Urban Aboriginal identity construction in Australia: an Aboriginal perspective utilising multi-method qualitative analysis

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[ARTWORK DELETED]

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Cover artwork

The artwork on the cover was painted by my brother, Robert Bolt. The following text is a description of Robert's artwork as told in the words of his eldest daughter Rondell Lloyd-Bolt - aged 13:

This is a painting that my dad, Robert Bolt did. I think that this painting symbolises being away from the sea, your family and where you come from. I like this painting because the jellyfish look like they are moving on the canvas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land where this research took place: the Wandandian peoples. The Wandandian people have lived in this area for thousands of years. I would like to acknowledge and thank the participants (most are descendants of the Wandandian peoples) for their role in this study. I am whole-heartedly indebted to them for their contribution. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisory panel which consisted of my supervisor Associate Professor Cherry Russell, my associate supervisor Professor Chris Cunningham, and my mentor Professor Gavin Mooney. All three members of the supervisory panel have made significant contributions to the final product. In particular, I would like to thank and acknowledge Professor Gavin Mooney's contribution, kind words and motivation throughout the early years of the PhD and final write-up stage: he always believed in me. Dr Lesley Batten - thank you for the 'fresh eyes' proof read of the thesis; substantial amendments were made from this contribution. Dr Virginia Simpson-Young - thank you for providing feedback and formatting the thesis. I would also like to acknowledge several Aboriginal community organisations in Nowra, NSW: the South Coast Cultural Centre, the Arwon Aboriginal Elders Corporation, the South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation, the Aboriginal Legal Service and the Illaroo Aboriginal Corporation.

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In 2005 I won first prize for a presentation at the Faculty of Health Sciences Colloquium which was held at the University of Sydney. I would like to thank and acknowledge them for giving me the opportunity to present the proposal for my research.

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, Reuben Bolt, declare this thesis titled "Urban Aboriginal identity construction in Australia: an Aboriginal perspective utilising multi-method qualitative analysis" is my own original work and has not been submitted in whole or in part for a higher degree at any other University or institution.

[SIGNATURE DELETED]

Mr. Reuben Bolt

STUDENT DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis titled "Urban Aboriginal identity construction in Australia: an Aboriginal perspective utilising multi-method qualitative analysis" will be available to the public after examination.

[SIGNATURE DELETED]

Mr. Reuben Bolt

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPH   American Association of Physical Anthropologists

AHMRC   Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council

APB   Aborigines Protection Board

ATSIC   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

CSDH   Commission on the Social Determinants of Health

HREC   Human Research Ethics Committee

HSC   Higher School Certificate

SSSI   Society for the Study of Symbolic Interactionism

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The following conventions have been used on transcript data presented in this thesis. A description of the convention is presented in the left column; examples, which are presented in the right column, are highlighted in grey.

In many cases 'umms', 'ahhs' and unnecessary language such as repetitive words and stutters have been omitted from the text to aid in readability.	
All participants have been given a pseudonym. This is indicated by the pseudonym in brackets immediately following a quote from the interview transcripts.	"My identity comes from how I feel. It's an inner sense of who and what I am." (Bruno C2)
Participant pseudonyms also indicate the cohort in which they are located. C1 indicates cohort 1, C2 indicates cohort 2 and C3 indicates cohort 3.	"I've always brought my kids up to care and share" (Shirley C2)
Text that has been removed from the transcript due to potential identification of the participant is indicated by italics in square brackets and a description of the omitted text is given. It was not appropriate to replace this word with a fictitious word because it would have altered the meaning.	My language *[traditional Aboriginal name]* (Jeremy C2)
Words in capital and bold type font indicate participants' emphasis of the word.	"Identity is, **IS** a big problem" (Jeremy C1)
The term '[inaudible]' in square brackets indicates that participant's speech was heard, but the meaning or actual word could not be determined.	"You come across the old veggie patch or [laughs which makes it inaudible]" (Joe C3)
Ellipses, indicated by '…' show that text has been omitted.	"We are not on an equal sort of ground with mainstream Australians … we have less money, you know. We're disadvantaged in schools, in health, you

	know, in everything" (Michelle C3)
Comments in square brackets '[ ]' indicate that I have added contextual information which was required to understand the events depicted by the participant.	"I went with the old people from the desert, it took me about 14 years before I could get my lore painting [ceremonial body paint] back" (Jeremy C2) "I try to teach [my children] about food out in the bush, you know fruit, berries, you know what I mean?" (Joe C3)
Inverted commas have been used to indicate participants' recapitulation of actual words spoken by characters depicted in their stories.	"Mum rubbed off on us and because mum rubbed off on us, she used to always tell us you know "Shirley, you're just as good as anybody else" (Shirley C2).
In instances of turn-taking conversation I have identified the researcher and the researcher's talk.	Researcher: So tell me about your identity. Joe: My identity? Me as a Koori fulla or? Researcher: Yeah well is that…what do you identify with? Joe: Me I identify as an Aboriginal, Koori fulla,

ABSTRACT

Background: Since British arrival, Aboriginal people have experienced marginalisation and extreme disadvantage within Australian society. Urban-based Aboriginal people, even more than those living in remote communities, have been subject to the impact of racism and discrimination on self-identity. Nonetheless, many urban-based Aboriginal people proudly identify with their Aboriginality. Having long been the subject of others' research, it is only in recent times that the question of identity has attracted attention in Aboriginal research. Furthermore, few studies have addressed urban Aboriginality from an insider's perspective.

Aim and significance: The main aim of this research was to understand better the process of the construction of Aboriginal identity. Knowing how Aboriginal people see themselves and their future as Aboriginal within the broader Australian community is significant in providing a foundation for both the protection and the preservation of urban-based Aboriginal identity, while helping to create positive practical benefits and minimising the damage to Aboriginal culture that result from collective memory loss. A secondary aim was to test whether tools of narrative analysis could be used within an Indigenous Australian context, utilising Aboriginal Australian English language, and in the context of a specific urban setting.

Method: The study used purposeful sampling to recruit 11 individuals from three age cohorts of mixed-descent Aboriginal people living in urban communities on the south coast of New South Wales, Australia. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews which were tape-recorded and then transcribed in full. Both thematic and narrative methods were employed to analyse the data. Interpretations benefitted from an insider perspective, as the researcher is a member of the community under study.

Results: Findings from both methods of analysis show that participants experience their Aboriginality as problematic. Nonetheless, they make strong claims to Aboriginal identity. In making such claims, they link the personal to the social in a variety of ways, drawing on both negative and positive aspects of being part of a marginalised culture to explain the construction of the problem of Aboriginal identity and, as importantly, its on-going resolution through processes of identity construction and re-construction. The Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview is revealed thorough a thematic analysis of 11 interviews and shows

that participants are able to construct positive versions of self when they perceive themselves as living in accordance with the prescribed worldview. Results from case study analyses reveal how four participants distinctly craft the Shoalhaven worldview. The adoption of multi-method qualitative analysis documents the construction of both collective and personal Aboriginal identities and shows how these become core elements of the various strategies for solving the broader problems of Aboriginal identity in contemporary urban Australian society.

Conclusion: Understanding the construction of Aboriginal identity from a micro-sociological perspective, with the added benefit of an insider's analysis, can point the way to the development of more meaningful and appropriate strategies to both address and alleviate the broader problems of Aboriginal marginalisation in Australia. The findings from this research have documented the narrative construction of urban Aboriginal identity revealing the positive and negative aspects of the urban Aboriginal identity concept. A starting point to address the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation in Australia is to focus on the positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept, with a view to devise, develop and implement culturally appropriate strategies and policies. The researcher's life experience, informed by the ontology (collective values and perspectives) of the community, influenced and informed the analysis and results of the study. This shared ontology and community acceptance was integral in the process of developing and maintaining rapport and trust with participants which ultimately shaped the interaction process influencing personal accounts told in the interview.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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Prior to the British colonisation of the Australian continent there lived a nomadic people practicing a hunter-gatherer and tribal lifestyle. It has been estimated that, at this time, there were more than 500 different tribes, each with a distinct and unique dialect, territory, history and culture (Broome 1982). Many people living in Aboriginal communities in Australia today proudly identify with their Aboriginal heritage and make identity claims through a process of acknowledgment of descent from a particular traditional Aboriginal tribe, clan or language group. These include, among many, the Wandandian, Wiradjuri, Yuin, Ngarigo, Biripi, Tharawal, Ngunawal, Wodiwodi, Gandangara, Eora, Pitjantjatjara and Yolngu peoples. Individuals also make identity claims via broader Aboriginal collectives which are regionally specific and include those such as Koori (primarily specific to the state of New South Wales), Murri (specific to the state of Queensland), Nyungah (specific to the state of Western Australia) and Nunga (specific to the state of South Australia). In recent times, many Aboriginal people in Australia have adopted the rapidly growing international political discourse of Indigenism (Niezen 2002) resulting in the claim of an Indigenous identity. Thus, Aboriginal people in Australia gain a sense of self through claims of membership to broader collective identities.

Only recently has an acknowledgement of Country, and an acknowledgment of the traditional custodians of that Country, become a protocol commonly practiced by individuals, including academics, community members and those working within the many local, state and federal government departments in Australia. This protocol has deep and meaningful significance to Aboriginal peoples and is a relevant and appropriate way to introduce this study. As a demonstration of this protocol I would like to acknowledge the Wandandian peoples and their descendants, who are the traditional custodians of the land where this research took place. This area is now known as the Shoalhaven Local Government Area. I proudly identify as a descendant of the Wandandian peoples. The original inhabitants from many Indigenous groups in this area were forcibly removed from the land and society by successive Australian governments and placed on the Wreck Bay Aboriginal mission and Roseby Park reserve. Both are located within the Shoalhaven Local Government Area. I would also like to acknowledge the Ngarigo peoples of whom I am a descendant. The Ngarigo are my grandfather's people who inhabited the northern

parts of the state of Victoria and southern parts of New South Wales. They too were forcibly taken from their traditional lands. Many from this area were placed on the Lake Tyers Aboriginal mission located within the state of Victoria. When Aboriginal people were forcibly taken from their traditional lands and placed on missions and reserves (and this occurred in all states and territories in Australia), they were dispossessed of land, culture and identity. I would also like to acknowledge this process of dispossession which overtime has drastically impacted on the essence of Aboriginal identity.

In the following chapters I provide some historical, essentially colonial background to the nation state of Australia. I begin here with a quote from the current Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd.

> This is not, as some would argue, a black-armband view of history; it is just the truth: the cold, confronting, uncomfortable truth—facing it, dealing with it, moving on from it. Until we fully confront that truth, there will always be a shadow hanging over us and our future as a fully united and fully reconciled people. It is time to reconcile. It is time to recognise the injustices of the past. It is time to say sorry. It is time to move forward together. To the stolen generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the government of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the parliament of Australia, I am sorry. I offer you this apology without qualification. We apologise for the hurt, the pain and suffering that we, the parliament, have caused you by the laws that previous parliaments have enacted. We apologise for the indignity, the degradation and the humiliation these laws embodied. We offer this apology to the mothers, the fathers, the brothers, the sisters, the families and the communities whose lives were ripped apart by the actions of successive governments under successive parliaments (Rudd 2008, p.1).

These words, uttered on the 13th of February 2008, are significant for three reasons: firstly, they acknowledge Australian Governments' responsibility for inflicting past wrongs on the Indigenous population; secondly, they bring to the fore the negative historical relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Australian governments; and thirdly, they show how the subscription to different versions of history (the 'black armband view', for example) can

shape identity at the local level. The third point is highlight in section 2.1.3 of the next chapter.

This negative historical relationship is crucial to the question of urban Aboriginal identity because since British arrival, Aboriginal people have experienced marginalisation and extreme disadvantage within Australian society. Urban-based Aboriginal people, even more than those living in remote communities, have been subject to the impact of racism and discrimination on self-identity. Nonetheless, urban-based Aboriginal people proudly identify with their Aboriginality. While they have long been the subjects of others' research, it is only in recent times that the question of identity has attracted attention in Aboriginal research. Furthermore few studies have addressed urban Aboriginality from an insider's perspective.

1.1: Research question, aims and significance

For the majority of my candidature the working title, or short title, of this study was *Urban Aboriginal identity*. During the final phase of the study the title was *Urban Aboriginal identity construction in Australia: an Aboriginal perspective utilising multi-method qualitative analysis.* The title indicates several features of this research, namely the topic (urban Aboriginal identity construction) and a component of the methodology (a multi-method qualitative analysis).

The main aim of this research was to understand better the process of the construction of Aboriginal identity. This aim was guided by the research question '*how do urban Aboriginal people make and remake their identity?*' Knowing how Aboriginal people see themselves and their future as Aboriginal within the broader Australian community is significant in providing a foundation for both the protection and the preservation of urban-based Aboriginal identity, while helping to create positive practical benefits and minimising the damage to Aboriginal culture that result from collective memory loss. A secondary aim was to test whether tools of narrative analysis could be used within an Indigenous Australian context, utilising Aboriginal Australian English language, and in the context of a specific urban setting. The research question is answered over the course of the following six chapters.

1.2: Summary of chapters

Chapter One is the introduction containing the research question, aims and significance of the study and a summary of chapters. Chapters Two and Three are predominantly background chapters based on a review of the literature. In Chapter Two, I document a brief history of the colonisation of Australia and describe seminal works that have influenced and contributed to what is currently known about the Indigenous peoples of Australia. In the context of an Australian colonial history, I trace the changing Western perspective of Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal integration into Australian society. I conclude with the emergence of an Indigenist research paradigm and the role of history, culture and society in human identity construction. In Chapter Three the project is described in terms of its epistemological foundation, theoretical perspective (which incorporates Symbolic Interactionism and narrative theory), qualitative methodology and methods. In addition to my review of the literature within the social sciences and more specifically narrative theory, I provide a justification for the use of in-depth interview methods and a multi-method qualitative analysis which utilised the tools of thematic and narrative analysis. I also describe the research site and focus on ethical issues which conform to the Indigenist research paradigm.

In Chapters Four and Five I present the findings of a thematic analysis and narrative analysis respectively. In Chapter Four my analysis has revealed that participants constructed Aboriginal identity over the course of four clearly defined themes. I conclude that two of these themes are positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept whilst the other two are negative. I show that when the participants attempt to reconcile these elements they construct Aboriginal identity as a problem. At the conclusion of each of these themes I make an evaluative statement which I later suggest represents the collective Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal worldview (albeit a collective of eleven people). In Chapter Five I present my findings from a narrative analysis of four selected cases from the same interview cohort. Here I adopt several narrative analytical frameworks. In particular the prime narrative model (Mathieson and Barrie 1998) which treats the entire interview as a narrative process reveals how participants distinctly craft the Shoalhaven worldview.

In Chapter Six I discuss the strengths of a multi-method qualitative analysis. The findings here are brought together with the themes from my literature review chapters to show how the 'primitive aborigine' construct, although considered invalid in current times, has

become a crucial resource that participants draw upon to construct identity. My discussion is in three parts: first, I address methodological issues related to the study; second, I describe the key findings of this study which were identified through the use of these methodologies; and third, I present a discussion of the problem of urban Aboriginal identity.

In Chapter Seven I highlight the significance of this study and describe how it contributes to what is known about identity in urban Aboriginal communities. I then suggest ways in which the findings can be used to stimulate more culturally appropriate strategies for alleviating the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation in Australia. The focus here is especially on the manufacture of future cultural reproduction processes which draw upon the positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept.

CHAPTER 2: AUSTRALIAN COLONIAL HISTORY CONTEXT

> Aboriginal Australians in contemporary Australia possess social identities and associated worldviews that are derived from their exposure to both indigenous and mainstream Australian culture (Halloran and Kashima 2004, p.916).

In the first paragraph of Chapter One in this thesis I mentioned the diversity of Aboriginal communities and cultures prior to British colonisation. This diversity is also evident in contemporary times. However, the notion of pan-Aboriginality (Beckett 1988) has been written into government policy and administration causing some confusion around the concept of Aboriginality and claims of that identity. This is important because "a pan-Aboriginal identity is now embraced by most Australians of Aboriginal ancestry" (Tonkinson 1998 p.294), yet they also acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal communities. A starting point for alleviating this confusion is to answer the question 'What do we know about Aboriginal people in Australia?' To answer this question I review a range of sources including books, journals, conference proceedings and web sources which effectively provides the colonial historical context for this study. I bring the broader recurring themes to the attention of the reader. This helps define the major schools of thought that contribute to what is currently known about the original inhabitants of Australia and their descendants. My review then focuses on urban Aboriginal identity in the context of this history, what this means for Aboriginal identity, what this means for urban Aboriginal people and how this has informed the current proposed future directions for research into Aboriginal communities.

2.1: The cultural impact of the 'other'

> Australian Aborigines are a colonized people and share the experiences of the continuing effects of colonization with colonized people's worldwide (Gilbert 1995, p.147).

The colonial expansion of European nations including the British, Dutch, French and Portuguese, between the 15th and 18th centuries involved the colonisation of various lands

around the world. Many of these lands were inhabited by peoples with unique cultures and cultural practices. When the colonists arrived, interactions caused cultural intermixing. Each culture contained 'truths' reflecting different worldviews which is problematic when describing history. For example, it has been well documented that many Indigenous groups of the land now known as Australia believe they have inhabited the land since the beginning of time (Broome 1982). Furthermore "[i]t is often said that in the [broader International collective] Indigenous view, time is cyclic rather than linear" (Harris 2005, p.36). The Western worldview, which is more reliant on Western science, claims that human arrival in Australia came from the north, through Malaysia and Indonesia. This most likely occurred by land bridge or canoes when sea levels were at their lowest, perhaps during the last ice age, making it possible to walk or island hop (Broome 2002). There is general consensus in the scientific community that modern-day humans are descended from a group of hunter-gatherers in Africa. Genetic studies on current living human populations postulate human travel from the Horn of Africa, across the Red Sea and into Arabia and southern parts of Asia. Until recently this 'southern route' was considered part of the 'greater untold story' (Kumar, Ravuri, Koneru, Urade, Sarkar, Chandrasekar, and Rao 2009).

Regardless of how the original inhabitants arrived in Australia, they lived a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle (Edwards 1988); moving from place to place, living on food sources made available by the local environment. The local native flora (wild berries, yams, lillipillies, geebungs, and other edible berries and fruits) and the local native fauna (kangaroo, wallaby, goanna and so on) were essential food sources. The original inhabitants maintained a unique culture and identity, including self-identification in their traditional languages. This culture of hunter-gatherer is a well documented trait of traditional Aboriginal society and plays a vital role in the current universally accepted 'truth' that the original inhabitants of Australia are considered the longest continuing culture in the history of humankind. The precise length of this cultural continuity is not known. What is known (based on current archaeological evidence) is that Aboriginal people have inhabited Australia for at least 50,000 years, with estimates of upwards of 200,000 years (Broome 2001). In a recent study which tested completely sequenced 966-mitochondrial genomes (that is 966 individuals) from 26 relic tribes in India, researchers found that seven genomes (that is, seven individuals) share two synonymous polymorphisms with M42 haplogroup, which are specific to Aboriginal Australians (Kumar et al. 2009). These findings are significant because "[t]he shared lineage provides

direct genetic evidence to the long suggested ancient link between India and Australia"
(Kumar et al. 2009, p.4). The findings also support the theory that the current species of
humankind evolved in Africa and populated the world via the 'southern route'.

The geographical isolation of Australia from other countries limited cultural influence
from other peoples, thus allowing the original inhabitants to maintain their unique culture
(at least, this was the general consensus that stimulated much of the earlier anthropological
research on Aboriginal people). The first documented contact between Indigenous
Australians and Europeans was in March of 1606 when Captain Willem Janszoon, aboard
the vessel *Duyfken,* chartered more than 300 kilometres of Queensland's north-west coast
(National Library of Australia 2009). He gave Dutch names to several features of the
landscape including Cape Keer-Weer. Keer-Weer is Dutch for 'turn around'. Janszoon
named this place Cape Keer-Weer as this was as far as the *Duyfken* travelled before
heading back to the Indies (Peters and Brady 2006). When Janszoon landed, he was met
with a hostile reception from the local so-called "naked, savage, cruel, black barbarians"
(Flood 2006, p.2).

In other instances of contact, Macassan[1] fisherman (from the islands of Indonesia) traded
trepang or sea cucumber with the original inhabitants of the northern parts of Australia.
Trepang is a marine invertebrate valued for its medicinal and culinary qualities in Chinese
markets. However, it only "entered local official records in China since the seventeenth
century" (Wu and Cheung 2002, p.3) after it was introduced via south-east Asia. When
dried, the meat fetched high prices in Canton (China) because it was believed to be a
sexual stimulant (Verhart 2000). The trepang trade represented a thriving market in
Australia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Russell 2004). Many trepang-
processing sites in northern Australia have been discovered in archaeological studies
revealing cultural items such as broken Indonesian pottery, glass, coins, fishhooks, pieces
of metal, and clay pipes (Macknight 1976). It has been suggested that trade may have
occurred earlier (as early as 800 years before present), however this date has been disputed
by some (see Russell 2004).

Interaction between the Makassan and Indigenous locals occurred in waves (Berndt 1962,
cited in Macintosh 2004). One scholar suggests that over a period of 150 years there was

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[1] Macassan is also commonly spelt Makassan in the literature. I have used both versions in this thesis and
according to the version originally sighted in the literature.

an average of 400 Makassan visitors per year (Verhart 2000). This ultimately had a direct influence on the culture of the Indigenous groups of the northern parts of Australia, because humans are cultural beings with 'cultural baggage' and when they interact with people of other cultures they utilise this 'cultural baggage' in an attempt to communicate and understand the other. The extent of interaction determines the degree of influence. In the case of the local Indigenous people and the Makassan visitors, interaction was quite extensive, and included negotiations where Makassan fishers sought permission from the 'king' of the Indigenous tribe (or tribes) to fish for trepang. Some Makassan visitors built temporary living structures whilst others employed Aboriginal people to fish for them (Evans 1992). This suggests that interaction occurred for extended periods.

Makassan influence on Aboriginal culture is also evident in the ceremony, custom, art, myths, song cycles and language of contemporary Indigenous groups in the north (Russell 2004). In the case of language, Makassan words, described as *loan words* (Evans 1992) are found in these contemporary Aboriginal communities and include 'Rupiah' and 'Balanda' which translate as 'money' and 'white man'. These have become well entrenched in Aboriginal culture: Trudgen (2000) reports that '*Balanda* is a Yolngu term for non-Aboriginal people' (cited in Lowell 2001, p.8). However, the impact of Makassan culture on Indigenous people in the north was not as severe as the impact of British culture on Indigenous peoples of the east coast of Australia.

In 1770, Captain James Cook, aboard the British vessel *Endeavour,* travelled up the east coast of the Australian continent. In his log, dated Sunday 22nd April, 1770, he observed smoke from several campfires at different locations along the coast. He made a log entry detailing his observations of the original inhabitants on the shore near Pigeon House Mountain:

> They appeared to be of a very dark or black Colour; but whether this was
> the real Colour of their skins or the Cloathes they might have on I know
> not (Cook, cited in Organ 1990, p.2).

Cook later sailed into Botany Bay and Sydney Cove. This area became the first site for British settlement. On the basis of the absence of the more obvious markers of Western civilisation - houses, roads, fences, farms, - Cook "applied the legal doctrine *terra nullius* meaning "land of no one," to the Australian continent" (Short 2003, p.491). This was used by British authorities to justify legal attainment of land. It was an act of claiming

sovereignty and ownership of the land which began the process of British colonisation of Australia and of its original inhabitants.

The sailing of the First Fleet from England to Australia arose as a result of the developing European industrial revolution and the newly emerging Age of Enlightenment. Larbalestier suggests that for Goldberg this was a "shift from medieval premodernity to modernity as being in part a shift from a religiously defined human identity and personhood to a racially defined identity and personhood. Race and reason are intertwined in Enlightenment thought" (Larbalestier 2004, p.1). 'Progress' underpinned these ideologies. In particular, the industrial manufacture of cotton, steel and pottery replaced cottage industries. This encouraged those living in rural towns to move to cities in search of employment, thereby, in time, creating overcrowded slums which harboured disease. Unemployment and unsanitary living conditions created a criminal class resulting in the conviction of many. To deal with this criminal class convicts were to be transported to the Americas. However, when American independence from Britain occurred on the 4th of July 1776, a new convict settlement was required, and "on the 26th of January 1788 British ships containing 290 seamen, soldiers and officials and 717 convicts sailed into Port Jackson" (Broome 1982, p.22). Over the course of 252 days the First Fleet had travelled half way around the world from England to New South Wales (State Library NSW 2008) where a majority of the British travelers were criminal class and probably infected with disease and illness from the overcrowded slums in England. Over approximately the next 80 years, 165,000 convicts were transported to the newly established British colony in Australia (ancestry.co.uk 2009).

There were at least 17 reported hostile meetings between Aboriginal people and British people in the first month of invasion[2] (Broome 2002). Broome emphasises three factors which shaped this early interaction: firstly, the colony was a gaol; secondly, the British came with preconceived ideas about Aboriginal people; and thirdly, the British dispossessed Aboriginal people of land and did not offer a treaty. Three legal claims of title to land were in operation during that time: claims by means of 'discovery', 'conquest' and 'treaty negotiation' (Reynolds 1996). Conceptually, this approach is underpinned by 17th century philosopher John Locke's Eurocentric notion of property ownership (Short 2003). Aboriginal people were not considered a unified people sharing a common form of

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[2] Broome uses the term *invasion* rather than *colonisation*. However both refer to the same event.

government and, therefore, treaty negotiations were not offered. In addition, the absence of a unified form of government, which effectively limited a cohesive effort to resist the invaders, did not constitute a war (from a British perspective) and therefore conquest was also not considered to have occurred. In other parts of the world where British colonisation occurred, "the Crown claimed sovereignty, but not ownership of the land" (Short 2003, p.492). This was linked to the British perception that these peoples were more civilised than the original inhabitants of Australia. In such situations, treaty negotiations were offered. Even though the British acquired the original title, and the so-called 'uncivilised aborigines' inhabited the land, *terra nullius* was still claimed and "acquisition was, therefore, by means of discovery and occupation" (Reynolds 1996, p. 87). The term Australia is derived from the Latin 'Terra Australis' and means 'the southern land'. The consequence of 'discovery' and 'occupation' imposed a new word *'terra nullius'* (Stanton, Read, Meyers, and Reece 2006). Thus,

> Terra Australis was a land to be taken and colonised, as there was no pre-existing human habitation of sufficient significance even to warrant the use of the concept 'conquest'. From the point of view of European civilisation, Terra Australis was an empty land (Herbert 1978 cited in Stanton, Read, Meyers, and Reece 2006, p.91).

Subsequently, the doctrine of *terra nullius* was applied to the Australian continent whilst inhabited by people, and can be considered illegally attained and subsequently stolen.

The absence of a unified government and the hunter-gatherer lifestyle reinforced an Aboriginal primitiveness which was informed, at least in part, by social evolutionary theory. This theory also informed the disciplines of anthropology, history and literature, which are Western disciplines that have dominated the understanding of Aboriginality in Australia (Muecke 1999). Social evolutionary theory contributed to a constructed 'truth' that Aboriginal people were 'primitive' and therefore 'inferior'. Muecke (1982) also identified three discourses of Aboriginality embedded in the canons of anthropology, which were conceived by European authors: 'the anthropological', 'the romantic' and 'the racist'. Essentially both the romantic discourse of Aboriginality and the racist discourse of Aboriginality have been informed by the anthropological discourse of Aboriginality. These discourses of Aboriginality continue to inform current knowledge about Aboriginal people in Australia, and continue to impact on urban Aboriginal people in a plethora of ways, which will be addressed later. However, I firstly describe how these discourses are linked.

The discipline of anthropology can be divided into two clearly defined categories: *physical anthropology* and *social anthropology* (Hollinsworth 2006). Both these sub-disciplines have had a devastating effect on how Aboriginal people have been studied, described, and in that process given an identity of 'aboriginal inferiority'. The physical anthropologists were obsessed with measuring skeletal remains (particularly the size of the skull and brain) to determine the intelligence level of Aboriginal people. It was believed that the larger the brain or skull the more intelligent the individual. During this period, thousands of skeletal remains were unearthed and sent to many museums and science centres across the globe for research purposes. Banjeree suggests this era has been described by Katona as embracing the "academic mindset of skull measuring" (Banerjee 1999, p.7). Social anthropologists, on the other hand, were more interested in the behaviour and interaction of people in the context of their cultures and societies. Both forms of anthropology were informed by Social Darwinian thought which is linked to the theory of evolution and can be traced back to the 2000 year old concept of the great chain of being (Breen 2003). The term 'social evolutionary theory', however, did not emerge till the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859 (Breen 2003). A distinct feature of this theory was the idea that "race and culture were linked in a single evolutionary hierarchy extending from the dark skinned savage to the civilised white man" (Stocking 1982, p.xxii). The association of black-skinned with negativity developed from ideas about 'primitive' cultures, which evolved from British experiences with African tribes:

> Influenced by these existing definitions of 'black' as dirty and evil and
> 'white' as clean and pure, the English saw the Africans as unchristian
> 'savages' who were violent, lecherous, treacherous, and akin to the apes
> of Africa (Broome 2002, p.29).

The work of Taylor and Morgan was instrumental in the formulation of a racial hierarchy which placed European cultures at the top and hunter-gatherer societies at the bottom. Lewis H. Morgan's publication '*Ancient Society: or Researches in the lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilisation*' posited seven steps which tracked the evolution of 'Man'. It is reproduced here (Table 1) from the Elibron Classics Replica Edition (Morgan 2005):

Table 1: Seven steps in the Evolution of Man:

I	Lower Status of Savagery	From the Infancy of the Human Race to the commencement of the next Period
II	Middle Status of Savagery	From the acquisition of a fish substance and knowledge of the use of fire, to etc
III	Upper Status of Savagery	From the Invention of the Bow and Arrow, to etc.
IV	Lower Status of Barbarism	From the Invention of the Art of Pottery, to etc.
V	Middle Status of Barbarism	From the Domestication of animals on the Eastern hemisphere, and in the Western from the cultivation of maize and plants by Irrigation, with the use of adobe-brick and stone, to etc.
VI	Upper Status of Barbarism	From the Invention of the process of Smelting Iron Ore, with the use of iron tools, to etc
VII	Status of Civilization	From the Invention of a Phonetic Alphabet, with the use of writing, to the present time.

(Source Morgan 2005, p.13)

This model informed a hierarchy by which different cultures and societies were measured. So, for example, if a particular society did not have the knowledge of the use of fire they were considered to have been located within the Lower Status of Savagery. This model was quite influential for it was "followed with keen interest by Marx and Engels…[and]…became a sort of bible of the socialists" (Goldenweiser 1941, p.152). The evolution of 'Man' was believed to involve much more than cultural change and was linked to the changing structure of the brain itself:

> With the production of inventions and discoveries, and with the growth
> of institutions, the human mind necessarily grew and expanded; and we
> are led to recognise a gradual enlargement of the brain itself particularly
> of the cerebral portion (Morgan cited in Stocking 1982, p.177).

When commenting on brain size and intellectual differences between Europeans and Africans in 1881, Taylor suggested there existed:

a connexion *(sic)* between a more full and intricate system of brain cells
and fibres, and a higher intellectual power in the races which have risen
in the scale of civilisation (Taylor cited in Stocking 1982, p.116).

Baldwin Spencer and his collaborator Frank Gillen are considered the founding fathers of Australian anthropology as they "were the first to adopt a 'scientific' anthropological approach to Aboriginal life worlds" (Charlesworth 2005, p.6). Spencer linked mental capacity to environmental influences which, in turn, were linked to 'progress':

Primitive man could not evolve higher intellectual faculties in the
absence of a fit environment…his progress was retarded by the absence
of capacities which only progress could bring (Spencer cited in Stocking
1982, p.118).

Thus the various groups as inferior primitive races were considered as unable to achieve social progress in evolutionary terms. However this perspective was not limited to 'black races' but also to subsets of the European population:

[U]p to a certain point savages and barbarians are like what our ancestors
were and peasants still are, but from this common level of superior
intellect of the progressive races has risen their nations to heights of
culture (Taylor cited in Stocking 1982, p.116).

This line of thinking constructed a 'truth' that Aboriginal people did not have 'culture', which informed the thinking of British citizens (including scientists, politicians and others in power) and influenced policy and policy change. This became a racial hierarchy that informed and constructed a hierarchical social order whereby the British and other European cultures considered themselves superior to 'primitive' cultures that were deemed unable to progress beyond the defined stages of savagery and barbarism. This reinforced the perception that Aboriginal people were culturally, intellectually and biologically inferior to the British. The geographical isolation of Australia and the minimal contact with 'the other' also reinforced the idea of a 'primitive', untouched culture. This is where the 'romantic' discourse of Aboriginality became associated with the 'primitive' traditional Aborigine construct: located somewhere between the Lower Status of Savagery and the Upper Status of Savagery. For example in a paper delivered to the Anthropological Institute in London in 1872, C.S. Wake stated that Aboriginal people in Australia "represent the childhood of humanity itself, revealing to us the original condition of

mankind" (Reynolds 1996, p.118). The discipline of anthropology has played an integral role in the perception of Aboriginal people as primitive which also prompted much of the earlier research on Aboriginal peoples, their cultures and communities. This has led some writers to conclude that Aboriginal people are the most researched people on the earth (Martin 2003).

The 'primitive aborigine' construct was based on an inherent inferiority determined by the appearance (or lack thereof) of progress. This inherent inferiority was embedded in British thought at the time of colonisation and became a key idea in the act of naming the original inhabitants 'aborigine' which appears un-capitalised in much of the earlier Australian literature (Greer 2003). It is an ethnic category based on European notions of culture and heredity which has been historically imposed on the original inhabitants (Tonkinson 1990). This suggests that, upon first contact, Aboriginal peoples were deemed inferior.

The inferiority construct informed the predictions of Aboriginal extinction that followed. The caste system was adopted by the British and used to identify different groups of Indigenous peoples in colonised states around the world. So, whilst full-blood Aboriginal people were thought to be dying out and doomed to extinction, the 'half caste' population (considered to contain more superior European genes) was growing at an alarming rate and considered a growing social problem:

> Almost invariably the Australian settlers in the first half of the twentieth-
> century thought of…mixed descent children, and of the descendants of
> these children – whom they labelled, almost zoologically, as half-castes
> or crossbreeds, as quadroons and octoroons – as a growing, fearful social
> problem (Manne 1998, p.2).

The growing 'half cast' population was seen as problematic in the broader scheme of the future of Australian national identity. This was based on an argument, from empirical observation, that described Aboriginal people as neglected and destitute; leading to the assumption that they would inevitably become a welfare burden (Moran 2005). There was also the view that "the growing population of Aboriginal "half castes" presented the threat of the development of black or "discoloured" enclaves in the heart of pure white Australia" (Tindall 1940, p.68). However, the half-caste problem was deemed solvable by 'breeding out the colour', which became a policy congruent with the White Australia Policy (Bourke 1994) and with the policy of assimilation. These have impacted negatively on Aboriginal communities:

> The assimilationist policy assumed that their culture and way of life is without value and that we confer a favour on them by assimilating them into our ways, even to the point of taking their children and removing them from family (Johnston 1991, p.9).

Over time a new constructivist perspective gained momentum in academia and society in general, which emphasised the importance of the worldview of individuals:

> earlier agrarian and industrial societies provided social scripts, which most individuals were expected to follow, contemporary societies throw more responsibility on to individuals to choose their own identities…and requires of individuals that they construct an 'authentic' version of themselves, making use of the numerous identity-props which consumer-society makes available (Rustin 2000, p.34).

Nakata describes the effect this new thinking had on Western perspectives of Indigenous communities in Australia: "[u]nderstandings of Indigenous peoples in the human sciences was largely within cultural frameworks, formerly as primitive and inferior cultures and in more contemporary times celebrated as part of the diversity of cultures in the world – no longer inferior just different" (Nakata 2002, p.2). This change in perspective towards Indigenous people has had a dramatic impact on the conduct of research into Aboriginal communities, and although the work of Spencer, Taylor and Morgan has added to this broad knowledge-base, it is now generally considered outdated by current Western science:

> No serious scholar now follows Spencer's evolutionary approach which saw Australian Aboriginal religions as quintessentially 'primitive' forms of religion, or Emile Durkheim's reductionist approach which saw Aboriginal religions as archaic instruments of social cohesion – the simplest or most 'elementary' forms of religion in the simplest form of society … [Stanner] has emerged as the central figure in the study of Aboriginal religions (Charlesworth 2005, p.1)

W.E.H. Stanner's work on Aboriginal religion has been particularly influential, and has added to current knowledge about Aboriginal communities in Australia. It has been described as "thorough, sensitive, successful and astute" (Keen 2005, p.61). His contribution is significant, in that he advocated an understanding of Aboriginal religion

which is not based in broader Durkheimian thought, but based on an understanding of the *worldview* of Aboriginal peoples:

> Aboriginal religion must be described and analysed as significant in its own right, and as expressions of human experience of life…[which]…can best be understood 'internally', interpreted in terms of its meaning without reducing it to a social epiphenomenon" (Stanner cited in Keen 2005, p.62).

Stanner's thinking was considered different and advanced when compared with popular conceptions of the time. The predominant approach had neglected to attempt to see Aboriginal communities from Aboriginal worldviews.

Stanner was indeed influential: C.D. Rowley's trilogy completed in 1972 and the work of anthropologists Elkin and the Berendts relied heavily on his work (Briscoe 2003). Even though academic and scientific perceptions of Aboriginal people have changed over time, the pioneering work of the physical anthropologists has firmly embedded the 'primitive aborigine' construct into what is currently known about the original inhabitants of Australia. It is severely and unfortunately constrained by the academic mindset of skull measuring, which was informed by a long tradition in Social Darwinian thought that linked progress to genetic and intellectual capacity. Thus, non-Aboriginal researchers, especially physical and social anthropologists, have made a significant contribution to what is known about Aboriginal people in Australia.

In more recent times, the trend in non-Aboriginal researchers conducting research on Aboriginal communities continued. *Urban Aborigines* (Gale and Brookman 1972) was the first study "to document the presence of city-based Aboriginal communities" (Anderson and Jacobs 1997, p.15). This was a study in geography which documented urban Aboriginal life in Adelaide. It was significant because it provided impetus for reflection of the 'us' and 'them' binarism, which is where the discipline of cultural geography is suggested to have evolved (Anderson and Jacobs 1997). However, since that time there have been several studies of Aboriginal people in urban environments. One PhD focused on the role of Aboriginality and Aboriginal identity in shaping the lives, identities and economies of non-Aboriginal Australians (Palmer 1999). Another examined the implications of Aboriginal people living in urban spaces in the Redfern area of Sydney. Its author concluded that "[f]or the non-Aboriginal majority of Australians this return of Aboriginality to urban space was inappropriate … its founding and ongoing presence is a

paradox; it will always be out-of-place" (Shaw 2001, p.70). The study focused on the perspective of the 'white' residents surrounding 'The Block' which is frequented by drug dealing activities, high crime rates and the concern of Aboriginal youth justice issues. The findings suggest that "[t]he Block continues to be discursively framed as a dangerous place that does not belong in the centre of Sydney" (Shaw 2001, p.70). In the Sydney urban Aboriginal community of La Perouse, Lambert-Pennington, an urban anthropologist, aimed to explore the broader Western constructions of Aboriginality by government authorities, policies and citizens. The study sought to understand the ways in which local Aboriginal community members deal with the predicament of not looking, acting or living the way popular constructs of Aboriginality expect or demand. Over the course of her involvement with the La Perouse Aboriginal community for more than 11 years, Lambert-Pennington claims to have developed a rich and nuanced understanding of Aboriginal identity construction, interconnected with every aspect of their lives (Lambert-Pennington 2005). A study in the Bourke Aboriginal community (a small rural town in north western New South Wales) found that the local Aboriginal population subscribed to a discourse of 'racial loyalty' - a process that requires individuals of mixed descent to identify exclusively as Aboriginal (Cowlishaw 2004). These studies of urban Aboriginal communities, although not particularly focusing on identity construction, have addressed the issues of urban Aboriginal identity.

2.2: What does this history mean for the construction of identity?

The Aboriginal experience in an Australian context is commonly understood to involve struggle, marginalisation and disadvantage. The diversity of Aboriginal communities and the plethora of terms used to claim the many collective identities of Aboriginality - including those mentioned in the opening paragraph to this thesis - have caused confusion around the concept of Aboriginality. This is because an understanding of Indigenous identity has a number of possible starting points. Weaver (2001) raises the question: "Are we talking about race, ethnicity, cultural identity, tribal identity, acculturation, enculturation, bicultural identity, multicultural identity, or some other form of identity?" (p.240).

Weaver's comment on identity in the context of Canadian First Nation's people (a group that are members of an Indigenous collective) forces the reader to ponder the multiple

trajectories for understanding identity and identity construction. It is a complex issue that has received considerable attention in academia over many years, focusing on scholarly debate crossing many disciplines including philosophy, psychology, sociology and biology. In general, the study of identity has had many foci including being linked to culture (Weedon 2004), being assessed in terms of national identity (Dixson 1999), starting from the notion of a sense of self (Taylor 1991), of multiple selves (Gergen 1991) and many more.

In this research, however, the *history of place* is considered a key starting point to understand how urban Aboriginal people construct identity. Many identity construction sites exist in society and history. Six of these are politics, labour markets, residential space, social institutions, culture and daily experience (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). In this thesis, I pay particular attention to the role of culture in the formation of human identity and the expression of that identity. In this sense, culture permeates history and society.

Culture, according to sociologist Ronald Fletcher (cited in Berg 2002), is the social heritage of a community and includes the total body of material artefacts, collective mental and spiritual artefacts and distinctive forms of behaviour in a member's ongoing activities within their particular life-conditions. Similarly, cultural anthropologist Gary Ferraro defines culture as "everything that people have, think or do as members of their society" (Ferraro 1998, p.16). Ferraro's use of the verbs, 'have', 'think' and 'do' correspond to the structural elements of Fletcher's social heritage definition of culture. People *have* material artefacts, they *think* in terms of mental and spiritual artefacts, and *do* in terms of distinct forms of behaviours. These elements of culture are generic and applicable to all societies, suggesting that cultural reproduction processes are also generic. However, material artefacts, mental and spiritual artefacts, and distinct forms of behaviour differ between societies, effectively affording each society a unique culture and identity.

Cultural differences are more easily identified when comparing different geographical locations. Consider the cultural difference between places such as Australia, Japan, England, Russia, France, India, the United States of America and China. Each of these locations contains unique cultural elements in terms of language, architecture of the urban landscape, behaviours and norms. Cultures not only differ from place to place, but also change over time and are "forever dynamic, are always changing, responsive to internal and external pressure and influences (Rolls 2001, p.10). Human identity is also dynamic and viewed as "a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always

constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall, cited in Davis 2004, p.184). Culture is therefore an important component of identity, because identity is learnt from the relational environment which contains culture and therefore pervades all aspects of human experience which is stored and understood within cognitive processes.

The experience of culture which permeates the broader socio-cultural-historical context has the potential to influence personal belief systems, attitudes and behaviours. These elements of culture - in effect, the mental and spiritual artefacts of the social heritage definition of culture - inform the worldview of particular individuals and collective groups. These elements of culture are often evident in the telling of stories. Thus, they are expressed in the telling of historical events which suggests a link between the history of place and the individual worldview. The history of place is internalised by people in story form in socialisation processes and has the potential to become a prominent resource that informs the individual of a sense of self. Taylor (2006) points out that "our understandings of who we are, our identities, are derived from the accumulative ideas, images and associations, and so on which make up the wider social and cultural contexts of our lives (p.94): a wider social and cultural context which has an historical context.

These ideas describe the link between the social and the personal in an individual's understandings and conceptions of self. This is how the worldview of the local culture and broader culture influences one's sense of self. In fact the internalisation of the worldview, essential mental and spiritual artefacts, is a prerequisite for understanding one's sense of self.

The addition of the historical context adds a time element, suggesting that our individual biographies are dependent "on being placed within a continuity provided by a constructed and shared social history in which we locate our selves and our individual continuities" (Bruner 1991, p.20). Continuity of experience of culture is also required so that one learns an identity, and crucially this learnt identity is based on the culture in which one is immersed, and becomes reflected in the individual's worldview. This is where social identities become prominent features of the expression of one's sense of self and can become evidenced in story telling exercises.

