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Rethinking Appropriation of the Indigenous

A Critique of the Romanticist Approach

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to set out the effects of romanticism on attitudes of the New Age movement to Indigenous Aboriginal Australian culture and people. Past scholarship has clearly expounded insensitive and exploitative New Age appropriation of Indigenous culture and emphasized inequalities in the power to represent one's own group. Essentialist, romantic stereotypes detract from deep understanding of Indigenous Australians, and negotiated solutions are not really possible when the parties involved are in grossly unequal circumstances. Scholarship acknowledges diversity within Indigenous groups and the New Age movement as well as convergences and reciprocal cultural borrowing, often within romantic epistemologies. A simple dichotomy of cultural theft by New Age practitioners from Indigenous Australians is inadequate to explain the complexities of the interaction.

Keywords: cultural appropriation, New Age movement, Indigenous, romanticism, Australian Aborigines.

INTRODUCTION

Uluru (formerly Ayres Rock), the massive rock in the center of Australia, is of great sacred importance to its Aboriginal owners. The site was listed in *The Pilgrim's Guide to Planet Earth* as one where seekers could experience spiritual forces resulting from convergences of magnetic grids encompassing the earth.¹ In the 1980s there was a plan (the Harmonic Convergence) to encircle the rock with people holding hands to welcome in a predicted New Age. In central Victoria, one New Age practitioner made sustained efforts to involve the local Aboriginal Co-operative with the event. When Aboriginal members eventually were persuaded to visit the woman in her home, they were frightened by the subject matter of her books and ritual apparatus relating to witchcraft, so wanted nothing more to do with the project. The Harmonic Convergence took place at Uluru on 16-17 August 1987. New Age practitioners' wishes to spend the night at the rock and conduct rituals in sacred caves were resisted by Aboriginal owners and park rangers, but some New Agers claimed they did, in fact, carry out rituals and stay overnight. The New Age pilgrims' views on Aboriginal culture were essentialized and peppered with spiritual beliefs and practices from elsewhere in the world.²

Since the 1980s, Australian anthropologists and cultural studies theorists have joined similar voices from the United States³ and New Zealand⁴ in clearly denouncing cultural (mis)appropriation by New Agers and others on grounds that it is an assault on the integrity of personal ties of kinship, community and country.⁵ Commentators have argued that it amounts to a form of cultural theft and continues the uncritical essentialism and subjugation of colonialism.⁶ Furthermore, they have claimed that it is akin to identity theft⁷ as it offers no cultural and intellectual space for the urban Aborigine.⁸ As a result, cultural appropriation can confuse and denigrate Indigenous efforts to reclaim tradition and heritage in an effort to overcome serious social issues and can inadequately recognize the knowledge of Indigenous people.⁹ Stewart Muir claims there has been so much disapproving literature that it is a wonder there is anything left to say.¹⁰

However, the issue may not be as cut and dried as it appears at first glance. Even the meaning of cultural appropriation is far from uncontested and ranges from topics as diverse as theft of material items, such as human remains and stolen art designs, to the application of art and music styles and ideas about ritual and religion in new non-Indigenous contexts where commercial or scientific gain are not primary motives. As a result it becomes difficult to define clearly the parameters of impact, structure and nature of the phenomena. Similarly, Australian Aborigines are by no means unanimous in their response, and there are signs that a shift away from absolute condemnation of cultural borrowing is taking place in some quarters, particularly from scholars of the New Age¹¹ and some philosophers, Kwame Appiah in particular.¹² In this sense, a simple dichotomy of cultural theft by exploitative New Agers from good but suffering Indigenous peoples is inadequate to explain the complex and multiple levels of interaction between the two groups.

This paper aims to set out the effects of romanticism on New Age attitudes to Indigenous Aboriginal Australians and to further the debate on cultural appropriation. Many general propositions about the Indigenous derive significantly from the North American colonial encounter; however, in specific examples cited here, "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal" refer to Australia's Indigenous population, historically known as "Australian Aborigines" or "Aboriginal Australians." With several hundred pre-contact languages, marked regional cultural differences and radical variation in the effects of the European colonial encounter, the idea of one monolithic

Australian Aboriginal culture is unsustainable. Contemporary scholars do, however, find it useful to generalize in relation to some issues and, though terminology varies, often there is some recognition of the population segment that retains “classical” kin and religious organizing principles described by early anthropologists. They generally live in the sparsely settled north. A larger “post-classical” population has been subject to stronger forces of history and assimilation and live in the more densely populated coastal regions. They also demonstrate some “remarkable commonalities across the continent.”¹³ While there are obvious disjunctions between notions of “European” and “Western” and the development of European ideas and institutions in Australia and the Americas, in this article the terms are used interchangeably.

One of the central problems here is defining the New Age movement with its extraordinarily disparate cultural paraphernalia, beliefs and practices. While the term is a theoretical construct, in practice in Australia it refers to the network of movements emerging from a variety of Theosophical traditions embracing a cultural eclecticism and romantic approach to spirituality and culture.¹⁴ Closely related to the New Age movement is the rise of Neopaganism, predominantly focused on the revival of European religious traditions but also featuring many examples of Indigenous appropriation.¹⁵ The term “New Age” describes a vast array of perspectives, beliefs and approaches to Indigenous and spirituality, but the commonality of romantic approaches to Indigenous culture and environment and shared spiritual/cultural eclecticism combine closely enough for the term to be a useful designation and theoretical construct. Because many issues of the New Age in Australia extend to artists, musicians and spiritual seekers in the West generally, the ideas discussed here may contribute to a more general appreciation of cultural appropriation of the Indigenous in contemporary Australia and foster a respectful conversation between New Age adherents and Indigenous Australians. This paper argues for recognition of the possibilities for reciprocal borrowing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, but with important ethical conditions attached.¹⁶

SHARED LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIES?

