

## Gendering Aboriginalism

### A Performative Gaze on Indigenous Australian Women

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KATELYN BARNEY

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#### —INTRODUCTION

*The bitter smell of coffee lingered in the air like smoke and the echo of laughter and music whispered in my ears. I was at the Judith Wright Centre waiting for Indigenous Australian female singer/songwriter Toni Janke to perform. I watched the audience file in and take their seats in the cabaret style theatre. I smiled at my friend Mark and his sister Louise who had both come along to watch the concert with me. There was a hush over the audience as the lights dimmed and Toni came on stage. The backing CD started and the sounds of guitar, drums, and ethereal sounding flute reverberated through the theatre. Toni began to sway to the music and then her strong, smooth voice began performing her song 'Jewel of the North'. I also moved to the slow beat and listened carefully as Toni sang, 'we sang all the old songs back then, and we laughed and we danced once again'. Then the applause wrapped around me and embraced me in its warmth. I smiled and looked over at Louise and noticed she had a puzzled look on her face. She caught my eye and said in a hushed tone, 'It's certainly not what I was expecting.' I wondered, what did she mean by this statement? Did the performance not 'sound' how she was expecting? Did Toni not 'look' how she assumed Indigenous Australian performers should look? Was she surprised that the concert was performed by an Indigenous Australian woman? I wondered how many other people in the*

*audience were also thinking that it was not what they expected. Were Indigenous Australian women performers aware of these audience expectations?*

Each time I recall this experience it tells me about how Aboriginalist discourse works to fix, confine and sustain non-Indigenous audiences' expectations of Indigenous Australian women performers. Indigenous Australian women who perform contemporary music are intensely aware that Aboriginalist discourse hinders them and they perform a diverse range of styles, languages, places, and identities in order to resist, negotiate, and challenge Aboriginalism. This essay focuses on Indigenous Australian women musicians' perspectives of the Aboriginalist gaze to examine how they perform around, within, and against this discourse through their music.

Drawn from Said's theory of Orientalism,<sup>1</sup> the term 'Aboriginalism' has been used by scholars in the Australian context to refer to specific ways of representing Indigenous Australian people. Broadly defined, it refers to the tendency of (largely white) scholars to use 'culture' as the key analytical tool for knowing social difference and for explaining issues in colonial contexts.<sup>2</sup> Music performance is one arena where Aboriginalism is visibly and sonically at play. One of the most common Aboriginalist representations of Indigenous Australian people is, as Indigenous Australian female performer Lou Bennett points out, 'basically a man, out in the desert, black skin, flat nose with a lap-lap on, standing on one leg, resting against a spear'.<sup>3</sup> In performance contexts Indigenous Australian singer-songwriter Deb Morrow notes that another typical Aboriginalist construction is an Aboriginal man playing 'didjeridu, clap sticking, full black, with paint all over them. And that, that's all they are. Anything less than that is not Aboriginal.'<sup>4</sup> Lou's and Deb's comments raise the questions: in what ways are discourses of Aboriginalism gendered? Does Aboriginalism have consequences that are different for men and women?<sup>5</sup> How does Aboriginalism affect performance and specifically Aboriginal women performers? As a non-Indigenous researcher, how does my own research and writing work within and against Aboriginalism?

—WHAT IS ABORIGINALISM?

But first, what is Aboriginalism and how has it emerged as a body of critique? While it has been suggested that Hodge, Hodge and Mishra or Attwood were the first writers to use the term 'Aboriginalism', earlier references to the term can be found in the work of Vijay Mishra.<sup>6</sup> In 1987 Mishra drew on Said's *Orientalism* to develop the term Aboriginalism in order to describe the attempt at the 'reduction of a culture to a dominant discourse' which overpowers 'the plurality of Aboriginal voices'.<sup>7</sup> Since Mishra's use of the term, a number of authors have examined historical and contemporary expressions of Aboriginalism in various contexts including education, film and literature, anthropology, archaeology, media, and theatre.<sup>8</sup>

Aboriginalism has the effect of silencing Indigenous Australians and views Aboriginal people as 'fearsome and dangerous, childlike and passive or primitively attractive but not as capable of self government or equal civil or moral subjects. Essentially they will be spoken about or for but cannot speak themselves.'<sup>9</sup> McConaghy argues that one of the central projects of Aboriginalism is the 'construction of normative and prescriptive statements of what it means to be "a real Australian Aborigine" or "a real Torres Strait Islander"'.<sup>10</sup>

Hodge describes Aboriginalism as being 'ideally constituted to act as an ambiguous instrument for ideological control'.<sup>11</sup> Like Hodge, Attwood shows that Aboriginalism is characterised by an overarching relationship of power between coloniser and colonised and suggests that Aboriginalism, like Orientalism, 'produces authoritative and essentialist "truths" about indigenes, and which is characterised by a mutually supporting relationship between power and knowledge'.<sup>12</sup>

Discussing Aboriginalism in children's literature, Bradford describes Aboriginalism as a strand of colonial discourse that 'generally represents Aboriginality as having a pure and authentic quality untouched by historical and cultural change'.<sup>13</sup> Like Attwood, Bradford argues that Aboriginalism works within the dynamics of knowledge and power and suggests that Aboriginalist discourse 'locates authentic Aboriginal cultures in a remote past where they can be safely quarantined from notions of progress and development and denied the possibility of change or adaptation'.<sup>14</sup>

A number of these scholars emphasise that anthropologists, historians, and literary writers have been, and continue to be, responsible for the construction,

development, and dissemination of Aboriginalism. Certainly Aboriginalism exists not only in academic discourse but has filtered through into Western consciousness where statements develop from Aboriginalism into the general culture as stereotypes such as those identified by Lou Bennett and Deb Morrow. But before addressing Indigenous Australian women performers' perceptions of how they are imagined and constructed by audiences, I would now like to examine some examples of Aboriginalism from anthropological texts. As Muecke notes, rather than viewing texts as locations where the desire to speak is liberated, we need to critique them as sites of multiple exclusions.<sup>15</sup>

—ABORIGINALIST REPRESENTATIONS OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

Critiques of Aboriginalism rarely feature in anthropological or ethnomusicological discourse and with the exception of Moreton-Robinson there has been very little discussion of the specific ways that Aboriginalist discourse constructs, works against, and affects Aboriginal women.<sup>16</sup> As McConaghy, Mills, and Lewis separately point out, Said's *Orientalism* presents us with a notion of colonialism as non-gendered.<sup>17</sup> Said states that 'Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand'.<sup>18</sup> Lewis emphasises that the 'him' of this quotation is significant—for Said, in *Orientalism* at least, Orientalism is a homogenous discourse articulated by a colonial subject that is 'unified, intentional and irredeemably male'.<sup>19</sup> Lewis acknowledges that although Said discusses the impact of discourses of gender in his later work, in *Orientalism* he 'does not question women's apparent absence as producers of Orientalist discourse or as agents with colonial power' and gender only occurs in the text 'as a metaphor for the negative characterisation of the Orientalised Other as "feminine"'.<sup>20</sup> In response to Said's lack of reference to discourses of gender, Lewis argues that women did produce representations that constituted Orientalism and examines women's contribution to the field of visual and literary Orientalism.<sup>21</sup> While there is a wealth of literature on gender and Orientalism, scholars working in the Australian context have not yet drawn on this work on gendered Orientalism to critique Aboriginalism in relation to gender.<sup>22</sup> How, then, is Aboriginalism gendered?