Various forms of identity are constructed when people engage in conversation with each other. We can understand the process of identity construction if we understand the content and context of the stories told. We must also understand that worldviews are contained within cultural frameworks, are based on mental and spiritual artefacts and are transmitted

from person to person in story form both intergenerationally and intragenerationally. This suggests that cultural reproduction is a necessary feature of human identity and identity construction. Therefore, cultural reproduction plays a central role in one's sense of self and in one's understandings of the identity concept.

History, culture and society are necessary elements of identity construction as well as the cultural reproduction of identity.

2.3: What does this mean for Aboriginal identity?

History, culture and society are permeable concepts which are understood in an individual's interpretations. This suggests that one's sense of self is also permeable and has the potential to change over time. Consequently, one's worldview can change. However, it is more common that worldviews remain relatively constant across the life course. This is where the story of history of place plays a crucial role in informing the worldview. Even though history, culture and society constantly evolve, there are elements which remain more or less stable. Consider the way in which the 'primitive aborigine' construct provided justification for the marginalisation and disadvantage of Aboriginal people in Australian society. It was based on an inferiority-superiority binarism which predicted that Aboriginal 'races' would inevitably die out. This assessment was built on a belief that Aboriginal people were inherently inferior in terms of culture, intellect and genetics. Unfortunately, these ideas are so ingrained in the way we think, that they continue to impact on individuals in the form of the experience of marginalisation and disadvantage. These old ideas have been described as racist:

> Popular conceptualizations of race are derived from 19th century and early 20th century scientific formulations. These old racial categories were based on external visible traits, primarily skin colour, features of the face, and the shape and size of the head and body, and the underlying skeleton. They were often imbued with nonbiological attributes, based on social constructions of race. These categories of race are rooted in the scientific traditions of the 19th century, and in even earlier philosophical traditions which presumed that immutable visible traits can predict the measure of all other traits in an individual or population. Such notions have often been used to support racist doctrines. Yet old racial concepts persist as social conventions that foster institutional discrimination. The

> expression of prejudice may or may not undermine material well-being, but it does involve the mistreatment of people and thus it often is psychologically distressing and socially damaging (AAPA 1996, p.659).

The use of the term 'race' in academia began to lose popularity from about the 1920s (Hollinsworth 2006) with several academics suggesting the term should be abandoned altogether because "it is an ideological construct, not an empirical category; as such it signifies a set of imaginary properties of inheritance which fix and legitimate real positions of social domination and subordination" (Cohen, cited in Hollinsworth 2006 p.27). In the case of Aboriginal people in Australia, the notion of 'race' as a social construct became entrenched in Australian government policy and legitimised the treatment of Aboriginal people. For example, terms such as 'half caste', 'quarter caste' and 'octoroon' have been used in official government policy and administration to describe the perceived different subsets of the Aboriginal 'race' (McCorquodale 1997).

The link between genetics, culture, intellectual capacity and progress was informed by social evolutionary theory, and although these links are now considered to be flawed, they nonetheless continue to inform citizen attitudes towards Aboriginal people. The American Association of Physical Anthropology (AAPA) acknowledged the global impact of this flaw in a statement of biological aspects of race: "For many millennia, human progress in any field has been based on culture and not genetic improvement" (AAPA 1996, p.570). This shows that the link between genetics and progress was not contained within the discipline of anthropology or limited to the perception of Aboriginal communities, but rather pervaded all disciplines, which in effect has informed Western thought in general.

What is clear from the above historical analysis is that Aboriginal identity today cannot, and should not, be separated from the past. As emerges in the following section, there are many different interpretations of Aboriginality and Aboriginal identity which range from a denial of any continued existence of some separate Aboriginal identity, to an identity which is separate but 'stuck in the past'; under the assumption that Aboriginal culture, and hence Aboriginal identity, have not moved on, developed or reformed over time. Most significantly the 'stuck in the past' view is one that has been imposed on Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal Australians. That raises the important issue of who is to define Aboriginal identity? The history of Aboriginal people since invasion is a dual history with different perspectives depending on who is writing it, and more importantly who is *telling* it.

Up until about the 1950s Australian history was informed by a 'truth' of heroic achievement which underpinned the myth of 'peaceful British colonisation' of Australia. In his influential lecture for the ABC's Boyer lecture in 1968, anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner coined the term the 'Great Australian Silence' (Baker and Worby 2007), which signified the beginnings of an alternate version of Australian history: one that included bloody frontier violence and massacres. This newer version of history has been described as the 'black armband view of history' (McKenna 2007). The 'black armband history' was coined by historian Geoffrey Blainey as a part of his 1993 Latham Lecture (Newman 2001) which "aroused interest, but no strong reactions until John Howard used the phrase … in a speech three years later" (Macintyre and Clark 2004, p.132). The 'black armband view of history' is also linked to a movement of the so-called 'guilty industry' people who sought to rewrite the history of Australia in an effort to reveal an alternate past. Blainey's lecture has resulted in an ongoing debate for historical truth labelled the 'history wars' (Macintyre and Clark 2004; Manne 2003; Windshuttle 2002). Strikingly, the 'history wars' have never been fought between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but rather between non-Aboriginal leftists and non-Aboriginal rightists, such as historians Manning Clark and Geoffrey Blainey respectively (McKenna 2007). In that debate, the Aboriginal voice has seldom been heard.

What matters for the issue of Aboriginal identity in this thesis is that in the uncertainty and confusion surrounding much that has been written about Aboriginal identity, there are but four certainties. The first is that there is confusion; the second is that Aboriginal identity today cannot be defined or interpreted independently of the history of Aboriginal people; the third is that history is a product of a wider Australian history and as such must embrace the impact of non-Aboriginal Australia on Aboriginal people; while the fourth certainty is that identity is a subjective concept, in the sense that it will vary depending on who is telling the story of identity.

This thesis accepts all these points. It seeks to reduce the confusion; it draws strength from the recognition that Aboriginality cannot be understood without 'the other', the non-Aboriginal Australian; it does not in itself interpret Aboriginal history as being separate from Australian history nor in turn that that Aboriginal identity is separate from non-Aboriginal identity, except – and this is important - insofar as the Aboriginal people in this story seek to do so – and they do; and crucially, on the question of whose values, it takes a stand in leaving the question of identity to the narratives of those people whose identity is to be debated, here, not just Aboriginal people but urban Kooris.

2.4: Aboriginal people and Australian governments

It is important also to try to set Aboriginal identity in a political context; showing how, over time, attempts have been made to change such identity, particularly within the Australian political forum. In the introduction to this thesis I quoted Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. His words were offered in the spirit of reconciliation which is the prominent ideology that drove formal policy towards Aboriginal people by the Howard government in the 1990s. Rudd's quote exemplifies the negative historical relationship between Aboriginal people and former Australian Governments. However, the historical relationship between Aboriginal people and Australian governments can be further characterised by ideologies that dominated social thought throughout Australian colonial history. These ideologies were informed by the 'academic mindset of skull measuring' where, in several instances, they were transformed into legislation. Stephanie Gilbert (1995) describes this process in relation to the development of legislation in the state of Queensland. These ideas are reproduced in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Legislation policy

Period	Ideology	Legislation
1) Prior to 1897	'Dispossession' 'Extermination'	
2) 1897 – 1960s	'Protection'	Queensland Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act
3) From 1965	'Assimilation'	Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act

(Source Gilbert, 1995)

More recently, the ideology of self-management began in the late 1980s (Gilbert 1995) and the current ideology of reconciliation began in the 1990s. Earlier in this chapter, I described the use of the caste system and the way in which it has become entrenched in anthropological thought which in turn has been influential in applying names to Aboriginal peoples. This was documented by John McCorquodale in his PhD study which analysed 700 separate pieces of Australian legislation. He uncovered at least 67 classifications,

descriptions and definitions of Aboriginality (Gardiner-Garden 2000). This hints at the lack of cohesion and coordination - indeed, chaos - in the broad policy framework which characterises the relationship between Aboriginal people and Australian governments.

Whilst the treatment of, and attitude toward, Aboriginal people can be traced in historical documents such as police reports, parliamentary records and government legislation, the exclusion of Aboriginal peoples from the Australian constitution of 1901 is a particularly striking statement made by Australian Governments. Within the whole of that document, Aboriginal people are mentioned twice. Section 51 notes that the Parliament would have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth for "the people of any race, other than the Aboriginal race in any State" and Section 127 states "that Aboriginal natives shall not be counted" (cited in Gardiner-Garden 2007). Thus Aboriginal people were excluded from the general Australian population.

This unequal treatment, which was embedded in policy at the institutional level, was also reflected in its practice. In the Shoalhaven, for example, at "one time the David Berry Hospital was the only hospital in the region that would accept Aboriginal patients" (Colyer and Sullivan 2004, p.8). These instances of exclusion are striking, particularly the exclusion of Aboriginal people from the 1901 Constitution, as this was a defining moment in Australian history, signifying the beginnings of a national collective identity. That national collective identity clearly and deliberately excluded Aboriginal people. For Aboriginal people that live a Western lifestyle in urban areas this was crucial because:

> In Western societies both individual and collective forms of identity are closely tied to ideas of national, local and family history and tradition. These, together with the personal and collective memories that sustain them, create a sense of where one comes from and where one belongs. For most people, this sense of history and tradition is learned informally in the family, through media representations and in school. National anthems, flags, costumes and holidays, state rituals, national sports teams, pageantry, museums, heritage centres, buildings and monuments all help to create and sustain narratives about who we are and where we have come from (Weedon 2004, p.24).

Profoundly, the historical exclusion of Aboriginal people from Australian society adds to the construct of a national identity.

Australian identity is in part a product of the historical and contemporary exclusion of Aboriginal Peoples from the society's political and social institutions. The active denigration of Aboriginal Peoples and their culture has provided a justification for the exclusion of Aboriginality and its values from the core of Australian identity. Despite Mabo and Reconciliation, Australia is yet to accept Aboriginality as a desirable attribute of national identity (Houston 2003, p.85).

Aboriginal people, along with the Anglo-Celtic and new-ethnic Australians, have become broad streams which source Australia's sense of national identity (Dixson 1999). It has been suggested that the Australian accent has been directly influenced by Aboriginal people:

> The broad flat vowels, complex diphthongs and murmuring nasalities of spoken Australian English must have come to us from Aboriginal languages. It stands to reason that men who spent their waking hours in the company of black farmhands would have begun to mimic the consonants and vowels of Kriol, if only to make themselves more readily understood. Children who were brought up by black women among black children would also have picked up the sounds they heard around them (Greer 2003, p.62).

So whilst Australia's sense of national identity has been influenced by Aboriginal peoples, it is the negativity and friction that continues to be highlighted which is also inextricably tied to colonial history.

In more recent times three discourses of Aboriginality have emerged within Aboriginal communities: 'Aboriginality as resistance, Aboriginality as cultural continuity, and Aboriginality as descent' (Hollinsworth 1992). These have been suggested to have the "ideological potential to construct a powerful national identity" (Hollinsworth 1992, p.138). However, the discourse of 'resistance' has become a prominent feature of urban Aboriginal identity concept whereby Aboriginal people have become more vocal in their demand for equal rights signified by the Aboriginal political movement of the 1960s.

This socio-political environment of Australia pressured the Australian Federal Government to change the Constitution. Some notable historical events of that time include the 1963 bark petition sent by the Yolngu of Yirrkala in the Northern Territory protesting against plans to grant mining leases in Arnhem Land; and, in 1965, the Charles Perkins-led

freedom rides, designed to expose racial discrimination against Aboriginal people in New South Wales rural towns (Gardiner-Garden 2007). Other notable figures were Bill Ferguson (Goodall 1982) and Jack Horner. Jack Horner is a non-Aboriginal person who fought for the Aboriginal cause and subsequently wrote a personal memoir of the struggle (Horner 2004) and Bill Ferguson's biography (Horner 1994). In response to the negative treatment of Aboriginal people in Australian society Jack Patterson and William Ferguson wrote an article in *The Publicist* in 1938, titled *'Aborigines claim citizenship rights'*. This was a politically motivated article aimed "to publicise the social, political and legal conditions under which Aborigines lived, and to persuade those in power to reform legislation that governed them" (Stokes 1997, p.158). These events, among others, led to 'The Constitutional Alteration (Aboriginals) Bill' introduced on 1 March 1967. Approximately two months later, on 27 May 1967, a referendum was held which asked two questions. The first question was an attempt to alter the balance of numbers in the Senate and House of Representative. The second, and more relevant to Indigenous Australians, was the question of whether or not to remove the two above-mentioned discriminatory references in the Australian Constitution of 1901. This resulted in a 90.77% 'yes' vote which passed in all six states. It "was inferred that the 'no' vote had probably not been so much out of concern for the Aborigines or for state powers, but out of prejudice" (Gardin-Gardiner 2007 p.13).

Because Aboriginal people were not included in the Australian Constitution of 1901 and not regarded as citizens, a general understanding developed that they were considered flora and fauna. This understanding stems from the 'primitive aborigine' construct, which emerged from the canon of anthropology. The 1967 referendum signified the beginning of the rewriting of the national narrative about Aboriginal people. This is especially relevant to this thesis on urban Aboriginal identity because identities are "shaped by the narratives in our culture" (Gilbert 2002, p.226). This is where the 'history wars' have become such a crucial component of the construction of personal identity: the telling of a specific version of history, which, for example, neglects to mention frontier violence, can sanitise that history, giving the impression of peaceful and legal settlement which can, for example, impact on land rights claims. In addition, this history gives Aboriginal people a sense of collective identity through the identification of familiar negative experiences of colonisation.

2.5: What does this mean for urban Aboriginal people?

Aboriginal identity in Australia has been defined through "descent or particular life experiences, or knowledge of the ancient 'order' or traditional Aboriginal customs, or by associating with Aboriginal people, or being accepted by an Aboriginal community" (Kurtzer 2003, p.50). Current Australian governments use two definitions of Aboriginality. The first, which is used predominantly in legislation, defines an Aboriginal as 'a person who is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia'. The second is a three-pronged definition, predominantly used in program administration, but also in some legislation and court judgments (Gardiner-Garden 2007). The three components of this definition are Aboriginal descent, a claim of membership to an Aboriginal community and acceptance by the Aboriginal community. The third clause was added in the early 1990s (Linning 1999). This definition of Aboriginality is clearly problematic, as historian, Peter Read, illustrates in the following conflation:

> In 1935 a fair-skinned Australian of part-indigenous descent was ejected from a hotel for being an Aboriginal. He returned to his home on the mission station to find himself refused entry because he was not an Aboriginal. He tried to remove his children but was told he could not because they were Aboriginal. He walked to the next town where he was arrested for being an Aboriginal vagrant and placed on the local reserve. During the Second World War he tried to enlist but was told he could not because he was Aboriginal. He went interstate and joined up as a non-Aboriginal. After the war he could not acquire a passport without permission because he was Aboriginal. He received exemption from the Aborigines Protection Act - and was told that he could no longer visit his relations on the reserve because he was not an Aboriginal. He was denied permission to enter the Returned Servicemen's Club because he was (Read, cited in Gardiner-Garden 2003, p.1)

This example is essentially a hypothetical account where Read has merged the identities of several individuals found in historical documents. Nonetheless, the conflation points to an identity politics, especially in relation urban-based Aboriginal people. In actual real-life cases, the issue of Aboriginal identity politics has received attention in recent times. Colin Johnson, later self-proclaimed as 'Mudrooroo', identified as Aboriginal all his life and has been acknowledged as the author of 'the first Aboriginal novel' as well as an authority on

Aboriginality' (Linning 1999). However, later in life he discovered that his father was of African-American descent. This problematises the government's definition because Mudrooroo cannot satisfy the descent criterion. To add to this dilemma, an Aboriginal activist made the following comment:

> When I first met Mudrooroo in 1973 his primary identity to me was that of a Buddhist. This did not affect my understanding of him as an Aboriginal person, and I understood then that 'Aboriginality' was a more fluent and diverse concept than many of my fellow Koori political activists would have conceded. To me Mudrooroo has lived the life of an Aboriginal person, displayed Aboriginal values, and will always be regarded by me as an Aboriginal. He will not have to reconstruct any aspect of his identity in his interaction with me (Foley 1997).

Although Mudrooroo cannot satisfy the descent criteria, he can satisfy the other two. That is, he can claim to be from an Aboriginal community, and can claim acceptance by an Aboriginal community. Regardless of biological descent, Mudrooroo has been socialised in an Aboriginal community, has internalised elements of Aboriginal culture and has the experience of an Aboriginal person; therefore, is culturally an Aboriginal person. In this sense, an Aboriginal identity is learnt from socialisation in an Aboriginal community. This form of learning an Aboriginal identity can have both positive and negative consequences for the individual:

> Aboriginal people will usually learn about their identity from significant others in their lives. Unfortunately, this also means that they may learn and internalise the negative beliefs associated with Aboriginality from the wider society through stereotypes and racism (Clarke 2000, p.152).

The life story of Gordon Matthews, who was adopted in the early 1950s, is a prime example of this. His construction of his Aboriginal identity was based on interactions with non-Aboriginal children at school. Due to his dark olive complexion, he experienced racial verbal abuse and, based on the limited knowledge of his parents, he assumed, believed and constructed an Aboriginal identity. He later uncovered that his father was Sri Lankan (Linning 1999). What is clear in the case of Matthews is that racial stigmas and stereotypes had become markers for an Aboriginal identity which was, and this is crucially important, imposed by others and later internalised and accepted. This shows that physical

characteristics (such as dark skin) have become markers for Aboriginal identity. It also shows how culture can influence the construction of identity, regardless of descent.

Descent is, however, a marker for Aboriginal identity; and although the 'social construction of race' led to the creation of fixed subordinate/power relationships, the idea that Aboriginal identity can be proven by a blood test was entertained by Aboriginal people from Tasmania. A group of about 30 people volunteered for DNA testing in the United States to prove their Aboriginality and ancestry for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) electoral role (ABC 2002). Simon Easteal, a human geneticist, concluded, however, that it was too difficult to prove a genetic link and attributed this to the limited knowledge of the genetic make-up of Indigenous Australians (ABC 2002). One study has, however, used genetic testing to evidence the ancient link between India and Australia (Kumar et al. 2009) exemplifying the complicated nature of the politics of Aboriginal identity.

Aboriginal identity politics was also a feature of a landmark court decision. In the 1998 Shaw v Wolfe case, Justice Merkel pointed out the complexity and multi-variant aspects of Aboriginal identity and made clear the role of socialisation:

> The development of identity as an Aboriginal person cannot be attributed to any one determinative factor. It is the interplay of social responses and interactions, on different levels and from different sources, both positive and negative, which create self-perception and identity (cited in Gardiner-Garden 2003, p.7).

What is clear from the above cases is that an Aboriginal identity has been constructed from socialisation in an Aboriginal community, which confirms that an Aboriginal identity is learnt from socialisation processes. This is important because society, culture and history constantly evolve, and thus the construction of Aboriginal identity becomes determined by the culture that one is exposed to.

Aboriginal people who live in urban communities are exposed to the culture of urban life, which is predominantly Western and are, therefore, more at risk of becoming acculturated to the Western lifestyle. As demonstrated on several occasions throughout this chapter, the

extent of contact with other cultures determines the extent of cultural influence.[3] Thus, Aboriginal people born and socialised in urban environments are at risk of becoming urban without being Aboriginal. A result of British cultural influence and urbanism is the organisation of identity through the English language. This also helps to explain the diverse nature of Aboriginal communities. So whilst some Aboriginal groups in remote communities practice customary law, traditions and traditional language, the reality and political experience of more urban Aboriginal communities, such as the Wiradjuri in mid New South Wales is "determined at the local council level" (Grant 2002, p.52).

The issue of mixed descent which has resulted in fair skin complexioned Aboriginal people has practical implications for urban Aboriginal people. In a study of mixed descent school-aged Aboriginal children, researchers found that 100% of the respondents previously had their Aboriginality questioned by non-Indigenous staff at least once per year of their schooling and of these 75% chose either not to identify as Aboriginal, or were hesitant to identify from fear of backlash and ridicule by teachers and students (Foley 2000). Findings from a Masters Research project revealed that several fair complexioned Nyungah people (Aboriginal people from Western Australian) have preferred to settle for a 'white identity' rather than embarking on the onerous task of frequently explaining their Nyungah identity (Boladeras 2002). For Aboriginal television presenter, Stan Grant, Aboriginal identity and cultures have been misinterpreted and misunderstood. Grant attributes this to their being measured against the Western interpretation of Aboriginal identity and culture, which, he says, are "fixed" concepts that are "identified by various rituals and ceremonies that people link to the past" (Grant 2002, p.50). These are primarily related to dreaming stories. However, for Grant, Aboriginal culture is also determined by stories of survival and resistance against white Australia. Thus, Aboriginal culture, to him, is a process of change, which sees the need for Aboriginal people to identify themselves, rejecting whiteness and finding a common struggle. On several occasions, Grant cited the notion of 'certainty' which he rejects in favour of the individual construction of identity: one that is fluid and unique to the individual, yet an authentic form of Aboriginality.

> It's not to say either of us is more or less Aboriginal, but we inhabit
> different worlds and we express ourselves differently. I can't deny that I

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[3] Earlier examples were of the influence of Macassan culture on the Yolngu and the Aboriginal influence on the development of the Australian accent.

> have mixed blood ... Live in Hong Kong … Live with a white partner …
> Aboriginality doesn't have to be static, doesn't have to exist at some time
> in the past and only relate to the very narrow definitions of blackness
> (Grant 2002, p.51).

What is clear from the above quote is that Grant's construction of Aboriginality does not conform to the broader commonly understood construction of Aboriginality, which can be contrasted with the 'romantic aborigine' construct. So, whilst individuals who claim an Aboriginal identity continue to experience, and as Grant has done here, express their disagreement toward certain constructions of Aboriginality, there continues a constant evolution of culture for each individual. Essentially, what Grant is doing is highlighting the essence of the constructivist paradigm, which links the notion of identity closer to the worldview of the individual, rather than viewing identity as a product of 'others'' evaluations, interpretations and assumptions.

Grant's perspective also shows that culture evolves. This is important because British colonisation has impacted on Aboriginal culture, to the extent that individuals of mixed descent who claim an Aboriginal identity reflect, sometimes quite prominently, elements of British culture, which then become markers for identity. One such marker is language. In Australia, 'Aboriginal English' has become widely spoken by Aboriginal people, particularly in New South Wales and, despite the fact that Aboriginal English is misunderstood and stigmatised as a dialect of Standard Australian English (SAE), it has the potential to "reflect, maintain and continually create Aboriginal culture and identity" (Jopson and Lewis, cited in Moores 1995, p.XVIII). In this sense 'urban' Aboriginal identity is informed by both 'traditional' Aboriginal culture and contemporary forms of Aboriginal and Australian culture. Thus, for Aboriginal people, authenticity is measured against the current available markers for Aboriginal identity which, over time have come to include former imposed colonial boundaries such as missions and reserves. Thus, an Aboriginal authenticity is measured against both old and new forms of Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginality was a feature of the Australian Bicentennial celebrations in 1988 and the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Olympics Games in Sydney in 2000. The Opening Ceremony displayed the unification of Aboriginal and white Australia through the bringing together of Nikki Webster (a 13 year old representing a young 'white' Australia) and Djakapurra Munyarryan (from the Bangarra Dance Theatre, representing Aboriginal

Australia: the oldest continuing culture in the world). This was seen as an attempt to display to the world Australia's sense of national identity:

> They "bridged" authenticist identity and voluntarist citizenship in an act of cordialized nation building in front of a TV audience estimated by the live TV commentators at 3.7 billion worldwide, more than half of the people then alive, including an actual majority of the Australian population (Hartley 2004, p.10).

Whilst this sense of a unified nation was portrayed to the world in the year 2000, the older ways of thinking had continued to inform ordinary citizens' perceptions of Aboriginal people. In their conversations with 'whitefella' citizens of Western Australian and Tasmania, Watt and Watt (2000) uncovered a common range of racist attitudes and beliefs about Aboriginal people. The authors expressed their surprise that such widely-held negative attitudes towards Aboriginal people still existed, stating "[i]t is hard to understand how human beings could think and feel about other human beings in this way, sometimes on the basis of no personal experience at all" (Watt and Watt 2000, p.6). This reinforces the friction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia.

The Aboriginal political movement of the 1960s and the landmark 1967 referendum invigorated the inclusion and integration of Aboriginal people in various aspects of society, giving them a more prominent voice in the broader context of Australian society. Until relatively recently, authors of Aboriginal descent did not appear in Western writing. However, the first fictional text published by an Aboriginal author was David Unaipon's *Native Legends* in 1929 (Weeden 1990). Unaipon is a significant figure, not only in Aboriginal histories but also in the broader Australian historical context, as evidenced by his appearance on the current Australian fifty dollar note and the aptly named David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education & Research and the Unaipon School located at the University of South Australia. Mary-Anne Gale's doctoral thesis, *Poor Bugger White Fella Got No Dreaming,* pays special attention to David Unaipon's works. Although Unaipon's *'Native Legends'* was the first published Aboriginal text, it was not till the 1960s that Aboriginal people began to publish regularly. Kath Walker's *We are Going* (1964), Colin Johnson's *Wildcat Falling* (1965) and Kevin Gilbert's *The Cherry Pickers* (1968) are among the first works written by Aboriginal people (Weeden 1990). Gilbert wrote *The Cherry Pickers* while incarcerated and it was smuggled out of prison on toilet paper (Goetzfridt 1995). Since the late 1960s, Aboriginal people have appeared frequently

in Western writing, making a contribution to the current body of knowledge. Many Aboriginal scholars in Australia have dedicated their work to the Aboriginal cause. Throughout the course of my PhD candidature I have found that many PhD research studies conducted by Aboriginal candidates are conducted within Aboriginal communities. This is probably because the worldview of the candidate researcher reflects the typical Aboriginal worldview which advocates for Aboriginal equality in Australian society. I describe several post graduate studies conducted within Aboriginal communities.

A PhD study titled *Urban Indigenous Place in Brisbane: Change and Persistence* adopts a case study method in the Inala Indigenous community in Brisbane's outer South West. The aim of the research is to establish the continuation of traditions in place maintenance and attachment, as well as newly emerging cultural activities and places with contemporary associations and attachments (Greenop 2009). Chelsea Bond conducted a PhD study entitled *When you're black, they look at you harder: Narrating Aboriginality within Public Health* (Bond 2007). The aim of her research was to enable an urban Aboriginal community to articulate their own narratives of Aboriginality beyond those contained within the medical narrative. She found that the provision of the opportunity to articulate one's identity narrative was an empowering action which enabled 'new truths' of Aboriginality to emerge (Bond 2007). Another PhD study focused on narratives of success amongst Indigenous students enrolled at the University of Queensland. The researcher took a broader view of how intersections, layers and parallels are negotiated by Indigenous students within and between multitudes of places in the blurring of life in the 'two-worlds' construct of Black and White (Stewart 2008). These studies have drawn on elements of narrative theory.

This chapter has described the colonial history of Australia which is a useful starting point for understanding Aboriginal identity construction. The notion that Aboriginal people were savages, uncivilised, and untamable was popular in the 18th and 19th century. This is based on the concept of race and has played a role in the broader perception of Aboriginal peoples and communities. These are racist stereotypes which have been used as 'evidence' to justify laws enacted to control the movement of Aboriginal people. This history, embedded in the 'academic mindset of skull measuring' has, in general, been refuted by Indigenous peoples. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generation is significant to Aboriginal people in Australia because it signified a government commitment to re-write Australian history; a version of history that the previous Howard administration would not do. Prime Minister Rudd also made it clear that he does not see a

distinction between different versions of history where he stated that "this is not, as some would argue, a black-armband view of history; it is just the truth: the cold, confronting, uncomfortable truth—facing it, dealing with it, moving on from it" (Rudd 2008).

The identity of Aboriginal people today cannot be separated from their history, which is one of dispossession, racism and oppression. In this sense, 'the other' seems fundamental to any construct of Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal history and Aboriginal identity have been forged both by pre-invasion history and importantly post invasion contact. Thus it is postulated that Australian Aboriginal identity is a function of non-Aboriginal identity – of, in essence, 'the other'. It is of note that, despite the culture of negativity, "Aboriginal people have retained a strong identification with their Aboriginality, in light of powerful political and social pressures not to do so" (Gilbert 1995, p.147). Certainly, cultures and identities change over time, and, despite the fact that missions and reserves were designed for the purpose of segregating Aboriginal people from the broader society, these once imposed colonial boundaries have become sources of belonging with which many Aboriginal people now proudly identify (Peters-Little 1999).

2.6: Challenges for Aboriginal identity

The Western perspective of Aboriginal people has moved more towards equality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians – but only very slowly. In some instances there seems no change at all except for that in terminology. This presents new challenges for Aboriginal identity:

> Whilst it is no longer the case that Aboriginal people are being bred white, it is nonetheless the case that in taking Aboriginality and submerging it into the general plurality of the multicultural whole one is not breeding out, but one is acculturating out Aboriginality, one's assimilating it into a new plural mix - it's no longer a dominant white Australia to which Aboriginality is being assimilated - it's now a dominant multicultural Australia within which the specificity of Aboriginal cultures and Aboriginality in general is also being lost. Aborigines in other words run the risk or are threatened in the context of multiculturalism with becoming just another tile in the multicultural mosaic (Wolfe cited in Sarumpaet 2008, p.7).

This is perhaps more important to urban Aboriginal communities, as they are more exposed to urban lifestyle which essentially reflects more the way of living in Western culture. In this sense, urban Aboriginal communities are more at risk to the threat of loss of Aboriginal identity by being submerged into multicultural Australian society.

The struggle for identity continues to be marred by the history of place, whereby Aboriginal people have been described as hostages to historical and contemporary images created by non-Aboriginal Australians (Bourke 1994, p.1). In addition, there has been a reinvigoration of racism towards Aboriginal people with one academic suggesting there exists a discourse of Indigenous barbarism and primitivism which continues to underpin the current assimilationist policies of government (Cunneen 2008). In the national report of the 'Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody', Commissioner Elliot Johnston described how history continues to impact on the perception of Aboriginal people: "Every step of the way is based upon an assumption of superiority and every new step is a further entrenchment of that assumption" (Johnston 1991, p.9). Similarly, it has been argued that a new form of postcolonial racism is emerging: there is a return

> under a new logic, of non-Aboriginal racism towards Aborigines. This is a racism which is not, as was colonial racism, built around the idea that Aborigines are 'lesser', 'other', 'uncivilised', but around a view that Aborigines, despite their economical and political marginalisation now have too much (too many special government benefits, too much special legislation, too much land). This is postcolonial racism, a racism which, uncannily arises in response to the various political efforts which have been made to compensate for the injustices of our colonial past (Anderson and Jacobs 1997, pp.19-20).

The fight for land and rights to that land is a challenge traced back to perceptions of land. In traditional times Aboriginal people saw themselves as co-existing with the land whilst the British perception of land (and more generally the Western perception of land) was a commodity. Captain Cook's *terra nullius* claim is a significant historical event in this context, because it is underpinned by social evolutionary theory from which the 'primitive aborigine' construct was produced and still has ramifications for current claims to land:

> [a]n inherent belief in the absolute moral, technical and cultural superiority of European society … justifies land dispossession based on the view that Aborigines never 'developed' the land, reflecting a

nineteenth-century social evolutionist framework wherein human societies exhibit 'development' and 'progress' (Anderson cited in Gilbert 1995, p.148).

In this sense, Western culture continues to impact on Aboriginal people in Australia. On the one hand, there has been a positive step towards achieving equality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Australia, yet, on the other hand, the problem does not seem to be moving at all. Rather newer forms of marginalisation are manifesting.

Various practices associated with colonisation, such as the removal of Indigenous peoples from their land and cultures are directly linked to their current health status (Cunningham and Stanley 2003), and has been linked to the 'social determinants of health'. In response to the gross health inequality across the world, the World Health Organisation has launched a commission on the social determinants of health (Marmot 2005):

> The Commission takes a holistic view of social determinants of health. The poor health of the poor, the social gradient in health within countries, and the marked health inequities between countries are caused by the unequal distribution of power, income, goods, and services, globally and nationally, the consequent unfairness in the immediate, visible circumstances of people's lives – their access to health care, schools, and education, their conditions of work and leisure, their homes, communities, towns, or cities – and their chances of leading a flourishing life. This unequal distribution of health-damaging experiences is not in any sense a 'natural' phenomenon but is the result of a toxic combination of poor social policies and programmes, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics. Together, the structural determinants and conditions of daily life constitute the social determinants of health and are responsible for a major part of health inequities between and within countries (CSDH 2008, p.1).

The Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) proactively seeks to achieve health equality between and within countries. What is crucial here is that the social determinants of health are linked to the historical marginalisation and disadvantage of Aboriginal people which has invigorated a political movement for equality. In terms of socio-economic and health status (morbidity and mortality, education, incarceration rates home ownership rates), Aboriginal people are not faring as well as their non-Indigenous

counterparts. In particular, there is a 20 year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Australia (Marmot 2005). In the 2005 Social Justice Report, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, recommended "that the governments of Australia commit to achieving equality of health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people within 25 years (ATSISJC 2005, no page number).

The Australian government recognised this gap, and a statement of intent was signed between the Australian Government and Indigenous representatives from a number of Indigenous bodies (ATSISJ 2008). It has been suggested, however, that gross inequality stems from institutionalised racism where the authors have called for a more compassionate society, especially towards Aboriginal peoples and communities (Henry, Houston, and Mooney 2004; Mooney 2003). Such racism is not only embedded in the health system, but also in other areas of government responsibility. With regard to the justice system, the Australian public has demanded answers for the unusually high rates of Aboriginal deaths in custody that occurred from 1st January 1980 up till 1987:

> The Royal Commission was established in October 1987 in response to a growing public concern that deaths in custody of Aboriginal people were too common and public explanations were too evasive to discount the possibility that foul play was a factor in many of them … it would have been assumed by so many Aboriginal people that many, if not most, of the deaths would have been murder committed if not on behalf of the State at least by officers of the state (Johnston 1991, p.1).

Through an analysis of various documents (including educational, community welfare, police, medical and parole), Commissioner Elliot Johnson, QC was able to examine the lives of the 99 Aboriginal people that had died in custody. In his report, the Commissioner noted that "all too often the files disclose not merely the recorded life history of the Aboriginal person but also the prejudice, ignorance and paternalism of those making the record" (Johnston 1991, pp.4-5). Institutional racism, although embedded in the letter of the law, is also perpetuated by the attitudes of those working within various departments. It has been suggested that "nothing will prevent Aboriginal deaths in custody until racism, entrenched in the practice of, and the letter of the law, is subdued to the point of non-existence" (West, cited in Gilbert 1995, p.147).

The call for equality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australian society, through the process of the elimination of racism, is made that much harder when the structures of 'race' continue to be used in academia - especially by Indigenous academics: Yin Paradies states that he identifies "racially as an Aboriginal-Anglo-Asian Australian" (Paradies 2006, p.357), and Aboriginal historian Gordon Briscoe utilises the term 'race' in a social constructionist context, stating that "indigenous people can be seen as patients as well as colonised races" (Briscoe 2003, p.xx). In addition, the term 'race' is still used in current Australian government policy.

2.7: Where now?

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is the prime Australian government health research body. It has identified the need to develop a cohesive and coordinated approach to address the gross disparities between the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the health of the broader Australian population. The first major step taken by the NHMRC was to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Agenda Working Group (RAWG). This body agreed to develop a 'Road Map' "which would identify and codify agreed national research priorities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health" (NHMRC 2003a, p.v). They conducted a series of workshops which sought to identify Priority Areas and draft research questions. One Priority Area was to focus on previously under-researched Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and communities. They state that "there is a paucity of information on the needs of urban communities" (NHMRC 2003a, p.12). They proposed a research question for this need: "what are the coping strategies in an urban Aboriginal identity and urban Torres Strait Islander identity?" (NHMRC 2003a, p.13). While that question is only addressed at arm's length in the thesis, it has triggered the more fundamental question that the thesis does seek to answer: *How do urban Aboriginal people make and remake their identity?* That issue can be seen to take its cue from the work of Bond (2008). She identified the need for a more contextualised understanding and application of a concept of identity (within public health practices generally) and a more rigorous debate and reflection upon the use of ethnic, racial and cultural identity (concepts) (again particularly within the Australian public health research literature). She also argued for the need to engage with, and understand, Aboriginality in a way that complements and supports Indigenous constructions of identity, health and well-being. This thesis seeks to investigate,

and identify, the urban Aboriginal construction of identity, and the extent to which 'the other' has forged Aboriginal identity in an urban population.

My literature review has provided a brief colonial history of the nation state of Australia. This is important because history, society and culture are permeable concepts that constantly change and are necessary elements of identity construction processes. The colonial history of Australia, which resulted in the negative historical treatment of Aboriginal people, was not unique to the original inhabitants of Australia, but rather is a common practice that other Indigenous people around the world have experienced. This practice invigorated a political movement of Indigenous activism across many countries throughout the world calling for an Indigenist research paradigm.

2.8: Indigenist research paradigm

In this chapter, I have documented the historical context for this study of urban Aboriginal identity in Australia. Clearly, the history of negative treatment of Aboriginal people, which has resulted in marginalisation and disadvantage, is a clear feature of this analysis. In response to this, an Indigenist research paradigm has been founded on the principles of cultural respect and cultural safety (Rigney 2006). It articulates its assumptions, theory, methodology and ethics as embedded in Aboriginal ontology, epistemology and axiology (Martin 2008). These are underpinned by relatedness. This suggestion of an Indigenist research paradigm is specifically located within, and targeted at, research on Australian Indigenous communities. It is, however, influenced by the growing global phenomenon of 'International Indigenism' (Niezen 2002).

A search of the term Indigenous prior to the 1980s might only have revealed a scattering of botanical works on Indigenous plants (Neizen 2002), with very few journals, magazines and newspapers using the term in the context of human society. However, Indigenism is a growing form of political activism and has become a source for a collective Indigenous identity which has recently emerged. For example, Indigenous peoples have been defined in three basic ways: legally/analytically (the "other" definition), practically/strategically (the self-definition), and collectively (the global in-group definition). This has invigorated the growth of a form of political activism, and is "not only a legal category and an analytical concept but also an expression of identity, a badge worn with pride" (Niezen 2002, p.3). Furthermore the term 'Indigenous peoples' has been used in various Indigenous world conference proceedings as "both a fragile legal concept and the indefinite,

unachievable sum of the historical and personal" experiences with colonisation and oppression (Niezen 2002, p.4).

The term Indigenism has been used in an international context to describe "the international movement that aspires to promote and protect the rights of the world's first people" (Niezen 2002, p.4). However it has a quite different meaning in a more localised Australian context, in which it refers to:

> A distinct Indigenous Australian academic body of knowledge that seeks
> to disrupt the socially constructed identity of the 'archetypal Aborigine',
> as a controlled and oppressed being, that informed the emergence of a
> distinct yet diverse Indigenist Research epistemological and ontological
> agenda (Rigney 2006, p.37).

The function of Indigenism is not simply to reject Western culture but, rather, to build a "robust Indigenist intelligentsia for the revision of ethics, meta-theories, research epistemes, and methodologies that move beyond dichotomies such as object/subject, rational/irrational and white/black" (Rigney 2006, p.42). Thus the Indigenist research paradigm has emerged in response to the construct of the 'primitive aborigine' which has been directly linked to the negative historical treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia. However, colonial history has not only affected Indigenous people in Australia, but has affected Indigenous people worldwide:

> Communities of mixed race peoples have been the legacy of colonialism,
> and they have formed quite differently in different locations. The Cape
> Coloured community of South Africa, the Metis of Canada, the Anglo-
> Indians of India, the Mestiza of Mexico, the Hapa of Hawaii, all have
> quite different histories and cultures. Nevertheless, in some sense they
> were all 'called' into being by European racial terminologies and
> European settlement, and they all suffered similar stereotypes (Perkins
> 2005, p.109).

Perkins' quote succinctly describes the fluidity of the concepts history, culture and society yet, at the same time, demonstrates a typical Indigenous experience of colonisation and signifies the nature of an Indigenous collective. Importantly, the fluidity of the concepts history, culture and society has played a crucial role in the development of the Indigenist

research paradigm. Although culture, history and society are unique to place, the general effect of colonisation has had a similar impact on the original inhabitants:

> Indigenous peoples, like some ethnic groups, derive much of their identity from histories of state-sponsored genocide, forced settlement, relocation, political marginalization, and various formal attempts at cultural destruction … The collective suffering that transposes onto identity is usually multigenerational. It can be separated by the space of decades, perhaps even centuries, from the immediate horrors of dispossession and death, kept alive by stories or written histories, to be recalled later, like the rekindling of smouldering ashes (Niezen 2002, pp.13-14).

These various versions of history of place inextricably bind the expression of Indigenous identity to those colonial and historical processes (Rolls 2001). The historical experience of colonisation has invigorated a radical rethink of the nature of research into Indigenous communities. In the context of research conducted on Aboriginal communities in Australia the NHMRC has devised a set of guidelines (NHMRC 2003b). They recognise that

> from the earliest periods of colonisation, ill-formed perceptions and assumptions about the values and ways of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and social organisation have emerged from the comparison of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world to the spiritual, social, political and economic perspectives of European colonisers" (NHMRC 2003b, p.1)

In response to this negative history, the NHMRC proposes six key themes to underpin research processes in Aboriginal communities: reciprocity, respect, equality, survival and protection, and responsibility (which are encompassed) by spirit and integrity (see figure 1) Many disciplines are engaged in what is now called 'Indigenist Research' (Rigney and Worby 2005). This model is appropriate for researchers conducting research into/about/with Indigenous communities in Australia by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. The NHMRC guidelines were designed to ensure that culturally inappropriate research practice on Indigenous communities done in the past is not repeated.

Figure 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples values relevant to health research ethics:
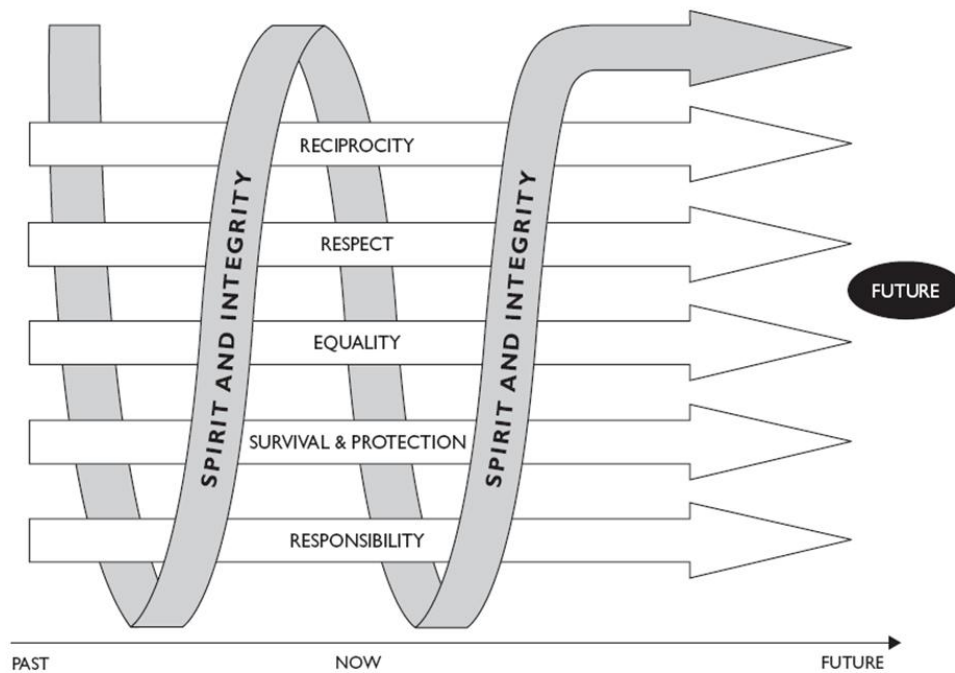
(Source NHMRC 2003b, p.9)

Aboriginal people are the most researched group of people on earth (Martin 2003) and have been subjected to, and subjects of research studies conducted within a broad range of disciplines from both the natural sciences (biology, geology, botany) and social sciences (anthropology, archaeology, education, psychology). Martin argues that such research has primarily been for the purposes of validating Western assumptions about the antiquity and humanity of Aboriginal peoples (Martin 2003). This form of research has "generated mistrust, animosity and resistance from many Aboriginal people" (Martin 2003, p.203) which has called for an Indigenist research paradigm that must be culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of Indigenous communities. Reciprocity, mutual obligation, involvement of the Aboriginal community in all aspects of the research process, and the identification of the proposed benefits of the research to the Aboriginal community under study must be clearly stated. These guidelines are useful for designing, developing and maintaining an appropriate research methodology for studies in Aboriginal communities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

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The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and how the research was carried out. I firstly identify the paradigm in which this research is located and then describe the epistemological foundation of the study, the theoretical framework, the methodology and the methods. In the second part of this chapter, I describe the process of the conduct of the research and then make some concluding comments on the appropriateness of this research design to the Indigenous community that this research was conducted. I show how this research incorporates elements of an Indigenist research paradigm.