Previous scholarship has included debates about authenticity and colonialism in the making of the Aborigine,¹⁷ the place of Aboriginal communities, and political and historical contexts in the construction of Aboriginality.¹⁸ In relation to the non-Aboriginal population, Jungian scholar David Tacey argues that spirituality in Australia is linked intrinsically to belonging and to the land, and spirituality requires coming to terms with the Indigenous population and their unique relationship with the land. Further, he argues there is a deep ambivalence within both white and Indigenous communities regarding romantic and instrumentalist approaches to the landscape and its unique role in the Australian psyche. Simplistic definitions of cultural ownership and appropriation become moot when symbolic and cultural forms are integrated with white and Indigenous history and culture, and each is linked with the needs of economy.¹⁹ Contemporary Aboriginal and Anglo-Celtic cultures, spirituality, and relationship with the land cannot be separated as easily as romantic discourse would suggest. This line is followed by historian Peter Read, who argues that Australian culture is marked by multiple forms of belonging and connection to spirituality and the landscape by Australia’s ethnicities, all of which are entwined with the history and culture of the Aboriginal population.²⁰

Since the 1988 bicentenary of European settlement in Australia, the place of primordially and desire for the Indigenous among settler Australians has been recognized as part of the creation of a fictional Australian nationalism.²¹ Many artists and musicians and much of the general population look to Aboriginal culture to express their identity and belonging.²² In the late twentieth century, claims and discourses about the Aboriginal sacred unsettled other Australians’ conception of home and belonging.²³ What we see at the intersection of Aborigine and New Age is sharper and more defined, but in many respects it reflects more general social phenomena.

This article confirms the damaging effects of romanticism and explores conflicted relationships between New Age practitioners and Indigenous people. Conversely it also indicates ambiguities: cultural appropriation goes two ways; some Indigenous people have drawn upon New Age ideology; and the documented genuine commitment of a few New Agers suggests potential for a more positive and grounded future relationship between the two groups. In relation to cultural appropriation, there is a continuum of behaviors and attitudes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

ROMANTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS

We follow Alvin Gouldner and Richard Kearney in viewing romanticism as a philosophical approach to culture, art, literature and society that integrates the transcendent imagination with a reactionary aesthetic response to perceived ills of unrestrained industrialism and environmental degradation, combined with an idealism of the emotional and anti-rational in human nature.²⁴ In this context romanticism is an episteme that tends to idealize the emotive, feminine, Indigenous and natural world in contrast to Western rationalism, science, industry and the masculine.²⁵ It is also a collection of schools of thought regarding art, literature,

philosophy and music arising in socio-cultural responses to the industrial revolution and modernity. The New Age, historically emerging out of romantically inspired organizations such as the Theosophical Society, shares similarities with its origins in nineteenth-century romanticism. It criticizes the dualistic and reductionist tendencies of a caricatured dogmatic Christianity as well as rational/scientific ideologies that separate humans and God, God and Nature, creator and created. Wouter Hanegraaff describes the cultural criticism embodied in “this worldliness,” holism, psychologization of religion, sacralization of psychology, and the expectation of a coming New Age that constitute New Age beliefs as “secular esotericism.”²⁶

A tradition of associating and representing the Indigenous with romanticism was not, of course, born with New Ager. What we may call romanticist idealization of Indigenous cultures as a model for utopian ideals, rituals and symbolic configurations has a long history in Western culture. Seventeenth-century cultural trends described the “noble savage” as evidence of the innate goodness of humanity in the perceived state of nature. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers such as Gabriel de Foigny (1630-1692), Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Denis Diderot (1713-1784), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) commonly utilized primitivist and utopian notions of ‘natural Man’ based on descriptions of pagan societies living close to the earth.²⁷ Eco-spiritual representations of Indigenous peoples were posited in contrast to dystopian visions of industrialization. These ideas came to be strongly represented in history and understandings of the colonial encounter in the United States²⁸ and ultimately Australia as well.

Romanticism has been a continuing thread in Australian colonial history, rising and falling at various times in response to particular historical context and social milieu. The first responses to Indigenous people were conflated with previous European responses to the primitive, seen for example with native Americans or ancient gladiators in classical artworks. James Cook (1728-1779) and Joseph Banks (1743-1820) were influenced by their Western European intellectual heritage and, according to Bridget Williams, would have been exposed to classical texts espousing romantic and utopian images. When Cook in 1770 wrote positively about a happy people without need of material goods, it was an era of debate about the primitive, before alternative ideologies and racist ideas of hierarchy became entrenched.²⁹

In spite of the significance of “Chain of Being” ideas and later notions of social evolution, romantic ideas such as the noble savage and melancholy “passing race” **define this** continued to influence representations of Indigenous people, sometimes in ambiguous ways or as part of the indigenization of settler colonists.³⁰ In the last three or four decades there has been a resurfacing of romantic views of Indigenous people and culture in Australia, of particular salience for identity politics.

CONTEMPORARY TENSIONS AROUND CULTURAL IDENTITY

In more recent times, sublime and romantic desires have become uppermost among New Age practitioners but are discernible among whites working towards reconciliation with Aborigines and among some urbanized Aborigines. Gillian Cowlishaw chooses the concept of “mythologizing culture” to refer to discourses about Indigenous that highlight suffering and, as an antidote, justify protection and rejuvenation of traditional culture.³¹ “Sentimental primitivism” and faith-based ideas in relation to the domain of traditional culture among white supporters of reconciliation resonates most with New Age romanticism. Cowlishaw also notes how some Aboriginal members of reconciliation groups engage with notions of “lost” culture and legitimacy.³²

Realistic and empathetic understanding is thwarted if people are represented romantically. Indigenous leaders Mick Dodson and Lois O’Donoghue are concerned that Indigenous people have been made into a romantic “other,” an image of what has been lost,³³ or into a stereotypically oppositional culture in contrast to a negatively perceived West.³⁴ Identities of “real” Indigenous people, dominated and outnumbered by settler colonizers, are particularly important and especially vulnerable.

