific place, focusing on what is heard instead of what is seen (Schafer 1993, 8). R Murray Schafer aimed to record audio and evaluate these soundscapes, often zooming in on - according to Schafer - neglected ideas of sound, such as noise pollution (Eisenberg 2015, 197-198). While Schafer urged the inclusion of sounds such as noise pollution, he ignored the sonic attributes of Indigenous peoples by excluding these in his project "Soundmarks of Canada" (Akiyama 2015). The problem here is not so much the sounds, but the link between the recorded sounds and the connection with the nation of Canada, implying Canadian sounds are only those that fit within a particular ethnicity, erasing First Nation voices from that profile. However, soundscape projects and ideas have since developed, with an emphasis on including and collaborating with Indigenous community members (McCartney 2014) and with particular attention to the idea that sounds are interpreted and related to in different ways in different places.

By conducting a soundwalk whilst in dialogue with First Nations residents in Redfern (research participants), I aimed to foreground Indigenous experiences of the place by walking the research participants' (spontaneously decided) route, during which we reflected on the stimuli of the place whilst I asked questions about their views on work, life experiences, and worldviews. Other times, walking served as a way of supporting a movement, such as during the Karrinjarla Muwajarri rally on June 18th 2022. Within this rally, walking became a political act which indicated solidarity with a cause – in this case, the call to defund the police in communities in the Northern Territory.

Throughout fieldwork, it stood out that walking was seen as an active practice. In metaphors, we see how walking became the term to describe serious action, as well as solidarity, in phrases such as "walking the walk" as opposed to "talking the talk." Allyship was often seen as outdated and passive. Instead, many First Nations musicians and activists urged active participation in solidarity practices:

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[2] This is the spelling Ingold uses in his publication. Another spelling used in this thesis is "Sámi", such as seen in Hilder (2015) and Ramnarine (2009).

"Don't just be an ally, be an accomplice" was a popular phrase, in which practices, doing, and walking are seen as more valuable than "just" talking.

1.9 Actor-Network-Theory

Actor-Network-Theory (also ANT) enables the following of agents and their workings through their connections with other agents. Rather than focusing on "culture" which connotes "coherence, timelessness, and discreteness" (Abu-Lughod 1991, 472), Actor-Network-Theory moves away from static ideas and shifts towards a more dynamic approach of following agents in a network, that move, have more fluid boundaries (if at all), and can change at any given time.

As Latour argues, once a phenomenon is labelled as "social" (i.e. social movements, social order), it may be understood as a domain that explains realities. However, he argues, this assumes these realities are fixed, much like the static idea of "culture." To move away from homogeneity, Latour urges for a focus on "associations:"

> it is possible to remain faithful to the original intuitions of the social sciences by redefining sociology not as the 'science of the social', but as the *tracing of associations*. In this meaning of the word, social does not designate a thing among other things, like a black sheep among other white sheep, but a *type of connection* between things that are not themselves social. (Latour 2005, 5)

By looking at the connections between agents, we may find how these relate and what that relation sets in motion. Moreover, ANT must be understood by what it reveals about those associations: merely identifying a network – albeit the name appears to suggest this – of agents does not say much. However, it is about what happens when a connection is established. As Latour explains:

> Being connected, being interconnected, or being heterogeneous is not enough. It all depends on the sort of action that is flowing from one to the other, hence the words 'net' and 'work'. Really, we should say 'worknet' instead of 'network'. It's the work, and the movement, and the flow, and the changes that should be stressed. (Latour 2005, 143)

If there is no change, movement, or flow coming from this connection, the said actors are, according to Latour, no actors. For actors must act to be an actor, they must make a difference (Latour 2005, 153). This idea of "making a difference" and challenging the status quo makes ANT useful to reflect through when it comes to Indigenous musicians and the political agency they carry when moving within the city of Sydney.

1.10 Reflexivity

This project is a reflection of my personal account. Though I aim to include as many voices from the participants as possible, I will, naturally, not be able to escape my subjectivity. My situation will therefore shape the outcomes of this research project, as Tomie Hahn states: "I am situated inside of me, I see, hear, taste, smell, and think from this me. When I take me out to do fieldwork, me always tags along" (Hahn 2006, 88). As Hahn explains, some research projects require reflexive approaches, dependent on the particular circumstances and the researcher's relation to their project. In my case, the idea of this research project being shaped by my situation is problematic as the perspective comes from a white woman based in and (culturally) formed by the Global North – and the privileges that come with that. This is even more problematised as the many European patriarchal systems and structures now imposed upon First Nations communities derive from the U.K., which is the exact place of my residence and university affiliation of SOAS during the writing of this thesis.

However, I believe that a position of privilege ought to be used to shed light upon issues that do not directly affect one's own situation, and that places representing knowledge and power may play a part in facilitating awareness and eventually change for the benefit of the communities engaged within this project. When it comes to writing about Indigenous musicking in Australia specifically, politics is an inherent component. As Chiara Minestrelli states:

> [M]usic, like law, forms an essential part of Aboriginal ontological beliefs and epistemologies, a way to give instructions and replicate the social order within Indigenous communities over time. It is thus a way to maintain wellbeing on different levels. Hence, to write about Aboriginal music inevitably means to engage with political issues, either as a legacy of the societal structures and allocations of power within autonomous Indigenous communities, or as a derivation of the encounter with settlers. (Minestrelli 2014, 132)

Because the writing of this thesis has been an inherently political undertaking, I hope my position can be seen as an ally, or better, accomplice, by amplifying Indigenous voices while being affiliated with SOAS University of London. SOAS as an institution does, traditionally, not specialise in matters considering Indigenous musics in Australia. It has been my hope that my PhD project, in contrast, has been able to take up a small space within an institution that prides itself on its mission of decentring European-derived knowledges.

I deem reparations from within academia nothing less than a necessity. As I later discuss in more detail, I have tried to make a small step towards much-needed reparations by applying a podcast as research method, enabling a more approachable way to communicate academic interviews. This podcast has also afforded me the opportunity to donate to Seed, an Indigenous youth-led climate

action group based in Australia, combining abstract reparations of the opening up of knowledge with a concrete gesture that holds monetary value. In turn, scholarship in the humanities and social sciences and places beyond academia will be enriched by studies on Indigenous musical practices in urban Australia.

1.11 A History of Redfern and The Block

As this thesis focuses on areas in central Sydney, I highlight the area of Redfern for its historical importance in relation to Indigenous political activism, and the many organisations housed here today. As the soundwalks explored in this thesis are also conducted in this place, I will provide a brief overview of some pivotal moments in Redfern, and specifically, The Block.

British naval officer Captain James Cook landed on Gweagal Country on Dharawal land, a place today known as Kurnell in South Sydney, in 1770. Cook called the harbour he sailed into Port Jackson. Even though we know from records that Cook has countered Indigenous peoples during his journey, he claimed the land to be "largely unpopulated" (Langton 2008, 3). Eighteen years later, in 1788, Captain Arthur Philips arrived with what is today known as "the First Fleet" at what Cook had called Botany Bay, in South Sydney, claiming it the British colony of New South Wales (Langton 2008).

Before the 1788 invasion, Eora Nation was inhabited by approximately 29 clans (Attenbrow 2010, 23-26). The Gadigal people lived in the area which is now the city centre (CBD) of Sydney (Kohen 2000, in Shaw 2007, 11). Few original custodians of the Eora Nation have survived colonisation. Over time, some descendants and members of other Indigenous groups have re-established themselves in the inner-city Sydney suburb called Redfern. Known for its Aboriginal occupation in Redfern and its neighbouring areas Darlington and Chippendale is an area called "The Block" (Shaw 2007, 11) (Fig. 1.3a and 1.3b). This area has been an essential space for this research.

In the 1970s, the Aboriginal Housing Committee in Sydney advocated for Aboriginal housing as the inequity in the housing market resulted in a surge in Aboriginal homelessness. In 1973, the Aboriginal Housing Company bought The Block and received a grant from the ruling Labour government at the time. However, the condition of the 70 unoccupied or squatted Victorian terrace houses on The Block was poor and governmental neglect and discrimination resulted in (drug) crime and violence (Shaw 2007, 15-16; Saunders 2020, 87-88). Gadigal Elder Allen Madden, who lived and worked in the neighbouring area Eveleigh, recalls the situation in The Block:

> That was for a lot of people that were left behind in those days. You know, factories were
> closing, jobs were pretty scarce, uhm. You had a lot of Aboriginal people that would've come

up from country areas and looking for jobs, you know. And one of the things was, the first place a lot of these Blackfellahs they'd head to would be straight down The Block. You know, if they were looking for a relo[3], (…) if no one find him at The Block, he's either dead, or in jail. And that was the sad fact about it. (Allen Madden, in Davis and Urban Growth Development Corporation, 2012a)

Allen Madden here refers to the tragic state of The Block. However, as Biripi hip-hop scholar and filmmaker Grant Saunders points out, this does not take away that there was also "an inter-connected community who looked out for one another" (Saunders 2020, 90), though media outlets repeatedly portrayed The Block as a failed project (Shaw 2013, 260). Just like the surrounding neighbourhoods such as Surry Hills and Chippendale, Redfern itself became increasingly gentrified, and the generalised portrayal of The Block as deteriorated partly led to the demolition and, later, "renewal" of The Block (Shaw 2007, 7-16; Saunders 2020, 91).

After the 2004 "Redfern riots," resulting from the death of 17-year-old Aboriginal boy TJ Hickey after being followed by the police, the opposition leader of the New South Wales state government urged to bulldoze The Block (15-16). Instead, the Aboriginal Housing Company initiated the Pemulwuy project, named after the Aboriginal leader and member of the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation. The Pemulwuy project meant to create improved and affordable spaces for Indigenous families. However, this project also includes the incorporation of commercial buildings and student housing. Taking into account that there is space for only 62 affordable houses for Indigenous families in the new Pemulwuy project, one may wonder if this project is indeed a positive "development" or yet another form of Indigenous cultural erasure in this urban space (Aboriginal Housing Company 2007; Aboriginal Housing Company Limited 2017; NSW Government).

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[3] Slang word for "relative."

Figure 1.3a. Screenshot of a map of Sydney's inner suburbs, zoomed in on the Block. www.maps.google.com.
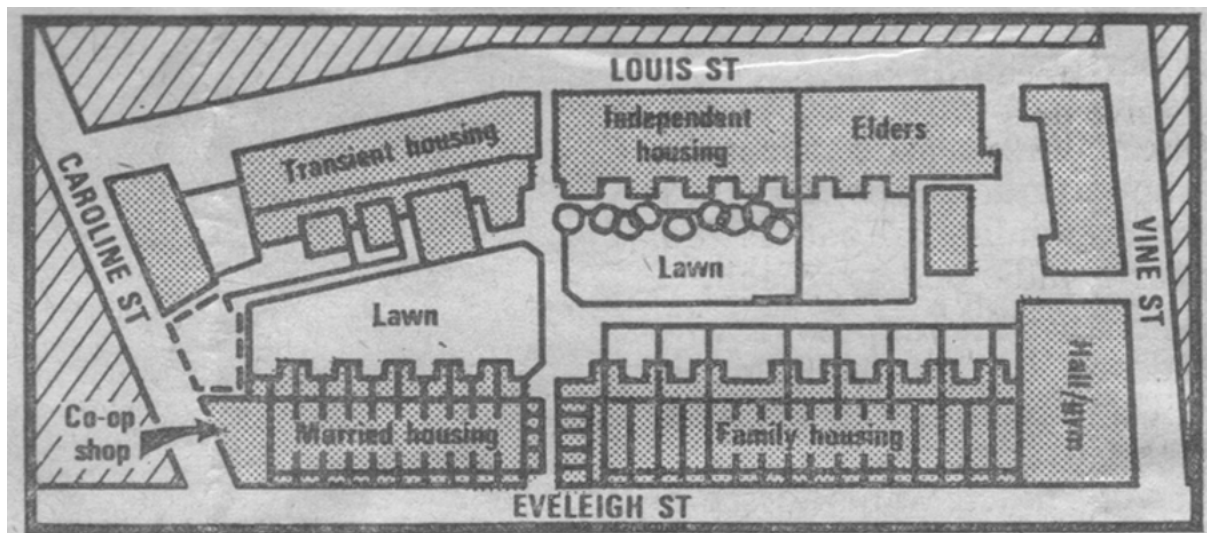
Figure 1.3b. Detailed visualisation of original housing arrangements on the Block.

http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/images/history/1970s/1973/block/blockdx.html.

The Block has held an essential space for Indigenous communities. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy, for example, was established on the night of January 26th, 1972, in response to then Prime Minister William McMahon's statement on "Australia Day" denying Aboriginal land rights (Robinson 2014). It was re-established in Redfern on National Sorry Day on May 26th, 2014. The area holds important community spaces, such as the community centre The Settlement, where research participant Tyren Ahsee works as Chapter Three will elaborate upon, and the NCIE (National Centre of Indigenous Excellence) organising activities for Indigenous communities centred around wellbeing. The following section elaborates on how I went into these spaces.

1.12 A Note on Gender

This thesis contains interviews with (mainly) First Nations artists and activists who live or work in Sydney. The majority of the interviewees are cis men. A big part of this issue stems from the fact that for this research, I mainly focus on musical creatives and professionals. Still, statistics show that women are severely underrepresented in the Australian music industry. The "Skipping A Beat" report, for example, shows that "[women] represent only one-fifth of songwriters and composers registered with the Australasian Performing Rights Association, despite making up 45 percent of qualified musicians and half of those studying music" and that "[music] festival line-ups are dominated (sometimes entirely) by male artists and male-lead acts" (Cooper, Coles and Hanna-Osborne 2017, 2). Indeed, many of the events I have attended featured a line-up dominated by male artists, which, in turn, narrowed the chances for me to meet non-male performers.

Moreover, when I did reach out to female artists, they often told me they liked my project, but the reasons they gave to decline participation were usually claims such as a lack of time or "headspace". For example, after having attended a one-day festival, I often reached out to double the number of female artists compared to the number of male artists, yet it was the male artists who were keen to participate, and none of the female artists. I must add that most of these female artists are mothers, who often carry most of the childcare responsibilities (Qu and Warren 2018). We must also wonder if it is men who more often may feel like having something to say, compared to non-male individuals.

Another factor is that, following traditional customs, it is more common for men to play the didjeridu – also often referred to as yiḏaki[4], and I have, therefore, not been exposed to female players. Tudulaig songman and yiḏaki player Lez told me about the instrument: "Only the boys will play. Not the girls" (Lez, podcast recording with author 11-09-2022); however, he quickly came back to his statement,

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[4] I highlighted the most common terms, however there are many local names for the instrument.

elaborating that in some areas women do play, though often in secret ceremonies. Lez confirms why I have, indeed, never encountered a female didjeridu/yiḏaki player. This section is necessary, not as a justification, but as a statement of transparency for the reader to know who shaped this thesis – besides myself as a researcher. It also provides an explanation of how this has occurred. A lot of intent went behind my quest to find female, trans, non-binary or gender non-confirming research participants, yet it remained a challenge throughout my fieldwork. A more gender-diverse group of research participants would enrich future similar research, shedding light upon the intersections of Indigenous experiences and gender. Chapter Three provides a focused reflection on this regarding walking in the city.

1.13 Methods

For this thesis, I have used various ethnographic methodologies, such as participant observation, conversations, interviews, and soundwalks – mentioned above as theory merges into the method. Conducting fieldwork has been a significant part of this thesis, and even though on-site fieldwork was delayed eight months by the COVID pandemic, and I had to cut my original fieldwork time by half (from 9 months to 4,5 months), my time in Sydney has been indispensable and provided rich data. Besides on-site methods, I have also employed digital ethnography to mitigate the COVID-19 impact on my research, but also because of the significance of digital technologies in the everyday life of many of the artists I have engaged with. An explanation of each method applied follows below.

1.13.1 Introducing the Interviewees and Brief Reflection

Before setting out my research methods, this section will introduce the interviewees who have shaped this research. I recruited people through personal connections, social media, and by visiting relevant events.

- DOBBY, the artist also known as Rhyan Clapham, is a Muruwari and Filipino multi-instrumentalist and hip-hopper. He is a Western classically trained pianist, as well as a drummer and a rapper, and has lived in Sydney for many years since studying at the University of New South Wales. I have known Rhyan since 2017 through mutual friends.
- Keyna Wilkins is a British-Australian composer, flutist and pianist who composed the didjeridu concerto "Celestial Emu," together with Gumaroy Newman (below). Together they form the

duo Yulugi. She works and lives in Sydney and I reached out to her over email, after I found the Yulugi debut album Chasing Stars to the Mother Tree online.

- Gumaroy Newman is a Gamilaroi and Wakka Wakka songman from Moree in northwest New South Wales, and has been living in Sydney for many years – in the Redfern-Waterloo area specifically. He is a didjeriduist who works in various settings, from corroborees to electronic funk music in his collaboration with Ganga Giri, to Western classical music settings with Keyna. We connected online via Keyna.

- Cianna Walker is a Yuin and Gumbaynggirr singer-songwriter from southeast Sydney. She is a young, starting musician who studied at the Conservatorium at the University of Sydney. She has family ties to well-known Indigenous activists, such as Chicka Dixon. I reached out to her online when I found out about her gig at the Sydney premiere of the 2022 movie The Drover's Wife via social media.

- Mi-kaisha is a Darumbal Murri and Tongan R&B/neo-soul artist raised in Sydney. She has studied at NYU's Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music and has released various singles and an EP independently. I knew of her because of her music and appearance on the TV show Australian X Factor. I reached out to her online.

- Dominic Allen is a non-Indigenous Australian filmmaker and the director behind the multi-platform project Carriberrie. I found out about Carriberrie online while I was still in the UK waiting to start my fieldwork, and I reached out to Dominic online.

- Yidinji, who is named after his tribal group near Cairns in Australia, is a didjeriduist and visual artist who lives in Canberra where he manages the Burrunju Aboriginal Art Gallery. When he doesn't have to work, he lives on Country for a few months every year in the Cairns area. He often works in Sydney to represent his art gallery, where he takes every opportunity to play his didjeridu. We met at the National Indigenous Art Fair in Sydney where he had a stall.

- Luke Patterson is a Gamilaroi poet and musician from Kurnell, in South Sydney, who currently lives in Redfern. His poetry works often incorporate music and sounds, and he is part of the community project Ngana Barangarai, which publishes poetry by inmates in Junee Correctional Centre. Luke was speaking at a panel at the Sydney Writer's Festival where we met.

- El Beauty is a First Nations drag queen from Parramatta, west of Sydney. She mainly lip-syncs to pop songs by, in her words, any strong woman. I have seen her lip-sync to Lizzo, for example. El Beauty mainly travels to inner Sydney for her gigs. However, we met at her gig at Burramatta NAIDOC in Parramatta.

- Mark Munk Ross, a.k.a. Munkimuk, a.k.a. MC Munk is a Jardwadjali hip hopper from southwest Sydney. He is a breakdancer, a rapper, and an MC as a solo artist, but also in his hip hop crew

Southwest Syndicate. Munk was also a radio host at an Indigenous radio station in Redfern, Koori Radio, and he is a producer for successful international groups, including Blackpink. I have seen Munk perform many times in Sydney, at NAIDOC in the City, for example, and we have many mutual acquaintances. However, we arranged our interview online.

- Tyren Ahsee is a Gamilaroi social worker from Dubbo, a five-hour drive from Sydney, living in Redfern. Tyren was trained to be a dancer, but realised his passion lies with community work. With his family ties to Redfern, Tyren was well-acquainted with Sydney when he moved there for his studies some years ago. We know each other through mutual friends.

- Radical Son is a Kamilaroi and Tongan singer based in Sydney. His musical style crosses soul, reggae and R&B and he has released several albums and Eps. I knew of Radical Son through his music, and we met at his gig at the Blak Markets, at the Sydney Harbour.

- Jayden Kitchener-Waters is a Gomeroi man from Tamworth. He plays guitar and sings, which is how we met as he performed during the NAIDOC at UNSW event in Sydney. Jayden works in language and culture revitalization and moved to Sydney for his studies.

- Lez is a Tudulaig songman and didjeriduist from Iama Island in Zenadth Kes/the Torres Strait living in Sydney. He moved to Sydney to help his sister with her child and plays his songline at the Sydney Harbour on the weekends, which is where we met. He has family ties to well-known Meriam activist Eddie Koiki Mabo, who started the "Mabo Case" leading to the establishment of the "Native Title Act 1993," enabling Indigenous people to make land claims.

- Kobie Dee is a Gomeroi and Wodi Wodi rapper living in southeast Sydney. He is known as an artist nationally and has various albums released. Since 2022, he also started touring outside of Australia, and he initiated the Southeast Block Party in Maroubra in southeast Sydney. I have known Kobie's music for a few years and we have mutual acquaintances. We met at his Burramatta NAIDOC gig.

As can be concluded from the people introduced above, this thesis has been shaped by the personal connections I made during fieldwork, and prior to my fieldwork time. It is also reflective of my movements; I met people – and asked them if they were interested in being involved in the research project – as a consequence of the specific events I attended. It also reflects the social media networks I am in: I would find music based on what the algorithm "found" for me and what my online connections shared.

While this thesis aims to provide a coherent story, I must take group dynamics within communities and between communities into account. Urban Indigenous communities have more access to platforms of representation by virtue of being in closer proximity to political and cultural institutions. Chapter

Four discusses this briefly in relation to the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* rally. There is also much to say about differences within communities in Sydney. Sydney's western parts, for example, are much less connected to Sydney's centre. While the interviewees come from various places within Sydney, including western parts such as Parramatta and Punchbowl, most are working in Sydney's central areas including Redfern.

1.13.2 Digital Ethnography: "Open Location" Methods

In this section, I explain the methods not bound to a specific location. However, I will also describe some of my experiences that made me rethink this. Digital ethnography allowed for flexibility and took away some of the pressures related to COVID-19 restrictions in the earlier stages of my designated fieldwork year. These methods have been crucial for my project in trying to make connections, finding and listening to music projects, and keeping up to date with events happening in Australia. I have applied these in combination with on-site methods, which I expand upon later.

Applying digital ethnography mainly entailed social media ethnography (Postill and Pink 2012), which involved following Indigenous musicians, artists, activists, and initiatives online on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Elsewhere, I reflected on a few specific posts during significant events, such as the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests and Indigenous Peoples' Day, focusing on transnational racial injustice issues (Schuitenmaker 2022). For this thesis, however, I have mainly focused on the video clips shared on these platforms. User-generated content (UGC) platforms, like YouTube and TikTok, have incorporated a link to social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, which allows users to share excerpts of videos posted on YouTube and TikTok on Instagram and Facebook. Content on Spotify, too, is often re-posted on social media, though it differs distinctly from YouTube and TikTok as Spotify mainly focuses on auditory content. I used social media platforms mainly as a tool to learn about popular music releases or popular content in general, as well as political and cultural events that, once the Australian borders had opened, I could attend. In Postill and Pink's words, the "everyday life of the social media ethnographer involves living part of one's life on the internet" (2012, 6). This was certainly true for me, as, ironically, once I had moved to Sydney and the algorithm picked up my location, digital platforms became more valuable to me as events and occasions tied to my geographical location appeared on my feed more frequently. Even when I thought I did not need to rely on these technologies anymore, they became reminders and invitations for important events for this research.

This research also studies the application of digital technologies in sharing Indigenous stories, music, and knowledge. It scrutinises the ethical issues around Indigenous knowledge sharing digitally and analyses music videos focused on place in relation to lyrics. For this, I navigated websites holding audio-visual material, such as Carriberrie, a platform exhibiting Indigenous music and dance traditions. I approach online Indigenous knowledge sharing through an archival framework, whereby I analyse digital exhibitions of Indigenous music and sounds. Digital ethnography also allowed me to learn how people felt about specific situations or phenomena, such as NAIDOC week, to see collaborations between artists, and to learn about significant music video clips, to which I applied audio-visual analysis.

1.13.3 Audio-Visual Analysis

I have conducted audio-visual analysis of video clips posted on YouTube and shared on Instagram and Facebook. I draw on audio-visual analysis theories by Mathias Bonde Korsgaard, who argues that music videos are an "interweaving of sounds, images, and words" (Korsgaard 2017, 6). In combination with hip-hop theories, hip-hop music videos are rich sources of information. Musicologist Jada Watson's take on place and space in music videos is particularly useful. Following theories from cultural geography and media studies, Watson focuses on how the identities of artists are tied to specific places and how this shapes music video narratives (Watson 2019). As set out by media theorist Murray Forman (2002, 9-31), I will address the following aspects in music videos: the discourse of Indigenous "Australian" contemporary music, the lyrics and (underlying) narratives, and the physical spaces shown in the videos, by Forman referred to as "the real." Forman's analysis is tailored to hip-hop in particular. While I will not analyse hip-hop solely, it will have a significant presence in this research as it is a popular music genre employed by the musicians I engage with.

Besides, Forman's notion of "the real" is beneficial for this research project when focusing on urban space-making. Live music can create spaces in urban areas for certain groups of people in real-time. Videos, however, allow a focus on the notion of space-reclaiming in the city through the places shown and represented in these videos. They may reveal the interplay between real-time and non-real-time and how both ways of musical performances create Indigenous spaces in the city. For example, in this thesis, I analyse the song and accompanying music video "Little Things" by Ziggy Ramo featuring Paul Kelly. The video is set in Sydney and shows well-known landmarks, such as the Sydney Opera House, and more locally known places, such as a decayed boat – the SS Ayrfield – still located in the Sydney Harbour. These visuals are the backdrop of a new version of an older song about Indigenous land rights and is a retelling of Australian history that includes First Nations points of view.

1.13.4 Podcast Interviews

My position as a white researcher from the Global North, affiliated with a powerful institution such as a university, puts me in a position of power. Cultural theorist Ian Ang points out that a critical perspective "takes seriously the Foucauldian reminder that the production of knowledge is always bound up in a network of power relations" (Ang 2001, 175; Foucault 1979). To relax the boundaries created by power relations between the Global South and the Global North, I decided to move away from the "traditional" interview format partly and to have informal conversations recorded for a podcast. This is not to be mistaken with an ill-prepared conversation; instead, it is what anthropologist H. Russell Bernard refers to as semi-structured interviewing, where the interviewer has prepared a list of set questions, while there is freedom for both the interviewer as well as the interviewee to deviate from those (Bernard 2006, 212). I have distinguished interviews from conversations as I realise informal conversations may take up quite some time. Therefore, we conducted structured or semi-structured interviews when participants preferred this method. In these cases, I prepared a list of questions in a specific order, but the interview was able to derail from these when necessary (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater 2012, 219-220).

The podcast – Titled Movements & Sounds[5]– and this research thesis are co-constitutive; the information gathered through the podcast series is primary data for the thesis. I have chosen the form of a podcast for several reasons. Firstly, I desired to make the conversations public. All research participants have been informed about this, and I have only shared the content after the participants gave informed consent. The academic world is inaccessible to many, and even when publications are free, they are not easily found, while the academic English language can be unapproachable. The knowledge gathered during my research project must benefit the participants as much as the research itself. It should, therefore, be shared publicly, which Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls a responsibility of research (Smith 2013, 267).

The research participants (or, podcast guests) were (Indigenous) musicians, (visual) artists, performers, poets, and social workers: DOBBY (Rhyan Clapham), Gumaroy Newman, Keyna Wilkins, Cianna Walker, Mi-kaisha, Dominic Allen, Yidinji, Luke Patterson, El Beauty, MC Munk (or Munkimuk), Tyren Ahsee, Radical Son, Jayden Kitchener-Waters, Lez, and Kobie Dee. Two of these episodes were conducted as a soundwalk, which I will elaborate upon below. These participants have shed light upon issues dealt with in this research while becoming part of the conversation. This way, the podcast became a more accessible outlet to engage with issues affecting Indigenous communities in Australia that "lives" alongside this written thesis. At the same time, I have aimed to expose the participating

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[5] www.movementsandsounds.com.

musicians to a broader audience while hoping to raise more awareness amongst a potentially new audience. I have donated to Seed[6] per uploaded session. This exposure, awareness creating, and supporting Seed is my small contribution to giving back to Indigenous communities in Australia. I have primarily used social media and networks established during fieldwork to recruit participants.

The advantage of face-to-face conversations was the ability to consider body language. Besides, meeting people face-to-face and hanging out together – following Clifford Geertz's notion of deep hanging out – enabled a deeper understanding of that person's creative output. As my research focuses on urban spaces, meeting and hanging out with participants face-to-face was also beneficial for taking the location of the meeting place into account. Seeing how musickers behave at particular events, such as NAIDOC week events, or respond to specific areas, such as the Block, resulted in a deeper understanding of that person.

However, the digital podcast recording, besides the ability to speak to a person during the time COVID restrictions denied my entrance into Australia, also enabled less background noise during the recording. When the interviews were focused on a person's career, for example, the location became less important. Participants sometimes preferred an online conversation, even though we were in the same city. However, I have tried to have as many interviews as possible in person.

1.13.5 On-Site Fieldwork in Sydney

My fieldwork entailed going to Sydney as the place for my research focus. I based my decision on Sydney as a fieldwork site because of the significant Indigenous music-making in this place. It is also the place where I was introduced to musics as such and a place which is generally not known for its Indigeneity, which is what I would like to challenge.

I rented a room in a shared flat in Sydney's inner-west, Newtown, whose central location afforded quick moving in and around the city. Participant observation was my primary fieldwork method. Concrete examples of participant-observation activities included interviews, conversations at meeting places such as cafes, gig and festival visits, volunteer work, museum visits, attending reading groups or academic symposiums, and thick description of events described below.

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[6] Seed is an Indigenous youth-led organisation in Australia that focuses on climate justice, run by young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. See more on https://www.seedmob.org.au/.

1.13.6 Participant Observation

Partaking in gigs and festival visits allowed reflection on various aspects of the performances, such as liveness, the ambience, the venues, and audience responses. Being in a particular space during a performance has been crucial for this research; It allowed me to be a "musicker," in musicologist Christopher Small's words, to be a part of the music experience in the active role of, in my case, the music listener and dancer (Small 1999). He explains:

> To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance. That means not only to perform but also to listen, to provide material for performance (what we call composing), to prepare for a performance (what we call practising or rehearsing), or to take part in any activity that can affect the nature of that style of human encounter which is a musical performance (Small 1999, 12).

Hanging out in a particular space also allowed me to directly interact with the performers and fellow audience members while experiencing the particular setting first-hand, whether in a venue or an outdoor setting like a park or a street. As described above, meeting participants at a specific location allows for a deeper understanding of the musicking at a particular moment. Moreover, education theorist Kate McCoy calls for a "methodology of encounters," which makes it possible to consider interruptions and complexities instead of focusing solely on pre-structured focus points (McCoy 2012). For this research, that idea translated into creating space for unexpected scenarios, considering that my prepared enquiries are both formed by my subjectivity (Hahn 2006) and may be less relevant for my research than the more spontaneous encounters I have faced in the field.

While I went to specific areas or events, one of the prepared focus points was the location: I asked questions such as: Whose traditional grounds am I on, and what features are part of it/placed on it? How does the audience respond and interact with the music performers?; Who are the stewards? How is the event set up? What is the line-up, and how is it marketed? This was a take on McCoy's methodology of encounters to allow space to enquire upon phenomena not formed by myself as a researcher. When appropriate, I filmed or recorded parts of the events as a memory aid to reflect on the ambience and the experience in general and combined these with field notes. I used these videos and notes to reflect upon and interpret the event for analysis. As ethnomusicologist Gregory Barz states, "Notes written in the field affect perception, memory, and interpretation and are a part of an individual's way of knowing (what do we know about musical performance?) and process (how do we know it?)" (Barz 2008, 206). With this in mind, I have tried to be as straightforward as possible, stressing my subjectivity while reflecting on the event to avoid imposing my perception as the norm.

Another central focus point has been the "liveness" of the live performance. As discussed earlier, while part of my fieldwork took place virtually – mainly employing audio-visual analysis – on-site fieldwork enabled me to delve into the "being there" of a performance, as the live aspect of an event adds extra value to a performance. Other than recorded performances such as music videos, analysing a live performance allowed me to consider the reception of the musical performance in that particular space and at that specific time and the engagement among audience members with each other.

The events I have engaged with for the writing of this thesis are the Sydney Writer's Festival, Reconciliation Week, Vivid Sydney, NAIDOC week, the Indigenous Art Fair, and many smaller various events in community centres, one-off gigs, public talks, a rally, volunteer work events, and many more events that have simply not made it into the thesis, although that still have been a part of the overall setting forming my ways of thinking. These events were significant for this thesis as they were all centred around Indigenous cultures or strongly focused on Indigenous musics, arts and performances.

The fieldwork activities explained above are rooted in the notion of thick description, presented by Clifford Geertz in The Interpretation of Cultures (1973), in which the researcher describes experiences in the field and puts them into the context of that field while keeping one's subjectivity of experiences into account (Nettl 2015, 149-160). Ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice explains:

> [W]e have the privileging of ontology (being there) over epistemology (knowing that), and the beginning of a potentially fruitful turn away from fieldwork methods toward fieldwork experience. According to this credo, sometime during or after fieldwork, one becomes an ethnomusicologist. In effect, the self is transformed and reconfigured in the act of understanding one's own or another culture (Rice 2008, 46).

Here, Rice stresses the significance of being in the field in ethnographic fieldwork, moving away from Enlightenment European thoughts of knowledge that privileges knowledge obtained through collecting and categorising, and shifting towards embodied knowledge of the experience. Partaking in Sydney's Indigenous music cultures and political events allowed for immersive experiences while connecting with people who have taught me about their (musical and political) lives.

1.13.7 Soundwalking

As discussed above, I have conducted two soundwalks that have become part of the podcast series. A soundwalk allows for reflection on the sounds heard in the space of the walk during the walk, while the recording of that walk also allows for a reflection on the sounds heard listening back to the recording. The political quality of the sounds of Redfern, what they signify, and how First Nations community

members experience this place have been critical topics in this thesis. The soundwalks afforded insights into daily practices, learning more about the research participants and leaning into the possibility of spontaneity. Unlike a seated interview, during which there may be less distraction and possibilities where a conversation leads to an unexpected route, the soundwalks challenged us – the researcher and research contributor – to talk and walk while listening and responding to our surroundings and each other. The recording was an experimental take on an interview, in the sense that the participants would not have a specific outcome, unlike the seated interviews, where the aim was to learn more about their creative practices. The walks, however, had to accept some messiness, not knowing what would and would not "work", and emphasised the idea of practising culture, which allows for adaptation, flowing, and a coming together of various elements, such as cultures, the environment, and technical devices.

The Listening to the City handbook (Williams and Coblentz 2018), produced by the MIT Community Innovators Lab (affiliated with MIT Urban Studies), is dedicated to soundwalking methodologies focused on community projects and research and has provided the methodological foundation for the soundwalks. This may be accomplished by walking together while recording sounds. As seen in soundwalk conceptualist Gregg Wagstaff's work, soundwalking may be done in silence or with comments and sounds by the walker(s) (McCartney 2014). Both walks have taken shape as commented walks, in which I asked the co-walker questions, though I also received a few questions in return, and there was space to listen to our surroundings.

1.13.8 COVID-19 Statement

I must reckon with the fact that, even though I have tried to mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on this research, it has had a severe impact. The main result and my biggest disappointment has been the lower ratio of women, trans, and gender-non-conforming participants in this research. I needed more time in Sydney to connect with people and earn their trust. As this may be the case for all genders, I firmly believe that (mainly) women have been affected with extra layers of violence due to the colonisation of their lands and that, therefore, it is harder to connect as a non-Indigenous person.

Another setback concerns the general commitment I could provide towards community engagement in a way of "giving back." By this, I mean that it has always been my intention to contribute beyond my role of researcher and to be an active ally or accomplice in situations that would potentially need an extra pair of hands in the form of volunteering, for example. While I have contributed to the

initiatives described below, by volunteering at community space "107 projects" for example, I deem four-and-a-half months of engagement very short. I believe I could have made a bigger and more meaningful contribution if I had the time to engage on a deeper level.

These disappointments made it challenging to come to terms with how I had to adapt my research. However, I am grateful that the eventual relaxing of Australian border measures allowed me to go, as this type of research – which requires community engagement and integrity – simply would not have been possible in a fully online format.

1.14 Thesis Overview

Chapter Two sets the tone by critically reflecting on how I have engaged with research data obtained for this thesis, scrutinising how digital technologies challenge accessibility, and making it possible to rethink engagement with Indigenous expressions. As alluded to above, part of this research project was to make of the interviews and soundwalks a podcast series to facilitate transparency, accessibility, and to first-hand deal with the intricacies around open knowledge-sharing. I approach this project with an archival framework, as archives are catching up with the digital and enhancing their accessibility opportunities. I look into questions around access, agency and embodied learning through new digital technologies through the example of Carriberrie – initially a VR experience that showcases Indigenous music and dance practices across Australia from nine different groups. I scrutinise the structures and norms by which digital platforms have been and are formed. I urge a nuanced and critical reflection on how digital platforms inform people's interaction with Indigenous expressions. This chapter finishes with an autoethnographic account of the ways in which this research project has dealt with the same questions posed around others' works. It takes a critical stance on scholarly work in general while holding myself accountable for aiming towards a more equal and transparent research practice.

Chapter Three focuses on the research question, "How do Indigenous musicians and activists negotiate urban space?" First, I reflect on how urban scholars approach the idea of the city. For this, I will delve into themes such as gentrification and the effects of problematic and outdated notions of Indigeneity regarding city structures. I discuss the ways in which "the urban", "the rural", and even "the wild" are imagined in European literature, and further problematised through a framework of Indigenous concepts, such as Country. I also zoom in on how the city has historically excluded Indigenous communities in its structural foundation and how its effects are still apparent today concerning property rights and urban development.

A discussion of two soundwalks follows: one with poet and musician Luke Patterson, the other with social worker Tyren Ahsee, with both walks taking place in different sections of Redfern. With these soundwalks, I aim to show how Sydney's Indigenous inhabitants relate to the city's sounds and spaces, while navigating everyday life. The chapter concludes with two case studies of encountering Indigenous musics and sounds in various urban places within Sydney: Songman Lez playing Yiḏaki and practising songlines at Warrane/Circular Quay, and a Blak Box performance at Barangaroo, bringing together various Indigenous performers highlighting Indigenous points of view. I aim to show the ways in which music and sound intersect with Indigenous space-reclaiming, focusing on presence, storytelling, and walking.

In response to Chapter Three, which focuses on sounds and music as part of the city, Chapter Four listens to the sounds and music in which Indigenous artists aim to create an intentional political statement. Here, I ask, "How do musical Indigenous interventions employ the city?" in which an intervention unfolds when a group of people question norms. This does not necessarily mean a statement in a lyrical, explicit way. As Thomas R. Hilder states about many Sámi performers, artists often downplay their Indigeneity in musical expressions. However, the political agency behind any Indigenous performance lies deeper (Hilder 2015, 20). At times, when musicians seem to thrive in settings that are not tailored toward an Indigenous crowd or artists per se, it may seem as though no political agency is performed. This is what I scope out in the first part of Chapter Four, followed by a deep focus on performances during NAIDOC week.

NAIDOC week celebrates the First Nations cultures in Australia. I indicate how these celebrations in cities such as Sydney are important – not only for their apparent political significance throughout the continent but particularly in Sydney as they reverse power dynamics for a week in places where Indigeneity is not seen as an integrated way of life. Furthermore, I reflect on the ways in which sounds challenged Indigenous subordination during the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* rally in 2022. This rally is significant in its own right, for it reflects the current state regarding the coming to an end to many regulations implemented as part of the "NT Intervention" – which Chapter Four elaborates upon – and the ways in which it reveals the importance of matters concerning the Northern Territory being protested in a place that holds institutions of power, such as Sydney. I aim to show how various attitudes or ways of coming to effective change are all interconnected and exercise a particular agency within their networks, which are in turn also connected with and to each other.

Chapter Five responds with a focus on representations of genealogies and communities in music productions, reflecting on the notion of First Nations artists building upon a foundation established by activists before them – enabling today's generations to take up space in contexts such as described in Chapter Four – while uplifting others, both globally and locally, especially younger generations. In this

chapter, I ask, "In what ways is First Nations musical storytelling a vehicle for intergenerational and transnational solidarity?"

Video clips deserve significant attention here, as we find an interplay between audio and visual clues about representations of lived realities and experiences, while simultaneously challenging those. Equally important is the music genre hip-hop in the way it illustrates and confronts realities. An important theme within these videos is gender, specifically regarding women's representation. I argue that hip-hop inspires aspiring young (female) artists by looking into how Indigenous hip-hoppers such as BARKAA and MC Munk create and open up spaces for future generations. The identification of the necessity to "pave the way" comes from a lack of Indigenous spaces ("on-site" or mediated) in the first place. The inspiration to do so not only comes from earlier generations from within Indigenous voices in Australia but also finds links to Black Power and Indigenous movements from overseas, particularly from the U.S.A., where the civil rights movement had gained traction and with which Indigenous populations could relate.

Chapter Six will engage with perhaps the timeliest theme within the thesis, focusing on environmentalism. Here, I ask, "How do Indigenous musicians engage with environmental issues?" In a place that knows devastating bushfires making many animal species near extinction, besides the many effects global warming is experienced across the world while Indigenous communities have been protecting lands from extractivist practices, the ways in which Indigenous artists in Sydney engage with this issue is nothing less than a necessity in this thesis.

Reflecting the difficulty of de-centring humans in ethnomusicological writing, Chapter Six comprises three sections that each try to delve into the theme differently. I first focus on the traditional skills in didjeridu-making practice. While the didjeridu/yiḏaki originates from Arnhem Land in north Australia, it has become a musical symbol for Indigeneity and is used across the continent and beyond today. I take a Latourian approach, where I follow the various agents who all take part in creating the instrument. This is a way to avoid making humans centre-stage in this highly collaborative process while reflecting on the interconnected relationship between Indigenous communities and the environment.

I will study Indigenous music-making with the land and all that is part of it. This shows how music and musicians are often in dialogue with the land. It depicts the interconnectedness of humans, lands, language, and ancestors, and – following Indigenous female scholars Lou Bennett and Aileen Moreton – how practising Indigenous cultures is seen as activism. It examines how humans listen to Country, and by doing that, learn from Country. I argue how this invites us to rethink the idea of listening altogether.

The chapter concludes with the album "Warrangu; River Story", written and composed by Indigenous musician DOBBY. This album is a research project in its own merit, highlighting extractivist practices and questioning governmental policies exacerbating the climate crisis. Here, the question I

focus on is how music can transgress imagined borders between the rural and the urban, and how an urban performance promotes environmental awareness.

Chapter 2

Access to Indigenous Storytelling: Reflections on Podcasting and Digital Archival Practice

As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, Indigenous musical storytelling can be a powerful tool to reclaim space. This is the case, as Chapter Three will discuss, for Tudulaig songman Lez, for example, who plays his songline at Warrane in central Sydney. Indigenous storytelling is also a tool to retell history from an Indigenous perspective, as Chapter Five will illustrate in the case of Muruwari and Filipino musician DOBBY in his hip-hop track I Can't Breathe. Moreover, Indigenous storytelling can be a vehicle to pave the way for the next generation of Indigenous musicians, as will be described by Darumbal Murri and Tongan musician Mi-kaisha, who is featured on Malyangapa Barkindji artist BARKAA's hip-hop album. Indigenous stories expressed through music, performance, lyrics, and dialogue are not just a key focus in this thesis, but they have shaped this thesis. They are foundational to how I have come to reflect on music and sound, which the following chapters are built upon.

Working with Indigenous artists, musicians, and storytellers is a meaningful endeavour, which is why Stó:lō and St'at'imc scholar Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem has coined "Indigenous Storywork." Her aim for proposing the term is "that storytellers, story listeners/learners, researchers, and educators can pay better attention to and engage with Indigenous stories for meaningful education and research (Archibald, Lee-Morgan, and De Santolo 2019, 1). As briefly touched upon in the Introduction Chapter, part of the aim of this research project was to turn the conducted research interviews into a podcast series to share and make more accessible the stories told that have shaped and become part of this thesis. Moreover, it was important for me to work with an alternative form of engagement, complementing the normative form of writing in academia with the sounds of the research participants' voices and the surroundings we found ourselves in while recording. As a result, the interviews are openly accessible online, and with that, they have the potential to function as an archival resource for anyone to use.

The digital has expanded ideas of what archives can be. Can a digital archive only be a digital archive when the digitised content used to be in a physical archive? I approach my podcast as a digital archive, challenging the notion that archives hold mainly historical items. However, this does not mean that a podcast does not also "historicise" audio content; as soon as it is uploaded, it becomes another captured moment. This demonstrates clear similarities with archival practices, as elaborated upon below. In Indigenous contexts, the idea of "capturing" oral knowledge, and therefore making it into something static and unchangeable may be seen as problematic for the embodied, in-person nature of storytelling traditions. However, as Native American scholar in Indigenous Studies John-Carlos Perea demonstrates in his work with, first, analogue powwow recordings, which he later digitised and used in

his own classroom settings, is that recordings might stay the same, but the context in which they are used is ever-changing (Perea 2017). He claims that how these recordings are used is what makes them traditional, not the idea that the story itself is an old story (68). While our positionalities differ, I, too, use the podcast in my own classroom settings and in presentations, in which my students – or any listener – can directly hear the stories coming from the people to whom they pertain.

Nonetheless, we may identify a significant difference between podcasting and archival practices, and a pertinent one at that, as podcasting research interviews right after the interview takes place takes away the need to repatriate as the interviewees will have access to their recordings as soon as they are uploaded (which, in this case, never took longer than three months). This might be understood as, what Topp Fargion and Landau call, "proactive archiving," where the access to the sonic material is initiated by the archiver (2012, 137). As I will explain below, the content is also not "based" in a centralised digital archive, but it is, in this case, to be found on an individual website, making it a small-scale project in which podcast guests can directly contact the researcher if they wish to adapt, change, or request something in regard to the episode. The research contributors, therefore, have much greater agency towards the material.

Archives have not always been associated with accessibility. Stereotypical ideas of archives housed in grand buildings holding many texts, books, and artefacts still live on today. Those inclined to visit are often researchers and (other) archivists, who, in turn, are able to retrieve records the easiest as records are labelled and described within archival frameworks (Douglas 2018). However, records can be difficult to retrieve for those not used to or trained in research or archival systems (Barwick and Thieberger 2018). As a response, archival institutions are increasingly aiming to challenge their inaccessibility. Digital technologies play an essential part in making archival recordings more accessible while also shaping how we engage with the cultural practices they make available. This chapter focuses on the accessibility of, and engagement with, Indigenous expressions through digital archives. It seeks to answer the question: In what ways does digitising music and sound recordings challenge the accessibility of, and make it possible to rethink engagement with, Indigenous expressions?

Attempting to answer this question, section 2.1 will elaborate upon practice-based research – creating a podcast as an alternative form of research output in this case – exploring how accessibility and alternative ways to academic knowledge transmission are particularly pertinent in Indigenous research contexts. I will explore how ethnomusicology has a particular history of applied approaches to research and research outcomes dissemination to situate this research project and the podcast that has become part of the project.

Section 2.2 enquires into the colonial foundations of archival practices and how, today, archivists, ethnomusicologists, and scholars, in general, are rethinking these practices with accessibility as a key

aim for digitising sound recordings. I demonstrate how online recordings can function as another agent transmitting Indigenous oral knowledge and stories and how, consequently, engaging with these recordings takes on different shapes. Beyond making archival holdings accessible, there has also been a shift in ways of engagement, that is, how people interact with archival records. In line with museum practice, I will exemplify this through the exhibition *Boorun's Canoe*, which emphasises practice over static depictions in museum exhibitions. I use the word static here to refer to depictions of cultural expressions as if these are not evolving or changing. I will further elaborate on the notion of practice through Carriberrie, a VR experience now also hosted on a website that showcases various Indigenous cultural song and dance practices from various communities across the Australian continent. Carriberrie functions as an example project that may be seen as an archive that has never had physical objects but where accessibility and engagement were the impetus for the project to be realised.

After reflecting on various practices and examples that rethink accessibility and forms of engagement with Indigenous expressions, section 2.3 will reevaluate and further reflect on podcasting as research. I will focus on the practicalities and aims of the podcast, as well as reflect on what accessibility and engagement mean in Indigenous research contexts. This section also investigates how to navigate complexities around benefitting the research participants, the potential listeners, and the research. By looking into these case studies – and aiming to apply and embed ethical considerations into my own research and podcast practice – I illustrate how digital archives can challenge the accessibility of and engagement with Indigenous expressions.

2.1 Ethical Research in Indigenous Research Contexts

Throughout this thesis, I draw on interviews with artists and activists that have become part of a podcast series I made called Movements & Sounds[7]. This series came into life to employ podcasting as research method (Kinkaid, Brain and Senanayake 2019), making my primary interviews more accessible to artists and communities and, with that, creating a more transparent way of conducting research. Creating a creative work based on research (research-led practice) that also contributes insights back into the research (practice-led research) can serve as an effective method to broaden the reach of scholarship beyond academic circles while rethinking research methods (Bell 2009, 256).

As Sharon Bell describes, the impetus to combine her anthropological work and her creative filmmaking practice was the impatience she experienced with anthropological fieldwork being delivered through "prose that was dense, pedantic and jargon ridden" (Bell 2009, 255). Indeed,

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[7] www.movementsandsounds.com

academic language is hardly accessible to those not privileged to enjoy higher education, or even to those who work in an academic discipline different from our own. However, I acknowledge that –to focus and engage deeply within a field – jargon may, at times, be hard to avoid. This written thesis itself is, at times, guilty of this, although I have been intentional about my word choices.[8] However, to conduct research ethically, there is not just the responsibility to communicate to non-academic audiences but also to those who have given their time to the research in the form of an interview and their communities.

Communicating scholarly outputs to a broader audience outside of academia has been a critical aim in applied ethnomusicological endeavours. In the 1970s, for instance, Alan Lomax argued for "cultural equity," a principle which promotes peoples' rights to "practice, maintain, and pass down their languages, customs and traditions" (The Global Jukebox, n.d.a). In his "Appeal for Cultural Equity," Lomax urges to halt the disappearance of cultural systems, such as (endangered) languages and musics. For this, he argues for rethinking the values of various cultures without favouring one dominant cultural tradition, such as Western European music. He refers to this as "aesthetic imperialism" (Lomax 1980, 24). Lomax's solution, too, lies with technology:

> The remedy lies in a policy of decentralization. Electronic communication is intrinsically multi-channeled. A properly administered electronic system could carry every expressive dialect and language that we know of, so that each one might have a local system at its disposal for its own spokesmen. (Lomax 1980, 25)

Today, his work is carried on through the Global Jukebox, an online database that holds sounds worldwide. Here, people are encouraged to participate and inform how they would like their culture to be represented on the website (The Global Jukebox, n.d.b). This makes the initiative more of a co-production in which anyone – academic or non-academic – may participate.

Applied ethnomusicological activities can translate into a myriad of activities, such as festival production or music recording (Sheehy 1992, 323). However, as wide as the range of activities may be, the commonality of these activities is often the aim to "extend and complement the academic domain, the theoretical (intellectual, philosophical) domain, and ethnographic, artistic, and scientific research" (Harrison 2012, 518). The goal of the applied activity is to have social benefits that extend beyond academic knowledge generation (Harrison 2014). A reciprocal relationship in which both the researcher and the researched benefit is particularly significant when working with Indigenous people.

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[8] I have observed an interesting phenomenon over the course of my education, in which non-native English writers often feel pressured to write in a particular way attempting to hide the fact that English is not their first language. My practice to "resist" such pressure is both an intentional choice for the reasons mentioned above, as well as an unintentional practice due to my own English as a second language.

The AIATSIS (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) Code of Ethics (2020) claims reciprocity as one of the critical features of conducting research with Indigenous peoples. Indeed, as Stó:lō and St'at'imc scholar Jo-ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem argues, reciprocity is an important principle to engage in ethical research when working with not just Indigenous peoples, but also Indigenous stories. Reciprocity, together with the principles of respect, responsibility, and reverence, form a methodological guideline to conduct research with Indigenous peoples and stories ethically. Archibald explains: "In this story research process the researcher must listen to Indigenous Peoples' stories with respect, develop story relationships in a responsible manner, treat story knowledge with reverence, and strengthen storied impact through reciprocity" (Archibald, Lee-Morgan, and De Santolo 2019, 2). The researcher's task is to enhance the potential for stories to have an impact and, therefore, aim to amplify those stories. This amplification of stories to a broader (non-academic) audience by the researcher and the sharing of the stories by the storytellers, artists, musicians, and activists is an example of a reciprocal relationship in Indigenous research contexts.

Besides, in the pursuit of decolonising scholarship, it is an opportunity to produce a research output that does not rely on texts. In academia, the written word is a medium that – to this day – is still seen as a superior form of knowledge transmission (Kibbee 2016, 21). Even in ethnomusicology – a discipline that foregrounds sound – scholars are still expected to write in the form of articles, theses, and books to be taken seriously. This may be seen as an aftermath of Enlightenment thinking, which not only relies on ocularcentrism, as discussed in the Introduction Chapter, but also associates writing "with scientific progress and secular modernity" (Sykes 2019, 209). Hearing, meanwhile, is often perceived as "immersive" and "subjective" (Sterne 2003, 15). In older forms of anthropological scholarship where objectivity was a must to practice good scholarship, scholars were expected to keep their distance and not to "immerse" themselves. However, today, we know that objectivity does not exist, and acknowledging one's presence within and potential effect on the sound communities our research concerns results in a more accurate reflection of the situation. Listening to the voices that shape this research is not only an act of decolonial engagement with knowledge but also a more expansive way to engage with knowledge. The recordings pick up on sighs, silences, tones, and background sounds: information that would be ignored or denied importance in a written account.

Archibald's earlier-mentioned focus on stories shows the central part stories play in many Indigenous cultures worldwide. Therefore, working with Indigenous stories, in forms such as conversations, musics, and performances, must not be taken lightly. An inspiring example of a practitioner and scholar working with Indigenous peoples and stories is Biripi hip-hop scholar Grant Saunders. Saunders has, alongside his thesis, created a documentary film focused on Indigenous hip-hop. His aim, too, was to reach an audience outside of academia while at the same time providing a

research output that is meaningful and useful to those who are a part of the research (Saunders 2020, 36). His documentary also functions as an alternative story about uprisings in Australia against police brutality, for example, which is relatable to the stories discussed in Chapter Four.

Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith states that knowledge is a collective interest and that researchers are responsible for sharing their knowledge (Smith 2021, 183). Though reciprocity may translate into making Indigenous stories more accessible to a non-academic audience, sensitivity to openly sharing Indigenous knowledge is also needed. This is especially the case when the scholar is non-Indigenous. Gender scholar Cecile Jackson points out how often silence is thought of as subordinate. She explains the common thought among scholars and development practitioners that those who have a "voice" are the ones being able to speak. Speech, generally, is associated with power, while silence is often associated with weakness (Jackson 2012, 1000). As Chapter Four will demonstrate, this may be the case when it comes to speaking publicly or when singing or performing on a stage. However, it does not mean that being silent always equates to being or feeling suppressed. At times, withholding information and, therefore, refusing to speak can be a tactic of refusal. Other times, staying silent can be a form of protection for oneself or community members. Kamilaroi and Tongan singer-songwriter Radical Son, for example, openly explained during our podcast interview that he was not comfortable discussing sensitive topics considering Country borders with a non-Indigenous person:

> I'm sharing something with you quite deep in terms of how I think about this. I don't feel comfortable expressing concerns about me and my Country, my people, with someone who's not an Aboriginal person as well. So it's a really tricky process, like, I would love to communicate with someone and it's one of the issues that I kind of see amongst our mobs is, I'd like to see us come together and be able to have a relationship with each other, we can discuss these things. (Radical Son, podcast interview with author 26-08-2022)

Choosing to refrain from speaking on a specific topic here could mean that Radical Son prefers to keep the information within the community, protecting it from being misused or ending up where it does not belong. As land is the primary pursuit of colonialism, the topic of land borders mentioned (or rather not mentioned) by Radical Son above is particularly sensitive. A colonial institution such as a university may be perceived as one of those places where information about it does not belong. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang write about refusal in research, claiming that for some, and specifically "Indigenous, ghettoized, and Orientalized communities," "[r[efusal can comprise a resistance to making someone or something the subject of research" (Tuck and Yang 2017, 811-812). Choosing to be silent or refusing to give certain information can, therefore, be a way to retain power.

Given Australia's painful history, it is only understandable that scepticism about sharing concerns about Indigenous matters with non-Indigenous people exists. For example, I received suspicion during

my fieldwork after I had approached an Indigenous academic[9] who works with archival material. She had just given an inspiring presentation at the University of Sydney, and I asked if she had thoughts on the True Echoes project at the British Library[10] which involved the digitisation of recordings from Zenadth Kes/the Torres Strait Islands on wax cylinders. Without looking at me directly, she said, "Oh yeah, they still haven't given that stuff back, have they.." and walked away. I suspected she thought I was involved in the British Library project.

Noonuccal scholar Karen Martin – Booran Mirraboopa – claims there is a type of research she calls "*terra nullius* research", which she describes as:

> In this research, we are present only as objects of curiosity and subjects of research, to be seen but not asked, heard or respected. So the research has been undertaken in the same way Captain James Cook falsely claimed the eastern coast of the land to become known as Australia as *terra nullius*. (Martin 2003, 203)

Much like the land that settlers have claimed, research can be perceived as an invasion. Tuck and Yang refer to this kind of research practice as "inquiry as invasion" (Tuck and Yang 2017), which gives settlers the right to know and implies that Indigenous peoples are something to be known. However, as Kamilaroi scholar Sheelagh Daniels-Mayes explains, to counter problematic ways of conducting research, scholars need to consider Indigenous peoples as "knowers." Consequently, she states, "the investigator [needs] to enter the research project as a student ready and willing to learn from the knowers" (Daniels-Mayes 2021, 132). This also implies that when the knowers decide that knowledge should not be known, this must be respected. Especially since earlier-mentioned Smith (2021) stresses that emotional labour can be a real issue for Indigenous peoples. This emotional labour is inflicted onto Indigenous people by living in a colonial reality, which can imply multiple "tasks" such as giving consultancy on Indigenous matters for free or resisting anger in a stressful (racist) situation (Smith 2021, 204-205). Throughout my fieldwork, multiple people confirmed this. Darumbal Murri and Tongan musician Mi-kaisha, for example, shared her experience as a student at NYU:

> We're students, we shouldn't be teaching other people about, you know, the injustices that we've experienced, or we shouldn't be teaching other students why they can't use that word or why they shouldn't say that or why they shouldn't treat such and such like this way and then this other person like that, I think it becomes problematic because then we have this expectation to be teaching and bringing something to the table. When, when we should be the ones learning, and, you know, soaking up the information and not the other way around. (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022)

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[9] I keep their identity anonymous for ethical reasons.
[10] Section 2.2.2 will further elaborate upon this project.

Here, Mi-kaisha points out the labour she and fellow Black, Brown and Indigenous students conduct in a university setting while they are the ones going to university for education. Being aware of the burdens that many Indigenous people face, I believe a researcher must know when to know one's place and not further enquire about matters not meant for the researcher to know. The same goes for requests for research participation being denied or ignored, which has happened to me various times. I would usually reach out – either in person or online – two or three times. When I would not hear back, or kept receiving responses suggesting they liked the project, but currently did not have the time, I would take it as a declined request and leave it.

I have reflected on content refusal here to acknowledge that while applied scholarly work may be of good intent, openly sharing Indigenous stories must come with caution. Scholars must also remind themselves that, ultimately, ethical research means that the research must serve those who participate. If individuals choose not to participate or refuse to share particular content, it is the scholar's job to respect that – respect is one of the four principles earlier-mentioned Jo-Ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem argues for.

The following section will reflect on digital archival practice. The link between (digital) archiving, exhibition practices, and my podcast series was made explicit again during one of the podcast interviews I held. Mi-kaisha made the following remark at the end of our conversation:

> What this podcast covers is super important. And I'm super grateful that you're documenting these histories and this particular context, this time, these artists, yeah, I think it's gonna serve as a really, really important archival resource for our communities in Australia as well. (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author, 02-06-2022)

Reflecting on this, I realised if I created an online archive myself, that would not just function for artists as potential promotion material but something that may serve anyone in the long run. Therefore, I felt it was a responsibility to share openly the conversations that shape this research and reflect on what it means to partake in a kind of – albeit newer and rethought – archival practice myself.

2.2 On Archival Institutions: Learning about Indigenous Cultural Practices through Technology

Archives, at times, tend to feel inaccessible. This may relate to the archive's origins from the 18th century, which sociologist Mike Featherstone describes as a site to store documents containing government secrets and to hold hidden information about populations and rival and colonial territories. He states: "the construction of archives can be seen as furthering governmentality and the regulation of internal and colonial populations" (Featherstone 2006, 591). Driven by Enlightenment thinking, an

urge to gather and analyse information on individuals and groups of peoples arose in Europe, and with that, files, such as sound recordings, written documents, and artefacts, accumulated and were stored in an archive neatly categorised.

Listening to archived sound recordings has become a secondary activity over the past few decades, as ethnomusicology has emphasised the significance of empirical research – "fieldwork" – over "armchair" methodologies as such. Listening to these recordings was something to undertake prior to or after fieldwork to support the "real" research activities such as participant observation (Landau and Topp Fargion 2012, 133-134). Archives have, therefore, become less interesting to many, and admittedly, as an aspiring ethnomusicologist academically trained in this climate, to me.

However, as ethnomusicologist Janet Topp Fargion convincingly argues, digital technologies that have been recently developed are, and can be, utilised to bring new usage and meaning to sound archives. She explains: "Technology is key. Not only can items be digitally preserved using new technology, but they can also be more easily returned to the originating communities and, where appropriate, disseminated very broadly" (Topp Fargion 2019). While many ethnomusicologists have held onto their "field recordings" for private usage – to be primarily used in best interest for their research – a new wave of reflexive approaches has sparked the rethinking of the usage of sound recordings. Instead of mainly benefitting the research, scholars now focus on the community's needs over those of the researcher. As digital archivist Jarrett Drake argues: "Archives are much more a social endeavor – they must also encourage use and promote value. Community members are more successful at that than archival institutions" (Drake 2017). Favouring the communities' needs over the institutions' is one thing, but being successful in that endeavour is another. As Barwick and Thieberger rightly state: "While archives can commit to preserving data and metadata, the only way for languages and other cultural traditions to be preserved is through active use in communities" (Barwick and Thieberger 2018, 136). Seeger argues that the archive has become an agent in oral expression dissemination:

> Many oral traditions today are transmitted in a new way: from tradition bearer to recording, and then from the recording to a younger generation. Community members are increasingly using archival holdings as teaching resources … archived recordings [now have] a participatory role in the transmission of traditions … [which] suggests changes in policy — especially regarding acquisitions and access … (Seeger, in Cooper 2013, 23)

Seeger claims that the archive functions as another "teacher," enabling community members to learn oral traditions. Musicologist Dan Lundberg calls this an "archive loop" (Lundberg 2019, 227). In a podcast interview I held with Gomeroi man Jayden Kitchener-Waters, he attests to the idea of

recordings having an active role in transmission when he explains how he learned Indigenous dancing and how he now sees his nephews learning those dances too:

> Yeah, ever since I was young, growing up, just learning the dances and a lot of it was just the way I would learn and this is the way I think you should be learning is, I just grew up watching them. And then one day, it was sort of, "I might go dance, can I dance with you guys?" Or they invite me "do you want to come dance with us?" And I was like, "Yeah, okay." And there was never really a formal process of: here's this move, then you do this move. It was purely from just watching for so long and listening for so long and learning that way. And it's really encouraging to see my little nephews doing the exact same thing, we've never really gone through moves with them. But just from watching us dance or watching us do our performances on YouTube and stuff. They're able to learn the songs and dances which I think is really cool. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022)

Indeed, Jayden confirms that knowledge acquisition on dance is not taught through instructions but by watching and listening for extended amounts of time from a young age. According to this statement, digital platforms such as YouTube now enable another way for people to learn cultural traditions. Interestingly, the dancing Jayden refers to is a cultural expression performed today. It is an alive tradition, though Jayden's nephews do engage with the traditions through digital technologies.

This brings me back to the question: In what ways do digital archives challenge the accessibility of and rethink the engagement with Indigenous expressions? To further engage with this question, it is essential to acknowledge that research concerning digital technologies often focuses on the "what" (for example, access) but not on the "how" (how people use it once there is access). As film and media theorist Herman Wasserman points out, "studies of the Internet and digital media more generally has tended to be articulated in the form of an emphasis on development and access, premised on an assumed universal teleology of progress, rather than Internet use within multifarious digital cultures" (Wasserman 2017, 130). Indeed, once internet is available, it is important to scrutinise how it is used and how people would like to use it. E-commerce theorist Alopi Latukefu's states:

> In some cases external non-Indigenous [added capitalisation] organizations have been providing online presence and information management to Indigenous [added capitalisation] groups. However, this has implications for the ways in which Aboriginal organizations, communities and individuals operate, as they are drawn into a sort of benign dependency relationship in terms of their own information and knowledge management. (Latukefu 2006, 47)

Indeed, here we see how external organisations have in some cases managed internet access (the "what"). However, Indigenous self-determination (the "how") is at stake here. When it comes to digital archives, I employ performance scholar Diana Taylor's insights into the distinction between practice

and materials, focusing on "how" people engage with traditions that have become part of the archive or are part of lived, embodied performances: the repertoire.

In her book *The Archive and the Repertoire,* Taylor describes a separation between what she calls "the archive" and "the repertoire." Taylor states: ""Archival" memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change." And: "Insofar as it constitutes materials that seem to endure, the archive exceeds the live" (Taylor 2003, 19). These remarks highlight that an archive may be perceived as old, as these materials are being held longer than many humans live. Therefore, the archive's reputation as old and static is understandable. Taylor's ideas about the archive also highlight, as pointed out by Hilder (2015), that in a colonial context, the archive holds political power over the repertoire. Hilder suggests that, to overcome ideas that Indigenous cultural expression has, for a significant part, been "lost", we need to revalorise embodied knowledge by, for example, focusing on those cultural expressions that have resisted (172-173). Taylor also argues that those archival materials have been selected. She states:

> There are several myths attending the archive. One is that it is unmediated, that objects located there might mean something outside the framing of the archival impetus itself. What makes an object archival is the process whereby it is selected, classified, and presented for analysis. Another myth is that the archive resists change, corruptibility, and political manipulation. Individual things – books, DNA evidence, photo IDs – might mysteriously appear in or disappear from the archive. (Taylor 2003, 19)

This is what Ann Stoler refers to as "the pulse" of the archive, arguing that perceptions of archives as still places impartial to any political influence, a place without "a pulse" (like a mausoleum), out to be rethought. Instead, Stoler explains, there is indeed very much a (political) pulse that determines what enters the archive and what "gets lost" in the archive (Stoler 2009, 19-21). As Hilder, while drawing on Taylor (2003, 20) puts it aptly: "It depoliticises its contents and the reasons for which its contents were selected, as if it was a 'true' representation of the past. In this way, the archive 'sustains power'" (Hilder 2012, 168)

Yet the repertoire, Taylor continues, "enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing-in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge" (Taylor 2003, 20). Importantly, she states:

> The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by "being there," being a part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning. (Taylor 2003, 20)

It is the transmission that Taylor refers to that is vital for a tradition to sustain itself. Archival material only transmits something when people perceive the archival material. Therefore, the question around accessibility is only one concern; the next step is to look into how technology may contribute to embodied learning. To do this, the following section reflects on museum practice to discuss its limitations, as well as ways in which a rethinking of established practices now challenges how people can engage with Indigenous cultural practices.

2.2.1 Museums: Exhibiting the "Other"

As ethnomusicologist Thomas R. Hilder describes in his work on Sámi Indigeneity and musical performance, museums in Scandinavia have often focused on nostalgic displays of traditional Sámi ways of life. This would entail the display of *gákti* (clothing), skis, and typical Nordic landscapes (2015, 61). Over time, these sorts of representations have been critiqued. To move away from colonial-anthropological structures, Sámi have obtained key roles in institutions such as museums and universities. Since then, a poignant shift has been made mainly in the representation of Sámi in contemporary life. These institutions now not only house archives holding Sámi historical cultural phenomena but also offer sites for language learning and festivals. Events like these emphasise contemporary life and, therefore, counter stereotypical notions of Sámi indigeneity as if they were cultures belonging to the past (Hilder 2015, 61).

A similar movement is found in Australia, where, especially since the UNESCO seminar "the Role of Museums in Preserving Indigenous Cultures" in 1978, museums have (been) encouraged to rethink the role of Indigenous peoples in relation to the collections held by museums (The Australian Museum Trust 1980, 9-10; Ambrose 1978; Hamilton & Paton 2015). As frequently discussed in museology, museums have been critiqued for taking objects out of their cultural contexts and, therefore, "killing" the objects. The idea of the "museum as mausoleum," famously articulated by archaeology theorist Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, has become a popular notion among academics critically assessing these institutions (Poulot 2012, 1; Witcomb 2003, 8). Museum theorist Andrea Witcomb even argues that the museum is often seen as "backward looking" and static, while being bound "by tradition and inherently conservative" (Witcomb 2003, 8-9). Perceived as static and elitist, archives and museums are alike. Static, partly because of the literal "displays" of cultures, as if the one depiction in a museum represents a sort of fixed essence of a culture, placed behind glass to slow (natural) deterioration, not to be interacted with. Elitist, because of its history deriving from a European Enlightenment-driven urge to showcase the "wonders" one had obtained from "exotic" places far away (Daston and Park 1998: 260),

now donated to, or under the custody of, a museum, to be observed by those who can afford the museum entrance fee.

However, as seen with archives, museums have been challenged to change their ways. As Indigenous peoples have gained greater influence over displays, many institutions are looking for ways to move beyond their static image and shift ways of engagement with the museum's holdings. The project *Boorun's Canoe* in Melbourne Museum is one such example. In this project, two high school friends, Steaphan Paton and Cameron Cope, initiated a project to build a canoe according to Indigenous Gunai/Kurnai principles of knowledge transmission (Hamilton & Paton 2015, 105). *Boorun's Canoe* was part of the *First Peoples* exhibition in the museum, which museum staff and Indigenous community members co-curated. *Boorun's Canoe,* in particular, was a highly collaborative undertaking. Gunai/Kurnai Elder Albert Mullett, Steaphan Paton's grandfather, taught his grandsons how to build a bark canoe according to Gunai/Kurnai principles. The entire process is filmed. It was commissioned by the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, where Boorun's Canoe was first displayed in 2011, before the exhibition was opened in the Melbourne Museum in 2013 (Hamilton & Paton 2015).

Here, two systems came together: that of the community members and of museum conservation. As part of the project, the canoe was meant to float on Cherry Tree Creek, which are Gunai/Kurnai waters, an endeavour that had not been carried out for over a hundred years. Hamilton and Paton state:

> Through conversations, it became clear to the conservator that the material condition of the canoe was not something that the artist and family highly valued because the canoe was made to be used and knowledge existed on how to repair, maintain or make another one if needed. The artist and family placed more value on the intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer associated with the careful selection of the tree, the preparation and transformation of the bark into a vessel, its use and connection to Country and the Ancestors. The physical condition of the canoe, in a conservation sense, was not deemed particularly important. (Hamilton & Paton 2015, 110)

Because of the artist's close curatorial involvement, with the principle of natural deterioration in mind, the canoe was not placed behind glass but exposed to the air in the room in the museum. Moreover, Paton's involvement also aided in rethinking institutional practices such as the numbering of the "objects". Paton took offence after a museum staff member had placed a physical numbering on top of the canoe, which was, up until then, a common practice in the museum. However, as Hamilton and Paton state, "the artist took offence to this practice and felt that his artistic integrity was being displaced and that his work was being stamped by a colonial marking" (Hamilton & Paton 2015, 112). This indicates the delicacy around cultural practices and the way in which two systems could become completely misaligned without constant and committed re-evaluation and communication.

Most importantly, and relatively new to museum practices, was the understanding of the significance of intangible heritage that surrounded the canoe: the making, the preparing to float, the enforcing of the connection to Country, the stories, and more. It is impossible to "capture" those aspects to display in a museum, but the canoe was surrounded by pictures taken by Cameron Cope of moments in which the transmission of knowledge took place (Hamilton & Paton 2015). Pictures, however, do historicise a moment in time, complicating the before-mentioned problem of portraying groups of peoples as if they were from a previous time – whether it be a hundred years ago, or twenty years ago. While a complete de-historicization in a museum may be impossible, the *Boorun's Canoe* project is an example of how museums try to challenge archival practices by providing visitors a different way of engaging with both the materials and the practices around the materials. A project that takes new ways of engagement to a next level is Carriberrie.

2.2.2 Questions on Accessibility and Engagement in Carriberrie

To look into the questions of accessibility of and engagement with Indigenous expressions, I will delve into the case study of Carriberrie. The Carriberrie project, unlike a "traditional" archive, has never been in physical form; it has always been "situated" virtually. Not only does looking into such a project allow for a broader understanding of what an archive may be, but it also asks for critical reflection on the future of archives and what technical options will allow for a more "embodied" experience without including physical objects. According to Diana Taylor, while "archival materials" may "exceed the live," their meanings change constantly depending on who interprets them. However ephemeral the embodied practices may seem, the meaning of these practices may remain relatively constant.

Carriberrie – the Dharug[11] word that is more commonly known as "corroboree" (a dance ceremony, also written as "garriberri" (Dharug and Dharawal Resources n.d.)) – is a digital platform showcasing Indigenous song and dance. It is primarily a virtual reality experience exhibited in the Australian Museum in Sydney starting in 2018. It is also available online in website format[12], making it available to anyone with (stable) internet access. Carriberrie "hosts" the recordings of nine performing groups from various communities throughout Australia over the period of the making of Carriberrie between 2017 and 2018 (Carriberrie Teachers' Guide, n.d.).

At first sight, the Carriberrie project may not necessarily be seen as the typical archive often imagined. However, as discussed above, archives are now shifting their storage to the online sphere

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[11] The Dharug language belongs to the areas around what is today known as Greater Sydney.
[12] https://www.carriberrieonline.com/.

with the primary aims to increase accessibility and safeguard the intellectual property stored on these materials. Besides, archival organisations such as PARADISEC, an online archive digitising recordings from endangered cultures in the Pacific, have also always existed online without holding any physical objects (Barwick 2004; PARADISEC 2023). True Echoes, in turn, is an initiative in which sound recordings of various groups in the Pacific held in the British Library Sound Archive are digitised. These sounds were recorded on wax cylinders dating between 1898 – 1918 and hold sounds by Indigenous peoples from Zenadth Kes/the Torres Strait islands, as well as from mainland Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (British Library n.d.). As stated in a nomination form, filled in by British Library representatives to add the Torres Strait wax cylinder recordings and other recordings to UNESCO's "Memory of the World Register": "The British Library has digitised these collections of recordings and made them available purely for the purposes of safeguarding them and for making them available for non-commercial research, study and private enjoyment" (British Library 2010). The aim of the making of Carriberrie has similarities, as well as differences. As stated in the Carriberrie Teachers' Guide: "to capture, share and celebrate traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music and dance" (Carrieberrie Teachers' Guide n.d., 3). While True Echoes makes available recordings that have already been "captured," Carriberrie is a project that takes part in the recording of the songs and dance, after which those are also made available to audiences.

Today, archives are more than just institutions housed in physical buildings. As ethnomusicologist Anthony Seeger and audio-visual archivist Shuba Chaudhuri describe, the activities undertaken to run an archive often take place elsewhere, may this be in various "on-site" spaces or virtual spaces (Seeger and Chaudhuri 2015, 23). These activities, they argue, mainly consist of: "(1) acquisition, (2) organization, (3) preservation, and (4) dissemination" (Seeger and Chaudhuri 2015, 22). When relying on these conditions, it also seems fitting to consider Carriberrie as an audio-visual archive. With technologies this much developed, there is no need to rely on cumbersome tactile recording materials anymore, and instead, record audio-visual material instantly and digitally. Archives may now be located in online "clouds," solid-state drives, or websites. Having said this, it does not necessarily mean that digital technologies are, therefore, always more accessible. Solid-state drives deteriorate, cloud storage requires ongoing fees and involves ceding control of data to a third party, and websites also require money and upkeep. Besides, digital technology is always vulnerable to the "next big thing" that makes previous practices obsolete or unsupported. Nevertheless, there are many grounds to approach Carriberrie as a modern-day digital archive.

Carriberrie was initiated by non-Indigenous Australian film producer Dominic Allen, who worked with international creative agency corporation Isobar to create the virtual reality experience that was

later turned into a website. Producer Dominic Allen explains the reason for the online version of the project:

> The version of it, which is called Carriberrie Online (…). So that's a kind of co-production between us as filmmakers and producers, and the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra. And so they've partnered with us to host that experience into to build it into their website and make it accessible to their audiences and preserve it in their catalogue so that it can be accessible for generations to come. (Dominic Allen, interview 2022)

Again, we see here that an archive – in this case, the National Film and Sound Archive based in Canberra – has come to play a role in this project with the aim of accessibility and preservation.

Carriberrie was part of "Weave," a festival of Aboriginal and Pacific cultures, in the Australian Museum in 2018. The Australian Museum is Australia's oldest museum, established in 1827. It is a natural history museum exhibiting various animal species, stones from around the world, dinosaurs, and Indigenous cultures in Australia. The fact that Indigenous cultures are represented in a natural history museum sheds light upon colonial thinking, in which Indigenous peoples were seen as less human (Smith 2021).

In Australia, the categorisation of Indigenous peoples has a fraught history in general, as there is a widely-believed myth referred to as the "Flora and Fauna Act," which supposedly classified First Nations peoples as fauna. Although such an Act never existed (Byrnand 2015), Indigenous peoples have been differentiated from non-Indigenous peoples from the moment of colonisation. The very notion of Indigeneity as a category is imposed upon First Nations peoples, as prior to European invasion, there was no need to distinguish between "Aboriginal," the Latin word for "original inhabitant," or "non-Aboriginal" (Heiss 2007, 41). As described throughout this thesis, this classification has resulted in various racist policies and systems, amongst which the peculiar state Indigenous peoples found themselves in as they were classified as "native to" Australia, yet did not count as citizens until 1967 (Lawrence and Gibson 2007, 654). Indigenous cultures are often housed in natural history museums, so it is unsurprising that a myth such as the "Flora and Fauna Act" has become part of Australia's national narrative (Byrnand 2015). The categorisation of Indigenous peoples in the Australian Museum – being placed between non-human phenomena such as dinosaurs and stones – is a painful reminder of the museum's colonial foundation stemming from ethnographic principles.

As artist and sociologist Laura Fisher describes, the ways in which artefacts belonging to Indigenous peoples have often been presented in natural history museums stems from "evolutionist" thinking, in which Indigenous people are described as primitive and nearing extinction. She states:

> Cultural objects were displayed as self-evidently illustrative of these assumptions and their worth rested in their revelation of the practices of a past culture. The primary focus of an

'ethnographic framework' is seen to be the way cultural traditions are encoded in an object, which means that objects are presented as authentic exemplars of a generalized community practice, and tradition is regarded as having strictly determined the character of community members' creative output (Fisher 2012, 255).

Evidently, Fisher's description of "ethnography," and with that, natural history museums that heavily rely on this method, connotes the earlier explained critiques many imperialist institutions face: being perceived as generalising and implicated to describe traditions and peoples as static.

However, does this mean museums should remove their Indigenous cultures exhibitions? Surely that would also entail the loss of spaces where visitors are now encouraged to learn from various Indigenous traditions. Below, I explore how incorporating a project such as Carriberrie may challenge some of the issues described by Fisher above.

Carriberrie features nine different Indigenous song and dance groups from across the continent. We hear and see, for example, the Mayi Wunba (wild honey) group from the Mona Mona community from the Kuranda region in far north Queensland. One of the dances the group performs is the Kuku-Yalanji ceremony, which explains the honey cultivation technique and the part it plays in the ecosystem of the area (Carriberrie Teachers' Guide n.d., 13). The lyrics are sung in the local Djabugai language, accompanied by boomerangs, clapsticks, and the didjeridu. The setting of the performance is the Kuranda rainforest, and the all-male dancers wear red lap-laps and white ochre body paint.

The Bangarra Dance Theatre is another group that is part of Carriberrie. Bangarra is based in Sydney and performs across Australia and internationally. They perform Western contemporary dancing that is also influenced by local Indigenous dance styles – depending on the kind of production they perform (for instance, a performance based on traditions from Zenadth Kes/the Torres Strait Islands will include influences specific from or based on this area). The performance featured in Carriberrie is Bennelong, a story about an Aboriginal "informant" – Chapter Three will discuss him in more detail – who was captured by early British settlers. In one of the featured performances, we see a group of dancers of various genders in light-coloured clothing wearing red coats on top resembling British royal militant coats. One man plays Bennelong and puts on clothing piece by piece, handed by other dancers. The music sounds like an orchestral production (though we cannot see an orchestra, and the music is most likely a recording), with lyrics sung in English. The setting is a theatre stage.

Another example is the rock band Lonely Boys from Ngukurr in Southern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. We see two performances of the same song, The Hunter, in different settings: one on an open-air stage at night (we know this as the sky is dark), the other in the desert during the daytime. In both settings, the band members play their instruments, such as electric guitar and keyboard. The all-male group wear long dark clothing, except for one of the members in the desert performance who wears body paint and a black lap-lap carrying a spear.

The three groups described above exemplify the variety of performances that are part of Carriberrie. It indicates the polylithic nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, thereby rejecting essentialisation. Some expressions in Carriberrie draw on traditions that have been practised since pre-colonisation, while others are newer, adopted expressions. Once "entered" the setting of a particular group, the audience can see and hear in 360 degrees, adjust the angle, move within the space and be surrounded by the setting (Fig. 2.1a, b, and c).

Figure 2.1a. Still from the Lonely Boys from Carriberrie Online. Three members performing "The Hunter."

Figure 2.1b. Still from the Lonely Boys from Carriberrie Online. Four members performing "The Hunter" are seen as if the viewer/listener follows the band.

Figure 2.1c. Still from the Lonely Boys from Carriberrie Online. Still from the same moment as figure 2.1b, but the viewer/listener is facing upwards.

The experience of being in a space may be referred to as "spatial presence", which media and communication scholars Hartmann et al. define as "the subjective experience of a user or onlooker to be physically located in a mediated space, although it is just an illusion" (2015, 117). Moreover, Carriberrie allows the audience to see otherwise "still" musical instruments in action, which creates the illusion that there is greater interaction between the cultural expression and the audience. For example, while clapsticks may be in closer proximity to museum visitors if they were physically placed in a museum, Carriberrie offers the audience to see and hear the instruments practised, such as heard with the Mayi Wunba group and the Lonely Boys from Ngukurr. This may reveal a possible future for physical archives: if technology makes experiences available in which practice is favoured over "unchangeable" materials, this may be an extra push in the area to repatriate items to their cultural and historical contexts.

We cannot deny that the immersive qualities of Carriberrie require a different kind of engagement that is certainly more experience-based and less observant and distant than we are used to in museums. Nevertheless, the incorporation of newer archival forms to engage with Indigenous traditions in a museum only removes some problematics. In a way, it still exhibits "the Other," as discussed by Ceuterick and Ingraham: "the representational vividness of evocative ethnography [offered by VR] does not alone inoculate it from exoticizing or othering its subjects" (2021, 9). Besides, the now "static" captured performances are not to be adjusted or adapted after the filming. It is also not an actual experience of the repertoire. While spatial presence is genuine for the person experiencing it

(Hartmann et al. 2015, 117), the performers in the videos do not have that same interaction experience. This leads to the following section, looking into the question of who has been granted access.

2.2.3 Song and Dance as Virtual Contact Zone

As explained by Cultural historian and musicologist Amanda Harris, communication through technology and cultural expressions has been a recurrent phenomenon between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Non-Indigenous anthropologists and other researchers, particularly in the mid-20th century, have been focused on documenting live performances by Indigenous peoples in the form of recordings. This, for example, was the aim of the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition. Harris describes:

> One of the means through which they [the members of the Arnhem Land Expedition] sought to bridge the cultural divide was by recording the songs and ceremony of Aboriginal people they encountered in audio and film. In doing so, they converted the strangeness of the sounds heard in the alien surrounds of Arnhem Land into a format comprehensible to their own cultural parameters, a format that they could own, distribute and ultimately manipulate into other forms more readable or audibly intelligible. (Harris 2014, 5)

In the case of Richard Oglesby Marsh, sound recordings were used to forge a connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, here we see how sound recordings were used to document Indigenous cultural expressions and connect to these sounds in the "explorers'" own ways.

Many practices seen today – may these be situated in museums, depicted in documentaries, or performed on stages – could be interpreted similarly, where the medium through which the practice is showcased is tailored towards a people other than those seen in the practice. If this medium is more tailored towards a particular audience, then this particular audience will benefit most from the content that this medium delivers.

Applied to the Carriberrie project, it is evident that people in the city, particularly Sydney – where the Australian Museum is based – can enjoy this project first and foremost. However, The Carriberrie producer Dominic Allen tells me in a podcast interview:

> I think there's a lot of people, unfortunately, who are still really ignorant about the depth and diversity of Australians First Nations culture, and it's clear from the experience I've had, that anyone that has an opportunity to learn more about it has a profound experience. And it can in some cases, be life changing for them and lead to a much greater awareness and respect for the First Nations people. (Dominic Allen, podcast interview with author, 15-06-2022)

While indeed, Dominic indicates that there is an aim to reach those who may not be aware of First Nations cultures in Australia, the ultimate hope is that the project would create awareness and respect, thus possibly having a positive impact on First Nations communities as well. The focus on the medium is also not to say that film, VR, or a website is not an Indigenous medium. As Hilder, drawing on Michael Meadows (1994) explains, at times, there is a "problematic notion of Indigenous people as passive victims of a world obsessed with the authentic and "real" and denies the possibility of Indigenous people adopting media technologies for their own cultural and political purposes" (Hilder 2017, 176). Much like Halifu Osumare's take on the "Indigenisation of hip hop," in which the globally recognised music genre hip-hop can become "Indigenised" by re-interpreting the genre through Indigenous traditions, voices, and perspectives, there can be an "Indigenisation" of film, museums, and cultural exchange practices. As Osumare claims: "Indigenization, thus, becomes both a part of the antidote to hegemonic individualized consumerism, and simultaneously the means by which the entire process is promulgated" (Osumare 2012, 32). As Arjun Appadurai describes, indigenisation is "often a product of collective and spectacular experiments with modernity, and not necessarily of the subsurface affinity of new cultural forms with existing patterns in the cultural repertoire" (Appadurai 1995, 24). Carriberrie may, therefore, be seen as an experiment which Indigenises film, and by placing the film in a museum, there is Indigenisation of the museum, as well as the internet through its online version.

2.2.4 Cultural Encounters

Dominic Allen, the producer of Carriberrie, tells me what inspired him to initiate this project:

> I was doing a project in Arnhem Land at a little place called Gunbalanya, which is near the East Alligator River. I met a dancer there. His name's Joey Nganjmirra, when he was contributing to a documentary we were making at the time. Part of the experience I had with Joey was getting to witness him perform what he calls a Sorry dance, which is funeral type, song and dance that people do. (…) And it's a deeply moving experience. And so I saw Joey do that on a road, this kid had died from a car crash. And so Joey, took us out to somewhere nearby and in the middle of a dirt road and performed this dance. And being a camera operator, you get to be very close to people when they're doing these sorts of things. And it provides a really intense, full-on connection to the person and also to the context of what's happening. And it was at that moment, seeing Joey perform that dance and wanting to kind of understand that, that I just thought that using virtual reality as a tool to try to get more audiences into places like Gunbalanya, which is to say, very remote locations, very difficult to access, harnessing the technology of virtual reality, to be able to share that visceral experience with more people could be a really powerful thing for both the audience and also for the dancers and different First

Nations, performers and ritual practice, sort of custodians that we that we have all around the country. (Dominic Allen, podcast interview with author, 15-06-2022)

For Dominic, a non-Indigenous Australian, seeing Indigenous dancer Joey Nganjmirra perform his dance sparked his curiosity and determination to make sure others could experience this close connection to the performer and the cultural practice performed. While we might trace some earlier described tensions around knowledge accessibility here – who gets to know what we know? Who is this knowledge meant for? – we must also not perceive the collaborating performers as passive bystanders, just because the producer is a non-Indigenous person.

In this particular case, the earlier idea of the separation between the "archive" and the "repertoire" becomes blurred. A chain of actions occurs: Dominic sees a live performance in a remote area. It is a Sorry dance that is performed today: the repertoire. He wants to bring this repertoire to a place where many people gather: the city, to be displayed in the Australian Museum. If we follow the idea of the "archive" and the "repertoire," by filming the performances across Australia, the repertoire is turned into the archive: film, something that exceeds the live. However, the VR experience is only an experience once "experienced." Dominic explains the specific qualities of VR technology:

VR has several unique properties to it, which don't translate in other mediums. And one of the sort of most important for this project, being the feeling that you've done something or been somewhere that people have after VR. They did a test in Northern America, where they showed a bunch of kids at the start of the year tour of Rome in VR. And then at the end of the year, they said, "has anyone been to Rome?" and more than half the class put their hand up, even though they hadn't been to Rome. Because they just thought they had been to Rome off the back of that experience. And it's different to "have you seen a film about Rome", in which case, in traditional medium, that there's that distinction about what you've experienced, and what you've seen. And VR is more experienced-based than kind of watching-based, it's more immersive, and it's more memorable. And it has also cognitive impacts on you. So you will feel different than when you've watched something just on a flat screen. (Dominic Allen, podcast interview with author, 15-06-2022)

As Dominic claims, the VR medium helps bring emotional understandings of the cultural expressions. Dominic's statement echoes McLuhan's "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 2001[1964], 107), as the properties of VR determine the more experience-based feeling. In other words, once one has had a bodily experience of a practice, one can have an emotional connection to this practice or have a better understanding of this practice. The Carriberrie VR project, therefore, requires participation from its audience.

As seen in Taylor's idea of the repertoire, the "being there" and audience participation are key. She states: "The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by "being there," being a part of the transmission" (Taylor 2003, 20). VR forces us to

question in what ways someone is or is not in a space. Though technologies such as VR cannot replace the participation experience in the same way a live performance – the repertoire – is a participation experience, it is a more immersive way to engage with the archive. The potential to forge a closer understanding and bodily connection is certainly there, which was a vital impetus of the project. Dominic tells me:

> we were targeting, if we targeted anyone, curious people really and also people who have a sort of openness to song and dance and you know, it is a universal language and that's what David Gulpilil, who has now passed, but he provided an introduction to the film. And he says at the start that, you know that it's the sort of language of the first people where I think that song and dance is a really great thing that all humans can share. And we can all sort of access together. And so that was, you know, the tool, I guess, to disarm some of those separations or barriers that might be in the audience members and other people. (Dominic Allen, podcast interview with author, 15-06-2022)

Here, we see how Carriberrie draws on song and dance to create meaningful encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, focusing on common grounds rather than differences. This is aligned with the qualities Ceuterick and Ingraham ascribe to VR: "[VR's] ability to simulate— not just represent—the manifesting simultaneity of difference and sameness that happens during the embodied presence of an encounter with an other" (Ceuterick and Ingraham 2021, 10). While we cannot replace "being" physically on a site with new technologies, the Carriberrie project does take the next step in taking seriously the significance of practice, engagement, and movement based on song and dance and moves away from static depictions in which materials are taken away from their context. Instead, the audience is invited to "step into" First Nations contexts, rather than the more common phenomenon where Indigenous people have to enter a non-Indigenous context.

2.3 Research and Creative Practice

The sections above have scrutinised how digital technologies have changed the form of access and shaped different engagement experiences with music and sound archives. This means that the sounds and musics are – to an extent – within easier reach to the sound communities to whom the sounds belong, as well as to a broader audience that may benefit from learning through and about those sounds, which in turn could potentially enable greater understanding of and between cultures. With the idea of allowing greater access to information through sounds while facilitating cross-cultural dialogues, this research project also involves a research podcast that has become an alternative output besides this written thesis. This section will elaborate upon practice-based research, illustrating how it

has enriched this research and reflecting on the importance of alternative ways of knowledge dissemination in Indigenous research contexts.

2.3.1 Podcasting as Research: Aims and Practicalities

Since the start of my studies, I have been trying to navigate issues around research outcomes, inclusivity, and power relations through how ethnomusicologists generate and disseminate knowledge. This is not at all a new issue. In 1986, Anthony Seeger argued that the discipline of ethnomusicology, and with that, our field recordings, "are inextricably part of the colonial period" and that access to these recordings remains largely with "middle-class urban populations" (Seeger 1986, 266). He proposes that, instead of archiving field recordings once the fieldwork or the research is finished, the ethnomusicologist can be a part of the archiving process and use it as a research strategy. Part of Seeger's strategy was to document and provide information about the recordings and the recording process as soon as possible, and to think about recording techniques (equipment used, etc) (Seeger 1986, 269). While Seeger refers to the archiving of field recordings specifically, I am extending this idea to the production of research outputs, such as recorded interviews, shared in the form of a podcast. Much like a recorded interview, field recordings are, in a more concealed way, moments of produced research interference: they are produced while "in the field," they are curated moments by the scholar, and they are recorded by the scholar's choice of technology.

My main aim was to create a research output that would serve not just the research, but the people who have shaped the research – particularly those who have given their time and energy in an interview. Scholar Daniels-Mayes asks herself: "Would I want to be participating in my research? Why? Why not?" (Daniels-Mayer 2021, 129). This is the question I asked for this project, combined with the question: What are my skills? These two questions formed the foundation for the podcast. I chose to enhance my skills in asking people questions and listening, and I believed that people would be more enticed to partake in the project if it would provide them with more than just a jargon-filled written thesis. Why would artists give their time to a researcher when they could give their time to a magazine journalist or radio presenter reaching a broader audience?

As the popularity of the medium of a podcast had risen over the years, especially during the pandemic, it seemed like a fitting choice, alongside the practical reason that my first few interviews had to be conducted through online recordings due to travel restrictions. Since then, I have enjoyed and learned from other ethnomusicology-informed podcast series. "Massa", for example, is a series established by ethnomusicologists Schuyler Whelden and Juliana Cantarelli Vita, focussing on Brazilian

musics and cultures. Much like my objectives to serve beyond academia, focusing on accessibility, "Massa" provides an insight into various musical cultures within one place of focus, Brazil, made openly accessible. Their website states:

> that's our goal here: to offer accessible, comprehensive conversations about Brazilian music, in terms of their specific sounds, as well as the cultural and historical circumstances that give them meaning (Massa, n.d.).

Not only is the information in this series accessible to "curious non-specialists" (Massa, n.d.), but compared to a written paper, it is also easier to access for the musicians themselves and their communities. For this reason, Jennifer Cooper calls on archivists, claiming they have an ethical responsibility to make field recordings accessible (Cooper 2013, 20).

Closer to this research's geographical area is the podcast series "Music! Dance! Culture!" hosted by Australian-based Georgia Curran and Mahesh White-Radhakrishnan, which makes accessible not only conversations about musical cultures, such as explored in their episode with Indigenous Yolngu musician Arian Pearson, but also advocates for the value of music research, explored through a conversation with their guest Anthony Seeger (Music! Dance! Culture!, n.d.). Both Curran and White-Radhakrishnan refer to their social obligation as researchers to not only document and analyse musical practices but also to engage in what they call "music sustainability activism," connecting threads of musical practices that have been disrupted by injustices and finding ways to highlight – in this case – Black (musical) cultures in the wake of the Black Lives Matter Movement momentum resulting from the murder of George Floyd (Curran and Radhakrishnan 2021).

When I started the podcast series I have called "Movements & Sounds", it differed from these two examples mentioned above in that it had become part of an already existing digital platform, SOAS Radio, a small independent radio station housed within the SOAS main building. Even though SOAS Radio was a modest initiative with one paid employee only among volunteers, the difference in reach between a written paper and a podcast episode is significant: an episode uploaded on the radio platform showed 336 listens after being openly accessible online for about three months, compared to a small 5-page article on SEM Student News (Schuitenmaker 2022) which showed a mere 47 downloads after those same three months. Much to my regret, SOAS Radio ceased operations and the contributors – including myself – failed to retain access to the website domain due to institutional changes. Movements & Sounds now has its own domain (www.movementsandsounds.com), despite my drive to make the series part of a bigger community. These events highlight institutional workings on a small scale, revealing challenges that researchers, archivists and creative producers working within (cultural) ("public") institutions may face, challenging and potentially compromising their integrity. It also demonstrates that digital technologies do not always facilitate greater accessibility. After this first-hand

experience, I felt a distrust in similar institutions and concluded that, instead of making the podcast a part of yet another bigger platform, I preferred to manage the online recordings myself, knowing that I would make sure to keep the episodes online and therefore accessible – as promised to the research participants. During the writing of this thesis, the podcast has already proven to be accessible to people from Indigenous communities in Australia, as well as non-academic "hip-hop heads" in the UK as they have reached out through the podcast website.

Besides accessibility, the podcast aims to deliver more transparency in research workings: Where did a participant's quote come from? Which question sparked that answer? Besides, it removes the need to eliminate pieces of the interview in the podcast episodes as there is no limit in terms of time or word count.

I have often had conversations with professional musicians who have considerable audience numbers and may benefit from broadening their audiences. Obtaining contacts and a reputation can be seen as "musical capital," as explained by Susan Coulson (2010, 264), who enquires into how music can be a person's livelihood. Exposure to an audience outside of Australia is another benefit I believe a podcast facilitates much easier than an academic paper. Moreover, by setting up a project that stands by itself alongside the thesis, it has allowed me to apply for a small grant, which the SOAS Enterprise fund granted. This enabled me to donate to Seed, an Indigenous Youth-led climate justice organisation. I see it as a small step towards much-needed reparations, as much harm has been done in the past in the name of research affiliated with First Nations peoples (Greer, Harrison and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002).

The initial plan was to move away from a (semi)structured interview format that follows a script (Bernard 2006, 210) and instead have more relaxed conversations. One idea to do this was to listen to a piece of music chosen by the participant and start the conversation by listening to that music and seeing what responses it would bring up. Again, during my first interview, I realised it would mean a lot of work for guests. I abandoned this idea and made sure to keep the conversation going and flowing. I also wished to be considerate of the musicians' time, which ultimately resulted in my accepting that the traditional interview format was the most practical and valuable way, after all, when considering people's time and effort.

2.3.2 Podcasting as Research: Reflections on Sharing Indigenous Knowledge

Moving beyond careful deliberations over practicalities, this project must reckon with what it means to share knowledge as a practice openly. Where is this drive coming from on a deeper level embedded

within my cultural situatedness? In his book *Hungry Listening,* Dylan Robinson reflects on Indigenous refusal of knowledge-sharing. In a system dominated by a colonial urge for all knowledges to be accessible at all times, Robinson explains:

> In content refusal, Indigenous scholars have resisted the Western imperative for all knowledge to be accessible at all times, acknowledging that Indigenous epistemologies uphold context-specific practices of knowledge sharing. Western premises of knowledge acquisition and dissemination sit in stark contrast with situated and context-specific practices of Indigenous knowledge sharing guided by protocol. (Robinson 2020, 21)

While stressing that access to knowledge in the Western realm is also limited due to social factors such as class, gender, and race, Dylan Robinson exposes a significant epistemological contrast between many Indigenous societies' protocols around knowledge dissemination and a colonial expectation for information to be accessible with just one click away.

Gamilaroi poet and musician Luke Patterson also explores the notion of content refusal in his poem "Illawarra Wandering." Based in Sydney's Redfern, Luke partook in the podcast project through a soundwalk, explained in more detail in Chapter Three. During our walk and talk, he told me about his online poem,[13] which, afforded by the digital, also contains sounds attached to some words. A reader (and now also, listener) can click on one or more of the underlined words of the poem on the online arts publication website "Running Dog" (Patterson 2022). Visually, some of the words disappear at times for a moment, while others light up. In terms of sounds, Luke told me:

> I think it was me experimenting with another layer of perception in the poem. But also, the idea of like, clarity and cacophony. I think there's like a kind of way of knowing and being and like ways where like, you're not necessarily entitled to know everything. And, and divisions of knowledge are regulated and important. For safety reasons, not only of the knowledge, but the people holding it. And so the poem is trying to partly suggest, you can't have it all at once. You can't see Country all at once. So there's the words that are vanishing and we can only do certain readings at certain times. And you can layer the sounds but if you layer them too much, it might be too noisy and that kind of thing. (Luke Patterson, soundwalk interview, 20-07-2022)

Through layering the poem with sounds and enabling multiple sounds to be played simultaneously, Luke challenges how much one may and should know. On the one hand, the inclusion of sound is afforded by the internet, as is its accessibility, but it also allows for the challenging of information being readily available, not in accordance with local Indigenous cultural protocols around information sharing.

Examples of Indigenous ways of knowledge dissemination are the ancient practice of intergenerational storytelling, exemplified by Teela Reid, whose knowledge about First Nations

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[13] To listen and read the poem: https://rundog.art/projects/illawarra-wandering.

Matriarchs in her family is passed down by stories told within her family between generations (Reid 2022, 43-44), or Thomas Mayor, who describes the importance of listening to his uncle, for the "uncle-nephew relationship" is crucial in Kaurareg culture in the Torres Strait Islands (Mayor 2022, 16-17). The practice of face-to-face storytelling between a small group of individuals stems from a way of being in the world that is separate from the Western – and, at times, contested – idea of the "Information Society", which relies on huge quantities of data, where accessibility is enabled predominantly by technology (Webster 2006). As a white person based in the Global North, I ought to reflect on the intricacies of openly sharing Indigenous knowledges through an accessible medium that is also enabled by technology.

For this reason, the podcast focuses on First Nations musics that are intended to be heard by an audience that would reach both communities and beyond close communities. Focusing on musical practices in Greater Sydney, built on Eora and Dharug lands, I aim to focus on what it means for musicians to claim spaces in a place where various groups of people of various backgrounds live and move together. The idea of social "movement" here is crucial in these musics. Muruwari and Filipino hip-hop artist DOBBY explains, in episode 1, that often the basis for his music is social change, to which he says:

> in June last year we [BARKAA and DOBBY] were talking to ourselves and we were like "how do we get outside our bubble?" Because preaching to the choir doesn't do anything. Well, it does something, and it has a place and it has a purpose but, real change comes from finding the perimeter, right? And finding the, the boundaries, and pushing that outwards. (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021)

Yuin and Gumbaynggirr singer Cianna Walker has similar thoughts on finding broader audiences regarding social change. In episode 3, she says:

> continuing with my activism, and try to connect, and reach to others, and I guess together. It's cliché, so cliché, but I guess, collectively, we all can like strive to raise awareness of Black issues, and representation, and hopefully, you know. Drive for change, and I guess, stop deaths in custody (…) the one wish that I have for change is probably for people to understand, or, at least, sympathise, have cultural awareness. 'Cause I think if people can understand, then, the world would be a much happier place. (Cianna Walker, podcast interview with author, 13-05-2022)

Yulugi shares the importance of movement between cultures. Yulugi is a duo between British-Australian western classically trained musician Keyna Wilkins, and Gamilaroi and Wakka Wakka songman and yiḏaki (or: didjeridu) player Gumaroy Newman. In episode 2, Keyna describes how special she thinks their collaboration is and how special it is for her that Gumaroy is comfortable sharing his culture. And this goes both ways: Gumaroy explains about their yiḏaki concerto:

The closest I have been to Tchaikovsky, Mozart, (…). Bach as in B A C H. We've got bark as in B A R K, paperbark and ironbark … that's the closest I've ever been to Bach. So it was new for me and I quite enjoyed it and to get the respect from such a, like a, high quality professional, world renowned musicians. It's pretty humbling. Because going back just to two generations ago, my mother and father, you know how we have lockdown here? They were locked down and they weren't even allowed to leave the, the reserve that they were on. They just had to stay there for years and years. So for me now traveling the world collaborating with musicians such as Keyna, and all the other great musicians that I collaborate with, I'm a pretty lucky guy. (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author, 14-11-2021)

Here, Gumaroy describes how being able to share his culture through music is something he cherishes given the tough circumstances in which previous generations in his family lived, forced by the ongoing colonisation of his ancestral lands. Bringing his culture through music together with other musical cultures and sharing that on stages and settings that he describes as "not his territory" are challenges for him that he calls "fantastic" (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author, 14-11-2021).

Throughout the podcast interviews, I made a few observations: One was that the different nature of podcast interviews compared to "ethnographic" interviews shaped the interviews. The interviewees knew from the offset that the information was going to end up online, which meant that only information they felt comfortable sharing in public was shared. This also meant that, instead of a person who would promise confidentiality, I became more like a journalist, and in that way, creating more distance between myself and the interviewee by asking questions that I deemed not too personal. The other one is centred around the idea that I had become the "listener's advocate."[14] This means that a potential audience shapes the kind of questions I ask. Sometimes, I found myself asking questions with expected answers or bringing up information I was already aware of but of which I felt a potential listener would benefit from knowing. This, for example, happened when discussing numbers around the Black Deaths in custody issue or when I asked musicians to say something about a particular song that I had already read about in another interview they had given.

Furthermore, while my first impetus for this project was to avoid tampering with someone's words, I did feel the need to edit the conversations to some extent. This, again, had to do with being the listener's advocate: even though podcasting is also referred to as "DIY radio" or amateur radio (Madsen 2009, 1193), I felt somewhat committed to delivering content to SOAS Radio that was acceptable, meaning that "umms" and long pauses or distracting breath noises are just not pleasant to listen to. Once SOAS Radio ceased operations, that became less of an issue, yet most of the episodes had already

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[14] A concept I have come across many a times in online "how to" blogs or tutorials on how to create the best listening experience for a podcast.

been edited. Still, background noises sometimes distracted the conversation. One participant, Gumaroy Newman, called in while sitting in a park against a tree. While this was a fitting scene for that particular interview, as it involved many references to Mother Earth, the high-pitched squeaking sounds of birds flying around made the conversation hard to listen to. While I welcomed the idea of having a conversation that would include the sounds of the animals in the area, this particular interview was recorded when SOAS Radio was still in operation. It therefore was not deemed acceptable to include an unedited version. Moreover, the audio is sometimes interrupted due to a poor internet connection, which meant I had to cut that part of the conversation.

From a more personal point of view, I noticed I felt more exposed. Knowing that the conversation would end up on the internet, I was more self-conscious about my spoken English, which is not my first language. While it did make me nervous on the one hand, it also makes research more transparent. As a domain dominated by the English written word, a recorded spoken word piece reveals another side of the researcher, which may emphasise the researcher's subjectivity. Moreover, I felt that as a researcher, it has made me more accepting of my background, as written papers usually demand to "camouflage" the fact that I write in a non-native language.

Finally, the podcast series has allowed me to experiment with the soundwalks discussed in mainly chapter one of this thesis. Most commonly, podcasts are recorded conversations between individuals. However, the soundwalks have enabled the city sounds to be included in the series. This, in turn, allowed for a more relaxed approach towards the aesthetics of the soundwalk episodes, perceiving sounds of the wind, the microphone, or other beings as part of the conversation instead of noise. In summary, I have provided an overview of the practicalities and benefits, as well as the tensions and challenges in "translating" research interviews and recordings into a more accessible format of a podcast.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to demonstrate how digital archival practice challenges accessibility and the ways it rethinks engagement with Indigenous expressions. I have researched the foundation of archival practice and how ethnomusicologists' work relates to archival practice. I argued that for research outputs to be mutually beneficial for both researcher and those involved in the research, scholars' private recordings – including research interviews – may be made accessible online to be a bigger asset for all those involved.

What comes with this digitisation of Indigenous expressions (may these be videos, audio recordings, or images) is a more active way of engaging with archives. We heard this in the case of Jayden's nephews, for example, learning dances through videos on YouTube. Furthermore, this newer focus on practice over static depictions is exemplified in museum practice – illustrated by the Boorun's Canoe exhibition, which highlights the practice of canoe-making, over the exhibition of materials solely behind glass.

A case study taking a next step is the VR experience – first exhibited in the Australian Museum, and now also online – Carriberrie. This project uses digital technology to foster a more meaningful way of learning from Indigenous expressions by emphasising embodied engagement. Diana Taylor's distinction between the archive and the repertoire shows how digital technologies enable a more embodied and invested way of engaging with the repertoire. While indeed the distinction between archive and repertoire still prevails, enhancing digital technologies in archival practice shows an awareness of creating a more meaningful way to learn from Indigenous expressions.

Holding myself as a scholar accountable, I have also put words into practice by making available online the research interviews and soundwalks conducted for this research in podcast format. This chapter set out the benefits of applied scholarly work, focussing mainly on the idea of reciprocity of research outputs. While podcasting may make Indigenous expression more accessible, we may also respect the idea of Indigenous content refusal, which means that sometimes, accessibility is not always desired and is, therefore, not, per definition, mutually beneficial between the researcher and those involved in the research. Though, by having an understanding of this and through transparency, research outputs as such can be beneficial in amplifying the Indigenous stories that Individuals choose to share in an accessible format.

Chapter 3

"Knowing the Place Names": Indigenous Urban Space

This chapter focuses on the connection between sounds and First Nations space-making in various areas in Sydney. I ask the question: *How do Indigenous musicians and activists negotiate urban space?* To rectify urban imaginaries that often exclude Indigenous stories, I aim to show how Indigenous residents and artists navigate their urban experience and everyday life by listening to the urban soundscape and through musical performances in urban spaces. I will then scrutinise how these experiences and musical expressions highlight the Indigeneity of various spaces in Sydney. This chapter emphasises Indigenous political experiences in the city, allowing the following chapters to build upon this basis through topics such as political intervention, hip-hop, and environmentalism.

To respond to the research question, first, I interrogate how gentrification and displacement affect Indigenous residents in Redfern. I argue how the (imagined) tension between Indigeneity and urban living has played an essential part in these issues. These topics are discussed through two soundwalks: one conducted with Gamilaroi poet and musician Luke Patterson on July 20th, 2022, and another with Gamilaroi social worker Tyren Ahsee on August 20th, 2022. Before going into an in-depth exploration of the soundwalks, I discuss the methodology of soundwalking to indicate how and why these walks took shape. I introduce this chapter's particular focus on "experience," which is discussed throughout the chapter with reflections on related concepts, such as De Certeau's "practice" (1984) in section 3.3.2, Kapchan's "listening acts" (2017) in section 3.3.4, and Lefebvre's "concrete space" (1991) in section 3.4. Soundwalks have been a critical method through which I engaged with people, place and sound as a practice-led research methodology.