3.1: Paradigm

Paradigms may be viewed as basic belief systems that deal with ultimates or first principles which influence worldviews: they are based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Guba and Lincoln 1994, p.107). An important point needs to be made here that understandings of the notion of 'the worldview' range from the personal to the collective. Worldviews may vary, for example, from the local environment (such as a town) to a broader location (such the country), as well as to subsets of the population that claim belonging to certain groups including cultural, ethnic or religious groups. For the purposes of this thesis, a worldview is understood to consist of mental and spiritual artefacts (Fletcher, cited in Berg 2002) and is passed on from generation to generation in a process of cultural reproduction.

In relation to the research paradigm, Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe a logical (if not necessary) primacy which answers three questions: 1) the ontological question: 'what is there to be known about nature?'; 2) the epistemological question: 'what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known?'; and 3) the methodological question: 'how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?'. Crucially, the answer to the methodological question is constrained by the answer to the epistemological question, which in turn is constrained by the answer to the ontological question (Guba and Lincoln 1994), which suggests that any research is constrained by the paradigm in which the study is located. The many different schools of

thought within social theory can be placed on a paradigm continuum (Alsted 2001) ranging from essentialism to radical constructivism:

Figure 2: Paradigm continuum:

Independent reality   **Reality dependent on us**

| Essentialism | Positivism | Structuralism | Critical Realism | Social Constructivism | Radical Constructivism |
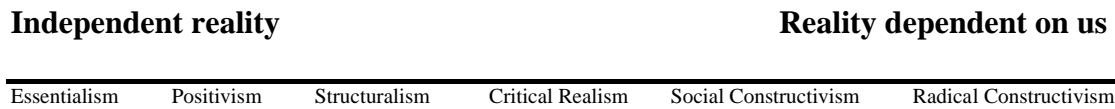
This research is set within a social constructivist paradigm which suggests an appropriate trajectory for addressing the topic of urban Aboriginal identity. Any research begins with a general area of concern (Crotty 1998) and here that is the marginalisation of Aboriginal people in an Australian colonial context which has continued to impact on urban Aboriginal people's construction of *self*. Understanding the processes of Aboriginal identity construction and re-construction can provide a clearer understanding of the worldviews of Aboriginal people which underpins their sense-making processes. Progressing from this, I have devised a research program that consists of four necessary elements: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods (Crotty 1998). These necessary elements are generic and applicable to studies that adopt either qualitative or quantitative approaches, or a combination of the two. Figure 3 shows my own framework in relation to this structure:

Figure 3: Research framework:

Crotty's structure	**This study: Aboriginal Identity**
Epistemology	Constructionism
➡ Theoretical Perspective	➡ Symbolic Interactionism narrative theory
➡ Methodology	➡ Qualitative approach
➡ Methods	➡ In-depth interview thematic analysis narrative analysis
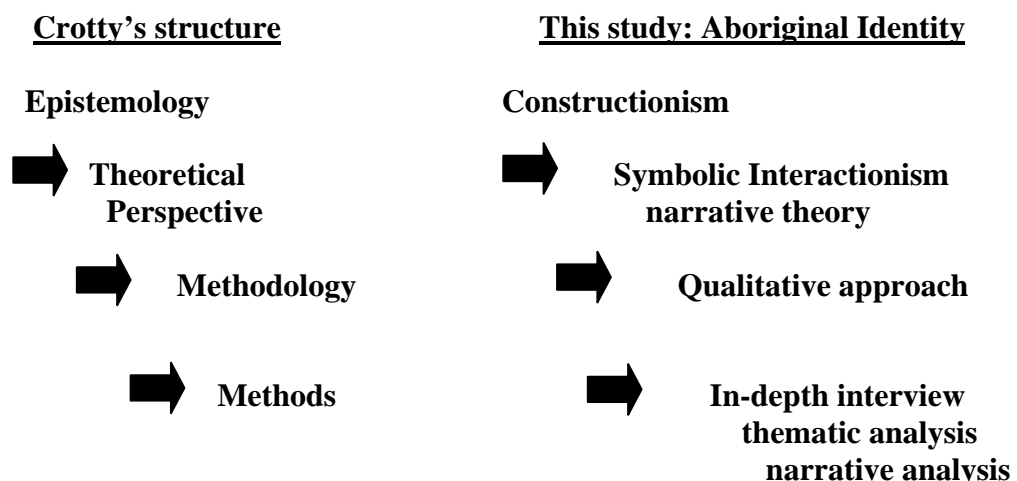
(Adapted from Crotty 1998, p.5)

Over the course of this chapter, I focus on each element; however, I refer more specifically to qualitative studies and studies within the social sciences. I begin with an exploration of

the concept of epistemology, and describe how the epistemological foundation of this thesis evolved from two key events of personal experience: a series of identity questioning episodes experienced in my teen years; and the theoretical influences within sociological thought to which I was exposed during my study for this degree. I then describe the theoretical perspective, which is grounded in symbolic interactionist theory showing how the philosophical insights of George Herbert Mead (Mead 1934) have contributed to the concept of narrative identity which, when utilised in a research design, especially one of a qualitative nature, gives agency to the participants. I then set out the data collection method and multi-method qualitative analysis tool, paying particular attention to the interaction within which identity is co-constructed between Aboriginal researcher and Aboriginal participant. This data analysis tool consisted of a thematic analysis and then a twofold narrative analysis comprising the 'narrative analysis' model (Labov and Waletzky 1967) and the 'prime narrative' model (Mathieson and Barrie 1998). I provide a brief discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each before showing how each analysis tool, when used in conjunction with the other, provides an appropriate analytical framework for a study of urban Aboriginal identity construction.

3.2: Epistemology

> Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. It attempts to provide answers to the question, 'How, and what, can we know?' (Willig 2001, p.2).

If epistemology represents 'ways of knowing' (Denzin 2002), and this study is located within a social constructivist paradigm, then for the purpose of this research, 'knowing' about the topic of 'Aboriginal identity' can be deduced by understanding the 'worldview' of participants who claim an Aboriginal identity. Epistemology is also used in the context of the personal, as it involves conceptions of who the human being is (ontology) which is bound in morals and ethics (Christian, cited in Denzin 2002). In this sense, it is likened to the notion of 'worldview', and thus, the epistemological orientation of the researcher must influence the choice of methodology. Earlier, I identified the general area of concern (the marginalisation of Aboriginal people in an Australian colonial context, and the impact this has on Aboriginal people's construction of positive versions of self); I now describe how my interest in urban Aboriginal identity construction is reflected in the methodology of this study by firstly describing how I became intrigued about identity during my teen years and then move to how this provided the foundation for postgraduate study.

In the latter stages of my secondary schooling I became intrigued about the Aboriginal identity question, and, in particular, the processes of identity construction and identity formation. At that time, in what I considered was some reasonable thinking, I devised two premises which were the result of personal experience as an Aboriginal person living a two-world construct: an Aboriginal world and a white world. I constantly theorised about who I was. This self reflection on identity included identity questioning episodes such as 'Who am I?', 'Am I really an Aboriginal person?', 'I eat MacDonald's, I drive a car, I wear clothes like other Australian citizens, so am I really Aboriginal?' These identity questioning episodes were quite central to the formulation of the two premises that guided my thinking about self during my latter teenage years. The premises are:

> *Nothing can exist without my memory;* and
>
> *The world is but a creation in one's memory.*

These premises represented a core component of who I was for the greater part of my adult life up to the age of 29, when I enrolled in the PhD. With the help of my mentor, Professor Gavin Mooney, I sought to embed these premises in the theoretical perspective of a PhD proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney and also to the then College of Health Sciences, the University of Sydney, seeking an Indigenous research scholarship. As I progressed through the PhD, however, these premises disappeared from the proposal. Although the idea of Aboriginal identity remained, the orientation changed from 'identity and autonomy', to 'identity, sobriety and self-healing', to 'identity and mental health' and finally to the Aboriginal construction of Aboriginal identity utilising an interactionist approach and multi-method qualitative analysis. The interactionist approach was central throughout the concluding 18 months, but the actual 'aha' moment did not occur until I researched the development of 'Symbolic Interactionism' which I traced back to James, Cooley and Mead (Faberman 1985). It was only at that time that I finally understood the role of the 'I' and 'me' components of the self in Mead's 'philosophy of the act'.

The personal identity questioning episodes during my teen years and younger adult life are representative of a constructivist worldview that has been re-shaped during the thesis. Taking the position that identities are fluid concepts which change over time, my immersion in academic culture has changed my worldview. Thus, I consider that the radical constructivist paradigm remains valid, but I am acutely aware of the negative consequences of utilising this paradigm in an academic context. In terms of personal

epistemology, I now locate myself within the social constructivist paradigm on the social theory continuum (Alstead 2001) rather than the radical constructivist paradigm which was so evident in the premises devised in earlier life.

3.3: Theoretical perspective

The theoretical perspective of this study draws on insights from Symbolic Interactionism, narrative theory and an Indigenist research paradigm. I show how the philosophical insights offered by George Herbert Mead have influenced the 'narrative identity' thesis (Battersby 2006; Eakin 2006; Strawson 2004). These elements of the theoretical perspective are suitable for the suggested guidelines of an Indigenist research paradigm which provides an appropriate theoretical framework for this study.

3.3.1: Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a branch of sociology. Sociology has been defined as "the study of human social life, groups and society" (Giddens 1989, p.8), which emerged as a discipline in the 18th century during the industrial revolution and through the pioneering work of French writers Comte and Durkheim, and German philosophers Marx and Weber. During this time, the term 'social physics' was used to describe these various kinds of studies however, in an effort to distinguish his views from other writers of the time, Auguste Comte coined the term 'sociology' (Giddens 1989). This new discipline offered a range of theoretical frameworks for understanding the worldviews of cultures, ranging from microsociology (interaction between individuals) to macrosociology (global social processes). These different forms of sociology were influenced by different pioneers. For example, Marx and Weber focused on power structures which remain key influences of macrosociology. Mead and Blumer focused on the interaction between individuals which remain key influences of microsociology. Symbolic Interactionism is the chosen theoretical base for this study. I now provide a brief history that details the contribution George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer made to the development of Symbolic Interactionism.

Mead, Blumer and Symbolic Interactionism

While philosopher George Herbert Mead did not coin the term *Symbolic Interactionism,* his philosophical insights certainly contributed to this branch of sociology, which

developed over the course of four stages: 'normal', 'network', 'cluster' and 'speciality' (Mullins and Mullins 1973). Mead was considered the intellectual leader of the 'normal' stage, which spans the period from the turn of the 20th century until his death in 1931. He was a lecturer at the University of Chicago's philosophy department where he taught for nearly 40 years.

The 'normal' stage of Symbolic Interactionism ended with Mead's death in 1931. Although the key text of the sub-discipline *Mind, Self and Society* was written by his students and published three years after his death, Mead was attributed authorship. This is where Herbert Blumer succeeded Mead as intellectual leader as "organizational chief of Symbolic Interactionism" (Mullins and Mullins 1973, p.393) and remained influential until 1945. The two part series titled *Symbolic Interactionism* (Plummer 1991a; Plummer 1991b) presents papers from a variety of sources (including journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters) which provide a detailed description, and discussion of, the origins of symbolic thought. Although, to a large extent, they are acknowledgments of Mead's intellectual contribution to Symbolic Interactionism, there are also criticisms.

Mead has been described as the pioneer of symbolic thought (Blumer 1991). However, others have suggested that key thinkers such as Josiah Royce (one of Mead's teachers) and Chauncey Wright deserve acknowledgement (Lincourt and Hare 1991). The Scottish moralists established 150 years prior to Mead's contribution have been described as symbolic thinkers (Schott 1976) and key figures such as Adam Smith have also been considered pioneers of symbolic thought. Faberman (1985) has traced the intellectual development of symbolic thought through an analysis of the contributions of William James, Charles. H. Cooley and George Herbert Mead. He argues that James presented key ideas related to symbolic thought, namely the 'I' and the 'Me' variants of the human self, to which Cooley reacted and on the basis of which Mead theorised the 'philosophy of the act' providing a transformative breakthrough in the discipline.

James's formulation of (the human) 'self' consists of two variants he calls the 'I' and the 'Me'. The 'I' is the self as 'knower' and has been likened to Freud's *Id* or *Ego* (Miller 1873). The 'Me' is the self as 'known'. It consists of three elements or identifiable aspects: the 'material me', the 'social me' and the 'spiritual me'. The 'material me' includes all that an individual is or can acquire or appropriate, including material possessions; the 'social me' is the acknowledgement bestowed by others within their social groups (since there are many social groups, there are many social 'me's'); and the 'spiritual me' is the innermost

self of selves, occasioning the most intense emotions (Faberman 1985). James's analysis of the 'me' has been described as insightful. However, his reduction of the 'I' element of the self to a 'passing thought' has been criticised as lacking the provision of a "convincing conceptual base for the potential of personal continuity and identity" (Faberman 1985, p.59). Cooley had reservations about James's view especially in regard to his neglect of the relationship between the self and the social whole. Cooley insisted that there can be no 'I' without a corresponding sense of 'you': a process learnt throughout the early stages of child development (Faberman 1985). Thus, his focus was more on the mentalisms of child development.

These components of the self (the 'I' and the 'Me') were further developed by Mead, both in reaction to James' individualisms and Cooley's mentalisms. Mead later proposed that the 'act' itself was the 'unit of existence', not the individual. This consisted of four stages: *impulse*, *perception*, *manipulation* and *consummation*.   *Impulse* refers to a tendency built into the human organism (for example, hunger); *perception* refers to the act of sensing outside stimuli (it is shaped by the physiological makeup, for example a colour is only deemed a colour by the eye's ability to receive colours, which is transmitted to the brain for perception); *manipulation* is the organism's choice to move towards or away from the object; and (if the organism moves towards the object) *consummation* occurs on examination of the object (Mead 1934). This 'philosophy of the act' promotes humans from *doers* to *thinkers* and distinguishes 'man' from animal. Thus, the "mind connects to the empirical world via the behavioral act" (Faberman 1985, p.67). Thus, the mind is viewed as a process rather than a biological organism (Miller 1973).

Attitudes further influence the behavioural act. They are incipient acts which "influence what subsequently will become overt behaviour" (Faberman 1985, p.67). For Mead, attitudes are the central bridge between the inner and outer world and are considered phases which occur throughout the duration of the act. The "inner world which comes into being by virtue of the fact that the individual engages in a process of making indications to himself, is a world of ongoing and hence developing self interaction" (Blumer 1991, p.149). This inner self interaction occurs before the outer behaviour, in a process of *reflexivity*. This occurs when humans anticipate the consequences of their actions and amend their behaviour according to the perceived outcome of the consequence. Mead's development of the self "has no significance unless it can turn back upon itself as an object and thereby distinguish itself in a plurality of other selves" (McKinney 1955, p.115). This emphasises the crucial role of the interactions between the 'I' and 'Me' components of the self.

Mead adopted and developed the 'Me" and 'I' components of the human 'self' from James's and Cooley's earlier conceptions. Through his *philosophy of the act* he has intuitively infused the individual and the social, reorienting the concept of 'self' from the psychical entity to a process with origins in the social. Thus, selves are products of interaction, not the opposite. McKinney describes this process:

> Instead of beginning with an individual mind and working outward to a formation of society, Mead starts with a social process and works inward to the individual through importation of the process of communication by means of the gesture, particularly the vocal gesture. Mind is irreducibly social in that it is based upon the social act which inevitably involves others. By regarding the social process of experience in a rudimentary form as prior to the emergence of mind, it becomes possible to explain the origin of the mind in terms of interaction (McKinney 1955, p.116).

It was Blumer who coined the term *Symbolic Interactionism* and who described two forms of interaction: the 'conversation of gestures' (also known as 'non-Symbolic Interaction') and the 'use of significant symbols or significant gestures' (also known as 'Symbolic Interaction'). A gesture is a portion of an ongoing *act* that is perceived by a responding organism. The 'conversation of gestures' (non-Symbolic Interaction) involves reaction to a gesture without exercising reflexivity, thus not anticipating the outcome of their response. *Symbolic interaction* or *interaction using significant gestures* has a fundamentally different character:

> The gesture is now picked out by the responding organism and given a meaning, with the response being based on that meaning … In symbolic interaction the gesture of the other person is not responded to immediately and directly but is first picked out for interpretation before response is made to it (Blumer 1991, p.152).

The evolution of Symbolic Interactionism has not been a steady process. The 1930s are considered to be the establishment period. It built momentum which later saw a larger scale sociological movement in the 1940s and 1950s. Symbolic Interactionism declined from the 1960s through to the late 1970s and re-emerged in the 1980s (Stryker 1986). The reinvigoration of Symbolic Interactionism at this time is largely attributed to the establishment of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI) in the mid 1970s. It was established "as a collective response to the American Sociological Association's

marginalisation of interactionist research and theory" (Symbolic Interactionism 2007). The first issue of its journal *Symbolic Interaction* appeared in the autumn of 1977.

The sociological analysis of personal stories is becoming more sophisticated (Gubrium and Holstein 1998), especially with the emergence of different forms of sociology. One form, Symbolic Interactionism, has influenced many studies across a range of disciplines in the social sciences, and has been particularly useful in studies of identity. In recent times, Symbolic Interactionism has become the focus of the link between narrative and identity.

3.3.2: Narrative identity

> Human beings think, perceive, imagine and make moral choices according to narrative structures (Sarbin, cited in Mishler, 1995, p.108).

I now introduce the narrative identity thesis which is influenced by Mead's philosophical insights. Mead's *philosophy of the act* indicated the occurrence of a *reflexivity* mechanism in human cognitive function when humans interact with each other. Thus, the single unit for Mead was the 'act'. Although Mead mentioned the key role of language in human identity construction, the ideas have been further developed with attention to the role of narrative and, in particular, to that of oral narratives which "have come to be seen as a form of discourse not inferior to that characteristic of a literary tradition but rather as embodying a distinct form of language and thought" (Chafe 1990, p.100).

Thus the single unit for meaning making and subsequently, identity construction is reduced to cognitive functions which occur in story form. As Brockmeier and Carbaugh point out, "the self in time can only exist as a narrative construction. Without the narrative fabric, it seems difficult to even think of human temporality and historicity at all" (2001, p.15). In other words, the argument is that human identity construction is inexplicably tied to the *narrative* that individuals author about themselves. This becomes not only a prominent resource, but a necessary resource that individuals draw from to construct identities. Thus, narrative is the only means of 'telling' identity. Nietzsche has referred to this as the 'prison house of language' (Riessman 1993). Mead's earlier contribution to Symbolic Interactionism has influenced the 'theorisation' of *narrative identity,* which combines Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of narrative identity with George Herbert Mead's conception of the temporal and intersubjective nature of the self (Ezzy 1998). The notion of narrative identity has become a widely accepted view of how we construe our lives. It "insists that

our identity is a function of the story that we construct about ourselves" (Battersby 2006, p.27).

The relationship between narrative, self, identity and the story of personal experience is a universal feature of human identity construction. Stories of personal experience "provide one widely available means by which people create, interpret, and publically project cultural constituted images of self in face-to-face interaction (Miller, Potts, Fung, Hoogstra, and Mintz 1990, p.292). Interest in narrative theory and method in the social sciences has increased rapidly in recent times, prompting the claim of a paradigm shift. Many terms have been used to describe this paradigm shift: the 'biographical turn' (Chamberlayne, Bornat, and Wengraf 2000), the 'narrative turn' (Riessman 1993), the 'narrative revolution' (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach et al. 1998), 'biographical work' and the 'new ethnography' (Gubrium and Holstein 1995) and the 'narrative explosion' (Hanninen 2004). Some researchers have suggested this paradigm shift indicates the beginning of the demise of the positivistic paradigm in the social sciences (Sarbin 1986; Bruner 1990). Importantly, the paradigm shift has allowed narrative to move "beyond the confines of the literary critic and the linguist" (O'Sullivan 2005, p.98). Narrative has entered into many disciplines and has become a focus of bridging the many different disciplines: Narrative Network Australia is a newly established forum which aims to connect researchers, bridge disciplines and link communities (Narrative Network Australia 2009).

In their description of this paradigm shift (here termed the 'biographical turn') Denzin and Lincoln describe the 'five moments' model which occurred from around the early 1900s (Roberts 2002) and corresponds to the 'normal stage' of Symbolic Interactionism. The five moment's model is reproduced in figure 4.

Denzin (2001) has suggested the adoption of a sixth and seventh moment: 'the post experimental: 1996 – present' and 'the future, the seventh moment'. Some education researchers reject the notion that *they* are in the sixth moment because "the model does not 'fit' the history of educational ethnography" (Delamont, Coffey, and Atkinson 2000, p.233). Nonetheless, the model does show the rapid evolution of biographical research, which centres on narrative as the 'single unit' for identity formation as well as identity construction exercises. Indeed, narrative theory, method and framework have become embedded in many studies across many disciplines in the social sciences. Denzin (2002) sees this as a positive step forward in qualitative research, since, "in the seventh moment there is a pressing demand to show how the practices of critical, interpretive qualitative

research can help change the world in positive ways (pp.26-27). The seventh moment, which effectively incorporates an interpretive practice, critiques the more traditional qualitative research methods practiced during earlier moments. Critiques are expressed in narrative analysis, critical ethnography, action and participatory action research, feminist research, cultural studies, autoethnography, and performance ethnography (Marshall and Rossman 2006).

Figure 4: Key moments in the development of biographical research:

1. Traditional 1900-1930: Positivism;

2. Modernist 1950-70: Challenges to Positivism (e.g. symbolic interactionism);

3. Blurred Genres 1970-86: Increased challenges to positivism from Symbolic Interactionism, Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Feminism and looking to Literature/Literary Criticism;

4. Crisis of Representation 1986-90: Production of Reflexive Texts

5. The Present or Postmodernism 1990-97: the Postmodern Zone: doubt thrown on *all* previous paradigms

(Source Roberts, 2002)

Narrative analysis has been described as an interdisciplinary approach with many guises which "seeks to describe the meaning of experience for those who frequently are socially marginalized or oppressed as they construct stories (narratives) about their lives" (Marshall and Rossman 2006, p.6). However, the notion of 'narrative' or 'story' has been around for a very long time and it is likely that people have been telling stories about their lives for thousands of years (McAdams 2006, p.109). The term 'story' itself is vague, meaning "many things to many people" (Sclater 2003, p.320), and there is general consensus that it is hard to define in a sociological sense, thus, generating "considerable disagreement about the precise definition" (Riessman 1993, p.17). This disagreement can be attributed to the cross-disciplinary attention that narrative method has received in recent years:

> For many, the attraction of narrative studies lies in its promise to enable
> us to think about a human subject who is socially situated and culturally
> fashioned, at the same time as that subject expresses a unique

individuality and an agency that makes the subject, at once, quite singular but also part of more or less local and global communities (Slater 2003, p.320).

Another attraction is that the concept of narrative has the potential to integrate knowledge and understanding generated by separate fields in the human sciences (Hanninen 2004). A pitfall that results from this positive potential is that the term narrative "can be used to mean different things in different contexts" (Haninnen 2004, p.70). For example, in the context of one specific study, the researcher claimed "the terms *narrative* and *story* are synonymous" (Gilbert 2002, p.233). This is clearly not the case for other researchers where the 'story' genre of narrative has been described as a distinct from of narrative (Riessman 1990), as discussed below. In another study the authors describe the differences between these terms in this way:

> By using the term 'story', we take our point of departure in ethnomethodological conversation analysis and refer to the telling of actions, the telling of what occurred according to the teller, including and ending with the telling of the punchline … By using the term 'narrative', we refer to a more extended unit of actions that include not only the telling itself and the punchline, but also the participants' evaluation of the reported events (Kjærbeck and Asmuß 2005, p.3).

Cortazzi (1993) describes many studies across a variety of disciplines that have utilised narrative method: theory and sociolinguistics (Toolan 1988), folklore and linguistics (Henderics 1973), psychological and sociolinguistic (van Dijk 1984), education - combining psychological with anthropological findings (Brewer 1985), psychiatry and literature (Coles 1989), psychological and literary themes which are widely cited in educational contexts (Bruner 1986; Bruner 1990), and examining narratives in history, literature, psychology and philosophy (Polkinghorne 1988). Cortazzi also describes the multidisciplinary nature of several studies co-authored by scholars within different disciplines: linguistics and anthropology (de Beaugrande and Colby 1979), linguistic and psychotherapy (Labov and Fanshel 1979), linguistic and cognitive psychology (Kintsch and Van Dijk 1983), in addition to the many contributors to Sarbin's (1986) volume, and Britton and Pellegrini's (1990) collection of papers which cover issues including psychology, psychiatry, child development, literacy and discourse. Despite the fact that a broad range of disciplines have adopted narrative techniques, and that there is no

consensus on a precise definition, the link between *stories* and *selves* has become accepted across all disciplines (Sclater 2003).

The life history tradition has been integrated into biographical research and here, again, the philosophical insights from Mead (combined with the Ricouer's philosophy of time) have been influential (Jarvinen 2004). During the last 35 years "the concepts of narrative and life story have become increasingly visible in the social sciences" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber 1998). Paul Eakin identified *narrative identity* as "the notion that what we are is a story of some kind" (Eakin 2006, p.180). Riessman suggests an inextricable link between narrative and identity: "Individuals become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their lives" (Riessman 1993, p.2). Eakin (2004) makes a distinction between autobiography in the literary sense and autobiography in the context of the narrative identity thesis: "autobiography is not merely something we read in a book; rather, as a discourse of identity, delivered bit by bit in the stories we tell about ourselves day in and day out, autobiography structures our living" (p.122).

As biographical research gained momentum, biography was also linked to the biological:

> I propose that the self-abstracted person, so clearly seen in adulthood, is one who has acquired a biography and thereby can tell his or her life story. A person is thus defined as a self-narrating organism (Maines, cited in Ezzy 1998, p.239).

A fundamental prerequisite for autobiography telling is the well-being of the human organism (Eakin 2004, p.129). For example, if the human biological organism does not function properly (for example, as a result of a brain injury or amnesia) he or she may not be able to exercise the cognitive functions required to communicate. Eakin reminds us that when the identity story system is ruptured we can be jolted into awareness of the central role it plays in organising our social world. Consequently, the role of memory is crucial to identity and identity construction exercises. This is where the psychological plays a necessary role:

> If I ask about the world, you can offer to tell me how it is under one or more frames of reference; but if I insist that you tell me how it is apart from all frames, what can you say? (Goodman, cited in Gergen 1998, p.415).

Life histories are rich resources with a plethora of reference frames. They play a necessary role in identity *construction* processes. It is a resource that individuals access when they engage in conversation. In order for the identity construction process to occur, each individual must access certain forms of identity that are located within cognitive processes. These cognitive processes involve the process of remembering experiences. These experiences become resources that people draw upon in order to reference concepts that emerge in conversations. This is where identities are constructed. Thus, identity construction exercises are contingent upon several factors: each individual must have a sense of self; the sense of self is informed by a worldview; and the worldview is learnt from experience with culture that permeates the relational environment.

Thus, life histories develop as people age and experience culture within society. This culture becomes internalised, which can then influence personal behaviours; this is enculturation. It is a complex process that requires a precise definition of culture. For the purpose of this research, culture is defined as social heritage, conceptualised in terms of material artefacts, mental and spiritual artefacts and behaviours (as described in Chapter 2). However, the point of particular interest here (related to cultural reproduction) is that many cultural elements that permeate these three broad categories transcend the generations (often in story form) to become reflected in the practice of its members and of future generations. These stories-as-told by participants are influenced by pre-existing identities that emanate from significant others (parents, siblings, school teachers, colleagues at work, the manager of the mission or reserve, and so on) at different times in their lives.

In summary, human identity formation is organised in story form and is contingent on the social, the psychological and the biological. Thus, identity is learnt from socialisation in a broader social context within which a plethora of cultural resources exists. These are internalised in story form and become resources for story telling in later life, where identity construction occurs. I have described Symbolic Interactionism and narrative in terms of theory and its applicability to the human individual. In the next section, I describe the methodology adopted for this study.

3.4: Qualitative methodology

> Different theoretical approaches to subjectivity and identity will produce
> different types of analysis and forms of knowledge (Weeden 2004, p.9).

This study utilises a qualitative methodology. Such methodologies draw on an array of different philosophical underpinnings, theoretical perspectives, ontological and epistemological orientations, and shared understandings and purpose (Guba and Lincoln 1989). However, any study should draw on the tradition which allows for the adoption of appropriate methods to answer the research question. Thus far I have identified the nature of the research design which draws on a social constructivist paradigm consisting of a theoretical framework that draws on insights from Symbolic Interactionism and narrative theory. A qualitative methodology is well suited to this epistemological foundation and theoretical framework.

Two broad methodological approaches to research in the social sciences are *quantitative* and *qualitative*, which are commonly understood to be based on *objectivism* and *constructionism* respectively. However, research is becoming more sophisticated with the adoption of mixed-method design and analysis. This would seem problematic if there is the "attempt to be at once objectivist and constructionist" (Crotty 1998, p.15). We are entering the age where understandings of the link between traditional epistemology, theoretical perspectives and methods are challenged. For example, the theoretical perspective 'Symbolic Interactionism', which was once commonly understood to represent ethnography with a constructionist epistemology, has now become a theoretical perspective underpinning Grounded Theory Method, which has been seen as representative of an objectivist epistemology (Crotty 1998).

Qualitative research draws on a long tradition in anthropology, sociology and clinical psychology, and has achieved status and visibility in the social sciences in the past 25 years (Merriam and Muhamad 2002). The nature of qualitative research is directly related to the idea that "meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Merriam and Muhamad 2002, p.3). In this sense, the world, or reality from the point of view of the research, is not so much a fixed or agreed upon measurable phenomenon, but rather relies on an individual's interpretation. Positivist research on the other hand is typically dedicated to the development and testing of hypotheses. Such research requires an understanding of the concept of what is to be studied, complete with a well-defined research plan, leading to the formulation of a hypothesis for testing. Thus "a hypothesis is deduced from a general law and this is tested against reality by looking for circumstances that confirm or disconfirm it" (Gibbs 2007, p.5). In this sense "[q]uantitative research rests exclusively in positivistic and post-positivistic assumptions. In contrast qualitative research "forms around assumptions about interpretation and human action" (Pinnegar and Daynes

2007, p.4). Given the nature of the broad area of concern, as well as my personal epistemological stance, a qualitative research design is appropriate.

The emergence of alternative data collection methods and the development of analytical frameworks have made it much more difficult to define qualitative research. However, the approach has five characteristics. Qualitative research (a) is naturalistic, (b) draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study, (c) focuses on context, (d) is emergent and evolving and (e) is fundamentally interpretive (Marshall and Rossman 2006).

Qualitative research methods set out to understand, describe or explain social phenomena in a number of different ways with particular reference to providing the insider's perspective (Gibbs 2007). There are several techniques suitable for the analysis of qualitative data and these are dependent on the text produced for analysis. They can include an analysis of experience of individuals and groups, of their interactions and communications as well as the analysis of documents (Gibbs 2007) and other forms of media such as "newspapers, movies, sitcoms, email traffic [and] folk tales" (Ryan and Bernard 2000 p.769). The broad approach is well suited to studies of identity and much more so for studies in Indigenous communities, because it seeks "to unpick how people construct the world around them, what they are doing, or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and that offer rich insight (Gibbs 2007, p.X). Such a research design allows participants to tell their versions of identity rather than settling for the "other's" historical version, which has named and validated Aboriginal peoples and their cultures.

Qualitative methodologies are especially appropriate when the topic under investigation has been minimally investigated (Creswell 1994; Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood, and Axford 1999). To date, there are few studies that focus solely on the topic of urban Aboriginal identity construction. However, many researchers, particularly within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, have historically conducted studies on Aboriginal communities. In those studies, the non-Aboriginal researcher attempted to represent the worldview of the participants. Such interpretations have been criticised by current Indigenous Australian scholars who have called for more appropriate research methods which benefit the Indigenous communities under study (Martin 2003; Rigney 2001).

In summary, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate given the nature of the topic and research question. Thus, participants' interpretations of their sense of self and their worlds are viewed in the light of the constructivist paradigm, which is particularly appropriate to a theoretical perspective which incorporates Symbolic Interactionism, narrative theory and an Indigenist research paradigm.

3.5: Method

The methods used in this study are now described. In this section, I primarily describe the research process and draw on the appropriate literature to justify these chosen methods.

3.5.1: Research site

This study was conducted in an Aboriginal community located in the Shoalhaven Local Government Area (LGA) in New South Wales, Australia, which is about 160 kilometres south of Australia's largest city, Sydney. The Shoalhaven City Council municipality stretches from Berry in the north, to Durras in the south and consists of 49 communities including the historical townships Nowra, Berry, Kangaroo Valley and Milton which were established for administration purposes. Historically, they functioned as service centres for the surrounding farming district with some services still performed in current times (Shoalhaven City Council 2009).

Major employers in the Shoalhaven are Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Defence and the Shoalhaven City Council. The Department of Defence has a presence in the area with HMAS Albatross located at Nowra Hill and HMAS Creswell located in the Jervis Bay Territory. The Jervis Bay territory was acquired by the Commonwealth from the State of New South Wales in 1915 so the national seat of Government would have access to the sea (Attorney-General's Department 2009). In 1995 the Jervis Bay National Park and Jervis Bay Botanical Gardens was given back to the Wreck Bay Aboriginal community and are now known as Booderee National Park and Booderee Botanical Gardens. Booderee is an Aboriginal word from the *Dhurga* language meaning 'bay of plenty' or 'plenty of fish' (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2009).

The Shoalhaven consists of three Aboriginal communities (see figure 5): Wreck Bay; Jerrinja (formerly Roseby Park); and a third community interspersed throughout the major

township of Nowra. Wreck Bay and Roseby Park are former missions designated by previous Australian governments to segregate Aboriginal people from the broader Australian population. HMAS Creswell is located nearby Wreck Bay village.

Figure 5: Map of the Shoalhaven:
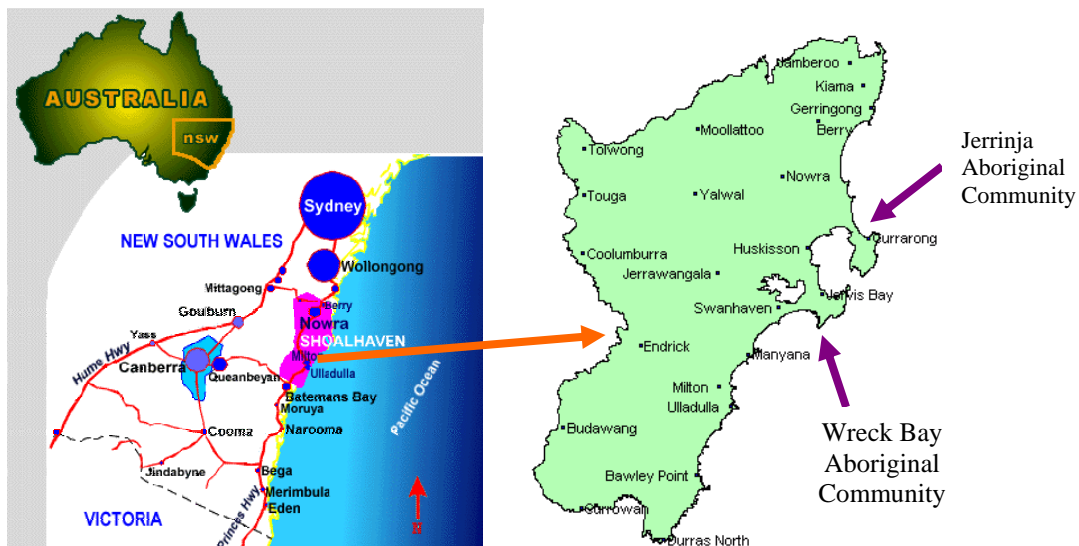
According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001), the total Indigenous population of the Shoalhaven was 1590, consisting of 787 males and 803 females. There has been a steady increase in the Indigenous population. In 1991 the figures were 927 and in 1996, 1355. At this rate the Indigenous population has increased by almost 31.5% from 1991 to 1996 and a further 15% from 1996 to 2001. Census figures collected on the 8th of August 2006 indicates that 88,405 people had identified the Shoalhaven as their usual place of residence. Of those 3174 identified their Aboriginal descent and 83 identified their Torres Strait Islander descent. This is a total of 3257 which is 3.68% of the total Shoalhaven population which is markedly higher than the national average of 2.3%.

3.5.2: Data collection

> Research methods provide ways of approaching, and hopefully
> answering research questions (Willig 2001, p.2).

In this study the in-depth interview was deemed an appropriate method for original data collection because it is personal and emphasises "depth, detail, vividness and nuance" (Miller and Crabtree 2004, p.188); this is particularly appropriate for the study of urban

Aboriginal identity. In-depth interviewing is "a research-gathering approach that seeks to create a listening space where meaning is constructed through an interexchange/cocreation of verbal viewpoints in the interest of scientific knowing" (Miller and Crabtree 2004, p.185).   During the interview the approach was to ask open-ended questions and listen with minimal interruptions. I refrained from asking leading questions and in most interviews opened with a broad request to 'tell me about your identity.' This allowed participants to choose from a variety of topics. However, it was common that participants described their life stories and recapitulated significant events of personal experience. The duration of each interview was approximately 45-60 minutes, audio taped, transcribed and analysed at a later date.

3.5.3: Sampling and recruitment

The study used purposeful (non-probability) sampling to recruit individuals from three age cohorts of mixed-descent Aboriginal people living in the research site. This sampling criterion was considered important because it provided a diverse age population to compare for differences and similarities in identity construction exercises across cohorts, which provided a deeper understanding of how identity is transmitted both intergenerational and intragenerational. Participants were assigned the code C1 if they were between the ages of 60 and 90, C2 if between the ages 40 and 59 and C3 if between the ages of 20 and 39.

A flyer with information about the project was posted at several Aboriginal organisations in Nowra. It stated that the study had been given ethical approval by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council, the Arwon Aboriginal Elders Corporation and the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney and provided contact details of the researchers and the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. Participants interested in the project contacted the researcher and an interview time was scheduled at a time and place convenient to both parties. This flyer was also disseminated at community meetings and made available to interested persons to either collect for themselves or to pass on to others.

Although it was envisaged that between five and seven people would be interviewed per cohort, giving a potential sample of between 15 and 21 participants, only 11 people in total eventually participated in the study. This was still an adequate sample size for this exploratory study.

The participants were given a consent form and participant information statement prior to the interview. These documents did not contain any information about the marginalisation of Aboriginal people, but rather it indicated the aims and significance of the study which was to investigate the Aboriginal construction of Aboriginality. In addition, the participant information sheet indicated that the project aimed to investigate and compare the ways in which different generations of Aboriginal people perceive their Aboriginality. This provided a focus for the interviews on the topic of urban Aboriginal identity.

3.5.4: Data analysis

Riessman's (1993) analytical framework suggests that interview material undergoes several phases of analysis and interpretation. In this sense, it is appropriate to think of interview material having undergone different levels of representation. These levels of representation are: attending, telling, transcribing, analysing and reading and are useful to characterise the essence of representation of Aboriginal identity at each of these stages of the research process.

<div align="center">

Reading (level 5)

Analysing (level 4)

Transcribing (level 3)

Telling (level 2)

Attending (level 1)

</div>

Given that identity is fluid, constructed in interaction, and is distinctly crafted with each telling, I have treated the interview as a point in time where the identities constructed were unique to that particular point in time. Thus, it is acknowledged that should the participants be re-interviewed at a later point in time, they will have experienced additional elements of society and culture and potentially have become influenced by these recent events, which could change their political or moral stance on a certain issue or they may draw on recent events to make the same, or a similar point. Participants were not re-interviewed, and thus their identities were understood by the researcher during 'attending' (level 1) to representations of stories they told in the formal research interview. Identities emerged during the telling of stories (level 2). These identities were frozen in time when taped on audio cassette and transcribed in full (level 3). These transcripts became the predominant

source material for analysis (level 4). During initial analysis I coded the transcripts and reordered them into dominant themes that presented across the interviews. This effectively broke the narrative structure of the surrounding text, which inevitably decontextualised the themes from their narrative structure, potentially omitting key phrases and altering the original meaning. This phase of analysis in particular involved rigorous interpretation. Upon reading the final report (level 5) the reader exercises 'reflexivity' in an effort to understand my interpretation of the identities co-constructed in the interviews for this study. Thus the process of urban Aboriginal identity construction has undergone a series of interpretations, and the urban Aboriginal identity concept is reproduced by the reader through the act of reading a report of my analysis.

The analysis of transcript text was the primary data analysis tool to answer the research question, which centred on a better understanding of the process of identity construction in an urban Aboriginal community. In fact, the analytical framework eventually incorporated two types of analyses (thematic and narrative) which involve different ways of 'seeing' and 'knowing' and thus different understandings of what can be known. These two different approaches to analysis can be used together to display different 'layers' of meaning (Riessman 1990).

3.5.4.1: Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis of free flowing text can involve focus on words or large blocks of text (Ryan and Bernard 2000). This kind of analysis can become a difficult task especially if the amount of text to be analysed is large. To deal with his difficulty, the process of coding has been developed. It is an "analytical strategy many qualitative researchers employ in order to locate key themes, patterns, ideas, and concepts within their data" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2004, p.411). My thematic analysis involved the process of applying literal and focused codes. Literal codes are descriptive and also appeared within the text. Focused codes were much more analytical requiring much more in-depth interpretation of participants talk. Below is an example of the way I applied the codes to one section of one interview.

Case study

I had a big problem with my identity. I went to get my birth certificate, 20 years ago at Births, Deaths and Marriages in Sydney and the guy said "You gotta go down to Lands and Titles Department", and I said "What have I got to go there for? I'm a, you know, this is Births, Deaths and Marriages", he said "Well when were you born" I said "59." He said "Well mate you were flora and fauna, we hold your records down at Lands and Titles" That created a problem for me for years.	Identity problem Story about retrieving birth certificate Experience in government office Retelling conversation 'Primitive aborigine' construct Impact on participant's sense of self.

The first code is descriptive which was taken from the actual words in the transcript. As we read down the list, we see that I have added more of my interpretation to the concept data; for example, the 'primitive aborigine' construct I concluded is embedded in the participant's use of the terms 'flora and fauna'.

While this process generated important findings, the technique has limitations. It effectively fractures the text "by taking bits and pieces, snippets of a response edited out of context [which] eliminate the sequential and structural features that characterize narrative accounts" (Riessman 1993, p.3). Thus, there is the possibility that thematic analysis can alter the teller's intended meaning. However, the thematic analysis is useful to determine the dominant themes that emerge across the interviews. In a sense, my thematic analysis is an assessment of collective Shoalhaven Aboriginal identity.

3.5.4.2: Narrative analysis

The narrative approach provided a more in-depth analysis which focused on meaning constructed in interaction between an Aboriginal researcher and Aboriginal participant from the same Aboriginal community. Although I had drawn on different elements of narrative theory, I primarily used the narrative analysis model (Labov and Waletzky 1967) and the 'prime narrative' model (Mathieson and Barrie 1998).