What does this discourse mean in relation to Aboriginalism and its relationship to gender?

*White male anthropological representations of Indigenous Australian women*

Anthropology has played an influential role in constructing Aboriginalist notions of both 'Aborigines' and Indigenous Australian women. My analysis here does not attempt to give an exhaustive account of Aboriginalist representations of Aboriginal women, nor does it try to condemn these images and texts. Instead I am attempting to illustrate how strongly entrenched and accepted these Aboriginalist images are. I am aware that it is almost heresy for a scholar to critique these influential anthropological texts yet to me the following examples strongly illustrate their Aboriginalist orientation. As Muecke reveals, anthropological accounts 'traditionally excluded the possibility of dialogue with the Others' and regarded traditional forms of Indigenous Australian cultures and music alone as 'authentic', valuable, and therefore worthy of scholarly consideration.<sup>23</sup>

Historically, it was mainly male anthropologists who dominated Australian anthropology and their primary objects of study were Indigenous Australian people and cultures.<sup>24</sup> In these early anthropological texts Aboriginal women were 'invisible, or represented as inferior, or possessions or victims, or both. White male anthropologists viewed the native scene through their own phallogocentric lenses, and were dependent on male Aboriginal informants.'<sup>25</sup>

First published in 1899, Spencer and Gillen's influential text *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* argues that the 'real' or 'primitive' Aborigines were dying out and those who adopted non-Indigenous ways would cease to remember the traditions of their past: 'many tribes will practically die out without our gaining any knowledge'.<sup>26</sup> Such a view, which I read as a marker of Aboriginalist discourse, positioned anthropologists as knowledgeable authorities on Aboriginal culture who spoke about and for Aborigines and situated authentic Aboriginal cultures in the past while denying the possibilities of change or adaptation. Briefly describing physical fights between Aboriginal women, Spencer and Gillen state that, 'fighting clubs will be freely used and blows given and taken which would soon render *hors de combat* an ordinary white woman, but which have comparatively little effect upon the black women'.<sup>27</sup> Here Aboriginal women are represented as tough, brutal,

and animalistic and compared negatively against 'delicate' white women who assumed the status of the norm. In this Aboriginalist and patriarchal framework Aboriginal women are then viewed in the following way—'Aboriginals = animals; women = domestic property of men; therefore Aboriginal women = domestic property of men who can be treated like animals'.<sup>28</sup>

The cover of the fourth edition of Elkin's text *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them* discloses the Aboriginalist orientation of its contents by presenting Aborigines in the essentialised singular way that Indigenous female performer Lou Bennett describes—that is: an Aboriginal man wearing a lap-lap, standing on one leg while leaning against a spear.<sup>29</sup> A young naked Aboriginal child sits on the Aboriginal man's shoulder in the photograph confirming the Aboriginalist assertion that the Aboriginal man is the central bearer of culture which he alone will hand to the child. While it is unclear from the image on Elkin's cover whether the photo was actually taken by Elkin or selected by Angus and Robertson's art editor, the picture featured does suggest that the true and authentic identity of an Aborigine exists and is constituted by a remote, primitive, male, and traditional Aboriginal culture.

However, we should not assume that such constructions belong only to the past. Almost sixty years later, gendered Aboriginalism continues in the anthropological work of Hiatt.<sup>30</sup> The cover of the text *Arguments About Aborigines: Australia and the Evolution of Social Anthropology* depicts three Aboriginal men sitting on the ground making a fire while another three Aboriginal men stand behind grass huts holding spears. Three women and two small children appear in the far background of the illustration barely visible to the reader's eye. One reading of this illustration could be that the artwork presents a picture from Australia's colonial past and that non-Indigenous people no longer view Aboriginal people in this way. However, like Elkin's text, the cover of Hiatt's book reinforces early anthropological accounts that positioned Aboriginal women as relegated to the background of culture. The title of Hiatt's text *Arguments about Aborigines* emphasises that he engages in discussions 'about' rather than 'in dialogue' or 'with' Aboriginal people. This could be read as objectifying Aboriginal people and clearly does not suggest any engagement with Indigenous Australian people. While again it is not apparent whether the painting was selected by Hiatt or by the publishers, when the cover is

analysed in conjunction with the title of the book, the image illustrates contemporary Aboriginalism at play and highlights the Aboriginalist claim that Aboriginality is defined by a static, traditional culture.

*Women representing 'other'*

Moore writes that in the early 1970s the new 'anthropology of women' began by confronting 'the problem of how women were being represented in anthropological writings' by male anthropologists and the initial problem was quickly identified as one of male bias which was seen as having three 'tiers'.<sup>31</sup> According to Moore, the first bias is that of the anthropologist who brings to research various expectations and assumptions about the relationships between men and women; the second bias is one inherent in society; and the third bias is one imbedded in Western culture.<sup>32</sup> Feminist anthropologists saw the primary task as one of deconstructing this three-tiered male bias by focusing research on women and anthropological writings about Indigenous Australian women proliferated during this period. Since the work of Kaberry, many women anthropologists attempted to challenge this three-tiered bias and claimed a deep concern for Aboriginal women and their traditions.<sup>33</sup>

Kaberry was the first non-Indigenous female anthropologist to represent the lives and culture of Indigenous Australian women.<sup>34</sup> Her 1939 book, *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane*, was based on her research in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia; it highlights the significance of Aboriginal women and focused on the cultural and religious heritage of Aboriginal women at a time when 'few outsiders paid any attention to the lives of Indigenous people, let alone women'.<sup>35</sup>

Kaberry's text at least emphasised the roles of Aboriginal women at a time when Aboriginal women were represented only in stereotypical ways or not at all. Her views of 'the Aboriginal woman' as sharing with men an equal ownership of land, a common religious heritage and having sacred and secret ceremonies restricted to women challenged some of Aboriginalism's key myths about Aboriginal women. Kaberry's focus on 'traditional' Indigenous women was part of her campaign to contest the view, argued by male anthropologists in the early part of the twentieth century, that 'traditional' Aboriginal women 'were no more than "domesticated cows"'.<sup>36</sup> Kaberry somewhat naively states that she had more

difficulty obtaining songs about childbirth from women and 'it was not until I had been seven months in the country that I finally heard the first songs'.<sup>37</sup> However, Toussaint argues that it would seem more likely that 'her youthfulness and the fact that she had not given birth herself, might account for the women's reluctance'.<sup>38</sup> One could criticise Kaberry for her detailed documentation of women-only ceremonies and songs, as this information is now recognised as restricted. Certainly Kaberry's public presentation of this information illustrates a major difference in past and present thinking and ethics of scholarship.