Romantic or sentimental thinking has been rife in broader contexts, as well. In many local governments, state organizations, churches and communities, groups participate in smoking ceremonies and welcoming rituals that effectively underwrite “the idea that all Indigenous people embody the kind of Aboriginality that a segment of the nation longs to restore.”³⁵ This pattern is often manifest in New Age and Neopagan gatherings, where Indigenous peoples become an ideal of a culture connected to the landscape, heritage and progressive values, and thus become a symbol or vehicle for their own attempts to connect with spirituality and the land.

In 2004 and 2005, this occurred in a somewhat instrumental fashion when a Pagan community gathered at a mountain in southeastern Australia attempted to use Aboriginal claims that the mountain was sacred as a tool to block construction of a telecommunications tower, which they felt would damage the site’s aesthetics and spiritual connection. Upon finding that the Aboriginal peoples of the nearest community were amenable to the tower, the Neopagans approached a nearby community for support, leading to conflict both between Indigenous communities and within the Neopagan community.³⁶ The legal, cultural and ethical complexities in this case are obvious, as is the need for the Neopagan community to perceive those Aborigines as legitimate who best represent their own particular ideals, values and spiritual connection to place in opposition to symbols of industry and technology such as a telecommunications tower.

Tension between romanticized models of Indigenous identity and struggles for recognition by Australian Indigenous people reflect similar conflicts elsewhere in the world. Cultural identity is a critical resource in the struggle of Indigenous peoples to assert their political, economic, social and cultural interests. There is in Australia a large gap between the settler population and the Indigenous communities in terms of access to social and material resources such as health, education, employment and wealth, but other factors are involved in a group's survival. Identity and a sense of solidarity also depend on the secure possession of cultural and historical narrative to define who the Indigenous people are in relation to the dominant culture in which they operate. When non-Indigenous individuals and businesses reinterpret, reinvent and market culture for the benefit of New Age movements, they place themselves in competition with Indigenous communities' capacity to represent themselves to the broader community.³⁷ That the New Age industry can influence broader cultural perceptions of Indigenous Australians' identities far more than Indigenous' own capacity to do so means that these differences of representation inevitably will become the site of political battles over the ownership and representation of culture.

In this sense, it matters little that romanticized images of Aboriginal cultures are almost invariably positive. At the very least, the romanticized image invariably de-politicizes Indigenous identity and reconfigures it as legitimate only within the stereotyped construction of the dominant culture episteme. The "public valorisation of Indigenous people and culture (is) at odds with their mundane marginal position."³⁸ Cognizance of this is a starting point for real understanding.

The issues of cultural representation and ownership are intrinsically interwoven with the struggles of Aboriginal peoples to have their voices heard and their interests recognized and accepted by government, industry and mainstream culture. As Aboriginal lawyer Larissa Behrendt argues,

The long-term outcomes for rights protections based on the assertion of noble savage/positive stereotypes are extremely detrimental to the Aboriginal community. If rights are granted because of a sympathy based on a particular stereotype, those indigenous people who do not fit within that paradigm will be excluded.... Those who do not fit into this image...who do not live lives based on an affinity with nature and devoid of any material possessions ...are seen as outside the set of the worthy beneficiaries. ... The real noble savage is above the need of human and legal rights framework.... The noble savage is depoliticized and as a result the issue of rights is relegated to the sidelines.³⁹

The struggle to maintain appropriate channels of authority, in the face of destabilizing Anglo-Australian attempts to assimilate and absorb aspects of Indigenous cultures, can become a severe threat to cultural identity. When New Age practitioners and others follow an ethos of Western consumerist individualism and appropriate cultural items and lore, they risk further disenfranchising Australian Indigenous people from their cultural contexts and disrupting the socio-cultural base of their communities. In many Aboriginal cultures the issue is not simply the significance of symbolism but also the mode of transmission, both of which are integral to the nature of sacred symbols. As a consequence, the New Age assumption of universal rights to a consumer-driven cultural eclecticism can pose a significant challenge to Indigenous cultures' attempts to assert their identity, preserve traditional lines of ownership and rights, and contribute to general socio-cultural cohesion. This is particularly salient for what Sutton refers to as post-classical communities no longer organized around classical pre-contact kinship and religious tenets.⁴⁰

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO THE ROMANTIC AMONG POST-CLASSICAL COMMUNITIES

Urbanized and de-tribalized "post-classical" Indigenous communities in southeast Australia in particular are vulnerable to cultural appropriation; at the same time, they may be drawn to romanticize images of their ancestral culture. Three decades ago, in his collection *Living Black*, Indigenous writer Kevin Gilbert critiqued romanticized images of sharing, kin-centered families that seemed in stark contrast to the lived reality of most Indigenous people.⁴¹ Policies of assimilation have created a body of Indigenous Australians deemed by law and public perception to be "inauthentic" in many contexts.⁴² Legal decisions around rights to land and heritage have declared, for example, that history has wiped out the association with the land and associated cultural rituals.⁴³ Furthermore, years of government policy designed to remove Aboriginal children from their language and tribal links have created gaps in cultural knowledge that create space for cultural revival movements that may draw on romanticized or New Age stereotypes.⁴⁴ Essentialist and romantic theories of authenticity are currently part of ethnic nationalism and, given the loss of land, power and autonomy, include emotional claims that images are "all we have left."⁴⁵

In the 1960s, before these issues appeared at the center of the political stage, developments occurred in New Age communities that would create a conflicted conjuncture, if not a collision course. It was an especially important era in terms of development among Neopagan communities, when historical accuracy became less important as a rationale for spiritual ritual and knowledge than subjective subconscious frameworks, such as those of Carl Gustav Jung. Jungian-oriented Neopaganism, like other new spirituality movements of the 1960s,

became almost completely focused on culture and symbolism as the ultimate source of legitimacy, so long as it could be interpreted as an archetype within the collective unconscious or be constructed as a signifier of cultural identity or political action.⁴⁶