3.5.4.3: Labov and Waletzky's analytical framework

Earlier I described how there is no one definition of narrative and that the many disciplines that utilise narrative theory draw on different theoretical assumptions. Here, too, the term 'narrative analysis' has been described in different ways using different terms: "Life

histories, biographies, autobiographies, oral histories and personal narratives are all forms of narrative analysis" (Marshall and Rossman 2006, p.6). Although there are many disciplines that employ analytical frameworks based on narrative theory, perhaps the most influential is that presented in an essay by Labov and Waletzky (1967). The analytical framework presented in this landmark essay has been said to represent the key moment in the development of narrative theory (Brockmeier and Carbaugh 2001), and has proven useful for many students wishing to adopt narrative techniques (Labov 2006). Indeed, it has made a major contribution to the field of narrative studies as all 47 contributions to the 1997 issue of the *Journal of Narrative and Life History* were based on this essay. The paper has paved the way for a systematic investigation of all forms and genres of non-fictional narratives as well as having an influence on the study of fictional narrative (Brockmeier and Carbaugh 2001).

In their essay, Labov and Waletzky suggested two definitions of narrative, one formal and the other informal. The formal definition includes the identification of free clauses, restricted clauses or narrative clauses. A clause is a cluster of words put together by the individual which include a subject and predicate but which does not constitute a complete sentence (Labov and Waletzky 1967). These are moved along the sequence at every possible combination to test for coherence. If moving the clauses changes the temporal sequence of the semantic interpretation then it is defined as a narrative clause. The most essential characteristic of such a clause is the a-then-b characteristic: "[s]ome narratives may use it exclusively, and every narrative must, by definition, use it at least once" (Labov and Waletzky 1967 p.21). Their formal definition of narrative is complex and requires micro-analysis of the data, including the identification of temporal junctures below the sentence level. In contrast, their informal definition which most student research adopts involves the process of "recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred" (Labov and Waletzky 1967, p.20). This informal definition has been used extensively across a broad range of disciplines.

Labov and Waletzky identified six functions of a narrative which provide a framework for analysis (Cortazzi 1993). This is presented below:

Abstract	What was this about
Orientation	Who? When? What? Where?
Complication	Then what happened?
Evaluation	So what?
Result	What finally happened?
Coda	Return to present

The 'Abstract' function informs the listener of what the story will be about. It is a clause which is not yet part of the sequence of events to be described. It initiates the narrative and summarises the point of it. It is optional. When it presents it has an important function because it can convey meaning, often beyond the narrative (Cortazzi 1993).

The 'Orientation' function describes background information that "the teller believes the audience needs to understand the narrated events" (Cortazzi 1993, p.45). It provides the listener with some context about who was present when the event took place, when it happened, what happened and where it happened.

The 'Complication' provides a turning point for the narrative. It is usually a crisis or a problem or a significant point that makes the narrative interesting and worth listening to. The complication can range from one narrative clause (thereby requiring at least two events to happen in temporal sequence) to an extended sequence of narrative clauses which is recapitulated in the same order that the sequence of events was inferred to have occurred. It remains unresolved until the 'Result' function presents.

The 'Result' function describes the resolution to the conflict. It is still a part of the sequence of events that is inferred to have occurred.

The Evaluation function can appear at any stage of the narrative; however, it commonly precedes the Result. It is a "kind of self-Receipt (sic) through which the speaker gives the meaning of the narrative" (Cortazzi 1993, p.47). The evaluation function in participant's talk "gives the meaning of the narrative, highlights the speaker's perspective and attitude to what has been told" (Cortazzi, 1993, p.20). Essentially, it highlights an individual's perspective of the topic of the narrated events. Most narrators will provide an evaluation of the story to avoid the 'so what' comment from the listener (Mishler 1995).

The 'Coda' function is optional. When it occurs it brings the listener back to the present and signifies that the telling of the narrative from the past is now over.

Many definitions have drawn on this seminal work. For example, David Herman's definition of narrative is "a sequentially organised representation of a sequence of events" (O'Sullivan 2005, p.2). When narrative is used in a broader context its definition may differ. For example, Longacre (1970), a linguist, suggests narrative is one of *four genres of discourse*: 'narrative', 'hortatory', 'expository', and 'procedural'. For him, narrative "discourse is characterized by time sequence in accomplished (past) time" (Longacre 1970, p.788).

In her book *Divorce Talk*, Catherine Riessman identified *four genres of narrative*: 'episodic', 'habitual', 'hypothetical', and 'story'. The *'episodic'* genre of narrative is stitched together by themes rather than by time and makes a general point (Riessman 1990). The *'habitual'* genre of narrative suggests that an event occurred over and over, telling of the general course of events over time. The *'hypothetical'* genre of narrative presents a version of how the story might have been; it is commonly oriented to the future and may lack orientation information. The *'story'* genre of narrative "recounts specific events so that the listener will believe they actually happened" (Riessman 1990, p.118-119). The *story* genre resembles Labov and Waletzky's definition. Henceforth, a narrative in the Labovian sense – essentially a recapitulation of events the teller actually experienced - will be indicated by the term *'story'* italicised. These kinds of *stories* can most simply be thought of "as a specific past-time narrative that makes a point, often a moral one" (Riessman 1990, p.79). Others have emphasised this point, making the link between the events depicted in the story and its incorporation into the fabric of one's life: "the point of telling the story is not to recount the event but to show how the narrator has made that event into something in his of her life" (Miller et al. 1990, p.293).

Labov and Waletzky's analytical framework has been influential in numerous studies and is particularly useful for the analysis of *stories* told in the formal research interview. However, this model is only really appropriate for 'simple narratives' which are stories about a single event or for 'habitual narratives' (Reissman 1990) which are a recurring series of similar events. For some sections of talk, the Labovian model is not suitable and requires another analytic model.

The concept of 'narrative practice' allows the analyst "to characterize simultaneously the activities of story-telling, the resources used to tell stories, and the auspices under which stories are told" (Gubrium and Holstein 1998, p.164). The analytical categories are 'narrative linkages', 'local resources', and 'organizational auspices'. First, narrative

linkages occur when the stories people tell are narratively linked to discourses in the wider socio-cultural-historical context. Some linkages recur more often than others and are contingent on timing and generational or cohort factors. The dominant themes that emerge across interviews then become useful classificatory devices, whereby a comparison of narrative linkages between different cohorts can be cross-referenced with actual personal experience of broader discourses. This comparison can determine which stories are based on personal experience and which are handed down in a process of cultural reproduction.

Second, stories and identities are constructed within local settings as well as the wider social milieu which provide different sets of narrative resources. These are essentially lived experiences. These two narrative elements - personal experience and the discourses that permeate the broader milieu - become local resources that individuals draw upon to tell stories and construct identities.

The third element, 'organisational auspice', can be considered in this context as the formal research interview, involving 'talk' in interaction. My presence as an Aboriginal person from the community in which this study was conducted is a necessary component of analysis. It also has to be recognised as having an influence on the interview. This is where Mead's philosophical insights become crucial elements of the research design. In his *philosophy of the act* he suggested that the *reflexivity* process occurs when humans anticipate the consequence of their actions and amend their behaviour according to the perceived outcome. In the case of this study, where researcher and participant have been socialised in the same local Aboriginal community, the analysis is enhanced by an understanding of the cultural nuances of the local culture: "[i]ndividuals resort to definitions of a situation that are part of their cultural lexicon and enjoy a high degree of consensus" (Riessman 1990, p.14). This limits time-wasting exercises on explanations of concepts that the teller may otherwise feel necessary to explain, should an 'outside' researcher conduct the interviews. Thus, the teller can devote more time to the telling of experience in her or his point making and identity construction process. Thus, "we must learn to listen to interview material as a joint construction and also learn to recognise the narrative" (Mathieson and Barrie 1998, p.600).

Utilising narrative practice in biographical work reflects locally promoted ways of interpreting experience and identity so that what is constructed is distinctly crafted by each individual, yet assembled from the meaningful categories and vocabularies of 'settings' (Gubrium and Holstein 1998). During the interaction, the participant offers a complex

sense of 'biographical patterning'. This is where narratives become the vehicle for communication, allowing individuals to transform knowing into telling. Thus they "link together our experience of the world and our efforts to describe that experience to a listener" (Riessman 1990, p.79). This is important because the communicative event which occurs between researcher and participant in the research interview occurs in narrative form (Georgakopoulou 2006). Several researchers have treated the whole body of talk as a 'narrative' where they have looked for the 'dominant storyline' or 'prime narrative' which is then located within a typology (Riessman 1993, p.34).

3.5.4.4: The prime narrative

The prime narrative framework treats the entire interview as a narrative. It involves the process of identifying the frequently occurring words narrators draw from throughout the interview. In this sense, the entire interview contains a narrative structure which requires consideration during analysis. For instance, Barrie and Mathieson focused on the "unfolding of a central or prime narrative about a person with cancer and how this person has come to be in the place he or she is now … It starts with some noticeable events (e.g. first as symptoms) but may not have a clear beginning and end" (Mathieson and Barrie 1998, p.583). Thus different kinds of information emerge at different stages of the interview. Commonly, the participant returns to the prime narrative; however they can deviate from it. Focusing on the prime narrative allows for an understanding of the "process whereby narrators actively construct who they are by what they tell us in the interview, what they emphasize, and how they emphasize it" (Mathieson and Barrie 1998, p.587). In particular, the emergence of the prime narrative may not be related to the question asked, or topic of the study. When the analyst focuses on the prime narrative, as well as the deviation from it, he or she can gain further insights into other significant events or concepts that participants draw on to make moral points, which provide deeper insights into the construction of identity in interaction.

3.5.4.5: Limitations of narrative analysis

The *topic* under investigation influences the kinds of narratives people employ. The topic may elicit *stories* or it may elicit a mixture of genres of narratives, or a mixture of genres of discourse. If the majority of the data produced in the interview is not in *story* form than Labov and Waletzky's analytical framework becomes less useful and effective. Bennett (1986) found that narrative discourse in the Labovian sense is seldom found in the talk of

people interviewed on the topic 'supranormal – ESP psychic powers and the influence of the dead'. She collected 153 narratives yet only 26 conformed to the Labovian model.

A narrative with a "Labovian" structure is plainly not the norm for the context. It is much more usual for a speaker to tell a story which deviates from this classic pattern. Rather than relating a unique event, speakers may opt to describe a typical happening; rather than arranging events chronologically, they may tell their story in circular fashion, beginning at the end or repeating key incidents several times at different stages of the narrative; rather than tying up the ends in a neat dénouement, they may leave it untidily open-ended; and rather than concentrating attention on events, they may give a disproportionately large amount of their story to describing circumstances and contexts (Bennett 1986, p.417).

Clearly the topic did not produce *stories* in the Labovian sense. There are important implications here. For example, the researcher (or listener, for that matter) often cannot determine the validity or authenticity of the events that are inferred to have occurred and in the "majority of cases, the only information on the nature of the reported events is in the narrative itself: there is no independent evidence on what actually happened" (Labov 2003, p.63). In addition, "people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths" (The Personal Narratives Group, cited in Riessman 1993, p.22). Psychoanalyst, Donald Spence, calls this 'narrative truth' (Frank 1995, p.61), and from this we can understand inferences about the original events which can give greater insights into how individuals transform reality when reporting it to others (Labov 2003). In addition, narratives are evolutionary in nature, that is, they are representations of a lived experience subject to change and interpretation during every telling, whereby the change is sometimes dramatic and at other times incremental (Gilbert 2002). Regardless of whether narratives are recapitulations of actual events, or made up stories, they should be considered identity construction resources, because, even if individuals are aware that they are, for example, telling 'white lies', they may tell this narrative to execute a political or moral cause. When this occurs, identities are inevitably constructed during that process.

Narrative analysts approach this thorny issue of 'narrative truth' differently (Riessman 1993). This is directly linked to the topic under study including the research design and discipline. For example, in sociolinguistics language is assumed to *represent* reality, whereas in phenomenology narrative *constitutes* reality (Riessman 1993).

If *stories* are viewed as identity construction resources that change with each telling, the possibility arises that the very essence of the story changes (as in 'Chinese whispers'). If the essence of the story changes, then the essence of interpretation of the story can change, and thus, so too can the identities that permeate those stories. This is important because "the way people define a situation is reality for them, even if others regard them as mistaken, and scientists could prove they are wrong" (Shibutani, cited in Riessman 1993, p.12-13). This form of subjective reality contributes to an individual's sense of self and of identity where human agency and imagination "determines what gets included and excluded in narrativisation" (Riessman 1993, p.2). These traits are multilayered, artful constructions which include the "historical moment of the telling, the race, class and gender systems that narrators manipulate to survive and within which their talk has to be interpreted" (The Personal Narratives Group, cited in Riessman 1993, p.21). In addition, narrators interweave "the objective events of the past, the past's effects on the present, and the symbolic reconstruction of the past in the present" (Ezzy 1998, p.250), which permits the telling of stories and production of identities. In this sense, narratives are interpretative, and they also require interpretation during analysis. In this study, I treat participant talk as interpretations of narrative truth which are partial and alternative.

3.5.5: Ethical considerations

Throughout the duration of this study I followed two ethical guideline documents for research into Aboriginal communities (AIATSIS 2000; NHMRC 2003b). These guidelines were developed to support the survival and protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and they focus on the need for researcher awareness of the impact their research may have on Aboriginal communities. I now describe how the conduct of this research has followed these guidelines.

This research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of Sydney and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AH&MRC) of New South Wales (Appendix III). A letter of support for this research was provided by the South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre (see Appendix IV), the South Eastern Aboriginal Legal Service (Appendix V), South Eastern Illawarra NSW Health (Appendix VI) and the Arwon Elders Corporation (Appendix VII). Furthermore, the South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre approved use of their facilities to conduct the interviews. This South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre is no longer functioning and the building asset has been sold. However, the Centre was then used for functions (such as funerals,

meetings and birthday parties) by many of the local Aboriginal community members, and was therefore deemed a culturally appropriate place to conduct the interviews.

Participants were provided with an information statement (Appendix II) prior to interview and informed they were under no obligation to consent to be interviewed and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any questions. A consent form (Appendix I) was provided to participants which required a signature to acknowledge their understanding of these conditions. AH&MRC ethical approval was received after the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee and as such an additional participant information sheet (Appendix III) was provided with the original participant information sheet (Appendix II).

All participants were assigned pseudonyms during transcription which were used throughout the project including both phases of analysis and during the final writing up of the thesis. This prevented any accidental or unintentional recording of information that could potentially identify the participants.

In the original proposal it was indicated that the participants would have the opportunity to view a copy of the thesis which, at the time, was planned to be presented to the South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre. A letter of appreciation for participation has been forwarded to participants, with a brief report of the findings of this study. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts. In the event that I needed to clarify a statement in the transcripts or needed to understand a little more about the participant, I simply phoned and discussed this over the phone, or I organised a meeting with them.

Files, audio tapes, transcripts and other materials have been stored in a lockable filing cabinet in the home office of the researcher throughout the active phase of the project. All computer files containing research material were password protected. Subsequently, all original data and analysis material have been forwarded to the University of Sydney for storage in a lockable filing cabinet in the Discipline of Behavioural and Community Health Sciences for a period of seven years. After this time has elapsed the paper records will be shredded and tapes destroyed in accordance with University record destruction procedures.

3.6: The research process

Thus far in the methodology chapter I have described the research project in terms of an appropriate epistemological orientation, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods to answer the research question. In these sections, I have primarily drawn on the literature to describe the research design. I now describe the research experience itself. The research process began when I enrolled in a PhD at the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University of Sydney; however I believe that my decision to embark on a PhD on the topic of Aboriginal identity was stimulated by some earlier experiences. In this section of the methodology chapter I describe elements of my life story to provide some historical context for how I came to study for a PhD. I then describe my research experience which covers the process of data collection, analysis and write up and includes a commentary on the importance of adopting an 'insider' research design for this study of identity construction in an urban Aboriginal community.

3.6.1: Elements of my personal life story

I am married and the proud father of a two year old daughter. My grandmother is Isabelle May McLeod and has six children, 46 grandchildren and 86 great grandchildren. I am one of four siblings and have a brother and two sisters. Of these 46 grandchildren the eldest is 41 and the youngest is 5. I am 33 years of age and I am roughly located within the middle of this cohort. Unfortunately most of my cousins did not complete their Higher School Certificate (HSC). As a teenager I could see that this culture of non-HSC completion was problematic. This fuelled my determination to finish. Unfortunately, I was not immersed in a culture of high academic achievement during my experience at school, and therefore did not fully commit myself to learning. I recall only ever completely reading one English book during my entire high schooling experience. This experience influenced a clear position: I wanted to finish my HSC, however I did not consider tertiary study an achievable option. I completed my HSC in 1994.

I'd like to share two significant events that occurred during my schooling experience. The first event occurred during the final year of primary school and the second event during the final year of high school. During my schooling experience at Kelso Public School when I was approximately 12 years of age, one particular teacher made a gesture which occurred immediately after I had a fight with one of my fellow students. Instead of giving me detention, or yelling at me, or suspending me, or expelling me from school, this particular

teacher broke up the fight, spoke to us both in a very calm voice and explained why it was wrong to fight. He then asked us to shake hands. I recall having much respect for that particular teacher and would like to acknowledge his kinds words as I believe this gesture has become a significant event which had shaped my schooling experience and perhaps contributed to a more positive appreciation for schooling culture. That particular teacher was Mr. Ian Irvine.

Whilst in year twelve at Nowra Technology High School, I completed a practice exam for the HSC. The question offered for this exam was something along the lines of this: 'Should other ethnic cultures be allowed to enter Australia and practice their religions in this Christian-based society?' Basically, I supported the view that other's religions and beliefs should be respected and chose to use the colonisation of Australia as an example of what not to do. In that essay, I described my disgust at the way in which Aboriginal people were forced to live on missions and reserves and become Christians. I recall making a statement along the lines of this: 'I know of no other cultural group that would force peoples from another culture to learn their religion and culture'. For the record, I did not score very well on that paper. The teacher responded to my work in red pen and capital letters describing how, by way of example, the sacrifice of chickens and cows was wrong and should not be tolerated in this society. That teacher's identity will not be revealed because I cannot recall that particular teacher's name.

Upon reflection of these two events it is very clear that teachers play a prominent role in influencing student attitudes. Although both events occurred under negative circumstances, my perspective of them, with the benefit of hindsight, yields a very different evaluation of them. On the one hand, the feedback from the teacher whom marked my practice exam incited a personal rebellion which developed a personal dislike for that particular teacher. On the other hand, Mr. Irvine's choice of method of resolution earned my deep respect for him.

After I finished my HSC I traveled with the Doonooch Dance Company located in the Shoalhaven LGA. Members of the dance company are primarily my grandmother's grandchildren. However, over the years, there have been many Kooris from different Aboriginal communities in Australia that have danced with the Doonooch Dance Company. I have traveled nationally, as well as internationally to Scotland, New Caledonia and New Zealand. Although I was actively involved with the dance company, I did not see this as a career path, especially given that the *ad hoc* nature of work generated *ad hoc* income.

Other family members were studying a Bachelor of Health Science at the University of Sydney and proposed that I begin study. I immediately dismissed that idea. However, a little later I was informed that I was eligible to apply for Abstudy whilst studying at a tertiary level. Abstudy is a government program designed to financially support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students during their studies. It is offered as an alternative to submitting a 'dole form' every fortnight. This one fact alone was enough to entice me to begin University study. Since my first day of study at the tertiary level in March of 1998, I have subsequently completed a Bachelor of Health Science with Honours, a Masters of Media, Arts and Production, and submitted a PhD. I have studied these degrees over a period of ten years and six months full time study, except a short period where I opted to take six months leave from the PhD.

3.6.2: The research experience

Over the course of a twelve month period from November 2005 to November 2006, 11 interviews were conducted with Aboriginal people residing in the Shoalhaven City Council Municipality located on south coast of New South Wales, Australia. All participants were strategically chosen so that four participants were located within one of the following three cohorts: age groups 20-39, 40-59 and 60-90. Open-ended questions such as 'tell me about your identity?' and 'what is something that is important to you?' were used, as they allowed participants to respond and generate talk on the topic of their choosing. Prior to participating in this research the participants were given a participant information sheet, which informed them of the nature of the research. Thus, it is acknowledged that participants have probably drawn on this information sheet to respond to the initial question of identity and thereby talking about their 'Aboriginal identity'.

Each interview was transcribed and coded shortly after it was conducted. I used NVivo software to assist in management of the qualitative data. I was attracted to NVivo software for its manageability, particularly because retrieval of assigned codes and the display of these codes into themes can be done efficiently (NVivo software is capable of generating reports of the number of codes assigned by the researcher in a matter of seconds). A very early coding report produced in NVivo revealed that I had assigned 144 nodes to George's transcript, 71 to Mimi's transcript, 70 to Sandra's transcript and the rest 57 or fewer. However, I soon discovered the process of coding in NVivo was quite time consuming. In addition, I soon learnt the importance of coding and sorting codes into theme in the early stages of analysis. That is, themes are identified and interpreted by the researcher when the

transcripts are read, which influences code assignment. This phase in general is a crucial stage, because the researcher will then draw on the codes which have already undergone a process of interpretation. At that stage of analysis the amount of data generated in the interviews and the coding of clauses below the sentence level became unmanageable. I abandoned the NVivo codes and at a later stage recoded all documents.

In late 2006 I sent an e-mail to my supervisor asking for advice. In that e-mail I described my analysis experience as 'drowning in transcripts'. I asked if it was normal for a PhD student to experience this much confusion; she responded that it was perfectly normal and offered this advice:

> Remember that your aim at each stage of analysis is to progressively REDUCE the data and DISPLAY it in a different way (i.e. not as a whole transcript or even as verbatim quotes) e.g. as KEY CONCEPTS or CATEGORIES (i.e. things you have abstracted from the text rather than the text itself).

Although this did not sink in immediately, over time I began to develop an understanding of this process. I realised that I could not bring meaning to the transcripts because an analysis in such depth forces the concepts out of context of its narrative structure. In addition, I made the error of trying to analyse at the same time, what was said, how it was said and why it was said, thus focusing on the meaning behind every concept the speaker had drawn on. I came to understand that the core purpose for the first phase of analysis was to simply document what was said – by coding – the themes. In addition 'analytical bracketing' was required to better understand these elements of the research process. Analytical bracketing is a concept coined by Gubrium and Holstein (1998) which allows us to focus on one particular aspect of transcripts, whilst suspending our analytical interests in others. My 'insider' status assisted data analysis, however it played a much broader and integral role throughout the research process i.e. it informed the *act* of research (Kanuha 2000).

In the next section I provide a brief description of 'insider' research and then discuss how I have dealt with some of the major issues documented in the literature, particularly 'power and authority', 'confidentiality and anonymity' and 'validity'.

3.6.3: 'Insider research' design

'Insider' research is a term used to describe projects where the researcher has a direct involvement or connection to the research setting (Robson 2002). This connection may include a shared attribute with the sample population such as race, ethnicity, heritage, sexual orientation or gender. Many researchers share a combination of these attributes and some have drawn on these to claim identities in their published work: the self description as a 'cultural' insider and 'Chicana feminist' researcher (Zavella 1993); the marginalised 'woman', 'lesbian', 'native' researcher of Hawaiian descent (Kanuha 2000) etc. 'Insider' research has also been described as 'indigenous' or 'native' research which refer to the conduct of "research with communities or identity groups of which one is a member" (Kanuha 2000 p.440). This latter description resonates with this study of identity construction in an urban Aboriginal community.

The 'insider' researcher approach has emerged across disciplines, and in parallel with the changing perspectives that informed the 'narrative' turn. In ethnography, this paradigm shift is traced back to the seminal ethnographic fieldworks of Brownislaw Malinowski who suggested anthropologists should 'go native', promoting the perspective that "scientists in a foreign milieu should emphasise their role as 'participants' rather than 'observers' to enhance their study of native people and cultures" (Kanuha 2000, p.439). In education there is a growing influence of 'insider' ethnic and gender research "where those authors identify themselves principally with the ethnicity and/or gender of the students they study" (Foley, Levinson and Hurtig 2000, p.37). In feminist research the focus has moved to the multiple realities of women with various class, racial, ethnic and sexual statuses (DeVault 1996 cited in De Andrade 2000). 'Insider' research has also been applied to practitioner research which "is characterized by the researcher being immersed experientially in the situation" (Coghlan 2003 p. 455) such as within the workplace. Collaborative research can also adopt the 'insider' approach which is a useful and relevant method for research within Indigenous communities because it provides the researched community with an opportunity to collaborate with the outside researcher, providing them with an active role overseeing ethical issues related to collecting, storing and reporting data. It also provides them with an opportunity for input into the conduct and design of the research.

Power and authority have been at the centre of the insider/outsider debate since the 1970s and 1980s during the time when significant methodological developments occurred within sociology and related disciplines (De Andrade 2000). In particular, the issue of access to,

and rapport with respondents was discussed in three ways: 1) how 'ethnicity' and 'race' influenced interaction and participation; 2) how these impacted on the quality of the research conducted – including how it was conceptualised or framed, and how it assisted in the interpretation of the findings; and 3) the predominance of white researchers in the production of scholarship about minority groups (De Andrade 2000). The first two points were integral to the collection and analysis of qualitative data in this study.

My insider status indeed informed the conceptualisation of the study. That is, I am a member of the broader Aboriginal community whereby several narratives continue to inform our status, including the narrative of Aboriginal disadvantage and marginalisation and the narrative that positions Aboriginal peoples as an over-researched population. Given that I was privy to these narratives, the conceptualisation of this study was oriented to benefiting the community and therefore I was adamant that the research should be conducted in an ethical way which aligned to research ethics into Indigenous communities.

Research ethics documents which have been developed for the conduct of research within Aboriginal communities (AIATSIS 2000; NHMRC 1999) are designed to ensure that previous historical unethical research practice in Indigenous communities does not become reproduced. This older practice was directly related to power where the researcher had the sole discretion for the direction of the researcher, the collection, analysis and storage of data and the nature of the content of their publications which may have resulted. The AIATSIS and NHMRC documents provide guidelines for the conduct of ethical research within Indigenous communities and are an appropriate starting point for any research project proposing to study Indigenous populations or Indigenous related issues and can directly deal with issues of power. Insider research should also utilise these principles however if the project does not employ an insider design then another "way of sharing power is through collaboration with Indigenous co-researchers" (Pyett 2002, p.58).

In his commentary on the validity of the insider approach Rooney (2005) suggests power and authority may have impacted on participant involvement in a practitioner research study where hospital staff may have felt compelled to take part. After all, firstly, they were "directed to participate by senior managers" (Rooney 2005, p.8) and secondly, the study was conducted by their superiors. Coercion was not an issue in this study on the topic urban Aboriginal identity construction as the participants were informed, prior to the conduct of the interview, that they could, at any time, choose to withdraw from the study. In addition they were provided with a participant information sheet and an informed

consent sheet which they were asked to sign. These documents included specific information about their rights to withdraw from the study and also the name, address and contact information for the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Sydney and an additional sheet with contact details for the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council ethics committee.

Power and authority also played a central role in the dynamics of the formal research interview which impacted on the collection of data. Thus, the relationship between the researcher and the participant may prevent the telling of certain kinds of information. For example a relevant question to ask about the research process for the abovementioned practitioner research study is did the respondents impart information their superior wanted to hear? In this study I felt that my role as researcher did not impact on the kinds of stories the participants told, certainly, not in the same way as the above study. However, I did find that some of the participants from the older cohorts engaged in the interview as a teller of their identity, rather than a negotiator. That is one participant in particular opted to tell me about Aboriginal identity in a lecture style, rather than through negotiation. Clearly authority was an issue, but not from the perspective of coercing participant involvement. To address the issue of power and authority in this study I chose to ask minimal open-ended questions which allowed participants to tell *their* story of *'their* identity.

My social, historical, cultural and ideological affiliation with the study population informed my position that participant confidentiality and anonymity was a high level requirement of the research. I am very conscious of the fact that my place within the community does not finish when the research is complete. To ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity I provided participants with a pseudonym (usually the code such as C1P1) during the interview itself, and then assigned a fictitious name during transcription.

Furthermore, participation in a formal research interview can influence the kinds of information that participants impart. I noticed at least on one occasion where a participant began to utter the term Gubba, but instead opted to use the more politically correct term 'white people'. Although participants were reassured that they would not be identified in any report, this particular participant chose to alter her choice of words, perhaps because she was aware that she was participating in a tape-recorded interview.

Various researchers have pointed out the importance of 'insider' research, including the contribution an insider can make to the research process. For example 'insiders' have a

wealth of knowledge that outsiders are not privy to (Rooney 2005). They have intimate knowledge of the local culture which provides them with "an assortment of complex behavior including ways of knowing, attitudes, and modes of communication" (De Andrade 2000 p.283) which is crucial to the kinds of information participants impart in the formal research interview. Furthermore, it has been argued that respondents may feel comfortable to openly talk if they are familiar with the researcher (Tierney 1994, cited in Rooney 2005) which will often result in the collection of rich data.

Insider scholars of 'colour' and 'gender' are often more attuned to the complex psychological makeup of people who have experienced racial, gender or class discrimination (Foley et al 2000). And given that an insider researcher has similar experiences of the study population, they are familiar (to various degrees) with the ontology, worldview and various perspectives of the community. This can influence researcher determination and motivation to study the population, which indeed shapes the analytical process and consequently the findings or results of the study. This determination and motivation has been described in the context of education where 'insider' researchers go beyond simply documenting inequities and barriers, with the focus moving from the study of oppressive practice to the study of success (Foley et al 2000).

'Insider' researchers, in general, have networks already in place which may assist in community support for the research, recruitment strategies, and appropriate referral processes. Certainly, this was the case in this study as minimal negotiation was required to post a flyer at the various Aboriginal organisations in the community and in addition, minimal effort was required to negotiate support for the research from various Aboriginal organisations in Nowra.

My insider status informed the *act* of research (Kahuna 2000). That is, race or ethnicity was mediated through insider status, and was therefore constructed, becoming a central dynamic in the research process (De Andrade 2000). This in conjunction with my extensive knowledge of the local culture played a pivotal role in the dynamics of the interview where "[c]ommon folkways, linguistic anachronisms, and cultural traditions naturally emerge[d] in and influence[d] the relationship" (Kanuha 2000, p.442). These became profoundly engrained in our interactions because we have shared cultural ways (Kanuha 2000) which ultimately enhanced the authenticity and value of 'insider' research study. For these reasons insider research is a valuable approach to empirical research.

On the contrary however, there is a substantial literature which questions the rigor of 'insider' research. Positivists have argued that the 'insider' approach compromises the validity of the research project because the insider researchers' involvement in the community renders him/her unable to exercise objectivity (Rooney 2005) and detachment (van Heugten 2004). Perhaps one knows too much, is too similar or too close to the project (Kahuna 2000). This debate has been traced back to the qualitative/quantitative divide. For example, the term validity is better suited to studies grounded in the positivist tradition and is not really appropriate for qualitative studies aligned with the constructionist epistemology. Thus, the concept of validity is "dependant on ontological and epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality and truth" (Rooney, 2005, p. 15). And given that the positivist tradition is premised on the idea that objective truths and meanings exist independently of human consciousness (Crotty 1998), it therefore, asserts reality as an external objective phenomenon. In contrast the neopositivist and/or antipositivist perspective posits that no researcher can exercise complete objectivity and postmodernists have argued that an 'objective truth' does not exist, but rather, that reality is the product of individual consciousness constituting multiple truths (Rooney 2005). This is a methodological dilemma that has received some attention in recent times. Van Heugten (2004) describes how she has overcome methodological dilemmas in her qualitative study by drawing on perspectives from postmodernism. It has "helped free [her] from the subjective-objective dichotomy, and encouraged [her] to attend to context and process, rather than content and 'fact' finding" (van Heugten 2004, p. 215). This study adopts constructionist perspectives which is well suited to qualitative studies; especially those that aim to understand human population from their perspective.

3.7: Summary and conclusion

In this study I have positioned myself as an insider researcher and have described how this status has assisted in the collection and analysis of qualitative data, as well as the important issues of ensuring that participants are not identifiable in any published reports or presentations. I have described my important role as a community member and how this status does not change at the conclusion of the study. I have also described how this research in the Shoalhaven Aboriginal community has followed the NHMRC guidelines for research into Indigenous communities. Ethical approval to conduct the research was obtained from three sources: the University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee, The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council and the Arwon

Aboriginal Elders Corporation.   The research utilised a qualitative methodology and adopted in-depth interview techniques to answer the question 'how do urban Aboriginal people make and remake their identity?' Participant consent was obtained in writing prior to the conduct of the interviews. The interview material was recorded on audio-tape and then transcribed in full. These transcripts were then analysed using thematic and narrative analysis techniques. In the next chapter, I present my finding from a thematic analysis and in Chapter Five I present my findings from a narrative analysis.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ABORIGINAL IDENTITY CONCEPT

The participants in this study constructed an Aboriginal identity in the formal research interview by drawing on elements of culture from a variety of sources. However, the primary sources they had drawn from were traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture and historical and contemporary Western culture. When drawing on these elements of Aboriginal and Western culture, they reproduced the culture of Aboriginal marginalisation which they experienced and had internalised over their lives. The telling of experience became the vehicle for the expression of identities. Drawing on the culture of Aboriginal marginalisation provided the means to construct Aboriginal identity as a problem.

In this chapter, I present findings from a thematic analysis and display these findings over a series of four dominant themes which characterise the essence of the Aboriginal identity problem. These are: 1) claiming an Aboriginal identity (linking the personal to the social); 2) sources of belonging to an Aboriginal collective (positive markers for Aboriginal identity); 3) consequences of the social on Aboriginality (constructing a marginalised Aboriginal identity); and 4) description of the impact of marginalisation on the sense of self. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the culture of Aboriginal marginalisation emerged as a prominent feature of the participant's talk, which has played a vital role in the construction of the Aboriginal identity problem. There are similarities as well as marked differences in the telling of the experience of marginalisation which are in part modified by intergenerational or timing factors. These will become apparent. I provide a summary of each point and make an evaluative statement.

4.1: Claiming an Aboriginal identity

All participants in this study claimed an Aboriginal identity using terms such as 'Koori', 'Black', 'Black Fulla', 'Murrin', 'Aboriginal', 'Indigenous' as well as several traditional Aboriginal names:

> I am a Murrin, or a Koori Black Fulla (Jeremy C2)
>
> Well I'm Koori, Aboriginal (Michelle C3)

> I'm an Aboriginal person (laughs) (Frank C3)
>
> My blackness in me, right, my Aboriginality in me, is the way I've been brought up that you care and you share (Shirley C2)
>
> I consider my self a Gwyeagal/Woronora man, which is South East Sydney, makes me Eora, as a clan group, Tharawal speaking language, and a Koori, South East New South Wales of Australia (Bruno C2)
>
> My identity is sorta like who I am as an Indigenous person within this country (George C2)
>
> Me? I identify as an Aboriginal, Koori Fulla (Joe C3)

I consider these terms constructions of 'Aboriginality' which is an umbrella term used as a marker for identity. These words for Aboriginality are used interchangeably throughout this thesis. 'Fella' spelt with an 'e' is commonly found in the literature, and the pronunciation of this term is accentuated with the 'e' sound. However, the pronunciation of this term in the local culture accentuates the 'u' sound and as such I have spelt this term with the letter 'u': 'fulla'.

Claims of Aboriginality were present despite there being potentially competing sources of identity. For example, seven of the participants mention their mixed descent status:

> Well, I'm Koori, Aboriginal, but I also acknowledge that I'm, that I have ancestry from Scotland and Ireland and China (Michelle C3)
>
> My identity sort of takes up a whole lot of different things, with Scottish, Aboriginal, Irish, Chinese and it's a bit of everything (Jeremy C2)
>
> We've got English and Irish and Aboriginal (Mimi C1)
>
> If you look at my situation, there is not only Aboriginal heritage there. There is also Scottish heritage, Irish heritage and part Chinese, ok? (George C2)
>
> Just in the last two generations, my heritage is white New Zealand, Welsh, Australian and Koori (Bruno C2)
>
> I mean gosh we got Chinese, we got Scottish, we've got, you name it we've probably got it (Sandra C3)
>
> I was born in, in the Northern Territory like, with a full blood mother, European father (Martha C1)

The participants have *acknowledged* descent from other cultural groups such as Scot, English, Maori, Chinese or Welsh, however they *claimed* an Aboriginal identity.

Evaluative Statement 1: The participants acknowledge their mixed descent; however claim only an Aboriginal identity.

4.2: Sources of belonging to an Aboriginal collective

Participants perceived themselves primarily as Aboriginal cultural beings and had drawn on Aboriginal culture in an effort to express this sense of self as Aboriginal. This also provided them with a sense of belonging to an Aboriginal collective. Sources of belonging to an Aboriginal collective were positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept and were understood by participants as a mixture of elements of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture. These are 'spirituality', 'descent', 'socialisation', physical characteristics', 'pride' and 'respect'.

4.2.1: Being Aboriginal is internal: descent, spirituality, pride and respect

The participant's claimed Aboriginal descent in a variety of ways from being born Aboriginal to claims that their parents were Aboriginal. In this sense they inherited Aboriginality by virtue of descent:

> I was born Aboriginal (Shirley C2)
>
> Both [my] mother and father [are] both Aboriginal (Mimi C1)
>
> My mother and father were both Aboriginal and their parents before them were Aboriginal and they were from around the local area so, therefore that makes me Aboriginal (Reggie C1)
>
> My parents are both Aboriginal too [pause] so, you know and I've grown up always knowing that I'm Aboriginal (Michelle C3)
>
> The way I feel, like I feel in my heart that I am Aboriginal and just knowing that I can feel who my people were, you know who my blood family were (Martha C1)

Aboriginality also involves a feeling which they described as being inside:

> My identity comes from how I feel. It's an inner sense of who and what I am (Bruno C2)
>
> The way I feel, like I feel in my heart that I am Aboriginal (Martha C1)
>
> I just know it, because I know when it's right and I know when it's wrong. That's how I know. I can feel that. And I think and it's just inside you (Sandra C3)

This internal feeling was often described as a form of spirituality, though many participants found it difficult to fully explain in words:

> That's what I think is so special about being an Aboriginal person because there's always that affinity, that spiritual thing…There's always that affinity, that spiritual thing, that you can't kind of explain to people, but that spiritual thing is there, that makes you identify with somebody else in a different, different town or different place in the nation, and that wonderful spiritual affinity and that's because of because of who you are as an Aboriginal person…It's always there inside you, you can't explain it to people it's sort of the - it's ingrained in you spiritually you know about, about your old people and your Aboriginality and who you are (Mimi C1)
>
> [Blood lores are] really important cause that's what makes you who you are. And that's what, that's what helps you identify. That's what helps you accept and [pause] umm not accept, umm, that's' what makes you [pause] find the road that's your journey. Do you know what I mean? It's like your, your - I don't know, it's hard for me to explain (Sandra C3)
>
> [Aboriginality was given to my children]…from birth. It's natural. I can't explain that, but that's just natural. You've got it from birth when you're born (Frank C3)

George provided more detail of the spiritual significance of being Aboriginal, describing the significance of birth, place and Aboriginal cultural practices:

> The thing is that when a person is born, in that, in this country of birth, ok, and that placenta's buried within that country, of what that new child is born, then that's a part of its, umm, part of your umm, your, ahh,

cultural acceptance I suppose, or your, or a part of your dreaming in respect to that land (George C2)

George does not use the term spirit or spiritual but rather 'dreaming' which is a Western word used to try to explain Aboriginal perspectives on the creation of the universe. The Western understanding of this concept is of a spiritual place of significance in which Aboriginal spiritual beings dwell.

Participants also made links to traditional Aboriginal tribes, clans or totems in constructing their claims to an Aboriginal identity:

My father was a tribal elder of the Wandandian people on the South Coast (Mimi C1)

I consider myself a Gweagal/Woronora man, which is South East Sydney (Bruno C2)

We're [participant names totem] I was in the right area doing the right thing with mum, and because it's all our language right, and *[traditional Aboriginal name for totem]* comes from around this way too, as well as the, the Yuin, all Yuin and Monaro mob (Jeremy C2)

Our totem being *[traditional Aboriginal name]* and the surrounding area where, where the *[traditional Aboriginal name]* are right, the*[traditional Aboriginal name]*, and it comes down like umm from nature, from like, breathing and you know and the way our life is and, and the way it becomes a part of the earth, and what's surrounding us surrounding us, surrounding us and it comes down not because it's a law that's written in umm in like, like in a tablet or words or something, it's a lore that becomes a part of your life, because, because it's in your blood, its hard to explain (Sandra C3)

My language *[traditional Aboriginal name]* (Jeremy C2)

Respect was another component of urban Aboriginal identity and a criterion for Aboriginality in general:

I was always brought up to respect my old people, my, my ancestors (Mimi C1)

> Because I'm an Aboriginal and I'm in Australia my first priority is based on the respect, or tries to be based on the respect of this country (Jeremy C2)

> We live as Kooris. Like we have extended families, we're very close, we umm, share things, we accept, like our grandmother and our uncles and have respect and (pause) yeah things like that (Sandra C3)

> We're black until we take away all of our good stuff that we had in the first place. We got respect there…You gotta respect the mother earth, cause everything you see, everything you see in here is all made from the earth regardless. And if you think about it and you try and think of one thing that's not made from the earth. And you can't can you? So, you gotta respect the earth. I got taught that at a young age, so. I got taught that at a young age. You gotta respect the earth, yourself and other people man…a respectful, strong Aboriginal person who respects others, themselves and the land that he walks upon bra[4]. But you know a person who looks after his whole family [pause]. A person who's got respect from everyone, no matter how old...it's one of the main ingredients of being an Aboriginal (Frank C3)

These findings suggest that the criteria for urban Aboriginal identity include 1) Aboriginal descent, 2) spiritual affiliation, 3) a link to traditional Aboriginal culture, 4) the ability to trace Aboriginal community/clan/tribe, and 5) respect. These elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept are underpinned by pride in their Aboriginal heritage. These are positive elements of the Aboriginal identity concept. How they have been shaped is discussed in more detail below.

Evaluative statement 2): The participants display pride in their Aboriginal heritage.

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[4] When the term 'bra' is used in the local culture it refers to 'brother'. Another words used in this context is 'bros',

4.2.2: Resources for shaping positive constructions of Aboriginal identity: socialisation and place

Socialisation is a prerequisite for identity construction because, in generic terms, human identity is learnt from experience with culture that permeates society. Several participants mentioned the notion of identity as a learning experience:

> Well it's a growing experience. It's a, you know, you've got to learn who
> are (Sandra)

> I find that I am always learning about who I am (Michelle)

Participants commonly used terms such as 'being raised' or 'brought up' and 'living the Koori lifestyle' in this context. The use of these terms primarily referred to socialisation within the family setting. This is important because human identity development is constantly shaped by experience with culture. However, culture made available during the initial stages of life is a key resource for constructing identities in later life, as demonstrated in my findings here. The participants commonly referred to childhood experiences when asked about their identities. Importantly, individuals such as parents or parent figures have passed on culture through a socialisation process and they have become 'significant others' that have influenced participants' sense of identity.