Soundwalking has provided insights into Indigenous experiences of living in Redfern, which is claimed as "the symbolic heart of Aboriginal Sydney" (Morgan 2012, 209) and is, therefore, where the walks took place. I was interested in the embodied experience and interaction as a form of practice-led research between the Indigenous research contributors, their surroundings, and me in the role of a researcher. As Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum states, walking "encourages us to notice and partake in the daily routines of (…) members of the society with whom we work" (Aduonum 2021, 249). Reflecting on the soundwalks, I discuss issues around gender and the privilege of walking, highlighting the subjectivity of the experience and the written account in this thesis. The soundwalks provide Indigenous perspectives from the community, as both walkers have strong ties to the area, either as resident, or as social worker in the community centre with family ties to the place.

Besides lived experiences discussed through the soundwalks, I demonstrate how musical performance casts light on gentrification and displacement in urban areas and how it enables a

reclaiming of the space. I will reflect on this through Lefebvre's (1991) distinction between abstract space and concrete space, where abstract space is subjected to imposed measures (Lefebvre 1991, 352) (i.e. opening times of a city hall, restrictions of amplifiers on trains) while concrete space reflects people's activities and uses of space (Lefebvre 1991, 362) (i.e. performing a ceremony in a space). I argue that the ways in which musical practice emphasises Indigenous lived experiences enable the making of an abstract space, an Indigenous space. To illustrate this point, I draw on an interview with Tudulaig songman Lez, who practices his songline at Warrare (also known as Circular Quay) in central Sydney, and on the performance "Blak Box" by various Indigenous artists that took place in Barangaroo. This area carries a particularly controversial history around Indigenous displacement.

The two different methods – soundwalking and participant-observation – enabled reflection on various ways of knowing, knowledge acquisition, and power (im)balances: the soundwalks allowed for an inquiry into listening and a two-way (or multiple-way) dialogue of people experiencing and moving within a space, providing an insight into how two Indigenous individuals navigate day-to-day life in Redfern, and the ways in which sounds play a role in this. The performances allowed me to be a spectator-listener and audience member. Instead of focusing on everyday life, the performances provided insights into Indigenous accounts of pre- and post-invasion usage of parts of the city, such as sightseeing and initiation ceremonies in Warrane and fisherwomen's customs and gas production around Barangaroo. By listening to (musical representations of) Indigenous experience in the city – through soundwalks and performances – I demonstrate how sound plays a crucial role in emphasising the Indigeneity of – and Indigenous experiences in – urban areas in Sydney.

3.1 Spatial Processes: Gentrification and Displacement

Gentrification and displacement are significant terms within this thesis, as these developments have occurred or are still occurring across Sydney, including Redfern. As mentioned in the introduction, Redfern, an inner-city suburb of Sydney, is where the first urban Indigenous community housing was developed in Australia. This is also the place that became known as a deteriorated place in the 1970s due to governmental neglect (Shaw 2007).

According to urban theorist Nik Theodore, ghettoization, or the marginalisation of spaces in cities, has long been believed to result from poor decision-making by the inhabitants of these spaces, regardless of the policy-makers' "best efforts". However, he claims this is an ill-informed notion as it ignores many other facets that contribute to the marginalisation of a space, such as labour markets, governmental decisions, and institutions (Theodore 2010, 169-171). Urban sociologist Michael Bounds,

for example, claims that the ghettoization of Redfern was exacerbated by the lack of education among Indigenous populations (Bounds 2004, 302-303). Note that up to the 1970s, the idea of Indigenous people having to go to school was deeply connected to the traumatic era of the removal of Indigenous children from their "uneducated" parents, referred to as the Stolen Generations (Lea et al. 2011, 323). Besides, children whose parents moved to the city for employability often spent time away from school in the city and instead spent time with their community, "renewing and strengthening their Indigenous bonds" (Morgan 2008, 78).

Theodore provides an overview of how past research has portrayed the urban "underclass" as "cultures," for example, a "self-defeating culture," a "black culture," or a "single-parent culture," which are opposed to the "mainstream culture" (Theodore 2010, 169-171). Deploying the term "culture" this way results in normalising distressed social states as "natural" and ascribing problems as part of "certain" cultures. Moreover, ascribing behaviours as part of a culture implies cultural systems to be static and incapable of change, which again links back to the earlier problematised notion of stereotyping Indigenous peoples.

While Redfern indeed experienced years of social upheaval and crimes, such as the 2004 "Redfern riots" sparked by the death of Indigenous teen TJ Hickey, there was also a strong sense of community (Saunders 2020, 90). Eventually, Redfern and the Block became gentrified throughout the late 2010s, following its neighbouring areas of Surry Hills, Chippendale, and Darlington. Gentrification in Redfern became a sensitive topic as the media repeatedly portrayed The Block as deteriorated (Shaw 2013, 260). This portrayal played a big part in the eventual complete demolition and, later, "renewal" of The Block (Shaw 2007, 7-16; Saunders 2020, 91). In fact, urban and humanities scholar George Morgan states: "Few urban minorities in Australia have been so feared or stigmatized for so long as the residents of RW [Redfern and neighbouring area Waterloo]" (Morgan 2012, 210). This stigmatisation resulting in urban "renewal" of the Block meant the displacement of many Indigenous people who had established themselves here because of the community housing initiative by the Aboriginal Housing Company.

Biripi man Grant Saunders, hip-hop scholar in Sydney, created a hip-hop documentary following Indigenous hip-hoppers, with main character MC Sonboy from the Block in Redfern. Saunders recounts:

> 'The Bloc 145' is a name of a recently established Café/Bar and 'Breadfern' is the name of a newly opened organic and gluten free bakery. The names alone symbolise a form of colonisation and a reappropriation of a place once known as 'The Block Redfern', situated in walking distance from these establishments, once occupied by a strong Indigenous presence who for a long time enjoyed communal sovereignty and rights to an urban life in low-income public housing. (Saunders 2020, 87)

Gentrification is often defined as a flow in which monetary investments are made into real estate in a specific low-value urban area. However, it may also be said that the process of gentrification includes the inevitable displacement of its less "well-off" residents, while "the gentry" profit from the new "improvements" in the area (Gottdiener, Budd and Lehtovuori 2016, 39-41). What one may see as an improvement may be a hindrance to someone else. The inclusion of new, more costly services in an area, such as the organic bakery "Breadfern" Saunders mentions above, means that some residents are being pushed out of their neighbourhood as they simply cannot afford to live there anymore. Therefore, gentrification cannot be defined by merely focusing on "urban redevelopment" but ought to also consider the social implications.

Urban theorist Tom Slater has pushed for a rethinking of gentrification research to turn the focus away from the mainly white, middle to upper-class populations moving into these gentrified spaces and to bring the focus of research to those forced to leave these spaces. He claims gentrification to be a crisis in which unequal capital flows result in the "disruption of community" (Slater 2006, 752). He rejects the idea that gentrification is a remedy for "decay." Indeed, in the Block, it is worth asking if gentrification has improved the area for Indigenous communities. This is why I am interested in listening to the experiences of two young individuals who live and work here now. However, it is equally important to ask if the earlier state the Block found itself in was a thriving place and if perhaps the project was mismanaged from the start. The abrupt displacement of Indigenous peoples in the Block may shift the issues from Redfern to other locations in the far-west of the city, such as Mount Druitt or Campbelltown (Allen Madden, in Davis and Urban Growth Development Corporation, 2012). In a way, gentrification may be seen as the middle-class colonisation of urban areas (Slater 2006, 752; Saunders 2020, 87). Indigenous peoples are thereby yet again in a position of being forced to leave their land and live in a neoliberal system of land ownership, which is completely disconnected from the Indigenous values of Country.

3.2 Country in the City

Indigenous ideas of "place" have been erased by dominant, non-Indigenous narratives. European invasion in 1788 brought English ideas of settlements to – what was yet to be named – Australia, and dominant settler ideas of rural and urban areas developed without any acknowledgement of Indigenous spatial notions (Gibson and Davidson 2004, 389). Towns started to emerge in which Indigenous peoples were not welcome. In an enquiry upon Anglo-Australian rural imaginaries, human geographers Sarah Prout and Richard Howitt describe how, when Australian towns started to develop, Indigenous

individuals were compelled to relocate to the outskirts of these communities. Here, they were monitored by law enforcement and welfare services, who had the authority to displace them once more and mandate their residence in state-controlled settlements for exhibiting behaviours deemed "out of line," like violating curfew restrictions (Prout and Howitt 2009, 399).

When Indigenous people proved to be "useful" labourers, they were allowed to stay on their Country. It is said that some preferred working for little to no wages to stay on their Country, rather than moving to a government-allocated reserve, which may include subsidies (Prout and Howitt 2009, 399). If, however, Indigenous people did not participate in the settlers' notion of productivity, Indigenous people were sent to these reserves, in which they were "allowed" to live "nomadic and traditional." These reserves were, and still are, mainly found in the north and centre of Australia, a landscape deemed ill-suited for European agricultural practices. Prout and Howitt state:

> In this era of protection and separation, the State was deeply concerned about the 'nomadic tendencies' of Indigenous peoples. Legislation that was passed during these early years became a springboard to attempt to contain and remake Indigenous populations into more settled and productive reflections of the settler society. Within this context, persistent Indigenous mobility was considered subversive and problematic not only because it was associated with a lack of productivity and civility, but also because it transgressed the boundaries of these imagined urban, rural and wilderness domains (Prout and Howitt 2009, 400).

The transgression of the boundaries between the urban, rural, and wilderness imaginaries still plays a role today in the clashing ways of living between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Australia.

However, we must not forget that places that have now become cities, are also still Indigenous land. When I asked Indigenous rapper DOBBY how he keeps a connection to Country while living in what we would also perceive as cities, such as Sydney, he states:

> If you know what Country name you are standing on, I feel like that is the beginning to a really deep and meaningful connection to Country. Wherever I stand I have to think, you know, ok, I'm on Dharawal land, I'm on Gadigal land, I'm on, you know, Bidjigal, Wiradjuri, Muruwari lands, you know. And, wherever you go around this world, it is Indigenous land to someone. No matter who you are, and I feel like this understanding of what those names are. They are like, given clues, to understand like what, you know, what the meaning of this lands and the water ways is, you know. So that's one way that you can really connect with Country, is like, knowing the place names (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021).

This indicates that Country does not oppose the urban, nor does it mean the same. Unlike the rural, Country does not automatically have to be away from the city. As stated by DOBBY, Country may be a way to realise that a piece of land is significant to an Indigenous people, whether or not a dominant

non-Indigenous civilisation has been established "on top of it." As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, even though some Indigenous cultural expressions may be hard to identify in Australia's cities today, urban spaces are not, by definition, non-Indigenous. Redfern – Gadigal land – in Sydney is as much Country as rural areas in Australia.

In The Country and the City, British cultural theorist Raymond Williams distinguishes the urban, or the city, from the rural, or the country, by separating "achievements of human society" – one of these achievements is the city – from "the land from which directly or indirectly we all get our living", the country. He then describes common associations (that is, in the U.K. context), such as feelings of "peace, innocence, and simple virtue" connected to the country and "learning, communication, light" connected to the city. One idea that keeps coming back in his writing is the idea of "movement" in the city, such as activities and possibilities (Williams 1985, 1-6). While cities and rural areas are constantly changing and how they are experienced are often interrelated, depending on individual situations, Williams asks why these historical ideas of the city and the country are so persistent.

Indigenous ideas of Country find similarities as well as discrepancies with Williams' ideas of the country. Besides the idea of country as a nation-state, Williams describes the country as "the land from which directly or indirectly we all get our living." Indigenous music artist DOBBY, however, explains his idea of Country:

> with the language, it [the language] is integrated into and embedded within the understanding and the lore/law, L O R E and L A W, of the land and waterways. So, the way we speak is embedded in song that dictates the seasons, uhm, you know, what animals we protect and care for, what animals are to be hunted respectfully at what given time, you know, uhm, specific areas for, you know, backburning in order to care for Country, so like.. All of these different things are kind of.. That's what I mean when I am saying Country. You know, I am talking about not just the place, but, how to engage with the place. (DOBBY, podcast recording with author 09-07-2021)

DOBBY's explanation of Country differs significantly from Williams' idea of the country as DOBBY speaks of mutual care between land, plants, and (human) animals. This contrasts with the idea described by Williams of humans ("we") getting their living from the land. The vital part of humans, in turn, "giving back" to the country is ignored in Williams' explanation. Moreover, in DOBBY's explanation, Country is not necessarily located "somewhere out there," confirming dominant assumptions about Indigenous spaces, but can be found in cities – in Williams's words, spaces of activities and possibilities – too.

The earlier mentioned boundaries imagined and imported by the British state between different places, divided into urban, rural, and wild, persist today. In fact, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021, passed in the UK in March 2021, will have a significant impact on traveller communities as it includes plans to criminalise trespassing in the UK (Dearden 2021, GOV.UK 2021). Furthermore, as

Topinka argues, the "distinction between wandering and settled, or rooted and rootless people" is what determines citizenship (Topinka 2016, 445), though paradoxically, this only applies to those who are or were colonised, as white British mobility has for long been encouraged (Topinka 2016, 448). The idea that mobility must be governed shows an evident fright by state governments in the Global North regarding communities whose living standards do not fit capitalistic ideas of order, settlement, and productivity associated with "the urban." The Australian government, a product of European imperialism, is no exception.

The forced removal of Indigenous communities from – what started to become – cities to reserves and the fact that colonisation started on these places that have now become urban areas resulted in the dominant assumption that Indigenous peoples do not belong in cities. Frontier wars and the introduction of smallpox killed many Eora as the first fleet arrived here (Connor 2017). However, as discussed in further detail below, many places in this area, such as Warrane (today also known as Circular Quay), were significant places for Indigenous ceremony. Moreover, Morgan describes responses to Indigenous migration to Sydney after World War II:

> Many Aboriginal people were reluctant to embrace a conventional European sedentary existence. For example, the models of fixed residence and regular wage labour are central to the discourses of citizenship in Australia but are largely incompatible with Indigenous rhythms of life. Many of those who travelled from their home country to Sydney did not remain permanently. They returned to the bush for extended periods. This is still the case. For some, this was in order to take advantage of seasonal agricultural work, but more often it was family business and spiritual commitments to land that drew them back. (Morgan 2008, 77-78)

Besides, for those who moved to the cities, it was implied that they should agree to assimilate their Indigenous ways (Morgan 2012, 209). These hardships, such as assimilation and incompatible ways of life, combined with earlier described spatial processes such as ghettoization and gentrification in some parts of the city, can make urban areas hostile places for Indigenous communities.

However, today, the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in 2016 were living in major cities. While the percentage of Indigenous peoples in the city differs significantly from the amount of non-Indigenous peoples living in cities, 37.4% and 72.7%, respectively (ABS 2018), it does show that large numbers of Indigenous people are drawn to live in urban spaces, encouraged by higher-paying employment possibilities that arose mid-twentieth century due to labour shortages in Sydney (Morgan 2008, 76). Still, the large number of Indigenous peoples living in cities is particularly noteworthy given the history of the physical removal of Indigenous families from urban areas to reserves.

Pieces of land – about 30% of the nation – that have been "returned" to Indigenous peoples in Australia are almost all outside of urban areas, with a few exemptions (Altman 2013) (See Fig. 3.1).
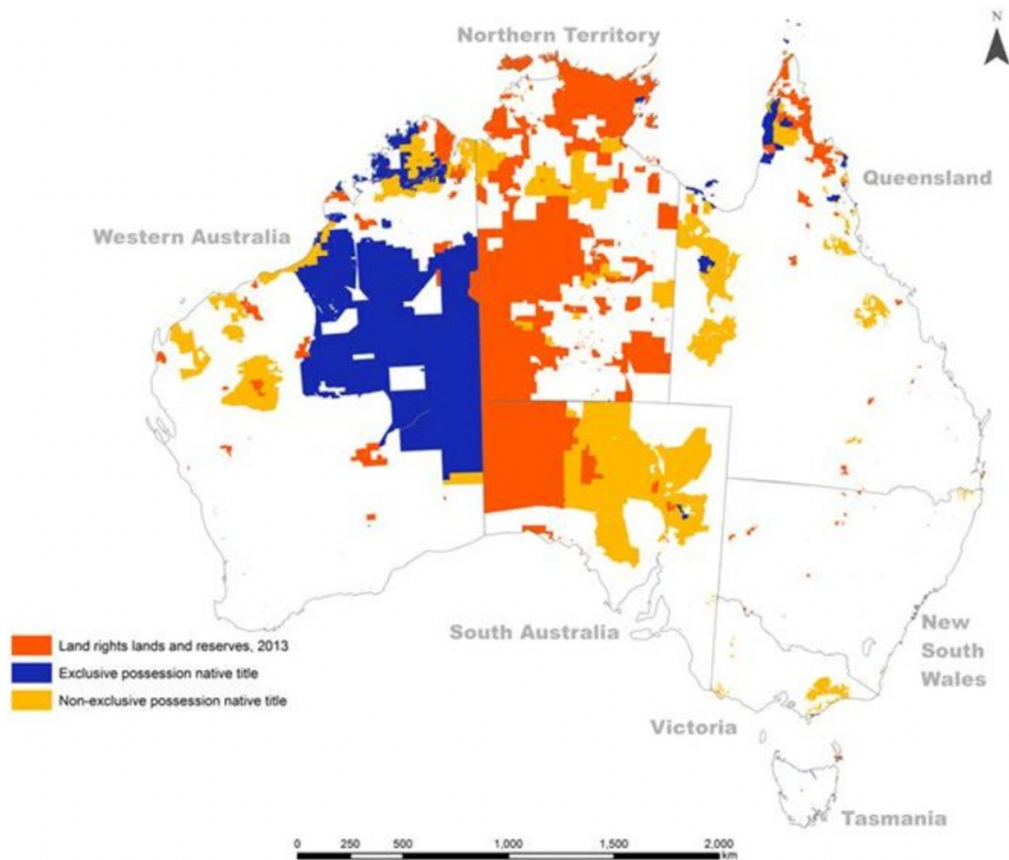
Figure 3.1 Map of Australia showing Indigenous land ownership.
https://www.crikey.com.au/2013/07/04/mapping-indigenous-land-wealth-the-revolution-we-had-to-have/

Urban theorist Libby Porter, who specialises in Indigenous displacement, explains the reasons why urban areas, in particular, are not in Indigenous hands. She claims that property rights make cities what they are today. Those property rights systems are, firstly, forced onto Indigenous lands, and second, the very idea of property rights opposes the notion of Indigenous lands in the first place. Another reason why urban areas specifically are not recognised as Indigenous places is because of the earlier mentioned racial stereotypes. It is easier for the dominant settler society to be able to "value" Indigenous ways in a natural environment than it is in a built environment. Porter states:

> These racial stereotypes have been held a long time. They cast Indigenous people in urban environments as "too modern" to make legitimate claims. And they cast urban environments as too modified for ongoing Indigenous cultural connection.

In jointly managed national parks, Indigenous majorities on boards of management are now a well-established approach. Yet the idea of having Indigenous people as majority decision-makers over urban development options or metropolitan-scale strategic planning is largely unthinkable. (Porter 2016)

Indigenous peoples' "adaptation" to urban life is enforced due to the neo-colonial society built on Indigenous lands. Indigenous peoples are forced to live in a society formed in the Global North, and when they "play the game"[15] by following "Western" standards – as was expected by missionaries, the state, and employers, and therefore vital to survive – they are no longer recognised as "fully" Indigenous and are therefore unable to make land claims.

I have provided background history on the ways in which Indigenous stories have often been excluded from urban narratives. I discussed how colonial-imagined perceptions of Indigenous peoples not only persist to this day, but also have consequences affecting Indigenous peoples' daily lives. This will inform the discussions on the soundwalks and performances below, as these have been shaped by the themes discussed here, such as gentrification, displacement, and Indigenous experiences of urban life in a – to-this-day – colonised place. A soundwalk between two individuals is a way to co-create a narrative, as opposed to a one-way interview in which the researcher asks questions for the interview participant to answer. It also provides an insightful account of everyday life, informed by the implications of the histories alluded to above, while reflecting on where the walk takes place. The performance discussions that follow help us better understand the musicians' place-based experiences of the spaces in which they perform. They are embodied knowledge transmissions that function as counternarratives to the imposed and introduced dominant structures on the land upon which they are performed.

3.3 On Walking

In his book "the Practice of Everyday Life", de Certeau highlights the Walker of the city. He states:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner,* whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of urban "text" they write without being able to read it. (de Certeau 1984, 93)

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[15] The idea of "playing the game" is also highlighted in DOBBY's track "That's Not Me" in which we see the rapper challenge the ways in which Indigenous people and People of Colour have to adjust themselves in the music industry to be accepted. Chapters Four and Five will elaborate on this idea.

As opposed to de Certeau's powerful city planner looking down upon a strategically designed urban space, it is the walkers who actually experience the city, and move within its spaces through tactical behaviours and practices. With this, we shift our focus from a place, drawn on a map and subject to a given name, such as Sydney, to a space, enabling people to move afforded by its spatiality. Fittingly, Sydney's Redfern is built upon the land of the Gadigal, named after the Gadi plant that is used as food, for making artifacts, and for aiding women during childbirth (Troy 1994; Dictionary of Sydney 2021b). Therefore, the Gadigal are named after a place's practices and experiences, which in turn, require space.

As anthropologist Dwight Conquergood notes: "de Certeau's aphorism, "what the map cuts up, the story cuts across," also points to transgressive travel between two different domains of knowledge: one official, objective, and abstract-"the map"; the other one practical, embodied, and popular-"the story."" (Conquergood 2002, 145). Indeed, practice must be favoured over theory when it comes to learning with Indigenous community members, given the intrinsic connection Indigenous peoples have to the practice of storytelling. We also see this in songlines, where information on Country is performed and embedded within song. The songs contain knowledge on where to find water and food, and how to maintain Country (Koch 2008). To reiterate DOBBY's words during our podcast interview: "That's what I mean when I am saying Country. You know, I am talking about not just the place, but, how to engage with the place" (DOBBY, podcast recording with author, 09-07-2021). In other words, the map, an abstract representation of a place, has, according to de Certeau, "colonized" space by erasing navigation stories and replacing those with representational visualisations (de Certeau 1984, 121).

To move away from ocularcentricity, a soundwalk creates an opportunity to situate ourselves in an area and move through it while creating a recorded conversation as we go. It allows for spontaneity and relies on the dynamics between the two individuals in conversation: a learning-as-you-go by "going along" (Ingold 2013, 1) to scrutinise an alternative form of knowledge. As to acknowledge that this written thesis is also an expression of dominant knowledge presentation that merely affirms dominant, colonising ways of information dissemination, the "Movements & Sounds"[16] podcast series, as discussed in Chapter Two, is a research outcome that lives besides this written thesis that can be used and listened to as an alternative way of knowledge sharing- and acquisition.

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[16] www.movementsandsounds.com

3.3.1 Soundwalking Methods

"Listening to the City", edited by Allegra Williams and Maggie Coblentz, contains an overview of various methods to conduct sound studies in practice. They aim to investigate ideas and understandings of place through sound, including the human voice (Williams and Coblentz 2018, 10). With their focus on practice research in cities, their research methods are useful tools for this project. Besides the focus on the relation between sound and place in the cities, their focus, too, was to collaborate with local residents of the areas in focus, and the idea to expand knowledge acquisition and dissemination beyond the written word. As is stated:

> this book was also brought into being with the intent of counterbalancing traditional social science practice—which historically recognizes only certain forms of knowledge as legitimate--with other ways of knowing cities, including the critical perspectives of those (often unheard voices) who live within them. (Williams and Coblentz 2018, 10)

As this research project focuses on both voices of community members, as well as music and sounds (not only as a research topic but also as a method), I have chosen to apply and loosely combine Williams and Coblentz's methods of "soundwalking" and "personal storytelling." The intended outcomes for "soundwalking" listed are:

- Understanding place and context, including the implications of socioeconomic, environmental and cultural shifts within a community
- Honing of critical listening skills
- Cultivating empathy and profound embodied experience across social divides, generations, and amongst strangers (Williams and Coblentz 2018, 71)

Combining these three outcomes, focusing on a sense of place and context and empathy through embodied experience, makes soundwalking a crucial methodology for this project: learning more about Indigenous experiences in the city through sound. However, as I deemed getting to know the walkers and their work better to understand their experiences better, I combined the soundwalk method with the "personal storytelling" method. The aimed outcomes for the latter method are:

- Cultivating empathy and educating publics
- Acknowledging, healing and learning from past traumas or social divides
- Developing a deeper understanding of a place and its historical contexts through personal storytelling
- Digitizing and preserving community stories/sounds, images, and objects that have not yet been captured and passing them on for the benefit of future generations (Williams and Coblentz 2018, 93)

As I had the privilege to "walk and talk" with Luke and Tyren, who are both involved in either community work or creative practice while having strong ties to Redfern, I deemed it necessary to engage not only with them in relation to the place during the walk, but also with their personal stories. By making their stories part of an online podcast, I aimed to make public and accessible – for those with internet access – their stories for educational and decolonial purposes. Following Linda Tuhiwai Smith's words:

> Sharing contains views about knowledge being a collective benefit and knowledge being a form of resistance. Like networking, sharing is a process that is responsive to the marginalized contexts in which Indigenous communities exist. (…) The face-to-face nature of sharing is supplemented with local newspapers focusing on Indigenous issues and local radio stations specializing in Indigenous news and music. Sharing is also related to the failure of education systems to educate Indigenous people adequately or appropriately. It is important for keeping people informed about issues and events that affect them. It is a form of oral literacy, which connects with the story telling and formal occasions that feature in Indigenous life. Sharing is a responsibility of research. (Smith 2021, 183)

While the shared interview – now an online podcast episode – came forth from a soundwalk, the nature of the podcast episodes is more experimental, less focused on a polished creative output (as city sounds would sometimes take over the spoken words), but instead more focused on the process. The participants decided the route of the walk, and often, decisions about which directions to go were made in that moment; therefore, staying open for spontaneity was key.

During the walk with Luke, I had written down pre-determined questions to reflect on his creative professional work, on top of the dialogue that would spark through our walk. During the walk with Tyren, I chose not to prepare questions beforehand to see if the different conversation styles would bring new perspectives to the research. Knowing Tyren personally before our walk helped in terms of conversation – there was always a topic we had discussed prior to the walk to fall back on. I used a Zoom recorder to record the walk, which I connected to my phone. I did not use a windcatcher during the first walk, and I learned my lesson during the second walk to avoid missing parts of the conversation due to the wind. Having said this, reflecting on the conversation with Luke that caught some wind, the parts of the conversation that are hard to hear may not have been meant to be part of the conversation after all. I will reflect on this in the following sections.

3.3.2 – Soundwalks: Introducing the Walkers & Reflections on Gender and Privilege

In my quest to know more about the intricacies around the ways in which Indigenous populations navigate everyday life in Sydney and how sound plays a role in this, I conducted two soundwalks: the first one was together with Gamilaroi poet and musician Luke Patterson, and a month later with Gamilaroi man Tyren Ahsee.

However, before introducing the soundwalkers and explaining the process behind this kind of interview, I must reflect on the fact that the accounts that will follow in this section are indeed based on the experiences of two cis Indigenous men. While I wished for more gender-diverse perspectives through a soundwalk, I was limited by time pressures and a lack of non-male respondents. I have reached out to many, mainly female individuals whom I knew to have a connection to the area of Redfern (through living, working, or being active through community ties), but it just so happened that it worked out with Luke and Tyren.

I am reflecting on this issue here, as the "walkability" of a city is highly constrained or enabled by factors such as gender, sexuality, class, race and ability. As Collie (2013) points out, the flaneur can only be a flaneur when enjoying the freedom to be a spectator of the city while being able to observe, and not being the spectacle (that is, in this case, a body often subjected to desire) itself (8-9). The flaneur, here, refers to Walter Benjamin's well-known concept, drawn from writings by poet Charles Baudelaire, of a man who moves within a city space– in his work, this city is nineteenth-century Paris. Benjamin's version of the flaneur is afforded the space to walk and observe and to distance himself, to some extent, from bourgeoise society, and to hide behind the crowd (Benjamin 1969, 169-170). This idea of the flaneur, therefore, exposes privileges of the usage of spaces in cities, as the ability to merge within the masses points towards a normative body that is not constrained by the above-mentioned factors such as gender, race, sexuality, class, or ability. One may therefore ask if Benjamin's flaneur is, in fact, not part of a bourgeoise section of society after all. Moreover, as Jarvis (2014) illustrates, the "fabric" of the city itself is often highly gendered, set up by normalised patriarchal structures.

Having said this, both Tyren and Luke have provided invaluable and diverse insights: the two walks covered different parts of Redfern – this was not predetermined, and neither individual knows each other personally – and their relation to the place differs significantly. While Luke is from a place in south Sydney, Kurnell, and moved to Redfern in 2020, Tyren is from rural New South Wales in Dubbo, but has always had family connections in Redfern since he was a child and has been active as a social worker for many years in one of Redfern's Community Centre since he moved to north Sydney a few years ago. He currently lives in Redfern, too.

I met Luke at the Sydney Writers' Festival, where I coincidentally listened to him speak during a panel discussion on "How to Write a River, a Sky, a Seed…". I was intrigued by learning that he was not only a poet, but also a musician. Curious to hear more, I went to another talk the next day: "Ngana Barangarai (Black Wallaby)" which is an initiative in which writers visit the Junee Correctional Centre for more than ten years to create poetry with the inmates. This poetry has become part of a bundle, and they have published ten volumes. Luke is part of this initiative. I initially asked him for an interview without mentioning a walk. However, his poetry and other works often reflect on regional identities and the ways in which sound plays a role in his works – mixing mechanical sound and technology with bird sounds – and as he wrote a review on Wiradjuri and Irish poet Jazz Money's book "How to Make a Basket" in the form of a "written down walk," I suspected him of being up for a soundwalk, which he was to my delight.

Tyren, on the other hand, is an acquaintance I met through mutual friends. We had spoken a few times about the Uluru Statement from the Heart[17], and discussed our mutual fondness for Redfern. I knew he was actively involved in the Community Centre in Redfern called "the Settlement" and was driven to make a social impact with Indigenous communities. While he may not be actively involved in musical or creative practices, community workers often do the work that Indigenous artists in Australia reflect on and are inspired by to create their cultural expressions. Gomeroi rapper Kobie Dee, for example, expresses how the Indigenous-focussed mental health organisation Weave has been a beneficial support system throughout his life (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author, 27-01-2023). I felt it was essential to include a voice by someone who may not appear on a stage, but is involved in impactful work and knows the Redfern area well. It was only during our walk that I learned Tyren used to be an active dancer who was accepted into NAISDA (National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association) Dance College a few years ago.

3.3.3 On Listening: A Soundwalk with Luke Patterson

Before our walk, we discussed that Luke would decide where to go. We met at Redfern train station, and after we had a coffee and a *stroopwafel* (a Dutch cookie) while talking about the wattlebirds that were near us, we started our walk. As is customary to start a ceremony (in the most open usage of the word, not necessarily a cultural performance) with an acknowledgement of Country, I asked Luke if he felt it was appropriate to do this at the start of our walk, to which we answered:

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[17] A campaign which impelled for an "Indigenous voice" to be enshrined in the Australian constitution. At the time of our interview, the campaign was in full swing. The referendum was held on 14th of October 2023 and was unsuccessful.

The whole performance of it, it's yes, a part of the ceremony, an important part of the ceremony, and, but shifting and connecting perception to the place stuff like that. But are there other ways of acknowledging? And like, doing welcomes with like.. that's what I kind of wonder and look for. So that's why I didn't want to do like an acknowledgement straight up. But then those like, I feel like our attention to place, or at least mine in that moment was to like, wait for those wattlebirds, those honeyeaters to do their little dance and whatever, like, and then just like, me kind of loving them, is at least my acknowledgement of that place. (Luke, soundwalk recording with author 20-07-2022)

Here, we see how Luke is looking to acknowledge Country by focusing on the birds with whom we shared the sidewalk, favouring the "being there" over the political act of mentioning the original place name at the time. He continues:

Who's it directed towards? Like, is the acknowledgement directed towards people so they can hear it? And then do what they will with it? Or is the acknowledgement for you, as well, trying to connect to a place, or is it directly an acknowledgement to place? In which case it's not like political and it's not performative. (Luke, soundwalk recording with author 20-07-2022).

The intention behind the type of acknowledgement of Country made Luke acknowledge the birds at that moment. Reflecting on this moment, I realise that, indeed, our walk was not so much about politics in the sense of seeking to be heard, but about how two people of different backgrounds move within a space and relate to it on a personal and everyday level. It also sheds light on the fact that Luke is an Indigenous person in Australia, but not to this particular piece of land, Gadigal land. Therefore, Luke cannot talk with full authority over how to engage with this particular Country. It also poses a question on the production of this soundwalk itself: is it a performance, or research data? As Conquergood states:

We can think of performance (I) as a work of *imagination*, as an object of study; (2) as a pragmatics of *inquiry* (both as model and method), as an optic and operator of research; (3) as a tactics of *intervention*, an alternative space of struggle. (Conquergood 2002, 152)

On the one hand, a soundwalk is research data, as I am reflecting on here. On the other hand, it might be seen as a performance, knowing that what we (Luke and I) "played out" during our walk was recorded and exhibited on the podcast website. As elaborated upon in Chapter One, the soundwalk can complement normative text-based knowledge generation and circulation. It is, therefore, yet another form of practice-led research.

We continued our walk down Raglan Street, where Luke directed us. When we reached a housing commission complex, known as a place where many Aboriginal families live, Luke told me: "Yeah for

some reason in my head when I was like, "oh, where should we go?" this kept popping into my head. (…) It's one of the housing commissions, but all the buildings are fucking named after colonists" (Luke, soundwalk recording with author 20-07-2022). We read the building names out loud: "Joseph Banks.." (me), "James Cook" (Luke). Luke then continued: "I think it's a fucking sick joke, to like. It's a big like, a lot of communities live here. (…) I just thought there's some humorous irony" (Luke, soundwalk recording with author 20-07-2022). As opposed to the start of the conversation mentioned earlier, referring to the practice of acknowledging Country, this part of our conversation was remarkably political. However, with some irony, this was also the part of our walk that caught some wind. I retrieved our conversation by deciphering the words aided by my memory, but for the most part, the wind erased Luke's words and took over the recording.

To explain why I am describing the above, I will first have to move on to an anecdote. During Luke's panel talk at the Sydney Writers' Festival, Luke mentioned a spiritual experience in the city. He thought he was hearing a rhythmic pulse of the city sounds, almost like hearing music, claiming that there is musicality in Country. During our walk, Luke explained:

> I was going out for a walk. And, like, it was just the most beautiful sort of cicada noise filling the air. And I was like, it was a hum, that was like warming the soul. And I could, I could tell it was sort of coming from a direction. So I was like, "alright, I'll take my walk in that direction. They must be, they're probably in the park over in that direction," or whatever. This was in Marrickville. Just a Marrickville street, urban street kinda setting, but still wading down to the river, it's kinda beautiful. And as I turned the corner, the sound sort of suddenly shifts dramatically (…). And suddenly, it morphed, the sound morphed into an air conditioning vent at the Woolies[18], like a big fucking massive air conditioning vent. And I was just, I was just so thrown, not thrown off. I was kind of delighted because I was having a very, like, spiritual, connecting with Country kind of moment. Like, I was feeling like the ancestors were speaking to me. But then I realized it was the fucking air conditioning. But yeah, for some reason, like I still, I don't know, I still felt like it was that Country experience. And I'm kind of brought in, in the sense that I'll, I'll incorporate you know.. Yes, kookaburra and street life into my concept of Country. That, I don't have a problem with that. But it was just a kind of, that time, I feel like it was Country playing a trick on me, which was even more delightful than Country just like showing me a pretty bird or something like that. It was almost like, we were in dialogue rather than me just sort of looking for it to speak or speak back or something. (Luke, soundwalk recording with author 20-07-2022)

Here, Luke describes how he blurs the often-created and imagined boundaries between nature and culture, the latter being the human-made construction of the air conditioner. As we see here, the idea

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[18] Colloquial name for the supermarket chain "Woolworths."

that the sounds came from an air conditioner does not invalidate Luke's moment of connecting to Country. As he mentions, on the contrary, it made him feel like he was in dialogue with Country.

A few days after we did our soundwalk, I listened to the recording and discovered that the part where we spoke the colonisers' names out loud caught the wind. It made me wonder if this had something to do with that same principle. I uploaded the recorded soundwalk – with wind sounds and all – onto the podcast website, and emailed Luke the link. I mentioned that I was somewhat amused that the wind perhaps did not allow for this part to be heard, to which he agreed, claiming it is "kinda magic!" (Luke, email correspondence 14-08-2022).

Without trying to ascribe some form of "sacredness" to any human-made objects and our interaction with them, we may very well question to what extent we understand forces beyond potential human comprehension. Following Latour's ANT, as described in the Introduction Chapter, non-human actors can have agential force (Latour 2005). At the end of our walk, we returned to the question of Country, and what it might be. Luke told me:

> Running around for a definition of Country is, sometimes not as fruitful as other means of coming to it, but at least a system that can sustain itself is that what I'm trying to say? Or like self-regulating open systems? Like yeah, I'm just trying to think if there would be a non-Country.. If my, if my concept is so broad what doesn't fit? What fit in it? I think is the question. (…) I think it also goes beyond like our like poor or poor human comprehension of things. Like, there's just too many things that have been thinking here, well before we were thinking here. So I've got to give just about everything a bit of credit. Yeah, yeah, I think like maybe cross, I cross over also my interpretation of like Country and Dreaming as well, a little bit like the concept of Dreaming, sort of Dreamtime. Yeah, spirit world kind of thing. But I sort of see it just as like a fabric of reality. So in some sense, like, the co-creation between, like, social being and place. Like, I don't think it's anything that magical or mystical really, to be honest. (Luke, soundwalk recording with author 20-07-2022)

As described before in Porter (2016), the idea that Indigeneity and urban environments are mutually exclusive has come about due to racial stereotypes. Of course, the ways in which cities have been established in Australia are directly linked to European principles and are, therefore, a direct result of the colonisation of the Australian continent, yet this does not mean that Indigenous ways of life cannot be practised in these urban environments. An issue also arises from the fact that many Indigenous people living in urban centres are not Indigenous to that particular Country, but (older generations) have moved there for job opportunities. This, then, might seem to undermine Indigenous claims for sovereignty over those places. Yet, it is important to remember DOBBY's earlier words here: "If you know what Country name you are standing on, I feel like that is the beginning to a really deep and meaningful connection to Country. (…) And, wherever you go around this world, it is Indigenous land to someone. No matter who you are" (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021). While

indeed it is essential to acknowledge Indigenous people's sovereignty over their Countries, we cannot dismiss a perhaps alternative type of sovereignty over those spaces where colonisation has had more intense impacts to this day, with there now being fewer descendants of those places as a result of it. Indigenous peoples from other Countries (that is, Indigenous Countries in Australia) can still practice a form of "pan-Indigenous sovereignty," reminding people that it is an Indigenous place. As Luke says, his ideas of Country and Dreaming come down to a "co-creation between social being and place." Indigenous populations have a co-constitutive relationship with their environment. Just because there was no such thing as what we now refer to as "cities" pre-colonisation does not mean that Indigenous peoples cannot extend their ways to such places. It is not about the materials or sounds in these places; The relationality between (social) beings and how they interact is more important.

The favouring of practice over static ideas, end products, or outcomes is seen in visual art, too. Yidinji is a visual artist and didjeridu player who manages an Aboriginal Art Gallery in Canberra, Burrunju. During our conversation at the Indigenous Art Fair in Sydney, he told me about his visual art:

> Mine is very contemporary. It's like most Indigenous artists nowadays you will see they're using a lot of different colours. It's mainly because those colours are available nowadays. You know back then it was just earthy colours. Earthy red colours, earthy yellow, white and black was mainly charcoal, that they used. So many use just those four colours, yeah. Nowadays, there's all these colours, it's water paint that we use, that we can use using our stories and yeah, you know, our way, and and it has, we have the blessings from the Elders saying "go out and make it your own." And that's what all of our artists are doing. We're just using brighter colours. (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022)

Here, Yidinji told me why he uses a great range of colours in his pieces: they are available, just like the earthy colours he described were those available in pre-colonial times. This again shows how the practice of using what is there is more significant than stereotypical ideas of what Indigeneity is in terms of materials or aesthetics. During my fieldwork, this idea has come back repeatedly in an array of practices, from storytelling to architecture and from music and dancing to weaving (See Fig. 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Earrings made during an Indigenous weaving workshop, using imported store-bought weaving reeds.

We can trace the idea of practice over static ideas or end products in Luke's idea of Country: Instead of trying to find definitions of Country, it might be more fruitful to think about "a way of listening" as practice, rather than trying to find stereotypical ideas of what sounds may be included in, or excluded from, Country. Ethnomusicologists increasingly argue to approach listening as something that is culturally and historically learned (Kapchan 2017; Meizel and Daughtry 2019). Deborah Kapchan claims that "listening acts" are active; acts that perform something (Kapchan 2017, 277). Applying de Certeau's idea of tactics, Kapchan argues for "tactical listening:"

> To listen tactically, (…) is not to claim ownership of (sonic) territory, but rather *to attend to a vibration, to resonate that vibration within another environment (the body), to translate and thus transform the sound (to echo it, enlarge it, retune or remake it in similar or other media), and to circulate it.* Tactical listening, in other words, is listening with a motive. It is a self-conscious transmission and translation of perception. (Kapchan 2017, 284)

Deriving from the above, an essential aspect of Kapchan's idea of tactical listening is the idea of intention. If we apply this theory to Luke's anecdote about his dialogue with Country, for example, we can see that Luke is very much aware of his listening experience – even at times when he is not engaged in a soundwalk (which explicitly examines listening) – while at the same time knowing that this experience is unique and situated. Luke's listening intentionally focuses on Country.

In a place that is dominated by non-Indigenous people, Luke's Indigeneity is "other." Therefore, listening to Country in this space is an inherently political act. This is unlike unexamined listening modes explored by, for instance, Judith Becker, where a listener is not fully aware of their particular way of listening (Becker 2004, 71). In Luke's case, when the structures of a surrounding are set up by foreign people – in the case of Redfern, non-Indigenous settlers – one's everyday life, and with that, one's listening experience, may stand out, which makes one aware. This, combined with how individuals such as Luke draw on attunement to the environment when navigating urban spaces, requires not just a thinking through situated listening, but an *examined* and tactical listening as a way to navigate urban space.

3.3.4 On Listening: A Soundwalk with Tyren Ahsee

The soundwalk with Tyren differed significantly from the one with Luke in topics and sounds. The importance of the relationality between people and place was a connecting thread throughout the soundwalk Tyren and I recorded. While Tyren grew up in Dubbo, a five-hour drive from Redfern, his connection to Redfern runs deep. He told me: "I've never actually lived here. But I've always come here, visited like my aunties and stuff like that" (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022). While we walked down Eveleigh Street, which is located in the Block in Redfern, he pointed at some houses and told me about the street:

> It's definitely one of my favourites. Yeah. My auntie lives in here. My cousin lives in a house. My friend lives on the corner there. He's Indigenous as well. So yeah, it's really cool. A lot of the kids I work with as well live in these apartments here. (...) I think they really enjoy the community feeling like, like everyone kind of knows each other here. And everyone's kind of connected in some way. So I think that's what they really enjoy about it, the connection. Yeah. I think it was an area where a lot of Indigenous people felt like safe to come to, because it's like always been kind of an Indigenous space. It's probably changed a lot now. But predominantly, I feel like it's always been an Indigenous space. (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022)

While pointing at the various newly built houses, we started talking about gentrification in the area:

> We're walking like, past the Block, which is like a popular area of Redfern. Especially for Indigenous people. It looks a lot different now, from when I was younger, there used to be like a big like green oval and then like a wall with like a massive Indigenous flag. I remember whenever me and my friends were in Sydney would always come and visit the Block and go take a photo in front of the big flag. (...) I would say that, like, probably Indigenous people kind of got pushed out just to do, to like gentrification, and, you know, people wanting to build and

people wanting to move in. And then a lot of people got pushed out, a lot Indigenous people. Communities just get pushed out there. Like the suburbs. I feel like Redfern's become like a, I don't know the right word for it, but like a trendy spot. Perhaps. (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022)

The recording contains a lot of construction sounds that reoccurred during our walk. At times, it was why we started the topic of gentrification. Other times, it disrupted our conversation as the construction sounds were too loud. When the road work blocked parts of the sidewalk, it resulted in a moment without speaking as we could not walk next to each other. Those are also the moments we hear the voices and footsteps of others passing us, highlighting, on the one side, the spontaneity within this specific moment in which Tyren and I had to adapt our walk, yet on the other hand, emphasizing that there is a continuity or – following Lefebvre's concept of urban everyday life – rhythm[19] to this moment, in which we hear others' footsteps going about their presumably daily life. As media scholar Evelyn Kreutzer argues in her video essay: "Footsteps are performative. They have rhythm. They evoke human subjectivity. They evoke presence and replay pastness" (Kreutzer 2022). The footsteps emphasise the space as practised.

As gentrification has altered the place significantly, pushing many First Nations tenants out of the area, there have been times I wondered if Redfern was the right place to focus on for research to find "an Indigenous place." While its sovereign and political history show no doubt about it, for me it was more important to find a place where Indigenous peoples gather and move around today. Could this be anywhere in the city? Possibly. However, Tyren reassured me that Redfern was indeed, still today, a significant place when he told me he sees Redfern as an Indigenous space, predominantly because of Indigenous political movements and actions. He explains: "There's a lot of things that I think like the community is still doing just to try to keep, you know, an Indigenous space, which is really cool. Like community movements and the youth work and stuff like that. Still trying to get Indigenous people to come around" (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022). This is something I had seen in the form of a sit-in at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE hereafter) based in Redfern, for example, when the employees were informed that within eight days, the centre would close and programmes and activities run there, would cease. As a response, Indigenous activists organised a sit-in and sat around a fire on the NCIE's grounds, inviting policy-makers to meet them and negotiate. After a week of rallying, the centre remained open.

Besides construction sounds, I remember thinking how the sounds in this particular recording did not seem to be that "special" or "striking," as these were mainly car sounds. This was a reminder that the soundwalk was not just about Tyren or our conversation but also about all the other actors in our

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[19] The idea of rhythm in the city, following Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis, will be discussed in Chapter Four.

surroundings contributing to the soundscape. In LaBelle's words, the soundwalk may be heard as a "means for opening up a malleable space between the personal and the social" (LaBelle 2010, 132). It demonstrates the collaborative nature of a soundwalk as a social undertaking.

Moreover, the car sounds also tell us something about the "mundaneness" of the space, which is precisely what sounds of the everyday could be. Following Evelyn Kreutzer's argument, the sounds of traffic may allude to daily life: "As we move back towards the street the banality of daily life comes back in through the sound of traffic and footsteps" (Kreutzer 2022). Indeed, as LaBelle claimed, walking is often perceived "as an emblem of the everyday practices of urban space" (LaBelle 2010, 88). If the soundwalk recording would include sounds out of the ordinary, would it be a soundscape of Redfern? The everydayness in Tyren's walk also came through when he explained his job at the community centre in Redfern called "The Settlement." He explained his day-to-day work with the kids, describing activities like:

> This is where I work. Like a community centre called the Settlement. It does a lot of youth work and, you know, after school care for a lot of Indigenous kids. (…) Yeah, there was a lot of cultural activities that we used to do, like bushwalks, painting and you know bit of dance and, and, you know, building those cultural ties earlier for kids allows them to actually form their identity and realize that they've got a whole, you know, history and, and cultural traditions that have lasted like thousands of years, which is really cool. It's really empowering. They are young kids, though, so it doesn't set in fully, but certainly starting to lay the groundwork. (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022)

Here, Tyren explained how the community centre tries to teach young children Indigenous practices so that they can understand their cultural background. Their young age is important here, according to Tyren, so that they can form their identity from a young age. Given the history in which Indigenous peoples used to be penalised for practising their culture (Corn 2009, 23), it has become common for many to realise at a later age that they are of Aboriginal heritage, as their parents would have hidden this identity from them, or those who knew would be ashamed. It comes as no surprise, then, that when young kids are encouraged to practice and learn their cultural ways, Tyren sees this as empowering. When I asked him if he feels a sense of pride around his heritage in relation to Redfern, he told me:

> Yeah, it's awesome. I feel like Redfern has always been a popular suburb or area within Sydney for Indigenous people. So yeah, it was like a sort of connecting to the area felt really cool. (…) I feel like my family.. Like I've had a family connection here, a long time. My, my great grandfather was like, a really popular person within the community here. His, his last name was Silva, which is like a big Indigenous family. Yeah. Yeah, he's nickname was Batman. Everyone used to call him. Not sure why, but pretty cool. (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022)

The idea of connection to a place through kinship is important for Tyren, even though his Indigenous heritage is not related through cultural ties, Redfern being Gadigal land while Tyren is a Gamilaroi man with ties to Wiradjuri and Dunghutti. This is certainly not uncommon in the area, as adjacent to Redfern is the area called Eveleigh, housing the now repurposed "Eveleigh Railway Workshops." Eveleigh was an industrial area that attracted many Indigenous peoples from various rural areas for work opportunities and cheap housing (Eveleigh Stories, n.d.; Taksa 2000, 13; Morgan 2008, 76). During our walk, Tyren directed us to this particular area. Here, we found a plaque quoting Gadigal Elder Allen Madden, who used to work here. Tyren read it out loud: "Gadigal Elder Allen Madden worked at Everleigh, as did his father and uncle, he recalled: "The men were very strong… you'd never shake my father's hand, he just had a vice-like grip."" (Tyren, soundwalk recording with author 20-08-2022; Allen Madden, in Davis and Urban Growth Development Corporation, 2012b). I asked Tyren if he liked seeing symbols of historic Indigenous presence as such, to which he answered:

> Yeah like it's really cool. Like I feel like it's good to like, you know, keep symbols of like history around the area, it's a way to keep like stories and stuff alive which is really like an important thing for Indigenous culture to have stories passed down. (Tyren, soundwalk recording 20-08-2022)

As Tyren explains above, tokens of historical Indigenous presence in the area are gestures he holds in high regard. Through unions, Aboriginal peoples in the area could unite and demand equal pay – though as Indigenous people only made up a small portion of the workers, they did not have much to say within those unions (Allen Madden, in Davis and Urban Growth Development Corporation, 2012b). As Morgan describes:

> The coming together of [I]ndigenous peoples from different regions in the city laid the foundations for a larger post colonial consciousness and [I]ndigenous solidarity that transcended the particularities of place of origin. RW [Redfern and neighbouring area Waterloo] was the site in which stories were exchanged of common experiences of racism at the hands of authorities. Such exchanges were the foundation for the emergence of a Pan-Aboriginal politics and culture. (Morgan 2012, 209)

Indeed, for Tyren, the idea that his family has lived there for many generations, combined with his part-time job as a social worker, makes him feel at home. This demonstrates that lived experience tells us much more about a space than what a space was originally "designed for." While many Indigenous families in Redfern had to make way for new" developments," Redfern is, as Tyren indicates, still an Indigenous place because of the ties to people, and the daily activities people undertake in this space. This ties in with de Certeau's idea of everyday life, conceptualised around everyday practices or "ways of operating" (de Certeau 1984, xi).

What I have aimed to showcase by including sections on walking and how First Nations individuals living in Sydney navigate everyday life, is that, following de Certeau, these actions are not passive; they are indeed political simply by virtue of those being Indigenous adaptations to the imposition of Western standards and the continuation of capitalistic pursuits of "development" in urban areas, such as gentrification. It is about the ways of using the space, not what the space looks like. Again, we find the importance of practice over static, stereotypical notions of Indigeneity. While parts of the following are problematic, I will exemplify this using de Certeau's example of Spanish colonisers in the Americas:

> the ambiguity that subverted from within the Spanish colonizers' "success" in imposing their own culture on the Indigenous Indians is well known. (…) [The] Indians nevertheless often *made of* the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. (de Certeau 1984, xiii)

While we can see that some of the word choices are not accepted in today's writing – alluding to the term "Indians" first and foremost, but also to the idea of having "to accept" foreign systems, creating the illusion that there has been a moment in which Indigenous peoples were compliant towards the changes, instead of being forced to adapt in order to survive – the point made is clear: it is about what people *do* with the systems, the materials, the spaces that are there, making it their own by re-appropriation through their individual notion of Indigenous ways. As Morgan points out, Indigenous peoples most often do not just accept the imposed colonial structures; they transform these structures "through the lenses of their cultures" (Morgan 2008, 77). It is the everyday practices, such as walking, working, storytelling, moving, visiting family and friends, interacting with Country, in short, spatial practices, that makes a place lived. When those social conditions represent Indigeneity as "state" of a structure, it is the practices by First Nations peoples reclaiming the area of Redfern as an Indigenous space. The idea of transforming structures can be seen when individuals create from an abstract space an Indigenous space.

3.4 Transforming Structures: Indigenous-Controlled Spaces

As highlighted before, the "urban" is falsely used as almost synonymous with "non-Indigenous." For instance, Professor Bronwyn Carlson discusses her journey of self-identity as an Aboriginal individual, noting that external perceptions influenced her understanding. She states: "I learnt that 'they' [Aboriginal people] lived in the bush and were dirty" (Carlson 2016, 2). She furthermore recalls media commentators deeming those living in the city not being "real" Aboriginal people (2016, 5). Yet the

reality is that urban areas are built on Indigenous lands and that the majority of Indigenous peoples live in major cities.

The structures in which a city is set up have often excluded Indigenous peoples. This happens not just in the sense of land grabbing and forcing Indigenous people to move away from the cities, as described in section 3.2, but also by reinforcing narratives that celebrate white settler perspectives. Elsewhere, I have shown how statues in public spaces, such as the Captain Cook statue in Sydney's Hyde Park, or institutions that have helped shape the city of Sydney as part of the British colonial project, such as the Powerhouse Museum, have historically excluded First Nations peoples and narratives (Schuitenmaker 2024). However, Indigenous musicians and artists can resist those narratives by using urban space and emphasising their points of view through performance.