Kaberry's failure to acknowledge the impact of colonialism on Kimberley Aboriginal life has been criticised by Indigenous academic Moreton-Robinson who states that Kaberry's 'methodology allows for an illusory absence of colonisation which is preserved and felt in the presence of its absence'.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Toussaint notes that Kaberry 'appears from her ethnography to have worked *unquestioningly* in a colonial era and she aligned herself with pastoral families, some of whom held more power and authority than 1930s Aboriginal women and men'.<sup>40</sup> Certainly Kaberry was working in a period in Australian anthropology that was strongly aligned with and influenced by Aboriginalist and colonialist agendas where Aboriginal peoples were objects of study and anthropologists were viewed as knowledgeable experts on Aboriginal cultures.

Aboriginalism is also evident in more recent work by non-Indigenous female anthropologist Diane Bell. Bell's book *Daughters of the Dreaming*, was first published in 1983 and was received at the time as a 'challenge to certain cherished assumptions concerning the role of women, particularly in the sphere of religion'.<sup>41</sup> Bell asserts that Aboriginal women have a parallel culture to men, are social actors who have status, power and authority to enact social agency, and 'are autonomous, independent ritual actors who actively participate in the creation, transmission and maintenance of the values of their society'.<sup>42</sup>

Yet *Daughters of the Dreaming* could be viewed as an Aboriginalist text in its positioning of Bell as a knowledgeable expert on Aboriginal women with the authority to represent and document Aboriginal women's secret and restricted knowledges in a public text. Bell has been highly criticised by Indigenous Australian women academics such as Huggins et al. and Moreton-Robinson who have challenged Bell's right to speak for Indigenous women.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Moore suggests



that white women anthropologists, like Bell, want to challenge men's right to speak for women, but in the process find themselves 'unintentionally speaking for other women'.<sup>44</sup>

Hamilton, however, emphasises that Bell's *Daughters of the Dreaming* must be commended because it 'opens up a certain perspective, one which has received little credence or even attention before'.<sup>45</sup> Bell herself states that her aim is to articulate an ethnography that was 'feminist, engaged, ethically grounded, collaborative, relational and enmeshed in ever-expanding political contexts'.<sup>46</sup> However, Bell's intentions must be questioned because similarly to Kaberry, Berndt, and others, Bell documents information about women-only ceremonies, information that today is considered restricted information.<sup>47</sup> Bell argues 'my economic and emotional independence of the world of men meant that I was "safe" with women's secrets'.<sup>48</sup> While she acknowledged that the information about women-only ceremonies was secret, she still documented it in a public text. The question remains: how 'safe' was Bell with information about women's ceremonies?

Certainly the work of women anthropologists attempted to challenge assumptions concerning the roles of Aboriginal women. However, the representations of Indigenous women by these white women anthropologists reveal that they, too, have contributed to the production of Aboriginalist discourse about Aboriginal women. There have been many other representations of Indigenous women by non-Indigenous women scholars.<sup>49</sup> Moreton-Robinson argues that 'when white women anthropologists write about Indigenous women, they do so in the conventions of representation bounded by their discipline, university and politics and white Australian culture'.<sup>50</sup> However, a number of anthropologists attempt to challenge and actively resist Aboriginalism in their work by moving beyond the traditional frame of reference to deal with social change, include and acknowledge the voices of Indigenous women, and situate Indigenous women not as objects within texts, but highlight the fullness of the lived experiences and multiple subjectivities of Indigenous women in the present.<sup>51</sup> Certainly, part of the challenge for any non-Indigenous scholar researching Indigenous Australian people and their cultures, myself included, is to resist speaking for Indigenous Australians and emphasise Indigenous perspectives in order to actively challenge, shift away from and move beyond Aboriginalism.

Despite the growing body of academic literature about Indigenous Australian music, critiques of Aboriginalism and colonialism are yet to take centre stage in this area of study.<sup>52</sup> There has been a noted sparsity of scholarly examination of the dynamics of Aboriginalism at work in relation to contemporary music performance.<sup>53</sup> However, with the exception of Lawe Davies, who mentions Orientalism and Aboriginalism in relation to Aboriginal rock, there has been little academic examination of the ways in which Aboriginalist discourse fixes expectations of what Indigenous Australian people performing contemporary music should look and sound like, and further, how Indigenous Australian performers respond to these expectations.<sup>54</sup> There has also been a lack of examination of the specific ways Aboriginalism works to hinder Indigenous Australian women who perform contemporary music.

Aboriginalist discourse creates expectations and assumptions of Indigenous performers on two levels: how Indigenous performers should look and also how they should sound. Aboriginalist images of painted up black (mostly male) bodies wearing red headbands and dressed in loincloths are a dominant Aboriginalist representation in tourism, books and television. Aboriginalism also creates the expectation that the music of Indigenous performers will ‘sound’ Aboriginal, and therefore be linked with ‘culture’. For example, when (now disbanded) Indigenous Australian female duo Shakaya were interviewed on ABC radio, the first question they were asked was ‘So, do you think there’s anything particularly Aboriginal about your music?’<sup>55</sup> Naomi Wenitong and Simone Stacey from Shakaya responded in following way: ‘We’re trying to, we want to create a bit more sound where we can use a didjeridu and have actually used didjeridu in our songs. We’d like to do a lot more stuff with traditional instruments you know.’<sup>56</sup> Their response suggested the pressure to conform to the image constructed by Aboriginalist views of Indigenous performers by including sonic markers of Aboriginality such as didjeridu in order to legitimise their music and their identities.<sup>57</sup>

Neuenfeldt points out that the didjeridu is an integral element of an Aboriginal ‘sound’ in contemporary music and further suggests that ‘having an identifiable “sound” ... is a major requisite for candidature for entry into the “universal pop aesthetic” ... of sound, sight and sentiment.’<sup>58</sup> Aboriginalist expectations of the didjeridu are linked ‘with the implicit inference that Aboriginal

instruments, music (or musicians for that matter) are primitive, unsophisticated and low tech'.<sup>59</sup> Other recognisable ingredients of an Aboriginal 'sound' are clapsticks and lyrics sung in Indigenous Australian languages. Under the Aboriginalist gaze, the inclusion of Aboriginal 'sounds' into contemporary songs by Indigenous performers 'serves to "legitimise" them in the sense of creating overt linkages to past and present forms of artistic expression'.<sup>60</sup>

Indigenous Australian women performers play around, within, and against Aboriginalist musical constructions by actively negotiating, challenging, and simultaneously using these constructions while blurring and merging the borders between contemporary and traditional Indigenous musical expression through the use of a wide range of musical styles and instrumentation. They make deliberate musical choices about how they, as performers, will look and also how their music will sound.

—INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN WOMEN PERFORMING WITHIN/AGAINST ABORIGINALISM

Certainly, the Indigenous Australian women who perform contemporary music I interviewed are acutely aware of Aboriginalist stereotypes surrounding Indigenous Australian performance, understand how culture is used to legitimate performance and use a range of strategies to work within, against and around these Aboriginalist constructions.