> My dad's been the major influence on me. He's, he's you know, the
> most significant part of my belief structure comes from my father…he's
> had the strongest influence on me… My dad keeps telling us that you
> need to get back to culture because that's where the answers are…I feel
> that I owe my loyalty to my Aboriginality, you know? (Michelle C3)

> Well that was handed down to me see, from my father, from my dad …
> inside in our makeup we are all the same, and that's what dad used to tell
> us all the time, and that's why we always, we, we never sort of umm, was
> never ashamed of who we were … it's sort of the it's ingrained in you
> spiritually you know about, about your old people and, and your
> Aboriginality and who you are, and ahh, and I think dad used to drum
> that into our heads all the time and that's why it stayed there (Mimi C1)

> I had more protection from dad see and mum you know (Jeremy C2)

> Mum rubbed off on us and because mum rubbed off on us, she used to
> always tells us. "You know, Shirley, you're just as good as anybody

else." But if dad would have rubbed off on us, we would have been like daddy. You know. We'd have been shame and frightened of white people you know and never ever stick up for ourselves … Our mum rubbed off on us, and if she hadn't of done that, we'd have been like all these other black fullas, frightened and shy and shame and whatever. But because we was brought up to think that was just as good as anybody else, I think that's why, you know, that's why we survived more and went a long way I reckon … I learnt a real lot from my nan, because she used to take me to bible school, and she taught me about caring and sharing, you know (Shirley C2)

Grandfather always told us we were never any different, from white people you know, if you cut me open, I'm gonna bleed red blood just like they are. So I never felt different, you know I never had that feeling of umm, being different (Sandra C3)

At other times childhood socialisation was linked to a preference to claim an Aboriginal identity:

We respect our white ancestors but to us, umm, it's that Aboriginal side that we identify with because, ahh, that was where all our learning came from (Mimi C1)

I wasn't raised as a Welsh person, I wasn't raised as an Australia, I wasn't raised as a New Zealander, I was raised as a black Australian … I was raised Koori. So I am Koori (Bruno)

I am a Koori because I live as a Koori (Sandra C3)

Critically important is that participants do not claim a Welsh identity or a New Zealand identity because they have not been socialised as a Welshman or New Zealander, but rather have been socialised as an Aboriginal person in an Australian context which prompted the claim of a preferred Aboriginal identity. Thus, Aboriginal identity claims emanate from socialisation in an Aboriginal community and it is this socialisation process that they have drawn from to refute other identity claims. This suggests that socialisation in an Aboriginal urban community is a prerequisite for Aboriginality. Frank combined notions of descent and socialisation when he was asked why his children were Aboriginal:

> Cause they've got my blood in them that's why. And that's [pause] cause
> they, they live the Koori life (Frank C3)

In the quote below, Sandra makes the point that her son can claim an Aboriginal identity through descent, even though her son's father is 'white'. She draws on ideas of socialisation (way of life) and spirituality (blood lore) to evidence these Aboriginal identity claims. In this sense socialisation is much more important than descent.

> It's about your way of life and I'm his mother. So his blood lore is my
> lore so, as far as I'm concerned he is, he's black, he's Koori (Sandra C3)

Several of the participants explicitly linked socialisation with 'caring and sharing', which is understood to be a cultural trait of Aboriginal communities:

> My blackness in me, right, my Aboriginality in me, is the way I've been
> brought up that you care and you share, you know and that'll never ever
> leave me…I've always brought my kids up to care and share (Shirley C2)

> The love and sharing and caring, you know they're all there … It was
> alright cause I had a good upbringing so, my mother stayed home and
> looked after me (Frank C3)

> I was always brought up to respect my old people, my ancestors (Mimi
> C1)

> To live as an Aboriginal, to live as a Koori, to live within your
> community as a um, accepted Koori, which means that I'm involved in
> Koori things, I promote Koori things, I umm, try to help Kooris to help
> themselves and that (Sandra C3)

The participants described how they, in turn, make Aboriginal cultural resources available to their children. Thus they have become significant others to their children.

> I teach them every aspect of being black. They're black that's it (Frank
> C3)

> I've always brought my kids up to care and share (Shirley C2)

> I bring the children up in a Koori way of life, cultural way of life (Sandra
> C1)

Place was also considered an important component of Aboriginal identity:

> I'm from this country, this is my identity and I have a stronger affiliation with the Aboriginal perspective of this place rather than the English version (Jeremy C2)

> I've grown up in Australia. I was born here. My parents are born here. They're both Aboriginal, you know and I've always learnt and I've always known that I'm an Aboriginal person (Michelle C3)

> Land is so important to us, belonging to that land, caring for that land and then caring for us. I see that as a very large component of identity, more than biology, much more (Bruno C2)

Understanding the concept of belonging to land is a feature of identity that is learnt from socialisation. Through the use of the term 'biology', the notion of descent is again determined as an insignificant component of the Aboriginal identity concept. However, in a profound way several participants referred to elements of their Aboriginal appearance in relation to the issue of identity. This appearance is understood as linked to Aboriginal descent:

> I'm the person who makes me who I am. I got my black body, [laughs] my black nose, it's distinguished out in the world, bra. How every individual looks … Hey, I look at me. My skin is black to me (Joe C3)

> I've grown up always knowing that I'm Aboriginal. I've always been told that I am and, ah, I think that I am, and I believe that I am and [pause] I, ah you know, I think too that I look like I am, as well, you know (Michelle C3)

> Howard is getting darker, Brett's dark, is getting darker, you can tell he's Koori. Hayley, you can tell she's Koori, 'cause she getting dark in the face, Bronwyn pretty fair (Frank C3)

Data presented thus far demonstrates that Aboriginal identity claims are linked to several sources including Aboriginal descent, internal feelings and socialisation in an Aboriginal community. However, the issue of Aboriginal descent was somewhat contested by the participants as some suggested it was significant and others not in relation to Aboriginal identity claims. Ironically, some participants claimed both. There was no disagreement on the significance and importance of socialisation in an Aboriginal community, which is a key element of the urban Aboriginal identity concept they have learnt. In particular, the participants have acknowledged that they have been influenced by significant others

including their parents. They understand the role of the parent in passing on the Aboriginal identity concept and certainly they see themselves as significant others for their children.

Evaluative statement 3): The participants are advocates for the preservation of Aboriginal identity.

4.2.3: Linking to traditional Aboriginal culture: cultural continuity

> I am the original and I'm a Koori that was there for 65,000 years … as a cultural group we lived in harmony with everything for 60,000 years. That's unheard of on a world scale for the whole of human history (Bruno)

The participants claimed an Aboriginal identity by claiming cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal cultural practice. In many cases, cultural continuity gave the participants a sense of Aboriginal identity. Such practices included artwork, hunting and ceremonial practice. In most cases, these aspects of cultural continuity were articulated as important aspects of teaching children.

The arts were integral components of traditional Aboriginal society, ranging from painting, to dance, to the manufacture of traditional Aboriginal instruments. The participants reported various aspects of traditional Aboriginal society and linked these to their contemporary cultural practice:

> Practically there's stuff like artwork, umm, music, dance, umm, you know, ceremony, that's, that's the practical side, where you sort of you can do something to, to express your Aboriginality (Michelle C3)

> Even just taking kids out and teaching them to track. How to cut down a didge, find a didge, cut it down make it into a didge, you know, it's empowering them because it's giving them pride in their identity. "This is mine. This is a black thing. This is a Koori thing" (Bruno C2)

> I got taught to paint in gaol so, [pause] good way to, you know, make the time fly by, I started painting and I got pretty good so, I do bits of painting here and there, I teach my kids sometimes, when they're by themselves (Frank C3)

> I went with the old people from the desert, it took me about 14 years
> before I could get my lore painting [ceremonial body paint] back (Jeremy
> C2)

Some participants claimed to continue traditional Aboriginal hunting and gathering
practice in contemporary times:

> I try to teach [my children] about food out in the bush, you know fruit,
> berries, you know what I mean? (Joe C3)

> Because our old people told us about bush tucker and bush medicines
> they were really umm, they helped, us, helped our people, umm, when
> we couldn't go to doctors and things, cause you would go out and get the
> old bush medicines and, and you've have that you know, or you'd go and
> kill rabbits or go and fishin'. We were fortunate 'cause we lived by the
> sea and mainly our survival was from the seaside, and umm, that was
> very good cause umm you always had that good food (Mimi C1)

> My white New Zealand grandfather, he was raised by the Maoris as a
> young fellah. He came to Australia to live with the Kooris, and he learnt
> the Koori ways, and this is a man that was 70 years older than me when I
> was little, so he knew how to teach me how to hunt and fish (Bruno C2)

> I teach them how to paint, umm, taking them fishing and that, like I said;
> getting pippies, oysters, crabs (Frank C3)

Pride in traditional Aboriginal culture and practices were articulated in many ways,
including the various examples of continuing traditional Aboriginal cultural practice.
However, doing Koori things in contemporary society is influenced by Western culture:
contemporary equipment such as fishing rods, fishing lines and stainless steel fish hooks
are used. The connection is nonetheless made, which shows that participants possess and
display strong pride in their Aboriginal heritage.

Prior to British arrival, Aboriginal people practiced dance for ceremonial purposes. Due to
the diverse nature of Aboriginal communities during this time, ceremonies were unique.
However, it is commonly understood that Aboriginal people wore ochre paint on the body,
and danced to the accompaniment of instruments such as didgeridoo, clap sticks,
boomerangs, chanting and singing. Even though the didgeridoo was found only in the
northern parts of the Australian continent soon after British colonisation, it has now

become an accepted traditional Aboriginal instrument for many Aboriginal groups in Australia. Several participants mentioned the contemporary practice of traditional Aboriginal dance:

> They're Aboriginal, you know, Aden and John, they like to do their traditional dance and travel around everywhere doing traditional dances and that (Martha C1)

> My Aboriginal lore, dancing lore (Joe C3)

> We are involved with taking the language, the local language back into a primary school where I come from, and we are involved with teaching dance with some of your mob[5], at the schools (Bruno C2)

Accessing traditional Aboriginal cultural elements included mental and spiritual elements of traditional Aboriginal culture. These involved the recognition and identification of traditional Aboriginal spiritual artefacts in contemporary times, for example the practice of ceremony:

> We do ceremonial stuff or dance or music or art, that is me. I'm an Aboriginal woman, you know, and so my Aboriginal woman for me [is] to identify the strongest link with that (Michelle C3)

> I love going, like, going, like, doing like, women's, umm, ceremony and stuff and that's, that's sort of umm, it's very, umm, like it sort of umm, it makes me like, feel better about myself and being Aboriginal. I love going to that women's ceremonies, 'cause that's when we can really self express, ourselves (Martha C1)

> I'll wake up, 12 o'clock every new year just with a gum tree, ah old stringybark and just say, you know, thank you for the oxygen for the year, and that's it, you know. And then I see myself as a -, being true to what I believe in by doing that … I think ceremonies important anywhere like, Christians, or the Catholics, you know will use, if they see, that the only why they can convert everyone is by making them do their ceremony they'll go all around the world to do that (Jeremy C2)

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[5] In the local culture it is appropriate to refer to different Aboriginal groups, tribes or clans as 'mobs'.

Jeremy's statement about family structures which describes the relationship with totems is spiritual in nature. He also explained that family structures are lores and languages and importantly are still valued today. He described how his Aboriginal family status - through totems and lore - gives him automatic family status in other parts of the country:

> Aboriginal identity is about family structures … If you was, say, *[traditional Aboriginal totem]* here right, you'd be *[traditional Aboriginal totem]* still up in the Territory. … We're under the *[traditional Aboriginal totem]* lores and we are under the *[traditional Aboriginal totem]* languages, so we are automatically family when we walk in there (Jeremy C2)

Several participants made comparisons between traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture. The notion of lore was mentioned by all participants except Shirley. Bruno draws on traditional Aboriginal social relationships to claim an Aboriginal identity:

> Spirituality to me is a way of life … We also had traditional laws were meant not to be broken for the betterment of the tribe, but our lore is the traditions, our dreamings, our songlines, our song cycles, our belonging to mother earth as opposed to owning it (Bruno C2)

Accessing elements of culture from traditional Aboriginal society included giving children totems and Aboriginal names. The participants themselves have become significant others.

> Both of my kids names, they're, they're lore names. By lore names I'm saying, I mean names from the land. Like *[traditional Aboriginal name]* that means *[traditional Aboriginal totem]*. Or *[traditional Aboriginal name]* means daughter of the *[traditional Aboriginal totem]*. You know what I mean? My sons name is *[traditional Aboriginal name]* (Joe C3)

> I'll put it this was to you: Just say this, little language, I'll say one thing right *[traditional Aboriginal name]* my daughter's name is *[traditional Aboriginal name]* means *[traditional Aboriginal name]* (Jeremy C2)

Participants proudly claimed an Aboriginal identity indicating that it was internal, emanates from spiritual feeling and is difficult to explain. In addition, they had drawn on elements of traditional Aboriginal culture to make claims of an Aboriginal identity. Importantly, these were claims of cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal practice and included hunting and fishing, dance, artwork, ceremony and giving their children

Aboriginal names, lore names and totems. Although the participants do not live the hunter-gatherer lifestyle (as a means of food production for survival), they claim cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal cultural practice, which not only gives them a sense of self as Aboriginal but also reinforces pride in their Aboriginal heritage.

Cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal practice plays a much more important role than simply reinforcing participant's sense of self or of pride in Aboriginal heritage. It is also a means of cultural reproduction for the preservation of urban Aboriginal identity. The participant's have become advocates for Aboriginal identity preservation and their vision is that this can occur through teaching their kids to continue traditional Aboriginal cultural practice. Learning to paint is essentially learning how to do Koori things and this is where the participants have played an important role in maintaining the urban Aboriginal identity concept through the generations. For example, Frank made Koori painting culture available to his children, Joe and Jeremy gave their children Aboriginal names and totems and Bruno often takes Aboriginal children to teach them how to make a didgeridoo. These various forms of passing on of Aboriginal culture to children also has the potential to pass on a pride in Aboriginal heritage.

Evaluative statement 4): The participants claim cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal culture to construct positives versions of self. This also reinforces a sense of pride in their Aboriginal heritage, which also ensures the preservation of the urban Aboriginal identity concept.

4.3: Consequences of the social on Aboriginality: constructing a marginalised Aboriginal identity

Although the participants saw themselves as Aboriginal cultural beings continuing the practice of traditional Aboriginal culture, they also acknowledged themselves as part of a broader Aboriginal collective in Australia. Claiming membership of an Aboriginal collective is a crucial component of the construction of the Aboriginal identity problem because Aboriginal people are understood as the most marginalised and disadvantaged group of people in Australian society. This is where broader discourses of Aboriginality have played a major role. All participants drew on the macro culture of Aboriginal disadvantage and marginalisation in a variety of ways which are documented over the remainder of this chapter. Some participants described Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage and claimed that identity:

> So few Kooris own or are buying a house compared to other people. We die 26 years younger than anybody else. Our basic level of education is about year eight (Bruno C2)

> We are not on an equal sort of ground with mainstream Australians … We have less money, you know. We're disadvantaged in schools, in health, you know in everything … I've been unfairly treated because I'm Koori … I think women are marginalised, too, you know, as well as Aboriginal people, so being a woman and being an Aboriginal leads me, I find … it makes me feel like it's harder to achieve stuff … They're using their material, you know, wealth to measure how well they're doing in this competition. When it comes to material wealth, Aboriginal people aren't doing so great (Michelle C3)

A culture of marginalisation created a hierarchical social order which located Aboriginal people at the bottom. This created a two-world construct: an 'Aboriginal world' and a 'White world' which participants used throughout the interview. Traversing these different worlds was described as problematic.

> We were in the urban situation and that's totally different from being in the tribal situation, and you had to live with that and sometimes I think it was, sometimes I think it was very sad really in one way because those old tribal people were protected in some sense cause they weren't affiliated with the white man's world and his ways (Mimi C1)

> Education: It's a very large priority with me. Family ties, the ability to live as I want as a Koori, but also exist in the mainstream world. They're the basic priorities that I have …It's a real problem for Kooris to live in both worlds (Bruno C2)

> My identity is who I am as an Indigenous person within this country, and the problem with when one was trying to find its true identity, is that I sorta like found myself as a half-caste or quarter-caste Aboriginal person betwixt between two different cultures, with the traditional [Aboriginal] people and European people (George C2)

Marginalisation was also implied and embedded in participants' life situations which were the direct effects of Australian government policies of assimilation and segregation. These policies were focal points of their experience of colonisation and for some this included

personal experience. This distinction is important because participants located in C1 and C2 told stories that occurred during their childhood in missions, reserves or tin shack settlements. Since these places had boundaries which segregated Aboriginal people from the broader population, their stories about their childhood experiences effectively became stories of disadvantage and marginalisation. For example, several participants reported that the mission was typically managed by a 'white' administrator.

> The manager had total control. And ah, he was the law in the, in the, on the reserve. It didn't matter which reserve it was, La Perouse, Wreck Bay, over at Jerrinja, down at Wallaga Lake. Wherever there was a manager he was the law … Even their own relatives couldn't come in and visit their families on the mission here without having to get permission first and then when they did come in, the law written up under the Aboriginal protection thing, where visitors were only allowed in between the hours of nine and five. And if you, over-stayed after five o'clock, 'cause we had a gate up the road there then and that was locked so, if you was caught in here after five o'clock, the manager could call the police and have you arrested and charged for trespassing (Reggie C1)

> They were dreadful days living on the mission, with a white manager, supervising you and he was like, umm, sometimes, some of them was like old Hitler, like the Gestapo, 'cause they looked down on the people too, they didn't sort of want to do anything good with the people (Mimi C1)

Aboriginal camps were erected by Aboriginal people on the peripheries of the major townships so they could access employment opportunities:

> [My parents] weren't even semi-skilled, they had to take whatever work they could find and mostly on the south coast it was either in the saw mills or you went and worked in the fields in the paddocks picking beans and peas, digging scrubs and pulling corn and then the seasonal work, and it only happened in the seasons and in the winter months you just sort of had to survive (Mimi C1)

Since Aboriginal people were not legally permitted to live in 'proper' housing amongst the wider population, segregation became the expected norm.

> Back in my day, we were all together as a, as people: you either lived on the mission, or you lived in camps just outside the town, you're a fringe dweller or you lived in the bush, you know in a humpy (Mimi C1)
>
> When I was little I lived in the camps (Martha C1)

Descriptions of the tin shack settlement provided the stimulus for mental images of daily life:

> When we lived in tin shacks we never had electricity. We had candles and lamps and … there was one tap for about ten shacks, so everybody just used to get the water from the tap and bath in front of the fires, we never even had a bathroom or nothing (Shirley C2)
>
> It was a tin shack made out of tin, kerosene tins and bags and on the walls and dirt floors. No, we didn't have lino, we had a dirt floor and, only two little rooms … and all the family had to sleep in the one room and you laid on the floor and I only had one bed. But, one thing we did have, we had that beautiful old big open fire, and that's why a fire is very important to our people cause it did everything, it kept you warm in the winter and you could have a bath in the big old tub, by the fire side, and cook the meals on the old camp oven, boil the billy … I couldn't imagine too many white people living like that, but our people had to live like that or you was in a tent, you lived in the tents and they was very, very … what could I say … you couldn't get any better and you lived like that, but we were happy (Mimi C1)

Segregation was not restricted to housing but occurred across the spectrum of social institutions:

> When I was born, Aboriginal women weren't allowed to go into the local hospital to have their babies. That's why I was born in Crown Street Women's Hospital in Sydney … When we went to the movies, the Aboriginals were only allowed to sit in the couple of front rows in the movie theatre. They weren't allowed upstairs to mix with the white people upstairs … As we got older, Aboriginals still weren't allowed to go into the pubs and have a beer (Reggie C1)

> We weren't allowed to sit back stalls in picture halls, it was always front stalls (Jeremy C2)

> A couple of years where I spent in Darwin before I came to Sydney, at the picture theatre you know, when the full bloods had to sit on the floor, like in the front. But us, like, we could sit in the seats because we were coloureds. They used to separate the coloureds you know, that's what they'd call us - coloureds - from the full bloods (Martha C1)

> No Aboriginal person was allowed in any pub or club in Nowra … I used to be a member of South Sydney Juniors, and that, these clubs [in Nowra] would fit in that over and over and over again. And yet I come down here and I couldn't get into Nowra or Bomaderry Leagues Club 'cause I was Aboriginal (Shirley C2)

Although Aboriginal people were segregated from the broader population, they were permitted to apply for an exemption of Aboriginality certificate. Reggie recounted how his grandfather was required to produce this certificate every time he entered licensed premises:

> Even though the publican knew him for years, he still had to produce that certificate of exemption every time he walked in the door. Otherwise he wouldn't get served (Reggie C1)

The exemption of Aboriginality certificate was referred to by Aboriginal people as a 'dog tag' or 'dog collar', because those who applied for it were considered to have betrayed their Aboriginal cultural heritage:

> You seen your fathers out wearing dog tags (Jeremy C2)

> I've still got my grandfather's dog collar, when he signed away his identity, identity in the fifties after fighting in two world wars as a human equal, and coming home back to Australia and couldn't get a job, couldn't buy a house, couldn't walk in and have drink with his mates at the pub (Bruno C2)

Missions and reserves were built as a result of government policy which aimed to fulfil a broader initiative to fix the 'Aboriginal problem'. These effectively removed Aboriginal access to traditional Aboriginal cultural practices, thereby contributing to the cultural assimilation of Aboriginal people. They also legitimised the negative treatment of

Aboriginal people within the social hierarchy. This informed the attitudes and behaviours of white Australian citizens towards Aboriginal people. The resulting stereotypes and stigmas played an integral role in participant constructions of the Aboriginal identity problem. However the construct of caste was a key element and in many cases participants refused to use these terms as authentic markers for Aboriginal identity:

> We were taught that we were half caste Aboriginals (Martha C1)
>
> I found myself as a half caste quarter caste (George C2)
>
> You know, you can't say you're half and half, you're a half caste or a quarter caste, cause they were stigmas that the gaa, that the white man put on the Aboriginal people … Even though my skin is very fair and a lot of people don't believe you're Aboriginal, but it's not the colour of your skin that matters, it's what you are inside (Mimi C1)
>
> You're a quarter caste, half caste, what part of you is that? Your big toe? What part of you is white? You know it's not about that. It's about your way of life (Sandra C3)

Thus a criterion for urban Aboriginal identity did not include the requirement to look like a 'traditional Aborigine', and whilst I earlier documented that some participants claimed to look Aboriginal, others denied the link between physical characteristics and Aboriginal authenticity.

> [skin colour] doesn't mean shit mate (Frank C3)
>
> It is so ridiculous in the sense it's not the shape of your nose, the thickness of your lip, or the colour of your skin, as I said when we started my identity comes from how I feel. It's, it's an inner sense of who and what I am (Bruno C2)

Stereotypes and stigmatisation of Aboriginality were described as channeled through society and in the form of white citizens' attitudes and behaviours towards Aboriginal people:

> All white people talked about was dirty blacks, you know. It was never - there was never ever anything good said about Aboriginal people … The stories you heard in town about Aboriginal people, they was dirty blacks …, the way people talked about Aboriginal people, dirty blacks, drunks and swear and all this and that (Shirley)

> Stereotyping from the justice system, from the department of education,
> from the health department, from just mainstream society has been a
> major problem in my life (Bruno C2)

The historical unequal social arrangement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia have become resources for stories of marginalisation and disadvantage. The participants accessed this resource to tell stories of childhood socialisation, which, in effect, were accounts of the personal experience of formal policies of segregation, and of marginalisation. Participants located in C1 and C2 offered accounts of marginalisation through stories of experience of life on missions, reserves or Aboriginal camps. These policies shaped participants' identities by allowing, restricting or denying Aboriginal people access to certain social sites in Australian society, resulting in discriminatory treatment. These sites that were available to them - the mission, reserve or tin shack settlements – were, one might say, endorsements, of marginalisation.

Participants located in C3 were born after the 1967 referendum, and thus had not experienced formal policies of exclusion. Segregation of Aboriginal people, however, did continue after the 1967 referendum in several communities (such as those in the Northern Territory). Nonetheless, in most cases the referendum did mark a dramatic change in government policy towards Aboriginal people. It was certainly viewed by participants as a significant turning point in the colonial history of Australia:

> It wasn't until 1967 that our people were given the right to vote anyway.
> We couldn't vote before then, we were nothing. We weren't even as
> human beings as far as the Australian government was concerned. We
> were nothing. If you couldn't vote within your country then what was ya?
> You didn't have no privileges and that's not very long ago, 1967 (Mimi
> C1)

> If we look back over 216 years of colonisation it was only since 1967,
> when Kooris were first allowed to vote up to 2005[6] (George C2)

After 1967 formal policies of segregation were phased out and the Australian government focused on integrating Aboriginal people into mainstream society. They introduced the

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[6] This interview was conducted in the year 2005

assimilation program for this purpose. For some participants it resulted in relocation to an outer western suburb of Sydney:

> From the shack - when I was 13 I think, or 14 - we moved to Sydney and lived there for oh about ten years I think …We was the first ones to move in the assimilation program (Shirley C2)

> We were one of four families who were the guinea pigs to assimilate into a white man's society … We went from an old tin shack to a beautiful four bedroom home (Mimi C1)

Several participants reported instances of the practice of the forced removal of children from their Aboriginal parents, known as 'the stolen generations':

> They took a lot of the kids away because they didn't consider their home life to be good enough (Sandra C3)

> The welfare took me first and then, I didn't know where they were taking me and they took me to Darwin, to Katherine, and then I stayed a couple a days at the convent in Darwin there before they, every week they used to have this like, mail planes that used to fly over every week so they put me on that to go over there (Martha C1)

> My dad come off a mission … and in those days the welfare used to chase him all the time, him and his little brothers and sisters and they'd always have to run from the welfare (Shirley C2)

Participants with no direct experience were nonetheless vocal in their condemnation:

> You know, like kids … to me, didn't have to be taken away to be umm [pause] you know like taken from their parents, all they had to do was educate in this sort of society (Jeremy C2)

> As far as I'm concerned, he [former Prime Minister John Howard] is a redneck. No because if he, if he has to say sorry, then he's probably got to compensate all these kids that's been taken by the welfare (Shirley C2)

> My children haven't been taken away, I wasn't particularly taken away. I wasn't a stolen child and I have been shut aside because of my mouth, but, I still see the results of what happened in my grandchildren today. Because it is passed on through me, through my grandparents and through their great grandparents, etc. (Bruno C2)

Participants' accounts of assimilation mainly referred to the period immediately after the referendum. The change in policy affected Aboriginality, though in less obvious ways than segregation policies. All participants, not just those that experienced mission life reported instances of discrimination, prejudice and racism. At no point in the interviews did I ask for specific stories about the experience of racism. However I did ask several participants what it was like to grow up in Australian society as an Aboriginal person and they spontaneously made general statements about racism, discrimination and prejudice:

> There was a lot of discrimination against Aboriginal people and in rural towns (Mimi C1)

> Well, many years ago in Nowra there, we had a lot of prejudice against the Aboriginal, the local Aboriginal [people] (Reggie C1)

> Nowra was a racist town (Shirley C2)

> There was just so much racism around it wasn't funny (Jeremy C2)

Others referred to specific personal experiences:

> I grew up in the times when there was prejudice around a, the place and umm, our people weren't getting a fair go in the earlier days, I, I, umm, experienced some of that myself (Reggie C1)

> You were called Abos and niggers and, and awful names like that (Mimi C1)

> It didn't really worry me when I was young, until I moved out country New South Wales, and then, you know it, you know it was a bit racist out there (Frank C3)

Some participants experienced stereotyping from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people:

> it was only when I got older and I went to high school and I had the white people calling me Black and the black people calling me white (Sandra C3)

> Cause I get it from both sides, too white to be black, too black to be white. So I see my own people are doing just as much damage, especially to those that are just finding their identity (Bruno C2)

Several participants perceived racism and prejudice as ongoing occurrences:

> I still believe much of the government policies are very racist, they're just disguised very well, they're couched very well (Bruno C2)

> The discrimination, the racism is still there. Underneath it is very subtle but it is still there. And I defy anybody who says it's not. And as for Mr Howard saying there's never any racism in Australia I think he's gotta learn a few history lessons. Change his mind. It was always there with our people that racism and its bad (Mimi C1)

> I'm putting up with a lot of racist bullshit … I've been copping racism out here since I fucking started here. It's bullshit (Joe C3)

> As far as I'm concerned there will always be that bit of racism here, no matter what (Shirley C2)

> If I ring up to rent a house, or a flat, I get the keys and can go and have a look at it, but as soon as they know I'm Aboriginal, I rarely get the keys or something (Bruno C2).

A consequence of participants' claims of membership of an Aboriginal collective is the internalisation of a culture of marginalisation which includes a history of discriminatory policy and practice. Participants articulated this unequal treatment in terms of racism, prejudice and discrimination. This, coupled with a common understanding that Aboriginal people are the most disadvantaged group of people in Australia, are resources that the participants access to construct identity in the formal research interview. My findings revealed reports of first person experience of government policy which discriminated against Aboriginal people. Importantly, my findings also show that participants continue to subscribe to the two-world construct in their telling of personal experiences of racism, prejudice and discrimination. Thus, they have reproduced the structures of race which continues to inform identity construction processes. However, their interpretations of colonial history subvert the conventional telling which is reconstructed by non-Aboriginal Australians as a proud achievement.

Evaluative statement 5: the participants draw on a culture of Aboriginal marginalisation which is a result of a British imposed two-world construct.

4.3.1: Influence of colonial history

The development of a sense of identity occurs via experience with elements of culture that permeate society. One powerful influence on culture is the history of place. The colonial history of Australia shaped the identity of participants, who drew on this history in conversation with me, thus shaping the identity construction process in the formal research interview as well. They have experienced and internalised elements of this culture during their lives, storing these in their long term memory; on recall, these become *significant life events* and *life histories.* Importantly, when participants referred to colonial history they primarily focused on the negative treatment of Aboriginal people and suggested rationales for this negative treatment including the negative connotations of the 'black' construct derived from the structures of 'race'.

Two participants referred to Captain Cook's landing in Botany Bay in 1770, which is a significant event in Australia's colonial history:

> When I looked at a tree I seen that the tree had never changed since Cook landed … It's been here before Cook (Jeremy C2)

> This country was built on a penal mentality and it hasn't changed from those colonial days when Captain Cook first put his foot here (George C2)

Events such as these continue to be culturally reproduced in other ways as well. Jeremy used the term *'terra nullius'*, which was a term used by Cook when he laid claim to the land:

> See, a lot of things that really hurt us is the fact that they'll go and claim the land under *terra nullius,* you know, and next minute you know they're digging up all the wealths from the place (Jeremy C2)

Participants linked the development and implementation of policy that restricted the movement of Aboriginal people in Australian society to theories that underpinned the colonial mindset. These have become inscribed in common sense processes and in participants' stories of identity:

> I see a lot of things out there that people do with Darwinian Theory and all this (Jeremy C2)

> There's always gonna be survival of the fittest isn't it? It's good ol' Darwin's theory. Whoever the most powerful, is gonna survive (Sandra C3)

The racial classification system played a role in the historical treatment of Aboriginal people. It was arranged hierarchically, with European or British cultures at the pinnacle and Aboriginal cultures at the bottom. Thus, the prevailing understanding was that Aboriginal people were culturally, genetically and intellectually inferior to those of British and European origin. Whereas such ideas were used to justify the negative treatment of Aboriginal people, participants used them to refute the cultural, biological and intellectual superiority-inferiority construct. Either way, 'race' was inscribed in participants' talk in different contexts where participants made frequent reference to the negative evaluation of Aboriginal identity. Bruno, for instance, referred to the ways in which language linked blackness with negativity.

> Even our language I perceived 'it's a dark night', 'it's a black lie', 'it's a raging dark storm', we are raised in, in a communication, or a language system, that the colour of your skin, if it's not white, it's a negative thing (Bruno C2)

His siblings had chosen not to identify as Aboriginal because:

> They were raised to think that black was negative, black was wrong, black was dirty (Bruno C2)

Clearly, participants are aware of this negativity and continue to draw from it to construct identity. At the same time, they often used the terminology of 'race' to assert positive constructions of their Aboriginal heritage:

> Our race of people is one of the, umm, most oldest races in the world … I don't know about other, other cultures and other races of people, but I only know about my own, just the closeness we have as a race of people (Mimi)
>
> We're not stupid. We're not dumb. We just happen to be a different race (Sandra C3)
>
> [Building a stronger collective Indigenous identity] … involve[d] being associated and working with all Indigenous races (Bruno C2)

The construct of 'race' clearly emerged in participants' stories of marginalisation as well as in their understandings of the rationale for the negative treatment of Aboriginal people in Australian history. However, identity construction processes were also influenced by culture that evolved in other social contexts. As a result of exposure to these other forms of culture, the participants blend elements of them with personal belief systems.

4.3.2: Blending elements of different cultures

Australia is a multicultural society and participants have experienced elements of many different cultures. Michelle, for instance, says she 'believe[s] in karma', while George referred to Chinese beliefs about yin and yang and traditions within the Muslim and Buddhist faiths. However for most participants, Christianity was the dominant non-Indigenous cultural influence on identity during their early lives. Sandra attended a Catholic boarding school and Bruno reported he had been 'indoctrinated into very orthodox Catholicism'. However, even though elements of these religions were available to all participants, none except Mimi identified as a Christian: 'I am a very strong believer in Christianity' (Mimi C1). Nonetheless, others reported the Christian influence on their sense of identity:

> I'd say it's played a very big role in my life … I was a Christian, but I am not a Christian now. Cause the way I've been brought up to believe in Christianity, right, is that you don't smoke, you don't swear, the fair dinkum, true dinky dye Christians the way … my mum is, you know there's a lot people that say they're Christians they go to, just because they go to Church they say they're Christians. To me that's not being a Christian, its just that I'm from the old school and learnt in a, old, old, old ways … We used to go to Sunday school and we used to always go to Church you know and everybody was, mostly everybody was Christians you know even dad turned a Christian … Me and Jeremy used to sing in the big choirs down at, down in Sydney for the Church, and we used to go to Church all the time (Shirley C2)

> In a lot of ways Christianity, umm, helped me stay on the short and narrow instead of crossing lines that I probably would never have thought of to do or you know, if those lines were open to me maybe I would have. I don't consider it a bad thing, um, you know I'm not, I'm not a umm, a

> Christian - (I) believe in God, but I don't practise like a Christian would.
> I don't go to Church, but I do bring the kids up to believe in God, and we
> grew up and I went to Sunday School till I was 16, but that doesn't make
> me a practising Christian (Sandra C3)

> Even though I was brought up through religion, through the Christian,
> Christian faith, well, me mum's been a Christian all her life and so has
> grandfather, and my uncle's been a minister, umm, I had to find what
> was right for me … I wouldn't know what I know today unless I didn't
> go through that. So it was like a bouncing board to me … I've been
> taught with the Bible. In the old Biblical texts, it says the meek shall
> inherit the earth. I believe in that and I believe the meek are the people
> who are bloody colonised (George)

These elements were commonly blended with traditional Indigenous cultural frameworks
as participants claimed Aboriginal identities. Several commented on the similarities
between an Aboriginal creator and a creator within other cultural contexts:

> If you look at the old lores, they are very similar to the, Judaism laws and
> ahh, a lot of the other, ahh, other, other laws throughout the world you
> know … The dreaming is the same as everlasting life, what they call in
> the Bible, when one dies and goes back to being with one's God ok?
> (George C2)

> The old people in the coast they call him Miriahral and he was, he was
> the great one, and, to them that was God, and umm, so there was
> similarities ahh, between, my old tribal ancestors and my, my, ahh, my
> Christian beliefs and um, and I think it's those things that always made
> me a strong person, who I am (Mimi C1)

In the Aboriginal perspective of universal lore, all religions share a common set of guiding
principles. To help me understand the concept of universal lore George provided an
analogy with Christianity:

> It's not my lore, it's a, it's a lore that was given to us, it's a lore that, that,
> that I cannot, I cannot extract myself from, ok? Because that's the way it
> is. Umm I'll give you a little, umm, Christian version of how I perceive it
> ok? It's like when Christ was crucified on the cross, ok?… When he died

and rose again from the dead, umm, wasn't in a Church, or a tabernacle, but he had to pay the respects by going back into the mother which was a cave to be with the father which was himself, ok?… It's - it a universal thing, outside, outside of, umm, of wicked bloody umm thinking within, within different religions (George C2)

Similarly, Jeremy said:

Christianity … is a younger form of what Aboriginality is … Maybe Western society's based on dreaming tracks too, I don't know, it, it must be if it's within this cycle in this world (Jeremy C2)

Michelle's account of her personal beliefs and practices blends elements of traditional Aboriginal culture with elements of Eastern philosophies:

I don't believe in stealing off anybody, you know, and I don't believe in umm, lying to people, because I believe in my Aboriginal lore where you do something, something wrong is done by you. I believe in natural lore. I believe in Karma and I believe in, I believe in the higher power out there that says, well that's ok, you can behave like that if you want to as long as you understand that that's gonna come back on to, on to you in a different sense (Michelle C3)

Clearly, in drawing on worldviews that have evolved in different cultural contexts, participants are selecting some elements and rejecting others (for example George's 'wicked bloody thinking' comment above). Despite having been socialised in a multicultural society and internalising many elements of Western culture, they also draw on a construction of Aboriginal people as a unique 'race', thus maintaining the 'us' and 'them' mentality and thereby contributing to the reproduction of the structures of race which were used by previous Australian Governments to inform policy decisions. This is important because it provides the necessary resource to reproduce the Aboriginal identity problem. The racial classification system and the associated policies of dispossession and segregation have been used by former Australian Governments to effectively deny Aboriginal people access to traditional Aboriginal culture. I now document participants' perceptions of the impact these policies had on Aboriginal identity in general and then on the identity of the participants themselves.

4.4: Emotional impact on Aboriginal identity

Several participants mentioned the notion of an identity crisis which ranged from the national to a personal identity crisis:

> We're talking about a national bloody, identity crisis, within this country … When I was going through my identity crisis is that I was, I had to go through the loss of ahh, my children, ok, through separation of marriage, I went to gaol a number of times, umm, being incarcerated, ahh, within the prison systems … I had to go through this identity crisis with, with, with, with religion ok (George C2)

> The problem identifying black or white, creates insecurity, creates lashing out, confusion, substitution with instant self-gratification, drugs, alcohol, whatever (Bruno C2)

> The Aboriginal policies that the government brought out, for white people to rear Aboriginal children [pause] and that's when they have identity crisis, and identity problems and it's hard enough growing up, you know, normally you know let alone growing up with umm other identity problems, not knowing who your family is. Not knowing who you're related to. Not knowing, you know who, who you can have relationships with on a male-female basis whatever, because you might be related to them … You even have identity crisis when you, in my situation, where I've had a son to a white person and he has an identity problem, because if it's not his dad and his grandmother telling him that he's half white, you know, he won't be accepted in the Aboriginal community if he goes around saying "I'm half white" (Sandra C3)

Several participants described episodes of personal identity questioning:

> The question was, "Who am I?, What am I? What am I doing here and where am I going?". I know that I've got a dad, mum, brothers and sisters but, the personal thing you, the inner, the inner thing with me was, what's my purpose here? ... I was a walking contradiction all of me life trying to come to terms with who I was (George C2)

> Because we were living with white families, I didn't know I was
> Aboriginal, we used to say no, we are half casts, because that's the way
> we was taught (Martha C1)

Yet others did not undergo this series of identity questioning:

> When it comes to thinking about umm, my Aboriginality I never doubt
> that. That's, that's, that's never ever an issue for me. I don't ever have a
> conflict about knowing that (Michelle C3)

> I had a wonderful upbringing and never had a chip on my shoulder about
> who I am, about being Aboriginal (Mimi C1)

Clearly the nature of Aboriginal identity as it relates to one's sense of self is unique to the
individual and their life history: some have always identified as Aboriginal, others have
found an Aboriginal identity in later life, some experience identity questioning episodes
and yet still others claim to have never questioned their Aboriginality. This shows a mixed
response over the issue of the personal claim of identity.

Participants also commonly described the psychological impact on their identity. This
included the emotional responses to the experience of growing up in a culture of
marginalisation. Such emotions included shame, frustration, anger, distrust, regret,
negative internal feelings and sadness. The theme 'shame' emerged in several of the
interviews. Some participants reported being deeply affected themselves, whilst others
linked shame to the historical treatment of Aboriginal people in general.

> That shame was, part, to me it was the basis to my generation [pause]
> we've had to fight against that shame even myself, because I was raised
> that way. And it's instilled into you from a very early age (Bruno C2)

> They've been taught that in history Aboriginal people were made to feel
> ashamed about being black (Michelle C3)

> Well I tell you, you know I was ashamed to be Aboriginal … I was so
> ashamed I never said I lived in a tin shack. I used to tell them I lived in
> this big farm house …You was ashamed to be, in those days, that's the
> sixties, you was made to feel ashamed …When we moved to Sydney and
> had to - being the only Aboriginal kid in the school that was hard, that
> was very hard. 'Cause you know you, you was made to feel ashamed too
> (Shirley C2)

Shame was not only imposed by the broader 'white' culture, but sometimes also experienced in relationships with other Aboriginal people:

> Some people will come out and then they'll get confronted by their own people and made to be ashamed because they look white, so they disappear back into the mainstream (Bruno C2)

> Well all the other black fullas at school [caused me shame] 'cause they used to skite and say, 'Oh yeah, we got electricity and … taps and bathrooms' and things like that (Shirley C2)

Shirley claims to no longer be ashamed of her Aboriginality. However, when I asked the question "Are you ashamed of being Aboriginal now? Or is it something you just went through back then?" She responded:

> No I'm not shame, but [long pause] well - I don't think you should have to go out there and you know and wear black, red and yellow, and you know what I mean? (Shirley C2)

Although Shirley claims to not be ashamed, she still displays elements of her shame through a reluctance to display pride in her Aboriginal heritage by not wearing the colours of the Aboriginal flag (black, red and yellow). Others reported seeing the shame in other Aboriginal people. For example, Bruno suggested that 'shame job' influenced his siblings' preference not to identify as Aboriginal (as reported earlier) and Shirley reported that shame was a component of her father's identity:

> Dad was too ashamed to even go and ask for a job. My brother was only sixteen and he was the oldest you know, he had to go and ask for a job for dad, cause he was, he wouldn't even ask the white man for a job (Shirley C2)

Shame was also linked to teenage status:

> I was very shame. Being a teenager had a lot to do with it. I mean, if I was younger like my other brothers and sisters, being the second eldest, like, when you are the second eldest, I was older, so therefore I understood a lot more. If I was little, you know you wouldn't have had to worry about having nice things (Shirley C2)

These reports of shame derive from participants' life situations such as living in a tin shack settlement or being born and socialised in a disadvantaged Aboriginal community. For others, shame underpinned an entire generation of Aboriginal people. This construction of an identity of shame is an important component of my analysis because Aboriginal identity claims membership of an Aboriginal collective which has the capacity to allow negative elements of culture to become internalised by participants which in turn impacts on positive constructions of self, thus producing the Aboriginal identity problem.

Bruno reported anger as a result of his life situation which featured an internal conflict:

> The older I got, it became very confronting because I was raised, as I said a private Catholic, white institution and the only Koori kid, umm, made me very violent because I had to fight every day ... So, like, hence a lot of aggression, a lot of anger … directed towards my direct family because they, were still hiding it. They had a, you know there was a, a dichotomy there, there was a, a friction in what was inside me and what I was told to believe and what I was taught to do (Bruno C2)

Martha described the frustration of losing the ability to speak her traditional Aboriginal language:

> I used to talk my own lingo, you know, with, with my family, but they, umm, you know, they took them away from me and I lost all that [long pause) … My old Aunty there up in Darwin, she spoke to me in, in the lingo there once and I, I said "What are you saying?", and she said "Don't you know your own language?". She said "When you were little that's all you ever spoke". … You know, it's frustrating not being able to talk your own lingo, with your own people, you know, you meet your people now and they are, trying to talk to you and you don't know what they're saying (Martha C1)

Martha's status as a member of the stolen generation also had an emotional effect on her children.

> I feel like I haven't acknowledged my mother properly by not meeting her people … It's kinda, it's strange, too, because mum will say you know, that she doesn't worry about it. She doesn't, she's not really thing about it. But with us we, we are we're more, uh, it seems, it seems like,

well, for me it seems like it's really painful for me to deal with that. I've talked to my brothers and they feel like, angry about it … And it's hard too, I think we're all still a bit afraid of how emotionally, um, heavy it's gonna be when we get there (Michelle C2)

Four of the male participants reported incarceration which had impacted on them in a variety of ways including anger, distrust, frustration and loss of family:

I was getting arrested all the time. It just made me more angry and that, towards coppers and white people (Frank C3)

I got to the stage of where I wouldn't trust anybody, I was umm, especially western society you know, because a lot of our history was not pushed through the school books, when I was in gaol I sort of was given history books by [pause] Perkins and whoever, who gave me stuff to show me just what happened all the poisoning around the country, all the murders, how many people were wiped out (Jeremy C2)

I was sent to boys' town at an early age, it institutionalised me very early. Through that anger and frustration, a lot of gaol, addiction, alcoholism, violence. Different, I felt alienated, different from everybody else around me. Didn't know where I felt, sit in, didn't know where I belong, lack of self esteem is a big one, lack of self worth, and basically a chip on me shoulder the size of me head (Bruno C2)

When I was going through my identity crisis is that I was, I had to go through the loss of my children, ok, through separation of marriage, I went to gaol a number of times being incarcerated within the prison systems (George C2)

Negative emotions from colonisation were described as being widespread among the Aboriginal population, both old and young and passed down through the generations.