Urban Indigenous-led or controlled spaces are particularly needed due to the earlier explained disadvantages Indigenous groups experience in urban areas, such as assimilation and dealing with incompatible ways of life. Not being seen as part of the dominant settler society, nor understood as "fully" Indigenous, urban Indigenous artists are creating their own spaces that challenge prejudiced assumptions about Indigenous peoples living and working in the city (Boomalli, n.d.). Cultural theorist Robin Boast explains the need for Indigenous-led (cultural) urban spaces by reflecting on Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "contact zone;" spaces where various cultures come together, often entangled in unbalanced power relations (Pratt 1991, 34). Fittingly, Boast applies the idea of the contact zone to museums, though his ideas apply to any cultural institution exhibiting or performing aspects of cultures. He states that museums can offer collaboration spaces between stakeholders from various cultures. While he encourages this, he also realises that museums, academia and other gatekeeping institutions – as well as the thesis I write here – verify their neocolonial project by including Indigenous knowledges into the museums' already existing formats without "transcending" those formats (Boast 2011, 65). Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Goreng Goreng artist Richard Bell expresses a similar concern when talking about "Aboriginal Art." He states:

> There is no Aboriginal Art industry. There is, however, an industry that caters for Aboriginal art. The key players in that industry are not Aboriginal. They are mostly White people whose areas of expertise are in the fields of Anthropology and 'Western Art.' (Bell 2010, 153)

Stó:lō Indigenous arts theorist Dylan Robinson expresses a similar concern. He explains that "inclusionist" practices may as well just affirm already existing unbalanced power structures between mainstream institutions and the Indigenous content they present (Robinson 2020, 5-6). This reaffirms the need for Indigenous-led spaces in urban areas, in which practices and activities are managed and shaped exclusively by Indigenous individuals.

The following sections in this chapter investigate how First Nations musicians and artists reclaim Indigenous spaces in the (institutionalised) city – that is, where various institutions exercise authority over space – and how the space and sound interact. Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 will focus on sonic encounters around Indigeneity in the city, during which I took on an observer role, participating as a member of the audience. The sections are based on semi-structured interviews with Indigenous performers and ethnographic observations.

3.4.1 Indigenous claimed spaces: Warrane

Circular Quay, with its original name Warrane, is home to a beautiful view of the Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It is also a place where a man – who I later got to know as Lez – often plays didjeridu /yiḏaki (see Fig. 3.3). He usually sits on a plastic crate, wearing a red lap-lap while white ochre covers his body. He often has with him the Aboriginal flag, visibly shown next to him, and a collection of musical instruments, such as clapsticks, a didjeridu, boomerangs, and materials such as possum skin and woven baskets. The sounds of the didjeridu are loud, not only because of the microphone that lies on the ground next to the "tail" of the instrument, but also because of the reverberation of the sounds, as he often sits under the bridge that holds the train rails and the Circular Quay train station. One cannot miss him while he is there.

Figure 3.3 Lez practising songlines under the train tracks at Warrane/Circular Quay. Photo by author.

At times, another musician accompanies him playing the didjeridu, which allows Lez to sing through a microphone while playing clapsticks. When a crowd gathers in a half circle around the musicians, Lez describes what the didjeridu sounds mean, which the other musician would then play. When the sounds signify an emu – for example, the musician would make hand gestures while playing the didjeridu, creating sounds that signify the animal. For example, the player would make sharp, "staccato" tones juxtaposed with the underlying drone sounds to create emu sounds. Sometimes, children dance to the sounds.

I always wondered if he was enjoying himself among the tourists. I was hoping for an interview with him; however, every time I went back to Circular Quay to find him, he was not there. I knew he regularly played there, though, as I received messages from people – who knew what my research was about – informing me about this one man playing "Aboriginal music" here while sending me videos of him playing. This indicates how much of an impact he makes on people who have not had much exposure to First Nations musics before. Lez is very aware of this. Poetically, I managed to chat with him on my final day in Sydney. He told me: "They all come to Circular Quay. Every nationality come here. Whether you're from France or from Europe, or from Eastern Europe, or Arab country, they all come here. And they all have questions to ask about our people. And they learn about how we, before and after" (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022). I was delighted that he was up for a chat with me, and at that moment, it felt like I was entering his space: he asked if I wanted to sit with him while he pointed towards a plastic crate covered with possum skin.

While Lez, indeed, takes advantage of the landmarks, such as the Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge, attracting millions of tourists every year, he proudly told me – or rather, corrected me – that he was not a busker. Instead, he told me this is a place for ceremony: "For hundreds and hundreds of thousands of years. This place here, Warrane, was actually an initiation ceremony grounds for young boys become men. They have to go through their manhood" (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022). He is eager to "set the record straight" and educate the crowds about Indigenous practices:

> Every weekend. If the weather is good. I'll come down and play. The reason I play down here is to practice my songline and to also presenting my song through educating people about Country, how it works with our people who work with it, not against it. So when I explain the songs of how the songs fit into certain things, people start to realize that we were not nomadic people, we were farming our Country in a different way, unlike today, and we use stick fire farming. The reason why we use stick fire farming is because the native seeds of Australia needs the heat. And heat comes from the fire. So to open the seed to produce new growth again, you have to burn the country to preharvest or refarming your areas. So everything was done by moving from place to place as we did it. And by doing that, we'll have to have a sense of sustainability to preserve and to reproduce our resources. (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022)

Lez's explanation aligns with Bruce Pascoe's claim that First Nations peoples have indeed employed all sorts of farming techniques while living in settlements long before British settlement. Not only is this information on how to live on the land passed down through storytelling and ceremony, but Pascoe has gathered written documentation from early European settlers to add to the evidence. Fire-stick farming, a term first written down by archaeologist Rhys Jones in 1969, has been a long-standing farming technique employed by Aboriginal peoples for a period extending well beyond 40.000 years (Pascoe 2013, 48-49). One of those recorded memories is part of Pascoe's publication, found in NA Wakefield's study on bushfires and vegetational changes in Australia:

> it had been the accepted thing to burn the bush, to provide a new growth of shorter sweet feed for cattle … The practice was to burn the country as often as possible … in the hottest and driest weather in January and February, so that the fire would be as hot as possible, and thus make a clean burn [but] the long followed practice … resulted in a great increase of scrub in all the timbered areas … The fires forced the trees to seed and coppice, and in time an almost impenetrable forest arose. (JC Rogers, in Pascoe 2013, 117)

Lez's musical reclaiming of the space many visit for its landmarks challenges the ways in which one interprets the space. Much like Matt Sakakeeneey's work on jazz funerals in New Orleans, in which a marginalised community musically reclaims urban architecture (2010), Lez shows that, indeed, this place is where the Opera House is housed. However, it is also Warrane, a place for Aboriginal ceremony, where Indigenous people practice their sovereignty. Lez emphasises the latter by continuing his songline practice here. As LaBelle notes, general ideas of "street musicians" link to notions such as "authentic sound" and "singing from the heart" that are "aimed at countering established and professionalized productions" (LaBelle 2010, 11). Passer-byers would not need to understand much about the intricacies of Aboriginal ceremony to recognise that Lez aims for a re-thinking of the place, in his case, by emphasising the space's Indigeneity.

In a way, he has created his own "contact zone," as Pratt refers to it as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (Pratt 1991, 34). Yet unlike a museum or cultural institution, the open space under the bridge holding the train tracks where Lez performs is not loaded with the constraints museums and other cultural institutions put on Indigenous peoples by including Indigenous practices into an already colonial set-up (Robinson 2020, 5-6). Moreover, as seen in Sakakeeny (2010), bridges may function as an amplifier for Bla(c)k sounds in the most literal sense in terms of acoustics, claiming the space with an unmistakable presence (Sakakeeny 2010, 2-3).

However, we must take into account the control of sounds in Sydney's city centre: not just any person is allowed to play music, and busking locations are restricted to specific zones. To be able to "play music" in the city, one must obtain a "busking permit." Those who received such a permit after

having done an audition are constrained by all sorts of regulations determining a variety of aspects, such as the exact location, the kind of activity, whether the use of amplification is allowed, and the hours during which the activity may take place. The "Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority Busking Policy" even includes a designated section for "Aboriginal Busking Sites," determining exactly which spot in the harbour is suited for an Aboriginal performer (See Fig. 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Busking Pitches Map of The Rocks and Circular Quay indicating specific locations dependent on the kinds of activities.
https://www.placepermits.com.au/assets/documents/SHFS%20Busking%20Policy%202012.pdf.

On the "Aboriginal Busking sites," (hereafter ABS) the Busking Policy states:

> An Aboriginal pitch has been established at Palm Grove DH5 in Darling Harbour and pitch CQ4, between Wharfs 2 and 3, at Circular Quay. Performers at this pitch must be identified as Aboriginal through accreditation by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. All Aboriginal performers must hold a busking permit and public liability insurance (in the sum of $AUD10 million), all standard busking conditions apply to performing in this location. The ABS operates between the hours of 10am and 9pm with a maximum of 7 hours performance time on any given day. (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority 2012, 6)

The ABS allows an allocated space for Aboriginal performers, and only when no Aboriginal performer is using the space can non-Indigenous activities occur at the location instead. Figure 3.4 also indicates how some acts, such as "Circle Acts," defined as "structured performances requiring the audience to stop and watch or participate" (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority 2012, 5) are restricted to locations

with either more space compared to the "Walk By Acts" (such as number 10, 12, and 13 in Fig. 3.4), or in between an already constructed site, in between pillars for example (as seen in number 3 in Fig. 3.4) where a crowd can gather without blocking passer-byers. Some sites require a break between noon and 2 PM "to allow for quiet enjoyment during lunchtime trade" (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority 2012, 8), favouring trade flows over repose.

A specific Busking Review Committee oversees whether the activities follow the policy (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority 2012, 14). Alluding to the above, we may conclude that while Lez, indeed, does not have to conform to an established institution housed in a designated building and that a space has been made available prioritising Aboriginal performers, he must deal with another kind of institution: the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, overseen by the NSW Government. In many ways, the earlier mentioned imagined boundaries in section 3.2 – described by Prout and Howitt (2009) – between the urban, the rural and the wilderness, remain to this day in the form of surveillance of public spaces in the city, enforced by regulations marking boundaries on a map between, in this case, busking spaces, and spaces where daily flows of human movements, trading, and infrastructure are prioritised in this city space and may therefore not be blocked.

The restrictions imposed upon Lez within this space are what makes this site an "abstract space," in Henri Lefebvre's words. Lefebvre states: "Abstract space is measurable. Not only is it quantifiable as geometrical space, but, as social space, it is subject to quantitative manipulations: statistics, programming, projections" (Lefebvre 1991, 352). Indeed, Warrane, by many known as Circular Quay, is today subjected to regulations overseen by the NSW Government, dictating times that people may perform here, limited by busking permits, insurance, a performer's heritage, and provided that it will not (or only within a particular scope) block other movements.

However, Lez still enjoys a type of freedom that performers in institutional spaces may not have: as he mentioned before, when the weather is not ideal, Lez may decide not to come out. Moreover, he does not have to account for a "set" program and can decide what practice he may wish to perform on the spot. There is also something to say about the stories he tells. Robin Boast claims that the inclusion of Indigenous voices in institutions may lead to silencing those voices by not necessarily focusing on the "co-creation" of a narrative, stating, "The institution that controls the calibration and use, controls the resource" (Boast 2011, 65). Lez, on the other hand, is not afraid to tell his audience his story. When he introduced himself to me, he made sure to tell a painful history of Australia:

> my people are Tudulaig people from the central region [of Zenadth Kes, also known as the Torres Strait Islands], Tudulaig, and with my father's side.. When the invasion came to the central islands, with my father's Tudulaig people, survival was very hard because it was only five families that survived the holocaust of invasion. So I'm one of the survivors of that through my father's side. (…) There is also related to the Eddie Koiki Mabo who fought for the freedom

of First Nation people and proved that terra nullius was a lie when captain Cook came in the country. That's my Uncle. (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022)

As Morgan states while referring to ways in which Indigenous populations have adapted to survive colonialism: "They accommodate coercive institutional pressures but rarely completely accept the moral influence of those authorities, whether state or religious, who seek to assimilate them" (Morgan 2008, 77). While Lez indeed practices his songlines at Warrane within the set rules – accommodating Morgan's "coercive institutional pressures", we also see how Lez rejects the morals of the state, making sure he tells the history of his people without sugarcoating. This confirms Raheja's (2011) claim, alluded to in the Introduction Chapter, showing that Indigenous people may work in an "in-between" space that both resists and complies with normative conventions, enabling an intervention into discussions on sovereignty (Raheja 2011, 193).

In 2019, a First Nations Community Consultation Report was released, which asked First Nations Peoples about their views on what they would like to see in the Australian Museum as a response to the 250th anniversary of the journey that brought Captain Cook to Australia in 1770. The two key objectives that resulted from this are stated as follows: "Truth-telling about Australia's history – the true story of Cook and the foundation of Australia (40.74% [of respondents]) and Privileging First Nations voices and perspectives (17.4% [of respondents])" (McBride and Smith 2019, 18-19). This response clearly links to the way in which Lez tells his story too. Furthermore, the most important topic through which to address the objectives was "colonisation and effects" in the ways of telling "what happened," its impact, and the fact that it is ongoing (McBride and Smith 2019, 18-19). While the awareness of the importance of First Nations voices in cultural institutions is growing – evidenced by the exhibition that resulted from the First Nations Community Consultation Report "Unsettled," curated by two First Nations female curators at the Australian Museum – in many cases, there is still a long way to go. By claiming space through music and performance outside, Lez is comparatively less constrained by authorities while, at the same time, being authorised by authorities to talk about what happened to his people and land. Drawing back on Lefebvre, Lez's presence transforms an "abstract space" – a space of calculations determined by authorities – into a "lived" or "concrete space:" "the space of the everyday activities of users" (Lefebvre 1991, 362). Lez's physical presence while practising songlines is a reclaiming of an urban space and, therefore a reclaiming of power, emphasising its Indigenous sovereignty, embracing the opportunity to tell listeners "what really happened," and to talk about his ancestry in relation to the colonisation of his lands.

3.4.2 Indigenous Claimed Spaces: Blak Box at the Cutaway, Barangaroo

Blak Box is a project produced by journalist and sound artist Daniel Browning, who is a descendant of the Bundjalung and Kullilli peoples. In 2018, his Blak Box project consisted of a box-shaped sound pavilion that housed Aboriginal stories' sounds at Barangaroo, in central Sydney. The description on the Gov Design Awards website states: "The works bring together a range of contemporary Aboriginal voices that respond to the past, present and future of the Barangaroo site" (GOV Design Awards, n.d.). Barangaroo is a site named after the Cameragal woman Barangaroo, who used to live on Eora at the time of British arrival and who has become known as a fisherwoman and overall significant figure in Sydney's history (Karskens 2014).

Her husband was Bennelong, another pivotal historical figure who is now commemorated through a place name in Sydney's city centre. The settlers first captured Bennelong to be an interpreter between the Aboriginal inhabitants and the colonisers. It has been said that a friendship evolved between Bennelong and Arthur Philip, the person who was assigned the role of governor of the colony of New South Wales (Smith 2009). While Bennelong was taken to London dressed like the settlers, Barangaroo refused to wear clothes, and it has been said she was dismissive of the Europeans' fishing practices. Being a fisherwoman herself, when the settlers caught 4000 fish, which would have been far too much for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples occupying the space, she may have been insulted by its wastefulness and by the threat of losing her position and those of other fisherwomen of Eora (Karskens 2014). When she passed away, Bennelong spread her ashes in Warrane, which was Governor Philip Arthur's garden at the time, the place also known as Circular Quay, where Lez practices his songline today.

To honour Barangaroo and her part in Sydney's history, the city council named the area of Barangaroo after her in 2007. However, throughout the 19th century, this place housed the Millers Point Gasworks, using coal to convert to gas for streetlighting in the "new town" called Sydney. After the Gasworks ceased operations in 1921, not all parts of the factory were removed, resulting in some of the parts, such as tanks filled with coal tar, cutting in the sandstone and contaminating the soil (Barangaroo, n.d.a).

When redevelopment of the area was initiated, there was again controversy as Prime Minister Paul Keating urged to include a parkland reserve to replace its maritime character with a pre-colonial appearance. The controversy came from those who felt that its industrial character and markers "link us today to the evolution of Australia as a nation" (Barns 2018, 62). Many have also claimed that Barangaroo is ill-suited as a placename (Barns 2018, 61), but unfortunately, those claims often fail to understand the complexities around First Nations placenames, for example, using the argument that

Gamaragal people are not part of the Eora Nation, when there is clear evidence that they are (AIATSIS n.d.b). Ideas like this circulating in various media play a part in (public) disputes over place in Australia.

The disputed site of Barangaroo, signifying Indigenous displacement, disempowerment, and extractivism in the name of Western ideas of "development," is now also home to the Cutaway. This open venue uses a gigantic sandstone cliff side that has been cut off a constructed hill, now housing a botanic park, as one of its walls. This is where another Blak Box performance took place in September 2022: Blak Box Precarities (See Fig. 3.5a and b).

Figure 3.5a. Sandstone cliff side used as wall in the Cutaway with lights designed for the Blak Box: Precarities performance. Photo by author.

Figure 3.5b. Inside the Cutaway after a Blak Box: Precarities performance. Photo by author.

Instead of recorded voices sounding in a box, as heard in the 2018 Blak Box production, the 2022 Blak Box production was a live performance which required the audience to wear headphones. The sounds were a mixture of live and recorded sounds, making it unclear for the audience to know where they came from. The performers were all situated in different corners around the audience, who were seated in the middle, which added to this experience. At times, it was hard to know which side to look at to see which artist was performing at the time, as they performed mainly one by one. Some of the recorded sounds were moments during which the artists were rehearsing: We heard them deliberating about when to start, what sounds to play, and laughing. It felt like the artists deliberately aimed to confuse the audience. The stools were placed in the middle of the space and did not have a set spot; people could move them around.

The artists involved were DOBBY (keyboard, cajon), Lorna Munro (spoken word), Ancestress (singing), Eric Avery (violin), and Steven Oliver (spoken word), who are all First Nations artists. Right before the show started, DOBBY quickly told me that the idea of the performance was to "invite the audience into our world" (DOBBY, personal communication, 02-09-2022). The event's website explains: "It embraces the First Peoples concept of 'deep listening' which is based on stories, silences and the spaces that lie between" (Barangaroo, n.d.b). To emphasise the relation between deep listening and space, the Blak Box event incorporated stories that reflected on the colonial history of the specific area.

During the performance, Lorna Munro, the spoken word artist of Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi descent, spoke a Wiradjuri-translated version of Shakespeare's words "Once more unto the breach" that are part of the play King Henry the Fifth. Instead of King Henry the Fifth encouraging his soldiers to prepare to attack, here Munro enabled a reimagining of these words, focusing on Wiradjuri warriors preparing for attack against foreign settlers. By replacing the English language with her native Wiradjuri language, she reverses the act of language colonisation. During a panel prior to the show, she referred to the performance as "audio sovereignty" (Munro, in Bless 2022), which finds links to Reed's claim – elaborated upon in the Introduction Chapter – about sonic materiality of sovereignty, called sonic sovereignty (Reed 2020). Like Reed suggests about the significant role of Indigenous song (510), the Blak Box performance highlights that Indigenous sound and music are more than aesthetic "products" for enjoyment, and instead, are happenings that actively reclaim a space where Indigenous peoples practice sovereignty.

Moreover, Munro encourages a rethinking of a typical depiction of Indigenous peoples as victims. Instead, she highlights that Indigenous groups fought in wars against the British groups (Connor 2017). Furthermore, she emphasises the significance of the frontier wars in places where colonisation started. This highlights the precarity of the particular place of the performance – Barangaroo – where, as mentioned before, many Eora were killed before settlers moved beyond their lands further land inwards: towards the lands of the Wiradjuri peoples, amongst others.

In the performance, Steven Oliver, the spoken word artist of Kuku-Yalanji, Waanyi, Gangalidda, Woppaburra, Bundjalung and Biripi descent, touched upon the theme of expressing oneself angrily. While receiving compliments from others – assumedly non-Indigenous people – that he appears as an Indigenous person who is not angry all the time, during the performance, we hear him refuse to take these kinds of remarks as compliments, sharing that he is – of course – angry. This sheds light on how Indigenous people may feel restrained to express themselves freely, depending on the situation they are in. As Sarah Ahmed explains about people who may often hold "minority" positions:

> To be welcomed is to be positioned as not yet part, a guest or stranger, the one who is dependent on being welcomed (the word *welcome*, a "friendly greeting," derives from *will*, "one whose coming suits another's will"). Indeed a welcome can lead us into a precarious situation. The word *precarious* derives from *pray* and means to be held through the favor of another, or dependent on the will of another, which is how *precarious* acquires the sense of risky, dangerous, and uncertain. No wonder: an arrival can be precarious. If you are dependent on a door being opened, how quickly that door can be shut in your face. (Ahmed 2017, 128-129)

The Blak Box performance created a space where these concerns were meant to be shared and heard, effectively reversing this dynamic where it was First Nations performers doing the "welcoming" instead

of being the ones to be welcomed on Indigenous land. Referring back to what DOBBY told me at the show's start; it was about the artists inviting the audience into their world. We see how the theme of precarities can manifest through historical events of displacing groups of people and forcing them to only speak a foreign language, to everyday remarks such as those shared by Oliver, illuminating ways in which First Nations peoples are expected to behave in order to be accepted – or perhaps, welcomed – in society.

The artistic choices during the performance further emphasised the theme of precarities. The instruments' sounds contributed to these uncertain feelings. The cajon's percussion sounds were scattered: there was no identifiable beat or rhythmic pattern for the listeners to follow. Meanwhile, the high-pitched violin sounds reminded me of an eerie movie. When I heard mumbling voices, I remember thinking: "Are these sounds part of the performance?" while taking off my headphones to hear if the sounds came from outside. I remember questioning if we were actually outside or inside. Was this space industrial – referring to the giant concrete pillars – or natural – referring to the sandstone wall? Is there a difference? Before discovering its history, I remember wondering how this place came about and what it would have been before it was turned into an events space. Is this how First Nations peoples experience the city? And everyday life? As an audience member, it was unclear which direction to face, due to the absence of a "formal" stage and the backless stools, not faced towards any specific direction. I was unsure about whether the sounds were coming from one of the artists performing live or if it was a piece of recorded sound. My friend and I were unsure when the performance started. Through sounds and space, Blak Box aimed for its audience to experience precarity, demonstrated through the evoked feelings of confusion and uncertainty, providing the audience with a temporary insight into how First Nations people may navigate daily life.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to answer the research question *How do Indigenous musicians and activists negotiate urban space?* I set out themes significant to Indigenous precarities in the city, gentrification and displacement, to sketch some of the hardships dealt with specific to urban life.

Redfern, and in particular, the Block, has seen many changes over the years, from deteriorated to gentrified. What remained important is the connections Indigenous residents have with the place through family ties, shared experiences, or the community initiatives set up in the area, as indicated during the soundwalk with Tyren. Sounds in the area may signify the changing of the place – when we hear construction sounds, for example, but may also serve as a reminder that humans are only one

component within a web of actors thinking and being. As seen during the soundwalk with Luke, sound – any sound, even that of an air conditioner – can be a way in which one may be in dialogue with Country – even in the city.

Other times, when sounds are part of Indigenous performance, such as the didjeridu, clapsticks, or singing in a native language, they may stress how these places were lived pre-colonially. Instead of a site for tourism, Lez reclaims Warrane by practising his songline, reminding listeners of the Indigeneity of the space. In the case of Blak Box, First Nations artists take audience members into a world of precarities of Indigenous experiences, focusing on the colonial history of Sydney, and Australia more broadly, while drawing on the interplay of space and sound. To transform an abstract space into a concrete space, these musical performances and sounds assert Indigenous sovereignty in spaces in Sydney by drawing on Indigenous lived experiences and undertaking sounding acts.

Unlike what is discussed in Reed (2020), for example, is that sovereign sounding acts in Sydney, as heard in the Blak Box performance in section 3.4.2, or Lez's reclamation of Warrane in section 3.4.1, Indigenous sounding sovereignty may be performed by those who are not direct descendants of the people Indigenous to that piece of land. After all, the city centre of Sydney is Gadigal land. We hear this distinguishing in the difference between a "Welcome to Country" or an "acknowledgement of Country," for example. While only direct descendants of a people Indigenous to a piece of land can perform a Welcome to Country, anyone can perform an acknowledgement of Country. In Indigenous sovereign sounding acts in Sydney, we hear a pan-Indigenous space-reclaiming that advocates for Indigenous sovereignty on both the piece of land of the performance, as well as on a national level.

Chapter 4

Sounding Together: Indigenous Musical Interventions in the City

Dominant settler imaginations often depict Indigenous communities as living and moving outside of the (imagined) borders of cities (Shaw 2007), as described in Chapter Three. However, my research focuses on urban Indigeneity. As Henri Lefebvre claims in his book Writings on Cities, urban areas can be seen as centre points of activities, or cores of exchange economies (Lefebvre 1996, 66), where various infrastructure networks, groups, and individuals come together. These networked infrastructures and groups of people are crucial for how Indigenous individuals make political stances for better living conditions. This chapter will examine how music and sound serve as tools for navigating and experiencing the city, challenging dominant narratives on Indigeneity. I ask *How does Indigenous musical and sounding performance create interventions in the city?*

As De Certeau argues in his work on the walker in the city, walkers resist power by creating their pathways through tactical practices (De Certeau 1984). This theory is developed by Tripta Chandola, for instance, as mentioned in the Introduction Chapter. She reflects on how residents of Govindpuri's slums in Southwest Delhi use sound to make themselves heard by the middle-class residents who live just outside the slum (Chandola 2020). Here, she describes how a group of wailing women enabled a sonic intervention, successfully blocking a visit from a candidate of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi elections, the opponent of a local candidate from the slums (Chandola 2020, 102-104). This shows the potential of the ways people create sound to intervene in situations undesirable to local residents.

The idea of an 'intervention' is essential in this chapter. It embodies a moment in which the city's usual flows or 'rhythms' are intentionally disrupted. This intentional disruption, caused by Indigenous artists performing music or making sound, urges for reflection on the status quo. This may take shape in the form of First Nations professional musicianship – as discussed with musician Mi-kaisha. It can also be a celebration – discussed through ethnographic observations during NAIDOC week, a nationwide full week of Indigenous cultures celebration. Moreover, and notably the most apparent form of disruption, is protest – reflected on through a discussion on the Karrinjarla Muwajarri rally, where "noise" in the streets of Sydney challenged how policy-makers were said to be "listening, but not hearing"[20] the needs of Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. I argue for "noise" as a central concept in section 4.5 – which I will further discuss below – through which Indigenous music and sounds intervene in the settler rhythms in Sydney.

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[20] This is the title of a report from March 2012 that critiqued the ways in which community consultation took place that eventually led to problematic policies of the Stronger Futures Act 2012. Section 4.6 will further delve into this report.

Sound theorist Brandon LaBelle refers to the ability of music and sound to 'take over' a moment as "sonic agency" which he describes as "a social force that works to interrupt the dominant order" (LaBelle 2018, 4). He states:

> As forceful movements – of rhythmic and resonant intensities, of vibrational and volumetric interruptions – sound works to unsettle and exceed arenas of visibility by relating us to the unseen, the non-represented or the not-yet-apparent; alongside spaces of appearance, and the legible visibilities often defining open discourse, the flow and force of particular tonalities and musics, silences and noises may transgress certain partitions or borders, expanding the agentive possibilities of the uncounted and the underheard. (LaBelle 2018, 2)

It is exactly the "agentive possibilities" LaBelle refers to in combination with the idea of presence and appearance, through which this chapter approaches sound and performance. For this, I will examine various musical events in 2022 in Sydney, such as the Indigenous Art Fair, an annual event held in Sydney that brings together Indigenous artists and community collectives exhibiting Indigenous art from across the continent. I will also reflect on Vivid Festival, an annual lights festival in Sydney that hosts various musical performances besides light shows. NAIDOC week is a cultural week that celebrates Indigenous cultures. This week, there are daily events – sometimes multiple events on a day – nationwide, among which musical performances are key components. Finally, I will discuss the Karrinjarla Muwajarri rally, protesting the presence of police guns in remote communities in the Northern Territory. These political and musical events highlight moments in history that have shaped the current moment yet are simultaneously actively shaping and imagining future attitudes held by and towards Indigenous populations in Australia. This chapter's central focus point is how Indigenous artists and activist groups use and move within the city of Sydney – through music and sound. The ways in which Indigenous musicians and activists embrace, enhance or resist institutional powers and profits, shapes the intervention.

Moreover, there are various ways in which a sounding intervention is practised. I will apply Thomas Turino's notion of "participatory performance" (2008) – further explained below – to scrutinise the ways in which sound and performance is created. While some musical political statements are presentational – with clear distinctions between performers and audience – other statements are about moving together and finding participants who actively contribute to and shape the sounding activity. This approach will aid in exposing how different ways of sounding contribute towards intervening in the rhythms of the city, shaped by the dominant settler society.

Each space examined in this chapter attracts specific musicians or activists, who align their practices to the specific space while tending to their own causes. In this chapter, I argue that these various kinds of sound-making practices together form a web of actions that intervene in the established rhythms of

the settler society. Section 4.1 will elaborate on how this chapter uses the concept of an intervention. Section 4.2 will explore noise theory as the theoretical concept within section 4.5 of this chapter, and the sections following (4.3, 4.4, and 4.5) will delve into various case studies, enquiring about different kinds of performance as political interventions.

4.1 City Rhythms & Intervention

In "Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life", Lefebvre connects the idea of "rhythm" to "repetition," for "No rhythm without repetition in time and in space" (2004 [1992], 6). However, he then adds the importance of "difference" to the equation, as no repetition is identical. Applied to everyday life, which he refers to as "our urban-State-market society," Lefebvre states: "The everyday establishes itself, creating hourly demands, systems of transport, in short, its repetitive organisation" (Lefebvre 2004 [1992], 7). Repetition may, according to Lefebvre, be seen in terms of cyclicality or linearity:

> Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in reality interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures. (Lefebvre 2004 [1992], 8)

Lefebvre bases his philosophy on modern-day France (Lefebvre 2004 [1992], 6). As such, we find a discrepancy between the idea of time based on patriarchal European principles in which the linear structures of "human activity" would interfere with natural cycles. Not only are these linear structures – still persisting to this day – imposed upon women's bodies that are of a monthly cyclical nature (Lambert and Ferns 2023), but it is also exactly this linear structure that is forced upon Indigenous societies. Didjeridu player Yidinji told me:

> Me Elders taught us how to look after Country. You're not for example, not take too much food from one area you take and you take that food in a season, there is a season for different foods. And that was amazing part of it, our family, our ancestors were living was they did not need to change. They have that much respect for Mother Nature, that they continued nomadic, and moved with the seasons for 1000s of years. Amazing. So we were taught that as kids, that you hunt that food this time of the year, you haunt that food this time of the year. And it just makes a lot of sense. Because if you hunt in one area for too long, eventually there will be nothing, that.. yeah, so by the time you come back to where you start, there's always more food. It just makes a lot of sense. (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022)

Yidinji explains how his ancestors have been living with the natural cycles and moving with those accordingly. As indicated in Chapter Three, urban life has indeed come with hardships for Indigenous people, focused on the imported ideas derived from Western Europe of productivity and settlement that have excluded Indigenous urbanites from neoliberal city models (Mayer 2012). Yet today, many Indigenous peoples live in urban areas and are connected to these places through kinship and Indigenous organised spaces, as seen in Chapter Three.

Yidinji told me the above in the context of retaining his culture, as he explains that the government is today – to some extent – willing to work with and listen to Indigenous communities regarding rainforest protection. The rainforest is something close to his heart, as he explains where his name, Yidinji, comes from:

> After my tribal group, which was very lucky when I was born mum and dad had given that to me as an Aboriginal name, skin name, which means People of the Rainforest, from my area. (…) Cairns, which is the tropical area of Australia, rainforest. We are very lucky we've got some of the world's oldest rainforests and even more so nowadays that our people have a big say on how to protect the rainforests. It is so important there's not too much left in the world. And as we all know, this is just too much we're losing too much. So now we've got a big say on how to protect and which is great, they [the government] listen to us. (…) We still gotta work with government you know, and but we have a big say, the bigger say than what they do, but we've also got to work together to protect these areas. They realise that and we realise that, that if we come together that we can protect these places, special places a lot more. (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022)

While Yidinji's important connection to the rainforest indeed can be seen as part of the issue of imagining Indigenous peoples outside the city, it also speaks to the reality of how the colonisation of the continent of Australia has affected Indigenous peoples' ways of life. Yet, even for Indigenous urbanites, these special connections still hold through spiritual connection and kinship connected to place.

The above also clearly indicates that Yidinji sees the government as an entity separate from Indigeneity, yet he seemingly perceives the 'collaboration' as something positive. I met Yidinji at the National Indigenous Art Fair at The Rocks area, traditionally known as Warrane[21], in Sydney (Langton 2008a, 3). The National Indigenous Art Fair is an annual two-day event where Indigenous artists and Indigenous corporations exhibit and sell their works. Not only is it focused on visual arts, such as paintings, and crafts, such as weaving (often done at the fair by women sitting on the floor in a circle),

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[21] Also known as War-ran, Weé-rong or Warrang (Australian Museum 2023). I use the name "Warrane" as that is the name Lez uses, the songman playing his songline here – described in Chapter Three.

but it also has a musical performance program, traditional dance group performances, panel discussions on Indigenous affairs and bushfood workshops.

Yidinji tended a stall displaying his and fellow artists' artworks, representing the Burrunju Art Gallery in Canberra, which he manages. Besides visual arts, such as painted didjeridus and canvasses, Yidinji also exhibits his didjeridu-playing skills, attracting big crowds at his stall. The drone sounds of the didjeridu fill the ample open space - usually a passenger terminal for cruise ships - reminding visitors of an unmistakable Indigenous presence. This starkly contrasts the Sydney Harbour backdrop, where the 'Captain Cook Cruises[22]' cruise ships arrive and depart (See Fig. 4.1 and 4.2).
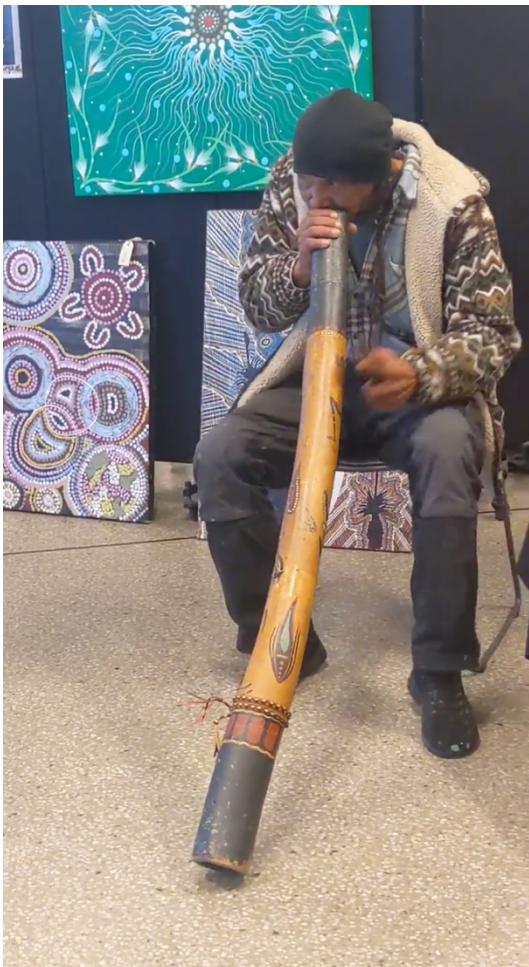
Figure 4.1. Yidinji playing the didjeridu at the Indigenous Art Fair. Photo by author, 02-07-2022.

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[22] A cruise ship company named after British naval officer James Cook whose landing on today's Botany Bay was the onset of British colonisation of what is today known as Australia.

Figure 4.2. Captain Cook Cruises in the background during the Indigenous Art Fair. Photo by author, 02-07-2022.

As he explains above, he believes a coming together of government and Indigenous communities will eventually help combat current issues, such as climate degradation. What does this say about agency, and how are institutions of power navigated? As this chapter investigates how Indigenous musicians create interventions in the city and its institutions, Yidinji is an example of someone who tries to enhance connections with institutions. With his Art Gallery based in Australia's capital city, Canberra, he tells me:

> Government departments come where we do all sorts of workshops with government departments. (…) We get funding, yeah yea. They've got no choice but to help us. Because we are the only cultural centre in Canberra. We're the only ones and it's the only place really where they can come and get authentic Aboriginal art, as well, as you know, hands on as well. A lot of the government departments, they want a piece of artwork for those offices, we can sit them down and they can help create it. And so a lot of it's hands on and it ends up in their office when it's finished. It has so much more meaning because they will get the hands, we get the handprints on it as well. Plus they've had a hand in helping to do the painting. It means so much more then when it hangs in their office. (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022)

We may read Yidinji's remarks almost as if he refuses to be used for a token artwork hanging in a government department office. Instead, he makes politicians care about the artwork by connecting

them to the art. They learn through the practice of creating art while Yidinji sits with politicians and teaches them about the art: "Hands on, get a feel for it, get a better understanding, while they're painting. They can ask me questions. Yeah. So "why did they paint it like that?" "Why?" "Why do you use hands?" Because the old cave paintings are my biggest inspiration" (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022). Anthropologist Tim Ingold explores the idea of learning the "hands-on" way in his book Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture. Inspired by his fieldwork with Saami[23] people, Ingold argues for a learning through actively doing, or "going along." He states:

> My companions did not inform me of *what* is there, to save me the trouble of having to inquire for myself. Rather, they told me *how I might find out*. They taught me what to look for, how to track things, and that knowing is a process of active following, of *going along*. These were people who had always lived by fishing, hunting and herding reindeer, so for them the idea that you know as you go – not that you know by means of movement but that knowing *is* movement – was second nature. (Ingold 2013, 1)

Like Yidinji, who works with urban institutions in a way that creates meaning by creating art, bringing politicians into the process, rather than ticking a box of purchasing an already finished piece, Ingold investigates processes – with the idea of "knowing is movement" – rather than outcomes or end products. For this focus on movements and processes, I will employ Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory, or ANT, to showcase Indigenous musical and political agency in the city and how this is asserted. ANT enables us to find answers about why musicians perform in a specific way for this specific audience, at a specific venue. It enables me to see who has a say in these performances: the artists, the audience, the venue, or perhaps the funders? What are the processes and thoughts behind a musical performance, rather than enquiring about the music and the moment of performance itself? In other words, how has the musical performance in a specific place in the city come about?

Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino argues for the integral part music plays in social life in his book Music as Social Life (2008). In line with Yidinji's idea of learning through doing, and being involved in creative practice through active participation, Turino distinguishes between 'participatory performance' and 'presentational performance.' Participatory performance, Turino explains, is "a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles" (Turino 2008, 26). With his specific focus on musical practice, he interprets participatory activities as those practices that actively contribute to the sounds of the event. Acknowledging Small's idea of musicking – introduced in Chapter One – in which, for instance, listeners are also active musickers (1998), Turino makes the explicit separation between

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[23] This is the spelling Ingold uses in his publication. Another spelling used in this thesis is "Sámi", such as seen in Hilder (2015) and Ramnarine (2009).

performers and audiences. Turino's approach is beneficial for this chapter, as the primary focus of participatory music-making is the activity itself – "the doing" and fellow participants, rather than the end products (Turino 2008, 28). In this chapter, I will apply this idea to various Indigenous music and sounding contexts. Unlike Turino's explicit focus on music, my application of his approach will also consider sounds more broadly. This allows me to look into musical performances and the sounds created during a rally.

4.2 Public Disturbance & Noise

To investigate how First Nations music artists and activists create interventions in the city, I am introducing the idea of noise in relation to the Karrinjarla Muwajarri rally discussed below. I have chosen the word noise intentionally, even though it often connotes a disturbance. While I advocate for Indigenous music and sounds to be heard, the negative associations around the term noise will aid in demonstrating the marginalised positions First Nations populations can find themselves in and how sound and the city are used to reclaim power. Like the notion of an "intervention", "noise" can be seen as a disruption of Lefebvre's idea of the rhythms of the city. In this section, I am using "noise" as a metaphor, though it is a fitting term in the study of music and performance for its association with sound. Sound theorist David Novak argues that: "Noise is associated with public sociality and carnivalesque performances (e.g., charivari) that playfully disturb the norms of everyday life" (Novak 2015, 125). If we deconstruct Novak's formulation, we must see noise as public, social, a performance, and – most importantly – a phenomenon that interrupts the status quo.

In Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things, philosopher Jane Bennett enquires what constitutes political actions. She asks: "What is the difference between an actant and a political actor? Is there a clear difference? Does an action count as political by virtue of its having taken place "in" a public?" (Bennett 2010, 94). We see the significance of where an action takes place in the often-compared ideas of "dirt" and "noise." Noise theory, here, is based on anthropologist Mary Douglas' "dirt as matter out of place" (Douglas 1995 [1966], 36); therefore, noise is sound out of place (Bijsterveld 2008; Pickering and Rice 2017). Bennett stresses the importance of public space for action to be political, or, following Novak, noise.

Moreover, as ethnomusicologist Rachel Harris claims in her research focused on Uyghur expressive culture, the notion of noise is often used to describe otherness. In Xinjiang, she argues, Islamic sounds are condemned by the state and must, therefore, be contained to reaffirm China's control over the Uyghur region. "Muslim noise" is heard as "backward and oppositional" (Harris, R. 2020, 182). We see

the idea of noise as oppositional or other also in Tripta Chandola's work, noting that describing sounds as noise can be seen as a process of othering (Chandola 2020, 102). Moreover, sociologist Tricia Rose's work on rap music in the USA discusses how rap music is perceived as a medium of resistance against the "dominant transcript" (Rose 1994, 101). It is the sound belonging to those whose stories are heard as other.

Furthermore, Davide Panagia also indicates that noise may take shape as a celebration and as political intervention. He shows how chocolate making in piazzas in Italy can be a form of protest against new European Commission standards that allowed for different makeup of ingredients of chocolate. This introduction made many European chocolatiers feel threatened as it would mean economic decline in areas in Africa and South America, where most of the cocoa is grown. Organising a celebration of "real" chocolate tasting was a response to these new standards, and, following Panagia, is considered noise through the "cacophony of democratic politics" (Panagia 2009, 46), in which many voices overlap and clash with the centralised ways in which governmental structures are organised. However, we must acknowledge that there are different kinds of noise made by various musicians, performers, and activists in various settings. The rally described later in this chapter may certainly not be classified as a celebration.

Therefore, I suggest that we approach noise in various ways, asking the questions: what kinds of noise are produced and for what audience? What are the goals? And in what kind of space? Following Turino's "participatory performance" I will focus on participatory noise to help answer the questions posed above. While some soundings are more integrated with existing infrastructures, rhythms, norms, and ways of listening – such as the performances during NAIDOC week – other kinds of sound may disrupt the dominant social norms more explicitly – such as the Karrinjarla Muwajarri rally. The artist mentioned earlier, Yidinji, is an example of an artist who works with government institutions and uses participation as a tactic to get politicians to hear Yidinji's points of view. Below, I will discuss instances where artists have successfully become part of 'mainstream[24]' programming during popular festivals or as part of a Western classical music venue (4.3) in a more presentational setting. In the case of NAIDOC week (in section 4.4), we may see the events happening as "permitted political disturbance," where for one week only, Indigenous cultures may take centre stage and presentational as well as participatory activities are celebrated. Section 4.5 will discuss the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* rally and reflect upon the ways in which noise is made together.

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[24] Acknowledging the normativity of this term, over the course of my fieldwork I found it often used by my First Nations acquaintances in conversations about including First Nations artist in cultural programs and line-ups, and highlights the ongoing 'othering' of First Nations people in Australia.

4.3 Institutions, Spaces, and 'the Right' Settings

Musician Mi-kaisha also performed at the earlier-mentioned Indigenous Art Fair – the event where I met Yidinji. Mi-kaisha is a Darumbal Murri and Tongan artist raised in Sydney. During my fieldwork, she studied at NYU's Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music and has performed at well-known events such as the Dubai Expo in 2022 and the lights festival Vivid in Sydney.

Vivid is an annual multi-week lights festival that takes place around June in Sydney. It entails a program full of light shows, music performances, and workshops throughout Sydney's central areas, such as Barangaroo, Circular Quay, Darling Harbour and Central Station (Vivid Sydney, n.d.). The kinds of spaces range from open-air stages to existing podiums in theatres and from art galleries to public squares. It is Australia's biggest festival: It was attended by 2.58 million visitors in 2022 (Morris 2023) and is entirely "owned, managed, and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency" (Destination NSW 2023). As media scholar Lindiwe Dovey notes in her work on African film festivals, looking at cultural expressions (in her case, African screen media) through the lens of festivals allows us to focus on the selective and curatorial practices underpinning the festival (Dovey 2015), in other words: which acts are part of the program and what does that mean? Vivid's program exhibits a variety of projects and performers from various backgrounds. I noticed a lot of – particularly – First Nations acts in the 2022 program.

Mi-kaisha's Vivid show on June 1st, 2022, took place at Darling Harbour. Originally called Tumbalong (meaning "a place where seafood is found" (Darling Harbour 2020)), it is today an upscale entertainment pedestrian area with restaurants, bars, and tourist attractions such as an aquarium and a casino. Mi-kaisha's gig was part of the Vivid series "Tumbalong nights" on the Tumbalong open-air stage, located in the middle of a "Lights Walk," a popular walking route on the Vivid program attracting many visitors. This location makes for an eclectic mix of audience members: those who came for the show, as well as many Vivid passers-by and Darling Harbour visitors. Mi-kaisha's gig consisted mainly of her songs, crossing genres she describes as "R&B pop with a little bit of NEO soul" that is also "heavily informed by storytelling traditions of Indigenous cultures and also Pacific Islander cultures" (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022). Among the visitors were some of Mi-kaisha's family and friends, who enthusiastically danced and sang along.

The day following her show, we sat down for an interview in which she told me about her experiences as an Indigenous and Pacific Islander musician. For example, Mi-kaisha told me how she 'manages' her performances around big events – such as Vivid – that attract a broad audience that may not always be aware of the hardships Indigenous peoples experience:

I've always been very, very strong on certain issues when it comes to deaths in custody, when it comes to higher rates of incarceration, when it comes to just overall injustice and disenfranchisement of First Nations peoples and communities. And I'm always very outspoken about that. But I guess in my creative space, particularly at shows like Vivid, I'm also aware that people are not necessarily opting in to hear those things. And I just have an awareness and a sensitivity to that. And that doesn't mean that I'm not going to talk about those issues. But I will also have a sensitivity, I guess, towards people that maybe didn't want to hear something super political or super heavy about the reality of what's happening in Australia. And so I just take a moment not to apologise, but just to thank people for being present in that moment for me. (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022)

Here, Mi-kaisha explains how she navigates the moments she touches upon heavy topics during her gigs. For her, it is important that people enjoy her shows. During her Vivid show, there was indeed one song which she dedicated to her friend who passed away in a car accident due to being chased by the police. She thanked the audience for listening while she explained what happened, followed by a downbeat song with the lyrics:

Mama tell me, why do they see me like I'm something less
Something foreign, something to fear. (Mi-kaisha 2022)

Besides this downbeat track in which a keyboard accompanies lyrics expressing frustration about racial profiling, most of her other tracks during this performance felt indeed lighter and joyful, consisting of upbeat songs to which the audience danced and mainly included themes of love. She shares a similar sentiment about her earlier Dubai Expo gig:

People are there to have a good time. And so I absolutely shy away from having those super strong political conversations. But it's been, I don't know, it's been nice to just be in their spaces and to have those moments where I can just sing upbeat, super happy songs. And that's even been nice for me because it just feels lighter. (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022)

Mi-kaisha's words above allude to the idea that she is, in this instance, in a space where she embraces the idea of singing happy songs. While she enjoys this, she does mention that it is "their space," in which she is the one adjusting her set: When I asked Mi-kaisha if she adjusts her tone and song choice to the specific spaces she performs in, she told me: "Absolutely. And it's just about productivity for me. Like there's no point in me going into spaces super strong when that audience is just not ready to receive that. So it's about, yeah, just catering my set to the context. Really" (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022).

Productivity, here, could be related to Bruno Latour's idea of the "movement," "flow," or "work" that comes about through a connection that is being made. Mi-kaisha chooses not to use her political

voice on a Vivid stage. However, this does not mean that she was not an agent here, or that her performance was not a sovereign act. Instead, she chooses another kind of productivity: "it's just nice to know that, you know, the community and events like Vivid want me to be a part of that and allow, you know, space and give me a platform to share my music, share my stories share the stories of my community as well" (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022). What is more important is the space that is offered to her, and by Mi-kaisha using that space, her stories and those of her community are those sounding loudest at that moment in time, in that space, on a platform that is the Vivid stage in Darling Harbour. Mi-kaisha's performance finds itself, as Raheja would call it, in the space between compliance and resistance (2011, 193) in which she works within a conventional space, while she, at the same time, pushes its boundaries: while her performance was about entertainment and joy, she slipped in some subtle storytelling, making sure the audience knew they were listening to a sovereign, Indigenous musician, who is engaged with the struggles of her people.

Tailoring a performance to a specific setting is an experience shared by Gumaroy Newman, Gamilaroi and Wakka Wakka yiḏaki[25]-player in the duo Yulugi, a collaboration between him and British-Australian flutist and composer Keyna Wilkins. On November 12th, 2021, The Riverside theatre in Parramatta (Western part of Greater Sydney) facilitated an online watch party. Amid COVID-19 lockdown rules, the watch party allowed audiences to digitally watch and listen to an earlier recorded performance of three pieces, including 'Celestial Emu', a didjeridu concerto composed by Keyna and Gumaroy. Keyna composed the concerto for an orchestral setting, while Gumaroy was responsible for the yiḏaki part. The concerto was performed by The Metropolitan Orchestra and Gumaroy as didjeridu soloist.

The piece is inspired by the 'Emu in the Sky' constellation, a legend by the Gamilaroi people. It opens with the orchestra musicians on a stage, all seated and not playing. We only hear the yiḏaki. While playing, Gumaroy appears on the stage and slowly walks from the back to the front of the stage, playing emu sounds through the yiḏaki. We know these are emu sounds because of the louder, staccato sounds juxtaposing the more constant drone sounds of the yiḏaki. Moreover, we see Gumaroy making emu gestures with his right hand, depicting an emu's head. Gumaroy is the soloist around whom the piece evolves, as he sits in the middle of the stage on the floor, surrounded by the orchestra. We then hear strings come in, playing low-pitched, solemn and mysterious-sounding chords. Slowly but surely, more instruments join in.

Referring to this show with The Metropolitan Orchestra in the Riverside Theatre in Sydney's Parramatta and the duo-shows with Keyna, Gumaroy told me how he, like Mi-kaisha, adjusts his yiḏaki-playing to the setting he is in:

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[25] The word Gumaroy uses for didjeridu.

> You'll never hear me play, in my solo shows, what I play with the Yulugi shows or The Metropolitan Orchestra, because it challenges me to change my styles. And that's what I (...) enjoyed. The sequences and the rhythms I was playing. Can you imagine like, fully grown [non-Indigenous] man tried to do a corroboree today? Impossible. So it was a challenge. (...) So in a nutshell, I'm saying, you'll [usually] never hear me play like I do within a Yulugi show, or Metropolitan Orchestra show, unless you see me within the context, because I [usually] don't play solo rhythms like that, or, I don't play corroboree rhythms like that. (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021)

The connection between Gumaroy and the Metropolitan Orchestra, or his collaboration with Keyna, impels him to adjust playing styles regarding rhythms and sequences. Indeed, as he explained in our interview, the rhythms he usually plays are sometimes more navigational, playing higher tempos when navigating rocky landscapes, or slower rhythms following a waterway. These navigational rhythms refer to songlines, elaborated upon in the Introduction Chapter. Songlines refer to the travels of ancient beings that belong to specific routes and areas. However, during the didjeridu concerto, it was more important that the sounds and rhythms aligned with the rhythms of the orchestra, not a specific navigational route. Gumaroy did this by improvising while listening to the orchestra.

Evidently, however, it is not just Gumaroy who changes something about himself as a musician while playing with the orchestra. It goes the other way around, too: When I asked if Gumaroy and Keyna thought Gumaroy's and his yiḏaki's presence affected the orchestral setting and the concert hall, Keyna told me:

> Absolutely. I mean, the Metropolitan orchestra, they do a lot of European classics like Mozart, Haydn, Prokofiev, all that like their last concert, six months ago, Telemann Double Bass Concerto, which, you know, I highly respect, but they are also a really pioneering group in terms of showcasing us modern contemporary Australian work. So they like to juxtaposition the old with the new, but they've never done a didjeridu concerto before. And it's actually really, there are not many, I think there's only like three or four that have ever been written. You know, partially because there's just so many, you know, stylistic and cultural divides, and.. but so I think that everyone recognises this is a really special magical thing. And the feedback we got was just so much about how it just seemed like it was really authentically respectful of both cultures. (Keyna Wilkins, podcast interview with author 14-11-2022)

Interestingly, the Yulugi duo Keyna and Gumaroy, as well as Mi-kaisha, have in these instances only shared positive thoughts on their experiences as First Nations artists playing in spaces, such as Vivid, and the Riverside Theatre, that attract a broad audience, including non-Indigenous audience members.

The act of including First Nations performers in a broader programme can, in some cases, become problematic when performers' Indigeneity is 'used' as a token. This is what Stó:lō scholar

Dylan Robinson calls "inclusionary music" or "inclusionary performance" (Robinson 2020, 6). Focusing mainly on Western classical music, Robinson suggests that at times, Indigenous performers are expected to perform in ways that suit that particular Western classical set-up, therefore sustaining, if not deepening, existing unequal power relations between Indigenous performers, non-Indigenous performers and colonial structures (Robinson 2020, 6). Mi-kaisha agrees that practices Robinson refers to as "inclusionary practices" where Indigenous content is desired, while the context, structure, or set-up of a space, venue, or cultural institution remains unquestioned, can indeed occur. Reflecting on this, she states:

> I'm not saying that, that people shouldn't be intentional about involving First Nations peoples and projects and events. But just doing that in a way that's respectful, and culturally respectful as well. Like, if you're gonna hire a First Nations artist, just hire them for, for them. And absolutely, it's important that they're Indigenous. And that's, that's a massive part of who I am and my artistry, but it should be my choice, whether I choose to bring that into my performance, or whether I choose to speak on that, or you know, how I use my identity and how I use my experience to inform that I don't think that that should be dictated by the event organisers, I think it becomes problematic when they're like, when people are instructing things to, you know, ask for it to be more Indigenous or to present in a certain way or to look a certain way for the institution. I think that's when it becomes problematic. And I guess I'm just lucky that I have a massive awareness of that. And I'm able to squash it as soon as it happens, and just do my thing. (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022)

Mi-kaisha shows her awareness of a problematic phenomenon where commercial institutions dictate how Indigenous performers express their identity during a gig on "their" stage. As critical race theorist bell hooks argues: "Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (hooks 2006 [1992], 366). In the case of Vivid Sydney, what struck me was that "First Nations" was an exclusive section on their website showing the programming, while another entry on its website contains a blog showing a top 9 First Nations events. See Fig. 4.3.
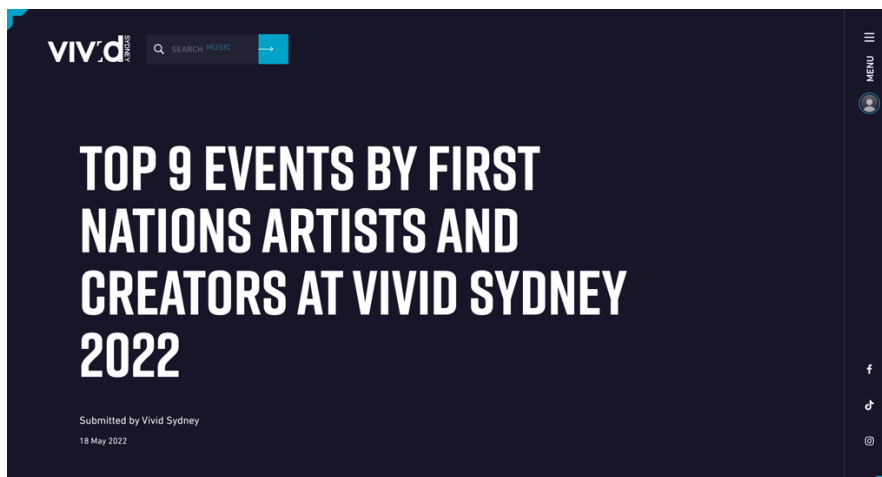
Figure 4.3. Screenshot of Vivid website blog page highlighting First Nations events in their program. https://www.vividsydney.com/blog/top-9-events-by-first-nations-artists-and-creators-at-vivid-sydney-2022.