*Sarah Patrick*

Brisbane based Torres Strait hip hop performer Sarah Patrick (Figure 1) notes that:

White Australians think they know our culture but they know nothing. They just know what the media feeds them. They see a didgeridu, they see a corroboree, they see a group of black people painted up, they go 'oh, that's their strange little rituals, that's culture'.<sup>61</sup>

Sarah's statement highlights her awareness of Aboriginalist expectations of Indigenous performance. One of the premises of Aboriginalism is the perpetuation of stereotypical notions of a primitive Indigenous people engaging in strange and exotic rituals that sharply distinguish 'them' from 'us'.<sup>62</sup> Like many Indigenous Australian people, Sarah rejects this representation of Indigenous identity and performance and argues that:

What makes you black is actually your spirituality and your ties to family more than anything. Particularly knowing your family and knowing where they come from and knowing your tribe. That to me is more of a marker of Indigenous culture identity, um, as opposed to the markers of oh paint, costumes, didj. To me that's a stereotypical view that, that's a white view that's been forced upon us, um, and it's not the reality.<sup>63</sup>

For Sarah, her Indigeneity is based on her family connections and her inner guiding beliefs rather than any visual or sonic markers of Indigenous performance. She also emphasises that non-Indigenous expectations of Indigenous performers being 'painted up' with ochre and playing didjeridu represent a cliched view, which has been forced on Indigenous people. However, she does allow herself creative freedom to incorporate elements of Torres Strait Creole at times in her music, for example in her song *Where Itzat*:



Figure 1. Sarah Patrick Performing at *Encounters* Indigenous Popular Music Concert, 17 April 2005, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia (photograph: M. Hade)

With a smile like the sun you's a whole lotta fun  
The kinda wantocs sistagels chase at NAIDOCs  
You's are black-tastic, black-tabolous  
Black-wonderful, black-marvelous  
Native as platypus yea I like that  
Black is where it's at—I love black boys yo and they love me!

Sarah points out that 'White Australians have a perception which is stereotypical but not necessarily the truth and that's not helped by portrayals in the media'.<sup>64</sup> She further notes:

What you'll find with most Indigenous rap is that instead of using Afro-American terms I do it in Island language terms, so instead of saying 'brother' we say *bala*, like *gumma* is well, in the city it means just a good looking person you see a nice looking guy it's like 'Oh *gumma!*' However when you go back up North into the islands it still just means like a beautiful woman, like a girl, but that's changing (laughs).<sup>65</sup>

Although Sarah does incorporate elements of her Torres Strait Islander background in her music, she also emphasises that:

It's not done in a methodical way—like you obviously don't sit down with a song and go 'Oh! I'll put in this here because I have to have the markers' for me necessarily like in terms of Indigenous culture, the one big marker that people don't understand is that it is the inner, rather than the external. Just like, yeah cool, I can paint up as much as the next person but that doesn't make me any more black than anyone else.<sup>66</sup>

Sarah sets out openly to resist Aboriginalist expectations of Indigenous sounds in her music and, although she does not necessarily plan to incorporate elements of Indigenous musical expression, sometimes 'it just happens'.<sup>67</sup>

#### *Briscoe Sisters*

The Indigenous Australian duo from Cairns, North Queensland, the Briscoe Sisters (Deline and Naurita Briscoe) [Figure 2] have also successfully been grabbing audiences' expectations by using hand clapping and singing a number of contemporary songs in the Aboriginal language from their region in Mossman in



Figure 2: Naurita and Deline Briscoe, Brisbane, 9 July 2004 (photograph: K. Barney)

North Queensland—Kuku Yalanji.<sup>68</sup> They point out that they do not often come across questions about the legitimacy of their performances. Their song ‘Wanju’ on their live album is sung in Kuku Yalanji and English in two-part harmony and accompanied by acoustic and electric guitar, drums, and bass.<sup>69</sup>

One of the sisters, Deline, states that ‘Back when I was about seventeen I just thought “Hey we should do a song in language” just because it’s how we talk so I thought why don’t we just do a song in language so we did that’.<sup>70</sup> Deline emphasises that:

A lot of people think that the Aboriginal culture and languages are lost and when we get up and sing it just opens their eyes to see no there is a culture, there is a language for you know every section of Australia. But,

yeah and I guess because ... every time we sing, we sing a language song so it's hard. If we didn't sing language yeah we maybe would be asked that.<sup>71</sup>

Further, Deline notes, 'There's a lot of people out there that don't know that Aboriginal people still have their culture because they think that's all lost and they've got no culture 'cause I've heard those statements before too'.<sup>72</sup> The view that all Indigenous cultures and languages are all lost is a marker of Aboriginalist discourse, implies that Aborigines and their music making are dying out and also situates authentic Aboriginal cultures in the past. By singing in their language the Briscoe Sisters are resisting this perception and challenging the Aboriginalist myth that Aboriginal people cannot adapt to modern times.

Like some other Indigenous Australian women performers, the Briscoe Sisters incorporate their language into their music as a way of preserving their Aboriginal language through song. Deline states that:

Actually a lot of times when we sing in language, people from our area, Kuku Yalanji especially, when they've moved to the cities or they've moved to Townsville or whatever, we finish [and] they're crying 'cause they've never heard our language sung like that before, and so it's a new thing for us and our tribe, clan, all of that, to have our language sung like that.<sup>73</sup>

However, many of their songs do not incorporate elements which audiences might identify as 'Aboriginal' (for example, 'Check it Out', 'Lonely Souls', and 'Broad Road'). They sing about a diverse range of issues including workplace prejudice, relationships, child sexual abuse, friendship, and other topics and accompany themselves on guitar and hand percussion or sing a capella. The Briscoe Sisters then, are resisting non-Indigenous people's expectations on dual levels. The majority of their songs resist Aboriginalist constructions and expectations of what styles of music Indigenous Australian people perform and also how they should sound by not including musical markers of their Indigeneity. Yet at other times they incorporate some lyrics in language which challenges the Aboriginalist assumption that Aboriginal languages and cultures have died out and the colonial myth that Aboriginal people are incapable of adjusting or adapting to the present.

*Monica Weightman*

The beginning and ending of the title track on Monica Weightman's CD *Lost Generation* incorporates the song 'Darnley Island Too Far Away', a song that Monica's father sang during his childhood on Thursday Island.<sup>74</sup> The opening is sung by Monica and two male vocalists in unison and accompanied by clapsticks:

Teb teb ka nalai e  
Kara nas barki  
Bakiamudari tumem ka  
Erub ka deraimeli e  
Nole ka erdari  
O diya mi diya  
Darnley Island too far away

Monica states that:

It's a wonderful story. We've retraced the writer's steps and I spoke to his descendants up there on Darnley Island, they're still there. But ... his name's Leui Thaiday, the guy who wrote that and he was a songwriter. He was a pearl diver and a songwriter. Apparently he was forever making up songs so we spoke to his relatives on Darnley Island, they gave us permission to use it, and ah the mask on the CD.<sup>75</sup>

The inside of the CD case also features a painting of a wedding mask by artist John Dow, which signifies the 'cycle of generations'. Most of the songs on Monica's album (including 'Here We Go', 'Miss You', 'Middle of Nowhere') do not draw on features that audiences could identify as musical markers of her Indigeneity and Monica notes that:

I got asked a question from a South African woman. She said to me, about the instrumentation, like 'do you use the didjeridu and stuff?' and I said, 'Well, no I don't.' And I probably would be reticent about putting it on my, or within my music because that's not ... where I come from, you know. We're talking more about drums and Islander drums, that's sort of more where I come from. So there is this general conception that, you know, all Aboriginals [*sic*] play didjeridu.<sup>76</sup>

Monica's statement points to the localised nature of Indigenous Australian musical sounds and emphasises that she is aware that the sound and image of the didjeridu



has become fixed in the minds of many non-Indigenous people as a symbol of Aboriginality through out Australia and overseas. Neuenfeldt notes the didjeridu has become the 'primary aural and visual musical icon of Australian indigeneity'.<sup>77</sup> Monica resists Aboriginalist expectations by only incorporating sounds which she feels are culturally appropriate while at the same time contemporary music has provided Monica with the tools to connect with her Indigenous heritage.