I certainly still see the anger and the pain in, in the older people (Bruno C2)

My father's an angry black man because of the way Aboriginal people are treated by mainstream Australia … You work on dealing with the hurt that's accumulated, because we carry that too, like, we, we hold, we

> also feel the pain of, of what's happened to Aboriginal people, so we sort
> of have to work on healing, like healing ourselves (Michelle C3)

> You know what the government done is really sad. And from a lot of
> those kids that we had in that hostel, there was a lot of them that tried to
> OD and hang themselves and we used to be running up to the hospital
> with them and all you know, and it's really sad and sometimes we'd get
> so upset me and my husband and we would go home and my husband
> was there one night and he was saying "Shirley you know what? I wish I
> had a big wand so I could wave over all these kids" … They're the kids
> that I reckon that really done it hard (Shirley C2)

Martha reported feelings of deep regret and sadness at having lost contact with her sister
and her failure to achieve emotional connection when they met as adults.

> Well umm, because I didn't sort of umm, grow up with her, I didn't sort
> of really felt anything, which was a bit, a bit strange. Apparently she did
> because she started umm, crying and, and wanted to hug me and, you
> know and, [long pause] … Like, there was no emotion, or nothing
> because, I didn't have that, that sort of, I didn't build that sort of
> connection, you know, because, like being, not being able to grow up
> with, with them and that (Martha C1)

She reiterated her regret later in the interview and blamed the government for these
feelings:

> I just regret not having to go back you know when I left [the mission] I
> regret not going home, going home to meet up with all my, my family,
> my sisters and my brother … I feel terrible because, I should have stayed,
> I should have kept in touch but I never … I feel terrible. That made me
> feel bad, you know? And that and that's how I feel. The Government had
> a lot to do with that at the time (Martha C1)

When asked why she didn't go back she suggested the culture to which she was socialised
for most of her younger life had influenced her decision:

I don't know maybe because that was sort of drilled into me that I wasn't, you know, I wasn't Aboriginal, so I was brought up by the gubs[7] (Martha)

Integration into 'white' society was universally experienced as an extremely difficult process:

In a tin shack you didn't have to pay elec, for electricity or if you didn't have much food you could go and ask aunty or uncle or cousins to help. When you lived, moved to Sydney it was really hard you couldn't ask anybody, you didn't know anybody … I chose to go to *[participant names high school]* high school and being the only Aboriginal girl in the school that was really hard, cause when I lived in Nowra, I used to go to school all my cousins was Kooris. And there was a real lot of people there. But when we moved to Sydney and had to, being the only Aboriginal kid in the school that was hard, that was very hard … It was really good when we lived out there [in the tin shack settlement]. It was happy. Everybody was happy, but when we moved to Sydney and started mixing with white people then it got, then it got a bit hard, 'cause you had to, I mean you had to have white friends or you didn't have no friends (Shirley C2)

We are raised in, in a communication, or a language system, that the colour of your skin, if it's not white, it's a negative thing. Umm, even though I'm well educated and I'm proud to be Koori, I was still indoctrinated to believe that and it was very hard to fight against that as I got older (Bruno C2)

It was hard. It was very hard. Umm, I learnt very early that, ahh, and I think too because of the time that I was young, like in the, in the seventies. You know there's still umm, like, umm, you know I was a child then and I didn't have the understanding that I do now but being a child and not understanding why people, you know look at you and, and judge you as being, you know a sort of, like a stereotype Aboriginal person or Aboriginal like girl, it was sort of umm, it was hard to deal

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[7] Gub, Gubs or Gubba is a term that Aboriginal people use to refer to 'white' people.

> with, hard to, hard to understand why people thought that I was, I could
> be placed in a little box, you know, labeled as this and then that's who I
> am (Michelle G3)

When the participants told stories about their lives, they clearly described the typical Aboriginal experience of Australian society. Crucially, the participants have indicated that this experience was a struggle, and that it has impacted on them in a variety of ways.

The loss of Aboriginal identity was clearly experienced as problematic in many different ways:

> We use Koori words, we cook and eat things that were a part of our
> lifestyle, and we've lost a lot of it which is a real shame (Sandra C3)

> When people have been disrespectful and that, they're not losing all of
> their Aboriginality, they're just losing part of it (Frank C3)

> Those kids have lost their identity and I see that that's creating a really
> major problem for them … Many of our social attitudes and our social
> problems in my community, come from that lack of identity and that lack
> of cohesiveness, particularly with the young ones, our health, our crime
> rates. Umm, the numbers before the juvenile system. Those kids have
> lost their identity and I see that, that's creating a really major problem for
> them … I believe a great large of our problems in Australia-wide is lack
> of respect, both for self and for everybody else at large, especially
> amongst Koori kids, because without that identity, and without that self
> respect, they're not gonna respect other people out there (Bruno C2)

> Unless you really have been involved with all them kids, you, you don't
> understand what it's like 'cause they don't know if they're black or white.
> And that's the way they've been brought up and they don't understand
> nothing. They've been brought up to live a white man's way. And they're
> not white at all (Shirley C2)

The loss of Aboriginal identity over time was attributed to Western hegemony, which was described in terms such as social conditioning or indoctrination:

> [I have been] assimilated into Western society and conditioned to accept
> the values [of that society] (Jeremy C2)

> I was indoctrinated into very orthodox Catholicism (Bruno C2)

> A lot of the Kooris that were taken away and lost their identity was because a lot of them were umm, indoctrinated with stuff … Religious people that came and tried to humanise and [pause], you know, they tried to instill their beliefs on the Koori people and they took a lot of the kids away because they didn't consider their home life to be good enough and that created really big problems with the 'stolen generation' then, because the Koori policies, the Aboriginal policies that the government brought out, for white people to rear Aboriginal children [pause]. And that's when they have an identity crisis, and identity problems. And it's hard enough growing up, you know, normally, you know, let alone growing up with other identity problems, not knowing who your family is … That's how they lose, you know their - their Koori way of life, because, because those white people or whom-, whomever they may have been, they, they would have made them feel like they were heathens, you know and, and outcasts, and, and immorally wrong for what they do (Sandra C3)

Evaluative statement 6: the participants have constructed Aboriginal identity as a problem.

4.5: Summary

The findings from my thematic analysis documented the construction of the Aboriginal identity problem which consists of four themes: 1) claiming an Aboriginal identity; 2) sources of belonging to an Aboriginal collective; 3) consequences of the social on Aboriginality and 4) the emotional impact on Aboriginal identity. I conclude that my thematic analysis has documented the collective construction of an urban Aboriginal identity problem. The participant's use the first two broad themes in a positive sense and thus I considered them to be positive elements of the Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal identity concept. They use the other two themes in the negative, and thus I consider them to be negative elements of Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal identity concept. In addition, they loosely align the positive elements with Aboriginal culture the negative elements with Western culture[8]. When they attempt to reconcile the positive and negative elements they

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[8] I've described these as loosely aligned because there are many exceptions to this finding, such as George's suggestion that the Western system is not all bad and that there are elements of the system that Aboriginal people should use for their benefit. This idea is also produced in other participant's talk, such as wanting children to gain a good education and wanting children to grow up and get a good job.

construct Aboriginal identity as a problem. Thus, the point of intersection between Aboriginal culture and Western culture is where the Aboriginal identity problem originates.

My findings have documented that the participants have explained in detail the nature of the culture of marginalisation which is directly linked to stigmas, stereotypes, and the experience of racism, prejudice and disadvantage. As a result of this experience they viewed themselves as separate from the broader Australian collective, thus subscribing to the 'us' and 'them' discourse which was integral to the development of historical policies, which were designed to control the movement of Aboriginal people in Australian society. This created a two-world construct - an Aboriginal world and a White world – which is a concept that was initially imposed by the British upon arrival, and later reinforced in government legislation. Unfortunately, my finding from this analysis shows that the two-world construct has become embedded in Australian culture and is a prominent resource that participants have drawn upon in conversations in the formal research interview. Crucially, my findings show that when participants had drawn upon the two-world construct they reproduced the 'Aboriginal world' as disadvantaged and the 'White world' as privileged. Thus Aboriginal marginalisation is a key feature of the local Shoalhaven Aboriginal culture.

This is where broader discourses of Aboriginality have played a crucial role, and particularly because negative discourses of Aboriginality were not only talked about by Aboriginal people, and other citizens in Australian society, but more importantly have informed Australian historical policies which legitimated real positions of Aboriginal subordination/white domination. In this sense, the collective construction of Aboriginal identity is unfortunately made, and remade in a process of story-telling of marginalisation which has become a prominent feature of their experience.

Throughout this chapter I provided short summaries and made evaluative statements. I reproduced these here:

> Evaluative Statement 1: the participants acknowledge their mixed descent however claim only an Aboriginal identity;
>
> Evaluative Statement 2: the participants display pride in their Aboriginal heritage;
>
> Evaluative Statement 3: socialisation is a prerequisite for Aboriginal identity;

Evaluative Statement 4: the participants claim cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal culture in order to construct positives versions of self (this also reinforces a sense of pride in their Aboriginal heritage, and in turn, becomes a strategy for the preservation of urban Aboriginal identity);

Evaluative Statement 5: the participants draw on a culture of Aboriginal marginalisation: a result of a British imposed two-world construct.

Evaluative Statement 6: the participants construct Aboriginal identity as a problem.

I conclude that these evaluative statements are prominent elements of the Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal worldview and are necessary strategies for constructing Aboriginal identity as a problem. In figure 6 I present a model of the urban Aboriginal identity concept, which is based on the findings of my thematic analysis.

The Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview is informed by Aboriginal culture and Western culture. The term Aboriginality itself is derived from the British act of naming the original inhabitants of Australia 'Aborigine'. Aboriginality did not exist prior to British colonisation. Culture, history, society and identity constantly evolve allowing participants to adopt and accept Aboriginality as term for self-identity and they have successfully retained a unique urban Aboriginal identity that is sourced from the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview.

Figure 6: Model of Shoalhaven Urban Aboriginal Identity concept:
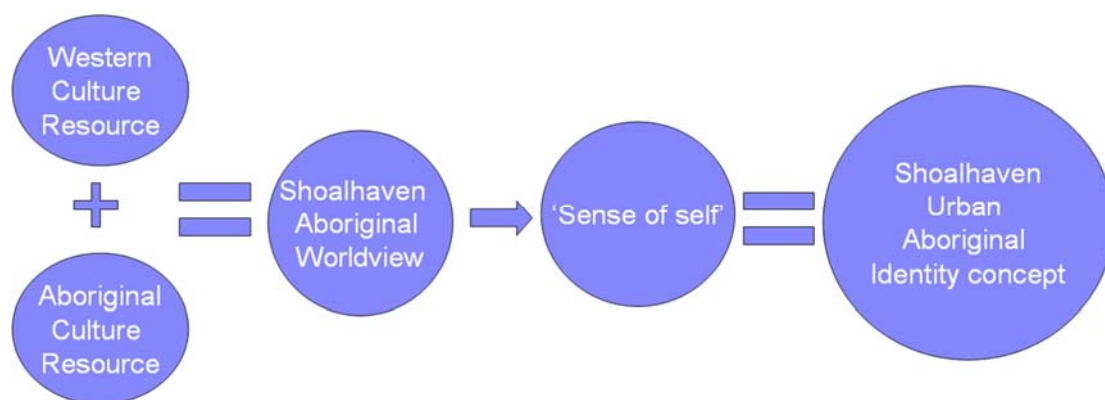
Worldviews consist of morals, values and beliefs and are shared by a community and transmitted from person to person in story form. The worldview is a component of the identity concept, which allows individuals to derive "a feeling of being of primary value, to the extent that they see themselves as living in accordance with the values and beliefs prescribed by the cultural worldview" (Halloran and Kashima 2004, p.915). The participants in this study see themselves as Aboriginal people who live in a contemporary Australian setting (sourced from Western cultural elements of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview) which at the same time is also a land with a rich Aboriginal culture, heritage and lore (sourced from Aboriginal cultural elements of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview). Importantly, my findings have shown that the participants have drawn on the positive elements of the Shoalhaven worldview to achieve a positive social identity (Turner 1999, p.9). Thus, so even though Aboriginal marginalisation is a key component of the local culture, they have managed to express positive versions of self by drawing on the positive sources of the urban Aboriginal identity concept, such as pride, spirituality, descent and respect.

Effectively, my findings from a thematic analysis of transcripts generated from 11 in-depth interviews have documented the Shoalhaven worldview. In the next chapter I show how four participants distinctly craft the Shoalhaven worldview to construct Aboriginal identity as a problem and offer strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage.

CHAPTER 5: STRATEGIES FOR IDENTITY PROBLEM SOLVING

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In the previous chapter I presented findings from a thematic analysis of 11 interviews with Aboriginal people. Utilising thematic analysis methods required breaking the narrative structure in which the themes were embedded. This act of breaking the narrative structure has the potential to alter the meaning intended by the speaker and potentially omit key meaning. I therefore conducted a narrative analysis of four selected cases to compare the findings from my thematic analysis. In this sense, my findings are triangulated. I concluded that the findings from my thematic analysis documented the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview. The findings from my narrative analysis, which are presented in this chapter, document the way in which four individuals distinctly craft the Shoalhaven worldview. The cases presented here were selected on the basis of the strength of the prime narrative.

In this chapter, each interview is treated as a process of unfolding events which constituted a narrative. However, in the first case study I focus firstly on one of Bruno's story of personal experience. In this example, I utilise the narrative analysis model (Labov and Waletzky 1967) to analyse Bruno's account of a sequence of events that occurred in the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages. I show how the application of the functions of Labov and Waletzky's analytical framework provides a much more textured understanding of his _story_. In this example, the participant constructs the Aboriginal identity problem and describes in detail how it has impacted on his sense of self and how it has ultimately influenced his actions. I then utilise the prime narrative model to understand the historical context of the construction of his identity problem and show how the construction of a political identity is a key strategy for solving the broader Aboriginal identity problem.

In the second case study, I show how one participant utilises several genres of narrative (Reissman 1990) to make specific points. I also apply the prime narrative model to show how Joe's talk focuses on his children. I show how passing on an Aboriginal identity to his children are important to him which is also a demonstration of one element of the Shoalhaven worldview: preservation of Aboriginal identity.

In the third case study, I show how Michelle's talk focuses on the emotional impact of colonisation on her sense of self. Crucially, Michelle describes the impact that her

'significant others' - that is, her parents - have had on her sense of self. I show how Michelle's prime narrative is focused more on the impact of colonisation and the problem of Aboriginal identity, than on strategies for solving the Aboriginal identity problem. However, Michelle still advocates for the preservation of Aboriginal identity and advocates for equality.

In the fourth case study, I trace George's resolution to his personal identity problem which he described as requiring the 'pilgrimage or journey'. This is a strategy which involves the process of backtracking to Aboriginal culture which, for George, was the solution to his identity problem. He then suggests that this is a key strategy for resolving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and advocates for its application in the context of the broader Aboriginal collective.

5.1: Case Study I - Bruno's construction of political identities

> I myself have to justify, on a daily basis, why I am proud to be black … I
> was the only Koori kid in the school with 1200 whites (Bruno C2)

Bruno, a 47 year old man, relocated to the Shoalhaven in the mid 1990s. He is one of 11 siblings, is currently single and has nine children. He has been incarcerated for most of the last twenty years. At a particular point in the interview, Bruno tells a story of personal experience that occurred in the Australian office of Births, Deaths and Marriages. I apply Labov and Waltezky's (1967) analytical functions to interpret the *story* in the context of the entire interview and within a broader framework of colonial history.

Throughout the interview, Bruno refers to significant events in colonial history. This is fairly typical of participant's talk in this study. In one particular example, Bruno utilised the 'story' genre of narrative, artfully interweaving personal experience with previous government legislation. This narrative of personal experience is told to make a specific moral point. However, the application of Labov and Waletzky's narrative analysis model to this section of talk reveals much more deeply rooted meaning and understanding of the construction of identity in the formal research interview. In this example, the cultural identity of the teller is explicitly tied to the problems of identity.

5.1.1: Bruno's story

Abstract:

01:     I had a big problem with my identity.

Orientation:

02:     I went to get my birth certificate.

03:     20 years ago

04:     at Births, Deaths and Marriages in Sydney

05:     and the guy said "You gotta go down to Lands and Titles Department"

Complication:

06:     And I said "What have I got to go there for? I'm a, you know, this is Births, Deaths and Marriages",

07:     he said "Well when were you born"

08:     I said "59."

Result:

09:     He said "Well mate you were flora and fauna,

10:     we hold your records down at Lands and Titles"

Evaluation:

11:     That created a problem for me for years.

12:     I still haven't got my birth certificate after 20 years.

13:     I refuse to walk into a Lands and Titles Department

14:     and say "look I'm an animal can I have me birth certificate please?"

15:     and that created internal turmoil.

The application of Labov and Waletzky's functions breaks this simple narrative into 15 clauses below the sentence level. Each clause imparts specific information. In the *abstract* function Bruno has indicated the nature of the topic he is about to narrate. For him, the topic is that he *had* a problem with his identity (note the past tense). However, for him this is not only a problem; it is a *big* problem. The *abstract* function is not yet part of the sequence of events he is about to recount, thus conveying meaning beyond the narrative. It becomes the reference to support his point that he had a problem with his identity (line 01).

The *orientation* function provides the listener with the 'who', 'where', 'what', and 'when' information that is required to understand the point of this *'story'*. This is where Bruno gives an account of a sequence of events which he has personally experienced. He tells us that he went to get his birth certificate (line 02) 20 years ago (line 03) at Births Deaths and Marriages in Sydney (Line 04), and then informs the listener of who was present when the sequence of events occurred (line 05). It can be inferred that the 'guy' is an employee - probably a receptionist - at Births Deaths and Marriages.

The *complication* provides a turning point for the narrative. In this particular narrative the sequence of events was a series of 'turn-taking' conversations between Bruno and a receptionist. Bruno plays the role of 'actor' for both himself and the receptionist and re-enacts the conversation that took place 20 years ago. Bruno asked why he was required to go down to the Lands and Titles Department (Line 06) and after a sequence of turn-taking conversations, the receptionist asked for Bruno's year of birth, to which Bruno responded "59" (referring to 1959). At this point in the narrated events, the listener's attention is captured; they invoke interest causing the listener to want to hear more of the story. Yet the story remains unresolved up to this point in the narrated events.

In the *result* function Bruno has described the resolution of the *'story'*. As a part of the sequence of events that had actually occurred, Bruno states that the receptionist said "Well mate you were flora and fauna" (line 09) "we hold your records down at umm, Lands and Titles" (line 10). At this point the recapitulation of the sequence of events at the office of Births, Deaths and Marriages ends.

Bruno's *evaluation* of the story is significant because it allows the listener to gain a sense of the teller's opinion and feelings about the narrative. It informs the listener of why he is telling this story. He restates the problem earlier identified in the *abstract* function: "that created a problem for me for years" (Line 11). Bruno then goes on to explain that after 20 years he still has not retrieved his birth certificate (Line 12). This suggests that Bruno has developed a political personal identity which will not permit him (morally) to attend the Lands and Titles Department to retrieve his birth certificate. He interprets this act as an acceptance of the inference that he is an animal (line 14). Bruno evaluates this narrative for a second time: it has "created…internal…turmoil" (line 15). This is the third statement he makes about his personal identity problem (line 01, line 10, and line 15).

Based on these transcripts, I have concluded that Bruno has indicated that he has experienced a personal identity problem. He uses one particular story of personal experience to exemplify this point. However, his use of past tense in the *abstract* function (line 01) implies that his identity problem is no longer an issue. But as the narrated events unfold it becomes clear that an identity problem still exists for Bruno. He later claims he will not go to the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages to collect his birth certificate. Thus, this has not only impacted on his identity in the past, but rather continues to impact on him in current times and may do so into the future. He may never retrieve his birth certificate from the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Thus, the possession of a political identity may continue to shape his attitude and behaviour and may not change unless of course his political stance changes. I conclude that the construction of a political identity has become a key feature of Bruno's sense of self. The intriguing point here is, however, that the production of a political identity had become a controlling mechanism in regards to personal attitude and behaviour.

Evaluative statement: Bruno has constructed Aboriginal identity as problem.

Although analysis of this story demonstrates the way in which Bruno's political stance has influenced his attitude and behaviour, further analysis of other sections of the transcript provides clarification and confirmation of the meaning conveyed in Bruno's personal account. It also captures the interaction between researcher and participant, providing a more in-depth understanding of identity construction in the formal research interview. This interaction needs to be considered a crucial aspect of the meaning-making exercise, and thus the point of the *'story'*. In the next section, I therefore focus on the 'flora and fauna' statement (line 09) Bruno made. At this point of the analysis, and from my presentation of

this *'story'*, the 'flora' and 'fauna' statement may not make sense to those who do not have a shared understanding of the historical processes which included former Government legislation that controlled the movement of Aboriginal people in Australian society and denied their rights as citizens. I now look to a holistic interpretation of this *'story'* in the context of the entire interview, which highlights the significance of the 'flora and fauna' statement in the context of broader colonial history.

Displayed below is a turn-taking sequence of conversation that occurred immediately prior to the telling of the *'story'* of Bruno's experience in the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Note that the end of clause 009 in the following transcripts is line 01 of the *abstract* function in the above narrative.

Bruno:

001   The kids are our future.

002   But we've got to stop fighting as adults and concentrate on the kids.

003   Give them a chance.

004   Give them their sense of identity.

005   Give them positive role models.

006   We've only been human beings for 37 years, 38 years now,

007   but look at what we have achieved

Researcher:

008 So you mean we have only been regarded as humans.

Bruno:

009 Under Australian law (ok) I went, right, I had a big problem with my identity

The first five clauses are related to children and positive role models, which is one of Bruno's solutions to the broader collective Aboriginal identity problem. Bruno believes

education and role models are crucial for the preservation of urban Aboriginal identity as I explain later. In clause six, Bruno states "we've only been humans for 37, 38 years now". Bruno consciously and deliberately subscribes to the discourse that marginalised his people by making the statement that his people were *not humans*, rather than only *regarded as not humans*. He offers the story of personal experience in the Births, Deaths and Marriages office as evidence to convince the listener of this point.

These two separate pieces of talk (although one immediately precedes the other and could be considered the same section of talk) are linked by a commonality. This is in the "we've only been human beings for 37 years, 38 years now" statement (line 006) and the "Well mate you were flora and fauna" statement (line 09). To understand the narrated events both 'teller' and 'listener' must have an understanding of the historical context in which Aboriginal people in Australia are situated. If the listener (or the reader of this thesis) is not aware of the significance that the 1967 referendum had on shaping the nation's identity and, more pertinent to this study, Aboriginal identity at the local level, then the narrative might not make sense. The 'flora and fauna' statement is commonly understood as the status of Aboriginal people in broader Australian society prior to the 1967 referendum. Thus, since Aboriginal people were not citizens, they must have been considered flora and fauna. These narrated events reveal Bruno's construction of Aboriginal identity as problematic within the broader scheme of things. However, the production of a political identity has become a strategy to solve his personal identity problem.

Evaluative statement: the production of a political identity is a strategy to solve Bruno's personal Aboriginal identity problem.

Thus far we can ascertain that Bruno has constructed a political identity by drawing on elements of the marginalisation of Aboriginal people in an Australian historical context. This political identity is directly related to his perceived identity as an urban Aboriginal person. However, Bruno is an individual with a unique life history, like all participants in this study, and all people in general. Analysis of the entire transcript revealed key moments in Bruno's life. These are key moments which Bruno has opted to tell in the formal research interview and are resources that have contributed to his sense of self. In effect, they show how his political identity developed.

5.1.2: The story-as-told of Bruno's political identity

In this section, I adopt the theoretical insights of Barrie and Mathieson (1998) and apply the prime narrative model to show how elements of Bruno's political identity features in several of the stories he tells in the interview. In this sense it is an autobiographical account.

Being raised white

In response to the first question in the interview 'tell me about your identity?' Bruno informed me that he and his siblings "were all raised white" by their mother. The rationale Bruno offered for this was in story form. He opts to tell the story as a re-telling of his mother's experience:

> My mother was asked in, in the family law court about ten years ago, why she raised 11 white kids, why she never told us, and her answer to the Justice, well the family law court system was, if I raised my kids in the fifties and sixties and told, said that they were black, they've got nothing. They were pushed out of the schools. They were pushed away from opportunities that other kids had.

Finding Aboriginal community in later life

Finding an Aboriginal community in later life was one resolution to an aspect of Bruno's identity problem. Bruno describes the essence of this process:

> I always stood up and said I'm Koori, but being comfortable with being Koori was not part of me for many years, for many years. I think identity [pause] is made up of so many issue; whether it's background experiences, culture, social conditioning, economics, education - there are so many things that make up your identity for who you are. I believe it wasn't until I was well into my adulthood, that I came to a sense of who and what I was, and that was only completed when I once again found my community and my family and was taken in.

Experience of incarceration

Bruno described his experience of incarceration and institutionalisation which began when he was a young child:

> I was sent to Boys' Town as uncontrollable, because I didn't like school,
> I'd rather go with my grandfather hunting and fishing, I wouldn't wear
> shoes, so I was sent to Boys' Town at an early age. It institutionalised
> me very early. Through that anger and frustration, a lot of gaol, addiction,
> alcoholism, violence. Different - I felt alienated, different from
> everybody else around me. Didn't know where I felt, sit in, didn't know
> where I belong, lack of self esteem is a big one, lack of self worth, and
> basically a chip on me shoulder the size of me head … I've spent nearly
> 20 years in gaol. Since I found my family and found my community, ,and
> I'm talking blood family, I haven't been to gaol in 12 years, and I don't
> look like I'm ever gonna go back. It made a difference to how I perceive
> myself as a person, knowing that I was accepted where I came from

Political statements

As the interview progressed it became more and more apparent that Bruno was a highly
political individual. His political stance influenced an advocacy for Aboriginal equality.
This informed conscious decisions to reject elements of Western culture:

> I was raised as a black Australian … I am not an Australian person, I am
> a Koori. I say that I am not Australian … I don't want to assimilate into a
> white world. I am black. I had no need to assimilate into a society that
> doesn't have the same traditional values, concepts and spiritual beliefs
> that I had, that my people had.

Building a stronger collective Aboriginal identity

Bruno's political stance informed several strategies he proposed to solve the Aboriginal
identity problem in the broader community:

> I don't see that there is any political party that gives a shit about the black
> vote, 'cause there's not enough, enough of us, and we don't get together.
> If we got together as one voice, and they are gonna lose 220,000 votes, I
> think they'll listen and we'll get a voice.

'Yarning up' with other Indigenous people throughout the world was another political
strategy for building a stronger Aboriginal collective:

> The more our identity is discussed, the more that we yarn up about it and
> get together as a cohesive unified force, our identity will become a very,
> very, very social and political weapon, as I said on a national and
> international [scale]

Bruno described the importance of education for Aboriginal children:

> I encourage them to use their identity, in a positive way. "You're Koori,
> you're black. What would be a good thing for you as a Koori to do?"
> Quite often I will lead them around to education.

He also described how teaching children to have pride in their heritage by doing traditional
Aboriginal cultural practice was empowering:

> I take them out to the old people and they learn traditional culture and
> traditional lore, and traditional methods. Even just taking kids out and
> teaching them to track. How to cut down a didge, find a didge, cut it
> down make it into a didge, you know, it's empowering them because it's
> giving them pride in their identity. "This is mine. This is a black thing.
> This is a Koori thing."

The importance of teaching children pride is linked to education, and again for political
purposes:

> I think that as more Kooris get educated and the more that we get
> together and talk, our identity on the whole would become a very, very,
> very strong political power in Australia, and give us a voice of unity. It
> will make the changes that we have been trying for, for a long time

The following interaction between researcher and participant demonstrates Bruno's
political stance:

Bruno:

01:     We also learn from other people who have been fighting this battle for longer than
us and have achieved more.

Researcher:

02:     So like a sense of experience with colonisation?

Bruno:

03:      Yes. And I would use the word invasion, but yes, a collective sharing of past experiences with invasion.

His choice to use the term invasion rather than colonisation demonstrates a rejection of process of colonial expansion. Furthermore this is not only a rejection of the British colonisation of Australia, but rather is a demonstration of the rejection of the broader colonisation process that many different Indigenous people have experienced. It is this experience of colonisation that provides a common experience, thus informing a collective Indigenous identity.

At a later point in the interview Bruno indicated that his political perspective was always a part of him, just that he was not aware of it:

> I've never thought of myself as political before, but I realise now later on,
> that I have probably been political all my life.

In this first case study, I focused on the evaluation function of Bruno's talk to gain his perspective on the story. He explained on three occasions that he had a problem with his identity. I concluded that Bruno produced a political identity to resolve the identity problem. In a profound way, the construction of a political identity was a result of the influences of Western culture but that which also provided a solution to the identity problem. Thus the construction of a political identity was a strategy to resist, deal with, and resolve Government treatment of Aboriginal peoples. However, his telling of this perceived resolution has severely impacted on Bruno, and again, as evidenced in this telling, continues to impact on his identity in negative ways.

This story was told in the broader context of the interview. I looked for meaning beyond the narrated events and upon further analysis was able to understand the reason Bruno told this particular story. He was making a moral point: to reinforce the point that Aboriginal people were treated unfairly and unequally in Australian society. Furthermore, an accurate interpretation of this story was also contingent on a shared knowledge of the socio-political history of Australia. In particular, Bruno utilised the terms 'flora and fauna' which in the context of the interview, are directly associated with the 1967 referendum which represented a landmark change in policy regarding the restriction of movement of

Aboriginal people in Australia. Bringing together the concepts mentioned in the narrated events and legislation, it gives the researcher a better understanding of the society that informed those policy decisions. This story also revealed how his political-mindedness has influenced his current attitude and behaviour as well we his perception of future forms of attitude and behaviour.

Over the course of the interview, Bruno's political stance is illuminated, and this characterises the information he imparts in the interview. Although all participants are advocates for equality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia, Bruno's ideas were more politically-focused than others, as other participants seldom offered such views to resolve the issues of Aboriginal marginalisation. Following the evolution of Bruno's political stance is straightforward. Significant events that occurred in his life history include 'being raised white'; 'finding Aboriginal community in later life'; 'experience of incarceration'; 'making political statements' and the suggestion of 'building of a stronger collective Aboriginal identity' as a resolution of the broader problems of Aboriginal inequality. These have shown the extent to which the construction of an Aboriginal identity problem has influenced Bruno previous attitudes and behaviours. In addition, it also brings to the fore a potential to influence his current and future attitudes and behaviours. In this sense, the construction of a political identity, albeit a reaction to the negative treatment of Aboriginal people, could very well continue to cause Bruno identity problems in the future.

There are, however, positive aspects of constructing political identities which become practice strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage. Such strategies include the building of a stronger Aboriginal collective identity which could potentially lead to the loss of 220,000 votes; yarning up with other Indigenous peoples; Kooris getting educated; teaching children to have pride in their identity; teaching children how to do traditional Aboriginal cultural practice. These suggested strategies are all politically oriented so that "our identity on the whole would become a very, very, very strong political power in Australia" (Bruno C2). Clearly, Bruno has a preference for maintaining the two-world construct which was also a strategy solving the broader problems of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage.

Evaluative statement: the production of a political identity is a strategy for solving the broader issue of Aboriginal marginalisation. Profoundly, the construction of a political

identity is culturally affirming. It also maintains the two-world construct without the marginal feature.

5.3: Case Study II - Joe's narrative of the importance of Aboriginal culture to identity

Joe (C3) is 31 years of age. He is a father, currently employed and in a relationship. Earlier attempts at analysis of this transcript revealed that he experienced racism, and, via the utilisation of the *story* genre of narrative, he provided in-depth detail about these experiences. The first *story* of racism occurred at his place of employment. The second *story* of racism occurred at the Coles supermarket which involved an interaction with the security guard. My analysis revealed that Joe made evaluation statements in both *stories* and that both evaluations were directly oriented to his 'kids'. After noticing that Joe's evaluations of these *stories* were oriented to his children, I decided to test for the frequency of his use of the word 'kids' and documented the context in which these were produced. My subsequent analysis revealed that the experiences of racism played a vital role in the development of the prime narrative: the importance of Aboriginal culture. I first describe how the prime narrative emerged and then present elements of the transcript to evidence this.

The first question asked in the interview was 'What is important to you?' The response to this question indicated for things. These were: 1) life in general, 2) his children, 3) the mother earth and 4) the destruction in the world at the moment. Later in the interview Joe was asked what was the most important thing to him at that moment? His response was:

> Yeah my kids. Yep. My kids. MY KIDS. [laughs]

It is very clear that Joe's children are important to him, and perhaps this is attributed to the current stage of his life course. He is a young male with several young children, and works to provide for his family. Analysis of the remainder of the transcripts uncovered the frequent word 'kids' and 'lore'. 'Lore' is loosely associated to aspects of Aboriginal culture and beliefs, including the notion of 'mother earth'. I identified the use of the term 'kids' on many occasions; however, my analysis of the entire transcript revealed that these terms appeared in different contexts throughout the interview. Joe predominantly utilised the *story* and hypothetical genres of narrative (Riessman 1990) in this process. I now

present seven stories where the term 'kids' have emerged. I have titled each story according to the evaluation function identified by the '*(e)*' symbol italicised.

Story 1:   in tune with nature

Story 2:   Teaching kids how to fish

Story 3:   Teaching kids about (bush) fruits berries

Story 4:   Perseverance of racism at work

Story 5:   New seeds means life is about them now

Story 6:   I understand life better now so I can teach my kids better

Story 7:   My kids have LORE names and will protect them

Point 1: In tune with nature

Prior to telling Story 1, Joe committed himself to making a point about being aware of signs in the weather: a concept he introduced. Before I present this story, I firstly display a series of turn-taking conversation which occurred immediately prior to the telling of this story.

> Researcher: So tell me about your identity.
>
> Joe: My identity? Me as a Koori fulla or?
>
> Researcher: Yeah well is that…what do you identify with?
>
> Joe: Me I identify as an Aboriginal, Koori fulla, yeah. I identify with, you know, you know with the land. Me personally you know?
>
> Researcher: With the land?
>
> Joe: Yeah
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> Joe: It's everything about the land, you know what I mean? If I, if I see something funny in the weather you know, I react with that. If I see something different with the animals I will react with that.
>
> Researcher: What do you mean by that? Have you got an example?

Thus far we see that a series of turn-taking conversation has taken place. Analysis of the transcript at this point of the turn-taking exercise reveals that Joe identifies with the land and claims an Aboriginal identity. It does not provide in-depth information regarding the importance of these claims. However, all of this preamble is an integral part of the story of Joe's identity and only focusing on this section of transcript imparts superficial meaning. This preamble does, however, play a much more significant role in the co-construction of Aboriginal identity across the entire interview. As a result of this turn taking exercise, Joe has introduced the notion of begin acutely aware of the weather and animals and in that process has committed himself to this point. When he is asked to provide an example of this he offers a hypothetical story. At this point we can assume that Joe could not think of a specific event of personally experience.

Line 01:   Yeah ok, just say like, out of the blue right you'll have a
            nice day, you know

Line 02:   and then from out of the blue this cloud will just come
            around from nowhere.

Line 03:   To me that's telling me something, you know what I mean,

Line 04:   *(e)* so I know I gotta change shit straight away for that day
            you know what I mean, if my kids are outside…

We see that the hypothetical narrative has ended with the key reoccurring word 'kids'. In this sense we can assume that inclement weather has the potential to harm his children. Thus, Joe has told a hypothetical narrative (Reissman 1990) to make the point that he is acutely aware of weather patterns. Being acutely aware of weather patterns was an integral part of Aboriginal survival prior to the British colonisation of Australia, and Joe has committed himself to telling his story of Aboriginal identity by drawing on this traditional Aboriginal resource. As the interview continues, Joe retells a sequence of events in which he walked a vast distance late one night. The reason he walked this long distance was that he had had an argument with his partner. After Joe finished telling this *story* he stated:

then the next day I went fishing and I caught seven tailor, a flounder, a
good size flounder, a good big pound lad, better than what you buy in the
shops down here anyway (laughs) you know? I, I was cheering man

I then asked Joe if he 'goes fishing a lot' and he introduced the second story:

Point 2: Teach kids how to fish

Joe:

Line 05:   I go fishing as much as I can or whenever I can.

Researcher:

Line 06:   Is that important to you?

Joe:

Line 07:   (e) For me it is yeah, because that's what my father taught me how to fish, out at long nose there. Fish for Groper.

Line 08:   And his father taught him to fish there for Groper and so on and so on, you know what I mean?

Line 09:   And at the moment I'm teaching my kids how to fish too.

Line 10:   We went out, what, about two months ago, my daughter there Sally, she caught a fish down Paringa there.

Line 11:   The first time I took her down there. (True) she caught a big umm nigger fish, black fish. Yeah. Hey daught?

Sally:

Line 12:   Yeah a deadly one. I still remember

Joe:

Line 13:   Pulled it up by herself and all (laughs)

Line 14:   (e) I had a little tear rolling from my eyes there (laughs) yeah.

In lines 07 to 09 Joe indicates that fishing is important because it has been passed down from parent to child for at least two generations. Joe has utilised the *story* genre which makes his point more believable than the hypothetical genre. In classic Labovian fashion Joe provided orientation information by describing the 'who' (himself and his daughter) 'where' (at Paringa), 'what' (fishing event) and 'when' (about two months ago). In the

evaluation of the story (line 14) Joe indicates the importance of this *story*, albeit not explained in actual words, but rather a description of the effect it had on him: 'the little tear rolling from his eye' statement. This suggests that it was an emotional experience for him. When such conversations occur it is common that no other evidence is offered to confirm that the reported events actually occurred, however Joe's story is further substantiated by the presence and input by his six year old daughter. She has added to the conversation confirming the accuracy of the reported events that occurred two months ago.

In line 12 Sally indicated that the fish was 'a deadly one'. The meaning of the term 'deadly' in the context of the local culture is comparable to terms such as 'excellent' or 'great' rather than something that was poisonous and life threatening. In this sense Sally was expressing pride in catching such an 'excellent' or 'great' fish. This shows that an accurate analysis of Aboriginal English is contingent on a well nuanced understanding of the local lexicon.

Immediately following the *story* of fishing, Joe told another story about finding a veggie patch in the bush. This time he told a hypothetical story.

Point 3: Teach kids about (bush) fruit and berries

Line 16:   Yeah I have to teach them you know what I mean? It's not only shops where you can get food from, you know what I mean? That's what I think anyway. You know what I mean

Line 17:   I try to teach them about food out in the bush, you know fruit, berries, you know what I mean?

Line 18:   Not only that, it's just, you know what I mean, you might be going past, when you're kids … and you're in the middle of nowhere and you're hungry hey?

Line 19:   You come across the old veggie patch or [laughs which makes it inaudible]

Line 20:   you know and munch into the lad hey?

Line 21:   You know, then, you know, that, later on that night your guts ache.

Line 22:   "I told you not to eat that many [laughs] yeah."

Common features between the 'fishing' narrative and the 'veggie patch' narrative are teaching his kids and cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal cultural practice. That is, these narratives are representative of the traditional Aboriginal cultural practice of gathering foods in the natural environment. By teaching his children about these practices he is essentially teaching his children how to do Aboriginal things. This story exemplifies the importance to Joe's Aboriginal identity of passing on a culture of fishing and gathering foods to the next generation.

Point 4: Persistence of racism at work

Later in the interview Joe told a *story* of personal experience of racism that occurred at his work place. This resulted in him 'chucking in' his job. When Joe used the term 'chucking in his job' he was referring to handing in his resignation.

Line 23   I'm putting up with a lot of racist bullshit.

Line 24   You know what I mean? And I got mates out there, you know white fullas, you know what I mean? And they are, you know, love it, about two months ago, I chucked me fucking job in, because they pissed me off that much. You know what I mean?

Line 25   And it's only at certain times I could get me tooth pulled out at this, down here at, at the Medical Centre, you know what I mean? And they know that I only do it at this time,

Line 26   and they know that I do overtime to help out wherever I could, you know what I mean?

Line 27   And they started making a joke out of me, and I got real upset about it, and I said "No, this is bloody bullshit man," and I said "I've been copping racism out here since I fucking started here. It's bullshit." You know what I mean? I said "I don't expect this on this day and age", you know what I mean? "This is supposed to be a multicultural country now and we are still copping this when I'm working out here with you fullas"

Line 28   I mean, not everyone's like that but, you know, but still, when you've got to work in a place like that I do take offence to

Line 29   I chucked it in and walked out. I said "Here's your fucking job. Here's your glasses" and walked out.

Joe has told in detail, the story of how he quit in his job. He describes this experience as an account of racism which he perceives comes from his work mates who have made fun of him. In furthering his point that this was an account of racism he constructs an identity as a good person by clearly making the point that his workmates know that he does overtime to help out whenever he can (line 26). He also makes the point that 'they' know he can only get his tooth pulled at a certain time. He also draws on the expectation of equality because Australia "is supposed to be a multicultural country" (Line 27). This story of racism in the work place is important as it shows that Joe has made a conscious decision to quit his job, which has effectively impacted on his income source. However, further analysis of the transcripts has revealed that Joe uses this story to make another point related to the importance of his children.

Line 30   Later on, my Union boss rang me up and he said ah, "Joe what are you gonna do? Are, you know, you've worked this, they're gonna shut down this year, this year anyway, you know what I mean?

Line 31:   I sat and thought about it and I sat and thought about the missus and the kids too,

Line 32   and so, I you know, in a way I felt like a dickhead, but in another way I was really pissed off, you know what I mean?

Line 33   And things didn't work out the way I wanted it to

Line 34   I've had a big year of a lot of deaths man. I couldn't go to half of them because this place. So I feel like a piece of shit too man, out of respect, you know what I mean? I looked at it two ways, bra, you know what I mean?

Line 35   (e) Like I say, you know, as long as I still can see in people and say hello, I'm - you know what I mean? - I do my bit.

> But as long as I'm doing the right thing for my kiddo's I'm
> doing my bit."

Further analysis has revealed that that, even though this was a negative experience for Joe, he later indicated that he would go back to his previous 'racist work place' and persist with racism for the sake of his missus and kids. However, his perseverance is significant for him because in the local culture attendance at a funeral is expected even if the deceased is not a close relative, or was not well known to the individual. Due to Joe not fulfilling his obligations of this expected norm, he describes how this has impacted on him which is identified as the evaluation function. He indicates that his non-attendance has made him 'feel like a piece of shit' (line 26). In addition, returning to work amounts to giving in to his 'white mates', which made him 'feel like a dickhead' (line 24). In this sense, Joe means that he felt embarrassed to go back on his earlier actions ('chucking in' his job). However this is immediately justified because he was 'really pissed off'.

Directly after this section of talk Joe was asked what is the most important thing in his life at the moment (this was quoted at the beginning of the presentation of this case study). He replied:

> Yeah my kids. Yep. My kids. MY KIDS. [laughs]

Joe then corrects himself:

> Sorry, not just that, brother, my kids and my elders, sorry. That was a big
> mistake.

In the context of this section of the transcript Joe is displaying a deep respect for Aboriginal culture, by apologising for neglecting to mention his Aboriginal elders. It is so important to him that he apologises twice and acknowledges that it was a big mistake to not acknowledge them. He then goes on to suggest:

> They're the two things that make the world turn. That's your negative
> and your positive. Either which way you look at it. You know what I
> mean? You starting off with new, and you know what I mean? But it's
> still passing knowledge on, so it's still positive, you know what I mean?

Joe has described the importance of both children and elders in the process of passing on knowledge. In the context of the interview this is not just any knowledge but is Aboriginal knowledge which he holds in high regard. More importantly, he suggests these are the two

things that "make the world turn". So in this sense, they are crucial to the future of Aboriginal identity. Joe makes this point further through an analogy with the tree:

> If you don't have a beginning and an end, for your seed to pass on like a tree, you know what I mean? It won't grow, no-one can breathe. You know what I mean, or no-one can pass their knowledge on.