One of the most significant manifestations of this eclectic approach among Australian Neopagans and New Agers is the appropriation of the symbols, motifs and rituals of Indigenous cultures as a means of defining contemporary Neopagan identity. Jane Mulcock argues that this embracing of eclecticism, the perception that all sacred sites belong to all humanity, and the collective appropriation of Indigenous cultures indicate a broader belief in a primal heritage that all humans share but which is better represented in Indigenous cultures through their perceived closer relationship to the land. According to this perspective, by visiting sacred sites and taking on the rituals of Indigenous peoples it is possible to tap into deeper layers of Earth spiritualism and get in touch with the shared, primal heritage of human spirituality.⁴⁷

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

Romantic interests in natural, spiritual or environmental issues often have led to confrontations between New Age practitioners and the Indigenous cultures they seek to amalgamate via the sacralizing of nature, animism or polytheism. Such confrontations are relatively common in scholarly literature, often represented as rather startling, not necessarily typical examples of cultural exploitation and insensitivity. Such was the case in 1987 when an Indigenous man from the southeast, Burnum Burnum, arranged for some traditional didjeridu players from the northwest to perform at a Down to Earth festival in Glen Lyon, Victoria, to help out some non-Indigenous friends. While a musician was playing, to Burnum Burnum's horror, a naked festival-goer put his erect penis into the didjeridu. Burnum Burnum's revulsion and shame at this act, which he described as "sick and irreverent," made him "hate whites."⁴⁸

Tensions between New Age practitioners and Indigenous people came to anthropological attention when Julie Marcus analyzed the Harmonic Convergence in 1987.⁴⁹ A more public example of conflict is manifested in the furor surrounding the work of United States author Marlo Morgan. *Mutant Message Down Under* tells of an American woman's three-month journey into the desert, where she was chosen to be the sacred messenger of the Nyoongah people.⁵⁰ In 1993 Morgan engaged in a series of lecture tours in Europe and the United States on Aboriginal culture.⁵¹ For many American and European readers, works such as hers are their only source of information about Australian Aboriginal culture and society. Morgan's book became extremely popular in the United States, selling more than 500,000 copies and standing to earn up to 90 million dollars, with lecturing and film rights.⁵² The scale of financing behind the New Age industry, combined with the high level of international publicity, throw into stark relief the imbalance in power and ability to represent a position between the New Age industry and Indigenous groups. Clarify "represent a position."

There is a strong underlying tension between a social group's desire to define and promote its own socio-cultural identity and attempts by New Age and Neopagan movements to romanticize and appropriate symbols and rituals. The conflict between Nyoongah Aboriginal Robert Eggington from Western Australia and Marlo Morgan is a clear example of how attempts to appropriate Indigenous identities often conflict with contemporary Indigenous people's struggles for recognition and socio-political goals.⁵³ Morgan's book, according to Denise Cuthbert and Michelle Grossman, is a first-contact fantasy that has operated to "assuage colonial guilt."⁵⁴ As he writes in his 1995 declaration against those who exploit the culture and spirituality of Nyoongah people in south Western Australia, Eggington claims that, among other professional groups which have "infiltrated the Sacredness of our Culture for the purposes of Desecration and control,"

Herbalists, Alternative Religious Practitioners...Self Proclaimed Healers, Spiritual and Psychological Refugees, New Age Shamans, Cultists and Their Followers, individuals involved in the New Age Movement, Women's Movement and Neopagan Cults and Shamanism Workshops have all exploited the Spiritual and Cultural Traditions of Nyoongah people by imitation of Ceremonial understanding and molten Meshing this with Non-Aboriginal Occult Practice [in an] oppressive manner.⁵⁵

Tensions have also arisen between Indigenous people and environmentalists (many with New Age sympathies) when Indigenous behavior and political actions disrupt romanticized, depoliticized and universalized views of Aborigines as conservationists. For example, the assumed allies parted company when Indigenous groups supported a road through the Daintree Forest in far north Queensland.⁵⁶ Rosita Henry has argued that Aboriginal views were divided over a protest movement around a Kuranda Skyrail development, also in far north Queensland. Aborigines and others were able to join together in some aspects of protest while still constituting a separate group.⁵⁷

A widely discussed Australian case concerning the contested construction of a bridge from the South Australian coast to Hindmarsh Island introduced many of the complexities of arguments over cultural property.⁵⁸ Two groups of Aboriginal women with custodial rights disagreed about the existence of women's special ritual knowledge around the proposed site and therefore about opposition to the development. Alliances

with New Age-influenced women's groups, issues of secrecy, and claims of fabrication further inflamed the situation. The implications of the case have reverberated through academia in books such as Michael F. Brown's *Who Owns Native Culture?*⁵⁹ Brown is one of a group of scholars attempting to take stock of current Western trajectories in issues of Indigenous cultural property and clarification of ideas of appropriation.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION DILEMMAS

The hardline approach to cultural appropriation and relativism recently has been subject to critique by a number of scholars.⁶⁰ Those retreating from black-and-white notions of exploitation and appropriation outline several practical and moral difficulties in issues surrounding "ownership" of culture and the effects of intellectual property law.⁶¹ Its antecedent? application can hamper ultimate reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people because it sets up barriers and confrontation between them.⁶² Over-zealous guarding of Indigenous culture fails to acknowledge and problematize reverse cultural borrowing among the world's Indigenous populations.⁶³ Appreciation of this issue is necessarily hinged on acknowledgement of the unequal power and economic relations within which cultural borrowing takes place, a factor not always highlighted in studies of Indigenous agency in response to Christianity, for example. Consideration of a number of key Indigenous Australian figures through their autobiographies, interviews and writings sets out both the two-way transmission of culture and syncretism in response to the powerful impact of imposed Christianity.⁶⁴ Similarly, Guboo Ted Thomas and healer Mick Fazeldean accommodate Aboriginal sacredness and spiritual beliefs within a Christian framework.⁶⁵

Reverse cultural borrowing implies agency and some critique of blanket notions of appropriation.⁶⁶ In her analysis of the Kuranda Skyrail development, Henry demonstrates how Aborigines strategically allied themselves with environmentalists. Taking on environmental discourse became an effective means to pursue rights to land. This did not make them any less authentic. Furthermore, when Aboriginal people came to an agreement with developers, other protesters were disappointed but there were "few recriminations."⁶⁷ Neither group should be viewed in a one-dimensional fashion.⁶⁸

Another main issue for scholars concerns workable solutions. Brown's examples for the United States⁶⁹ and Shand's for New Zealand⁷⁰ describe negotiated solutions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and groups that mask the massive power differential between poor and divided Indigenous groups and the strength of Western commerce and ideas of universal rights to parks and wilderness. Positive moves towards compromise, reconciliation and recognition of agency remove the spotlight from inequality.