*Deb Morrow*

Other Indigenous women performers, like Deb Morrow (Figure 3), attempt to openly resist Aboriginalist constructions of Indigenous performance by not drawing on any typical musical elements—such as didjeridu, clapsticks or the use of Aboriginal languages—that could be identified by audiences as forms of traditional Indigenous Australian musical expression. The title of Deb's CD *Flight of the Emu* (2001) is meaningful to Deb because, as she states, 'Emu's my main totem, that's the one that



Figure 3: Deb Morrow, Melbourne, 15 July 2004 (photograph: K. Barney)

drives me most'.<sup>78</sup> The CD cover includes a sketch of an emu in red facing a black and white photograph of Deb. The emu's head is close to Deb's profile and signifies Deb's closeness to and affiliation with her totem. The significance of an emu taking flight is explained by Deb in the following way:

As you know, emus can't fly, but there's a traditional story about how she used to fly once and she lost her flight through she came to the earth because she wanted to dance with brolga, and brolga tricked her into coming to the earth so once she stepped foot on the earth she lost her flight and that's when the world started getting created and things started going wrong, and we've ended up here.<sup>79</sup>

Here there is a certain tension between images and sounds because the songs on Deb's album do not draw on any musical elements which audiences might identify as 'Aboriginal'. Like Lou, Deb deliberately resists Aboriginalist stereotypes of Indigenous performance by trying to 'steer away from it as much as possible, because they're [clapsticks and didjeridu] not something I was brought up with. I wasn't brought up traditionally, I don't think my tribe actually ever blew a didjeridu.'<sup>80</sup> Deb explains that she uses instruments that are available to her, and she challenges the Aboriginalist beliefs that Aborigines are frozen in the past, unable to adjust or adapt to the modern world, asserting 'we're a progressive culture and we've progressed and we've been forced to be, to move into a modern world, so I use what's been given to me and that is my guitar, electrified instruments, drum kits'.<sup>81</sup>

A big question which arises is how can these Indigenous Australian women be resisting Aboriginalist constructions when, on the surface, incorporating elements of traditional musical expression and visual images could be read as meeting Aboriginalist expectations of Indigenous Australian performance? There is a tension apparent here—these women are trying to resist one-dimensional Aboriginalist constructions of Indigenous Australian performance yet at the same time they want to be free to explore, experiment and draw on their cultural backgrounds in their music and self representation. It is not surprising that this contradiction exists because just as the myths projected by Orientalism and Aboriginalism have no rationality and are grounded in 'prejudices based on doctrines of evolutionary difference and intellectual inferiority' the responses by

Indigenous Australian women performers to Aboriginalism in performance are equally varied and diverse.<sup>82</sup>

—MY RELATIONSHIP TO ABORIGINALISM

Aboriginalist discourse is constructed, controlled, and maintained by a dominant non-Indigenous culture and appears to continue to have a strong hold in the minds of many non-Indigenous Australians. I now want to step back to reflect on how my own research resists and challenges Aboriginalism and pose the question, as McConaghy does, is it possible to speak about Indigenous Australian people from outside of Aboriginalism?<sup>83</sup> Writing about Indigenous Australian issues, peoples and cultures is inherently political. As a non-Indigenous woman I am mindful of Sharpe's warning that 'none of us escapes the legacy of a colonial past and its traces in our academic practice'.<sup>84</sup> An important question for me is: how is my gaze different?

In some ways I feel that I am resisting gendered Aboriginalist tendencies to view women as secondary in this essay. First, by engaging with Aboriginalism in relation to performance and focusing on Indigenous Australian women, I am taking a crucial step towards 'moving beyond the exoticised projections of the imaginations of Western anthropologists'.<sup>85</sup> Second, by asking questions about Aboriginalism I am drawing attention to the ways this discourse works to create and sustain expectations of what Indigenous Australian women performing contemporary music should sound and look like, and how Indigenous Australian women respond to these expectations. Third, and perhaps most importantly, at every turn I am putting in place strategies that aim to privilege the voices of Indigenous Australian women performers and emphasise the diverse voices, performances and styles performed by Indigenous Australian women in order to resist how Aboriginalism excludes Indigenous people as authorised speakers and speaks for Indigenous Australians.<sup>86</sup>

After undertaking interviews with twenty Indigenous Australian women performers for my doctoral research, I was overwhelmed with the many challenging ethical questions posed by feminist researchers about representation and writing. How can I represent the performers best? Given that one of the central tenets of feminist research is to empower women's voices and experiences I also question whose voices should I include, when, and how often? How can I include a 'chorus of voices' such as that referred to by Reissman?<sup>87</sup>

Concerned with the issues of representation, authority and authorship these questions raise in my own writing, I am continually attempting to incorporate quotations of Indigenous Australian women performers from my interviews with them. The words of Charmaz resonate with my own thoughts and I quote her here at length:

I prefer to present many detailed interview quotes and examples in the body of my work. I do so to keep the human story in the forefront of the reader's mind and to make the conceptual analysis more accessible to a wider audience.<sup>88</sup>

At the same time, I am constantly reminded of Holman Jones's fear that the text might contain 'too many of the author's voices and too few of the voices of those she studies'.<sup>89</sup> Lincoln and Denzin note that one way to respond to these issues of representation is to move to 'including the Other in the larger research processes that we have developed'.<sup>90</sup> I attempted to do this by sending drafts of articles and chapters of my thesis that included Indigenous Australian women performers' statements to the performers themselves for their comments, additions and approval of the representation of their voices. This involved a process of negotiation and consultation with performers.

The best that I can hope for is to incorporate the voices of performers and allow them to speak in their own voices rather than interpreting them through my voice. Yet despite my intentions, ultimately the work remains my interpretation of their words. I am still left wondering if I got it 'right'? Are my representations of performers what they had hoped for? 'How do I "unlearn" my privilege as a white woman scholar?' throughout the research process?<sup>91</sup> Is it possible for me and them, a non-Indigenous researcher and Indigenous performers, to have an equal voice in a research project like this? Like Holman Jones, I feel that 'I am not wise with answers, but alive with questions'.<sup>92</sup>

Despite the positive aspects of my attempts to resist Aboriginalism, I cannot escape the fact that I am a non-Indigenous female scholar engaging in a representation of Indigenous Australian women, and that I am constructing or producing knowledge about Indigenous women performing contemporary music. As Attwood asks, is it 'possible to have any worthwhile non-Aboriginal knowledge

about Aborigines or is it inherently flawed because of the political—that is colonial—circumstances in which it was created?”<sup>93</sup>

—CONCLUSION

I conclude by returning to the narrative that I began at the beginning of this article.

