

OF PUBLIC SPACE: MY ISLAND HOME

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Welcome to the second volume of the refereed journal, *Public Space: the Journal of Law and Social Justice*.

The second volume of *Public Space* offers a meditation on the theme *My Island Home*. The theme was inspired, in part, by Neil Murray's song *My Island Home*. Murray said that he had been living in the deserts of Central Australia for some time, estranged from the fresh water country of his youth. He wrote the song after spending a week camping at Galiwinku in Arnhem Land, living like a king on bush tucker, and then leaving to travel to Sydney during the winter. The song expressed his intense longing to be in a boat on a tropical sea.

My Island Home also expresses a sense of belonging. It conjures an experience of Indigenous living and ardour for the land. The song is framed widely enough that although the person and the place may change, it still evokes home. Thus the song has since been recorded by other artists, like Christine Anu and George Rrurrambu, who have changed or translated the lyrics to refer to their own island homes. This idea of belonging has brought with it questions of ownership and control. *My Island Home* has been used to

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refer to Australia more broadly, which may be perceived as an expression of common feelings of home or as yet another example of appropriation of indigenous culture.

The first article of this volume sets the images of law against those of Crusoe shipwrecked on an island. Desmond Manderson's brilliant 'Desert Island Disks' sets a counter-story of the transports and transportation of law. The paper explores classic jurisprudential questions of the origins, interpretation, and applications of the law by asking what texts a jurist would rescue if stranded on a desert island. He chooses pictures, poetry, and music to form the basis of a lifetime's worth of exploration of the law. His scrutiny of the law is enhanced and illuminated by taking advantage of the multi media forum of *Public Space*. As we read Manderson's text we access his 'priestley collection' through audio files, photographs and texts. This fosters the possibility of thinking, of individual memories and associations, rather than submission to logic.

The next two articles, Katherine Biber's 'Besieged at Home: Jimmy Governor's Rampage' and Sally Varnham's 'My Home, My School, My Island' explore questions of power and control in the home. Biber meditates upon the power to arrange one's home as one desires on the national level. She considers the familiar story of Jimmy Governor from the perspective of control, and how that control is acquired, preserved, and articulated. Whilst his whereabouts were unknown and his motives were unclear, White Australia lost control and was in a state of siege until Governor was apprehended. As a figure of Aboriginal resistance the Governors became an obstacle to the national fantasy

of control and security in the home. However, Biber also argues that the pursuit and apprehension of a rampaging black man was a perfect device for nation building.

Varnham continues the theme of power and control through her exploration of the legal regulation of the home as school. Varnham notes the increasing popularity of home schooling in Australia and New Zealand, identifying both practical and ideological reasons for this movement. Parents may wish to educate their children in the home due to a desire to protect them from negative influences or bullying, or due to a commitment to high literacy or numeracy skills, or the special needs of the child. Legal regulation highlights the characterisation of education as a state duty, with an assumption of control of the intellectual capital of the nation. A desire to return education to the home is regarded as a deviation from the norm, rather than an individual and equally valid choice by parents.

The final two articles consider issues of belonging, of what it means to participate fully in the broader space that we call home. Sally McLean's paper 'A Feminist Critique of the Role of Medical Discourse in the Introduction of the Breastfeeding Amendment in the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 NSW*' ruminates upon legislation bringing an activity primarily associated with the home into the public sphere. Whilst McLean applauds the legislative reforms that prohibit discrimination against breastfeeding in public, she criticises the rationalisations of the amendments. In particular, McLean argues that the reliance upon economic and medical discourses effaces the mother and diminishes

women's breastfeeding experiences. Even though legislation now protects breastfeeding in public, exposure of the breast whilst breastfeeding remains taboo.

Young people's opportunity to belong to, engage with, and be part of society is considered in Anna Copeland's 'Participation and the Role of Public Space: Our Space, their space and Myspace'. Copeland argues that whilst the idea of youth participation is roundly supported, there are a myriad of ways in which young people's freedom of expression and movement is regulated. Rather than requiring young people to participate in ways and on topics predetermined by adults, Copeland asserts that we should prioritise the places and ways young people choose to participate.

Public Space also contains non refereed material to allow the publication of a wider range of material including responses to published articles, reviews, as well as materials which may challenge or exceed the bounds of academic discourse. Open Space is reader driven and readers are invited to submit materials specifically identified for publication in Open Space. In this edition of *Public Space*, we are privileged to exhibit the collaborative new media piece 'Our Rights' by Creative Cut. This short film articulates place and an Indigenous expression of rights.

With these musings on longing, belonging and ownership we welcome you to the second volume of *Public Space*. Hopefully these papers will inspire you to take up pencils, pens, cameras or tapes to contribute to our journal in the future.