In an attempt to gain insight into how the Vivid organisers curate and to hear about their decision-making process, particularly around their dedication to Indigenous artists, I asked for an interview. Unfortunately, their response showed no interest in my quest.

I have no information on the Vivid music team members' backgrounds, though, as their profiles on the website did not include any mention of Indigeneity – while the emphasis on mentioning Indigeneity in their music programming stood out – my assumption is that the 2022 edition was organised by an all non-Indigenous team. This shows that there may indeed have been a lack of Indigenous perspectives from within the Vivid institution in working with Indigenous artists and content.

Gamilaroi poet and musician Luke Patterson, for example, commented on the idea of specific sections within festival programs. Commenting on the Sydney Writers' Festival, in which he took part as a panellist, we discussed what an all-Indigenous event would look like, compared to a mixed event such as the Writers' Festival. Luke says: "more fun, more food, it probably wouldn't be in the "exclusive" section.." (Luke Patterson, soundwalk interview with author 20-07-2022).

In the case of both the Vivid festival as well as the Sydney Writers' Festival, Indigeneity is perceived as "exclusive" or "other," evidenced by check boxes on their webpages, enabling the audience to filter events on the genre or through a tag of "First Nations Content" or "Indigenous". See Fig. 4.4 and 4.5.
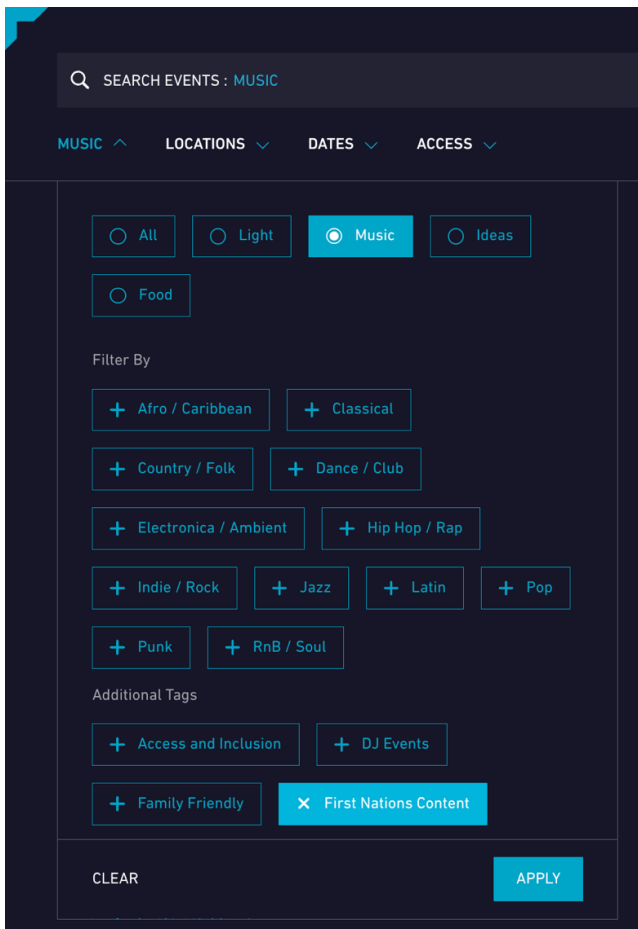
Figure 4.4. Screenshot of Vivid Sydney festival website, highlighting the "First Nations Content" tag. https://www.vividsydney.com/music/tag/first-nations.
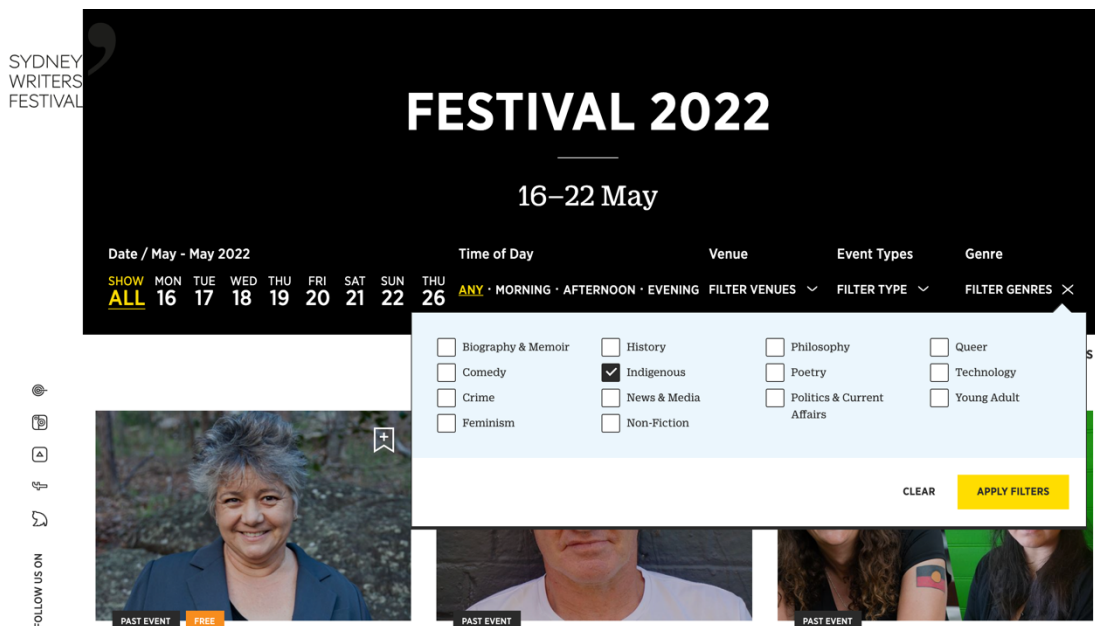
Figure 4.5. Screenshot of the Sydney Writers' Festival program webpage, highlighting the Indigenous genre filter.

The "othering" groups of people, hooks explains, can be exploitative: "Certainly from the standpoint of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, the hope is that desires for the "primitive" or fantasies about the Other can be continually exploited, and that such exploitation will occur in a manner that reinscribes and maintains the *status quo*" (hooks 2006 [1992], 367). This kind of exploitation can emanate by inviting an Indigenous artist to perform as a token or by dictating how an Indigenous performer expresses their identity. Mi-kaisha comments on this:

> It's like institutions saying, "okay, by virtue of us accepting you, you need to bring your title, you need to bring your ethnicity, you need to bring your minority to the university. So we can exploit that as a tool to say that we're woke and to say that, that we're inclusive." (…) any large white institutions do this, and are guilty of this. But I guess the bigger they get, the more problematic it becomes, because the more exploitive it becomes, and the more that they are profiting, I guess off this narrative and off this facade (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022)

Mi-kaisha's ideas on profit, here, shows how it can be problematic when this profit flows towards the institution while the artist is used as a token. Yet, as Butchulla rapper Birdz claims: "there's always room for improvement, especially in regards to gender equality and making sure that the excellence of Indigenous artists is recognised on all stages – not just your stereotypical tick the box "Indigenous/world stages."" (Birdz, in Owens n.d.). Birdz's claim shows the significance of First Nations artists performing at any event, not just a specified Indigenous event. This section has demonstrated that while Indigenous artists performing in institutional "mainstream" spaces according to the rhythms set by settler structures may at times be seen as a token, it also means that many kinds of audiences hear their work while these artists rightfully occupy space. Even though these instances may be heard as presentational performances, they are not isolated but are part of a greater web of actors all creating public disruptions while highlighting Indigenous sovereignty. To explore further kinds of public interventions, the sections following focus on NAIDOC week events.

4.4 NAIDOC Week: Reconciliation, Celebration, or Protest?

NAIDOC week, an acronym for National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee, is a week of Aboriginal culture celebration across Australia[26]. This establishment resulted from years of protest against Australia Day by Indigenous groups since before the 1920s, with several protest initiatives established over the years and a failed attempt to send a petition to King George V. In 1938, during the

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[26] Though the national government does not acknowledge this week as a holiday.

150th year anniversary celebrations of the landing of the First Fleet – for which Aboriginal performers from Menindee in rural New South Wales were brought to Sydney – Australia Day was contested so much that Aboriginal people from Sydney staged a National Day of Mourning (Harris, A., 2020, 9). Over the years, it has grown from this one day of protest, into the establishment of a fully Indigenous committee that made it into a week-long event, developing from NADOC (National Aboriginal Day Observance Committee) to NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee) highlighting the cultural diversity of different Indigenous peoples living in Australia (NAIDOC, n.d.b).

NAIDOC week is a significant time in the year, as First Nations cultural expressions are celebrated this annual week through music, dance, performance, and other creativities. Besides the Indigenous Art Fair that overlaps the first weekend of NAIDOC week, events like art exhibition openings, launch parties, one-day music festivals, and weaving workshops were organised throughout Australia, with plenty of those in and around Sydney. The idea of "rhythm," again, is useful here: while section 4.4 focused on occurrences during which musicians choose to work within the settled rhythms of the city, NAIDOC week is a moment which allows us to listen to the processes of those rhythms being "reversed," as it were, for a week. In this way, NAIDOC week may be seen as a more tranquil version of a carnival. As Rebecca Dirksen states, a carnival can enable a "seeming distraction" from daily adversities combined with collective rage while strongly believing in "speaking out" (Dirksen 2020, 4). While "white settler culture" is still dominating Indigenous peoples' daily experiences in terms of racial profiling, laws imposed such as The Northern Territory Intervention (more information will follow in section 4.5 of this chapter), and the ongoing theft of Indigenous lands, NAIDOC week seems to embody a moment in which spaces are created by and for First Nations people, while non-First Nations people are mere guests.

Scepticism around the meaning of NAIDOC week on a governmental level is seen on social media, in memes, for example. See Fig. 4.6.
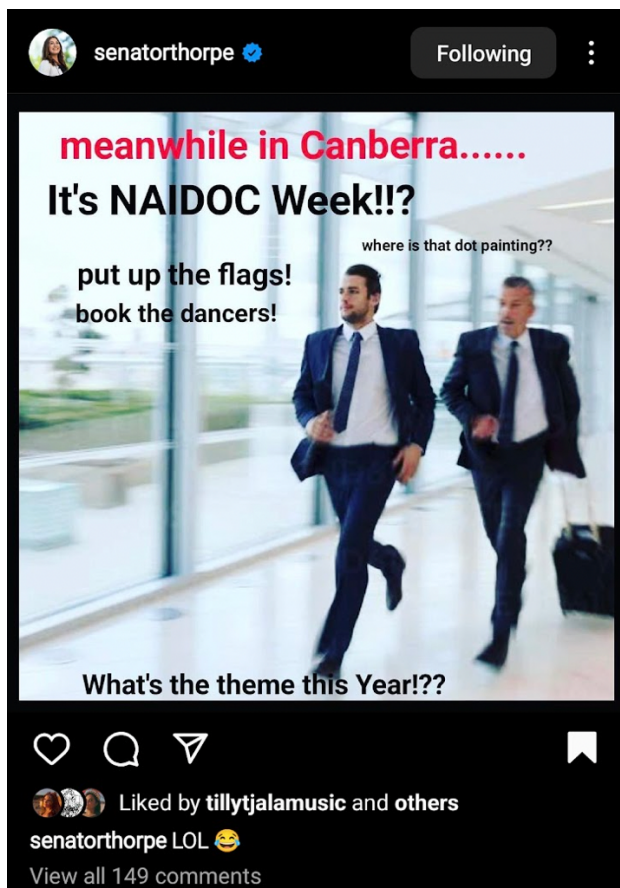
Figure 4.6. Screenshot of a meme indicating scepticism around NAIDOC week posted by Lidia Thorpe, independent politician and first Aboriginal senator in Victoria.

While there seems to be a general sentiment that the government does not encourage Indigenous events such as NAIDOC week enough – hence the earlier scepticism (in section 4.1) around Yidinji's artwork in government department offices – many First Nations acquaintances have told me they would love to see a whole month of NAIDOC week[27], comparing it to Black History Month in the USA or the UK.

I have engaged with the 2022 edition of NAIDOC week, which was themed "Get up! Stand up! Show up!" through participant observation, by being an active audience member celebrating and supporting Indigenous cultures. I took photos and videos of the venues and performances and wrote down notes about the events and my experiences afterwards. Besides participant observation, this was the time for me to connect with musicians and approach them for potential interviews. Within the one-week celebration, I visited eight different events, spanning from full-day festivals, such as Burramatta NAIDOC in west Sydney's Parramatta, to a launch party for an LGBTQI+ channel on digital platform indigiTUBE, and to art exhibition openings, such as visual artist Blak Douglas' exhibition in community creative space 107 Redfern. These occurrences exemplify the variety and diverse cultural events organised this week.

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[27] Personal communications.

For this section, I will focus on three full-day music festivals: 'NAIDOC Week at UNSW,' 'NAIDOC in the City,' and the earlier-mentioned 'Burramatta NAIDOC.' I have selected these three events for their emphasis on music, sounds, and dance. Besides, the similar nature of the events (full-day programme, free entrance, musicians performing on a stage), it also offers a focus on three different areas in the city: NAIDOC Week at UNSW in Sydney's Eastern suburb of Randwick at the University of New South Wales, NAIDOC in the City in the city centre in Sydney's town hall, and Burramatta NAIDOC in the western suburb of Parramatta. The geographical location and the kind of institution where these events took place all determine how we may interpret these events as interventions: an Indigenous celebration in a town hall, for example, carries a different weight than a similar celebration in a park. The Sydney Town Hall is an imperial product – elaborated upon further in section 4.4.2 – and an institutional building with restrictions such as access to certain sections, or music volume, while a park is an open space without obvious colonial symbolisms and feels therefore much less restricted. The following sections will elaborate on this.

4.4.1 The East: NAIDOC Week at UNSW

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) is located in the suburb of Kensington, in Sydney's Eastern suburbs. I found out about this event through the NAIDOC website, which shows several options to filter by, such as place or the kind of activity of interest. The website shows the year's National NAIDOC committee and is tied to the national government, stating copyright by Commonwealth of Australia, apart from the content provided by third parties (NAIDOC n.d.a). Local initiatives can promote their events on this centralised website. For the UNSW event, some of the activities required online registration, though there were no entrance fees.

When I arrived, I experienced a sense of community from the start as people sat close to each other on the floor, some whispering to each other, which suggested they knew each other beforehand. The fact that I could walk in – slightly late – while the audience sat on the floor made it feel open and welcoming. Furthermore, the dancers did not perform on an elevated stage, but performed on the same floor the audience sat on, adding to the relaxed atmosphere. The first activity had already started: Gurrawin Dance. I sat on the floor between other spectators, enjoying the dance performance. A group of about eleven performers danced, portraying various animals, such as emus and kangaroos. Most performers wore shorts and white ochre bodypaint on their upper bodies. The songman – the person responsible for composing songs – was responsible for the rhythm, clapping with two boomerangs while standing on the side. He sang in Gomeroi language – the language belonging to the place the

Gurrawin Dancers are from. We knew a song had finished when he started clapping at a higher tempo while making a "brrrrr" sound. He would then introduce the next song, explaining – in English – which animal the song concerned.

One of the dancers, Jayden Kitchener-Waters, was also scheduled to perform later that day, playing cover songs together with his cousin Keely Cain. Jayden told me later, during an interview, that the corroboree (the dance performance) was performed by a group of Indigenous (mostly male) dancers from Tamworth, a five-hour drive Northwest of Sydney, many of whom are Jayden's family. Besides the dancers, some audience members were also related (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022).

I also wonder if my perception of community was already formed by the idea that I would enter a (temporary) Indigenous space. From what I heard other audience members talk about, the audience consisted mostly of Indigenous people. The space in which the corroboree took place, called the Roundhouse, is a circle-shaped auditorium-like open room, where the group had created a dance space by placing small gum tree branches and leaves in a circle shape. The dancers stayed within this circle, while the audience sat on the floor on one side. See Fig. 4.7. Even though adding the gum tree branches on the floor was a small visual change to this room, it was significant enough to indicate the Indigenous space we were in.

Figure 4.7. Gurrawin Dancers during NAIDOC Week 2022 at UNSW. Photo by author.

A few dances in, audience members (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) were asked to participate in the dancing. Jayden told me later that the Gurrawin group always tries to do this. Since Jayden had been a student at the UNSW, the dance group has come to Sydney to perform on several occasions. Jayden told me:

> whenever I was doing dances, or stuff, [I'd] just invite them [fellow Indigenous students] along and to learn, which was cool. You know, the NAIDOC event, where my uncles and stuff came down to do the corroboree. That wasn't the first time that my uncles had come to UNSW to dance. I'd actually invited them a couple of nights before as well when I was at college. So whenever they came, I'd come and dance with them, and also made sure I told any other Indigenous people that were at college: "Hey, we're going to have a dance. Do you want to come and be involved?" And even if they didn't want to get painted up and dance, I think it's still important that they felt that space was open, and that they felt connected. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview 07-09-2022)

Here, Jayden emphasises the importance of creating an open space for Indigenous students to feel connected to community through dance. This shows the participatory nature of the corroboree at UNSW during NAIDOC week, contrasting starkly with the didjeridu concerto by Keyna and Gumaroy, or

Mi-kaisha's Vivid gig, described in section 4.3. Coming back to the research question on how Indigenous musicians create interventions the city, the Gurrawin Dance group and the University of New South Wales mutually benefit from each other here: UNSW – and its Indigenous student body – facilitates an Indigenous celebratory day, promoting the inclusivity that has become a demand for many institutions. Meanwhile, Gurrawin Dance uses this university space through their profession of dancing and culture sharing while shaping it to create an open space for Indigenous students.

After the corroboree, Vic Simms, a Bidjigal singer-songwriter from East Sydney's La Perouse – a 10-minute drive away from UNSW – took the floor to say he was happy to see culture being 'lived' and 'performed' in an urban environment. We hear echoes of Turino's participatory performance, which requires a specific type of attention "on the activity in itself and for itself" (Turino 2008, 29). By the performance taking place, culture is lived. Vic Simms stated: "We don't have to go to La Perouse, we can just stay here on Country" (Vic Simms, 06-07-2022). La Perouse is known for its natural beauty, being located near Kamay-Botany Bay National Park, which includes a variety of beaches and Bare Island. It is also where the La Perouse Aboriginal community lives and is, therefore, a significant place for Indigenous peoples (La Perouse n.d.). Simms' comment on Indigenous culture being lived and performed in an urban hub such as UNSW shows that he appreciates and encourages continuing First Nations performances in spaces that may not traditionally be associated with those performances. As a student hub, it attracts people from all over the continent (and abroad), including many First Nations students from diverse communities. Logistically, organising an Indigenous celebratory day at a university where people gather (for education) is a strategic move.

Following the Gurrawin Dance performance, the program included various activities such as an Indigenous Student Leaders Panel on First Nations' experiences and the importance of allyship, a weaving workshop, a painting workshop, a volleyball competition, a medicine tea workshop, and music performances by earlier-mentioned Jayden Kitchener-Waters, Keely Cain, and Mi-kaisha. All sessions were facilitated and run by Indigenous students, entrepreneurs, and musicians. I noticed Jayden and Keely mainly performed country music songs, with Jayden playing the acoustic guitar while Keely sang. Other times, Jayden played and sang by himself. Country music is popular among Indigenous audiences because country music artists, such as Slim Dusty, included Indigenous communities in their tours (Fisher 2016).

The repertoire consisted of mainly songs by Indigenous artists from Australia, or songs about Indigenous rights, like the country-music song "Fitzroy Crossing" by the Warumpi band, for example, or "Little Things" by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody. Jayden tells me that "Little Things" is an emotional song for him:

The big thing around that song is it's just a song of survival and great strength. It's a song about standing up against what's wrong for what's right. And I think it's a really beautiful song about reconciliation, people coming together and non-Indigenous peoples. You know, I don't know how to explain it. It's not a song about Blackfellas (…) going to meet whitefellas on their side of the fence. It's actually about whitefellas coming over on our side for once. And yeah, I love that song. And I performed it, well, number one, because I really wanted to perform predominantly songs written or sang or performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, but also just because it's a beautiful song. It's a song of great resistance and strength, but it's also just beautifully written. I love the melody of it. I love the continuity of it. I love how simple but sophisticated the song is. It's a good one. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview 07-09-2022)

Jayden indicates that what is particularly important for him in this song is the idea of non-Indigenous people coming to meet Indigenous people for a change, which can be seen as part of a broader discussion about collaboration, as seen earlier by Yidinji. The song is about Gurindji man Vincent Lingiari, who started a walk-off at Wave Hill cattle station due to poor working conditions. After eight years of strike, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976 was established, enabling Indigenous peoples to apply for land back claims. The famous moment Jayden refers to is when then Labour Party prime minister Gough Whitlam travelled to Wave Hill station and poured red sand into Vincent Lingiari's hands, symbolising the piece of land that was "given back" to Gurindji people after the strike.

For me as a participant-observer, I felt there was no doubt the people behind this NAIDOC event had transformed this space somewhat due to the majority of the crowd being Indigenous and the obvious Indigenous-led cultural workshops, performances and panels. Following Robinson's argument that spaces often like to include Indigenous content without reconsidering the structures in which Indigenous performers are expected to perform (Robinson 2020, 6), the corroboree was probably the most obviously restructured moment of the NAIDOC at the UNSW program. Here, the audience was seated on the floor and were invited to become performers, while the dancers did not perform on a stage. Instead, the audience could walk and sit around them.

Besides the setup, the atmosphere at the campus this day had a different feel. While as a non-Indigenous person, I cannot know how an Indigenous space feels like (besides, one may wonder if it is even possible to define an 'Indigenous space'), I can make remarks about the ways in which this day had a different atmosphere compared to other days I have moved around in this same space. As Marcia Langton describes, what makes "Aboriginality" is precisely the relation to non-Aboriginality: "'Aboriginality', therefore, is a field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people create 'Aboriginalities'" (Langton 1993, 33-4). Whereas I would usually feel like just another student walking around this international and diverse campus, on that day, I felt more like a

guest, enabled by the continued emphasis on Indigenous practices, such as dance, song, painting, weaving, or medicinal tea drinking.

4.4.2 The Centre: NAIDOC in the City

My fieldnotes on this event started with the following remark:

Because of the weather (loads of rain) the "NAIDOC in the City" event was held in the Sydney town hall, instead of in Hyde Park. I thought it was an unexpected location, yet not unexpected either because of the central location. Still, such a colonial building – some irony there I guess. See Fig. 4.8.

Figure 4.8. The entrance hall of Sydney Town Hall. Photo by author.

My surprise for this location was sparked mainly from the presumption that organisers of this particular grassroots event would prefer to avoid associating with a governmental institution as such, in a building that has such an obvious colonial aesthetic and origin. Sydney town hall – first opened in 1880 – and many other town halls throughout the British empire were built as "expressions of administrative pride and power" (Kelly 2009, 356-357). However, in a place like Sydney that is founded on colonialism, it might not necessarily matter if one particular building feels slightly "more" colonial than another. During this one-day event, I did not hear anyone commenting on the building or the institution it represents.

Once I arrived in the hall where the performances took place, it felt more like any other music venue or hall (see Fig 4.9). Compared to the UNSW NAIDOC event that was mainly focused on students, this event was bigger in audience numbers and the audience was more diverse in terms of age range: the NAIDOC in the City event attracted relatively more older adults and more families with young children. Even though both events were "public" in the sense that anyone was welcome and that both events had no entrance fee, apparently, the space the events took place in still determined the visitors' age range – emphasising the importance of the space and the associations it carries – and mainly consisted of Indigenous visitors,[28] something I was glad to see given the colonial space we were in, and again, may point towards the idea mentioned above that Indigenous populations are – unfortunately – used to finding themselves in settler-built surroundings. Compared to a university, a town hall may also be seen as a more public space – a university often requires registration and potentially a student card. Even though no card was needed to enter the UNSW during its NAIDOC event, I wondered if I was allowed to go, not being a student there. This was not the case at Sydney's Town Hall.

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[28] Australia has a loaded history regarding assumptions made by skin tone. Many Indigenous people refer to themselves as proudly Bla(c)k regardless of skin tone. Therefore, my observations are made with caution, and stem from factors that go beyond physical appearance, such as through associations with others and through acquaintances in my personal circles.

Figure 4.9. Hall in basement floor in Sydney town hall. Photo by author.

Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation organised the day in partnership with the City of Sydney.[29] The Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation is the same institution behind Koori Radio. Koori Radio is a First Nations community radio station in Redfern. Unsurprisingly, Koori Radio broadcasted the NAIDOC in the City event live. Hip-hop artist and Koori Radio MC BrothaBlack was situated in front of the stage to talk to the radio listeners between performances.

   The music genres ranged from country music to hip-hop and from corroborees to modern dance. The artists performing were mainly professionals, musicians who perform for paid gigs, such as singer-songwriter Joe Geia, rapper Mr Rhodes, and traditional dancers of Gawura Cultural Immersions. Like the NAIDOC event at the UNSW, this event showcased music by Indigenous performers focusing on Indigenous rights. It was an all-seated event, though I remember it still felt fairly casual. I felt like I could walk around and go in and out, perhaps because it was a free event or because they were behind schedule, giving it its 'loose' feel.

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[29] As stated on the website (Koori Radio n.d.).

Among the performers was MC Munk a.k.a. Munkimuk – who I interviewed later – as part of his South West Syndicate hip-hop crew. One of the pieces they performed was a new release: the hip-hop track "Paradise." Munk explains during an interview what this song means:

> the album starts with 100-year-old Uncle Wes Marne. (…) A 100-year-old Elder to like, start the album, which is way to do it. And the first track talking about what paradise was like before colonisation. What a paradise this place was. (…) At first, it was more about the narrative. And then, me like as the musical person, is more like then: "Well, how do we how do we make a soundtrack to the narrative?" Which is from that first one, which is Paradise. Of course, it's very, sounds like paradise, very sparse. It's got like birds tweeting all the way through the whole track. You know what I mean, and there's like, landscape type things going, and clapsticks, you know what I mean. (Munk, podcast interview with author 18-08-2022)

Here, MC Munk described how he brings nature and roots into urban spaces through sounds. At the start of the track, we hear hip-hop beats, harp strings plucked, clapsticks, Uncle Wes Marne talking about looking after Country, birds tweeting, and synthesised strings. Munk follows with a rap about the beauty of the land, such as the mountains and valleys, while referring to animals, such as the black cockatoo. We heard phrases such as:

> Ancestors roamed on this land, where we stand,
> for a 100.000 years, here we danced, and we sang,
> and have this connection to this Country, like the black cockatoo, that's sitting in the gum tree.
> (…)
> Bird life, wild life, following the songlines, been travelling this path for such a long time. (South West Syndicate feat. Uncle Wes Marne 2022)

The lyrics emphasise the deep connection to land Indigenous peoples have through ancestral ties and songlines.

A modern dance piece that followed echoed Munk's vision of an idyllic paradise, where Aboriginal people coexisted harmoniously with nature. In this dance piece, we saw an Indigenous young woman dance with the Aboriginal flag to a recorded piano and violin piece, which indicated pre-colonial times. We know this as the music suddenly changed when a second young Indigenous dancer came in while the first dancer 'fell' on the floor. The second dancer performed more staccato and less fluid movements compared to the first dancer. We heard more percussion in the music, and the piano and violin were replaced by electronic music, illustrating a severe and distressing situation, depicting the time post-invasion. The theme of celebrating a period pre-colonisation in which First Nations people did not have to convince others of their sovereignty, through imagined sounds and movements, was a recurring theme at this particular NAIDOC event. As Raheja argues, "The visual (…) is a germinal and exciting site for exploring how sovereignty can be a creative act of self-representation that has the

potential to both undermine stereotypes of Indigenous peoples" (2011, 194). Though, I would argue that while these visual representations were powerful, it was the sonic aspect of these performances highlighting and emphasising the represented moods and emotions towards the visual representations.

The emphasis on celebration was apparent. As the website states: "NAIDOC Week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is celebrated by all Australians and is a great opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities" (Koori Radio n.d.). This indicates that public disturbance may take shape in the form of a celebration, as is also exemplified earlier following Panagia's (2009) idea of the political qualities of celebration, where many different voices celebrating can be seen as a contrast with centralised governmental organisation.

As illustrated by Munk, the festival celebrates Indigenous cultures. Indeed, to me personally, the event did not feel angry – which was somewhat surprising considering Australia's violent history towards the First Peoples. Munk states: "I'm a half glass full type of guy, which (…) I'd rather not even think about invasion and more think about celebrating our survival that Aboriginal people have survived this long given the what would you call it, attempts to wipe people out, wipe our race out" (Munk, podcast interview with author 18-08-2022). Compared to other events I had attended in Sydney, the NAIDOC in the City celebration was more about uplifting and supporting community, rather than expressing anger. Moreover, there was an emphasis on the importance of Indigenous cultural expressions in particular. In a track performed by Munk and BrothaBlack, we hear the lyrics: "Once the corroborees are gone, we're finished, so the importance should never be diminished." This phrase shows that cultural expressions such as corroborees are inextricably linked to what Indigeneity is, according to Munk and BrothaBlack, and that performing this culture means that the culture is lived, something we have heard before by Uncle Vic Simms, who iterated a similar sentiment at the UNSW event. Events like NAIDOC week, therefore, create places that facilitate the expression of Indigeneity. As stated before, this in itself is a disruptive act in a neo-colonial nation-state. An interruption of the norm does not have to be loud or angry; sometimes, as NAIDOC in the City demonstrated, it manifests as a celebration of the continuation of Indigenous cultural expression.

4.4.3 The West: Burramatta NAIDOC

The final NAIDOC event I visited took place on Sunday July 10th, 2022. Because of the heavy rainfall that week, many events were cancelled. Burramatta NAIDOC was scheduled to be outside in a park but managed to go ahead, though slightly off schedule, as some performances were pushed back to plan

around the heaviest rainfall that day. The grass had turned into mud, which had become a running joke throughout the day. One of the performers, drag queen El Beauty, switched from sneakers to heels while on stage right before her performance, as she could not walk around otherwise. It became a conversation point between us, and a week later, we sat down for an interview.

El Beauty, too, is someone who performed at several NAIDOC occasions. A few days before the Burramatta event, she performed at the LGBTQI+ channel launch event for IndigiTUBE, which took place in the Imperial Hotel in inner western Erskineville. However, as she is based in Parramatta, she particularly likes performing here. She proudly calls herself a "Westie" and would love for the drag scene to grow in Sydney's west, as she now must travel into the city centre for gigs.

The location of Burramatta ("Burra" meaning "Eel," and "matta" meaning "place" in Dharug language (Dictionary of Sydney 2021)) – the Aboriginal placename of what is also known as Parramatta – was highlighted several times throughout the day, as presenter MC Luke Caroll mentioned that this year's census showed the highest percentage of Indigenous populations in Australia to live in West Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022). I found myself in and around Parramatta relatively often during my time in Sydney. The Parramatta council emphasises its Aboriginal heritage through various events, such as heritage days and Indigenous walks through the area, and the area around the Parramatta River includes Indigenous paintings on the walking paths, including an Aboriginal soundsculpture. El Beauty told me about what NAIDOC week means to her:

> I love each year with NAIDOC, it's a different message by some of the First Nation people you know what I mean, like this year was uhm.. It was something along the lines of "Stand Up, Speak Up" or something like that. (…) and there was one like that "it wasn't just more than words." I can't remember.. but I love how like we get a week to focus on that and be heard and be seen and, and see actions. You know, the only thing that I say is like, surely this wouldn't just be that week. I'm not saying we need a whole year to celebrate the First Nations cultures that's not what I'm saying but those actions need to be carried throughout the [year]. You know what I mean? It's not about just coming up and showing face, like it's good that we can all get along and come together and have a yarn and have a dance and show culture but, we need to see those faces still throughout the rest of the year of supporting First Nation culture. (El Beauty, podcast interview with author 22-07-2022)

Here, we see that El Beauty values NAIDOC week for its focus on First Nations culture, the importance of being heard and seen, and actions deriving from that. However, as she points out, she feels like one week of celebration is not enough, and this remark shows that, indeed, NAIDOC week may be seen by some as this 'odd' one week that is out of the norm. The permission to disrupt the usual rhythms of the city is bounded within the special time of this week. Some events, however, operate outside of the 'permitted' time of the year or assigned spaces. The section following will demonstrate a kind of

participatory noise through reflections on the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* "No Police Guns" Rally held in Sydney on June 18th 2022, as a response to regulations implemented since the Northern Territory Intervention.

4.5 The Northern Territory Intervention

Here I provide a short overview of The Northern Territory Intervention – also the "NT Intervention." This is necessary to understand the section following (4.5.1) on the demand to be heard. In 2007, the Northern Territory Intervention (NT Intervention hereafter) was implemented as a response to the increasing evidence of child abuse in, particularly Aboriginal communities, in the Northern Territory (ANTaR 2009). The "*Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle* "Little Children are Sacred"" report of 2007 states:

> The increasing expansion and identification of social ills or issues (such as child abuse and parenting problems, youth suicide, bullying, domestic violence, substance abuse, relationship breakdown etc.), combined with a greater focus on the quality of family life and the health and wellbeing of family members (Tomison & Wise 1999) have produced significant demand for assistance from families and communities. They seek external support to help them achieve and maintain a "reasonable" standard of living, health and wellbeing. (Wild and Anderson 2007, 40)

This report was the outcome of an investigation into child abuse in the Northern Territory spanning from August 2006 to April 2007 (Wild and Anderson 2007, 5). Shortly after its publication, the legislation of the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007 was established by the Howard government led by the Liberal Party. The Act was said to be an emergency response, allowing merely two months between the publication of the "*Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle* "Little Children are Sacred"" report and the enactment, which has been claimed to be very little time to consult Indigenous communities on the matters (Castan Centre for Human Rights Law n.d.).

The need for consultation has now become one of the main takeaways from how many perceive the NT Intervention. Tyren, a Gamilaroi man living in Sydney, studies Social Work pursuing a career in policymaking concerning Indigenous social work. Referring to the NT Intervention, Tyren told me:

> I've kind of learned about a lot of the policies that governments have started. And then like, it just not working. And a lot of the policies they started are like kind of paternalistic. I think that's the word, paternalism. Yeah. Which is like making a policy or initiative or a program for, like a community or a certain group without consulting them, without asking what they actually need. So it fails because it's not meeting the goals that they actually want. And then it's just like,

probably no lesson learned and then the next time they do the same thing. (Tyren, podcast interview with author 13-08-2022)

As Tyren alluded, many have deemed the NT Intervention to have failed. Some of the regulations under the Act are the restriction of the consumption of alcohol in specific areas, the "five year lease" introduction of some areas allowing the government "unconditional access", the prohibition of pornography in designated areas, and the increase of police forces in Indigenous communities. To introduce these regulations, some already existing laws had to be suspended, such as the "Native Title Act 1993" which allows Indigenous communities to make Land Back claims and the "Racial Discrimination Act 1975" (Castan Centre for Human Rights Law n.d.).

In 2009, the BasicsCard was introduced in specific areas, which affords people to buy necessities, but prevents the purchasing of alcohol, tobacco, gambling services, and porn. Tyren tells me from his personal experience:

> Yeah, well, there is like the NT intervention, where they, I forget what it was called, but I think it was called, like a certain like, card that like that NT communities got that they had to use to, to, like, they couldn't buy alcohol with it and stuff like that. And it was like, quite an intense thing because they sent army and stuff like that to, like come out to these communities and force that. It's just like, very intimidating for Indigenous communities and families to like, feel. (…) it was like a certain card that they had to use, which wouldn't allow them to buy alcohol and stuff like that, which is, which is a big area within communities, but, you know, kind of enforcing rules like that where they have no freedom. Kinda just makes it makes things worse. (…)
> You're walking into communities and like.. the alcohol.. you see all the alcohol cans drop and bottles drop by the time they get to the community, because it's like, alcohol free. But it's like, you know, what changes are they really doing? (…) So it's, instead it should be like working with community and building it up and building capabilities. And education. You know, Aboriginal people drink, because sometimes you know they don't, I don't know how to say it.. They don't have much to do or much going on maybe because, you know, they didn't have a proper education or they can't get a job. So it's just like.. and then they learned that from their father or grandparents and is passed on to the next cycle. (Tyren, podcast interview 13-08-2022)

In 2012, the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012 replaced the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007. The new Act saw some of the initial regulations adapted, though most of them remained. The penalties for bringing alcohol into a community area intensified with up to six months of prison time for 1,350mls of alcohol or less, and up to 18 months of jail time for amounts bigger than that (Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012, 15).

Significantly, in March 2012, a report titled "Listening but not Hearing" was published in response to the consultations that brought about the Stronger Futures Act 2012. It shows critiques on the

consultations that had taken place, indicating that no Elders of the communities were invited to help and share the new implementations of the 2012 Act. The report states:

> The Government's current policies have failed and they will continue to fail for so long as it continues to determine policies without the direct involvement of Aboriginal people in the decision-making process. As so many have pointed out, until Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are allowed to gain ownership over their future, Government will fail to improve their overall circumstances and they will remain second class citizens of this country. (Listening but not Hearing 2012, 6)

The government implemented the new regulations for ten more years, until 2022. The Listening but not Hearing report includes an appendix with transcripts from consultation meetings in various communities. One of the meetings took place in Yuendumu on July 5th, 2011. It shows how the community raised various concerns and indicated desired outcomes of the meeting, such as establishing jobs in the community and appointing an Indigenous Corrective Services officer (Listening but not Hearing 2012, 141-42).

4.5.1 Sounding as One: *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* "No Police Guns" Rally

In November 2019, in Yuendumu, a non-Indigenous police officer shot three times at 19-year-old Warlpiri man Kumanjayi Walker, who passed away hours later. As with so many Indigenous deaths in custody, the community have ever since been trying to have the officer responsible convicted. So far, only a few convictions have been made in the more than 551 Indigenous deaths in custody since 1991, the year the Royal Commission released a report investigating deaths in custody in Australia (Australian Institute for Criminology 2023).

As the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012 would come to an end in 2022, activists have been building pressure and had organised a rally on June 18th, 2022, with a public panel organised eight days prior for people to attain more information on the situation. An Indigenous Elder from Yuendumu[30] flew into Sydney to speak with people. The public panel was held at the University of Technology in Sydney, and I remember the grim ambience in the room. Most of the panellists, if not all, had someone in their family passed away while in police custody. At times, the earlier-mentioned Elder yelled into the microphone: "Enough is enough" and "I won't give up" or "I'd rather die and take a bullet for my community." At times, some speakers were crying and needed to take a moment before they could start.

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[30] Out of respect I refrain from using people's names in this section.

Eight days later, I attended the rally at Sydney Town Hall to support the call to action to defund the police – an explicit echo of the US Black Lives Matter campaign, which Chapter Five will elaborate upon further – in the Northern Territory. Before the speeches, Indigenous music was sounding through the speakers with songs such as the hip-hop track Black Child by Birdz and Mo'Ju, Black Man's Rights and We Have Survived by 80's reggae rock bands No Fixed Address and Us Mob. All music was performed by Indigenous artists, expressing either hopefulness with lyrics such as "Oh child, things are gonna get easier" sung by Mo'Ju (Birdz and Mo'ju 2019) or celebrating survival as heard in Us Mob and No Fixed Address' lyrics: "We have survived, The white man's world, And the horror and the torment of it all" (No Fixed Address and Us Mob 1981). The walking route started at the Town Hall, and went through Sydney's CBD (Central Business District) to end the march at the Law Courts Building. As the city is both home to the institutions that symbolise Indigenous suffering – embodying "big men" politics, as claimed by Maria Langton (Langton 2008b) – and is called home by various Indigenous groups by virtue of its dense population and employment opportunities, this is a place where events such as rallies tend to happen.

Most people wore shirts with the Aboriginal flag, or the shirts printed for this particular rally with the Yuendumu Elders' call to keep police guns out of remote communities. It was a combination of various groups of people: the organisers themselves, such as David Dungay jr.'s family, Kumanjayi Walker's family, and many other activists, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

One of the organisers mentioned various statements; amongst which that in Aotearoa New Zealand, 50% of police officers are unarmed. He asked why that is not possible here in Australia. He also said that the Albanese government needs to take drastic action against the deaths in custody. His words were: "we tried with ScoMo[31], he didn't give a fuck, he didn't listen." He then continued saying that it is Albanese's turn to take action, even though it will probably mean he will get backlash from his colleagues.

Kumanjayi Walker's grandmother spoke in the local language, translated by another woman from the community. She said that she thanks everybody to be at the rally today to support the family in Yuendumu and the Warlpiri Nation. One of the activists from Sydney mentioned multiple times that people in Yuendumu do not have the privilege to use "platforms" in the city, which the communities in Sydney do have. She stressed over and over that when one Indigenous community is hurt, all Indigenous communities are hurt. She came up with a chant then and there (as she said), in which she called: "Yuendumu" to which the rally participants responded: "We see you!", followed by "Yuendumu" (call), "We hear you!" (public response), "Yuendumu" (call), "We are you!" (public response).

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[31] Colloquial abbreviation for Scott Morrison.

One of the organisers said something along the lines of: "no offence to you all, but I don't trust whitefellas". This was part of the introduction to a non-Indigenous activist, who was an exception to that utterance and spoke at the public forum talk at UTS the week before. He provided a knowledgeable and detailed account of the history of implementing the Northern Territory Intervention.

My observations described here illustrate intricate dynamics around notions of race and the politics of Indigenous identity. I used my positionality in this moment as a subject to reflect on these notions and what this means in relation to public space and the role of sound. As mentioned before, while I had the intention to include my observations in this thesis at the time of the rally, I did not attend as a doctoral researcher. Rather, I went to support the call to defund the police in NT communities. While I believe being an academic and being a supporter of social justice are not mutually exclusive (in fact, social justice often drives ethnomusicological research, as seen in Pettan (2008), Hofman (2010), Mackinlay and Barney (2014)), describing these roles as separate comes from the belief that at this moment the call for police defunding was of greater urgency than my quest to shape this thesis. For this, my participation took shape in the form of an active listener, without trying to focus on particular details to reflect on those in my written work. Instead of trying to find something "to get out of this moment," I tried to see how I could contribute in a way that would benefit the movement, not primarily my research. My own politicisation, while standing behind the objectives of the rally, felt important to acknowledge.

The blurred lines between the researcher and the, in my case, supporter of Indigenous rights are discussed by Elizabeth Mackinlay. She reflects on her role as a middle-class White woman working with Indigenous women focused on dance practices and having family ties to the Yanyuwa people through marriage. With more than 25 years of work, her connection and ties to the Indigenous community are incomparable to those of a starting researcher like me without similar family ties. However, as a White non-Indigenous woman, I do share the need to reflect on my positionality in the space of Indigenous studies. As she explains, "[the] politics of "doing" Indigenous Australian studies resonate in and around debates about identity and the "authority of experience" to legitimate speaking positions" (Mackinlay 2003, 263). Being in a place such as the rally where so much grief was filling the air, I felt like it was not my place to centre my research, as I do so very clearly not share similar experiences with Indigenous populations when it comes to deaths in custody.

Yet I heard my position was renegotiated every time we chanted the words "Yuendumu" "We see you!", "Yuendumu", "We hear you!", "Yuendumu", "We are you!". In this moment, I felt part of the "public", even though, following Bennett, neither do I identity as a "harmed body", nor was I of a place where I needed to "restore" my power (Bennett 2010, 101). I simply support(ed) the call. Ethnomusicologist Michael Frishkopf states:

We have all experienced resonance at certain musical events, when "I-It" becomes "We," however ephemerally. But can the social threads spun by resonance endure beyond the space-time of performance? In purely musical contexts, often not: resonance dissipates; connections fade. But when resonance is paired with more durable, purposeful constellations of meanings and social organization (e.g., in ritual or activist settings), then—often—it does, stored there as if in a social "battery." (Frishkopf, in Rasmussen et all. 2019, 307)

The rally urged participants to "be on their side" for the specific call to defund the NT police. Being there was automatically political, and therefore, all rally participants, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, were tied through this goal. By chanting the words "We see you, we hear you, we are you," the rally organisers urged the participants to not just listen to (and potentially not hear) the call but also to have the participants embody the words. Here, Ingold's words "that knowing is a process of active following, of *going along*" (Ingold 2013, 1) again apply, where it is about action more than words, and where "knowing *is* movement" (Ingold 2013, 1). The participatory noise at this moment signified a united group demanding change.

At times, action was urged in other ways. Before the speakers started talking on the stairs in front of the town hall, I saw petitioners and affiliated social groups talking to people. An acquaintance from a solidarity group was there, too. We briefly spoke, and I quickly wrote my name down, hoping to encourage others to do the same. I heard a passer-byer saying to another petitioner: "get over it!" referring to the re-occurring Indigenous call for social change. I saw the petitioner follow the person, trying to convince them while speaking those same words back, this time with a baffled tone: "get over it?!".

When one of the organisers mentioned that whitefellas are not to be trusted (but, "no offense to you all"), it was clear I needed to know my place. A renegotiation of identity happened again. While at times, all rally participants were encouraged to come together by chanting "Yuendumu, we are you", other times, essentialist remarks indicated that participants were not in it together. To this, Mackinlay states: "within the context of Indigenous Australian studies, this is most obvious in the declaration that only Aboriginal people can speak for Aboriginal people, and it is a position which I have heard articulated many times by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" (Mackinlay 2003, 263-64). This remark did reaffirm my already established reservation about my positionality, which was the reasoning behind making my research "second place." However, we must not forget the earlier-mentioned idea of Indigenous communities living in various circumstances, and are in no way reducible to one coherent group of people. After all, while the rally took place in Sydney, this was a call to defund the police in the Northern Territory, specifically, set in motion as a response to the killing of Kumanjayi Walker and the

coming to an end of many of the regulations of the NT Intervention in 2022. Indigenous scholar Marcia Langton states:

> There is a naive belief that Aboriginal people will make 'better' representations of us simply because, it is argued, being Aboriginal gives a 'greater' understanding. This belief is based on an ancient and universal feature of racism: the assumption of the undifferentiated *Other*. More specifically, the assumption that all Aborigines are alike and equally understand each other, without regard to cultural variation, history, gender, sexual preference and so on. (Langton 1993, 27)

This tension around opposing non-Indigenous systems yet appreciating non-Indigenous support is also evident when Gomeroi man Jayden tells me:

> When I was living in Sydney. That was something that did happen a fair bit. Because there were so many Indigenous people living down there, there was also always some great opportunity to to all get together and protest and march and stand up, right. So there was a lot of that down there. And so I rocked up to those. But you know, as you sort of just alluded to my work every single day is a form of protest, form of protest against non-Indigenous people, or policies in the past that have told us that our language that our dances, our culture, our story isn't valued. And isn't any more relevant for the sort of protests that every day and it's really encouraging to see so many young people, especially a lot of non-Indigenous people really engaging in it, as well. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022)

Even though many viewpoints exist on the ways in which non-Indigenous peoples may relate, interact, and support Indigenous groups and Indigenous causes, what is perhaps more relevant is the workings a rally sets into motion. From the inside, it may seem that different groupings are trying to find their ways. Looking at the rally from the outside, what is presented is one group walking together.

Interestingly, it was Aboriginal musical expression that led sociologist Émile Durkheim to develop the concept of "collective effervescence." Collective effervescence derives from the idea that individuals may form a group during which a ceremony takes place, making this group go into a collective state of "effervescence," a state that is out of the ordinary. This state is formed by social relationships Durkheim deems sacred, and it is this sacredness that keeps members of this group feeling an attachment to it, even if the effervescent moment has already passed. It makes this group perform and carry out actions that are not the norm and have a significant impact. He explains: "Beside these passing and intermittent states, there are other more durable ones, where this strengthening influence of society makes itself felt with greater consequences and frequently even with greater brilliancy" (Durkheim 1915, 210).

The idea of collective effervescence has often been adopted in fields related to sociology. Michel Maffesoli, for example, adopts it in his study of community life in relation to the idea of *puissance*,

which he defines as the power of the masses, as opposed to powerful authority, or even the "will to live." *Puissance* lives in the underground, disguised until a moment of effervescence, during which *puissance* shows itself. It is a force that transcends the individual and binds people through resistance against power. What keeps *puissance* together is, again, the idea of sacredness. This is not so much in a religious sense, but it is embodied knowledge (Maffesoli 1996, 63). It does not have rules and does not rely on reason. As this idea is more about the collective than the individual, instead of focusing on the differences between the rally-goers, it is more fruitful to focus on the solidarity that keeps this group together. However, what is often stated is that actions need to be taken beyond the one-day festivities, such as a NAIDOC celebration or a moment of a rally taking place. To re-iterate El Beauty's words: "It's not about just coming up and showing face, like it's good that we can all get along and come together and have a yarn and have a dance and show culture but, we need to see those faces still throughout the rest of the year of supporting First Nation culture" (El Beauty, podcast interview with author 22-07-2022). This sentiment was shared by the rally organisers on June 18. Notions of white folks being there for one day to "tick off" a day doing a "good deed" is not appreciated. Therefore, for *puissance* to exist, it needs to extend beyond that moment. While *puissance* is continually in force, it is only displayed during historical moments such as protests as collective effervescence tribes (Maffesoli 1996, 32). It is here where we come back to noise: as opposed to everyday life in which people navigate the day-to-day as has been reflected on in Chapter Three, it takes a moment of upheaval to create noise that is heard.

4.6 Sound and Performance as Intervention

This chapter examined musics and soundings that, in Novak's words, "disturb the norms of everyday life" and are "associated with public sociality and carnivalesque performances" (Novak 2015, 125). Connecting the idea of celebration, such as seen during NAIDOC week, to the workings of *puissance*, we may even find some insight in a wordplay when resonating *puissance* with the French word of *jouissance*, translating to enjoyment. The idea of Indigenous or Bla(c)k joy can be seen in the idea of pride in Gumbaynggirr rapper Wire MC in his lyrics: "Let 'em know that you be Aboriginal and proud" and "Black pride, awoke my spirit and I cried" or Darumbal Murri and Tongan singer Mi-kaisha's lyrics: "We're Black and strong and powerful, melanin shine beautiful". Chiara Minestrelli refers to this as:

> 'Aboriginal Blackness' conceptualized around the idea of pride (...) as constructed on the notion of an imposed 'Otherness' (in relation to Australian society) and as elaborated through imitative practices (in relation to African American Hip Hop). When derogatory racial categories are adopted by Indigenous rappers, their original use is inverted by means of satirical rejection or

depletion of the original connotation, thus revealing their ideological matrix. (Minestrelli 2017, 78)

This idea can be applied to any musical genre or sounding practice and is also apparent in the form of "strategic essentialism – an intervention into the moment of oppression" (Mackinlay 2003, 264). This was apparent during the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* rally, where all rally-goers, Indigenous or not, were encouraged to sound as one.

This chapter sought to answer the question *How does Indigenous musical and sounding performance create interventions in the city?* As Theatre scholar and artist Alethea Beetson states: "In a country that tried to remove Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through genocide, when an Indigenous musician sings about any topic they are still enacting a moment of resistance" (Beetson 2022, 39). This chapter demonstrated how all Indigenous musics and sounds could be interpreted as interventions against the status quo, as long as these interventions are heard. This is where the city becomes relevant, for its function as a hub for governmental establishments, court buildings, but also media companies, and a place where diverse groups of people live and move. I have used Turino's distinction between participatory and presentational performance, and combined it with Novak's notion in which sound can disturb everyday life norms. This juxtaposition of ideas has helped explore the different ways in which musics and sounds can be political tools, re-asserting Indigenous presence, and highlighting Indigenous sovereignty. While cities may not be associated with Indigenous celebration, or, sadly, even presence, Indigenous musical and sounding performance may interrupt this stereotypical idea, and, following Raheja (2011), use their sovereign position to undermine it. In some cases, this happens through presentational performance, such as seen at Mi-kaisha's Vivid gig, or Gumaroy and Keyna's Celestial Emu didjeridu concerto. Other times, participatory performance invites others to sound and move together, such as seen during the NAIDOC at UNSW event, or at the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* rally. Various city spaces function as hubs to create these gatherings by bringing people together, either listening to, or participating in sovereign sounding practices.

"We're here and we're still here. We're still you know, we're still fighting."

- Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author 27-01-2023

Chapter 5

Intergenerational and Transnational Solidarities: Hip-Hop and Music Videos

Chapter Five focuses on the ways in which First Nations performers take part in musical storytelling with the motivation as well as the goal of intergenerational and transnational solidarity. As Gomeroi and Wodi Wodi rapper Kobie Dee states about the Indigenous music and culture event "We Are Warriors," initiated by Yuin and Thunghutti rapper Nooky from Nowra:

> The whole thing about We Are Warriors is 'You can't be what you can't see.' You know, and to see what a young Blakfulla from Nowra has put on today, it's like – that's what the kids are going to look up to and it shows them they can do whatever they want to do. (Kobie Dee, in We Are Warriors n.d.)