*A month after the performance by Toni Janke at the Judith Wright Centre, I ran into my friend Mark's sister Louise by coincidence at Indooroopilly Shopping Centre. 'Hey, Kate!' Louise exclaimed, 'I meant to tell you, thanks heaps for inviting me to that Indigenous music gig.' 'That's OK,' I said slightly bemused at the memory of her comment that the performance wasn't what she had expected. 'I ended up buying Toni Janke's CD from her website and I've really been enjoying listening to it,' Louise said excitedly. 'Really? That's great,' I responded trying to hide the surprise from my voice. 'Yeah, I was playing the CD the other day and then Mum said to me "you wouldn't know that she's Indigenous just by listening to her music, would you?"' Louise rolled her eyes and continued her story, 'And I said, "Well Mum, just because she's Indigenous doesn't mean she has to be blowing a didgeridu or wearing a head band!"'*

This narrative illustrates that contemporary music provides Indigenous Australian women with a powerful podium to change audiences' expectations, educate non-Indigenous people about the diversity of Indigenous Australian people and break down Aboriginalist perceptions of Indigenous Australian performance. The comment made by Louise's mum that 'You wouldn't know she's Indigenous just by listening to her music' suggests that Aboriginalist constructions of Indigenous Australian performance continue to pervade the minds of many non-Indigenous audiences and certainly the performers remain acutely aware of these expectations. But when Indigenous Australian women performers take the stage, their voices and performances are attempting to educate non-Indigenous people through performance about the diverse identities, songs and musical styles performed by Indigenous women musicians.

One of the key lessons to be learnt from Said is that Orientalism exists not only in academic discourse but has filtered through into Western consciousness where statements proliferate out into the general culture as stereotypes.<sup>94</sup> Said

acknowledges that Orientalism is fostered by 'travellers, commercial enterprises, governments, military expeditions, readers of novels and accounts of exotic adventure, natural historians, and pilgrims to whom the Orient is a specific kind of knowledge about specific places, peoples and civilisations'.<sup>95</sup> Each time I remember my experience watching Toni perform it reminds me that certainly Aboriginalism, like Orientalism, is not just cultivated in the academy but has permeated into the public as stereotypes. My narrative also suggests that Aboriginalist perceptions continue to pervade the minds of some non-Indigenous Australians and considerable resistance still remains to any notion that the less 'traditional' Indigenous Australian performances are legitimate.

Today, Aboriginalism continues to take many varied and at times contradictory guises in relation to Indigenous Australian women performing contemporary music. Indigenous Australian women performers have told me of their perceptions of the Aboriginalist gaze and emphasise that some audiences expect 'traditional' musical instruments, languages, costumes, and 'paint', while others have perceptions of 'real' Aborigines as being an 'other-worldly' and much desired 'other' to the non-Indigenous imagination.<sup>96</sup> Aboriginalist discourse is constructed, controlled, and maintained by a dominant non-Indigenous culture and appears to continue to have a strong hold in the minds of many non-Indigenous Australians. As a result, Indigenous Australian people, as Muecke acknowledges, are faced with a 'totalising concept of Aboriginal culture' and often expected to 'display this essence, or this or that skill, as if culture were an endowment of a totality'.<sup>97</sup>

Chow reminds us that we live in an era in which the critique of the West has become not only possible but necessary and describes this task of critiquing colonial power and representations as 'dismantling the claims of authority that are housed in specific representations'.<sup>98</sup> The contemporary music performances and recordings by Indigenous Australian women are exciting and exhilarating not only because they are talented musicians but because they provide potent examples of the ways Indigenous Australian women are able to resist Aboriginalism by singing, performing, speaking, and playing their way through these assumptions to self-define more diverse and dynamic identities as Indigenous Australian women.

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Katelyn Barney is project manager and managing editor of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland. Her doctoral research focused on the performance practices of Indigenous Australian women who perform in contemporary music contexts. She has published widely on issues relating to collaborative research with Indigenous Australian women performers, representation and ethics, and reflective writing as a teaching and learning tool in higher education. She has also co-edited a book on music, place and research. Kate is secretary of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (Australia and New Zealand Branch). <k.barney@uq.edu.au>

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—NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Cathryn McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education: Culturalism, Colonialism and the Politics of Knowing*, Post Pressed, Flaxton, 2000, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Lou Bennett, personal communication with author, 21 July 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Deb Morrow, personal communication with author, 15 July 2004.

<sup>5</sup> McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Bob Hodge, 'Aboriginal Truth and White Media: Eric Michaels meets the Spirit of Aboriginalism', *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1990, pp. 201–5. Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Post Colonial*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991. Bain Attwood, 'Introduction', in Bain Attwood and John Arnold (eds), *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, La Trobe University Press in association with the National Centre for Australian Studies, Bundoora, 1992, pp. i–xvi. Vijay Mishra, 'Aboriginal Representations in Australian Texts', *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1987, pp. 165–88.

<sup>7</sup> Mishra, p. 165.

<sup>8</sup> For education, see Cathryn McConaghy, 'The Flexible Delivery of Critical Adult Literacies in Postcolonial Times', in M. J. Garbutcheon Singh, R. E. Harreveld and N. Hunt (eds), *Virtual Flexibility: Adult Literacy and New Technologies in Remote Communities*, Research Centre for Open and Distance Learning, Rockhampton, 1997, pp. 29–41; Cathryn McConaghy, 'Constructing Aboriginality/Determining Significant Difference', in T. W. Maxwell (ed.), *The Context of Teaching*,

Kardoorair Press, Armidale, 1998, pp. 121–40; Cathryn McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education*. For film and literature, see Mishra; Hodge and Mishra; Clare Bradford, 'Saved by the Word: Textuality and Colonisation in Nineteenth-Century Australian Texts for Children', in Roderick McGillis (ed.), *Voices of the Other: Children's Literature and the Postcolonial Context*, Garland Publishing, New York, 1999, pp. 89–111; Clare Bradford, *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001; Eva R. Knudsen, *The Circle and the Spiral: A Study of Australian Aboriginal and New Zealand Māori Literature*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2004. For anthropology, see Hodge; Bain Attwood, 'Studying Aborigines: Changing Canons in Anthropology and History', in Bain Attwood and John Arnold (eds), *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, La Trobe University Press in association with the National Centre for Australian Studies, Bundoora, 1992, pp. 20–31; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2000; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 'Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation', in Aileen Moreton-Robinson (ed.), *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2004, pp. 75–88. For archaeology, see S. Hemming, 'Ngarrindjeri Burials as Cultural Sites: Indigenous Heritage Issues in Australia', *World Archaeological Bulletin*, vol. 11, 2000, pp. 58–66. For media, see Michael Meadows, *Voices in the Wilderness: Images of Aboriginal People in the Australian Nation*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 2001. For theatre, see Tom Burvill, 'Playing the Faultlines: Two Political Theatre Interventions in the Australian Bicentenary Year 1988', in Jeanne Collier and Jenny S. Spencer (eds), *Staging Resistance: Essays on Political Theatre*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1998, pp. 229–46.

<sup>9</sup> Burvill, p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> McConaghy, 'Constructing Aboriginality', p. 125.

<sup>11</sup> Hodge, p. 202.

<sup>12</sup> Attwood, 'Introduction', p. i.