Joe has expressed the importance of passing on knowledge as equivalent to breathing. Passing on knowledge of Aboriginal culture from elders to children is for Joe a life-giving process.

Joe then tells another story about his children. Only this time it is about his earlier life. He describes how his life is different now that he has children.

Point 5: I understand life better so I can teach my kids better

Joe

It's not about you no more. But then when you were running by yourself it was. And when you bring new seeds into the world yeah, it's a different story all together

Researcher

It's not about you anymore, it's about them.

Joe

No, yeah, yeah - making sure that they have a better life; making it easier for them, anyway. Or understand a bit more than what I didn't know. You know.

Joe now sees himself as older and, therefore, wiser, whereby he has become a role model for his children. Making sure his children have a better life is important to him. In this section of transcript Joe tells another story in which he was a victim of racism which occurred at the Coles supermarket.

Joe:

Line 36   The other day, we went down to Coles there - me and the missus (laughs) - and mind you, you know what I mean?, you're supposed to have a tag over the…

Researcher   Like a what?

Joe:

Line 37   A tag, like a liquor land tag over this can, over your bag when you go into Coles mind you, you know we just walked into Coles,

Line 38   This women saw us before we even walked in. I tied the bag up in front of her. Anyway we walk in. it's the same one every time. You know. We walked in we come out and [inaudible] because it was the only one open at the time.

Line 39   You know what I mean, there was a lot of people there and we had food here.

Line 40   Anyway she turned around being smart. "Oh, can I see what's in your bag". And you know what I mean [laughs]? Me, I said "yeah, you're right. No worries".

Line 41   My missus, she knows straight away she's being smart and she turned around "Why the fuck are you doing this again for? You fucking know you saw him just tie it up and …"

Line 42   "don't worry about it, babe, it's alright", you know?. "You gotta get over this shit alright. Just push it off". You know what I mean.

Researcher   So why was that? Why was she doing it? That old lady.

Joe

Line 43   Just being smart. She does that every time we go in there. A, a, are being racial, you know what I mean? That's what I think it is.

Joe's partner

Line 44   No. She, I said "It's 'cause you're black". And, she said "yeah, oh, no, no, no". But she did say 'yes'.

Joe

Line 45   Yeah, well there you go, see? She picks up on everything man. I don't worry about half the shit [laugh]. Well that's

> the difference now, See? Before, I would have just turned
> around and cracked her, no matter what if it was man or
> woman, you know what I mean? But now I don't care.

Researcher

> Yeah, but now you're older, you understand it more, hey?

Joe

Line 46

> Yeah. Now I've got more of a chance to teach my kids, you
> know what I mean? Well, that's the way I look at it. I - you
> know what I mean? Not everything is about fighting and
> that's the way I look at it."

Effectively Joe has described a change in behaviour and attitude over the life course. When he was younger he suggested that he would probably have 'cracked her', which means punched her. However, now that he is older and has children he can teach them that fighting is not the way to go.

At the beginning of this case study I stated that 'kids' and 'lore' was a recurring word in this interview. The response to the first question, 'what is important to you?' revealed both of these concepts. At this stage of the interview Joe delicately interweaves the first prime narrative (his kids) with the second prime narrative (lore). He sees lore as very significant. So much so that he has given his children lore names.

Point 6: My kids have lore names and this will protect them

> My kids, both of my kids names, you know what I mean? If anything
> ever happened to me, both of my kids names, they're, they're lore names.
> By lore names I'm saying, I mean names from the land.

When asked how names come from the land, Joe stated "I can't explain it". He continues:

> Even if something happened to me or their mother, they, well you know
> what I mean, they'll still be on top of the world. They're kids like that.
> You know what I mean? Like, the other day, she knew her grandfather
> died and she knew where he was going, and you know what I mean? A
> kid that age.

My analysis of Joe's transcript which treated the entire interview as a narrative process revealed the frequent word 'kids' and 'lore'. However these frequent words were only found in roughly the first two thirds of the transcript. In the remaining third of the interview Joe did not mention his children or lore, but rather this section was more oriented to themes of multiculturalism, negative relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, perceived changes in society and collective Aboriginal identity. This section of transcript lacked a clearly defined prime narrative. Nonetheless, my analysis has revealed significant meaning from the data, namely the identification of the recurring word 'kids' which revealed that Joe's children are important to him. Furthermore, the very first question I asked Joe in the interview was 'tell me about your identity?' and when adopting the prime narrative analytical framework, we must treat the entire interview as a narrative process. In this sense, the initial question acts as a resource that participants build on to answer subsequent questions generated in interaction. Thus, telling stories about his children is Joe's way of telling about his identity.

Furthermore, analysis of the transcript revealed that Joe sees himself as an Aboriginal person with Aboriginal culture, and that it is his duty to pass on Aboriginal culture to his children. This is exemplified in the *story* of fishing and the hypothetical narrative of finding the veggie patch. The importance of Aboriginal culture is further evidenced in giving his children lore names. In the face of adversity Joe will persevere with racism in the work place to provide for his children and partner. Joe has become a 'significant other' to his children.

Joe constructed an identity as a 'good father'. He has become a significant other for his children and passes on the Aboriginal identity concept to his children, by drawing on the positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept.

5.4: Case Study III - Michelle's narrative of significant others

Michelle, a 36-year-old mother of two is unemployed, currently deferred from university studies and is the daughter of Jeremy and Martha. In this case study, I demonstrate, through an analysis of the information she imparts in the interview, her parents' influence on her. Her parents are 'significant others' who have contributed to the formation of Michelle's identity. However, due to the extent of this extended response I address the

issues as they arise, rather than display the entire response and explain the significance of her comments in summary paragraphs as in Bruno's transcript.

When I asked Michelle what it was like to grow up as an Aboriginal person she replied:

Line 1	It was hard. It was very hard.
Line 2	I learnt very early that, I think too because of the time that I was young, like in the seventies.
Line 3	I was a child then
Line 4	and I didn't have the understanding that I do now
Line 5	but being a child and not understanding why people look at you and judge you as being, you know, like a stereotype Aboriginal person or Aboriginal like girl
Line 6	it was hard to deal with, hard to understand why
Line 7	people thought that I could be placed in a little box
Line 8	you know, labeled as this and then that's who I am.

In the first eight clauses of the response she mentions three clearly defined ideas. 1) It was hard to deal with; 2), she was too young to understand; and 3) she was stereotyped. Specifically she makes the comment that the act of labeling constitutes *who* she is (line 08). This is important because such labeling in the stereotyping of Aboriginal people was predominantly negative. She further illuminates the act of labeling through an analogy of being placed in a little box (line 07). However, it is significant that she highlights her process of understanding, which is consistent with significant moments in the life history of the individual of which there are key stages: conception, birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence and puberty. At a time when Michelle was experiencing childhood and adolescence, she reports a difficult time and essentially attributes this to her youth. At that time, she lacked the understanding she now has (line 4). She reiterates this key point:

Line 9	because, like growing older and leading life,
Line 10	I find that I am always learning about who I am
Line 11	and that people have sort of judged me because you know, because I am an Aboriginal female.
Line 12	they've been the hardest issues that I've had to deal with growing up.

She again returns to a distinction between youth (line 9) and learning knowledge (line 10), which she directly links to the difficulty with understanding (line 12) why she was stereotyped (line 11). Indeed, it seems that this was such a difficult time that it has become a significant life event: she suggests it was one of the hardest times in her life. Further, she describes being judged on the basis of her Aboriginality and gender. So for her, her status as Aboriginal and as female is the core feature of others' stereotypical judgments. This information is important in the broader scheme of her parents' influence on her, because this act of labeling was not unique to her but also happened to other Aboriginal people. In the following passage of talk she explains her parent's influence on her. Being Aboriginal means inheriting the culture of disadvantage. This is where she links the broader effects of stereotypical behaviour to the broader Aboriginal collective and at the same time brings to the fore the way her status as an Aboriginal person has influenced her personal experience.

Line 13   not so much my Aboriginality, but about dealing with my personal experiences that have been influenced by my Aboriginality.

Line 14   You know, because I'm an Aboriginal I've had to deal with,

Line 15   like, my mum's stolen generation,

Line 16   you know and my father's an angry black man

Line 17   because of the way Aboriginal people are treated by mainstream Australia.

Michelle is here exposing the influence that 'significant others' have on individuals. Thus, she identifies one very clear feature of each of her 'significant others' (mother and father) and links this to her status as an Aboriginal person. Her father is not only an angry man but he is an angry *black* man (line 16), which she attributes to the negative treatment of Aboriginal people (line 17), whilst her mother is a member of the stolen generation (line 15). Focusing on the word 'are' (line 17) implies the 'norm'. Thus, it is normal that Aboriginal people are viewed and treated in this manner. Additionally, this does not imply that it was restricted to a particular time in the past, but that it is still happening ("because of the way that Aboriginal people *are* treated").

For Michelle these characteristics of her parents have influenced her personal experiences, which, in turn, become resources for explaining her difficulties in understanding the way that stereotypes impact on the way she constructed identity in her earlier life. Michelle concluded that this was only because she now has the appropriate life experience to

understand this process, whereas, earlier, she did not. In the final passage of talk I have chosen to present here, Michelle effectively explains the process of cultural reproduction:

Line 18   So I've had to, we've had to

Line 19   deal with the influences that my parents have had on me

Line 20   and the way that they've been influenced, and their parents before them too,

Line 21   you know, my kids, too. Now. Today,

Line 22   it's sorta like, you know, are real, are real sort of, strong on being proud about being Koori,

Line 23   you know, because they've been taught that in history

Line 24   Aboriginal people were made to feel ashamed about being black,

Line 25   so they're real opposite of that, they're out there, you know and they push it out there.

She brings the personal to the collective: 'I've had to', becomes 'we've had to' (line 18). This is more than just her personal experience; it is Michelle's representation of a wider collective experience of Aboriginality by Aboriginal people. She directly links the pressures of dealing with issues of Aboriginal identity to her parent's influence on her (19) and to their parents' influence on them (line 20). Because she now understands this influence, she can explain the influence her parents have had on her children (line 21). Due to the negative treatment of Aboriginal people, which included the strategy to make Aboriginal people feel ashamed of being black (line 24), Michelle suggests that Aboriginal people are resisting this construct, opting to reconstruct an alternate proud identity (line 22 and line 24). Over the course of Michelle's transcripts presented here we clearly see the process of the influence that 'significant others' have on individuals.

At another stage of the interview Michelle provides more insights into the influence her mother and father have had on her. These occurred at separate times in the interview. I firstly present and describe the influence of her father. I then present and describe the influence of her mother. It should be noted that these descriptions of cultural continuity emerged from questions on quite different topics. In the first example, Michelle responds to my question 'tell me about your beliefs first?'

Line 25   Ok, well, I believe, like I said, my dad's been the major influence on me.

Line 26   The most significant part of my belief structure comes from my father, right.

Line 27   And he's a very, very proud man and

Line 28   being young, he was very angry and very, you know political, and made really heavy political statements and all that kind of stuff

Line 29   and so having that kind of influence, where he's at now, he's very strong on his culture and he's been telling us well, you know the last 20 years or so you know, you have to go back to culture, you have to get back to culture because that's where the answers are [for] your questions about who you are.

Line 30   If you've been born an Aboriginal person, and you identify as an Aboriginal person, for you to get to know yourself, you have to go back through Aboriginal, cultural, practise, ceremonies, beliefs and all that kind of stuff to be able to get the picture.

Line 31   Otherwise you're just, you know, you're missing pieces and you don't understand and it's confusing and nothing makes sense.

Line 32   He goes: "if you wanna make sense of the world around ya, you have to go back to your cultural beginnings"

Line 33   So that means, to see in the world from a cultural perspective, and the values that Aboriginal people have culturally, that we know that have been handed down, you know, we know that they're there.

There are several key points I want to illuminate here. The first is that Michelle claims her father is the most influential person in her life and that a significant part of her belief structure comes from him. The culture that he transmitted, or passed on, to her was predominantly (according to the information Michelle provides in the interview) a set of values or principles that advocated returning to Aboriginal culture. These issues, although

emerging as a response to a question on belief structure, underpin her father's influence. The notion of going back to culture perhaps worked for him. Certainly he believes it provides the answers to who one is, and if one does not go back to culture, it will be confusing, and one will be missing some of the pieces. Going back to culture has the added benefit of allowing the individual to see the world from an Aboriginal cultural perspective. This is welcomed by the participants.

In the following extract of the transcript, I asked Michelle a question about how she sees the future of Aboriginal identity. In the process of the telling, her mother's influence on her sense of self emerged, thus returning to the influence 'significant others' have had on her. The full transcripts are warranted here to allow a clear understanding to emerge from this prime narrative. I provide analysis of the section of talk in two parts. The first is the response to the question; the second is an analysis her mother's influence on her.

Researcher

> I know that you talked about different eras and whatever, how do you see Aboriginal identity moving in the future?

Michelle

Line 33   I reckon it has to. It has to move forward. There's no other way to do it. I mean otherwise it comes down to: either we survive, or we don't.

Line 34   And I think, well, I believe that in the heart of the Aboriginal people, our spirit, you know, can't be destroyed,

Line 35   and, because as the generations go further, they can sort of remove themselves from the feeling of the pain of white settlement and start looking at [it].

Line 36   "Ok this is what happened" and have a more, like, objective view about it and not be so controlled, well not be so influenced by the painful emotion of it.

Michelle clearly informs the listener that Aboriginal identity must move forward, and that the heart of Aboriginal people cannot be destroyed. This is a value statement. However, deeper analysis of the transcript reveals much more in-depth information.

Line 37   Like the kids, you look at them and my mum, right, she will
                 live every day, and us too will live every day sort of
                 conscious that mum was taken away from home,

Line 38   and we don't know her family, whereas our kids will grow
                 up and they'll think "Yeah well, we don't know our family",
                 but they're are not gonna be so heart-broken about it

Line 39   and they'll probably, well I believe that they'd be more
                 inclined to say "Well ok, what can we do about that?"

Line 40   Instead of just sitting back and not doing anything, you
                 know and being afraid of the emotion that will come when,
                 you know, with a family reunion with us mob up that way.

Line 41   They'll be saying "Well let's, you know, let's go and see
                 our family", and they won't be so emotionally afraid or
                 emotionally, you know, challenged to do it because they
                 don't really feel, on such a level that's so intense, like with
                 us or with mum, the pain of being taken away.

Line 42   You know I don't think that that'll be a big an issue for
                 them as it is for us. [pause]

Line 43   It's kinda, it's strange too because mum will say, you know,
                 that she doesn't worry about it. She's not really thing about
                 it. But with us, we are. We're more, it seems like, well, for
                 me, it seems like it's really painful for me to deal with that.

Line 44   I've talked to my brothers and they feel like, angry about it.
                 Well, it's like" "Well, come on then, let's go! We'll go up
                 here and we'll meet mum's family".

Line 45   We want to, but we don't ever get around to the point where
                 we say: "Nah, let us make it real, let's make it happen". It's
                 always an idea and it's always a, you know, and it's hard to,
                 I think we're all still a bit afraid of how emotionally heavy
                 it's gonna be when we get there, you know, cause it will be

Line 46   [long pause] … like we strongly identify with mum's people.
                 We always say, you know, "We come from the Territory, as
                 well that's our mob, that's our people".

Strikingly, Michelle uses highly emotive language *(heart-broken, afraid of emotion, emotionally afraid, emotionally challenged, pain of being taken away, it's really painful for me to deal with that, anger, emotionally heavy),* which is linked to her mother's removal from her family. However, she also links these emotions to the broader collective when she mentioned the painful emotion of white settlement or British colonisation.

For Michelle the future of Aboriginal identity will evolve in subtle ways. Her example of this is that her children will not be so controlled by the *painful* emotion of white settlement. This is because as the generations progress they will develop a more objective perspective of the treatment of Aboriginal people. She attributes this to their distance from the actual experience of such negative treatment. When Michelle continues, she artfully interweaves a prediction of the future, a somewhat hypothetic narrative with her mother's current real situation as a member of the stolen generation. Thus, she is drawing on a component of her life history which she has learnt through experience, and is using this resource to make predictions about the future of Aboriginal identity. Michelle and her family are still feeling the pain of her mother's removal from her family which was directly linked to government policy. In this sense, her mother is a significant other albeit a different kind of significant other than her father. For example, her father's influence was described in the context of a positive impact on her sense of identity, but her mother's in the context of a negative impact. These positive and negative elements were then used to make moral points, where identities were constructed.

Finally, this case study indicates the importance of the trans-generational impact of the stolen generation which is significant because it shows that personal experience of a phenomenon is not necessarily required to become a prominent element of identity. It shows, rather, that the story of marginalisation of Aboriginal people, as told by 'significant others' is enough to become a significant event that warrants retelling for the purpose of answer questions about identity.

Evaluative statement: Significant others have played a key role in the construction of the identity problem and in the development of strategies to resolve the personal identity problem. Crucially the strategy is to go back to Aboriginal culture.

5.5: Case Study IV – George's narrative of how to resolve the broader collective Aboriginal identity problem

George, a 54 year old male, has several children to four women, has experienced incarceration during his early adult life for minor crimes and currently sees himself as an ambassador for Aboriginal people. George reported that he wanted to be a priest, and began formal training at a Bible College, but later discovered that Christianity was not for him. Formal training at the Bible College, combined with the influence of his Christian mother, became a resource on which he drew in conversation.

In response to the first question, "tell me about your identity", George provided an extended response (of 1383 words) which traversed many themes. After many extended clauses which utilised 'hortatory', 'expository' and 'narrative' (Longacres 1970) genres of discourse, George announced:

> That's what my whole identity is based on this, that freedom within and
> the freedom with how I see myself today.

Based on his transcript, we can see that George suggested his *identity* is based on the notion of freedom and self-perception. However, to understand the significance of this self-perception statement we must interpret this talk in the context of the entire section of talk that encompasses two clauses: 1) the initial question; and 2) his self-perception statement. The key element of the latter is directly related to the notion of 'changing mentality', especially in relation to the way he perceives his sense of self. Thus changing the nature of his self-perception is a crucial component of the resolution of his personal identity problem, suggesting that the solution is personal in nature.

I now show how the prime narrative, 'changing mentality', emerged in George's interview by presenting key clauses in George's response. These are in the same order as they appeared in the transcripts. I begin with George's response to the question 'tell me about your identity?'

> 01   Well my identity is sorta like who I am as an Indigenous person
>   within this country.
>
> 02   And the problem with, when one was trying to find its true identity,
>   is that

03   I sorta, like, found myself as a half caste or quarter caste
       Aboriginal person betwixt between two different cultures

04   and to find one's identity in my early years as a part of my
       pilgrimage is to actually come to terms with me.

05   So the hardest thing for me was, and the question was, who am I,
       what am I, what am I doing here and where am I going?

06   the inner thing with me was, what's my purpose here?

07   How do I identify through a full blood, spiritual acceptance of who
       I am, and how I see myself,

08   rather than how other people see me, ok?

09   [pause] and the only way I've actually come to terms with my
       identity was actually back through the rainbow dreaming lore of
       this country.

In the above nine clauses George succinctly describes the essence of his *personal* identity problem, as well as the resolution to it. However, the first three clauses contain in-depth information. Firstly, he claims that his identity is 'who' he is. This is important and I return to this later. Secondly, 'who he is' is, for him, an Aboriginal person with an Aboriginal identity. He thus claims an Aboriginal identity using a construction of Aboriginality i.e. 'Indigenous' (line 01). Strikingly, in the second clause in the response, which is also the second clause in the context of the *entire* interview, George introduces the notion of the identity problem, thus acknowledging from the outset of the interview that locating his sense of self as an Indigenous person in an Australian context is problematic. The resolution to the identity problem included the process of *finding* a *true* identity (line 02) implying that his identity problem involved a fake, inauthentic or 'untrue' identity. He then described how he *found* himself as a *half caste, quarter caste* (line 03): a construction of Aboriginality which developed from theories of race and superiority, and which informed much of the experience of discrimination and stereotyping that impacted on participants in a variety of ways (as documented in the previous chapter). This imposed inauthentic Aboriginal identity resulted in a personal negotiation of the two-world construct (line 03), which also developed from theories of race and superiority.

Thus far my analysis of the first three clauses in Georges initial response shows how he has drawn on theories of 'race' which positioned him between *two-worlds*. For George these

two elements are the sources of his identity crisis. This exemplifies the powerful influence of stigma and its ability to inhibit the construction of positive versions of self in earlier life.

In clause 04 George introduced the notion of the 'journey' of identity searching which he articulates as a 'pilgrimage'. This notion of the 'journey' is rehearsed and has become a feature of George's sense of self. Indeed, so much so that another participant in the study, Sandra, commented on his influence on her.

> It's your learning experience that becomes your road to travel, it becomes
> your life story. It becomes your dream. Like George and them think. You
> know like, that's, that's your path to take. And I believe that too.

However, the nature of the 'journey' is personal. For George the purpose of his journey was to resolve his personal identity problem. A crucial component of George's identity quest included a series of identity questioning episodes (line 05, 06, 07 and 08) which George reports were answered by accessing traditional Aboriginal heritage and culture that he traced *back* through the rainbow dreaming lore of the land in Australia (line 09). Going back to culture was not the actual resolution of the identity problem, but was a crucial component. As my analysis continues, I show how this was achieved by focusing on key clauses in the remainder of his response. These first nine clauses can be interpreted as a kind of abstract function in the Labovian sense for the remainder of the response I present here.

At this stage, we clearly see that the personal identity problem was informed by broader social understandings of Aboriginality. George mentions the crucial role that representations of Aboriginality - in conjunction with outsider perceptions of his identity - have played in his identity-questioning dilemma. Thus, George made it clear that the stigma of the half caste construction was imposed on him: he *found* himself as a *half caste* (line 03) and expressed a need to discard the way he was perceived by others (line 08). This representation of Aboriginality provided him with a false sense of identity, prompting him to find his *true* identity (line 02). He continues by providing more in-depth information about the nature of going back to Aboriginal culture:

> 10   and to reach that point is that I had to go back through my own
>   totem
>
> 11   as part of my own rebirth, or my own thinking

> 12 I had to [pause] back-track back through my mother, back through
> my grandmother, my great grandmother and back to the time when
> man was first made out of the dust of the earth.

In clauses 10 and 12, we see repetition of the notion of 'going back' or 'back tracking'. This was an integral component of the resolution to his identity problem. However, this notion of 'going back' was in direct relation to re-finding his Aboriginal cultural heritage: one that included finding totem. In clause 11, he mentions the notion of *rebirth* and personalises this through the use of the expression his *'own thinking'*. So, for George, the process of back-tracking became a personal journey of rethinking 'Aboriginality,' which is also articulated as 'changing mentality'. Being *reborn,* which is also akin to changing mentality, was the way for him to resolve his personal identity problem.

As George continued, he told many sub-narratives: some examples supported the 'changing mentality' prime narrative, yet others diverted from it. An example of diversion was introduced in line 12. George introduced the concept of 'man made from the dust of the earth' which is a concept founded within the Christian religion. This is important, because it exemplifies the influence that Christianity had on George's perception of self identity. George utilises this sub-narrative device to explain this important role.

> 13 As the Bible says, but it's very, similar or in tune with the way
> Aboriginal people think, our traditional people.
>
> 14 even though I was brought up through religion, through the
> Christian faith,
>
> 15 I had to find what was right for me,
>
> 16 I had to find my own rite of passage. Ok?
>
> 17 back in defining me, not as this little half caste, quarter caste, lesser
> class or whatever other type of category they want to put me in
>
> 18 but my holistic self or my being, my onetime being lore and who I
> am, outside of the physical essence of what you see here today.

In line 13 he confirms the universal lore concept (which emerged in the previous chapter) by describing the similarities between notions found in the Bible and in the thinking about traditional Aboriginal people. We can clearly see the role that Christianity has played in George's sense of self. He describes being brought up through the Christian faith (line 14). George relied heavily on the Christian influence to refute the half caste construction of

Aboriginality (line 17), because he was on a quest to find his true self. After again returning to the notion of outsider perceptions of his sense of self, he extends the concept of self-definition to include other elements such as the 'holistic self', 'being', and 'one time being lore'. Thus, self-definition, which is bound up in notions of existence and perceptions of such an existence, is an integral component of the 'changing mentality' resolution. He further accentuates this notion by utilising the structures of 'race' referring to 'the other': "or whatever category *they* want to put me in" (line 17).

In addition, George associated the caste construction with a hierarchical order when he suggested an alternative to the half caste statement: 'lesser class' (line 17). This is important for two reasons. It shows (1) that he perceived Christianity to subscribe to the structures of race; and (2) that through life experience, George has learnt that Christianity did not provide the answers to his identity problem dilemma, but, in fact (due to his perception that it subscribes to the structures of race), it, in a sense, contributed to his dilemma. Based on the transcripts we can infer that the Christian religion did not address the caste construction issue which was so prominent in the formulation of George's identity crisis. Thus, he had to 'find what was right for him' (line 15). Furthermore, he draws on the notion of his 'holistic self' and 'being' (line 17) which is the key to the 'true' identity statement he was searching for (indicated in line 02). He continues:

> 19   by going back into who I am, what I am, is that it actually then
> brings into being the body, soul and the spirit connected, which is
> sorta like a trinity law ok?

When he used the term 'trinity law' he was continuing to draw on concepts within the Christian religion. In this example, George used an analogy with Aboriginal beliefs which is indicated in the following section, a description of the importance of backtracking to Aboriginal culture.

> 20   Within the dreaming there is no beginning or end, but eternal life
>
> 21   my earthly body is but an extension of my onetime being lore, which is everlasting
>
> 22   because my body's only here for 50-100 years and then it goes back to earth where it first come from, which is enshrined within the dreaming lore of one's own spiritual immortality, ok?

23   When it is time to go, I shall be one with my creator for the
      dreaming was given to me by the creator before the Christian
      missionaries come to this country

24   as the Rainbow dreaming is also the spiritual covenant over all
      living things within this country.

25   For me, to walk in my onetime lore, umm, what we also call Virgin
      lore,

26   is that it, it puts me into a sense of a, a full blood, spiritual
      acceptance of who I am.

27   Not as this half caste, quarter caste, or lesser class.

Although George had earlier refuted the Christian faith, he continued to draw on elements
of Christianity to make certain moral points. For example, his statement that "the dreaming
was given to [him] by the creator before the Christian missionaries come to this country"
(line 23), supports his moral stance that the resolution to his personal identity problem is to
be found in Aboriginal culture and not Christian religion. At the same time as refuting
Christianity, he also embraces elements of Christian teachings to make moral points. Thus
notions of the dreaming are likened to notions of heaven: "[w]ithin the Dreaming there is
no beginning or end, but eternal life". These resources allow him to express a unique sense
of self. He then later describes how access to the Dreaming allows for a change in his sense
of self: "it puts me into a sense of a, a full blood, spiritual acceptance of who I am" (Line
26). This is the key to George's resolution to his personal identity problem. For George,
access to the Dreaming allows for the removal of the caste system which was integral to
the formulation of his personal identity problem. He now perceives and accepts himself as
a full blood spiritual being, and importantly "not as this half caste, quarter caste, or lesser
class" (Line 27). He continues:

28   The beautiful thing about the dreaming is that there's no race,
      creed or colour or no status quo within the dreaming, ok?

In essence, George is an advocate for equality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
people and, by removing the structures of race from the perception of Aboriginality and
Aboriginal people, hierarchical social order is removed, bringing to the fore equality
between the races. He continues, only this time he speaks from the perspective of an
individual that has resolved his identity problem:

29   It's not an Aboriginal thing to me,

30   it's not a White thing to me

31   it's not an Asian thing me

32   it's a state of being. Ok?

33   So when I look at my own fullness, in respect to who I am, then
      when you look at identity, identity to me is only a state of mind

34   forget about the colour, forget about the half caste, ahh, question,
      or the full blood question or whatever, because we all are who we
      are

The key moment of intersection between George's resolution of his personal identity crisis
and the broader perception of Aboriginal people is his 'fact' that identity is a state of being
(line 32) or state of mind (line 33) rather than a product of racialisation which he denied on
several occasions (lines 29, 30 and 31). He adds another dimension to the perception of
identity question: "We all are who we are" (line 34). This again reinforces the idea that
identity is a state of being. He then goes on to evaluate the extended account of his identity
(the initial question was for him to tell me about his identity):

Evaluation

35   and the thing is that, if we can all come together, I suppose and,
      and respect, respect one another for who we are then, ahh, the thing
      is then you know, it will be a better world

This evaluation statement indicates his preference for equality based on respect. This could,
in George's view make a better world. George then introduces another sub-narrative (this
is an anchor for the next section of talk in his interview: not the topic of focus in this
chapter) related to ownership of religion.

36   The thing is that it's like everyone now has gotta [have] a bloody
      piece of ownership on religion, ok? And everyone wants to own

To further evidence his moral point of 'equality', he evaluates this section of talk for a
second time:

Evaluation

37   Now, you cannot own religion,

38   you cannot own the spirit. The spirit is a free thing,

39   and that's what my, umm, whole identity is based on this, that
        freedom within and the freedom with how I see myself today and
        the way I walk and the way I, you know, I act and the way I, I live
        my life,

Although George continues to narrate events, it is here that the significance of the self-perception becomes clearly articulated as the key to the 'changing mentality' strategy for solving the personal identity problem. It is here that I return to one of the concepts which George introduced in the very first clause of the entire interview. This is the '*who George is'* concept. Let us now revisit the transcript. In this first response, George revealed that his identity was '*who he is'* as an '*Indigenous person within this 'country'*. I interpret the '*who he is'* concept as George's sense of self which was learnt through experience of culture throughout his life. This very first clause is an anchor for the remainder of the response and is also a prominent feature of his construction of identities in interaction. This 'who he is' concept has the potential to become a foundational element for interaction between Aboriginal people and others in the broader Australian context. Thus respecting Aboriginal people for 'who they are' (essentially they are products of colonisation, of mixed heritage, of several cultural influences, but those that also strongly claim an Aboriginal identity), can alleviate the problem of collective Aboriginal identity in the broader context of Australian society.

This 'who we are' concept underpinned information imparted by George in the above transcript. Below, I have presented the clauses in which it emerged. These are line 01, line 09, line 26, line 33, line 34, line 35. When we read these lines in consecutive order we more clearly see how the 'changing mentality' concept becomes a prominent feature of George's resolution.

01   Well my identity is sorta like *who I am* as an Indigenous person
        within this country.

09   [pause] And the only way I've actually come to terms with *my
        identity* was actually back through the rainbow dreaming lore of
        this country.

26   It puts me into a sense of a, a full blood, spiritual acceptance of
        who I am.

34   Forget about the colour, forget about the half caste, ahh, question,
or the full blood question or whatever, because we all are *who we
are*.

35   And, the thing is that, if we can all come together I suppose and,
and respect, respect one another for *who we are* then, ahh, the thing
is then you know, it will be a better world.

39   and that's what my umm whole identity is based on this, that
freedom within and the freedom with *how I see myself today* and
the way I walk and the way I, you know, I act and the way I, I live
my life,

In effect, the reorientation of the perspective of Aboriginal people though George's notion of 'changing mentality' has provided him with an individual sense of freedom: the basis for the way he perceives himself, walks, acts and lives his life. At other times in the interview the 'changing mentality' notion continued to underpin other information. I'll now present a collection of quotes that exemplifies this. In these examples, I've removed surrounding discourse which in effect has decontextualised the information potentially altering the meaning portrayed. I begin with the use of the 'changing mentality' concept in the personal, and then show how George suggests the concept can be applied to the broader collective.

George reflects on his personal situation before embarking on the journey of identity searching:

When I'm in the dreaming to enter this world, and I've got to walk my
own pilgrimage or my own, you know, my own, [journey] my own
journey, to find myself, it took me 36 years, ok? By going through all the
death of trying to identify with what I am within today's society being
bloody oppressed, put into a situation where I'm worthless …, there was
no way for me out through a systematic set of laws and legislative laws,
to find who I was.

George utilises an analogy device to explain the process of the journey:

You got this thing out there of being a 'born again' Christian. Me, I had
to become a 'born again' Black fulla, in a sense in which to find my

identity. But once I found my identity, in the true sense of the word, then the black part of me didn't become an issue.

George describes the personal benefits of 'changing mentality':

I'm, I'm rich in who I am, I am not this poor little bugger-me black fulla, half caste, quarter caste black fulla anymore, caught up in this little tomb or in you know, being imprisoned within this little tomb of this penal mentality within this country. I am not a victim of that anymore.

George explains the individualistic nature of the journey:

I've been through the gutter, I understand where all of that is, you know what I mean? But the thing is I can't lead a horse to water to make drink what I drink, and sometimes you have to go through your own death, or through your own journey, to really appreciate what I'm on about ok? Cause I've been down through all those pathways before and at the end of the line is death.

George describes some necessary elements of 'changing mentality':

I can see a lot of my people still there caught up within the gutter language … and don't know how to free themselves from it. Now, the reality is, is that they're only victims of the Western system, ok? They're the ones who have been forced into that condition … the hunting days are gone, you can't live the tribal existence that you once was, so now you've got to convert into a new mentality, or a new way of thinking, ok? To pick the good things from the system, and apply the principle to yourself, that's not gonna be a threat to you.

George explains the future significance for 'changing mentality':

All I see today, within today's sorta like, society, is everything is based on a survival lore, and the mentality with Indigenous people is they're still on a survival language. They haven't moved from the tents in Parliament House[9]. You know what I mean? And they identify with this

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[9] The tents in Parliament house George refers to is the Aboriginal tent embassy which was erected in 1972 by Aboriginal activists demanding land rights and equal rights

survival bullshit every January, every year. You gotta go into a living lore, you can't stay in the survival shit. You know, you're in the 21st century now. We are in a new millennium. We are into a new time, you know. Let the past be the past. It's all a part of the history books now. You cannot change the past. You know. You might be able to change the future.

George describes how the 'changing mentality' concept can be adopted by the Australian government:

What Australia's got to do is change its policy, this national policy and international policy. I'd rather see a 'spiritual belonging' bloody policy, rather than go in and, and take, take, take all the time, you know, do it the proper way through bloody protocol, through proper ways of doing it, you know respecting people, instead of exploiting and taking everything from them. Give something back.

Finally, George describes the consequences of not adopting a new mentality:

George

Wealth is in your land, wealth is in your spirituality, your wealth is in your being, you know land is the essence of life, you know?

Researcher

So are you saying without land …

George

You're fucked. You go back to the old half caste, quarter caste fulla that had fuck-all. [long pause], and what that is, is psychological genocide. Can you see what I'm saying?

'Changing mentality' was the solution to George personal identity problem. My analysis revealed that this solution required a journey or pilgrimage to find his identity, much of it a journey between two cultures and two worldviews. George found that the answer was in the process of backtracking to Aboriginal culture. He was able to perceive his sense of self

as Aboriginal without the marginal feature, which was imposed by 'the other' and, was the fundamental cause of the problem in the first instance.

The 'changing mentality' strategy was so effective for the resolution to George's personal identity that he suggested it was also the solution to the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage. This strategy is ambitious because changing the mentality of how 'the other' perceive Aboriginal people, involves changing attitudes and behaviours which essentially involves changing Australian culture. The changing mentality strategy involves access to traditional Aboriginal culture as well as Aboriginal culture in the context of today's urban Aboriginal environment which is highly influenced by Western culture. In this sense, George is suggesting that the solution to the urban Aboriginal identity problem exists in partnership between Aboriginal people and Australian governments. He makes this point explicit in his suggestion that the Australian Government must adopt and embed a 'new mentality' into national and international policy: importantly this is a new mentality based on a spiritual belonging concept, which is understood by George as an element of Aboriginal culture.

This strategy is an example of the preference to maintain the two-world construct without the marginal feature.

5.6: Summary

In this chapter, I presented four cases studies, which were selected on the basis of the strength of the prime narrative: clearly each participant returned to key ideas throughout the interview. The purpose of presenting case studies and adopting a narrative analysis was to triangulate the findings of this study. The first Findings chapter, which was based on a thematic analysis, revealed the construction of an Aboriginal identity problem and I concluded that the collective Shoalhaven worldview consisted of several themes. The case study analysis revealed how four of those participants distinctly crafted the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview.

When comparing the findings from my thematic analysis to the findings from my narrative analysis, I found that the findings from my narrative analysis provided a much more in-depth understanding of the process of urban Aboriginal identity construction. I utilised Labov and Waletzky's (1967) model of narrative analysis to show how one participant artfully interweaved events of a past experience into government legislation for the

purpose of making a moral point. This analysis evidenced the underlying structure of his talk, bringing a deeper understanding of the meaning portrayed in the story. Effectively, he told this story to make the moral point that he does not agree with former Australian government treatment of Aboriginal people. In this story he had drawn on the 1967 referendum and made a statement about 'flora and fauna'. My analysis of this *story* subsequently revealed a limitation of Labov and Waletzky's model by exposing that the *story* itself was not told in a vacuum, but rather, that meaning found in talk outside of the *story* provided further contextual information. I must further note that the *story* was defined through my interpretive act. That is, I defined the boundary of that particular narrative by applying Labov and Waletzky's functions.

Due to my status as an Aboriginal researcher from the Aboriginal community I already had a well-nuanced understanding of the narrated events in that particular *story*. However, a researcher from another country with limited knowledge of the local lexicon and colonial history of Australia may not have as easily understood the meaning embedded in the story. Thus, a shared understanding of the socio-historical context in which Bruno's story was situated was also needed for an accurate interpretation of the point he made. Bruno claimed to no longer have a problem with his identity, however further analysis revealed that he in fact continued to construct his identity as a problem.

I concluded that Bruno constructed a political identity in response to the negative historical treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia. However, at the same time and this is crucial, my analysis revealed that the construction of a political identity had also become the strategy for solving his personal identity problem. That is, by not going into the Land Titles Office, Bruno is able to see himself as living in accordance with the Aboriginal worldview, which includes a subscription to resistance against colonialism (Hollinsworth 1992). For him, a marker for colonialism and Aboriginal primitivism is the 'flora and fauna' label which emerged within past Australian government policy that neglected Aboriginal citizenship rights and reinforced Aboriginal marginalisation. I thus made further conclusions that Bruno's construction of Aboriginal identity involved identity problem-solving exercises.

My analysis further revealed that the construction of a political identity continually emerged and subsequently became a resource for more practical strategies that he believed could solve the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage. Bruno's suggested strategies were also political in nature. For example these include becoming

educated in the Western system to fight the battle against 'the other'; to teach Aboriginal children to have pride in their Aboriginal heritage; to build a stronger Aboriginal collective; and to build a stronger Indigenous collective identity by drawing on the experience of other Indigenous peoples around the world. Clearly, Bruno has a preference to maintain the two-world construct: another strategy for solving the problems of Aboriginal identity and Aboriginal marginalisation. These strategies also serve as a function for the preservation of Aboriginal identity. This shows that the construction of Aboriginal identity, which occurs through problem-solving exercises, reflects the prominent elements of the Shoalhaven worldview documented in the findings from my thematic analysis presented in chapter 4.

My analysis of the second case study clearly indicated the importance of Aboriginal culture to Joe's Aboriginal identity. I was able to track this by documenting points he made about his children. He taught his children how to do Aboriginal things, such as fishing and finding the hypothetical veggie patch in the bush. He also reported to persist with racism in the workplace for the benefit his children in the longer term, as this allows him to financially support them (Joe perceived his experience of racism was an effect of his Aboriginality). Furthermore, he described the importance of giving his children totems or lore names. This case study exemplifies the importance of cultural reproduction and the role of the 'significant other'. Thus, Joe has become a significant other that passes on positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept.

Although Joe described two instances of the personal experience of racism, my analysis revealed that these stories were told to make a positive point. This finding was revealed by focusing on the evaluation function where Joe made the point that these experiences did not really impact on him as much as might be expected, since he has the benefit of a more mature interpretation of these events given his older status (i.e. he is not a teenager) and thus can teach his children how to better deal with these situations. In this sense, he projects himself as a 'good father', effectively teaching his children how to deal with racism and Aboriginal marginalisation should they experience this in the future. This finding demonstrates that Joe perceives Aboriginal identity may be a problem for his children in the future.

The third case study is a demonstration of how Michelle interweaves the positive and negative influences of her significant others' (her mother and father) in the same interview. She described the influence of her father's political stance as positive. On the other hand,

through the use of emotive language, Michelle has demonstrated how her mother's status as a stolen generation had caused her feelings of incompleteness which she described was from not knowing her mother's mob. In fact Michelle has not visited her mother's Aboriginal community, yet still makes acknowledgement of descent from that particular community. My findings have demonstrated that although Michelle had drawn on both positive and negative influences from her parents, she continued to focus on the negative impact of not knowing her mother's people. Ironically, she claims an Aboriginal identity through descent, not socialisation in that Aboriginal community[10].

My narrative analysis of the first three case studies reveals the important role significant others have in passing on the Aboriginal identity concept. If the negative elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept continue to be culturally reproduced, then potentially, future generations of urban Aboriginal people will also construct Aboriginal identity as a problem. This could happen if marginalisation continues to be a prominent component of the stories that people tell about their lives and potentially transcending the generations in story form. In this scenario, perhaps the construction of political identities can be used to stimulate strategies that best serve and protect the interests of Aboriginal communities in general. However, as demonstrated in my findings from Bruno's transcripts, the construction of political identities can be problematic.

The Shoalhaven worldview is informed by the experience of the negative historical treatment of Aboriginal people. Although this is expressed as a negative experience, it profoundly gives the participants a sense of belonging and unity. The participants display a strong commitment to Aboriginal equality in Australian society and in doing so they actively seek to solve the problem of Aboriginal identity offering a raft of strategies for this purpose.

When we bring the findings from these four case studies together, we see that each participant has successful reproduced the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview in conversation. However, they offered different problem-solving strategies: Bruno's strategy is the construction of a political identity; Joe's strategy is drawing on Aboriginal culture and transmitting this to the younger generation; Michelle's strategy, although drawing on

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[10] Michelle has, however, been socialised in the Shoalhaven Aboriginal community: her father's people.

both the positive and negative influences from her parents has focused on the positive influence from her father which is based on Aboriginal cultural practice; and George's strategy is to 'change mentality' or they way Aboriginal people are viewed. All strategies involve drawing on positive elements of the Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal identity concept, which was traced back to Aboriginal culture.

When comparing the content of George and Bruno's interviews we see striking similarities: both described undergoing a personal identity problem or crisis; both described that the answer to this problem was found in Aboriginal culture; both had offered strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage; and although both claimed to no longer have a problem with their personal identity, they continued to offer strategies for solving the broader problems of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage. These strategies were quite different.

In Chapter 4 I presented my findings from a thematic analysis, which documented the construction of an Aboriginal identity problem. In Chapter 5 I presented my findings from a narrative analysis, which demonstrated that four participants were actively engaged in problem solving exercises that included strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

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This chapter is presented in three parts. The first deals with methodological issues, the second with key elements of urban Aboriginal identity which were identified through the use of these methodologies, and the third a discussion of strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal disadvantage and marginalisation in an Australian context in the future.

6.1: Methodological issues

We humans are cultural beings that learn about *selves* in narrative form: our thinking is organised in narratives, our worldviews are organised in narratives and our telling of experience and behaviour which express our attitudes are in narrative form. Narrative is the vehicle by which we communicate. It enables us to think about *selves* as socially situated, yet, at the same time, it provides us with the ability to maintain a unique sense of self. This sense of self is what we have come to call our 'identities'. Essentially, I have just described the 'narrative identity thesis' (Battersby 2006) which posits narrative as the fundamental unit for human identity construction.