Kobie's statement about the We Are Warriors event exemplifies that the Indigenous-led event aims to inspire young Indigenous people. Intergenerational solidarity through musical storytelling may take shape through broadcasted "air" time and on screen, seen and heard in video clips, but also in a physical sense by musicians "taking up" space and standing in their sovereignty on a tangible platform, such as a stage on a festival, through musical performance. As indicated in Chapter Three, during my fieldwork, it became apparent that storytelling from Indigenous perspectives is much desired by First Nations communities when it comes to how cultural institutions often portray Indigenous peoples. I exemplified this by focusing on Lez's storytelling in Warrane. As will become apparent in this chapter, retelling history is a common theme in musical expressions, celebrating those who have "paved the way" and creating more (professional) opportunities for younger generations, while finding solidarities with other marginalised groups who share similar experiences. The notion of paving the way comes forth from the idea that previous generations of Indigenous peoples, and marginalised groups globally, have taken many actions, such as political activism and protests, to improve living conditions, which Indigenous people today can enjoy. This, in turn, is a motivation, as well as a goal, for Indigenous people today to sustain the idea of making living conditions better for future generations. As such, "paving the way" is an intergenerational and transnational pursuit. For example, we see this sort of expression through lyrics and social media posts, as expressed by Indigenous singer-songwriter Emily Wurramara (Fig. 5.1).
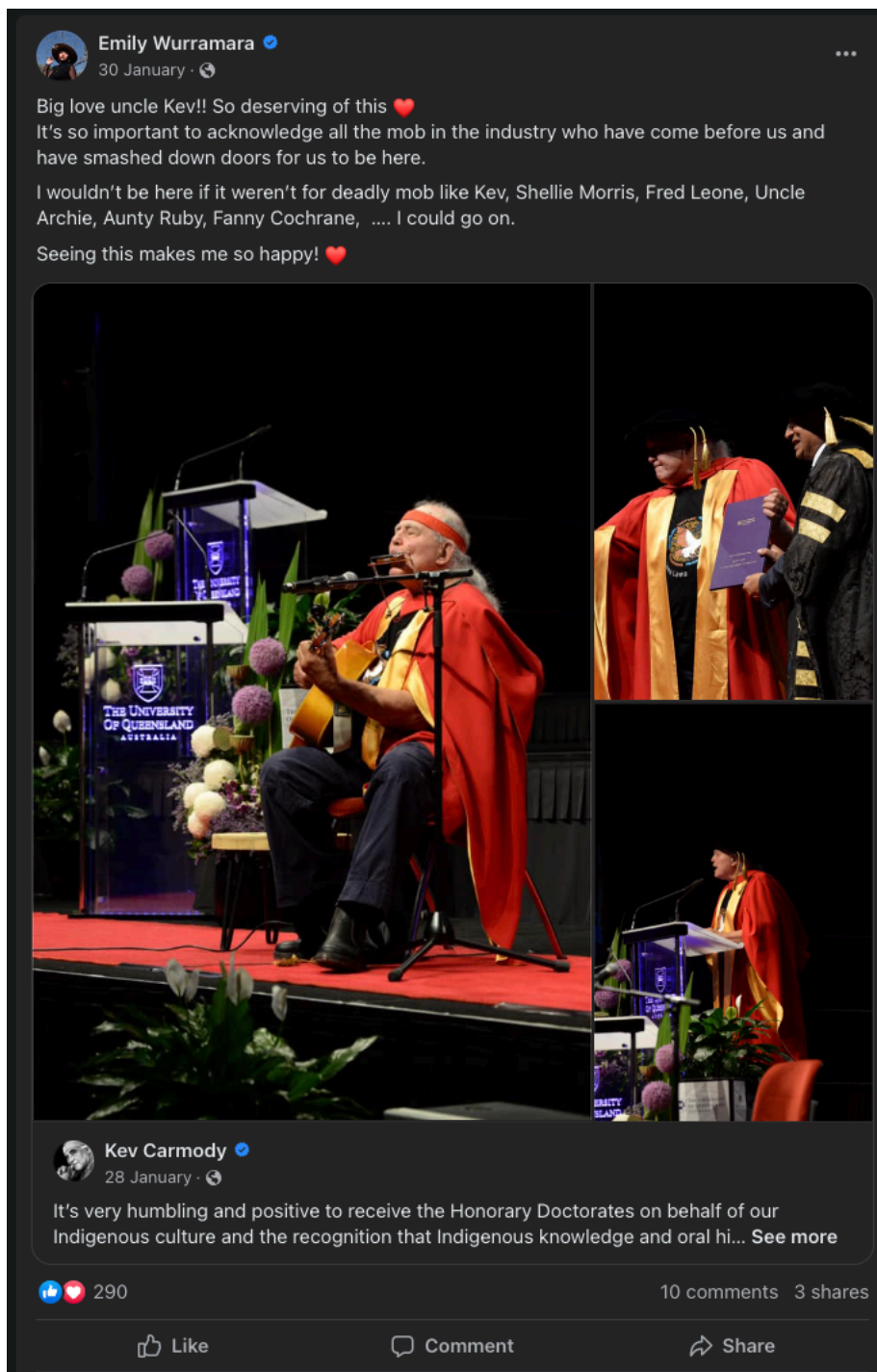
Figure 5.1. Emily Wurramara expressing gratitude towards older generations of Indigenous musicians while sharing musician Kev Carmody's post of him receiving an Honorary Doctorate.

Storytelling has long been acknowledged as essential to Indigenous intergenerational knowledge generation and acquisition in Australia (Beetson 2022). Musical genres that have become part of Indigenous cultures in Australia today are sustaining that tradition, enhanced by media such as radio and digital platforms like YouTube. Throughout my research, it became clear that the idea of "paving the way" for younger generations of people who experience marginalisation is an important notion that

has become a drive for many artists. I therefore ask: *In what ways is First Nations musical storytelling a vehicle for intergenerational and transnational solidarity?*

I will first introduce a methodology centred around audio-visual analysis of music video clips in section 5.1. Analysing video clips allows me to study the narrative of sound, image, and lyrics. I will then focus on various themes that have been shown to be significant in this study, based on interviews conducted with musical artists in the field.

A key theme throughout this chapter is the role of hip-hop in Indigenous storytelling. While Indigenous musicians enhance a wide range of musical expressions, this chapter shows how hip-hop has proven to be particularly pivotal in the art of First Nations storytelling – owed to the key role of lyrics through rap and the MC. There are also links to be found between Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour globally and Indigenous populations in Australia, where hip-hop – often claimed a Black musical tradition – is seen as a vehicle for power amongst those who identify themselves through similar stories often expressed in hip-hop, such as racial oppression and Black deaths in custody.

I will focus on how young artists aspire to be professional musicians themselves and how already established musicians create spaces for younger ones by featuring them on their music albums or creating radio shows. I will then argue why hip-hop in Australia was, firstly, adopted as a Black American music genre, but how it has, today, also become its very own Indigenous music genre in its own right, enabling musicians in Sydney to have a platform and share their stories, through which they counter dominant narratives and create their own. By focusing on music videos and hip-hop I aim to demonstrate how First Nations artists use these expressions as a way of storytelling, and how these can be tools for intergenerational and transnational solidarities.

5.1 The Music Video: Rethinking Place in Indigenous Hip-Hop

Music videos mediate between real-time and the moment of recording and filming. They represent notions of the current ways of thinking and simultaneously influence ways of thinking. Therefore, I apply a study of music videos to get a closer understanding of the ways in which Indigenous musicians in Australia, particularly in Sydney, position themselves in the world through music.

Culture and Media theorist Mathias Bonde Korsgaard states that a music video represents an "interweaving of sounds, images, and words" (Korsgaard 2017, 6), emphasising the interplay between the music and the video and resisting the tendency to view these – the music and the video – as two separate entities that happen to come together. Korsgaard points out that previous research on videos, films, and the moving image often emphasised the images, rather than the music and sounds (Korsgaard 2017, 6). With French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* ([1986]

2005) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* ([1989] 2005) as some of the most influential works in video and film studies, studies have mainly focussed on actions. This focus was based on Henri Bergson's concept of "intervals"- the moment between an action and a reaction to it (Bergson [1912] 2004, 28). There has also been a focus on framing and the viewers' perception based on what is seen.

In contrast, music scholars have prioritised music's significance over that of (moving) images. For example, popular music scholar Simon Frith claims videos function as songs more than films (Frith 1988, 216). However, Korsgaard does not hold music in higher regard per se. Instead, he focuses on the relations between the visual and the aural and approaches the music video as a phenomenon in its own right, not merely a subgenre of cinema or popular music (Korsgaard 2017, 7, 11). Having said this, the music videos I will analyse for this chapter are those of music artists, not necessarily visual artists. This implies that the music seems to be the core element, or better said, the first artistic expression, of which a corresponding music video has become a part and has been developed based on the music. This idea aligns with what Korsgaard calls the "musicalization of vision," which he explains as: "the visual polyphony [that] is brought about as a consequence of the multi-track production of popular music" (Korsgaard 2017, 113). In practical terms, this also means that meaning-making in music videos is often not achieved by direct visual representations, such as is often seen in films, but instead relies on its affective qualities, by which the (moving) images follow the music (Korsgaard 2017, 113). I have used Korsgaard's approach by focusing on how the visuals in the music videos of Ziggy Ramo's *Little Things*, DOBBY's *I Can't Breathe*, and BARKAA's *Blak Matriarchy* have enhanced and emphasised the lyrics and sounds of the music.

As will become clear in this chapter, hip-hop is an important medium among Indigenous musicians in Australia. Media theorist Murray Forman's focus on the genre in his book *The Hood Comes First* (2002), though situated in the U.S.A., provides a useful theoretical framework to discuss here. He attributes hip-hop's popularity growth in the 90s to a big part of the emergence of music videos. Forman states: "By 1983, when the network [MTV] finally entered the high-volume New York and Los Angeles cable markets, artists including Culture Club, Duran Duran, and other so-called video bands emerged as top pop stars in America, often well in advance of major tour exposure or radio play" (Forman 2002, 239). Digital social networks, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok accelerate today's dissemination of music videos. Indigenous Studies and Communication scholar Chiara Minestrelli describes this as particularly valuable for emerging and/or independent artists, as their videos can circulate effortlessly and reach a global audience (Minestrelli 2017, 59).

The idea of the networked dissemination of video clips as the driving force behind an artist's success aligns with the particular examples of Indigenous Muruwari Filipino artist Dobby's video *I Can't Breathe*, in which case it was the music video receiving all the online attention – as discussed in the Introduction

Chapter of this thesis; or Indigenous Wiradjuri Filipino artist Mo'Ju thanking their music video director during a performance in Sydney in 2018, stating the music video for their song *Native Tongue* was a real "game changer," implying the video's success.

Notably, Forman argues for the connections between space and identity expressed and enhanced by hip-hop and emphasised even more by music videos. His ideas on the connections between place and hip-hop in music videos focus on the "hood," the local neighbourhood where the artist lives or often hangs out (Forman 2002, xix). Hip-hop sociologist Tricia Rose, too, made this conclusion in her 1994 publication *Black Noise* (1994, 10). Indeed, as noted in Clapham and Kelly we see Indigenous hip-hop group Local Knowledge, for example, drive around The Block in Redfern while "they call upon and celebrate different Indigenous groups across Australia" (Clapham and Kelly 2019, 12-13; Local Knowledge 2008). Besides local neighbourhoods, the Indigenous hip-hop music videos I discuss here also seem to emphasise places of political or historical significance, highlighting natural sites such as shorelines and beaches or urban sites around landmarks and industrial sites, challenging dominant perceptions of these places.

Minestrelli ascribes this kind of framing as a way for artists to identify as Indigenous due to their specific relations to land as sovereigns in Australia. She describes it as a repertoire of Indigenous music videos, explaining: "Images of the skyline with the passing clouds and the camera capturing the sun setting, long shots, and panoramic views of the ocean and the beach were typical of film clips of some of the iconic Aboriginal bands such as Yothu Yindi and Warumpi Band" (Minestrelli 2017, 180). Inevitably, images of land and nature often refer to Country. This, in turn, relates to the earlier statement by urban theorist Libby Porter, claiming this is a stereotypical view in which it is easier for dominant settler societies to value Indigeneity when it exhibits close ties to natural environments (Porter 2016). It does, however, serve as a visual marker of something that is central to a pan-Indigenous identity in Australia. As Michelle Raheja states about Native American groups, and similar to Indigenous groups in Australia: "Native Americans have no single shared culture, event, or series of events necessary to imagine a collective group experience" (2011, 196-97). However, she points out that these are "visual registers" so meaningful to many various Indigenous groups, many can relate to them. Ideas and visual representations of Country are the one thing that Indigenous peoples in Australia can use as a way to claim their sovereignty throughout the continent that all groups have in common. Raheja adds: "Sovereignty is an ontological and philosophical concept with very real practical, political, and cultural ramifications that unites the experiences of Native Americans, but it is a difficult idea to define because it is always in motion and is inherently contradictory" (197). While we cannot point to one particular or single phenomena to assert Indigenous sovereignty, particular visual "clues" might point to a few specifics that are shared among Indigenous groups. The idea of sovereignty on Country

could be one of those. Besides, as opposed to many other phenomena, the ocean and the beach, but also images of the desert, have visually stayed relatively similar between right before Captain Cook's landing in 1770 and today. It seems, therefore, understandable that these types of images or sonic references are being used to make visual and auditory claims of sovereignty over these places. After all, how can one convincingly claim sovereignty over a space that has changed so much to the point one might not recognise it from prior to European invasion, such as an urban space?

It also aligns with shared sentiments felt when it comes to Indigenous people's displacement, many growing up away from their ancestral lands while unable to learn their culture and therefore physically removing people from the places they can practise their sovereignty over. As Gomeroi rapper Kobie Dee explains about his referring to Country in his songs:

> it felt weird that I just never learned about like, where I'm from, you know, I mean, I didn't, I didn't grow up learning Gomeroi dances, I didn't learn Kamilaraay language and, and stuff like that. So that was this disconnection there, because my friends are from here [Bidjigal land]. And they all go, they get to grow up with that, you know, and I just, I kind of just felt that disconnection. (…) I guess a lot of, because that was, you know, that was a bit of a struggle for me as a young Indigenous man of, of growing up away from my Country. (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author, 27-01-2023)

Kobie told me that the reference to Country is a way to reflect on the struggles he faced living away from Country, and how this showed in his daily actions (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author, 27-01-2023). This reflects the significant ties to ancestral, sovereign, place in Indigenous hip-hop.

The music videos I will discuss here are Ziggy Ramo's *Little Things*, Dobby's *I Can't Breathe*, and Barkaa's *Blak Matriarchy*. These musicians are based in Sydney, which is also where their music videos are set. This will tell us more about the specifics of this area in Australia concerning Indigenous musics, and how this aims to create Indigenous spaces through Indigenous representation both onscreen and "onsite" showing footage of specific areas in the city. Besides, they all have strong ties to hip-hop through their (previous) repertoire and by identifying as rappers. The main aspect I discuss here is place, and the ways in which it functions as a theme for activism and how it relates to Indigenous sovereignty in Australia. I follow musicologist Jada Watson's insights, illustrating how the use of spaces and places in music videos is instrumental in unveiling the narrative frameworks. Locations such as natural sites or landmarks can be aids to put the narrative of the video in context (Watson 2019, 278). Focusing on place in particular necessitates an analysis of music videos, and not just music without visuals: Place may sometimes not have a significant part in the lyrical content, though accompanied with a video, it may add an extra layer of information relevant to what we hear. A video may contradict or enhance the

music, position the artist in a geographical location (Vernallis 2013, 222-23) or make the audience reimagine their relation to a place.

Approaching this from an ethnomusicological perspective, the context of the music videos, embedded in cultural situations and social and political positions, drives my analyses. Similar to Taylor's (2000) analysis of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" – focusing on how the many potential meanings of the lyrics contribute to the popularity of the song – I, too, will employ lyrical analysis to demonstrate how lyrics reflect shared realities among Indigenous musicians in Australia, as well as People of Colour transnationally. As I will analyse while describing significant phenomena I pick up following the music videos, I strongly recommend that anyone enjoy and learn from these videos for themselves.[32]

5.2 On Indigenous Hip-Hop

The sections under 5.2 indicate how hip-hop facilitates artists to uplift younger Indigenous generations and find transnational solidarities. This may happen through the representation of Indigeneity on a platform, rapping from a young person's perspective, or inviting a young artist to sing on an album while paying tribute to earlier generations of Indigenous and/or Black activists who have done similarly in the past. As there has been a structural lack of Indigenous(-led/-owned) spaces, this has been an inspiration for many to create those spaces, often facilitated through hip-hop, may these be physical or mediated. The inspiration for this comes from both within Australia and from global civil rights movements. While hip-hop facilitates this as a genre through which marginalised communities may identify, it also shows how this genre enables a continuation of Indigenous storytelling and how Sydney Indigenous hip-hoppers make the style not only Indigenous, but tailor it to Sydney-specific localities as well.

5.2.1 BARKAA: Taking up Space to Create Space

> [We] have so many Black artists coming onto the scene. And I think it's just inspiring for me, as well, because they're Black. And they're like becoming mainstream. And they're just putting a voice out for us and for mob, I guess. And it's just really inspiring to see them, you know, doing what they're doing. And especially BARKAA, she raps and she produces content about her own experiences as a Black woman, as a mother. And I think that's just so inspiring to me, because like, I want to be there one day (Cianna Walker, podcast interview with author, 13-05-2022)

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[32] BARKAA – Blak Matriarchy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J-2ervgSfc
DOBBY featuring BARKAA – I Can't Breathe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB9xhr_wR0M
Ziggy Ramo featuring Paul Kelly – Little Things: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pk6dgf0EnmU

I spoke with Cianna Walker – a Yuin and Gumbaynggirr singer from Sydney – in May 2022 to talk about her experiences as a young Indigenous woman studying to become a professional musician. While she already performs for paid gigs at local council events, she has now started her music studies to get a university education – against all her expectations – and to excel as a musician.

She told me her favourite musical styles are R&B, soul, and hip-hop. The latter genre is employed by BARKAA, the musician Cianna refers to as her inspiration. As Cianna mentions, BARKAA, indeed, has become "mainstream": When walking through Sydney's inner western Glebe markets, I noticed one of the stallholders playing BARKAA's song "King Brown". I told her I loved this music, to which I received an answer: "Yes, it is about time Indigenous women are recognized and celebrated in the mainstream media!"

This section shows how hip-hop artist BARKAA has created a status for herself in the music industry that enables her to share this space with others – particularly women – to uplift, support, and amplify their voices. On May 4th 2022, I went to one of BARKAA's gigs called "Ngana Birrung", which translates to "Black Star", in west Sydney's Bankstown Arts Centre. BARKAA's entire performance signified her family and motherhood, and she kept reiterating her wishes to be a better mum, especially for her oldest daughter (whom she refers to as Lil' Kinji when they perform together). She often mentioned how grateful she is to her mother and sister for caring for her kids, saying that her mother deserves a crown. When she said something like: "If you think we are strong, just wait for our kids," the crowd started cheering.

As stated by Cianna, BARKAA, indeed, emphasises her motherhood during her performances and in her music. She often asks her children to come on stage to perform with her, who, in turn, receive the biggest applause from the audience. The song "Fight for Me" on her E.P. "Blak Matriarchy" illustrates how the artist has been combatting the hardships in her life, such as drug addiction, while she expresses quilt feelings towards her oldest daughter while rapping from her daughter's position:

> I'm broken and alone
> I know we had a broken home
> Stop thinking you need a man ma
> Getting chucked around the system, Need ya to take my hand ma
> Wanna go home, but you're to selfish on that needle
> Think you bad to the bone, was once good but you turned evil

These lyrics refer to the systemic removal of Indigenous children from their (parental) homes in Australia. While the official governmental-induced policy to forcibly remove Indigenous children – referred to as the Stolen Generations – spanning from the early 1800s until the 1970s (Barney and Mackinlay 2010, 1), the "Family Matters" report of 2021 shows that in 2019-2020, compared to non-

Indigenous children, Indigenous children were ten times more likely to be living removed from home (Liddle 2021, 25-26), indicating that Indigenous child removal is still prevalent today.

During a recorded live-streamed video on YouTube, right before the "Fight for Me" music video went live, BARKAA says:

> This song is both a mix between (…) my mum's story, you know, dealing with abuse in care. As you know, my mother is Stolen Generation. (…) Mum never got to come home and she was put in state ward (…) and put in the care of the government, the government didn't provide that care. A lot of our kids.. you know, a lot of reports have gone through a lot of statistics of our children getting abused in care. And, you know, this is a song, you know, not just for First Nations people, but for everybody who is, you know, I guess, dealing with parents in drug addiction, dealing with, you know, dealing with facts. (…) I just wanted to shine a light on our babies first and foremost, because they're the silent voices of our system. (BARKAA 2022)

As Barney and Mackinlay point out: "without doubt not one Indigenous Australian family has escaped the effects of the trauma of removal" (2010, 1), while Atkinson states: "For many, alcohol and other drugs have became [sic.] the treatment of choice, because there is no other treatment available" (2002, 70). BARKAA represents so many Indigenous families who have been a victim of a system forced upon Indigenous peoples, indeed seeking solace in drugs. With her mother being removed from her family during her childhood, BARKAA has made her daughter front and centre of the song, giving her a literal voice by rapping from her perspective and making her the focus point in the video clip.

It is not just her own family she shines a light upon. Darumbal Murri and Tongan artist Mi-kaisha, who is, like Cianna, another young female musician from Sydney, is featured on BARKAA's "Blak Matriarchy" E.P. In the song "Come Back" we hear Mi-kaisha sing her lyrics:

> We're Black and strong and powerful
> Melanin shine beautiful
> Resilient we made it this far
> We done made it through the dark
> You're looking at the real monarch

Mi-kaisha tells me during an interview: "I'm so honoured. And it just feels, yeah, super surreal that I'm part of that project and get to have my little moment to say what I want to say as well on her project and the fact that she gave me space to do that, as well, is just a massive honour" (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author, 02-06-2022). While BARKAA was nominated for two ARIA (The Australian Recording Industry Association) awards in 2022, she shares the space she has created for herself with other young Indigenous female artists, like Mi-kaisha, by not only including her in her song, but asking Mi-kaisha to write and sing her personal lyrics. Mi-kaisha elaborates on her experience:

BARKAA was secretly working away at this EP, and I don't know, she just messaged me on Instagram. And she was like, "Hey, Sis, I have this song, I would love for you to sing on it." She sent me over the track. I loved it. And literally in this very room that I'm sitting in right now I have my little studio setup. And I just got my microphone out and recorded, wrote a couple of ideas, recorded them sent them back to her. And she was like, "Sis, I love this." The next week, we're in the studio, I literally rocked up, had a little quick yarn with her and the producer recorded the vocals in like half an hour. And that was it. It was done. And for me, it just felt so easy. And it just felt so right. And it felt natural. And that's not something that you have the privilege of experiencing all the time as a songwriter and an artist. But there was something about what the song is saying and what purpose it's serving for our community, specifically, our Black women in our communities. It just felt right. I don't know a single song that exists that is for our women only. (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author, 02-06-2022)

Mi-kaisha emphasises that both women have come together in this song as Black women, and to celebrate that. Similar is the first track on the E.P. with the identical title: "Blak Matriarchy", which evidently reveals this track's theme. The word "Blak" spelled without a "C" is common usage among First Nations people in Australia. The start of use of the word Blak can be traced back to 1994 when KuKu and Erub/Mer visual artist Destiny Deacon convinced the curators of a collaborative exhibition to change the title to "Blakness: Blak City Culture" (Munro 2020; Latimore 2021). The word Blak without a C is used to differentiate First Nations peoples in Australia from non-First Nations Black peoples. It is also said that Deacon urged to take the C out of Black to reclaim the word from settlers and redefine it in her own way, which was different from the stereotyped view colonisers had of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, quoted in an article by Kate L. Munro, Deacon states: "Growing up, I always heard the words 'You little black c…s from white people. It's still common (to have) black c….s being shouted at us" (Deacon, in Munro 2020). Beyond the political meaning of the usage of the word "Blak," perhaps the title is also BARKAA's tribute to Destiny Deacon, amongst other First Nations women.

I choose BARKAA's "Blak Matriarchy" track and music video as an example here, as her importance and influence among young, mainly female, Indigenous people was undeniable. During my fieldwork in Sydney, I have not come across one Indigenous person who did not know who BARKAA was. I choose Blak Matriarchy specifically to account for the focus on women and the intergenerational solidarity depicted. Throughout the "Blak Matriarchy" music video, we see Indigenous women looking staunchly in the camera, dancing, or appearing on a screen behind BARKAA herself. The first phrase of lyrics we hear is a recorded voice in the background saying: "I am tired of begging and asking for our humanity. When is it enough?" This is an iconic phrase by Wongatha/Yamatji and Noongar/Gitja actor Shareena Clanton, who is also of Etowah Cherokee, Blackfoot and African-American descent and based in Australia. She appears on a black-and-white screen behind BARKAA, highlighting the historicity of the moment when Clanton spoke this phrase. During an interview on Australia's television channel ABC in

2018, she responded to the "Close the Gap" initiative in which seven targets were set to improve Indigenous wellbeing, health, and education. Clanton challenges then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull for only reaching six of the targets (ABC News (Australia) 2018).

The Blak Matriarchy video then introduces us to a cast of all-First Nations women, while BARKAA critiques the British monarchy and puts the spotlight on Blak women in her lyrics instead:

> Couldn't care less 'bout the monarch
> Ima set fire to the kingdom
> I'm coming for them
> All hail to blak matriarchs

The video ends with another iconic figure, the late Arrernte Anmatjere actor and politician Rosalie Kunoth-Monks. In 2014, she was at a roundtable at the earlier-mentioned Q&A program on the ABC (ABC 2014) television channel, with the words we also hear at the end of *Blak Matriarchy*: "You know I have a culture, I am a cultured person. Don't try and suppress me and don't call me a problem! I have never left my country. I am not the problem." While we hear these words, BARKAA speaks them simultaneously, showing First Nations women's intergenerational and shared struggles in Australia of different generations.

So far, I have examined, through the case study of BARKAA's song "Blak Matriarchy," how the artist uses her music – mainly in her lyrical content – to illustrate the continuity of both Blak issues, as well as strengths passed down from generation to generation. I have also demonstrated how she uplifts young women, either as a role model or by inviting them to sing on her album and promoting their music.

5.2.2 Representation through Circulation: Broadcasted and On-Screen

English theorist Diane Railton and Gender theorist Paul Watson argue that music videos often portray women negatively, or not at all, while music videos have the potential to show possibilities for women (Railton and Watson 2011, 18). This is even more important for women in marginalised situations. Indeed, what BARKAA does, and many other First Nations musicians in Australia do, is represent Indigenous women with pride in places – such as digital platforms like YouTube, but also in "physical" venues – where Indigenous people have not been represented before, as in many cases, they were physically not allowed to be. This section will, therefore, focus on the power of the "being", the "doing", and the "happening" of Indigenous musical performance.

Earlier-cited Cianna tells me why representation, in this case in the movie "The Sapphires" which follows the story of four Indigenous female musicians travelling abroad as a girl band in the 1960s, is so important to her:

> The Sapphires was like my holy grail for like a large portion of my life. And I think a lot of young Aboriginal girls can relate to that as well. Because I guess in a way we saw ourselves in the actors like Jess Mauboy, Miranda Tapsell, Deborah Mailman, we saw our aunties our, like our sisters, our mothers in them, so I guess it kind of like struck a chord, especially with like, my cousins and stuff. And like my, like, my Aboriginal friends, like we all, it was just like, it resonated with us, because obviously, we could see ourselves in them and like, you wouldn't come across a young like Aboriginal female that has not seen that movie. (Cianna Walker, podcast interview with author, 13-05-2022)

This aligns with an observation made by Daniel Fisher about Jessica Mauboy – the actor Cianna refers to above – a few years earlier, when he explains that celebrities like Mauboy have become part of people's personal identification with their own Indigeneity. This indicates that, indeed, this identification transcends localities (i.e. urban areas – where Cianna is based, or rural areas – what Fisher refers to) and emphasises a pan-Indigenous identification through political unification of Indigenous peoples:

> Jessica Mauboy, staging her voice above the polished groove of a CD backing track, participates in a long history of media activism and advocacy that today allows a voice such as hers, singing commercial soul and R&B musics, to be heard in a remote Aboriginal community as at once "black" and "Aboriginal." As mediatized avatars, such celebrity voices have themselves come to inhabit people's own voices and expressive repertoires, not just when they speak and sing about Aboriginal experiences, but in ways that fundamentally shape the value, politics, and historical significance of those experiences. (Fisher 2016, xviii-xix)

As Railton and Watson describe above, it is, in some cases, not about how women are represented but about the idea that women are represented at all. Support for Indigenous women "making it" on mainstream channels is celebrated among Indigenous communities, which, for example, was apparent when fashion magazine Australian Vogue included a fully Indigenous female model cast on their cover with Indigenous women of varying generations, with, again, the beach in the background potentially referring to ideas of Raheja's Indigenous visual sovereignty (2011) (Fig. 5.2), which was shared by numerous Indigenous acquaintances on social media.

Figure 5.2. Magnolia Maymuru, Charlee Fraser, Cindy Rostron and Elaine George on the cover of Vogue Australia. Image: Vogue. On: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-06/indigenous-model-vogue-magazine-elaine-george-paved-the-way/101038714.

In music video clips, celebrating other women is seen and heard when BARKAA does not just make herself centre stage but centres her song around Indigenous women as a group, emphasising the importance of community support in the phrase: "Mob on my back, yeah they all rock with me" while being surrounded by women. This aligns with Tricia Rose's idea that references to the local also include the artist's friends or support system. She states: "Nothing is more central to rap's music video narratives than situating the rapper in his or her milieu and among one's crew or posse" (Rose 1994, 10).

Moreover, hip-hop artist, MC and presenter at Koori Radio Munkimuk, or Munk, emphasises the importance of uplifting and showing solidarity with community. Not only does this mean uplifting Indigenous communities, but other marginalised peoples as well. MC Munk himself, for example, is part of the group South West Syndicate, formed by members from various cultural backgrounds besides Indigenous, such as Lebanese-Australian, Croatian, and members of Pacific Islander backgrounds. About their newest album, "Promised Land" which is yet to be fully released, Munk explained:

> [The album] basically tells like a story, a history, of this country going through like, like Aboriginal issues, migrants, you know what I mean, because our group isn't just all First Nations people, we're all.. it's a multicultural group (…). And then how we connect in the way of hip-hop culture. (Munk, podcast interview with author, 18-08-2022)

Here we can see how hip-hop facilitates a coming together of the various group members. A short moment later, Munk told me that the theme of racism appears in the middle of the album, emphasising that this experience is shared among the group members. This kind of solidarity among Indigenous peoples and, what Biripi hip-hop scholar Grant Saunders refers to as "culturally and linguistically diverse" or, "CALD" (2020) communities, may be a result of the dichotomy between White Australians and Indigenous people: White Australians, Saunders explains, "cannot identify with Indigenous Hip-hop resistance narratives, for they were, and never will be, victims of their own hegemony" (2020, 82). CALD communities, however, can identify with these.

This is today reflected in the music that is played at Koori Radio, which, in its forming years, was only tailored towards Indigenous music. Koori Radio is a radio station in Sydney's Redfern, named after First Nations people living in New South Wales and Victoria. Munk told me the origin story of Koori Radio:

> In 1988 there was the Bicentennial celebrations, which then was the biggest ever First Nations march of people coming from all over the country to Sydney. And on that day in 1988, people needed some way to know what was going on. So Radio Skid Row, which was originally a university radio station that then moved into just being an independent radio station gave, basically, Radio Redfern air time to share the frequency. Yeah. And then then that just kept carrying on. And then eventually that kind of died out. (…) then Cathy Craigie was like, "well, let's like, start our own radio station then on our own terms and our own.." and then had test frequencies for many years and just doing stuff and then one day, there was, immaculately there was licenses going up for grabs, and Koori Radio being someone, being a station that offered something different to any other radio station got the license. (Munk, podcast interview with author, 18-08-2022)

As Munk says, Radio Redfern was born out of the need for people to know what was happening during Australia's Bicentennial and the protest for Indigenous rights as a response to this event. When Munk became part of Koori Radio, he started his program "The Indij Hip Hop Show" showcasing First Nations hip-hop artists. Munk told me:

> filling in on some of the other stations as a presenter, you don't have any pick on what you play. The few times that I did it, I was like, "I'm not really enjoying this way." And it's like, what you call it..? Not really any First Nations mob in any of this music that I'm playing and I got a whole heap of it. And I'm like, trying to tell these people at these bigger radio stations that.. "Nah, man, this stuff is like, exists," and they're like, "nah, nah, nah, nah, this is what you got to play." So I kind of like then thought, well, "I've got all this stuff, man, I'll get to Koori Radio, and we'll

play" like this. And then that just became pretty massive and a place for First Nations artists to then send their music in and get played. (...) I remember Briggs sending me his first, like, album. (Munk, podcast interview with author, 18-08-2022)

Like Radio Redfern, and later Koori Radio, Munk's "Indij Hip Hop Show" was filling a void: when other radio stations did not allow him to play the Indigenous music Munk had acquired over the years at his three-on-three basketball competitions, combined with hip-hop challenges during which artists would give him their songs on CDs. Munk's mind was set, as soon as he got the opportunity; he told me: "I'm only gonna play First Nations hip-hop artists," giving these artists a place to have their voices heard (Munk, podcast interview with author, 18-08-2022; Fisher 2016).

While lyrics and their meanings are often seen as one of the main elements in hip-hop – attributing this idea to the core role of the MC (Neate 2004, 4), here I argue that with the focus on representation, we may go beyond lyrics and its meanings, and focus on the musicians and the music being there in the first place. The producing of the music and performance, and the inevitable reception of it while performing, has power in itself, especially when the musicians making the performing happen are Indigenous, as these musicians would add a political layer to the performance. When I asked Mi-kaisha about her music lyrics not reflecting a strong political message, she told me: "I think the power of my music, I think is that, like you said, at first sight, it's not inherently political. But I think by virtue of it just being an authentic expression of me, it becomes political because it's a First Nations woman expressing herself in whatever way she wants" (Mi-kaisha, podcast interview with author 02-06-2022). In a place where First Nations peoples are marginalised, actively "being" and making "something happen" become political acts. Munk affirmed this when he told me: "I reckon any First Nations person that is doing music is political in itself. In a way of a person is just like being, you know what I mean, is choosing to tell a story" (Munk, podcast interview with author, 18-08-2022). This demonstrates the significance of First Nations music taking place, representing Indigenous culture on screen, on a stage, or on the radio. These were places where First Nations people were excluded for a long time.

5.2.3 "I Can't Breathe": Bla(c)k Power, Hip-Hop Traditions, and Trans-national Solidarities

Acknowledgements of Bla(c)k history and the emphasis on community support are not isolated phenomena in Indigenous hip-hop in Australia. Instead, this section focuses on how hip-hop globally knows a history of acknowledging historical figures who have been significant for artists to be able to make music and perform. As the late rapper Tupac Shakur recites in his famous track "Old School": "What more could I say? I wouldn't be here today, If the old school didn't pave the way" (2Pac 1995), a sample used from fellow American rapper Grand Bupa, who recited this phrase in the song

"Dedication" by his hip-hop group Brand Nubian (Brand Nubian 1990). Following Brand Nubian's example in "Dedication," Tupac also names Black artists who went before him, such as De La Soul and Queen Latifah.

In the accompanying video clip, we see these figures appear in photos or videos, a phenomenon that has also been seen before. In American rapper Queen Latifah's video clip "Ladies First", for example, she sings in front of black and white pictures of Black female rights activists, such as Angela Davis, Winnie Mandela, and Sojourner Truth. Again, like BARKAA's earlier analysed video clip "Blak Matriarchy", Queen Latifah uses black and white photos, highlighting these historical references. Even though BARKAA does not explicitly highlight these perceived links between her and Queen Latifah in her lyrics, one cannot ignore the associations between the two Black female rappers, both shining light on other Black women who have been pivotal in advocacy for Black women's rights.

Ethnomusicologist Liz Przybylski suggests that hip-hop is a genre "that fluidly passes political borders. Many artists have gravitated to hip-hop's story of possibility as a kind of creative expression that has come from places that have been marginalized" (Przybylski 2017, 493). She argues that while "Indigeneity" and "Blackness" may sound like two separate concepts in academic settings, lived realities show that these categories often overlap. This dialogue between Blackness and Indigeneity enhanced by hip-hop is what she calls "crossings" (Przybylski 2021). This aligns with what Black Popular Culture scholar Halifu Osumare (2001) refers to as "connective marginalities," in which hip-hop may express similar social challenges among Black people globally.

Indeed, the links between Indigenous peoples in Australia and Black peoples overseas, demonstrated through hip-hop, are hard to ignore. In fact, many First Nations activists in Australia have ties to the Black Panther movement and the Freedom Rides established in the U.S.A. Cianna told me:

> I was born into a family of activism. My nan's brother is Uncle Chicka, Charles Dixon, and he was good friends with Charles Perkins, who was from University of Sydney, and he was one of the leaders that led the Freedom Rides. (…) my great uncle, my Uncle Chicka Dixon, he was a major activist, major advocate for justice, Aboriginal rights, human rights, the Freedom Rides happened in 1965. And it was actually inspired by the Freedom Rides that happened over in America with the African American mob over there. And basically in 1965 The SAFA which is at the time was Student Action For Aborigines, also Aborigines is a slur but that's what it was called at the time. Times have changed now. Basically, SAFA was a bunch of students taking action for Indigenous peoples, especially in regional community. So led by Charles Perkins, a bunch of them got on a bus. And they toured regional New South Wales and protested and brought awareness to basically the living conditions. (…) So he, he was an activist. He also did work with the Black Panther movement over in America as well. So he's very Power to the People, Black Power. He was a big part of my activism. (Cianna Walker, podcast interview with author, 13-05-2022)

It is no surprise that figures such as Cianna's granduncle Charles "Chicka" Dixon and his friend Charles Perkins (also known as Charlie Perkins) are celebrated in today's Indigenous hip-hop. Kobie Dee's track "Still Standing", for example, includes the lyrics:

> For the ones that fell before us so the next could breathe
> For our people who still died because of your disease
> It's not as easy as your eyes to see, we've gotta be that change
> Fight to see this culture remain
> Uncle Charlie, Uncle Chicka, fought through all of that pain (Kobie Dee 2020)

This again shows the importance of paying tribute to older generations of Indigenous activists who have led movements such as the Freedom Rides in Australia, inspired by those in the U.S.A. Scholar in Australian Aboriginal Studies Kathy Lothian shows how Indigenous activists in Australia have adopted their own versions of Black movements, inspired by movements in the U.S.A., like the Black Panther Party (Lothian 2005). Munk also told me about a composer project he was involved in: Ngarra-Burria, where he worked with blues singer Marlene Cummins. Cummins – who, like Munk, also used to have a show at Koori Radio – has played a significant role in the Black Panther movement in Australia. So much so that the documentary "Black Panther Woman" is dedicated to Cummins's involvement with the party (Munk, podcast interview with author 18-08-2022). In the documentary, she states: "Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, Stokely Carmichael, Huey P. Newton.. They were our heroes" (Cummins, in Perkins 2014).

Today, these connections are still apparent in music. Sydney-based rapper Kobie Dee tells me why hip-hop and rap resonate with him specifically:

> The storytelling, especially, like, just the stuff that they talk about. I would go outside and I could see in my neighbourhood, you know, the drugs, violence, like all of that stuff, but, not, not in like a glorifying way, like, the way that Tupac would talk about that stuff, you know, and then and the way that Tupac would talk about, you know, issues for his people over in America, you know, Black people in America and seeing issues with Black people here, you know, like us as Blackfellas here, faced a lot that I could relate to in Tupac's lyrics. You know, not even just Tupac like, Kendrick and J. Cole. And, you know, these kind of artists and not even just those kind of things, but also like, just the fun in the lyrics sometimes too like, just the storytelling and stuff like that I just really resonated with me a lot of what they spoke about. (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author 27-01-2023)

The hardships People of Colour face on a day-to-day basis expressed through rap is how Kobie relates his world to that of Black people in the U.S.A. Like Kobie, Palestinian rapper Tamer Nafar sees Tupac as an example of shared struggles, referring to his neighbourhood and encounters with the police. He states: "His [Tupac's] experiences are our experiences. His struggles with the police are our struggles

with the police. His ghetto is my ghetto. If you listen all he talks about is the ghetto, revolution, politics" (Nafar, in McDonald 2013, 20).

Similarly rapping about shared experiences on encounters with the police, Filipino and Muruwari hip-hop artist DOBBY told me about his song "I Can't Breathe," produced as part of the Black Lives Matter movement uprisings in 2020:

> I turned on the TV around June last year [2020], and I saw on Sunrise, which is, you know, one of the news channels here. There was this Australian woman, non-Indigenous white woman in Los Angeles, I think, or it was it was somewhere in the States. (...) She was talking to the Black Lives Matter protesters. (...) And then at the end of her report, she goes: "Oh, you know, thanks for telling me all about that. Because we back home don't have the history of police killings in Australia." And I just like, was so upset and just outraged by that, along with, you know, 1000s and 1000s of other, you know, yeah. Lots and lots of people here, were like, "what are you talking about? Because we definitely have that history of police killings here in Australia. You don't even know about the history." And I was like, I felt so helpless. Because obviously, she's in the States, and I'm back at home. And I can't say anything to like, I just wanted to jump through the screen and be like: "She's wrong. We do. And we see you and we feel you." (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021)

DOBBY, here, emphasises the emotions and struggles he shares as a Person of Colour, relating to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour in the U.S.A. Here, I will focus on some aspects of the music video accompanying the track, as this video received unprecedented media attention and has often been claimed an "unofficial anthem" as part of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protest in Australia (Silly McWiggles blog & podcast 2021). It has also made its way into school curriculums as an official resource for students to learn about anti-racism (Schuitenmaker 2022, 3; Racism No Way, n.d.).

The music video of his song "I Can't Breathe" starts with images of an art installation showcasing birdcages that represent the loss of 50 different bird species with European settlement in Australia (City of Sydney, n.d.), a clear visualisation of one of many ramifications of European colonisation (Raheja 2011, 197) that stands in stark contrast with Indigenous sovereign practices. Therefore, this music video can be seen as a firm intervention, specifically responding to the 2020 surge of the Black Lives Matter movement following the murder of George Floyd (DOBBYau 2020b). The lyrics "They said Australia and America is not the same. I say "David Dungay," they don't even know the name" show a parallel between Black deaths in custody in the U.S.A. and Australia, shedding light upon the murder of Dunghutti man David Dungay Jr. in Australia, five years prior to the murder of George Floyd in the U.S.A. With "I Can't Breathe", DOBBY and BARKAA (who is featured in the track) express their frustration about the question of why masses of people spoke out about Floyd's murder, but little is known about police killings of Indigenous people in Australia. DOBBY explains:

When George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis in the States, in June last year 2020, we, in Australia, looked back in our own backyard and said, "well how come we are quick to stand up and fight for someone like George Floyd but we don't even know the name David Dungay Jr. who was killed in the same, exact way. By not just one cop, but five police officers, in a prison." (…) The cops stood on the back of his neck and he was suffocated. (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021)

The video shows both rappers, DOBBY and BARKAA, together with their all-Indigenous "crew," – as referred to earlier, and similar to BARKAA's Black Matriarchy: a central aspect in rap music videos (Rose 1994, 10) – most of them wearing shirts with images representing Black and Indigenous rights movements. DOBBY's shirt shows the Aboriginal flag and BARKAA's shirt includes the text "Pardon Me for Being Born into a Nation of Racists." This refers to a famous photograph of Gumbaynggirr activist Gary Foley, who was demonstrating against South African apartheid during their 1971 Springbok rugby tour. With this, he also drew attention to social injustice issues against Indigenous peoples in Australia (UQ Art Museum 2016).

David Dungay Junior's cousin, Gumbaynggirr Dunghutti Bundjalung activist Elizabeth Jarrett, also appears in the video, wearing a shirt with a photo of Dungay and a photo of Floyd with the text ""I Can't Breathe" Justice for George Floyd (2020) and David Dungay Jr (2015) and all black people who have died in police custody across the world BLACK LIVES MATTER". Besides lyrics and clothes, the video also depicts Indigeneity through Josh Sly holding and playing a didjeridu and Luke Currie-Richardson holding a boomerang and a wooden club. A re-telling of history from an Indigenous perspective is a significant aspect of this piece, as the lyrics sound:

Got a lotta books that call us nomadic savages
Maybe that's a connection to them attacking' us

Government thinking up any other solution
But truth leads to Treaty and revolution
Killers acquitted, your silence is killin',
Give us your platform so your people can listen,

First came the massacres, then came the mission,
then stole the children, then filled the prison
No wonder our people do not trust the system;
Over 400, not one conviction, shame!

Here, DOBBY calls out the Australian government for not taking serious action against the high mortality rate of Indigenous people while in police custody. We hear echoes of the earlier-mentioned idea of claims against rape not being taken seriously or the downplaying of the reasoning behind crimes

(section 5.2). Facing these issues, such as DOBBY raps, would call for a "Treaty and revolution," as Australia is one of the few Commonwealth nations that have never established a treaty with First Nations people. The fact that there is no treaty – which would give Indigenous peoples more control over their own lives as their sovereignty would have been acknowledged, even though it would entail a "participation within liberal institutions" (Prokhovnik 2013, 420) – indicates that, indeed, the federal government of Australia upholds a system oppressing First Nations peoples.

The track continues to take us through historical events, with lyrics such as "saying Sorry means it never happens again," referring to National Sorry Day in Australia. This day, on May 26th annually, commemorates the Indigenous children forcibly removed from their families under Australian laws, referred to as the Stolen Generations (Healing Foundation, n.d.). In 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also made an apology to First Nations peoples for the suffering caused by federal governmental laws enabling the removal of Indigenous children from their families. DOBBY then refers to football player and American civil rights activist Colin Kaepernick taking a knee during the national anthem as an act of protest against racial injustice (France 24, 2018) by rapping:

Some of these cops musta been bullied in PE
to kill mob, that's why Kaepernick took a knee,
Donald Trump's calling that a lack of respect,
but what do you call a knee to the back of your neck, huh?

We find another reference linking former U.S.A. Prime Minister Donald Trump with the civil rights movement in the lyrics: "No more Twitter fights, 'cause the revolution televised, go!" referring to Trump's frequent controversial statements on Twitter and poet and activist Gil Scott-Heron's famous song titled "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Moreover, one of the verses sounds as if it is spoken through a loudspeaker, emphasising an activist aesthetic in combination with the flickering "police lights" in the background.

Rappers find connections globally, not just to the U.S.A., but also with artists from the U.K. Gomeroi artist Kobie Dee explains about his collaboration with Black British rapper Jords:

we were involved in these workshops with YouTube called "YouTube Black Voices." And that was like, they had Black artists from all over the world. And we were involved in these workshops. And it was with YouTube about like, working on our content for putting on YouTube and stuff like that. And then doing like, there was producing workshops and writing workshops and stuff like that. (…) And so when we got to London, we linked up (…) just like exchanging, you know, like one exchanging music, he showed me stuff from his new album, I'm showing him stuff that I haven't released yet. And just connecting as I guess, as Black men as well, you know, him being a Black man from London and me being a Black man from Australia, and connecting on that sense and and talking about the stuff that we face and seeing a lot of the

similarities in in what our people face and really connecting in that way. (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author, 27-01-2023)

Kobie tells me the two rappers toured together in Australia, Jords being Kobie's supporting act during his 2022 tour. Moreover, Kobie Dee shows how he has always been inspired by the grime scene in the U.K., mainly because it enabled building a community around it in London. He explains about his 2022 visit to London:

> I've always been a fan of grime and the UK scene. I've always been a fan of it and to go see where it started and how much of a community was built from it. And all of that stuff was just so inspiring for me as an artist, especially for me as an artist here in this country. Because I feel like our scene is just popping, and it's just starting to build that community. And there's rappers everywhere now, like when I was young, there was no rappers. If you did rap, like you, you either kept it on a low or you was like you was battling or something like that. So to see where the scene is now, I seen that a lot with the very early stages of grime music and the scene in the UK. So it was it was very inspiring. (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author, 27-01-2023)

As Kobie mentions here, Black music scenes that enable people to forge a community, such as the grime scene in London, inspire him. It is unsurprising to know that Kobie Dee is the driving force behind the South East Block party in Sydney's Maroubra, a one-day festival celebrating community through hip-hop music.

Besides solidarities around Bla(c)k narratives, we see affiliations on a pan-Indigenous level as well. One of Kobie Dee's newest releases is his track "Father's Eyes," a collaboration between him and Māori artist Stan Walker (Kobie Dee 2023). This gives voice to Indigenous fathers' experiences and encourages to break inter-generational trauma specific to Indigenous people. Another example is the hip-hop track "Until We're All Free" by a collective of Indigenous artists from Australia and Palestine, and People of Colour. This protest hip-hop track is a clear response to the 2023-2024 burst of violence as part of the ongoing genocide in Palestine, calling for a ceasefire (Sereen 2024). Elsewhere, I have demonstrated the online attention Indigenous artists in Australia provided to Indigenous People's Day in the USA, where DOBBY, for example, shared a TikTok video by Bobby Sanchez, a hip-hop artist who is a descendent of the Wari people in Ayacucho in Peru (Schuitenmaker 2021, 1-2). Since then, DOBBY has released a new track in 2022, "Walk Away," where he raps Sanchez's lyrics while referring to them:

> "Bobby Sanchez when I say
> "See, you genocide us"
> Then you colonise us, sterilise us, gentrify us" (DOBBYau 2022)

These lyrics demonstrate that DOBBY finds affiliations with Bobby Sanchez's experiences, specific to Indigenous groups. Solidarities among global and local Indigenous people is what Thomas Hilder (2015)

explores in his study on "pan-Indigenous" performance at the Riddu Riđđu international Indigenous festival. Hilder demonstrates how the Riddu Riđđu festival, and Sámi musical performance, can forge "cosmopolitan ties" among Indigenous groups globally, in that Indigenous musicians find connections over resisting the idea of nation-states (2015, 208). It is the effects of the establishments of nation-states upon Indigenous lands that undermine Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. I have aimed to demonstrate how hip-hop, specifically, has enabled artists in Australia to find linkages between Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour globally, while expressing similar stories of oppression and struggle.

5.2.4 First Nations Storytelling through Hip-Hop

As indicated above, First Nations hip-hop in Australia shows direct linkages to hip-hop globally, traced back through the civil rights movement in the U.S.A. Parallels can be found between marginalised groups of people adopting the music genre hip-hop and contesting the status quo (Rose 1994, 101). However, when it comes to First Nations hip-hop in Australia specifically, many have told me they feel strongly connected to the genre because of its effortless adoptability into Indigenous cultures. MC Munk explains:

> I suppose that's the other thing why hip-hop music resonates with, especially with First Nations people in this country, is also that in our culture, stories were passed down through song for the last 100,000 years, as well as with cave paintings, as well. You know what I mean, rock art, which is very similar to, like, graffiti art you know what I mean, which is why probably why, you know what I mean, that's why I think that's why hip-hop culture like resonates big time with a with, with First Nations people here in this country, because it's a very similar way of passing on information or knowledge. Yeah, I think that is the, the connection that mob here have with, with hip-hop culture. (Munk, podcast interview with author 18-08-2022)

Here, Munk ascribes hip-hop's celebration among First Nations peoples to its similar way of passing down knowledge to pre-invasion traditions. This indicates how hip-hop can be claimed as an Indigenous music genre and emphasises hip-hop's ability to educate. Shared struggles of marginalised groups have now become part of Indigenous stories, too. Munk's remarks immediately reminded me of my earlier interview with DOBBY, who shared this sentiment:

> There's something to be said about all of these Indigenous rappers, like hip-hop is so applicable or can be applied to, you know, Indigenous cultures so, so seamlessly, it seems like, you know, you look at the four elements of hip-hop, which is you know, DJing and MCing and breakdancing and graffiti. The same way with Aboriginal culture, you've got you know, the breakdancing is

the corroboree like the dancing, the you know, the, the body paint the ochre that we use to paint ourselves up, the dirt, you know, maps and the engravings and the, you know, paintings on caves and rocks and it's all kind of the same thing, as well as oral storytelling is that MCing that's our teachings from generation to generation. And then the music is the DJing. Like, we've got the didj up north, and we got the boomerang and we got the clap sticks, and we got the possum skin. So it's culture. And so I think there's something to be said about how, one: how hip-hop is so celebrated in Aboriginal culture, like BARKAA, like, you know, DRMGNOW, like Kobie Dee, as storytellers. (DOBBY, podcast interview with author 09-07-2021)

This brings us back to Munk's idea of Indigenous musicians and their inherent political storytelling. Stories, words, and names have long been integral to Aboriginal ways of life (Curran et al. 2019).

The practice of sampling in hip-hop culture – in which new recordings re-use pieces of previously recorded music – could also be seen as a way of stories being re-told to the next generation. Tupac's song "Old School" exemplifies this. He used a sample from Brand Nubian's song "Dedication". Or, instead of using a piece of existing music, a person's spoken words, like Shareena Clanton's phrase, are heard in BARKAA's "Blak Matriarchy", as described above. Rose explains: "For the most part, sampling, not unlike versioning practices in Caribbean musics, is about paying homage" (Rose 1994, 79), or, according to media sociologist Dick Hebdige, "an invocation of someone else's voice to help you say what you want to say" (Hebdige 1987, 14). Kobie Dee tells me that a significant moment of validation for him was when he first uploaded his recorded raps online and then received requests from his friends if he wanted to include their names in his songs. He states:

And then when I recorded it, those same people was like: "Ah, like, you actually sound good, actually." And I'm like: "yeah." And then, so it was like, once I started getting that, you know, then people are putting in requests that, like, "Oh put my name in your next song." And all this was like, and then I started doing that, started putting people's names in songs. (…) from there to see – because I still see so many of those people that I grew up with, I still live in the same area that I grew up with. So I still say those people and they literally seen my growth from 14 years old, to where I'm at now. So it's like, if I think back, I think anyone seeing how far that I was gonna take it, really. But yeah, it meant a lot. It meant so much because it validated that, what I'm doing sounds good for one, and two: people actually like it. So yeah, it was very exciting. (Kobie Dee, podcast interview with author, 27-01-2023)

Connecting hip-hop sampling practices to practices in oral cultures is not new. Rose reiterates historian Walter J. Ong, who focuses on originality: "Sampling technology as used by rap DJs and producers is strikingly similar to Ong's interpretation of narrative originality in oral cultures: "narrative originality lodges not in making up new stories (…) [instead] *formulas and themes are reshuffled* rather than supplanted with new materials"" (Rose 1994, 88). Instead, Ong claims that oral societies repeat learned stories over and over again, because "[k]nowledge is hard to come by and precious, and society regards highly those wise old men and women who specialize in conserving it, who know and can tell the stories

of the days of old" (Ong 2002 [1982], 41). The point here is not to focus on originality; rather, I am showing how the reiteration of names or musical sections is a common and much-valued practice in Indigenous and global hip-hop practices.

Deriving from the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement uprisings is also DOBBY's version of Janelle Monáe and record label WONDALAND's song "Hell You Talmbout", in which naming, again, takes centre stage. Monáe and the WONDALAND musicians collective released the song in 2015 as a protest against police killings of Black people in the U.S.A. (Torres 2015). The song calls out name after name of Black people whom police have killed. Moreover, they also released an instrumental version for others to use and fill in the silence with their voices. The label states: "This song is a vessel and now it is YOUR tool," and

> We've created this space for YOU to join us in honoring the memory of individuals that have been victimized by systematic oppression and abuses of power in our communities. It is our hope that, together, our voices can be a force that adds to a movement for recognizing our collective humanity. The practice of policing those who are Other must come to an end. (Leight 2015)

At the end of a music video based on the "Hell You Talmbout" track, the rapper Rio the Rtist ends with the statement: "We need to let the world know, and you need to know, that silence is the enemy, and sound is the weapon" (The Black Narrative 2015). This emphasises how using one's voice is to have – in this case – political agency (Fisher 2016, 116), a privilege taken away by those whose names are encouraged to be spoken.