<sup>13</sup> Bradford, 'Saved by the Word', p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Bradford, 'Saved by the Word', p. 111.

<sup>15</sup> Steven Muecke, *Textual Spaces: Aboriginality and Cultural Studies*, New South Wales University Press, Sydney, 1992, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup> Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman*.

<sup>17</sup> McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education*; Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, Routledge, London, 1991. Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, Routledge, London, 1996; Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*. third edition, Random House, New York, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, pp. 18, 16–17. See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1993 as an example of his later discussion of gender.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> On gender and Orientalism see, for example: Jane Miller, *Seductions: Studies in Reading & Culture*, Virago, London, 1990; Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French & British Orientalisms*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1991; Mills; Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion & Work*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1992; Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1992; Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*; Shirley Foster, 'Colonialism and Gender in the East: Representations of the Harem in the Writings of Women Travellers', *Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 34, 2004, pp. 6–17.



- <sup>23</sup> Muecke, p. 26. See also Gillian Cowlshaw 'Studying Aborigines: Changing Canons in Anthropology and History', in Bain Attwood & John Arnold (eds), *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, La Trobe University Press in association with the National Centre for Australian Studies, Bundoora, 1992, p. 20.
- <sup>24</sup> For example Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Family Among the Australian Aborigines*, University of London Press, London, 1913; Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. J. W. Swain, Allen & Unwin, London, 1915; W. Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilization*, Harper & Row, New York, 1937; A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1938; Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, second edition, Dover Publications, New York, 1938.
- <sup>25</sup> Jan Pettman, 'Gendered Knowledges: Aboriginal Women and the Politics of Feminism', in Bain Attwood and John Arnold (eds), *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, La Trobe University Press in association with the National Centre for Australian Studies, Bundoora, 1992, p. 123.
- <sup>26</sup> Spencer and Gillen, p. xiii.
- <sup>27</sup> Spencer and Gillen, p. 32.
- <sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Mackinlay, Kirsty Thatcher and Camile Seldon, 'Understanding Social and Legal Justice Issues for Aboriginal Women within the Context of an Indigenous Australian Studies Classroom: A Problem-Based Learning Approach', *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, vol. 33, 2004, p. 28.
- <sup>29</sup> A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them*, fourth edition, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1964. Lou Bennett, personal communication with the author, 21 July 2003.
- <sup>30</sup> Les R. Hiatt, *Arguments about Aborigines: Australia and the Evolution of Social Anthropology*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1996.
- <sup>31</sup> Henrietta Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology*, University of Minneapolis Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p. 1.
- <sup>32</sup> Moore, p. 1-2.
- <sup>33</sup> Phyllis Kaberry, *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane*, George Routledge & Sons, London, 1939. See also, for example, Ursula McConnell, 'Myth of the Wikmunkan and Wiknatara Tribes', *Oceania*, vol. 6, 1935, pp. 15-20; C. H. Berndt, 'Expressions of Grief Among Aboriginal Women', *Oceania*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1950, pp. 286-332; C. H. Berndt, *Women's Changing Ceremonies in Northern Australia*, Hermann, Paris, 1950; Isobel White, 'Aboriginal Woman's Status: A Paradox Resolved', in Fay Gale (ed.), *Woman's Role in Aboriginal Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1970, pp. 123-142; Jane Goodale, *Tiwi Wives: A Study of the Women of Melville Island, North Australia*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1971; Diane Bell, *Daughters of the Dreaming*, McPhee Gribble/George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, p. 226.
- <sup>34</sup> Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman*, p. 78.
- <sup>35</sup> Sandy Toussaint, *Phyllis Kaberry and Me: Anthropology, History and Aboriginal Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1999, p. 2.
- <sup>36</sup> Kaberry, p. 9.
- <sup>37</sup> Kaberry, p. 241.
- <sup>38</sup> Toussaint, p. 55.
- <sup>39</sup> Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman*, p. 78.
- <sup>40</sup> Toussaint, p. 108.
- <sup>41</sup> Annette Hamilton, 'Daughters of the Imaginary', review of *Daughters of the Dreaming*, by D. Bell, *Canberra Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1986, p. 1.
- <sup>42</sup> Bell, *Daughters of the Dreaming*, p. 226.
- <sup>43</sup> Jackie Huggins, Jo Willmot, Isabel Tarrago, Kathy Willets, Liz Bond, Lillian Holt, Eleanor Bourke, Mary Bin-Sallik, Pat Fowell, Joann Schmider, Valerie Craigie and Linda McBride-Levi, 'Letter to the Editor', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 14, no. 5, 1991, pp. 506-7; Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman*, p. 111.

<sup>44</sup> Moore, p. 191.

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton, p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Diane Bell, 'The Tracks of the *Munga-Munga*', in M. Joy and P. Magee (eds), *Claiming our Rites: Studies in Religion by Australian Women Scholars*, Australian Association for the Study of Religions, Adelaide, 1994, p. 215.

<sup>47</sup> Kaberry; Berndt, 'Expressions of Grief'; Berndt, *Women's Changing Ceremonies in Northern Australia*.

<sup>48</sup> Bell, *Daughters of the Dreaming*, p. 26.

<sup>49</sup> For example, see: Annette Hamilton, 'A Complex Strategical Situation: Gender and Power in Aboriginal Australia', in Norma Grieve and Patricia Grimshaw (eds), *Australian Women: Feminist Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, London, 1981, pp. 69–85; Gillian Cowlishaw, 'The Determinants of Fertility Among Australian Aborigines', *Mankind*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1981, pp. 37–58; Gillian Cowlishaw, 'Socialisation and Subordination Among Australian Aborigines', *Man*, vol. 17, 1982, pp. 492–507; Victoria Burbank, 'The Mirriri as Ritualised Aggression', *Oceania*, vol. 56, no. 1, 1985, pp. 47–55; Rozanna Lilley 'Gungarakayn Women Speak: Reproduction and the Transformation of Tradition', *Oceania*, vol. 60, no. 2, 1989, pp. 81–98; Elizabeth Mackinlay "'Men Don't Talk Much Any More": The Changing Status of Women in Society and Possible Implications for Yanyuwa Women as Keepers, Composers and Performers of *a-nguyulnguyul*', *Context*, vol. 12, 1996, pp. 45–50; Elizabeth Mackinlay, 'Maintaining Grandmother's Law: Female Song Partners in Yanyuwa Culture', *Musicology Australia*, vol. 23, 2000, pp. 76–98; Fiona Magowan, 'Shadows of Song: Exploring Research and Performance Strategies in Yolngu Women's Crying-songs', *Oceania*, vol. 72, no. 2, 2001, pp. 89–104.

<sup>50</sup> Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman*, p. 93.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Toussaint; Elizabeth Mackinlay, 'Performing Race, Culture, and Gender in an Indigenous Australian Women's Music and Dance Classroom', *Communication Education*, vol. 52, no. 3/4, 2003, pp. 258–72.

<sup>52</sup> See Katelyn Barney, "'Where is their Costume, Where is their Paint?" Exploring how Indigenous Australian Women Construct and Negotiate their Indigeneity through Contemporary Music', *Perfect Beat*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2004, pp. 42–59.