There are practical barriers and conceptual cultural differences impeding the application of Western law to legitimate Indigenous ownership of culture and knowledge. Negotiated solutions surely rest on an equitable base between negotiators, but in the retreat from post-colonial certainties about cultural appropriation, few recent scholars make much of the underlying inequality between the West and cultural others. Strathern recognizes that there is some excess and absurdity in attempts to apply intellectual property rights, but that in an unequal world it is a useful and powerful principle when dealing with problems of authenticity, representation and cultural transmission.⁷¹ It is also of relevance in appreciating the range of interactions between New Age practitioners and Indigenous people.

NEW AGE RESPONSES TO "REAL" INTERACTION

Australian Aborigines form a contemporary and commonplace source of experience and representation within the lives of Australians, thus the attempt to reconstruct Aboriginal cultural identity is part of the lived experience of White/Aboriginal relations, negative representations in media, and Australian Aboriginal attempts to resolve their own issues and rediscover and define their own unique socio-cultural identity.⁷² In this context, New Age interaction with actual Indigenous people can be unsettling. Interaction usually occurs at festivals or alternative workshops, where Indigenous people are a small minority often set apart by their conservative dress and restrained interaction. Interaction can be further muddied by large numbers of New Age and Neopagan practitioners claiming eldership or unique skills from Indigenous peoples as a source of legitimacy, though they demonstrate little connection to the communities they are appropriating. One prominent individual in a Victorian Neopagan community, highly regarded for his superb artistic and jewelry-making skills and his reputation for kindness and skill in ritual performance, claims to be both an Aboriginal and Maori tribal Elder, despite having little to no relationship to either community. While on one level his is a blatant appropriation, in his Neopagan rituals and activities he is careful to formalize thanks to the original landowners, and he politically supports Indigenous claims to social justice. Yet claiming status of this kind, despite its ritual and emotional importance, is quite overt when problems surrounding the legitimacy of cultural identity and belief are so pertinent to Indigenous communities. There are more personal and private occasions when New Age adherents might invite Aboriginal people to their homes or to a special natural site believed to be spiritual. Observations and Indigenous reports of these occasions indicate some tolerant bemusement, embarrassment and discomfort.

Sometimes interactions are marked by practical jokes and fake stories designed by Aboriginal people to lull New Age practitioners with what they want to hear from their own romanticist perspective while humiliating them in front of the other Indigenous peoples present. Moreover, when New Age practitioners attend lectures or workshops by experienced Indigenous political workers, the interaction can be confrontational. As one respondent interviewed by Mulcock commented:

Most of the people who were talking at the seminar were great; there was just one lady there who was still really angry. I can understand that anger at the whites...but then she started sort of saying to us, you whites took the land...you will never have what we have...it was hitting me, it really hurt you know. I thought this is racism coming around the other way again; it's just happening again, you know, what are you saying this for? You're telling me and I feel it really deeply, exactly like you have been doing, and yet you are turning around calling me a white.... I was very upset – I learned a lot from that though. You don't have to be *born* into it to understand....⁷³

Many of Mulcock's participants argued that they preferred to avoid contact with Indigenous people altogether. One commented: "They don't express themselves clearly, they don't make eye contact and they still have a lot of anger to work through."⁷⁴ However, despite the more overtly exploitative responses and appropriations of Indigenous peoples by New Age writers and practitioners, there is evidence of amicable and productive interaction and support for active engagement from Indigenous participants.

Prominent American Neopagan and feminist author Starhawk offers an alternative response to questions raised by Indigenous antagonism towards cultural appropriation. She argues that while Indigenous rituals and symbols can be powerful sources of inspiration and psycho-cultural impact, there is nevertheless a responsibility to cultures from which these signs have been appropriated:

People of European heritage, out of hunger for what their culture lacks, may unwittingly become spiritual strip miners, damaging other cultures in superficial attempts to uncover their mystical treasures. Understanding the suppression and grounding ourselves in the surviving knowledge of the European traditions can help people with European ancestors avoid flocking to the sad tribe of Wannabes, – want to be Indians, want to be Africans, want to be anything but what we are, and, of course, any real spiritual power we gain from any tradition carries with it a responsibility. If we learn from African drum rhythms or the Lakota sweat lodge, we have incurred an obligation not to romanticize but to participate in the very real struggles being waged for liberation, land and cultural survival.⁷⁵

Adam Possamai aimed to consider simplistic views of cultural genocide and motivations for the ways Indigenous knowledge is received and consumed. He interviewed thirty five Australian New Agers who saw their appropriation of Indigenous culture as peaceful and respectful. Some were working toward an ethic of appropriation that would not "pose a threat to Indigenous cultural integrity and survival." Bearing out the influence of Jung as discussed above, Possamai's respondents took on a specific view of history, looking for the "heart" and "warm glow of hope" rather than facts. They did not take an objective-historical approach to the re-appropriation of the past but pursued "subjective interpretations and sometimes invention about something which [they know] little can be said or proved but which feels right to them."⁷⁶ Some of these views show parallels with views of a few Indigenous people, mainly from southeastern Australia, who inhabit the same festival spaces as New Agers.