This qualitative study of urban Aboriginal identity utilised a constructionist epistemology and adopted perspectives from Symbolic Interactionism and narrative theory. The aim of the study was to understand better the process of identity construction in an urban Aboriginal community on the South Coast of New South Wales, Australia. 11 in-depth interviews were conducted for the purpose of generating original data. These interviews were transcribed in full and analysed using two different forms of analysis: thematic analysis and narrative analysis. These different forms of analysis are premised on different theoretical assumptions, and therefore required different ways of seeing and interpreting the data. As a result of this requirement, I presented my findings in separate chapters: in Chapter Four the findings from a thematic analysis; those from a narrative analysis in Chapter Five. This research adopted the analytical framework of 'narrative practice' (Gubrium and Holstien 1998) consisting of three analytical categories: 'narrative linkages', 'local resources' and 'organisational auspices'. In my discussion I bring together the themes in the literature (as presented in chapters two and three) with themes from the

findings chapter (as presented in chapter 4 and 5). I begin by addressing these three analytical categories.

6.1.1: Narrative Linkages and Local Resources

'Narrative linkages' occur when the stories people tell are narratively linked to discourses that permeate the broader socio-cultural-historical milieu. 'Local resources' are lived experiences that occur in localised settings. When participants were asked questions of identity they commonly responded by telling stories about their lives, making clear narrative linkages to the many discourses that permeate Australian society. This discussion is focused on discourses of particular relevance to urban Aboriginal identity.

Stephen Muecke (1999) maintained that much of what is known about Aboriginal people in Australia is informed by the disciplines of anthropology, history and literature. He also argued that the anthropological canon produced three discourses of Aboriginality: the 'anthropological', the 'romantic'; and the 'racist' (Muecke 1982). These are discourses which have had a negative impact on Aboriginal people, and since contemporary Aboriginal people reflect elements of both Aboriginal culture and Australian culture, it was not surprising that participants made narrative linkages to all three discourses of Aboriginality. What is surprising is that these discourses were prominent features of participant stories. In particular, the information imparted in the interview was underpinned by the 'primitive aborigine' construct.

My literature review revealed that the 'primitive aborigine' construct was firmly embedded in the work of many anthropological studies in the late 19th century. These included the pioneering works of Morgan, Taylor and Spencer (Stocking 1982). Lewis H. Morgan's (1877) work which posited a seven step model of human evolution from savagery to civilisation had become quite influential as it was followed with keen interest by socialists Marx and Engels (Goldenweiser 1941). The idea of progress was entrenched in this work, and was used to determine the civility or primitiveness of Aboriginal 'races'. Importantly this model was based on Western markers for progress, such as the use of the phonetic alphabet and knowledge of the use of fire, of the acquisition of fish substance and of farming and irrigation. The various 'races' were located on the table according to the appearance or absence of such markers for progress.

Progress was also linked to genetic capacity whereby the British believed they were genetically, culturally and intellectually superior to Aboriginal people. This informed the

constructed 'truth' that Aboriginal people would inevitably die out, which in turn justified the negative unequal treatment of Aboriginal people in Australian society. Whilst the social construction of 'race' (as distinct species of humans) is now considered invalid, it nonetheless continues to inform a set of "imaginary properties of inheritance which fix and legitimize real positions of social domination and subordination" (Cohen cited in Hollinsworth 2006, p.27). In the context of Australian colonial history, Aboriginal marginalisation is a key feature. My findings have revealed that participants have drawn on the notion of Aboriginal marginalisation. This is where the thesis's contention that history is inextricably linked to urban Aboriginal identity construction has been both confirmed and highlighted. Thus, in terms of the broader question of *urban Aboriginal identity*, Aboriginality cannot be understood without 'the other' and Aboriginal history cannot be understood as separate from Australian history.

The findings from my thematic analysis which were presented in Chapter Four documented the dominant emergent themes from 11 in-depth interviews. My key finding was the construction of Aboriginal identity problem which consisted of four clearly defined themes. These were: 1) the claim of an Aboriginal identity in the context of a broader Aboriginal collective; 2) sources of belonging to an Aboriginal collective; 3) the experience of a culture of Aboriginal marginalisation in an Australian colonial context; and 4) participant descriptions of the impact of Aboriginal marginalisation on their sense of self.

The two-world construct (a black world and a white world) emerged in participants talk in several ways: the statement of living in two-worlds; the description of being caught between two-worlds; the 'too white to be black, too black to be white' phrase; the description of physical boundaries which have reinforced the two-world construct, such as living in tin shacks, missions or reserves or the description of experiences of exclusion from pubs, clubs, cinemas, and so on. This situation, in which Aboriginal people were excluded from society, is the result of Australian government policies that were informed by the 'primitive aborigine' construct. Aboriginal people were considered genetically inferior and therefore could not compete in a Western society. As a consequence, and in order to 'smooth the dying pillow of the Aboriginal race', the Australian government sought to build missions and reserves to protect Aboriginal people. As Clarke noted "[t]he Aborigines Act (1911) was put in place to "protect" Aboriginal people who were considered to be a dying race … [However,] the purpose of the act was to segregate many Aboriginal people into reserves away from non-Aboriginal people" (Clarke 2000, p.150).

Policies of segregation had a dramatic impact on the identities of Aboriginal people, whereby the legislative act created physical boundaries. This strengthened the two-world construct for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, this construct has resulted in the lived experience of marginalisation which in conversation had become a resource for participants' constructions of identity.

These policies were justified by the science of the time which postulated that Aboriginal people were an 'inferior race'. However, when measured against contemporary Australian society's values and norms, the historical actions and treatment that Australian governments forced Aboriginal people to endure can be considered racist, and are recognised as racist by the participants. This treatment of Aboriginal people can be considered as representative of what Muecke (1982) has described as 'the racist': discourse that emerged from the anthropological canon.

The experience of racism was not only limited to that which was stuck in the past but that which continues to happen in current times. For example, Joe told two stories of personal experience of racism which occurred in the days preceding the interview. Shirley suggested that the then Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, was a 'redneck' for his reluctance to say 'sorry' to the stolen generations, interpreted as a racist act. Several participants described other experiences of racism, prejudice or discrimination such as the experience of name-calling at school and their experience of exclusion from pubs, clubs and cinemas.

In the initial stages of Chapter 2, I commented on the first documented contact between Aboriginal people and those on board the Dutch vessel the *Duyfken*. Prior to this contact, the original inhabitants lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle and, from a Western perspective, were considered to be untouched by cultural influence from others. This idealised view of the 'aborigine' continues to be used as a benchmark to determine the authenticity of Aboriginal identity claims. This is representative of the 'romantic discourse of Aboriginality' (Muecke 1982). The common thinking is that the more that an Aboriginal person in contemporary times resembles a traditional 'aborigine' the more authentic their Aboriginal identity claim is thought to be. However, the notion of mixed heritage, combined with the caste system which the Australian Government adopted and embedded in its policy and administration, legitimised the view (from the perspective of non-Aboriginal people) that Aboriginal authenticity was inherently tied to the image of the 'romanticised', untouched 'aborigine'. This impacted on the participants in several ways:

Several participants vehemently opposed the use of terms such as 'half caste', 'quarter caste' and 'octoroon' when describing their identity. For Mimi, it is ridiculous to use those terms of stigmatisation that the white man placed on Aboriginal people. In the one exception to this, Michelle stated that, depending on the situation, she would describe herself as a 'half caste' to allow her to articulate and acknowledge her identity to people from outside Australia. She is quite comfortable to use the half caste construction of Aboriginality for this purpose. The participants have drawn on 'the romantic discourse of Aboriginality' for identity construction purposes, albeit primarily to refute the use of such terms as markers for identity.

Boladeras' study of fair complexioned Nyungar's and Foley's study of fair-skinned children revealed participant reluctance to identify as Aboriginal in an attempt to avoid the onerous task of explaining their identities to others who deemed they did not look Aboriginal. This conforms to Muecke's notion of a 'romantic discourse of Aboriginality', where the authenticity of Aboriginal people and their identities are measured against the image of the romanticised 'traditional Aborigine'. The findings from this study, in contrast, have shown that participants have displayed pride in their Aboriginal heritage and vehemently refute the act of denying their Aboriginality.

Bruno's 'story', which occurred in the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages is an example of the way in which he simultaneously utilised narrative linkages and local resources in his story-telling efforts. Effectively, he recounted a sequence of events that he had experienced at that office. During the retelling of this story, he makes narrative linkages to wider discourses and historical events. He linked, for example, the 'flora and fauna' statement to the historical 1967 referendum, which had historically influenced Australian government policy on Aboriginal people. For Bruno, the 'flora and fauna' statement was made to reflect the fact that Aboriginal people in general were not counted in the Census and not considered citizens. These ideas, which emerged in Bruno's conversation, reinforced the 'primitive aborigine' construct.

Not all discourses of Aboriginality have a negative impact on Aboriginal people, however. As a result of, and in response to, the marginalisation of Aboriginal people in Australia three discourses of Aboriginality have emerged: 'Aboriginality as descent', 'Aboriginality as cultural continuity', and 'Aboriginality as resistance' (Hollinsworth 1998). All participants have made narrative linkages to each of these discourses. For example, all claimed Aboriginal descent. All have resisted elements of Western culture in some way

(one example was the rejection of earlier Australian government policies such as the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their parents and another was through stories of personal experience of racism which emanated from the broader 'white' culture). Clearly, all participants in this study claimed cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal cultural practices ranging from the acknowledgement that Aboriginal people in Australia are the longest continuing culture in the history of humankind, to going fishing, practicing ceremony, dance, art, and to the hypothetical 'finding a veggie patch in the bush'. They viewed these practices as distinctly Aboriginal and displayed a great pride in their Aboriginal heritage.

Broader concepts that are understood to be typically representative of traditional Aboriginal culture, such as the 'Dreaming' (which, in essence, is a 'white man's' interpretation of Aboriginal religion), have become a necessary element of George's identity. For him, the link to the 'Dreaming' (the re-finding of Aboriginal culture) was sufficiently integral to the resolution of his personal identity problem, that it was expressed as the core feature of his identity. So, in this sense, the urban Aboriginal construction of identity involves the process of accessing Aboriginal culture through Western interpretations. Given the social constructivist paradigm, this is quite crucial. However, what becomes problematic is that the 'romantic' discourse of Aboriginality has become such a prominent feature of broader Australian culture that it continues to shape the Western perception of how an Aboriginal person is supposed to look, act and think.

The findings of this study confirm that the nature of Aboriginal culture in this study is representative of Aboriginal culture in other geographical locations as documented in other studies. For example, the participants clearly identified as Aboriginal, and exercised what Cowlishaw (2004) termed 'racial loyalty', which is the process whereby Aboriginal people of mixed descent claim solely an Aboriginal identity. This shows that 'racial loyalty', as a discourse of Aboriginality, is not limited to that particular Aboriginal community or the geographical area of that study. However, my literature review did uncover that not all Aboriginal people exercise racial loyalty: Yin Paradies identifies as an Aboriginal-Anglo-Asian-Australian (Paradies 2006) and Indigenous cultural archaeologist, Lynette Russell, refuses to deny her Anglo heritage (cited in Paradies 2006).

6.1.2: Organisational Auspice

When Gurbium and Holstien (1998) use the term 'organisational auspices' they refer to contextual factors which acknowledge that what is being told is told within a specific setting, and, in the case of this study, the specific setting is the formal research interview. My status as a younger male and as a member of the Aboriginal community under study has the potential to enhance or inhibit the types of stories told. If, for example, I conducted an interview with a respected female elder and asked a question of identity, it is likely that my status as a younger male would deter the participant from telling elements of her life history which may have, for example, included episodes of deviant teenage behaviour. However, if the interview were to be conducted by an older female researcher, then the participant might feel better able to tell those kinds of stories.

In addition, Riessman (1993) indicated that the artfulness of human agency and imagination determine what gets included and excluded in narrativisation. This artfulness implies that identities are fluid, not static, and are constructed in interaction with the potential to change with different tellings. In this sense, if my status as a younger male deters the telling of certain kinds of stories, and given that identities permeate the stories people tell, then the 'organisational auspice' shapes the construction of identity in interaction. Furthermore, rapport between researcher and participant also played a central role in this process. Thus, the findings from this study have been produced from an analysis which had the benefit of an insider perspective of culture at the local level. Another benefit was that both researcher and participant had an understanding of the local cultural lexicon, as well as an understanding of broader discourses from the perspective of that local culture.

A crucial element of my interpretation and analysis of the interview data was my understanding of cultural nuances such as in the use of Aboriginal English. Examples include the use of the terms 'bra', 'gubs', 'deadly' and 'black fulla' (as opposed to 'black fella'). I used the former spelling to describe the way Shoalhaven Aboriginal people accentuate this word. Bruno accentuated the word with an 'e' which was striking to me because this was not the norm for the cultural setting of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal community. However, Bruno indicated that he was brought up white by his mother and that he had found his Aboriginal community in later life, which was the key to solving his personal identity problem. This is an explanation for accentuating the term black fulla with an 'e'. Joe's daughter described catching a 'deadly' fish. This is another example of the

importance of understanding the local lexicon as the meaning of a 'deadly fish' in the context of the local culture was an 'excellent' or 'great' fish, rather than a 'poisonous' fish with the potential for causing a 'life threatening' bite.

The 'narrative practice' analytical framework is well-suited to this study of identity as the above discussion indicates. The participants made narrative linkages to discourses of Aboriginality, which were both positive (cultural continuity, resistance, descent) and negative (the anthropological, the racist and the romantic). This only occurred as a result of the negative historical treatment of Aboriginal people. In effect, this negative treatment reinforced the two-world construct, which was imposed by the British upon first arrival. As a result of this history participants continue to draw on this culture of Aboriginal marginalisation.

6.2: Key elements of Aboriginal identity

An important underlying theme which needs to be brought out is the construction of Aboriginal identity as related to 'the other'; that is, non-Aboriginal Australia. This brings into question the role of history, society and cultural reproduction.

Australian literature generally paints the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations as marred with conflict and division. This history is endorsed by Australian government policies, which have shaped urban Aboriginal identity, and continues to make an impact on urban Aboriginal communities. This is evidenced in the stories that participants told in this research. Thus, the history of place has become a key feature of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview and continues to be used by participants as a resource to make personal moral points, which reflect that worldview.

All participants primarily focused on the negative treatment of Aboriginal people in an Australian colonial historical context and linked this to contemporary and past experiences of racism, prejudice and discrimination. In addition, they explained how these socio-historical events had impacted on their sense of identity. This powerful colonial history influence also informed their attitudes and perspectives of that history, whereby they told their versions of history.

Participant claims of an Aboriginal identity were linked to biological descent, the ability to trace traditional Aboriginal heritage (by identifying tribe or clan) and socialisation in an Aboriginal community. There was also a clear sense that Aboriginality included a spiritual

experience which began at birth and was difficult to explain. However, the findings from my literature review revealed that socialisation was an integral component for constructing an Aboriginal identity: as in the case of Mudrooroo and Gordon Matthews (Linning 1999). Several participants in this study claimed they were neglected this opportunity for a major period of the childhood: Bruno was brought up 'white' by his mother, and Martha was taken from her Aboriginal family at the age of six. This suggests that one can learn an Aboriginal identity in later life, showing that the construction of Aboriginal identity does not require a prerequisite process of continual socialisation in an Aboriginal community over the human life course.

Socialisation processes are cultural and require exposure to a worldview. Throughout the Findings chapter of my thematic analysis I made evaluative statements, which I concluded, were prominent features of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview. These are: 'an acknowledgment of mixed descent, however solely claim an Aboriginal identity'; pride in Aboriginal heritage; advocacy for the preservation of Aboriginal identity; cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal culture; a culture of Aboriginal marginalisation; constructing Aboriginal identity as a problem.

The findings from my narrative analysis documented how four participants offered strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage, which, and this is crucial, conformed with the prescribed Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview. I concluded that these four participants were actively engaged in identity problem-solving exercises.

The worldview is important because it contains mental artefacts, spiritual artefacts, values and beliefs, which provide individuals with a resource for sense-making exercises. This is crucial to urban Aboriginal identity because the construction of positive versions of self is achieved when the self is seen as living in accordance with the prescribed worldview. In bringing the findings from both analysis chapters together and cross referencing these against the findings from the literature, I have shown that participants see themselves as living in accordance with the Aboriginal worldview: they display pride in their Aboriginal heritage, see themselves as Aboriginal cultural beings and make claims of continuing traditional Aboriginal cultural practice. However, given that historical acts of dispossession of culture have broken the link between Aboriginal people and the prescribed Aboriginal worldview, they have developed a vocal resistance to colonisation. In this sense, the participants have condemned particular former Australian government policy which

attempted to break this link. Crucially, they are able to claim an Aboriginal identity and be comfortable with this claim, even though they have described the negative consequences for doing so.

Another point to note is that the participants subscribe to elements of both traditional Aboriginal culture and elements of Western culture, which allows them to construct positive versions of self. However, they have traced the Aboriginal identity problem back to the impact of Western culture. This is important because the construction of an authentic Aboriginal identity is based on both Western and Aboriginal cultural resources.

Given that the urban Aboriginal identity concept is highly influenced by socialisation in an urban Aboriginal community, it is the elements of culture to which participants are exposed that become the resources used to achieve authenticity as Aboriginal people. Thus, socialisation is much more important than descent, simply because an Aboriginal identity is learnt, requiring socialisation processes. This is where the worldview has an integral role, because the urban Aboriginal identity concept is constructed from exposure to the Aboriginal worldview and crucially, can happen regardless of biological descent.

Strategies for claiming an Aboriginal identity were used by participants in a variety of ways. Joe and Jeremy for instance, pointed out the importance of giving their children Aboriginal names. This signified a pride in Aboriginality, which also became a strategy for the preservation of Aboriginal identity. Several participants spent a great deal of time in the interview explaining the significance for them, of partaking in Aboriginal cultural practice; including ceremonies, dance, fishing and painting, which had become important features of urban Aboriginal life. More generally, subscribing to a pride in Aboriginality allowed them to feel good about themselves. In a sense, this contrasted with the negativity of Aboriginality that was embedded in past Australian Government policies and citizen attitudes towards Aboriginal people.

The findings from this study show that history plays an important role in the construction of Aboriginal identity in the formal research interview. In this study I have shown that 'significant others' such as parents or parent figures play a necessary role in the telling of various versions of Australian history. This is where the 'black armband view' of history has become an important component of the current Aboriginal identity debate in the literature. This debate invigorated the Aboriginal political movement of the 1960's and 1970's, which has also played a role in the preservation of Aboriginal identity. This is where significant others have a central role in cultural reproduction exercises: passing on a

culture of pride in Aboriginal heritage to the younger generation is important, because it gives the individual a sense of belonging to an Aboriginal collective, potentially protecting them from the negative experience of marginalisation. However, even though several participants clearly see the significance in passing on a culture of pride in Aboriginal heritage, the marginal feature continues to appear. This process can become internalised by individuals, and, in effect, the problem of urban Aboriginal identity is passed on to other members of the Aboriginal community as well as the younger generation. A model of cultural reproduction of identity is shown in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Model of Cultural Reproduction of Identity:
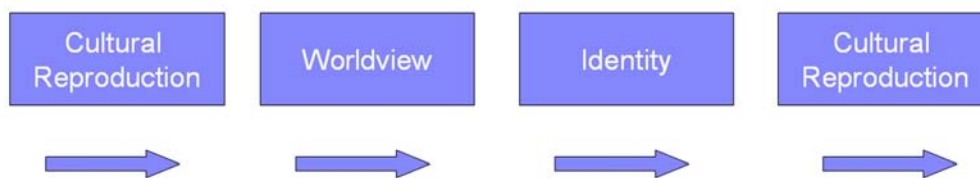
While cultural reproduction is vital to the transmission of Aboriginal culture, there are positive and negative outcomes of cultural reproduction of the Shoalhaven worldview. In terms of positive outcomes the telling of positive elements of Aboriginal identity such as pride in Aboriginal heritage and the reinforcement of the importance of cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal cultural practice, can facilitate the passing on of pride in Aboriginal heritage to the younger generations of Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, there are also negative outcomes, especially if elements of the worldview largely reflect and reproduce acceptance of Aboriginal marginalisation.

The intergenerational and intragenerational transmission of the Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal worldview occurs in story form. This process of passing on the urban Aboriginal identity concept is pertinent to the preservation of urban based Aboriginal identity. As I have demonstrated in my findings, the story of marginalisation is enough to transcend the generations. Even though racist policy was formally extinguished, Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people continued to accept that Aboriginal people are a

marginalised people[11]. So, whilst the younger cohort did not experience formal policies of exclusion, they continued to tell the story of Aboriginal marginalisation. My findings also reveal that significant others can have both positive and negative impacts on one's sense of self. Martha describe that she did not know she was Aboriginal because her significant others (nuns at a convent) told her that she was a half caste and not Aboriginal. What is crucial here is that even though Martha is of Aboriginal descent the powerful role of socialisation in a culture of denial of Aboriginal heritage had impacted on her in such a way that she actually believed she was not an Aboriginal person. In Bruno's case, his mother consciously chose not to identify her children as Aboriginal for fear of marginalisation; this, according to Bruno, ensured he and his siblings were not prohibited from attending school. Now, in later life, Bruno has drawn on this event in his efforts to construct a political identity. In both findings chapters, there were numerous examples of how 'significant others' were able to teach their children to have pride in their Aboriginal identity.

A central feature of the urban Aboriginal identity problem is the continued recycling and reinvention of the culture of marginalisation and disadvantage. Clearly this study has shown that the urban Aboriginal identity concept is informed by stories of disadvantage and marginalisation which are prominent elements of the local culture. If broader discourses of Aboriginality continue to reflect a culture of marginalisation and disadvantage, then there becomes a danger that this culture is internalised and the construct of a marginalised identity becomes a lived experience, setting up the cycle for the 'identity problem' to become the prominent experience of the younger generation.

6.3: Strategies to solve the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage

Historical Australian government policy and administration has marginalised and disadvantaged Aboriginal people and I therefore suggest that all attempts to address this

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[11] It is also of note that Aboriginal disadvantage is convincingly reflected in numerous statistical studies including in the areas of health, justice, welfare and education.

marginalisation and disadvantage of Aboriginal communities in Australia must involve Australian governments.

The participants offered several strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage. These strategies were underpinned by several principles that represented the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview. For example, the participants were advocates for the preservation of urban Aboriginal identity regardless of the wider milieu that shaped, and continues to shape, their sense of self in both positive and negative ways. Nonetheless, the various strategies for preserving Aboriginal identity are passed on in story form. These strategies include a commitment to racial loyalty, passing on the Aboriginal identity concept to their children, a subscription to the black armband view of history, a continued subscription to the 'two-world construct' and a preference for equality between Aboriginal people and other Australians. All participants at some point in their life have personal experience of socialisation in an Aboriginal community, which informs them of the concept of an Aboriginal identity that continues to be passed on to the younger generation.

My analysis revealed that participants claimed personal identities by claiming membership to an Aboriginal collective. Unfortunately, the claim of Aboriginality involves the claim of marginalisation, discrimination, racism and prejudice which was reported by participants as having many negative emotional effects on them including the experience of shame, anger, frustration, distrust, sadness and loss of Aboriginal identity. This is where Australian interventionist policies have played a powerful role in shaping the identity of the participants. This is particularly the case for those policies which restricted the movement of Aboriginal people, including formal policies of segregation and exclusion. This reinforced the two-world construct which was initially imposed by the British and which has now become the key resource which participant's access in order to construct identity. What is crucial here is that the strategy to adopt the two-world construct allows participants to draw on elements from both Aboriginal culture and Western culture. This suggests that the answer is located in both Aboriginal culture and Western culture. However, the key here is to draw on the positive elements of both cultures in order to construct positive versions of self.

Participants constructed political identities in the interview. However the extent to which this occurred varied between participants. It was very clear that the construction of a political identity was much more conservative amongst the female participants. The male

participants, particularly in the second generation, were vocal in the condemnation of British colonisation and the various acts that followed.

'Strategic engagement' was the preferred solution to overcome the identity problematic. Some termed it 'survival', others 'competition', and yet others 'education'. Participants advocated for the utilisation of aspects of the Western system by applying these to the life situation of the individual. This strategy involves maintaining the two-world construct without the marginal feature.

The strategy for solving the identity problem for George and Bruno was back-tracking to Aboriginal cultural heritage to find their Aboriginal identities. Although they had both experienced identity crises when younger, they explain that this is now in the past, and that they are both now comfortable with their identity, thanks to the journey. This is primarily because they have found a balance between the two-worlds. This form of trial and error evaluation of self identity can be problematic, because the experience of the journey, which essentially is an experience of marginalisation and disadvantage, is the prerequisite and underlying principle that provides meaning.

The fourth case study exemplified the complex nature of narration. In this example George produced the 'changing mentality' prime narrative. The findings here offer possible stimuli for the development of appropriate strategies to alleviate the broader problems of Aboriginal identity and marginalisation in Australia. These strategies are not, however, generalisable across all Aboriginal communities in Australia. Thus, the cultural elements that permeate place (in the case, the Shoalhaven, as well as a broader Australian milieu) at the time of interview informed the participants of their unique constructions of Aboriginality, which importantly were not measured against the physical characteristics of the 'traditional Aborigine' (which are so often used by the broader population to measure the authenticity of Aboriginality claims), but rather an authenticity which developed from socialisation in a culture that is unique to this urban community.

6.3.1: Challenges for Aboriginal people

Aboriginal identity is problematic for Aboriginal people in the context of Australian society, and the reasons for this are both simple and complex. It is simple because the participants place a great deal of weight on the issue of marginalisation, disadvantage and racism, both today and in the past. The many themes presented in both findings chapters are evidence of this: they show that the participants draw on the broader issue of

Aboriginal marginalisation which they perceive is problematic and given that the participants claim membership to a marginalised Aboriginal collective, they therefore also perceive their personal identity (which is Aboriginal in nature) as problematic.

At a deeper level, it is problematic in a more complex way. Aboriginal culture and in turn Aboriginal identity, has many communitarian facets (Houston, 2003), yet Aboriginal people have individual identities. These Aboriginal identities are informed by a prescribed worldview, one of mutuality, reciprocity and sharing. This is where the Aboriginal identity concept ceases to be as individualistic as in Western society. Given that individuals construct positive versions of self when they see themselves as living in accordance with the prescribed worldview, and given that the prescribed worldview focuses on the negative historical treatment, the negative history plays a much more significant part in Aboriginal identity than in the identity of the 'other'. Perhaps this is because 'the other' are not recipients of culture dispossession. When we move to a community perspective, this study has shown that marginalisation does not need to be personally experienced to become a prominent component of the urban Aboriginal identity concept. In a profound way, the experience of Aboriginal identity includes the experience of a collective Aboriginal marginalisation, which is transmitted in the stories that Aboriginal people narrate to each other. Clearly, the story of Michelle's mother taken from her Aboriginal family and raised by Catholic nuns has had a profound impact on Michelle; so much so that Michelle's stories of identity included the notion that a piece of her was missing because she did not know her mother's mob.

Given that the participants claim an Aboriginal identity, take a great pride in the cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal practices and draw so much on the resources within an Aboriginal collective, then many of the findings of Chapters 4 and 5 needs to be seen in these terms. Talk of the past, and of other Aboriginal experiences of racism, dispossession and denigration, are lived experiences for the community. While this, as Houston (2003) exposes, has many benefits for Aboriginal people, their communities and their culture, it also creates tension between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia, which inevitably presents as a challenge for urban Aboriginal identity and urban Aboriginal people.

Future challenges are linked to the ways in which 'the other' perceive Aboriginal people. As Nakata (2002) pointed out, the Western perception of Indigenous peoples in the human sciences has changed over time. Whilst this seems like a step forward for alleviating gross

inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australian society, there continues to be a discourse of 'primitivism' and 'barbarism' that underpins current government practice (Cunneen, 2008). This can be considered a form of continuing racism that is difficult to identify. Several participants in this study felt that racism is evident in contemporary Australian society. It is, in Mimi's words, "underneath …, very subtle, but it is still there", and, it is, as Bruno indicates, simply "couched very well". Institutional racism is a new, more subtle, kind of racism that Aboriginal people are becoming aware of. It presents as a new challenge for Aboriginal people.

Crucially, participants continued to advocate for the preservation of Aboriginal identity; in effect subscribing to a continued negotiation of the two-world construct. Unfortunately, this is not the vision of the current Australian government. Rather Australian Government's vision is to move forward as a united people, living in one world. Egalitarian principles underpin this vision. This presents as a challenge for Aboriginal people as they continue to deal with the effects of historical and current marginalisation in Australian society.

6.4: Insider researcher – strengths and limitations of this research

This research was unique because I, as researcher, am a member of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal community in which the research was undertaken. I proudly identify as a descendant of the traditional owners of Shoalhaven country. My status as an 'insider' researcher, in the broader sense (as an Aboriginal person conducting research within an Aboriginal community) influenced the design of the research proposal including the choice of methods, the chosen research setting, the chosen theoretical perspective, and rationale for the research. On a more local and important level, my role as 'insider' researcher played a crucial role in the recruitment of participants and the collection and analysis of qualitative data. My role as an 'insider' is fundamental to ensuring participant confidentiality which has directly informed my decisions for the inclusion or exclusion of interview data in the findings in this thesis document. Further, the issue of ensuring participant confidentiality will continue to be influenced by my insider status when preparing future published works that report on the findings of this study.

From the outset my personal rationale for this study was informed by several preferences to conduct a study in my own local community. The first was that I was fascinated with the

question of Aboriginal identity having questioned my own Aboriginality during my teen years. Second, understanding Aboriginal identity from the perspective of my local community provided me with a research topic which would ultimately contribute to an understanding of my identity questioning episodes. Third, access to the community required minimal effort during the recruitment process. Fourth, limited funding meant that it was much more practical to research my own people, thus requiring little funds for travel and accommodation. And fifth, I was previously trained in qualitative research methods which utilised the in-depth interview to generate original data for a study conducted as a requirement for an honours degree. The opportunity to research the topic of identity in my own community has assisted in the understanding of my sense of self. The PhD has become a significant 'chapter' in my life and now complements my already well-nuanced understanding of my community. However, I acknowledge that aspects of the theoretical framework which are embedded in this work do not resonate with various perspectives of the community. An example of this is the idea that meaning comes from the dreaming, vis-à-vis the subjectivist epistemology (see Crotty 1998) as opposed to the constructionist epistemology (underpinning this work) which affords a reality to each individual where meaning comes from within.

One benefit associated with this 'insider researcher' design was the ability to make a quality assessment of the findings. That is the findings did not simply reflect my worldview. Certainly, I did not view urban Aboriginality as a problem prior to the conduct of this study. Another benefit was that I had a well-nuanced understanding of the local culture prior to the conduct of the study and did not need to develop this understanding.

Rapport was maintained throughout the active data collection phase and the participants displayed an eagerness to talk about Aboriginal issues with an Aboriginal researcher. Further, they openly discussed sensitive issues such as being removed from family at a young age and the experience of incarceration, and prior experiences of shame in Aboriginal heritage. My status as an insider researcher also provided access to participants, with several interviewed in their homes, or in the home of one of their family members.

Although a well-nuanced understanding of the local culture was a positive aspect of the research design it also presented as a challenge. I believe it was much more difficult to realise and conceptualise obvious cultural nuances which may have been quite striking to an outside researcher. This is simply because I did not have an alternate cultural resource to reference concepts that emerged in the interviews. I believe that if I had completed this

study in another cultural setting, or even another Aboriginal community, I would have more easily noticed cultural differences. The process of reflecting on my findings with my supervisors and Indigenous peers provided mechanisms to identify obvious (to me) nuances.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

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The purpose of this research was to understand better the process of constructing urban Aboriginal identity. To answer the research question, 'how do urban Aboriginal people make and remake their identity?' I collected and analysed data generated in 11 in-depth interviews with Aboriginal people from the Shoalhaven and utilised a multi-method qualitative analysis. Initially, a thematic analysis was conducted across all 11 interviews. This was followed by a separate narrative analysis which was conducted on four of those interviews (selected cases).

The findings from the thematic analysis provided me with a deeper understanding of the collective Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal worldview. I found that this worldview was informed in many ways and from many sources. At the time of the interviews, the identity concept was informed predominantly by a blend of traditional Aboriginal cultural resources and Western cultural resources. This is not new knowledge. However progressing from this already broadly understood view of Aboriginal communities in Australia, my findings have revealed more specifically and in greater depth that the Shoalhaven worldview encapsulates four distinct themes: 1) the claim of an Aboriginal identity in the context of a broader Aboriginal collective; 2) sources of belonging to an Aboriginal collective; 3) the experience of a culture of Aboriginal marginalisation in an Australian colonial context; and 4) participant descriptions of the impact of Aboriginal marginalisation on their sense of self. My analysis further elicited that the first two themes were positive sources of the urban Aboriginal identity concept and understood by participants as located within Aboriginal culture; while the third and fourth themes were negative sources of the urban Aboriginal identity concept and understood by participants as resulting from the clash of mainstream Australian culture and Aboriginal culture. In addition, I found that participants had drawn on positive discourses of Aboriginality to try to counter this negativity. Effectively, I concluded that the participants were actively engaged in problem-solving exercises in their efforts to construct positive versions of self, even though the 'other' (dominant Anglo-Australian) worldview had cast them as marginal.

From the findings of my thematic analysis I was able to make several evaluative statements. I concluded that these are prominent features of the Shoalhaven worldview. They are:

- the claim of a sole Aboriginal identity

- pride in Aboriginal heritage

- socialisation in an Aboriginal community

- cultural continuity of traditional Aboriginal culture

- Aboriginal marginalisation

- An Aboriginal identity problematic

My narrative analysis revealed that, while participants subscribed to the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview, at the same time they proposed useful strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage. Crucially, these were in accordance with the principles of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview. My narrative analysis served two purposes: it documented the way in which each individual distinctly crafted the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview; and secondly, it showed more definitively that the participants were actively engaged in problem solving exercises. This is significant because the study had set out to understand how urban Aboriginal people make and remake their identity. It has additionally revealed that urban Aboriginal identity construction is made and remade through the activities of problem-solving.

When the findings from these analyses were brought together I reached the conclusion that the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview consisted of the following principles:

- Racial loyalty

- A strong commitment to the preservation of Aboriginal identity

- A strong commitment to Aboriginal equality in Australian society

- Subscription to the 'black armband view' of history

- A continued subscription to a 'two-world' construct.

For the participants, these principles have become strategies for preserving their Aboriginal identity which essentially has the potential to preserve and protect Aboriginal identity in future generations of Aboriginal people.

In Chapter Six, the findings presented in Chapters Four and Five were reconciled and integrated into a single set and compared with findings in the broader literature. The participants made clear and explicit narrative linkages to broader discourses of Aboriginality which have been integral to the negative treatment of Aboriginal people in Australian history. These were traced back to the 'primitive aborigine' construct which played such a crucial role in the construction of identity as revealed in the formal research interview. The 'primitive aborigine' construct was not only talked about by Aboriginal people and other citizens in Australian society but, more importantly, it informed Australian historical policies which served to legitimise situations of genuine Aboriginal subordination and White domination. These historical practices have become community experiences of marginalisation and, because the story of marginalisation is such a prominent feature of the Shoalhaven Aboriginal worldview, it unfortunately becomes made, and re-made in processes of storytelling. Thus, I conclude that marginalisation itself but additionally feelings of being marginalised are prominent features of Shoalhaven Aboriginal culture.

My findings further revealed that participant strategies for solving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage involved access to the positive elements of the urban Aboriginal identity concept. However, since the urban Aboriginal identity concept is predominantly informed by both Aboriginal and Western culture, the participants perceived the solution to be in finding the right balance between the 'two-worlds'. This suggests that any viable solution cannot be found in only one set of cultural resources; it lies in both.

A negative finding of this study was that there were no clear differences in the identity construction processes between the cohorts. Although participant stories were unique, processes of identity construction were profoundly similar. The reason for this was perhaps two-fold: 1) the broader narrative about the Aboriginal experience of historical marginalisation that was so prominent in their told stories; and 2) the participants are members of the same community. Given the close knitted-ness of the community, it is reasonable to assume that the perspectives, attitudes and ontology of the community have informed a common identity construction process regardless of age, gender or experience. Although no clear differences between the cohorts were detected, the study has still, nonetheless, documented Aboriginal perspectives of Aboriginal identity from a variety of Shoalhaven Aboriginal people of various ages.

Significance of the research

This research is significant for several reasons. The first is that it is 'Insider research' which influenced the development of the initial proposal (and subsequent versions of the proposal) in terms of the chosen study site and research methods. My status as an 'insider' also influenced the recruitment of participants and data collection processes; namely it shaped the interaction process and made the participants feel comfortable and confident to discuss some highly emotive issues. Furthermore, my 'insider' status meant, to the participants, that I have lived the Aboriginal experience, which perhaps, I was expected to conform to an Aboriginal worldview and subscribe to the values and belief systems of the local community. In effect this probably provided participants with confidence and comfort to engage in conversation on political issue that surrounds *urban* Aboriginal identity construction. Perhaps these stories would not have been told in this way, if the researcher was not a member of the community. Although there is substantial literature that focuses on the negative aspects of insider research, I believe these were not a prominent feature of my research experience and therefore did not warrant discussion.

Data analysis was assisted by my 'insider' status which consequently shaped the findings presented in this thesis. This insider status was absolutely crucial during the analysis phase because it provided me with an already well-nuanced understanding of the local culture and therefore, I was not required to develop an understanding of the meaning of various terms that participants used. Further to this, my life experience which was informed by the ontology (collective values and perspectives) of the community, places me in a unique position which did not require the development of rapport, respect or trust with the participants, although maintaining these were essential. In a profound way the participants were honored to participate in a research project that contributed to the successful completion of a PhD conducted by a member of their community.

My insider status also assisted in ensuring participant anonymity. For example, place names and specific events which could potentially identify a participant were removed from the thesis. My 'insider' status and intricate knowledge of the local community, in terms of place and dynamics within the various Aboriginal communities and families informed me of what was acceptable to report in the findings. It therefore assisted in my decision on what to include or exclude in the findings of this thesis and it will continue to inform my decisions on any future publications that may occur from this research.

Researching the foundation of Symbolic Interactionism was integral in the development of my understanding of the important role of 'insider' research, especially related to *how* identities become shaped by the interaction between researcher and participant. This is where the *reflexivity* mechanism in Mead's *philosophy of the act* (see section 3.1.1) has improved my knowledge on the importance of the Indigenist research paradigm and the various identities which are shaped by the interaction process. R*eflexivity* is crucial for making culturally appropriate comments, responses or questions and it also plays an integral role in maintaining rapport, respect and trust with participants. In addition, I could relate to the stories that participants told because I have been socialised in the local culture throughout my early childhood and later adult life.

To my knowledge, this is the first study on urban Aboriginal identity construction which has utilised a multi-method qualitative analysis. Further my literature review uncovered no other studies on urban Aboriginal identity construction which adopted the narrative analysis analytical framework (Labov and Waletzky 1967) or the prime narrative model (Mathieson and Barrie 1998). My findings show the applicability of narrative methods to a population that utilise urban Aboriginal English and, in turn, highlighted the strength of a multi-methods qualitative analysis, as well as the applicability of such methods to an Indigenist research paradigm. This is primarily because the qualitative methods adopted in this study were designed to give prominence to the Aboriginal voice and were implemented by an Aboriginal researcher.

The adoption of this multi-method qualitative analysis tool highlighted different aspects of the process of the construction of Aboriginal identity, and provided a triangulation of my findings. Without the incorporation of this multi-method qualitative analysis tool, my findings would have focused solely on the construction of the Aboriginal identity problem and would have failed to reveal how participants suggest strategies for resolving the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage and which conform to the principles of the prescribed worldview. The findings of this research have thus demonstrated the strength of utilising a multi-method qualitative analysis research design in an Indigenous research study.

The study has shown not only that participants perceive themselves as recipients of both historical and contemporary forms of marginalisation, but also that future Aboriginal populations may continue to experience marginalisation. This prediction is important

because it suggests that participants foresee that Aboriginal identity will continue to be a 'problem' requiring problem-solving strategies into the future.

Further multi-method qualitative research is needed on the construction of the urban Aboriginal identity concept in other urban Aboriginal communities to determine whether or not the findings of this study are valid beyond the Shoalhaven.

Ways forward – implications for policy and practice?

The fact that some Aboriginal people continue to perceive identity as a problem requiring a solution is a state of affairs that demands a response. I suggest that policy strategies should focus on the best and most practical solutions to break the vicious cycle of the passing on of the identity problem from one generation to the next. What is important here is that the conceptualisation of the 'urban Aboriginal identity problem' is mediated by the perception that the problem is solvable. This is where the findings that documented the positive elements of the Aboriginal identity concept can be used to devise culturally appropriate strategies to alleviate Aboriginal marginalisation and disadvantage.

Although participants perceived the two-world construct as essentially a product of marginalisation which produced an expectation that the Aboriginal world was in some sense disadvantaged and the white world privileged, it also enabled the participants to maintain the two-world construct without the marginal feature. For example, even though the two-world construct was central to the construction of the Aboriginal identity, and obviated the 'problem', the participants perceived that traversing the two-worlds allowed them to maintain, preserve, and strengthen their identities as Aboriginal people within the broader contemporary Australian society. Furthermore, living in two different worlds allows both traditional Aboriginal cultural knowledge and Western cultural knowledge to transcend the generations, which the participants perceived could help the Aboriginal cause for equality.

How can the findings from this study inform practical solutions to alleviate the broader problem of Aboriginal marginalisation? Participants' pride in their heritage invigorated the need and desire to preserve Aboriginal identity: they have a commitment to 'racial loyalty'. This suggests that participants' sense of self is strongly influenced by the Aboriginal identity construct. However, the issue of Aboriginal marginalisation in contemporary Australian society is complex, and practical solutions not without great challenge. Based

on the findings from this study, we know that pride in traditional Aboriginal cultural heritage is a distinct feature of participant constructions of positive versions of self. Therefore, I suggest that we draw on these positive features of the urban Aboriginal identity concept and use them to stimulate approaches to policy development and policy implementation which targets Aboriginal marginalisation or, at the very least, the perceived effects of marginalisation. Policy-makers should draw on positive features of the Shoalhaven urban Aboriginal identity concept to reinforce a pride in Australia's Indigenous heritage.

Changing from a culture of marginalisation to a culture of pride is simply not enough, however. How can the resolution of the Aboriginal identity problem be achieved if marginalisation continues to be the prominent resource from which Aboriginal people draw to construct identity? This is where 'the other' has a significant role to play; because changing culture can be much less time consuming if there is, as a basis, a culture of reciprocal respect developed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. This could begin with the adoption of an agreement between government and Aboriginal people which fosters culturally appropriate strategies to fix the problem. Given that Aboriginal history cannot be viewed separately from Australian history and vice versa, then any Aboriginal future cannot be viewed as separate from Australian future. In addition, contemporary urban Aboriginal people reflect many Western values, and so the answer, at least from the perspective of the participants, is to become more educated, or more business-minded, but not at the expense of further loss of their cultural identities as Aboriginal people. An appropriate solution, at least from my perspective as an Aboriginal person, is for Aboriginal people to find the appropriate balance between the two-worlds and to lead development in this direction. That can only succeed however if there is genuine respect for each of the two cultures across each of the two cultures.

This is where the findings of this research can inform Australian government Indigenous policy as well as informing a raft of other policy frameworks at local, regional, state and national levels. This is not only for the purpose of changing contemporary Aboriginal culture but also for changing broader Australian culture, and importantly for the benefit of Aboriginal people in Australia. Crucially, these ideas are based on solutions suggested by urban Aboriginal people themselves.

Finally, the construction of the 'urban Aboriginal identity problem' is cultural in nature. I suggest that the logical solution to this problem is to foster appropriate strategies to change

the culture of marginalisation. Strategies for manufacturing cultural reproduction processes can contribute here. The future of Indigenous peoples in Australia remains inevitably unknown but that does not mean to say that there are not factors that can influence it. We can for example draw on the insights offered by George to 'change mentality' and Bruno's suggestion to change the culture of Aboriginal marginalisation through strategies of positive role modeling for the next generation of Aboriginal people (which, in turn, can engender a sense of pride in their Aboriginal cultural heritage). These can provide a start to reduce the marginalisation of Aboriginal people in Australia. This can be achieved sooner if the strategies adopted include an approach that involves a culture of reciprocal respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

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APPENDIX

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to the three most important females in my life: my daughter, Savannah Jade Celcina Bolt; my wife, Nakia Cherokee Bolt; and my mother, Desley Elvy Edna Bolt.

[That's a gem painting my bra!]