<sup>53</sup> Some scholars have briefly discussed audience expectations of and assumptions about Indigenous performance and how this limits Indigenous Australian musicians who perform contemporary music. For example, Marcus Breen, *Our Place, Our Music: Aboriginal Music*, Australian Popular Music in Perspective, volume 2, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1989, p. 130; Graeme Turner, *Making it National: Nationalism and Australian Popular Culture*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994, p. 135; Karl Neuenfeldt, 'From Silence to Celebration: Indigenous Australian Performers at the Woodford Folk Festival', *The World of Music*, 43, vol. 2, 2001, pp. 83–84; Peter Dunbar-Hall and Chris Gibson, *Deadly Sounds, Deadly Places: Contemporary Aboriginal Music in Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2004, p. 24 and p. 64; Chris Gibson and Peter Dunbar-Hall, 'Mediating Contemporary Aboriginal Music: Discussions of the Music Industry in Australia', *Perfect Beat*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2004, p. 21. While there is a scarcity of literature relating to Aboriginalism in music performance, Magowan, in 'Shadows of Song', draws on Said's notions of 'strategic formation' and 'strategic location' in an analysis of women's crying songs in Northeast Arnhem Land. There are also some recent works addressing musical Orientalism (for example Ralph P. Lock, 'Constructing the Oriental "Other": Saint-Saens's *Samson et Dalila*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1991, pp. 261–302; Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk and Ashwani Sharma, *Dis-orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*, London, Zed Books, 1996; Jann Pasler, 'Race, Orientalism, and Distinction in the Wake of the "Yellow Peril"', in Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (eds), *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000, pp. 86–118. Others explore audience responses and expectations of Indigenous Australian art (for example, Djon Mundine, 'Black on Black: An Aboriginal Perspective on Koori Art', *Art Monthly Australia*, vol. 30, May 1990, pp. 7–9;

Djon Mundine, 'Aboriginal Art Abroad: Responses to Touring Exhibitions in Europe, the United States and Asia', *Art and Australia*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1998, 68–73; Djon Mundine, 'Passion, Rich Collectors and the Export Dollar: The Selling of Aboriginal Art Overseas', *Artlink*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1998, 16–22; Roberta Sykes, 'Non-citizens in our Own Country?: The Social and Cultural Background of Rural and Urban Aboriginal Artists', *Art Monthly Australia* vol. 30, May 1990, pp. 4–6) and audiences' responses to drama performers based on ethnicity (Helena Grehan, *Mapping Cultural Identity in Contemporary Australian Performance*, Bruxelles, New York, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Chris Lawe Davies, 'Black Rock and Broome: Musical and Cultural Specificities', *Perfect Beat*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1993, p. 57.

<sup>55</sup> Mark Colvin, 'Shakaya Keep Climbing up those Music Charts (an Interview with Naomi Wenitong and Simone Stacey)', Australian Broadcasting Corporation online, 2003, <<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/s698460.htm>>.

<sup>56</sup> Colvin.

<sup>57</sup> None of the Indigenous Australian women performers I have interviewed play didjeridu in their contemporary songs. This could relate to the complexities of gender in didjeridu performance. See: Linda Barwick, 'Gender "Taboos" and Didjeridus', in Karl Neuenfeldt (ed.), *The Didjeridu: From Arnhem Land to Internet*, Libbey/Perfect Beat, Sydney, 1997, pp. 89–98; Elizabeth Mackinlay, 'Performing Race, Culture, and Gender in an Indigenous Australian Women's Music and Dance Classroom', *Communication Education*, vol. 52, no. 3/4, 2003, pp. 258–272; Fiona Magowan, 'Playing with Meaning: Perspectives on Culture, Commodification and Contestation around the Didjeridu', *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, vol. 37, 2005, pp. 80–102; Karl Neuenfeldt 'The Ongoing Debate About Women Playing Didjeridu: How a Musical Icon can Become an Instrument of Remembering and Forgetting', *Australian Aboriginal Studies* vol. 1, 2006, pp. 36–43.

<sup>58</sup> Karl Neuenfeldt (ed.), *The Didjeridu: From Arnhem Land to Internet*, Libbey, Sydney, 1997, p. 112.

<sup>59</sup> Karl Neuenfeldt, 'The Essentialistic, the Exotic, the Equivocal and the Absurd: The Cultural Production and Use of the Didjeridu in World Music', *Perfect Beat*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 88–104, 1994, p. 94.

<sup>60</sup> Karl Neuenfeldt and Lyn Costigan, 'Negotiating and Enacting Musical Innovation and Continuity: How Some Torres Strait Islander Songwriters Incorporate Traditional Dance Chants Within Contemporary Songs', *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2004, p. 118.

<sup>61</sup> Sarah Patrick, personal communication with author, 29 October 2004.

<sup>62</sup> Bradford, *Reading Race*, p. 120.

<sup>63</sup> Sarah Patrick, personal communication with author, 29 October 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Sarah Patrick, personal communication with author, 29 October 2004.

<sup>65</sup> Sarah Patrick, personal communication with author, 29 October 2004.

<sup>66</sup> Sarah Patrick, personal communication with author, 29 October 2004.

<sup>67</sup> Sarah Patrick, personal communication with author, 29 October 2004.

<sup>68</sup> The Briscoe Sisters were originally a trio (Deline, Naurita and Merindi Briscoe). Merindi has since left the band and they are now a duo. Deline also performs solo with her band.

<sup>69</sup> Briscoe Sisters, *Briscoe Sisters with Heyoka Live @ the Tanks*, SMR3033, compact disc, 2006 (self released by the Briscoe Sisters).

<sup>70</sup> Deline Briscoe, personal communication with author, 9 July 2004.

<sup>71</sup> Deline Briscoe, personal communication with author, 9 July 2004.

<sup>72</sup> Deline Briscoe, personal communication with author, 9 July 2004.

<sup>73</sup> Deline Briscoe, personal communication with author, 9 July 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Monica Weightman, *Lost Generation*, Arts Victoria, SV0418, compact disc, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Monica Weightman, personal communication with author, 13 July 2004.

<sup>76</sup> Monica Weightman, personal communication with author, 13 July 2004.

- <sup>77</sup> Karl Neuenfeldt, 'Aboriginal Didjeriduists in Australian Education: Cultural Workers and Border Crossers', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1998, p. 7.
- <sup>78</sup> Deb Morrow, personal communication with author, 15 July 2004.
- <sup>79</sup> Deb Morrow, personal communication with author, 15 July 2004.
- <sup>80</sup> Deb Morrow, personal communication with author, 15 July 2004.
- <sup>81</sup> Deb Morrow, personal communication with author, 15 July 2004.
- <sup>82</sup> Mishra, p. 166.
- <sup>83</sup> McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education*, p. 259.
- <sup>84</sup> Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*, University of Minneapolis Press, Minneapolis, 1993, p. 13.
- <sup>85</sup> McConaghy, *Rethinking Indigenous Education*, p. 259.
- <sup>86</sup> Hodge.
- <sup>87</sup> Catherine K. Reissmann 'When Gender is not Enough: Women Interviewing Women', *Gender and Society*, vol. 1, 1987, pp. 172–207.
- <sup>88</sup> Kathy Charmaz, 'Grounded Theory', in Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber and Patrica Leavy (eds), *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, p. 516.
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