CROSSOVER PHILOSOPHIES AMONG INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

David Pecotic critiques the idea that New Age beliefs are hegemonic, intrusive and destructive of native tradition by presenting evidence that some native traditions demonstrate positive and creative responses to New Age ideas. Pecotic researched texts written by Indigenous Australians: one by a Western Australian elder male, David Mowaljarli; another by a woman from southeast Australia, Lorraine Mafi-Williams; and the third text constituting a central Australian response to New Age efforts to experience Harmonic Convergence at Uluru, discussed above. In spite of differing central elements in approaches to spirituality (such as holism), these Indigenous responses to New Age beliefs indicate ambiguity and co-option rather than negative resistance. Mowaljarli produced an interesting drawing of Australia criss-crossed by grid lines reminiscent of energy lines and convergences of the New Age. He had a "self-understanding that engages with New Age religion while reaffirming place." Mafi-Williams' approach to shamanism incorporated energy grids with crystals and the notion of a rejuvenated world. Pecotic argues that spiritually destabilized populations are dynamic centers for diffusion of New Age ideas and values to a culturally disoriented Indigenous population.⁷⁷

Mulcock, coming to her early fieldwork with strong political values against cultural appropriation of Indigenous people, found that "the line between the appropriating group and the appropriated group was not as clearly defined as I imagined." Aboriginal healer "Goreng-Goreng demonstrated what she described as a form of Aboriginal healing using hands and breath to identify and manipulate energy blocks within the body." Mulcock found that she had to reconceptualize "appropriation" as "cultural borrowing" in order to

“acknowledge the role of cultural exchange as an ordinary part of everyday life.”⁷⁸ Christina Welch acknowledges Indigenous agency in similar contexts.⁷⁹

Sutton’s recent exposition of Indigenous and New Age convergences furthers our appreciation of the origin and influence of concepts such as “the earth is our mother,” previously expounded for the United States by Sam Gill and for Australia by Tony Swain.⁸⁰ Sutton compares what he terms classical Aboriginal spirituality with a number of key dimensions of New Age spirituality, including naturalism, conservation, eclecticism and consumerism. He concludes that in spite of some “occasional resemblances” (exemplified above, perhaps, by Pecotic’s example of Mowaljarli), it would be unlikely for Aborigines from a primarily classical orientation to be susceptible to such influences. However,

where Aboriginal people are becoming culturally more like other Australians than ever before, have developed an urban-style individualism and eclecticism, the foundation is laid that clearly has made some of them receptive to New Age or similar exotic influences at a deeper level. One should not assume that all such shifts are cases of one-way influence, from West to Indigenous.⁸¹

Some Aborigines and non-Aborigines make similar use of romantic images of Indigenous people from the New Age. Indigenous people are involved in the production of imagery that complements and competes with New Age representations. It is unwise to stereotype either group as naïvely hoodwinked and lacking agency. Muir argues that New Age practitioners use such romantic images to “make their own lives.” A “suite of images of utopian tribalism and romantic primitivism” act as “conduits to an essence of Aboriginality” which they are often attracted to because “it speaks to them” and offers something for their ambivalent feelings of belonging.⁸²

CONCLUSION

Romanticism damages empathetic and solid relationships between differing cultures, exaggerating otherness and hindering appreciation of commonalities and issues confronting actual Indigenous peoples. Although not always a dominant ideology, it has a resurfacing presence in the cultural representation of the Indigenous in Australia. In contemporary times, New Age practitioners, lacking or critiquing aspects of their own lives, have been drawn to such romanticism, and in doing so have sought images, artifacts and spiritual knowledge from Indigenous peoples as well as their own heritage. Some post-classical Indigenous communities also have sought such inspiration. It is too simplistic to dismiss these people as charlatans and “Plastic Medicine Men.”⁸³ That being said, for post-classical Indigenous Australians the rise of the New Age industry and its assorted paraphernalia and romantic representations does have a tangible negative impact on their ability to represent themselves and come to terms with their own sense and transmission of cultural authenticity, heritage and identity. Many New Agers are naïve, ignorant, and motivated by concerns to self-develop, and some have behaved inappropriately when their cultural worlds have overlapped with those of Indigenous people. A few, however, are serious and thoughtful, able to turn their romantic attraction to genuine concern and greater understanding while interacting and further exploring Indigenous culture. Histories of violent and harsh material appropriation and continuing inequality make negotiated solutions less likely if the West does not listen or take seriously claims of cultural appropriation and instigate respectful conversations. As Starhawk says, “We have incurred an obligation not to romanticize but to participate in the very real struggles being waged for liberation, land and cultural survival.”⁸⁴ The interrelationship between Indigenous people and the New Age movement has developed historically in ways that make such imperatives and ideas of cultural authenticity complicated and at times ambiguous. Take care not to lump “the West” and “the New Age” together, as appears to be the case in a few places in the text, especially in the Conclusion.

ENDNOTES

¹ W. Simon, ed., *A Pilgrim’s Guide to Planet Earth: a Travelers’ Handbook and New Age Directory* (San Rafael, Calif: Spiritual Community Publications, 1981).

² Julie Marcus, “The Journey out to the Centre: the Cultural Appropriation of Ayers Rock,” in *Race Matters: Indigenous Australians and “Our” Society*, eds. Gillian Cowlishaw and Barry Morris (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997): 29-51; John Morris, personal correspondence (24 June 2009).

³ Ward Churchill, “A Little Matter of Genocide: Colonialism and the Expropriation of Indigenous Spiritual Tradition in Contemporary Academia,” in *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians*, ed. Ward Churchill (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1992), 104; Wendy Rose, “The Great Pretenders: Further Reflections on White Shamanism,” in *The State of Native America*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 403-21; Cynthia Kasee, “Identity, Recovery, and Religious Imperialism: Native American Women and the New Age,” in *Women in Therapy* 16, no. 2/3 (1995): 83-93.