The #SayTheirNames campaign strives to recognise violence against Black people and to say the names of those who have been victimised. This is an adaptation from the phrase #SayHerName, a campaign started in 2014 to recognise violence against Black women particularly (Wu et all. 2021, 1). Repeatedly saying people's names is an important strategy for the Black Lives Matter movement. Henry H. Wu et al. state:

> Even though each new instance of extrajudicial police violence is very often not directly related to a past incident, the names of past victims are still often reiterated online in the wake of a new victim's death. This connects that instance to previous instances of police violence. By repeatedly saying the names of past victims of police violence, the names themselves become signifiers of the same topics, issues, and narratives that are signified by #BlackLivesMatter more generally. (Wu et al. 2021, 2)

"Hell You Talmbout", which derives from the phrase "What the hell are you talking about?", has, in line with hip-hop's aesthetics mentioned above, been versioned by DOBBY in 2020. This time, it includes the names of Indigenous peoples killed by police in Australia, except the last one: George Floyd,

connecting Floyd's killing to the movement that has sparked another conversation about Indigenous deaths in custody in Australia. Other names referred to are Lloyd Boney, Fiona Gibbs, T.J. Hickey, Elijah Doughty, Ms. Dhu, Tanya Day, Mulrunji Doomadgee, Robby Shillingsworth, Mark Quayle, Kumanjayi Walker, and David Dungay (DOBBYau 2020a). While referring to the names of people who have passed may, in some cases, be controversial, it also shows the significance of speaking out these names, which includes Australia in a worldwide conversation on Black deaths in custody. Sometimes, following tradition, names will be adapted or altered after a person's death. For example, the name "Kumanjayi" is a replacement name for someone who passed away, enabling one to refer to that person without naming them (Jacklin 2005). DOBBY explains why, in the Indigenous context in Australia, sometimes it is accepted to name people who have passed:

> In Hell You Talmbout those are names who died prematurely due to police violence so their names are very much in unrest, whereas traditionally in Indigenous culture you would go through a process of when they're dying and then ceremonially passing and buried, so there's a lot of culture and tradition around how mob prepare for death, dying and also grieving too. These names were never given that chance and so we say their names in protest and song to simultaneously grieve and fight. (DOBBY, personal communication over Facebook with author, 13-05-2023)

Here, DOBBY shows how hip-hop for First Nations populations offers a way to not only have a voice to represent marginalised groups but also an alternative way of grieving. European settlement on the Australian continent has led to systemic disadvantaging of Indigenous peoples, often being the hyperfocus within the police system and are therefore subjected to police brutality at higher rates compared to non-Indigenous populations. Furthermore, it has disrupted many cultural practices, among which Indigenous cultural practices that revolve around traditional grieving. Naming in this way, therefore, has unfortunately become a newer tradition. At the same time, simultaneously, older Indigenous practices alluded to above, such as storytelling, are enhanced in First Nations hip-hop in Australia.

5.2.5 Sydney Indigenous Hip-Hop

As described above, First Nations hip-hop has its own signifiers and interpretations unique to Australia. Chiara Minestrelli states:

> after the initial phase of adherence to the canons of 'American Hip Hop,' (...) and as is visible through the many forms of Hip Hop that have manifested across different parts of the world,

Indigenous artists have found their own unique voices through Rap music. This also collides with a widespread idea about Indigenous youth as disengaged from and in conflict with their Elders; in fact, these artists have proven that Aboriginal culture is still moving flexibly, taking new shapes, dismissing and adopting some aspects from other cultures, and yet maintaining its core values. (Minestrelli 2017, 184)

Minestrelli argues that Indigenous hip-hop artists practice Indigenous cultural expressions, specifically by performing hip-hop. This can be seen as the localisation of a global tradition (Ingalls, Swijghuisen Reigersberg, and Sherinian 2018, 3). I refer to localisation here to emphasise the locality of Sydney specifically. Unlike Indigenisation, which is a specific form of localisation that draws on symbolisms referring to Indigeneity specifically[33], localisation is a broader term that takes into account local practices that are not necessarily associated with Indigeneity, although they do not exclude those either.

Some hip-hoppers have been pivotal figures in this localisation of global musics. As performance scholar Ian Maxwell states: "The development and maintenance of a hip-hop community down under relied (and, to an extent, continues to rely) upon the efforts of various social agents to reinscribe their own social worlds with logics, truths, actions, and interpretations" (Maxwell 2001, 260). MC Munk is, without a doubt, one of those social agents. Besides the aligning aspects of hip-hop and Indigenous storytelling, there has also been a conscious effort to distinguish from hip-hop in the U.S.A. When I asked about the focus on Sydney in his lyrics, such as "freestyling to myself, walking Sydney streets rhyming" (Renegades of Munk, n.d.) and the Sydney skyline in the South West Syndicate logo, Munk told me:

back in the, say, the early 90s. I reckon meeting other, what would you call them, famous hip-hop acts that were coming from America to here and meeting, meeting them. And just like that whole thing of they just talking about what they.. what is happening in their lives locally, and just learning that from them overseas hip-hop acts, you know what I mean, it's like, they don't wanna hear people in Australia talking about the streets of, the streets of New York. (Munk, podcast interview with author, 18-08-2022)

First Nations hip-hop in Sydney and Australia generally relies on and derives from hip-hop from abroad, yet simultaneously redevelops it and adopts it to make it its own style, while employing aspects of Indigenous cultures such as storytelling and oral transmission of information in the genre. Halifu Osumare calls this the "indigenization of hip hop": "Moving beyond mimesis to adaptation, hip-hop "heads" must eventually cultivate indigenization, resulting in a whole new musical genre steeped in local identities and realities" (Osumare 2012, 33). We find similar thoughts in ethnomusicologist

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[33] Elaborated upon below, drawing on Osumare.

Catherine M. Appert's work on hip-hop in urban Senegal. She describes how sounds – in this case, the sounds of the kora or sabar – lyrics, and images in music video – featuring a scene with a graffitied wall reading "SENEGAL" – are a way to indicate local identity, making those particular hip-hop tracks distinguishable to those from the U.S.A. (Appert 2018, 166-167). In Australia, MC Munk expresses similar sentiments, who raps about the streets of Sydney, or DOBBY, who displays notable sites in Sydney in his music video "I Can't Breathe." This video shows DOBBY rapping in front of the Captain James Cook statue, currently standing in Hyde Park in Sydney. Cook's arrival ignited the start of the British colonisation of what was yet to be named Australia. DOBBY states:

> It's meaning-making. Everyone sees that statue, and depending on the person that you are you have a particular affiliation, an association, with that statue and what it means. You know, for a non-Indigenous person, typically, it could be something like, "that is my identity, because that's the person that "discovered" (quote-unquote) Australia." To an Indigenous person, typically, they would say "this represents loss of my family, loss of my community, cultural genocide, white Australia policies, assimilation, and everything else." So it represents something much, sort of, deeper. That story is, one, obviously more truthful, and two, it is triggering. And, really sort of, what's the word, loaded. Places really can trigger something. I knew that if I'd have that in the video, it would really challenge your association with that statue. If a white person saw that video it could be really jarring for them and it would really challenge them and I knew that that's what we wanted, you know. It's all meaning-making. (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021)

Here, Dobby explains how the "drapper" (drummer and rapper) challenges specific sites in Sydney utilising hip-hop. He actively questions how songs like "I Can't Breathe" can contribute to the truth-telling he claims Australia needs, using his video and various spaces in Sydney as tools to further the conversation (DOBBY, podcast interview with author, 09-07-2021).

While some spaces in Sydney – like the site where Captain Cook's statue is situated – can be seen as hostile environments for Indigenous communities as they celebrate violent histories and deny Indigenous sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2015, 24), some hubs have made efforts to create community through hip-hop. 4E Sydney (4 elements of hip-hop), for example, founded and organised by Vyva Entertainment, is one such initiative. In 2022, this two-day hip-hop conference and festival occurred in the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre in Sydney's west. The first day during which the conference took place on June 24th, 2022, included panels focusing on the "industry and community dialogue" (4E Sydney, communications email, 03-06-2022). Panels included speakers such as Alethea Beetson, Indigenous theatre scholar researching the creative industries focusing on Indigenous creative practices, K-Sera, CADA Radio MC focussed on hip-hop and R&B, and Dan Palm, head of creative licensing at Sony Music label. One of the panels focused on funding for creatives, and ways to support young, local artists. It was particularly centred around the idea of setting up more nightlife and

supporting more creative initiatives – such as this – in west Sydney with a focus on young people, redirecting the focus from the city centre and direct surroundings towards Sydney's west to encourage local artists to engage in creative community activities.

4E Sydney is an example of space-making directly, facilitating a stage for a young generation of hip-hop artists in Sydney. The daytime program was full of breakdance battles between kids and teenagers, attracting a big crowd. BARKAA, again, brought her daughter with her on stage during her gig, and the all-female hip-hop group Hot Brown Honey builds their marketing and merch sales around the aim to use the merch sales to financially help the mothers in the group to bring their children with them on tour (Hot Brown Honey n.d.). These festival aspects indicate how community initiatives, like 4E Sydney, encourage young hip-hoppers in Sydney to express themselves creatively while finding avenues for funding and being part of a local community.

5.3 Ziggy Ramo – Little Things ft. Paul Kelly

Throughout this research project, the song "Little Things", versioned by Ziggy Ramo and released in 2021, has had a constant presence. With its music video set in Sydney and the artist as one of the most successful First Nations musicians in Australia, telling an Indigenous story, the significance of this song for this thesis is undeniable. Over the course of my fieldwork, this recorded song was played at important events, such as the Ngalu Warrawi Marri event at the Australian Museum, and covers were performed during NAIDOC week. This section will describe and interpret what is heard and seen in the song's video, while reflecting on past and current events that have shaped the song today. Gomeroi man Jayden Kitchener-Waters performed the song's original version during his NAIDOC 2022 gig. He explained what the song means to him, indicating how it holds an important space in Indigenous identity formations for young First Nations populations.

The music starts with the sound of a harmonica. This instrument is associated with the featuring white-Australian artist Paul Kelly, the artist behind the 1991 version of the same song, immediately referring to a collaboration between artists and, perhaps, a merging of music genres. It also features a banjo and acoustic guitar. In terms of genres, this may sound like folk or country due to the instrumentation. While we hear the first 15 seconds of the song, the image moves over water, ending with the skyline of the city of Sydney, setting the stage for the video. Some may also start to recognise the song by its progression, as this is a new version of an older Paul Kelly song in 1991, and a second version in 1993 was a collaboration with Indigenous Murri musician Kev Carmody – the musician mentioned in the introduction of this chapter referred to by Emily Wurramara.

The older version of the song tells the story of Indigenous Gurindji man Vincent Lingiari, who worked on a cattle farm called Wave Hill under poor conditions. Lingiari initiated a eight-year strike, of which the well-known "Wave Hill walk-off" was a part. This eventually led to the establishment of the "Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1976)," which enabled Indigenous peoples to issue land claims. In 1994, this version of the song won an "Australian Country music Golden Guitar Award" for the title "Heritage Song of the Year" which, as Karl Neuenfeldt argues, is ironic as Australian country music's "core" audience usually leans towards countering Indigenous (land) rights (Neuenfeldt, in Carmody and Neuenfeldt 1997, 12-13).

In today's version, we see and hear hip-hop artist Ziggy Ramo, who poetically recites lyrics on top of the repeated four-chord melody. He shared a statement on his Instagram page on May 28th, 2021:

> "From Little Things Big Things Grow" has always been such an important song to not only me, but Australia. It was released in 1991, the same year as the Royal Commission into Indigenous deaths in custody. 30 years on I feel honoured to be given permission by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody to revisit the story from another perspective. "Little Things" doesn't fit into a genre, it doesn't really fit into today's musical landscape but this art felt urgent and I wanted to share it with the world. @ziggyramo, May 28, 2021

This statement prioritises the story of the song over musical style or genre. During the song's first verse, the camera focuses on Ziggy Ramo only, and within the background is a blue sky. As there is not much visual distraction, the content of the lyrics seems to be the main focus here. Ramo recites:

> Gather 'round, people, and I'll tell you a story
> Two hundred years of history that's falsified
> British invaders that we remember as heroes
> Are you ready to tell the other side?
> We start our story in 1493
> With a piece of paper called the Doctrine of Discovery
> Invoked by Pope Alexander VI
> Without this good Christian, our story don't exist

A re-telling of history through an Indigenous voice has started, containing details that mainstream education often disguises. Ramo recites the lines "British invaders that we remember as heroes. Are you ready to tell the other side?", which reminds me of what Gamolaroi poet and musician Luke Patterson told me during our soundwalk: "I felt so lied to by, by the town, the education system. (…) Because, the story that we were told was like "a peaceful settlement"" (Luke, soundwalk recording with author, 20-07-2022). Ziggy Ramo's lyrics, indeed, indicate no peace and instead refer to "invaders" instead of "heroes".

The music is in a major scale, prompting a happy and joyful atmosphere. However, this joy contrasts the lyrics, immediately setting a more earnest tone. Even the – perhaps younger – audience not familiar with the old 1991 version of the Paul Kelly song may soon realise that the combination of the visual setting, in this case Sydney, the artist Ziggy Ramo, and the lyrics, indicates the song is related to the invasion of Indigenous lands as soon as we hear the second phrase: "Two hundred years of history that's falsified." While the camera zooms out, we see the Sydney Opera House, with Ziggy Ramo standing on top of it at its highest point.

The Sydney Opera House might be the most iconic landmark in Australia. While it is renowned for its architecture – designed by Danish architect Jørn Utzon – (perhaps, controversially) resembling white sails of a ship, it also offers a platform for musicians and other creatives. Ramo, here, uses the entire building as a literal platform and staging his undeniable presence. We then hear the lyrics of the chorus, sung by Paul Kelly, who is not in the video:

> From little things, big things grow
> From little things, big things grow

These lyrics pay tribute to the older version of the song. Followed by the next verse by Ramo:

> Captain James Cook, he boarded a fleet
> And he was armed with the Doctrine of Discovery
> The same tactics were used by Columbus
> It's how today Australia claims Terra Nullius
> Cause on that paper, the pope did write
> That you're only human if you've been saved by Christ
> And if there are no Christians in sight
> The land you stumble on becomes your god given right

During this second verse, we now see Ziggy Ramo again from closer up, but with a clear indication that he is still on top of the Opera House with some iconic sites as backdrop, such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, some high-rise buildings, and the Sydney harbour itself. His body language enhances the lyrics, putting a hand above his eyes as if he is blocking sunlight when reciting the lyrics "he boarded a fleet" and gesturing the sign of the cross when pronouncing the word "Christ." Again, Ziggy Ramo points to links with Indigenous peoples across continents with the lyrics "The same tactics were used by Columbus. It's how today Australia claims Terra Nullius", referring to the colonisation of Native lands in the Americas.

In the third verse, Ramo points towards the camera, directing his words to his audience when saying "your law," clearly addressing this song towards Australia's dominant settler society. He then makes a solidarity fist, touching his heart when reciting the lyrics "my people have resisted:"

Is that your law? Cause that's invasion
That's the destruction of five hundred nations
The genocide of entire populations
Which planted the seeds for the stolen generation
And grew into my people's mass incarceration
Now we pass trauma through many generations
The lord can't discover what already existed
For two hundred years, my people have resisted

After this verse, we see the inside of an empty building, resembling a naval-related industry. Over the course of the song, we get to see more naval-related images every time we hear the chorus, such as the inside of a decayed boat (the SS Ayrfield still located in Sydney's Homebush) and a ruin, with small plants and moss growing around and inside of it. The last ruin shown has a big gum tree growing on top of it. These images of plants growing on decayed and abandoned buildings, showing smaller plants first and ending up with a big gum tree, may align with the lyrics of the chorus: "From little things, big things grow," showing nature claiming back its space that was once taken from it, and revealing tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations to land simultaneously. The verses follow:

The wars continued since Captain James Cook
And this side of history, you don't write in your books
You don't want the truth and you don't want to listen
But how can you stomach Australia's contradiction?
'Cause we went to war in 1945
We were allies against a terrible genocide
And I know it's uncomfortable but the irony I see
Is that you fought for them, but you don't fight for me

We should move on
Move on to what?
I still remember, have you forgot?
That Vincent Lingiari knew others were rising
Gurindji inspired us to keep on fighting
So call it Australia, go on call it what you like
I just call it how I see it and I see genocide
Now that you hear me, can you understand?
There will never be justice on our stolen land

This is the story of so-called Australia
But this is the story of so much more
How power and privilege cannot move my people
We know where we stand, we stand in our law/lore

During these final words, "we stand in our law/lore," we see Ziggy Ramo raising his fist while he, for the first time in the song, sings the chorus along with Kelly: "From little things, big things grow. From little things, big things grow." This last shot of Ramo on top of the Opera House shows how he opens his hand while red sand falls out (Fig. 5.3). Besides signifying the colour of much of Australia's soil, it also takes us back to the 1991 version of the song and it reminds us of the iconic photo during a ceremony in which then prime minister Gough Whitlam pours red sand on Vincent Lingiari's hands. This visual marker symbolising Indigenous sovereignty (Raheja 2011) marks the moment when part of Gurindji land was "given back" to the Gurindji people (Fig. 5.4). This moment holds an important space in First Nations history. Gomeroi man Jayden Kitchener-Waters, who played the 1991 version during the 2022 UNSW NAIDOC week event (described in Chapter Four), explained:

The big thing around that song is it's just a song of survival and great strength. It's a song about standing up against what against what's wrong for what's right. (…) It's literally the Prime Minister rocking up on Country and handing back Country back to them old people. Handing Country back to those Blackfellas. It wasn't this big, you know, Vincent Lingiari arrives in Canberra and signs these papers and stuff. It was actually, you know, the government rocking up on their Country, and giving their land back. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022)

Figure 5.3. Red sand falls through Ziggy Ramo's hand. Screenshot of music video "Little Things." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rogAuQQBZ0.

Figure 5.4. Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours red sand into Vincent Lingiari's hand. Photograph by Mervyn Bishop, 1975. https://www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/2001.8/prime-minister-gough-whitlam-pours-soil-into-the-hand-of-traditional-land-owner-vincent.

The music video ends with the image of Ziggy Ramo sitting on a log on the beach while the camera is zooming in, reciting the lyrics:

> Since 1991, four hundred and forty-one
> Indigenous Australians have died in custody
> The casualties of a war that never ended
> But we are not yet defeated
> Always was, always will be
> Sovereignty was never ceded

Ramo then stands up and walks along the beach, looking over the water. The video ends with a panoramic image of Port Jackson, or, the Sydney Harbour, showing only natural elements like trees, with multiple big, white-sailed ships on the water, finishing the story where it started.

Besides music's ability to create Indigenous space, as argued throughout Chapter Three, songs like "Little Things" are also political because they re-tell history. As seen in Barney and Mackinlay, music plays a significant role in historicising traumatic events in Indigenous lives that have not been historicised in media or "mainstream" education, as expressed before by Luke Patterson (Barney and

Mackinlay 2010). Jayden told me why he chose this song to perform during NAIDOC week: "I performed it, well, number one, because I really wanted to perform predominantly songs written or sung or performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. But also just because it's a beautiful song. It's a song of, of great resistance and strength, but it's also just beautifully written" (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022.) Here, Jayden emphasises that, besides his personal musical taste for the song, he resonates with it because of the resistance and strength of Indigenous peoples it represents.

5.4 Conclusion

As seen throughout this chapter, Indigenous musical storytelling can be seen as a vehicle for intergenerational and transnational solidarities. It can function as inspiration, such as explained by Cianna Walker, looking up to BARKAA, and it creates a platform for young artists such as Mi-kaisha. These are examples of intergenerational empowerment as these young, female Indigenous musicians can see themselves in a slightly older Indigenous female musician, showing that successful musicianship is possible for Indigenous women. It often also provides an avenue for young hip-hoppers to empower themselves by reflecting on their past behaviours, such as told by Kobie Dee, who now uses hip-hop to show respect to generations of Indigenous activists who challenged previous policies to improve Indigenous living conditions.

Moreover, this chapter has scrutinised how storytelling has enabled the uplifting of marginalised communities locally and transnationally. We have seen this when MC Munk dedicated radio shows and stations to First Nations hip-hop. Storytelling has also sought ties to shared experiences with other Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities across continents, as seen in DOBBY's "I Can't Breathe". Music's ability, and specifically hip-hop, resonates particularly with First Nations communities due to the passing down of information through song and dance – a way of knowledge transfer that has a longstanding tradition within Indigenous groups. It also facilitates a recognition of uniting resonances for Indigenous communities globally when it comes to dominant narratives on nation-states, denying Indigenous sovereignty over their lands. It is the shared experience of racialised violence as a result of White hegemony that denies Indigenous sovereignty expressed through music that forges pan-Indigenous solidarities.

Hip-hop specifically talks to Black representation and experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, connecting with BIPOC communities locally and transnationally as well. This chapter has also demonstrated how today, initiatives in Sydney are encouraging youth to continue to express

themselves creatively through hip-hop, as seen in 4E Sydney. Finally, this chapter has illustrated how a re-telling of history through songs like "Little Things" can ignite a feeling of resistance and strength in listeners such as Jayden, who in turn re-tells this history by performing the song himself, continuing Indigenous intergenerational storytelling during moments of celebration.

Chapter 6

Indigenous Musicking and Environmentalism

This chapter concerns environmentalism and asks, *How do Indigenous musicians in and around Sydney engage with environmental issues?*. As the main objective of this thesis scrutinises how Indigenous musicians and storytellers reclaim spaces in Sydney as a sovereign act, environmental issues are important to account for how urban areas are the areas most depleted of nature. However, Indigenous musicians practice and bring their music, stories, and knowledge to these places to promote awareness, practice sovereign sounding acts, and to bring attention to custodianship of land and Indigenous practices that work harmoniously with nature – even in the city.

Moreover, in a place that suffers from regular runaway bushfires pushing many animal species to near extinction, besides the many ways in which global warming is experienced across the world while Indigenous communities have been protecting lands from extractivist practices, this question is nothing less than a necessity in this thesis. Extractivism can point to various practices that exploit nature, labour, (Indigenous) knowledges, and cultural expression for monetary gain or power and is often directly linked to colonial histories (Clark 2021, 6-7). This chapter specifically concerns practices that deem nature a "resource" that can be exchanged for economic advancement. For this, I draw on Blaser and De la Cadena's definition of extractivism: "the accelerated extraction of natural resources to satisfy a global demand for minerals and energy and to provide what national governments consider economic growth" (2018, 2).

As this chapter is located within ecomusicological debates, section 6.1 discusses current directions in this field to situate this chapter within these discussions. Section 6.2 considers the process of didjeridu-building to reflect on the interconnected relation between Indigenous communities and the environment, in which Indigenous ways demonstrate an intricate consideration for the environment regarding musical life. Section 6.3 delves into Indigenous music-making with the land, and all that is part of it. It depicts the interconnectedness of humans, lands, language, and ancestors, and how – following Moreton-Robinson (2020), Reed (2020), and Robinson (2020) who claim that sovereignty is an active practice – practising Indigenous cultures is seen as activism, claiming sovereignty. Finally, section 6.4 discusses the environmental impact of colonisation and how Indigenous musicians in Australia engage with environmental degradation and with climate change more broadly. The topic of climate change and Indigeneity is often tied to rural communities in which land connections are performed during corroborees. By contrast, this chapter focuses on musicians living and working in urban centres, drawing on their Indigenous heritage in addressing environmental issues.

6.1 Ecomusicology and the Current Climate Crisis

Ecomusicology is a field that transcends disciplines. What brings it together is the focus on the environment in relation to music and sound. Pedelty at al. state:

> Per the name, the approach of ecomusicology is recognizably "environmental," in the ways that that term is defined in the broader field of environmental studies. Ecomusicologists thus emphasize ecological analyses and reasoning to understand music, musicking, and sound in relational, holistic, systemic, and explanatory terms, and, in so doing, respond to the exigency of studying the sonic dimensions of the compounding ecological crises besetting all living communities. (Pedelty et al. 2022, 3)

This chapter aims to contribute to ecomusicological debate through a focus on the musical and material manifestation of Country in Sydney, following three case studies: the practice of didjeridu building and playing, singing and listening to the land by the Djinama Yilaga choir, and promoting awareness of climate change in music performance settings during the premier of DOBBY's hip-hop album *Warrangu; River Story*. Following Pedelty et al., this requires a relational and holistic approach that considers not just humans and their music and musical practices but also, in Tina K. Ramnarine's words, a "thinking past the human" (Ramnarine 2009, 188) that considers the agency of nonhumans. I intend to demonstrate how Indigenous musicians and storytellers engage with the environment in light of climate change in various ways in urban settings.

When researching the connections between music and environmentalism, ecomusicological approaches tend to focus – with good reason – on community practices in rural areas. In his book *Voices of Drought*, for example, ethnomusicologist Michael B. Silvers investigates music in Brazil's "sertão" in the nation's north-east, also referred to as "the backlands", the more "isolated Brazil", or the place "of a parodied rurality" (Silvers 2018, 3-5). Here, Silvers particularly focuses on forró (both "foothills forró from Ceará and electronic forró) and the structural inequalities within the country. He supports the growing recognition that a cultural lens can help approach environmental problems, a belief often neglected in conversations on climate change due to the focus on infrastructural "solutions," like water storage (Silvers 2018, 6; Allen 2021). Other notable examples of ecomusicological debates situated in rural areas include Steven Feld's work with the Kaluli in Papua New Guinea's tropical rain forest of the Great Papuan Plateau (Feld 1984); Angela Impey's work on the impact of governmental land conservation projects in western Maputaland, on the borderlands of Mozambique, South Africa, and eSwatini, which affects women's walking routes and therefore walking songs and their practices of playing the mouth harp, or "izitweletwele" (Impey 2018); Rebecca Dirksen's account on the loss of cultural expressions due to deforestation of Haiti's countryside (Dirksen 2019); or Jennifer C. Post's

work among Kazakh pastoralists and their local songs, expressing connection to land in Western Mongolia (Post 2019).

The focus on rural areas over urbanised spaces in ecomusicological discussions has multiple reasons. Bringing back the focus to Australia, colonisation first occurred in places we now refer to as cities. As Indigenous anthropologist Marcia Langton describes, the Eora were the first to encounter the British settlers, "before an endless influx of people, arriving in yet more ships, took control of their homelands" (Langton 2008, 7). She illustrates how, at first, friendships developed between the locals and the visitors[34], but also how the sounds in the environment changed by the arrival of the settlers, as described in Marine Officer David Collins' notes:

> The governor, with a party of marines, and some artificers selected from among the seamen of the Sirius and the convicts, arrived in Port Jackson, and anchored off the mouth of the cove intended for the settlement on the evening of the 25th; and in the course of the following day sufficient ground was cleared for encamping the officer's guard and the convicts who had been landed in the morning. The spot chosen for this purpose was at the head of the cove, near the run of fresh water, which stole silently along through a very thick wood, the stillness of which had then, for the first time since the creation, been interrupted by the rude sound of the labourer's axe, and the downfall of its ancient inhabitants; — a stillness and tranquillity which from that day were to give place to the voice of labour, the confusion of camps and towns, and "the busy hum of its new possessors." (Collins 2003 [1798], 3-4)

It is in these places – where European settlement began – that many locals have been killed during frontier wars (Connor 2017), and due to the introduction of smallpox. Eora man Boatswain Mahroot evidenced to the British House of Commons Inquiry that by the 1830s, only three people of his group were still alive (Langton 2008, 12). Thus, when many people of a place have passed, so have the cultural practices tied to that place. It is the musical practices in rural areas – the areas where colonisation occurred with a lower density of settlers and at later stages, therefore, that ecomusicologists rightfully focus on when researching oral practices tied to the natural environment.

In academic research, as well as in popular media, it is repeatedly claimed that the impacts of our current climate crisis are most heavily experienced in the Global South. As ethnomusicologist John Holmes McDowell starts his argument on the usage of traditional cultural expressions within climate crisis debates:

> Could it be that the voices of local and Indigenous people with a deep connection to locale and land will be the David to vanquish, or at least restrain, this Goliath? Will these voices of people in marginalized, neglected, and often victimized communities, amplified through a supportive

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[34] However, this statement is also contested by many, as there is evidence of violence against Indigenous people at the time of British arrival. Shots were fired at Gwaewal people when Captain Cook landed at Botany Bay, for example.

chorus of allies, rise to stop the drilling, stifle the pipelines, and restore viability to the planet's life? There are many disappointments and occasional triumphs in this unequal struggle, but dramas playing out at hundreds of sites indicate that the juggernaut, for all its force, may grind to a halt, ironically, in these typically out-of-the-way places and at the feet of these small but determined adversaries. (McDowell 2021, 21)

McDowell's words chosen to describe the people and the places concerned are "Indigenous," "locale," "marginalized, neglected, and often victimized," and "these typically out-of-the-way places." These loaded words all have antonyms, which may be something in line with: "non-Indigenous," "global," "centred, promoted, and celebrated," and "well-connected places." However, as sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos explains, the Global South is not based on a geographical location. While the concept connotes a rough northern/southern hemisphere divide regarding global power relations, the Global South does exist in the northern hemisphere and vice versa. What is more significant is the metaphor it stands for:

> It is a South that also exists in the geographic North (Europe and North America), in the form of excluded, silenced and marginalised populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia, racism and islamophobia. (Santos 2016, 19)

Both McDowell and Santos connect the "neglected" and the "excluded" or "silenced" to marginalised and victimised populations. While colonisation, as described above, has indeed historically caused many Indigenous communities to live in "these out-of-the-way places," this can, today, be challenged by the flow of Indigenous people who, over the years, have moved (back) to these urban spaces. In the Australian 2022 census that shows data until 2021, the highest number of Indigenous people in 2021 was recorded in New South Wales, with a third of those people living in Greater Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022). Besides, in July 2022, Sydney recorded its wettest July ever recorded, due to climate change-induced floods that forced many to evacuate (Cassidy and Doherty 2022; Patel and Samenow 2022). The effects of climate change are not just visible in rural areas; neither do the Knowledge Holders we ought to listen to live in only rural areas. It is time to bring the debates on environmentalism into the cities.

6.1.1 First Nations Connections to Land

In First Nations ontologies, humans and their cultural expressions are inextricably tied to nature, like land, waterways, plants, and air. Unlike the culture-nature divide in the West – based on philosophical Enlightenment thinking through figures like René Descartes, though later also heavily criticised by

postmodern thinkers such as Donna Haraway (2000 [1985]) – humans are seen as part of nature. Philosopher Mary Graham, of Kombu-merri and Waka Waka descent, states that one of the "basic precepts of the Aboriginal world view", is: "The Land is the Law" (Graham 1999: 105). She then elaborates:

> The two most important kinds of relationship in life are, firstly, those between land and people and, secondly, those amongst people themselves, the second being always contingent upon the first. The land, and how we treat it, is what determines our human-ness. Because land is sacred and must be looked after, the relation between people and land becomes the template for society and social relations. (Graham 1999, 106)

Not only is the relationship between land and humans sacred, it is, as Graham describes, crucial for the way humans relate to each other. A study that exemplifies this relation is musicologist Linda Barwick's publication focused on Djanba, a song genre in and around Wadeye, a place in the Daly region in Australia's Northern Territory. She states: "ownership of land and everything that springs from it—plants and animals as well as cultural products like songs, language and stories—is handed down from father to son" (Barwick 2011, 321). Here, Barwick suggests that for this particular patrilineal clan, not only plants and animals, but songs, language, and stories, too, belong to and derive from a specific piece of land, and are in no way seen as separate from it. In fact, plants are often celebrated in song and dance and may be depicted in body paint, such as the bush tomato in Central Desert culture. People also often use the plant's name to describe a good person (Pascoe 2013, 35-36).

Ethnomusicologist Grace Koch has worked extensively tracing Indigenous songlines for land claims. As the written word was not embedded within First Nations societies pre-colonisation, song and dance are acknowledged as proof of ownership by the Federal Court and Aboriginal Land Commissioners (Koch 2013, 5). Elder Dinny McDinny explains:

> Whitefella got that piece of paper — might be lease or something like that — but Yanyuwa and Garrwa mob they got to have kujika. When whitefella ask them kids how you know this country belongs to you, they can say we got the kujika. Kujika, you know, like that piece of paper. (Dinny McDinny, in Bradley 2010, 29)

Eileen McDinny then adds:

> Everything got a song, no matter how little, it's in the song – name of plant, bird, animal, country, people, everything got a song. Kujika is the big thing kid had to know; must listen to old people, like we listened. (Eileen McDinny, in Bradley 2010, 29)

Kujika are song cycles that follow creator spirits while they travel across the land. Knowing Kujika shows strong ties to that particular place (Bradley 2010; Koch 2013, 5).

In Brewarrina, north-west New South Wales, *Baiame's Ngunnhu* are fish traps believed to be one of the oldest human constructions in the world (New South Wales State Heritage Inventory, n.d). According to the Ngemba, the custodians of *Baiame's Ngunnhu*, the creator spirit Baiame constructed the design of the traps, which were then built with stones by his sons Booma-ooma-nowi and Ghinda-inda-mui (Bark et al. 2015, 241; New South Wales State Heritage Inventory, n.d). Elder and Knowledge Holder in Brewarrina, Brad Steadman, tells one of the fish traps' stories:

> Bunggula, the Sooty Grunter (bream), grunts when taken out of the water. The spines on its back are the spears flung by the old man, Baiame, who hunted him in the waterhole. The fish escaped and as he flashed his tail he made a channel which filled with water to make the river. But the country dried out, the kangaroos went away, the plants died and there was a big drought. The old man came back with his dogs and his sons and said the drought was because the people didn't know the law or the names of the rivers. He told them the songs to sing and the dances to dance so the rain would fall again and things would be as they are today. (Brad Steadman, in 2013, 56)

According to the story above, told by Brad Steadman, rain would fall through song and dance, filling the river with water. Today, this story is deployed in the environmentally-conscious hip-hop album "Warrangu; River Story," which I will focus on in section 6.4 in this chapter.

The short overview of examples above does not do justice to the myriad stories, told by various communities throughout the continent of Australia. However, in the interest of illustrating the deep interrelatedness between song and natural sites, I provided examples from various places in Australia from a variety of communities, referring to land, plants, travel routes, and waterways. Today, the challenge is to move the broader society into potential action towards restoring relations between humans and environment.

Noongar ethnomusicologist Clint Bracknell states: "Indigenous languages and expressive cultures are not just important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They are also vital to maintaining intimate human relationships with the unique and diverse landscapes from which songs, dances, and languages emanate" (Bracknell 2022, 13-14). Throughout this thesis, it has become clear that Indigenous peoples, though heavily disrupted by colonisation, have a deep and meaningful relationship with land. For Bracknell, the challenge is to encourage non-Indigenous people also to revitalise the connections to land that their ancestors once had: "In the southwest of Western Australia [the place Bracknell is Indigenous to], we are in a period of transition, attempting to reinvigorate Noongar expressive culture from its roots and engage the broader settler-colonial public via performance in the hope that they can value landscapes in the way our ancestors always did" (Bracknell 2022, 14). Here, Bracknell uses the word "performance" and describes it as a tool to encourage settlers to value the environment.

6.2 The Didjeridu: Materialism and non-Human Agencies

As set out in section 6.1 of this chapter, First Nations' ontologies show how humans are in reciprocal relationships based on mutual care between land, waterways, skies, and (human) animals. To demonstrate this in relation to musical life, section 6.2 will focus on the didjeridu, and how the principles of creating this instrument reveal how humans play only a minor role in creating this instrument. Instead, didjeridu building is a collective effort between humans, trees, soil, and insects. Here, I build on ideas of human and non-human agency in relation to our environment. This is indicative of First Nations practices applied to other facets of life, too, and therefore helps us understand how a collective of forces are all responsible and intertwined with each other instead of giving credit to human agency solely. It thus helps us move away from human-centric thinking and instead towards more holistic approaches.

It also allows for a place in this research to focus on the material turn that has gained traction in disciplines such as philosophy and anthropology – and consequently ethnomusicology – which is a topical contribution during our current climate crisis. Materialism shifts Western perceptions on (an excess of (synthetic)) materials in the world, such as "waste" – an idea challenged by Jane Bennett when she argued for a rethinking of the "liveness" of "things":

> The quarantines of matter and life encourage us to ignore the vitality of matter and the lively powers of material formations, such as the way omega-3 fatty acids can alter human moods or the way our trash is not "away" in landfills but generating lively streams of chemicals and volatile winds of methane as we speak. (Bennett 2010, vii)

In Chapter Three, I also discussed Mary Douglas' idea of "dirt as matter out of place" (Douglas 1995 [1966], 36), distancing humans from non-humans, contributing to 'othering' and therefore creating a rift between (and among a diversity of) humans and non-humans.

However, First Nations ontologies teach that a holistic, non-hierarchal worldview whereby humans are not separate from the environment but a part of it is benevolent for living in peace with the planet, instead of against it. Indigenous visual artist Clinton Naina, for example, uses his artwork to promote the idea that First Nations populations in Australia are fire-keepers, not firefighters, as seen in the West (Clinton Naina, during a Q&A on his artwork "Stolen Climate" at King's College London, 01-03-2023). Fire, in this example, is not perceived as a threat. Instead, the 'othering' of fire is what must be feared. Seeing fire as a threat, and therefore not allowing First Nations custodians to take care of Country harnessing the qualities of fire through moderation only makes way for bushfires such as seen at the end of 2019/start of 2020 (Morrison 2020).

How natural elements are worked with, instead of against, is also seen in the making of the didjeridu. The didjeridu is a material and sonic icon of Indigeneity, yet while it originates from northern Australia, it has made its way across the continent (and beyond) and is a well-established musical phenomenon in Sydney. This section draws upon ethnographic observations and interviews with various didjeridu players: Gumaroy Newman, Yidinji, Lez, and Blak Douglas, who all work in Sydney in different settings.

I first provide an overview of the didjeridu's origins and how it is used, relying on information provided by interviews conducted with didjeridu players. I will then provide theories on what the material turn entails, what it means to research instruments, and the insights it provides. After explaining the context of the instrument and setting out the relevant theories, I will apply these theories to the making of the instrument, enabling a better understanding of First Nations ontologies and how, today, individuals draw on these. While respecting that this application of theories comes from an outsider's perspective, I will demonstrate how anyone can challenge themselves to approach worldviews in different ways through a dialogue of oral knowledge transmission and scholarly frameworks. This section ends with a discussion on the political quality of the creation process of the didjeridu.

6.2.1 Background: The Didjeridu and its Significance

Before providing an overview of the instrument, it is important to note that this account comes from an outsider's perspective. While this has been the case throughout the thesis, it is especially important to bring attention to it here. This is because the musical and sound expressions discussed earlier have all been described through the idea of an encounter between cultures through movement of individuals and flows of expressions. While I believe this is also the case with the didjeridu – as I have encountered didjeridu players, such as Gumaroy Newman, Yidinji, and Lez, who consequently have participated in this study through interviews, and the sounds of the didjeridu in numerous musical expressions – focusing here on the instrument's background is something that must be approached with appropriate sensitivity, given the cultural significance of the instrument, paired with contested histories. It is not my place to speak as though I have extensive knowledge of this instrument. Moreover, my research focuses on musical expressions in Sydney, yet the didjeridu originates in northeast Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Still, an overview will help us better understand First Nations ontologies and how this relates to identity. This is in no way meant as a comprehensive overview; rather, it is a small accumulation of perspectives by didjeridu players and ethnomusicologists with extensive research in the area. It will

serve as a tool to bring the instrument and its making into a conversation that rethinks human understandings with and of the environment.

Archaeological research indicates that the instrument has been used for about 1000 years and has many different names depending on the community. In Nunggubuyu, for example, the word for didjeridu is *lhambilgbilg*, which finds a connection to other words for instruments such as "paired sticks": *wilbilg*. The *"lham"* in *lhambilgbilg* means "tongue." Although it is claimed that the word "didjeridu" is onomatopoeia, used to describe the sounds of common ways the instrument is played in western Arnhem Land: *tidjarudu* (Moyle 1981), Gumaroy Newman explains how he was told that the word comes from Scotland or Ireland. He explains:

> The word didjeridu is actually of Scottish origin. In their traditional language, it's "Eh-Jerree-Oo." And "Oo," or, the Irish say "Eh-Jeree-Dolf," so "Dolf" or "Oo", I have heard on uhm.. Pretty good information, that "Oo" or "Dolf" means black. And "Eh-Jeree" is a pipe. That's what I've been told by a gentleman from Glasgow that he does a program and he speaks his traditional language. (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021)

As Gumaroy believes the word 'didjeridu' is imported, he rather uses the word 'yiḏaki:' "That's why I prefer to call it yiḏaki but I don't mind if people call it didjeridu because then everyone goes "oh I know what it is" and they can relate to it" (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021). The word yiḏaki is a Yolngu word meaning "emu's throat" (Moyle 1981). The Yolngu live in Northeast Arnhem Land in Australia's Northern Territory. Mandawuy Yunupingu, Yolngu man and member of the band Yothu Yindi, explains about the yiḏaki:

> The Yiḏaki comes from northeast Arnhem Land and was originally played only in Australia's Top End. Yolngu understand the Yiḏaki has become an Australian icon and accept that non-Yolngu people throughout the world now use it for informal purposes and enjoyment. Be aware, however, that its origins are sacred and secret to Yolngu men. Those stories cannot be told here, can only be shared with initiated men. The Yiḏaki is a male-oriented instrument. In Yolngu society women are forbidden to play it as its origins are sacred to men. (Yunupingu 1997, vii)

Yunupingu here brings attention to a variety of aspects of the yiḏaki: Firstly, while drawing attention to the fact that the instrument originates from Northeast Arnhem Land, he also acknowledges the instrument's usage outside of Yolngu communities, may this be in or outside of Australia. Yet, while it is used outside its original context, its origin story is sacred, and within Yolngu, it is only known among men. This, however, is Yolngu-specific. As Tudulaig man Lez – the yiḏaki player and songman introduced in Chapter Three, who practises songlines near Sydney's Opera House – confirms:

> only in certain areas, women do play, but only in that particularly area because in this country, there's about 700 different nations of First People and each one has their own law. Because the land is different from each other, so the law is changed. So the women can only play in their

particular area. That's why you don't see a lot of Aboriginal women play and you probably will never will because they have their own secret ceremonies that only they can do their business in. (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022)

Deriving from Lez's statement, we can see how the land dictates law containing rules on how to practice culture on that particular piece of land, such as whether women are allowed to play. There are many different contested ideas around the question of whether (non-)Indigenous women are allowed to play or even touch the instrument. Ethnomusicologist Linda Barwick ascribes the 'taboo' closely linked to New Age groups in which non-Indigenous peoples appropriate the usage of the instrument. While traditionally only played in Northern Australia, many First Nations peoples in the southeast have now come to play the instrument to claim a pan-Aboriginal identity (Barwick 1997, 93-4). Yet it is also this area – Australia's southeast – where the taboo exists most heavily, which may have to do with the extensive loss of culture in this area due to European invasion. As Barwick notes:

> It seems that for Aboriginal people in southern Australia these attitudes derive from the widespread experience of loss of land, language and culture and the extraordinary efforts that people have made to protect what knowledge remains. In northern areas of Australia where didjeridu is traditionally played and where [Indigenous] languages and culture are less under threat, there appears to be a more tolerant attitude to non-Aboriginal women learning didjeridu. (Barwick 1997, 95)

Barwick then makes a case for the didjeridu to perhaps function as a warning for non-Indigenous people to be careful about enquiring into sacred practices that are outside of their worldviews (Barwick 1997, 97). As described by Yunupingu, the Yolngu recognise the yiḏaki for its healing powers. This rhetoric is appealing for "alternative lifestylers" – as Patricia Sherwood claims – in Australia who try to create holistic life experiences through the usage of the instrument based on their connection to Aboriginal people and on stereotypical ideas on Indigeneity (Sherwood 1997, 143). For Yolngu, Yunupingu explains:

> Through the provision of exercises for breathing, the Yiḏaki holds collective powers in the healing process. The sound transfers peaceful vibrations that penetrate the mind and create inner spiritual oneness in an individual or group. In some cases, the Yiḏaki is used for physical healing with the player concentrating this breath on an afflicted part of the patient's body. (Yunupingu 1997, viii)

It is indeed this sense of "oneness," holism and community that constructs social realities for "alternative lifestylers" as seen in Sherwood (1997).

Indigenous didjeridu players also confirm the importance of this instrument in other ways. Yidinji, for example, told me:

> I think with every muso[35], they've got this instrument that they don't let anybody touch. Well it's the same with my instrument, you know. It's pretty special. I don't like people touching it. Let alone playing. I won't let anybody play it. (…) My uncle he made that for me. (…) He was a didj player, as well as a didj maker. He is one of the best back home, been doing it for so long, really knows what he's doing. He just knew that one was going to be special for me. Yeah. (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022)

Yidinji ascribes the importance of the instrument to its sentimental value because his uncle made it especially for him. In both instances described above, what makes the instrument special is its ability to make a person or a group of people (i.e. a didjeridu-player, listeners, or a patient) feel attached to it, heal through its vibrations, or feel a sense of "oneness," all through which its significance is determined by human affectedness. Yet, my aim here is to show how humans are not the sole determinators of an instrument's significance and existence. To move away from anthropocentric thinking, the next sections will look into the process of the making of the instrument, focussing on agency and 'thing-power.'

6.2.2 Thing-Power

Things, according to English scholar Bill Brown, are not the same as objects. The difference, according to him, is that objects are used by humans, which gives them meaning in a (seemingly) objective way, whereas things require a different relation to humans or subjects: they are "encountered baldly" (Brown 2001, 5). Things, in other words, are less "objectifiable" than objects because their relation to humans has shifted from something that "works" for humans (Brown uses the example of a window), to something that interrupts the function humans ascribe to it (a dirty window, hindering its humanly ascribed function from looking through it). This does not have to have negative connotations. Brown explains how things can be things by their undeniable presence: "You could imagine things (…) as what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects – their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems" (Brown 2001, 5). The ways in which the didjeridu becomes valuable to other actors (humans and non-humans – as section 6.2.3 will explain) make the object a thing with agency. This way, we move from looking into subject-object dichotomies to actor-actor relationalities, such as seen in ANT explained in the Introduction Chapter.

This is important as seeing agency in things decentres humans and enables a thinking through networks rather than hierarchies or centres. In *The Social Life of Musical Instruments*,

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[35] Australian slang for "musician."

ethnomusicologist Eliot Bates demonstrates the need "to take objects seriously" by analysing the social life of the Anatolian saz and Central Asian long-necked lutes. Following Brown's analogy, Bates aims to show the "thingness" of musical instruments:

> Much of the power, mystique, and allure of musical instruments, I argue, is inextricable from the myriad situations where instruments are entangled in webs of complex relationships – between humans and objects, between humans and humans, and between objects and other objects. (Bates 2012, 364)

Here we see how Bates emphasises the relationality in which musical instruments may be agents involved in a network of other agents. He also highlights the materiality of the instrument instead of merely looking at the human social interactions of and with the instrument (Bates 2012, 372). The materiality of musical instruments is as important as the human relations to the instrument. As Bates suggests:

> It is precisely these moments [when instrument makers create through intuition] that show the limits of an exclusive focus on body techniques and articulated knowledge, and the perils of focusing exclusively on the human side of human-instrument interactions. In neighboring Turkey, *'ûd* makers talk of letting the wood "tell them what to do[.]" (Bates 2021, 371)

This indicates the agency of the materials from which the instrument is made.

This material agency is what philosopher Jane Bennett refers to as Thing-Power. Like Brown, Bennett claims that things become things when they "exceed their status as objects" by showing how things have their own lives, away from human realities, and like Bates, she emphasises the material quality of things (Bennett 2010, xvi). However, while Bennett argues for the agency of things outside of human meanings ascribed to them (waste on a dumping ground is still an agent without it directly interacting with humans), she defines a thing as "man-made items" (2010, xvi). This again ascribes human agency onto a thing as its entire existence depends on humans again. The following section shows how looking into the Indigenous tradition of didjeridu making positions humans as just a mere part of the process rather than the sole makers. It illustrates a network of materials, weather conditions, place, (human) animals and insects that all play a part, extending the notion of Thing-Power to things that have come into existence by a collaboration between a variety of (non-human) actors.

6.2.3 From Didjeridu Making to Playing: A Collective Effort

On June 11th, 2022, visual artist and didjeridu player Blak Douglas led a drawing workshop for children at 107 Green Square, as part of a festival called ARTiculate. 107 Green Square is part of 107 Projects, an initiative based in various locations in Sydney's inner West which makes creative practices accessible to communities. The ARTiculate festival is a month-long festival celebrating First Nations artists, refugee and asylum seeker artists, and artists with a disability. This month, 107 held an art exhibition, workshops, and talks. As part of one of these events, First Nations artist Blak Douglas held an interactive drawing workshop for children, but before the workshop started, he played the didjeridu.

After he played, he used a whiteboard to explain how the yiḏaki – as he referred to the instrument – is made while drawing on the whiteboard: Up in the Northern Territory, first, the men look for trees next to termite mounts. The higher the mount, the better. If the tree looks good, the men will knock against it to check if it sounds hollow. The termites travel up the inside of the tree from its roots. They eat the tree from the inside, crawl down again through a termite-made tunnel underground, and crawl up into a termite-made mount next to the tree, where they add another layer onto the mount construction: dung consisting of the insides of the tree, combined with soil. If the tree sounds as wished, the men cut it at the bottom before further adjusting it until it enables the musician to produce the preferred sound.[36]

On the whiteboard, Douglas drew a (nearly) dead tree and a termite mount next to it, with dotted lines following the termite track. This explanation emphasizes the importance of the making of the instrument, adding another layer to the story of the instrument we just listened to at the ARTiculate festival. Even though the origin of the instrument is on the other side of the continent of Australia, through cultural exchanges, it has made its way to Sydney, sounding in various settings with its meaning adapted to every occasion. The instrument's stories are shared during gatherings, such as during the ARTiculate festival in Sydney, and have become part of a wider community.

By analysing what Douglas taught about the making of the instrument, we learn the highly collaborative process between a tree, being nurtured and fed through soil, sun, and air, to then be eaten by mount-building termites, making a home through leftovers of the tree's insides. This is the start of the didjeridu-making process. In *Reassembling the Social*, anthropologist and philosopher Bruno Latour questions the term Actor-Network-Theory, also ANT. While listing a variety of other potential names for the concept, he then states: "someone pointed out to me that the acronym A.N.T. was perfectly fit for a blind, myopic, workaholic, trail-sniffing, and collective traveler. An ant writing for other ants, this fits my project very well!" (Latour 2005, 9). Similar to ants, termites are collective travellers

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[36] This is my interpretation of how I remember Douglas' explanation. Credits to the story belong to Blak Douglas.

working towards a collective goal – in this case, building a termite mount. The fact that these insects accidentally cooperate in musical instrument building only makes them part of yet another assemblage. Renowned didjeridu player David Hudson treasures their traces on the inside of the instrument:

> Just as Captain Cook's telescope led him to Australia, you can pick up the didjeridu and use it like a kaleidoscope and realise that inside the didjeridu, are the textures of a culture that is still alive. You have all these little tracks and paths from the termites and if you follow all the different paths, it will take you to the different aspects of the culture. (David Hudson, in Hudson and Tietjen 1997, 38)

Here, Hudson uses the material traces of the insects as a metaphor for Indigenous cultures in Australia, functioning as a reminder that the termites are part of the instrument's story.

Once humans have identified the right (nearly) dead, hollow tree, it will be cut, which also highlights a regenerative aspect of the instrument-building process: trees will not be killed in the process; only once trees are dead will they have become useful for instrument building to be repurposed for a new social life through ceremony. We see a clear difference here between the ways in which Western instrumental building often entails the cutting down of living trees, not to mention the carbon emissions that result from the transportation of specific woods that are in demand for instrument building. Ebony, for example, is often used for piano keys and violin fingerboards and is now listed as an endangered wood by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). It naturally grows in places such as Cameroon, Republic of Congo, and Nigeria, and is exported in bigger volumes than the trees can grow, therefore endangering the species (Forest Governance & Policy, n.d.; William Castle 2020). Unfortunately, today, ecologically ignorant approaches such as over-harvesting also reach the didjeridu-building industry. As eco-ethnomusicologist Robin Ryan points out: "Whereas [I]ndigenous harvesters remove small hollow trees that are likely to die before reaching maturity, non-Aboriginal opportunists have clear-cut species with the high growth and survival rates that otherwise would contribute to sustainable tree populations" (Ryan 2016, 60).

Research has demonstrated that early didjeridus were made of bamboo, which grew mainly in the Northwestern parts of Australia's Northern Territory, ascribing the instrument's origins to this part of the continent. However, today, a common sight is the wooden didjeridu, made of various types of eucalyptus trees, such as the Darwin Stringybark and the Darwin woollybutt (Moyle 1981, 322; Ryan 2016, 60). Alice Moyle describes the making process as an efficient endeavour which allows a player to be able to play the instrument within hours: once it is chopped, the bark will be removed, the surfaces smoothened, and both rims trimmed and polished with beeswax or gum (Moyle 1981, 322). The termite trails etched into the inside of the instrument produce the overtones through reverberation and resonance (Ryan 2016, 60).

To tune the instrument to be able to play with other instruments, Yidinji told me one may "simply" cut a bit off:

> Nowadays with the didjeridus, we can put them into keys as well. So if the musicians need a certain key, we can put these instruments in to key. So it goes by guitar tuner and then we simply cut the length of the instrument itself, so we can sort of cut it down a bit and play it and then once it's in the right key, that's the one we want. (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022)

This means that if a musician likes to play in various keys, they must have multiple didjeridus. Once the instrument has the right sound, it may be painted (Moyle 1981, 325; Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022).

To learn how to play the instrument, some may practice in water. Songman and didjeridu player Lez describes the way he learned to play:

> When I first learned to play it, I played it in the rivers with the way we were taught when you were small, when you're first time learning how to do the circular breathing sort of stuff, people find really hard. We put our children under water, and nose above it, and the lips underneath. So when they start to breathe through the nose and they're blowing bubbles. And they're doing that technique, they learn to catch up that circular breathing, is one of the oldest techniques. (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022)

While Lez tells me that it is a complex instrument to learn and play – "it's very hard to play this instrument what the people know as the didjeridu, but we call it Yiḏaki" (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022) – Gumaroy states the opposite, describing it as "mouth percussion":

> That's why the didjeridu is such, such a simple instrument to play. So if I listen to a drummer, I might think the drummer is going: "tikketikketaktetaktikketikket" so I speak those same phrases down, down the tube of the didjeridu. It's that simple. It's just, it's just mouth percussion, rather than hand percussion. (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021)

Here, Gumaroy explains how he imitates a drummer's rhythm in the context where he plays in a variety of settings: whether he plays in collaboration with Ganga Giri – who mostly plays an eclectic mix of funk and techno music – to his didjeridu concerto in the Yulugi duo together with Keyna Wilkins, described in Chapter Four. Yidinji, while playing solo at the Indigenous Art Fair or while busking on the streets in Cairns, also plays in collaborations. For instance, with South Indian musicians during the Multicultural Festival in Canberra: "I had a gentleman singing in language from southern India, the vocals is amazing, two traditional drummers and me on a didjeridu and just two ancient sounds coming together. Beautiful, just fusing together" (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022). And Lez plays

songlines in Warrane. These three instances are just a few examples of contexts in which the didjeridu may find itself today. Lez explained:

> It originally comes from a place called Arnhem Land, Yirrkala, it grew up from the ground from a place called Beswick. The people discovered the instrument there. And then it was shared only in the northern part of Australia, all the way to Western Australia, up to the Kimberleys. And coming down from West, as far as Uluṟu, which you might know as Ayers Rock, past Uluṟu, towards the East coast. (Lez, podcast interview with author 11-09-2022)

Through all of the instrument's travels, today, it can sometimes be interpreted as a symbol of pan-Aboriginality (Dunbar-Hall 1997, 70-1). The following section will examine what the instrument's socially ascribed meaning may mean for its makers, and how this positions each actor in a wider social context.