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- ⁴ Peter Shand, "Scenes from the Colonial Catwalk, Cultural Appropriation, Intellectual Property Rights, and Fashion," *Cultural Analysis* 3 (2002): 57.
- ⁵ Diane Bell, "Desperately Seeking Redemption," *Natural History* 106, no. 2 (1997): 52-53; Marcus, "The Journey out to the Centre; John E. Stanton, "The Stanton Report" (21 April 1995), at <<http://www.dumbartung.org.au/stanton2.html>>, accessed 26 April 2012; Julie Marcus and Jackie Huggins, "Introduction: New Age Dreams Have Real Lives," *Thamyris* 3 no. 1 (1996): 1-4.
- ⁶ Ray Burke, "Australian Aborigines, Trying to Understand their Plight," *Helium* (12 February 2008), at <<http://helium.com/tm/858348/aborigine-ownership-through-phases>>, accessed 26 April 2012; Denise Cuthbert and Michelle Grossman, "Trading Places: Locating the Indigenous in the New Age," *Thamyris* 3, no. 1 (1996): 18-36.
- ⁷ Robert Eggington, "Marlo Morgan Campaign," at <<http://www.dumbartung.org.au/freedom.html>>, accessed 26 April 2012.
- ⁸ Cuthbert and Grossman, "Trading Places."
- ⁹ Doug Morgan, "Appropriation, Appreciation, Accommodation, Indigenous Wisdoms and Knowledge in Higher Education," *International Review of Education* 49, no. 1-2 (2003): 5-49.
- ¹⁰ Stewart Muir, "The Good of New Age Goods," *Culture and Religion* 8, no. 3 (2007): 236.
- ¹¹ Andrei Znamenski presents detailed empirical evidence from Europe and America to set out the complexities of New Age appropriation of Native American spirituality and critique aspects of Indian Fundamentalism which suggest that any alteration of 'static' homogenized culture is necessarily fraudulent. Andrei Znamenski, *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and the Western Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 290-91. Scholars of the Australian New Age movement also retreat from polemic positions. Jane Mulcock, "Ethnography in Awkward Spaces, an Anthropology of Cultural Borrowing," *Practicing Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (2001): 38-54; Muir, "The Good of New Age Goods;" Adam Possamai, "Cultural Consumption of History and Popular Culture in Alternative Spiritualities," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 2, no. 2 (2002): 197-218; Christina Welch, "Appropriating the Didjeridu and the Sweat Lodge, New Age Baddies and Indigenous Victims?," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 17, no. 1 (2002): 21-38.
- ¹² Kwame A. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton & Co., 2006).
- ¹³ Peter Sutton, *Native Title and the Descent of Rights* (Perth, Western Australia: National Native Title Tribunal, 1998), 55.
- ¹⁴ For a more thorough discussion of the term New Age see George D. Chryssides, "Defining the New Age," in *Handbook of New Age*, eds. Darren Kemp and James R. Lewis (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 10-16, 22-23.
- ¹⁵ The interrelationship and interconnected origins of Neopaganism and the New Age are too complex to discuss adequately here. For more information see David Waldron, *The Sign of the Witch: Modernity and the Pagan Revival* (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2008): 133-68.
- ¹⁶ Empirical evidence is drawn from case studies in previous literature but informed to some extent by long-term past associations with an interest in the intersections of Neopagan sub-culture and support groups working with Indigenous people in Australia. See Janice Newton, "Aborigines, Tribes and the Counterculture," *Social Analysis* 23 (1988): 59-62; and Waldron, *The Sign of the Witch*. To highlight recent detailed studies of the New Age and romanticism, other significant bodies of literature are alluded to briefly.
- ¹⁷ Bain Attwood, *The Making of the Aborigines* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1989).
- ¹⁸ Jeremy Beckett, ed., *Past and Present: the Construction of Aboriginality* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988); Rosita Henry, "Engaging with History by Performing Tradition: the Poetic Politics of Indigenous Australian Festivals," in *The State and the Arts: Articulating Power and Subversion*, ed. Judith Kapferer (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 52-69; Ian Keen, ed., *Being Black: Aboriginal Cultures in Settled Australia* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988); Stephen Thiele, ed., *Reconsidering Aboriginality, Special Issue 2, The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 2, no.2 (1991).
- ¹⁹ David Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (Blackburn, Victoria: Harper Collins, 1985): 35-61.
- ²⁰ Peter Read, *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- ²¹ Jane Jacobs, "Earth Honouring: Western Desires and Indigenous Knowledges," *Meanjin* 53, no. 2 (1994): 305-14; Andrew Lattas, "Aborigines and Contemporary Australian Nationalism: Primordiality and the Cultural Politics of Otherness," *Social Analysis* 27 (1990): 50-69; Julie Marcus, "The Journey out to the Centre."
- ²² Lattas, "Aborigines and Contemporary Australian Nationalism;" Janice Newton, "Becoming Authentic Australians Through Music," *Social Analysis* 27 (1990): 93-101.
- ²³ Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, "The Modern Sacred: On the New Age of a Postcolonial Nation," in Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 1.
- ²⁴ Alvin Gouldner, *For Sociology: Renewal and Critique in Sociology Today* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 326-29. Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination: Towards a Post-Modern Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 160-74.
- ²⁵ For a more detailed discussion on romanticism in relation to the New Age Neopagan movement, see Waldron, *The Sign of the Witch*, 51-55.
- ²⁶ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 514-18.
- ²⁷ David Bennett, ed., *Cultural Studies, Pluralism and Theory* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 1993), 4-5.