6.2.4 The Political Agency of Termites

Jane Bennett writes about Charles Darwin's observation about worms in England:

> How do worms make history? They make it by making vegetable mold, which makes possible "seedlings of all kinds," which makes possible an earth hospitable to humans, which makes possible the cultural artifacts, rituals, plans, and endeavors of human history (Mould, 309). Worms also "make history" by preserving the artifacts that humans make: worms protect "for an indefinitely long period every object, not liable to decay, which is dropped on the surface of the land, by burying it beneath their castings," a service for which "archaeologists ought to be grateful to worms" (Mould, 308). (Bennett 2010, 95-6)

Bennett's words come down to that worms, in this case, help humans express their culture (practising archaeology in this instance), and therefore worms work alongside people (Bennett 2010, 96). Along this same line, Bruno Latour also writes about worms, this time in the Brazilian Amazon. While on an expedition, Latour accompanied a botanist, a soil scientist, and a geomorphologist into a border area of the rainforest. Here, the researchers found an 'in-between' section of vegetation that was both typical to a rainforest and, at the same time, typical for a savanna. It turned out that worms had changed the soil in this particular area, producing aluminium that, in turn, caused the soil to be of a more clay-like substance, which means that the forest was encroaching towards the savanna. As Latour states: "The only agents capable of accomplishing this are the earthworms" (Latour 1999, 76), referring to the worms as agents in the process of a growing rainforest area. In a time when deforestation seems to thrive (Kröger 2020), one may interpret the worms' efforts as a political act.

Bennett claims that humans now need to find ways in which we can see humans and non-humans in a non-hierarchal way, which shows an even credit distributed among all agents in a collective effort, without ascribing agency to non-humans only because we may trace "human qualities" within non-humans (Bennett 2010, 98-100). When it comes to political acts, if we want to give credence to worms and humans (and other actants such as soil and trees) equally, we must shift our perception of political acts as not necessarily intentional. Instead of focusing on intention, it is more important to look at the *effects* of the agents' workings. This aligns with ANT, which focuses on the actions that derive from a network of agents being connected, causing the action. As Bates points out, the instrument is not the maker's "*doppelgänger*", where the maker's intentions are lived through the instrument. Rather, once the makers have finished creating the instrument, it will find itself within networks with its own autonomy (Bates 2012, 364).

When it comes to the making of the didjeridu, then, where I am going with this is not surprising: as argued throughout this thesis, in a world where Aboriginality is seen as something outside the norm, an instrument symbolising Aboriginality can, in many instances, be seen as a political instrument. As Neuenfeldt claims, "In the last decades the didjeridu also has become a pan-Aboriginal instrument, used all across Australia. It is now the primary aural and visual musical icon of Australian indigeneity" (Neuenfeldt 1998, 7) and "It is used to signify indigeneity at socio-cultural, political and spiritual ceremonies and rituals" (Neuenfeldt 1998, 7-8). The appearance and sounding of the instrument on a stage, in an art exhibition, or in educational settings, fills up spaces that have previously excluded Indigenous peoples (Mackinlay 2005, 130), and are often still exclusionary due to racist, classist and sexist systemic structures that have laid the foundation of these institutions. Here, the political aspect of the instrument comes down to the social networks it finds itself in.

Moving beyond the social, its material form and how it has been sourced may be seen as political in a nation that, in 2021, was the world's fifth-largest coal producer and second-largest coal exporter (Australian Government Geoscience Australia n.d.). Extractivist practices exacerbating the current climate crisis are still flourishing in Australia, while further displacing Indigenous populations and destroying sacred sites (Albeck-Ripka 2020). By looking at the making of the didjeridu, we see a practice that respects the earth's resources by only using that which has lived through one of its forms (i.e. a tree creating oxygen through a process of photosynthesis, among many other functions), and only after having lived through that function will it be repurposed for other contexts. Whether the dead tree will stay rooted in the soil, later decomposing to become part of the soil, or whether this will happen to the same tree in the form of a didjeridu once it is no longer being used as a musical instrument: it will do no harm like synthetic materials will do once being regarded as waste ending up on landfills, and may even enrich the soil functioning as compost.

While mount building termites, eucalyptus trees, soil, water, carbon dioxide, or didjeridu players may not necessarily intend to engage in a political act, by following their collaboratively created product, we may see how each instrument maker has taken part in political engagement, and have therefore become agents as their building has caused an action. As Tim Ingold explains about "practitioners," or "form-givers", "creators": "Practitioners, I contend, are wanderers, wayfarers, whose skill lies in their ability to find the grain of the world's becoming and to follow its course while bending it to their evolving purpose" (Ingold 2010, 92). By looking into processes rather than at end forms or goals, we find vital lessons on how Indigenous musicians engage with the environment. Not only as a response to the current climate crisis, but embedded within a way of being in the world that sees humans as an integral part of that world, not as separate from it. While some parts of the world are catching up, Indigenous knowledge holders such as Yidinji explain how these ways are vital to sustain the planet's wellbeing: "our family, our ancestors were living was they did not need to change" (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022). Living holistically on Country, in Yidinji's words: "just makes a lot of sense" (Yidinji, podcast interview with author 03-07-2022).

6.3 In Musical Dialogue with Place

Section 6.2 has shown how looking into the process of didjeridu building enables perspective-shifting. Not only does it relay a focus from end products to processes, but it also demonstrates a network of agents working together, in which human and non-human agents are in equal relation with each other and, with that, challenging anthropocentric thinking. Now, in section 6.3, we will take seriously the dialogue about environmentalism (as seen in 6.1) and human – non-human collaborations (as seen in 6.2) by focusing on musical dialogues with place.

Over the course of various interviews, I have found that many of the First Nations musicians I had met regularly engage with place in musical and sounding ways directly. That is to say, instead of directing messages to other peoples on the topic of place, location, or climate (change), here I will focus on those musical and sounding expressions that converse with place, or Country, while learning from Country. As seen in Chapter Three, this does not mean that this kind of engagement with place must occur away from the city – even when the sentiments expressed involve climate change. When Luke Patterson, for example, questioned ways in which land acknowledgements are performed, he told me that, for him, it is important first to ask whom the acknowledgement is directed towards: other people, oneself, or the place (Luke Patterson, soundwalk interview with author 20-07-2022) regardless whether

this takes place in an urban space or not. This question reminds us that we must take seriously the ways in which humans converse with place, in which place is seen as a living entity: Country.

6.3.1 Singing to Country

Cheryl Davison, a Walbunga/Ngarigo artist, leads the Djinama Yilaga choir. Djinama Yilaga means 'happy ceremony' in Dhurga language. The choir is established in the Eurobodalla region in Australia, Yuin Country. The Yuin spoke various languages in various dialects, however, Dhurga was the language widely used among the Yuin (Four Winds n.d.).

The choir started as a Dhurga language revitalisation project, which, in turn, is believed to benefit Country. Lara Crew, the producer of the Four Winds festival that funded the Djinama Yilaga choir, said in an interview: "To heal country Cheryl believes you need to sing to country, just like the older generations used to do. The country needs to hear the language and hear the song of this place and its original people. We really believe this is an important part of healing country" (Crew, in Sydney Swans Media 2021). This was around NAIDOC week in 2021, with that year's theme "Heal Country!" (National Indigenous Australian Agency 2021). This theme was particularly significant following the 2019/2020 bushfires in Australia, also called the Black Summer Fires, which significantly targeted the Eurobodalla region.

As many NAIDOC week celebrations in 2021 were on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2022, Djinama Yilaga performed in Sydney during an art exhibition opening titled "Embers, Epicorm: Art of the Eurobodalla" as a belated response to the bushfires. One of their songs, called *Ganbi*, means 'fire' in Dhurga. Cheryl Davison explains about *Ganbi*:

> Aboriginal people view animals, plants, rocks as family; they are our brothers and sisters. This song reflects our concerns when the January 2020 fires approached. Our concern was not only for ourselves and our property, it was for our family, for nature, for those things we are responsible for caretaking for the future generations. (Cheryl Davison, in Palmer 2020)

Here, Davison explains how this song is directed towards humans as well as non-humans, raising concern for when the fires approached. An acoustic guitar accompanied the singers during the particular performance at the art exhibition in Sydney. Other times, the singers are accompanied by clapsticks. Clapsticks, I have been told, enable one to call upon one's ancestors (personal communication with an acquaintance during the Indigenous Art Fair 2022). Ancestors are an important part of Country, as Cheryl Davison states:

> I believe we sing to Country, 'cause our language comes from Country. And when we sing into Country, we are signing to our ancestors. And that is healing for our Country, and that is healing for us, as Aboriginal people. You know we feel our ancestors here, in this place. And we know that, you know, they're happy with what we do. (Davison 2021)

Here, we see how Country, ancestors, and languages are all interconnected. Much like ethnomusicologist Rebecca Dirksen's description of the relation between the Vodou spirit Èzili and the land of Haiti – "When Èzili is ill, so is Haiti" (Dirksen 2018, 113) – the connection between Aboriginal peoples, ancestors, native languages and Country are so strong that when Country is sustained, so are its people. This way, we can see how language loss can be damaging for Country and, therefore, Aboriginal peoples. Singing to Country in its native language, therefore, sustains Country.

While in Eurocentric worldviews, musical expression such as singing is perceived as something to be consumed – a process which music scholar Jim Sykes ascribes to the production and legitimisation of the Anthropocene, which manifests in, for example, the disciplinary divisions of creative expression in music departments (Sykes 2020, 4) – here we see how singing maintains the environment, which does not only emphasise the critical (healing) qualities sounding expressions may have, it also challenges boundaries derived from dominant Eurocentric thinking that persists to this day and determines regulations around climate change for a great deal.

Language activist and scholar Lou Bennett plays a vital role in the Djinama Yilaga choir, which I discuss below, offering support in revitalising language through song. Bennett and scholar Romaine Moreton state about the interconnectedness of human expression and Country – and therefore the importance of singing in language: "For Indigenous peoples, we are the embodiment of our languages and have been since the beginning" (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 97). Bennett and Moreton argue how using Indigenous languages can be seen as an act of "rematriation", focusing on recovering from patriarchal Western systems (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 99). While Eurocentric principles derived from Enlightenment thinking have prioritised the collecting and coding of languages, Bennett and Moreton explain that it has standardised languages through the frameworks of Western ears and language systems and eradicated or corrupted languages not fitting within that system. They argue: "The colonial collectors have essentially buried our old people and our sounds in their texts, all in the process of replacement and its strong association with the elimination of native peoples" (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 99). The written word, here, is seen as a colonial medium that eliminates the value of oral storytelling. The question that arises, then, Bennett and Moreton ask: "How do we as Indigenous researchers, artists, song-women and storytellers insert ourselves into the colonial text for the purpose of recovering our old people, our sense of ourselves? How do we walk lightly amongst written words that act like colonial gravestones and markers?" (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 100). Therefore, the acts of singing, talking, and walking on Country as Indigenous women is an act of refusal to these colonial

introductions. This is what they call the "activating" of places: "In activating our ancient places to which we belong, we are actioning for our own people" (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 100).

We hear echoes of Aileen Moreton-Robinson's idea of sovereignty, which she describes as an embodied practice in which an Indigenous person "is situated in the everyday actualities of their sovereignty" (Moreton-Robinson 2020, 2). If we approach sovereignty through Moreton-Robinson's idea, we could interpret Bennett and Moreton's idea of "activating" places as a sovereign act, where practices such as singing, talking and walking on Country function as these "everyday actualities."

The "actioning" is something that only Indigenous women can take part in, as to take a stance against those writing *about* Indigenous peoples. Here, we must see this thesis as an integral part of that conversation, and taking responsibility – putting intentions aside – in that this work still participates in an act where a white person writes about Indigenous peoples with socially ascribed authority using colonial systems (written word, academic certificate) in a colonial language. Indigenous women speaking and singing native languages on Country, therefore, is activism.

Singer-songwriter Cianna Walker, who, like Cheryl Davison, is also a Yuin woman, ascribes the idea of knowing where she is from for a big part to the fact that she knows some Dhurga language (the language that the Djinama Yilaga choir sings in), passed on from her great aunt:

> My great aunt, so my dad's Auntie, I just call her Auntie Em. She's an Indigenous poet. She has her own books. Her name is Aunty Emily Walker. She knows the language. She taught me kind of everything I know. But yeah, we use words that are like from them places in our vocab like I kind of just dabble between both of them. It's still, it's still very much alive like they have I think a new Dhurga Dictionary came out, which is for Yuin, that came out pretty recently. Like, it's hard, because obviously, colonisation and the assimilation policies and stuff that like were enacted in Australia, specifically in New South Wales, like, it's kind of hard to know, something like efficiently, especially like, because of the Stolen Generations and stuff like it's, it's very sad. It's upsetting and depressing. But yeah, a lot of language, a lot of culture and stuff was lost. (…) But yeah, I would say I'm quite grateful that I know where I'm from, and like, have access to knowledge and access to language, and cultural practices and stuff just through like family connections. (Cianna Walker, podcast interview with author 13-05-2022)

As we can derive from Cianna's statement, revitalising language is a slow process, in which she uses both English and Dhurga at the same time, inserting Dhurga words within English phrases. Using Dhurga is a direct act of opposition against systems that have tried to eradicate Indigenous languages. However, there are also cases in which songs are directed to Country in English. Gumaroy Newman, for example, in his song as part of Yulugi's "Mother Earth" recites the following words:

> Hey Mother Earth! Is that really you? My mother from days of old,
> The victim of such degradation, from methods so crude and bold.
> Like a vulture to a carcass, your resources, they just devour,

Providing a sense of social importance, and egotistical power. (Yulugi 2020)

He told me how he came to these lyrics:

> I imagined myself sitting down, being a traditional man, of particularly this land. So right now, both Keyna and I, we're coming at you from a nation that they call Eora. (…) And so I was imagining sitting down around Tubowgule, around where the modern-day Opera House is. And so I imagine "wonder what it would have looked like then, before the tall ships sailed in with the English." And then I thought, "wonder what happens.. wonder what the people who lived back then that are now reincarnated, now, when they see all these buildings, and, you know, the landscapes totally changed." So it was written through the perspective of that. (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021)

Gumaroy here emphasises the idea of the interconnectedness between an Indigenous person to Eora nation and this piece of land. Tubowgule is the area now also known as Bennelong Point, named after Aboriginal man Woollarawarre Bennelong, who lived during the arrival of the British settlers. Chapter Three includes a section on his wife, Barangaroo. Prior to British settlement, this area was important for its resources: oysters, fish, kangaroos and wallabies used to live here, but that changed after 1788, when this place became known as "cattle point" where the settlers held their cattle and horses and started building stone buildings (Sydney Opera House, n.d.). However, despite the current brick and concrete structures it holds, Gumaroy refers to this place as Mother Earth, reflecting on the changes that colonialism has brought to this place through imaginaries of pre-colonial times.

The above has described two different types of conversing to place: While the Djinama Yilaga choir sings to place "in language"[37] whilst activating Country, Gumaroy reflects on the changes of Country since invasion in the English language. This difference reflects the positionality of the musicians: While the Yuin choir revitalises its native Dhurga language, belonging to the place that the songs are a part of and tailored to, Gumaroy's music is tailored towards an area – Tubowgule – he himself, as a Gamilaroi and Wakka Wakka man, is not Indigenous to. Both instances show ways of sovereign acts: as explained above, Bennett and Moreton demonstrate how singing in language can be an act of resistance, and following Moreton-Robinson, can therefore be seen as a sovereign sounding act. I would equally argue that Gumaroy's English language song speaking to Country demonstrates another type of sovereign sounding act. It is perhaps a new type of sovereignty that has evolved as a response to the severe loss of Indigenous traditions and ways as a result of European invasion. As an Indigenous man to other Countries, Gumaroy stands in his position as Indigenous man, acknowledging another Country as a living entity. I do not wish to deem his using the English language as Raheja's idea of "compliance" (as explained in the Introduction Chapter) either: He equally shows resistance – not by speaking or singing

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[37] The phrase "in language" is used to describe when a person uses their own native language.

in language, but by acknowledging others' sovereignty over this place, knowing that his sovereignty lies elsewhere on the continent.

This indicates how Country can reflect a place where Indigenous peoples are tied to when one is "on Country", while Country can also refer to a place one may not be Indigenous to, yet still reflect the liveness of a place. The practice of singing or talking to Country indicates that Country is perceived as a living entity that may benefit from music and sounds.

6.3.2 Listening to Country

For a dialogue between humans and Country, the practice of listening to – whilst learning from – Country is equally significant. As above-mentioned Indigenous scholars Bennett and Moreton elaborate:

> Every morning we are woken by a cacophony of birds eagerly waking at sunrise. Each one with their own language, their own song. We listen deeply every day to the country, find and hear the language belonging to this country. We listen to the wind and messages it brings. We converse with each other as women of story and song. (Bennett and Moreton 2020, 100)

Here, we see how birds' languages and songs, Country, wind and women are all in dialogue. Gomeroi man Jayden Kitchener-Waters, who also works in language revitalisation on Gomeroi Country, explains how he learns by listening to Country:

> A lot of my learning is just done on Country. You know, I might message my uncles or, or regularly meet up with them every now and then and we'll spend time in the bush sit in the bush and I'll learn from them. But the big thing that, that I've been taught is, you can learn from people, you can learn from your uncles you can learn from the Elders, but the best teacher to learn from is Country and to learn from Mother Nature and just sit in the bush and listen to the bush. That's the best teacher. So that's something that I've really embraced, especially as I've moved back on Country and can spend more time on Country. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022)

Learning from Country is a recurrent theme, as will become apparent in section 6.4 in DOBBY's track *Dirrpi Yuin Patjulinya*, where he, too, refers to the rivers and the land as "our spirit teacher." Gumaroy Newman also makes this point: "Mother Earth, and all of its elements are our guardians, and providers, and Mother Earth, and all of her animals are our teachers" (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021). As music scholars Steven Feld and Tom Rice have pointed out, while listening can be studied for its perceptual qualities, listening is also a practice embedded within social norms and structures. This determines how humans listen and what that listening, in turn, reveals and

means to the situated listener (Rice 2015, 101). The ways in which people have attributed certain meanings to sounds, therefore, must be taken seriously. For example, Jayden reveals what he learns by listening to Country:

> I think, in a nutshell, just how to live, just how to live. And, yeah, we get taught how to live through our cultural values, we need to live with, with humility, live with respect, need to be patient. All those sort of cultural values are the main main points of call, I think. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, podcast interview with author 07-09-2022).

The idea of living with humility, respect, and patience is deeply embedded within Jayden's Country, Gomeroi nation, as fellow Gamilaroi[38] man Gumaroy explains that the cultural values are embedded within the name of the language group of the region:

> The language we speak is Gamilaraay. (…) "Gamil" means "no," "araay" means "having." So what is mine, is yours. So if we're in a traditional setting, and I got a certain tool, or weapon, or a piece of clothing or a certain type of food, or medicine, and Keyna or Charlotte wants it, I'm under traditional obligation to say: "yeah, it's OK." I have to give it to you, without expecting back. So Gamilaraay means "no having." Just keep things simple. When Keyna says "keeping the ego out of it," we haven't got a chance to get egotistical. We're still accountable to our Elders and our parents and our grandparents, and our colleagues and peers. (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021)

Values such as "no having" in which there is no place for ego, are so much part of the cultural values of the Gamilaraay language group that the grouping is named after this value. We may learn from this principle that, therefore, the sounds one hears in Country are connected to the values that align with this sentiment, such as humility and respect, as aforementioned by Jayden. Anthropologists Ruba Al Akash and Karen Boswall claim in their article on the listening habits of Syrian refugee women that we must look for listening practices that focus beyond human speech (Boswall and Al Akash 2017). However, as we see here, we may go beyond the limitations of listening to the human and instead focus on the non-human in non-performance settings, while taking into account how cultural values are embedded within both Indigenous languages tied to specific places, and by revitalising languages, Country may benefit too. However, revitalising languages does not only emphasise speaking. Rather, listening to Country requires human silence.

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[38] As Indigenous languages in Australia are of oral nature, the written spelling of many of these words may often differ. While Jayden prefers the word "Gomeroi", Gumaroy uses the word "Gamilaroi." These are different spellings for the same word, and therefore the same Country name. Many acquaintances have told me that pronunciation is often deemed more important than spelling. I have chosen to adapt the spelling to the preference of the person it concerns, and will clarify through footnotes each time when necessary. This way, I aim to privilege community members' customs and preference over academic consistency as a way to be inclusive and to avoid tempering with Indigenous systems.

Being silent and listening to Country can, therefore, be empowering. Gumaroy recalled an anecdote challenging the "knowledge" held by the Australian Prime Minister – who at the time of our interview was Scott Morrison – about navigating the land:

> Like one of my Elders said, he goes: "Hey, nephew!" He goes: "Look at our Prime Minister. Let's go take them out in the desert and strip them naked and take away their money and their key card. See how educated they are." When basic need for survival kicks into motion, how are they gonna survive? (…) "Oh, you didn't know you need to know songlines and I didn't know you need to know which plants were poisonous and medicinal, and can we use with this and that." Yeah, okay, who's the educated one now?! (Gumaroy Newman, podcast interview with author 14-11-2021)

Gumaroy suggests that the assumed limited knowledge the Prime Minister holds of the land is what ultimately indicates someone's education, suggesting that those who rely on monetary wealth and university certificates, and who often happen to have the loudest voice, may not be that powerful after all.

6.3.3 Connecting to Place in a Globalised Space

As Gumaroy's statement also suggests, in places such as Sydney, however, it may be more challenging to remind oneself of those values embedded within Country. As Luke Patterson stated:

> I see urban environment, and I see death, like, like, like, I, because my brain is constantly doing thought experiments and like, so I just look at the one meter squared in front of us of pavement. And I'm like, "if that wasn't there, how much life would be there instead?" And including, like the microbes in the soil and everything else that comes from it. And I just can't justify that sacrifice for the, for the, for my feet, or whatever, even though this is less pleasant on my bare feet than what like some meadow grass would be or whatever. So, like, ultimately, for me, the city is a scar, the city is a scab. (Luke Patterson, soundwalk interview with author 20-07-2022)

This statement of Luke's might seem to contradict his ideas on the sounds of human-made materials, which I discussed in Chapter Three, which discussed a dialogue with Country through human-made devices such as an air conditioner or a recording device. However, this also shows the complex relationship between humans and urban spaces. While it offers opportunity while not undermining a place's Indigeneity, humans (Indigenous or not) may still acknowledge urbanisation's detrimental effects on life.

The question that arises here is what it means for musicians to sing to Country in a place with so little nature left, such as Sydney, or any other metropolis. As Rebecca Dirksen explains about the work

of Haitian author Jacques Roumain, cutting trees, for example, means that the opportunity and skills for people to care for the environment – provided by the environment – are lost (Dirksen 2019). Jayden, who now lives in Tamworth but has lived in Sydney for years to pursue his studies, explains:

> Wherever we go, whether it be in the middle of Sydney, in a big high rise building or in the bush, we're always on Country. We're always on Aboriginal land. And we're always surrounded by our Old People. But I think I struggled with a bit being surrounded by by buildings, and just being surrounded by concrete. (…) While I was in Sydney, a big place of connection for me was just the beach. (…) My dad often talks about saltwater medicine, and just the water and the waves washing over your being a place of comfort and yeah, and medicine. (Jayden Kitchener-Waters, interview 07-09-2022)

While Jayden did not enjoy the presence of buildings, he does remind us that a place like Sydney is also Country, by virtue of the presence of ancestors. Country, for Indigenous populations, has a strong connection to Indigeneity, regardless of how much "nature" there is. While Sydney is a place that still includes places for human-nature connecting, such as beaches, as stated by Jayden, the inner-city suburbs, such as Redfern, are as concrete a jungle as any other globalised city space.

Therefore, we are coming back to the start of this thesis, drawing back on DOBBY's idea of connecting to Country, who states that "wherever you go around this world, it is Indigenous land to someone" (DOBBY, podcast interview with author 09-07-2021). The role of Indigenous music in Sydney, therefore, may just be that: the messaging about the space's Indigeneity. When the Djinama Yilaga choir, for example, sang on Gamaragal land in the Incinerator Art Space in North Sydney's Chatswood, the songs in language belonged to and addressed another Country: Yuin. The city space, in this case an art exhibition space, offers another layer of meaning: as a centre of activities, a city may have become a hub for peoples and Countries, and a place for unification, bringing local stories to a global sphere. The following section will scrutinise how performance might forge a connection between local stories and a global audience.

6.4 Forging Connection between Local Stories and a Global Audience: DOBBY's *Warrangu; River Story.*

This section examines the ways in which the Indigenous hip-hop album *Warrangu; River Story*, speaks to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences in Australia, focusing on relationalities between humans and place. The sounds and story of the album invite the listener to reconnect to Country – which encompasses First Nations' ways of being in the world in reciprocal relationships between land, waterways, skies, and (human) animals.

Warrangu; River Story, produced by Indigenous Muruwari and Filipino artist DOBBY, reconnects DOBBY to his cultural heritage, exploring the rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin in Australia, while protesting the privatisation of these rivers that disrupt the natural water flows. DOBBY, here, explores how the cotton and almond industry in the region is directly causing droughts, referred to as water theft.

As the performing of songlines traditionally embodies information about how to live with the land, also referred to as "Traditional Ecological Knowledge" (TEK) (Hilder 2015, 16; Ramnarine 2009) *Warrangu; River Story* continues this tradition, in which central components are community and Elders – the knowledge holders who tell stories about the waters in recordings that compose the main thread throughout the music album. I aim to demonstrate the ways in which the album, as well as the premier event of the album on June 12th, 2022, in the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, seeks interconnections between the personal, the regional and global. To do this, I focus on how DOBBY positions the stories of his personal relationship with Country amidst current climate change debates, and encourages others to do the same.

6.4.1 Warrangu; River Story

Researched, written, composed, and produced by Muruwari and Filipino artist DOBBY, a.k.a. Rhyan Clapham, *Warrangu; River Story* is a hip-hop music album with 11 tracks. DOBBY follows the flows of the Bogan River, the Culgoa River, and the Barwon River through music. These three rivers also function as natural boundaries between cultural groups in Brewarrina, the place where DOBBY's grandmother is from. The album owes its name to the Ngemba word for river, water source, or creek, as can be heard on the album in track 6: BOGARI. At the end of this song, we hear the recorded voice of the above-mentioned Elder Brad Steadman – knowledge holder from Brewarrina, who is also quoted in Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu*: "Warrangu. That's the river. Any river. Water source, creek. River. Warrangu".

Brewarrina is also the location of the fish traps alluded to above in section 6.1. Not only are Baiame's Ngunnhu a construction to catch fish and provide sustenance for the communities in the area, they are also a meeting place where various language groups gather for ceremony. This again shows how ceremony, song and dance, and sustenance from the area, such as food, go hand in hand.

The Bogan, Barwon, and Culgoa rivers are all part of an interconnected river system: the Murray-Darling Basin, which spans across multiple states. Its most extensive section lies in New South Wales, but also covers parts of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory. Over the years, the Murray-Darling Basin has been affected by droughts to the point that the Bogan River

completely dried out a few years ago. In the first track of DOBBY's album, *River*, we hear the artist walk in the dried-out riverbed together with Brad Steadman. This is where the story begins. DOBBY explains the reason he starts his album this way:

> it starts with me and him [Brad Steadman] walking down the Bogan River. And you hear the footsteps. It's like the crackly, you know, dry footsteps of the riverbed. We're like in the river, but there's no water. (…) We're not just talking about the stories and the cultural significance of these rivers. I'm also talking about what's happening now to the rivers like. In Australia, on the big newspapers, we call it drought. It's not just a drought, this is also mismanagement of our water system on a grand level, on a grand scale. The cotton farm industry and the almond plantation plantations, all these people who are irrigating water throughout the Murray Darling Basin, it's water theft at a grand scale, like people are over-irrigating and sucking the Murray-Darling Basin dry, so that all this money can be made for cotton profit. (DOBBY, podcast interview with author 09-07-2021)

Not only do the rivers suffer from water shortages (Slezak et al. 2021), but the end of 2018 saw over 10.000 fish killed (Davies 2019). It has been reported that blue-green algae caused the fish kill, which had grown in massive amounts due to higher temperatures, combined with a decline in rainfall and drainage from agriculture in the areas. The algae, in turn, caused low oxygen levels in the rivers, affecting the (mainly native) fish (Tomevska 2018)[39]. DOBBY, above, expresses that his aim for the album is not only to draw on Indigenous connections to Country, but to create political awareness about policies that further cause environmental degradation today.

DOBBY, who grew up on Dharawal country in the city of Wollongong, 2 hours driving south of Sydney, has been rekindling his ancestral Indigenous culture partly through music projects such as this album. We can hear this in track 2: *Dirrpi Yuin Patjulinya*, which, as he explains during his premiere performance on June 12th, 2022, translates to "The Bird Names Himself" in Ngemba language. Though DOBBY's heritage is from another group in the Brewarrina region – the Muruwari – Ngemba is the language that he has been learning from Ngemba Elder Brad Steadman (DOBBY, podcast interview with author 09-07-2021).

In another interview, DOBBY explains that the day after Steadman taught him that phrase, "Dirrpi Yuin Patjulinya," he heard a birdsong based on 3-tones, which he adapted as the basis of his composition (SSI Arts and Culture 2020). Besides the recording of the bird song, we hear the lyrics:

> I got no confidence in our current leader. I'm sick of suffering smoke-smothering emphysema. Towering flames, howling choke, the entire East coast from Cairns all the way down to Bega.

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[39] Barkandji Elder and visual artist Badger Bates produced the art which functioned as the backdrop of the performance, and he was a part of the Q&A-panel after the premiere of DOBBY's *Warrangu; River Story* on June 12th, 2022. During this Q&A Bates said he was sceptical and did not think it was algae that caused the fish to die.

> Listen to a different thinker, 'cause somebody is trying to give you the bigger picture. And take what I'll learn to understand, that the lesson is in the river is in the land. Our spirit teacher. (DOBBY 2020)

DOBBY encourages the listener, instead of listening to the government, to listen to the land, which he refers to as his teacher. This is a recurring theme that we have seen above, mentioned by Jayden in section 6.3. DOBBY expresses distrust in the state apparatus, in this case, the government, with Liberals' prime minister Scott Morrison at the time of the writing of this song. Scott Morrison has been heavily critiqued for his lack of action during the 2019/2020 bushfires DOBBY refers to in this song, resulting in various artistic expressions such as mocking murals and TikTok videos (Australian Associated Press 2019; Zhou 2019). At the time of *Warrangu; River Story's* premiere on June 12th, Australia had just elected a new prime minister, Anthony Albanese, leader of the Labour party. Even though the general sentiment among the people I had spoken to at the time seemed optimistic about this change – partially due to a set of symbolic gestures of the new government, such as the inclusion of the Aboriginal flag in the background during press conferences, or Albanese's victory speech in which his first claim was to endorse the Uluṟu Statement from the Heart[40] in full – many were still sceptical, as sounding through the streets during a protest against the Northern Territory Intervention[41]: "Albanese not so easy!"

A month before *Warrangu; River Story's* premiere, an Indigenous Canadian spokesperson claimed – during a Reconciliation[42] Week event – that she believes many are under the impression that Canada has better regulations, customs and laws around Indigenous culture, heritage and belief systems compared to Australia. However, she then argues that while top-down this may be the case, the lack of respect for Indigenous cultures in the Australian government leads to many more bottom-up initiatives. This mobilises people to set up grassroots initiatives and advocate for Indigenous rights through community, making the overall climate in Australia more aware of issues that affect Indigenous peoples. Indeed, DOBBY's performance was an occasion where I felt like it brought people together who came to learn through music and culture, celebrate Indigeneity, and were eager to find ways to make more environmentally conscious choices. The show's popularity was also reflected in the ticket sales: the event was sold out in its early stages of sale, which made the production team decide to create more spaces and release a second round of 50 extra tickets. This round sold out as well.

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[40] A campaign which impelled for an "Indigenous voice" to be enshrined in the Australian constitution. At the time of our interview, the campaign was in full swing. The referendum was held on 14th of October 2023 and was unsuccessful.

[41] Chapter Four contains a section on the Northern Territory Intervention.

[42] Reconciliation week is a week in Australia dedicated to learning about Indigenous histories and a moment for reflection and a rethinking of how to work towards reconciliation.

The event brought together a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, a representation drawn from the limited audience segment known to me and my accompanying friend. DOBBY invited us, the audience, to come along on his journey to Country, emphasising that we are travelling and moving through introductions to songs, like: "We're now moving towards south following this river.." while making "wavey" gestures with his hand as if we are following a bending river stream. In track 3, NGAANDU, we hear Josie Byno, a Muruwari woman from the Culgoa River in Weilmoringle (as she introduced herself in track 9: WAHWANGU). Josie Byno tells the local story about the river: "You know why we didn't learn a lot?" "Our parents didn't tell it, it was sacred." "My uncle, they wouldn't tell me nothing, he said: "no, no girl," he said: "that's all gone now, it's all gone now, leave it"." "Our language is lost because of that." When, musically, we start to hear a melodic chord progression, we know the story has begun. Byno continues while teaching about the river:

> If you came here, and, you know, you came to fish, you were only allowed to get a certain amount. When you got that certain amount, that's only probably just to feed your family. When the bait comes up then you had to go home. If you didn't get up and go home you'd hear trees falling. And lots of noises around, you know, like, spiritual beings.

We then hear her laugh: "they're warning ya: "Get up! Go home! 'Cause you got enough food there to feed the family."" She continues:

> I feel connected to the land, you know, connected to the land and the river. Somebody asks me "how do you feel about the river?" I said: "the river, the river is in our veins. It's in our blood, in our veins." And I said: "the veins that run in our body, that's' just like the river that's run in our heart, and soul."

The audience, while sitting on thin wooden chairs in the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney's CBD, is invited to listen to a sacred, local story told by Josie Byno from the Culgoa River, in Weilmoringle. If it were not for DOBBY going up to Brewarrina and recording the stories told by knowledge holders like Josie Byno for his album, this audience may have never been exposed to or learned from this story. Musically, DOBBY highlights the meaning of Byno's words. When we hear the word 'sacred,' for example, we hear a triangle sound, which reminds me, personally, of a sound made in children's movies when something appearing as 'magic' happens. She also reminds us that English is a foreign language to her people, but as Indigenous people were not allowed to practice their culture, many of the stories and much of the language got lost. However tragic, the fact that she speaks in English on the recording means broader audiences can follow her, which again shows how she opens up her knowledge to the community and people who would most likely otherwise not have learned from her.

6.4.2 Listener Relationalities

DOBBY, through artistic practice, connects not only Indigenous communities but also non-Indigenous communities to Country. As Josie Byno says: "I call this a significant site, it relates to us, and it relates to our culture." It is this relationality that one needs to a place in order to care about a place, as claimed by Tanganekald, Meintangk Boandik professor in law Irene Watson (2014). DOBBY makes these connections explicit in his track Ancestor. Here we hear the lyrics:

> If you care about our country you would care about our fish traps
> Celebrate our people, celebrate resilience, unlearn your evil

As well as:

> Nothin I'm saying on these tracks are new,
> We all gotta do what we each have to do
> Learn your past at least that's truth,
> Cause all of these rivers they lead back to you

The lyrical content suggests a unity in the listeners with words such as "our country", "our fish traps", and "we all," forging a connection among listeners, Indigenous or not. DOBBY particularly speaks to non-Indigenous listeners when he raps "unlearn your evil" and "learn your past at least that's the truth," encouraging settlers to educate themselves about their ancestral ties and histories. He emphasises a shared responsibility to care for Country when he finishes with "all of these rivers they lead back to you," creating a narrative in which any listener may find a connectivity between themselves and place. Rethinking relationalities to land and our position within it enables a shift in perspectives on why and how any people may be tied to a place and, therefore, care for/about it. Musical performance in urban settings can play a part in that perspective shifting.

In track 9 of the album, *WAHWANGU* – also translated as "the Barwon", we hear Tommy Barker telling a story about the Wahwangu and how it came about. It reflects the importance of Indigenous language and emphasises the locality of the place, referring to its custodians that introduce themselves at the end of the song: Lily Shearer, Josie Byno, Tommy Barker again, and finally, Rhyan's grandmother, who closes the song with: "I was born Mary Beryl Shearer. I was born and raised in Brewarrina." Here, DOBBY brings the story of his album back home and makes the audience feel his connection to Country, which the audience has now been a very small part of. After playing this song during the premier, DOBBY became emotional, and many in the audience followed. This illustrates how cultural expressions such as music and performance, as claimed earlier by Silvers and Allen, can enable a much-needed relationship between humans and land.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to answer the question, *How do Indigenous musicians in and around Sydney engage with environmental issues?.* To answer this question, I have drawn on Indigenous people's relation to Country – whether they are sovereign over a particular Country, or "standing in their sovereignty" over another Country on the continent, showing various kinds of sovereignties – and looked into how Indigenous musicians and activists today respond to the climate crisis musically. First, I described the building process of the didjeridu, to look into the collaboration between humans, insects, plants, soil, sun and air to create the instrument. I argue that this is an inherently political act, not only because of the environmental consideration this process exposes – in a time where the exploitation of the planet's resources has become the norm – but also because of the pan-Aboriginality the instrument has become to symbolise.

I have emphasised the treatment of Country as a living entity by the musical sovereign practice of being in dialogue with Country. Song and native languages are believed to heal Country, as demonstrated by the Djinama Yilaga choir. Being in dialogue is a two-way street and, therefore, also involves listening to Country. Furthermore, this chapter discussed how the performance of DOBBY's hip-hop album *Warrangu; River Story* exposes exploitative corporate practices, causing dried-out rivers and fish kills in the Murray-Darlin Basin. Here, I aimed to demonstrate how DOBBY connects local stories to a global audience, promoting awareness of today's results of climate change. I demonstrated how music performance can facilitate a connection to a place, even when a listener has not been to that place. While members of the audience during the premiere of *Warrangu; River Story* may live in and around Sydney, the performance enabled an imagined journey to the Brewarrina Shire region, facilitating a learning and caring about this region.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the political significance of First Nations musical performance, sounds, and storytelling in Sydney, Australia. For this, I focused on the various ways in which First Nations musicians, artists, and storytellers reclaim space and stand in their sovereignty through sounds and musics, such as by Indigenous musical representation in (onsite/mediated) spaces and the political messaging behind Indigenous expressions. Besides, highlighting the lived experiences of Indigenous people living, working, musicking, and moving in Sydney, I have offered an alternative insight into Indigenous experiences, focusing on urban space and contemporary expressions of Indigeneity. This thesis examined the political role of Indigenous storytelling in today's musical traditions and how this enables a deeper understanding of Indigenous sovereignty. Throughout my fieldwork, I came to understand that storytelling can be an essential element in the ways in which people relate to their Indigeneity. This is particularly expressed through hip-hop music, as rap emphasises lyrical expression and is, therefore, often seen as a continuation of Indigenous storytelling traditions.

The notion of space-reclaiming in this thesis has come forth from the idea that, unlike space-making, space-reclaiming highlights Indigenous sovereignty over these spaces. It emphasises Indigenous ontological relation to Country, which, on the Australian continent, is unique to the Indigenous peoples. This is crucial to stress in urban areas, where Indigenous peoples are often seen as out of place. This idea arises from Eurocentric imaginations that position First Nations peoples in remote community settings. However, as this thesis has evidenced, it was the place today known as Sydney that suffered from colonisation the earliest and was subject to the highest density of early European settlers. Even though Sydney's establishment as a city was directly derived from European principles, many Indigenous inhabitants today make claims to this space, with a particular focus on Redfern in the inner city.

Despite the gentrification of the area, space–reclaiming in Redfern manifests through the establishment of many Indigenous organisations, such as community and creative centres, as well as the housing initiative in the Block that holds designated housing spaces for Indigenous families. Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated how Indigenous musical performances and expressions negotiate various urban spaces in Sydney through either permanent emplacement or temporary and moving musical events. As has been demonstrated, this reveals various kinds of sovereignties: Those who practice sovereign sounding acts within the Country they are Indigenous to, and those who practice sovereign sounding acts as Indigenous people by deeply caring about the idea of Country as a living entity, acknowledging its Indigenous sovereigns. As has also been demonstrated, and following

multiple accounts on this idea, sovereignty is an embodied practice (Moreton-Robinson 2020; Reed 2020; Robinson 2020). I have moved away from a specific focus on Treaties, because, while they are highly important and necessary on the Australian continent to acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty, I urged for a focus on sovereignty that is embedded within Indigenous customs and acts. As this thesis has demonstrated, these acts may include walking, singing, or listening to Country, and resist to fall within the confines of white structures (Prokhovnik 2013) around "western" concepts of legal domains. It is, therefore, that I speak of "sounding sovereign acts." In Sydney specifically, a place where many Indigenous peoples from various Countries come and live together, we may hear a pan-Indigenous space-reclaiming, advocating for Indigenous sovereignty on both the piece of land of the performance, as well as on a national level. The affordances of urban space, such as big festival organisations, universities, and media channels, are what make Sydney a place where sovereign sounding acts can be heard by the wider society.

Chapter Two has critically reflected on the ways in which I have engaged with research data obtained for this thesis, and scrutinises how digital technologies challenge the accessibility of and make it possible to rethink engagement with Indigenous expressions. I made a podcast series of the research interviews and soundwalk recordings to facilitate transparency, accessibility, and to deal first-hand with ethical issues around open knowledge-sharing. Podcasting also functions as an alternative form of engagement with research outputs, complementing the normative form of writing in academia with the sounds of the research participants' voices and the surroundings we found ourselves in while recording. I examined questions around access, agency, and embodied learning through new digital technologies and scrutinised the structures and norms by which digital platforms have been and are formed. This chapter also included an autoethnographic account of the ways in which this research project has dealt with the same questions posed around others' works. While we must take into account the fragility of open knowledge sharing on digital platforms – due to cultural etiquette, copyright issues, and institutional barriers for platforms to stay online – I have aimed to demonstrate how an engaged way of handling research information, in particular information gathered through interviews, can be a step in the direction of more reciprocal ways of doing research. For this, research outcomes must benefit not just the researcher but also the people who have participated in the research.

Chapter Three scrutinised some of the ways in which Indigenous musicians and activists negotiate urban space in Sydney. I have first discussed how the city has historically excluded Indigenous communities in its structural foundation, directly deriving from Europe, but how Indigenous communities have also (re-)established themselves in various areas. I have taken one of those areas as a focus point: Redfern. Here, I conducted soundwalks with Gamilaroi musician and poet Luke Patterson,

as well as Gamilaroi social worker Tyren Ahsee. This thesis explored how working with research participants through the act of walking has provided insights into how these Indigenous individuals relate to Redfern and city life in general. We focused on the sounds we encountered and the visual information we saw while recording our conversation. It became apparent that experiential factors such as family ties and active engagement with the environment make Luke and Tyren relate to the place closely.

Beyond the sounds of everyday life recorded during the soundwalks, this chapter also sought to explore how Indigenous musicians negotiate urban space through musical expressions. Tudulaig songman Lez plays his songline at Circular Quay, the gateway for tourists to explore the Sydney Harbour, the Harbour Bridge, and the Opera House. By playing his songline here, Lez emphasises that this place is Warrane, an important initiation site and a site for Aboriginal ceremony, information he eagerly shares with anyone who stops and listens to him play. The 2022 Blak Box: Precarities performance, on the other hand, draws on Indigenous artists' experiences of navigating everyday life as an Indigenous person in Australia. This chapter demonstrated how this performance used a combination of the Cutaway venue – an open space under a human-made hill of which one of the walls is a cut-off sandstone cliff while the rest of the building is a concrete industrial-looking building – the sounds of the artists' instruments and voices, and the ways in which they and the audience were positioned. I demonstrated how the performers drew the audience into their worlds by vagueness and lack of boundaries of when the show started, where sounds were coming from, and which sounds were meant to be a part of the performance.

Focusing on political statements, Chapter Four has enquired into the ways in which Indigenous musical and sounding performance create interventions across the city in a variety of ways. I have presented how, often, an intervention is made simply by Indigenous presence on a stage. I have exemplified this by drawing on the performances of and interviews with musicians Mi-kaisha, Yidinji, Gumaroy Newman and Keyna Wilkins, who work within the parameters of established urban institutions in order to reach a wider audience that reaches beyond Indigenous audiences while making a living as professional artists. Here, the political agency lies with the artists who tactically navigate powerful institutions to engage non-Indigenous audiences.

This chapter also demonstrated how the significant week of NAIDOC week, which celebrates Indigenous cultures in Australia, though it is also often seen as a tokenistic implementation, in Sydney temporarily breaks with norms in which Indigenous people are a minority in city spaces. At NAIDOC week celebrations, spaces are made Indigenous spaces through sovereign sounding practices in which non-Indigenous people are guests, reversing power dynamics in the urban environment of Sydney. I have also reflected upon the the *Karrinjarla Muwajarri* rally in 2022, to include a form of sounds,

framed as "noise", that does not work with or inside institutions, but actively protests against the establishment. By focusing on noise, I aimed to capture the idea of the sounds of the other. The term's negative associations demonstrated the marginalised positions First Nations populations often find themselves in. Like the notion of an intervention, noise can be seen as a disruption of normative city rhythms. I aimed to show how a variety of attitudes or ways of coming to effective change are all interconnected and exercise a particular agency within their networks, which are, in turn, also connected with and to each other.

Chapter Five has demonstrated the significance of intergenerational and transnational solidarity through Indigenous musical storytelling. Hip-hop is an important genre in which this manifests, enabling us to draw global connections over issues that many marginalised communities deal with. It is also a way to sustain Indigenous traditions of storytelling. This chapter has shown how Indigenous hip-hoppers such as BARKAA and MC Munk, a.k.a. Munkimuk, have created professional opportunities for themselves to become artists, while at the same time platforming those who are starting their careers. I have evidenced how BARKAA, for example, raps lyrics from her daughter's position and invited young female musician Mi-kaisha to sing her own lyrics on BARKAA's song Come Back. I explored how MC Munk, for example, created his own hip-hop show on Koori Radio, The Indij Hip Hop Show, to promote Indigenous hip-hop artists.

This chapter also demonstrated the importance of music videos for Indigenous sovereignty, in which the places shown in the clips enable a rethinking of these places. DOBBY, for instance, in his I Can't Breathe video, questions how spaces in his clip are used to celebrate some meanings and not others while rapping in front of the Captain Cook statue in Sydney's Hyde Park. Ziggy Ramo, in turn, is filmed while standing on top of the Sydney Opera House, using the space as a literal platform. I have shown how inspiration to emplace oneself and, by doing so, empowering a younger generation to follow, have come from earlier generations of Indigenous activists, as well as Black Power movements from abroad. The idea of "paving the way" is central to many Indigenous musical expressions.

Finally, Chapter Six drew on Indigenous peoples' ontological relation to the environment and how, today, musicians respond to the current climate crisis. By taking the didjeridu-building process under the loop, I aimed to show how it can teach us about a holistic process in which humans, termites, trees, air, sun, and soil, work together in crafting this musical instrument. It showed how Indigenous ways of didjeridu-building demonstrate an intricate consideration for the environment when it comes to musical life. I have also illustrated ways in which musicians can be in dialogue with the land through song and native language. This also includes a listening to the land that invites us to rethink the idea of listening. The chapter concluded with a contemporary musical performance of DOBBY's hip-hop album *Warrangu*; River Story, highlighting extractivist practices exacerbating the climate crisis. I

demonstrated how sovereign sounding practices can transgress imagined borders between the rural and the urban, aiming to promote environmental awareness.

This thesis contributes to various fields of scholarship. I have drawn on Indigenous Studies (Tuck and Yang 2012; Smith 2013; Pascoe 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2015, 2020; Reed 2020; Raheja 2011; Archibald 2019; Bennett and Moreton 2020; Robinson 2020), in which I have reflected on my non-Indigenous position, worked through the concepts of sovereignty, reciprocity, content refusal, and listening, and for which I hope the focus on music and sound will be an enrichment. I have engaged with the area of Indigenous music in Australia (Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004; Corn 2009; Mackinlay 2015; Treloyn and Googninda Charles 2015; Fisher 2016; Ryan 2016; Barwick 1997, 2017; Minestrelli 2017; Clapham and Kelly 2019; Harris 2020; Dowsett 2021; Bracknell 2022) by focusing on today's Indigenous music-making and soundings in relation to urban space in Sydney. My particular contribution here is my attention to the ways in which musicians and activists Indigenise spaces and challenge dominant perceptions of spaces while celebrating Indigeneity, specifically in various areas in Sydney. I also hope to have demonstrated the agency of the non-human and non-natural in relation to attunement to the environment relating to Indigenous urban realities.

I have contributed to studies considering sound and/or space in relation to urban areas (Lefebvre 1991; Sakakeeny 2010; LaBelle 2018; Chandola 2020) and aimed to bring in Indigenous perspectives on, and issues around, gentrification, displacement, and negotiating urban space. For this, I adapted a specific focus on walking (Aduonum 2021) as a way to encounter place, and soundwalking in particular (Schafer 1993; McCartney 2014; Williams and Coblentz 2018) to foreground sound in our perceptions of place and space. Soundwalking also highlighted a knowing through doing (Ingold 2013) and participation (Turino 2008) in which this thesis emphasised the practitioner (or walker) as a knower (de Certeau 1984; Daniels-Mayes 2021).

Furthermore, I hope to have added to hip-hop scholarship (Rose 1994, 2008; Mitchell 2001; Osumare 2012; Appert 2018) and particularly to the field of Indigenous hip-hop (Minestrelli 2017; Przybylski 2017; Hutchings and Rodger 2018; Clapham and Kelly 2019; Saunders 2020) with a focus on how hip-hop, in particular, facilitates intergenerational empowerment through emplacement on physical performance stages, but also on screen or on-air. I have also contributed to studies focusing on environmentalism and materialism (Haraway (1985) 2000; Bennett 2010; Silvers 2018; Allen 2021; Pedelty et all 2022) by highlighting non-human agencies (Latour 1999, 2005, 2017; Bates 2012) and relaxing boundaries between imaginations of the rural and the urban through musicking and performance.

7.1 Reflections

Reflecting on my research process, I have tried my best to reflect the voices of those who helped me shape this research. I have particularly worked in a way that reflects peoples' thoughts and sentiments they shared with me as theory, rather than data. This means that I have theorised with and besides the research participants, rather than about them. My particular focus on sharing and increasing access to knowledge, which resulted in the Movements & Sounds podcast, has been particularly fruitful as a small step towards transparency, accountability, and engagement in ethical scholarship.

During the fieldwork months, I often stepped outside of my comfort zone by trying to connect with strangers while feeling the need to "promote" my research, something that felt uneasy for me; it was a hurdle necessary to get over to "get things done." My research ideas were often met with enthusiasm, though I did also receive some much-expected suspicion. Working in this field as a non-Indigenous person attached to a university in the United Kingdom comes with stereotypes of "well-meaning white people" without a clue. In many ways, I am one of those. I repeatedly received praise after interviews about the extent to which I came in informed. Of course, on a personal level, this was delightful, but on a more structural level, this is reflective of how many Indigenous peoples feel misunderstood, not heard, or deemed irrelevant by the wider society. Therefore, scepticism towards outsiders, and researchers in particular, can only be met with understanding.

I often needed to convey some of my pre-existing knowledge during an interview to show my dedication. Asking how people wished to acknowledge Country at the start of an interview, for instance, was something I was thanked for often. Other times, I noticed it helped to name some Indigenous musicians, artists or creative initiatives to show my knowledge and a way to talk about mutual musical taste.

As I had lived in Sydney before during various times in my life, the overall fieldwork went as expected. In fact, perhaps I should say things went better than expected. I went into my fieldwork time defeated by COVID-19, which reduced my fieldwork time by half, and my arrival time was delayed by eight months. Though grateful that at least I managed to go for some time, I felt like I was constantly running out of time. Reflecting back, I now realise that the time I spent in Sydney was more than enough for this research, as there have been many encounters, situations, conversations, experiences, and moments that have not made it into this thesis. However, I remain – as mentioned in the introduction – that on a personal level, I had wished to be able to contribute more, though time and funding constraints shape a researcher's reality. This research has been a test of my (in)ability to let go of control in a situation that was completely out of my hands. This was not only due to my delayed and shortened fieldwork time but also the fewer cultural events taking place, as Australia caught a second wave of the

COVID-19 virus relatively late compared to other parts of the world due to its prolonged border closure. Sydney also caught heavy rainfall during my time there, causing many parts to flood and many individuals to evacuate. While my acquaintances and I were safe, the weather disrupted or cancelled many events.

7.2 Future Directions

This research is by no means comprehensive. It is shaped by my personal background, choices, and the circles I found myself in. There are many individuals and areas that have not made it into this thesis. I hope that my contribution to insights on music and sounds that tell Indigenous stories in Sydney will be a useful resource for further conversations and discussions in this area. I have opened up a discussion on global shared experiences among marginalised peoples in Chapter Five, for instance, and it would be particularly interesting to investigate further how these global linkages between Indigenous peoples evolve through music. I have also tried to embed an alternative form of research output, by creating the Movements & Sounds podcast. However, this was a project within my limited capacities as the podcast was an addition to the fully developed thesis that also stands on its own. I would highly encourage experimentation with other research outputs that increase research accessibility, transparency, and reciprocity.

Moreover, as suggested in Chapter Five, children are often the reason why many strive "to keep culture alive." A study focusing on the ways in which Indigenous children musick and relate to Sydney would reveal insights into their experiences, needs, hopes, and dreams. I have also learned – mainly through my conversation with MC Munk and our consequent social media contact – about the many Indigenous musicians and creatives living and musicking abroad. Further research on Indigenous musicians in the diaspora (outside of Australia) could be conducted to find out how people relate to land, culture, and nation while living abroad and how this affects people's musicking.

I finished this thesis with a chapter on environmentalism. Here I briefly outlined ways in which Indigenous peoples are holistically connected to land and waterways. I have also reflected on Indigenous musicians performing in contemporary settings while advocating for climate justice. I believe the focus on environmentalism, climate change, and non-human agency could be expanded with increasing urgency to sustain life on Earth.

As this thesis has demonstrated, reciprocity is a key component in working with Indigenous people when it comes to research. This core principle may be extended to the ways in which humans relate to the environment. This also leads me to my final concluding remark. Over the course of this research,

and even prior to starting this PhD, I needed to ask myself: Why do I feel the need to tell this story? This question has been my constant companion and my answer (is there an answer?) changes daily. In an ever-increasing connected world, encounters shape our lives. I realise that cultures are not practised in a vacuum and that while I believe it is important for stories to be told from within, especially by Indigenous people, non-Indigenous people cannot stand by. One does not have to be Indigenous to care about the issues that affect Indigenous people. I believe the responsibility to create change is shared – especially since some issues, such as climate change, in fact, do affect all, not just Indigenous people. But to create meaningful change, it is time to listen to those stories that, for too long, have not been heard.

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