- ²⁸ Rennard Strickland, "Foreword," in Raymond W. Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982); James Axtell, *The European and the Indian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); James A. Clifton, "The Indian Story: A Cultural Fiction," in *The Invented Indian, Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James Clifton (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 29-48.
- ²⁹ Bridget Williams, "Reflections on Cook's Voyage," in *Seeing the First Australians*, eds. Ian and Tamsin Donaldson (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 35-45.
- ³⁰ Bernard Smith, *European Visions and the South Pacific 1768-1850: a Study in the History of Art and Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 248; Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989), 13-17, 34, 68. Also, James Urry, "Savage Sportsmen," 52-65; Margaret Maynard, "Projections of Melancholy," 97, 107; and Nic Peterson, "The Popular Image," 164-80; all in *Seeing the First Australians*, eds. Ian and Tamsin Donaldson (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985).
- ³¹ Gillian Cowlshaw, "Mythologising Culture: Part 1; Desiring Aboriginality in the Suburbs," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (2010): 209.
- ³² Cowlshaw, "Mythologising Culture," 219.
- ³³ Possamai, "Cultural Consumption," 197-218.
- ³⁴ See also Lois O'Donoghue, "Creating Authentic Australia(s) for 2001, an Aboriginal Perspective," *Social Alternatives* 10, no. 2 (1991): 19.
- ³⁵ Cowlshaw, "Mythologising Culture," 221. This idea was recognized by Andrew Lattas in his important paper linking primordiality and nationalism. See his "Aborigines and Contemporary Australian Nationalism," 50-69.
- ³⁶ Personal communication, David Waldron. Needs date.
- ³⁷ Jane Mulcock, "Cultural Property and the Dilemma of the Collective Unconscious, Indigenous Imagery, New Spirituality and the Politics of Identity," paper presented at Alternative Culture Session, Australian Anthropological Society Annual Conference, Sydney (1999).
- ³⁸ Cowlshaw, "Mythologising Culture," 208-09.
- ³⁹ Larissa Behrendt, "In Your Dreams, Cultural Appropriation, Popular Culture and Colonialism," *Law Text and Culture* 4, no. 1 (1998): 272-73. See also Cuthbert and Grossman, "Trading Places."
- ⁴⁰ Peter Sutton, *Native Title and the Descent of Rights*, 59.
- ⁴¹ Kevin Gilbert, *Living Black*, (Melbourne: Penguin Press, 1977), 1. See also Anne-Katrin Eckermann, Toni Dowd, Ena Chong, Lynette Nixon, Roy Gray, and Sally Margaret Johnson, *Binan Goonj, Bridging Cultures in Aboriginal Health*, 2d ed. (Sydney: Churchill Livingstone, 2006), 76, 86-87.
- ⁴² Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and MiscegeNation, Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era," *Social Analysis* 36 (1994): 93-152.
- ⁴³ Peter Sutton, *Native Title in Australia, an Ethnographic Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 135-36.
- ⁴⁴ Peter Sutton, "Aboriginal Spirituality in a New Age," in *In Dialogue with Christianities, Rethinking Aboriginal Australia*, eds. Françoise Dussart and Carolyn Schwarz, *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 21, no. 1 (2010):71-89; O'Donoghue, "Creating Authentic Australia(s)," 19.
- ⁴⁵ Elizabeth B. Coleman, *Aboriginal Art, Identity and Appropriation* (Hants, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 1; Jacobs, "Earth honouring," 306.
- ⁴⁶ David Waldron and Sharn Waldron, "Jung and the Neo-Pagan Movement," *Quadrant* 34, no. 2 (2004) 29-49; Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers and Other Pagans in America Today* (New York: Penguin Group Publishing, [date?](#)), 56-90; Vivian Crowley, "Carl Jung and the Development of Contemporary Paganism," *The Development of Paganism: History, Influencers and Contexts* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 12 January 2002), at <<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/religious-studies/bbb/crowley.shtml>>, accessed 26 April 2012.
- ⁴⁷ Mulcock, "Cultural Property," 6. Neopagan and New Age author Leila Castle illustrates this perspective, which is on a collision course with Indigenous notions of cultural ownership, when she writes that New Agers have the ability to reconnect with ancestral Indigenous wisdom through visiting sacred places. Leila Castle, *Earthwalking Skydancers, Women's Pilgrimages to Sacred Places* (Berkeley, Calif.: Frog Ltd., North Atlantic Books, 1996), [pg. #s.](#)
- ⁴⁸ Patricia Sherwood, "The Didjeridu and Alternative Lifestylers' Reconstruction of Social Reality," in *The Didjeridu: From Arnhem Land to Internet*, ed. Karl Neuenfeldt (K. J. Libby, Sydney: Perfect Beat Publications, 1997), 150.
- ⁴⁹ Marcus "The Journey out to the Centre."
- ⁵⁰ Marlo Morgan, *Mutant Messenger Down Under* (Scarborough, Ontario: Harper Collins, 2004). Morgan gave herself the name "travelling tongue." In the story she spreads wisdom she claims to have inherited from a secret community of Aboriginal people uncorrupted by white influence. There is very little evidence that her journey took place, and the experiences she describes stand in contrast to what is known of Aboriginal culture. See also Stanton, "The Stanton Report."
- ⁵¹ "Marlo Morgan – Mutant Message Down Under Timeline," at <http://www.creativespirits.info/resources/books/mutantmessage_timeline.html>, accessed 26 April 12.
- ⁵² Robert Eggington, "Marlo Morgan Campaign;" Vanessa Gould, "Australian Elders Receive Apology," *West Australian* 31 (January 1996): [pg. #s](#); Robert Bropho, "To the 11 Indigenous Spirit Elders of the World," at <<http://www.mountainman.com.au>>, accessed 11 Jan 2011. ← [The website comes up, but I cannot find this title.](#) Lynn

Andrews is another North American [U.S.? Canada?](#) New Age author who has written a suite of books with titles such as *Spirit Woman*, *Tree of Dreams*, and *Jaguar Woman* that have been steady sellers. *Crystal Woman* concerns Indigenous Australian women and is flawed similarly to *Mutant Messenger Down Under*. Lynn Andrews, *Crystal Woman, the Sisters of the Dreamtime* (New York: Warner Books, 1987); Patricia Benesh, "Questionable View of the Dreamtime," *The Age* (17 September 1988), 10; Alice Kehoe, "Primal Gaia: Primitivists and Plastic Medicine Men," in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James A. Clifton (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 193-209.

⁵³ Mulcock, "Cultural Property," 11.

⁵⁴ Cuthbert and Grossman, "Trading Places," 26.

⁵⁵ Eggington, "Marlo Morgan Campaign." Eggington's response is comparable to the views of Indigenous scholar Douglas Morgan of the University of South Australia. Morgan, "Appropriation, Appreciation, Accommodation," 5-49. *Jannga Meeynya Bomunggar* (The Smell of the White Man is Killing Us) [needs reference information](#).

⁵⁶ Christopher Anderson, "Aborigines and Conservationism: the Daintree-Bloomfield Road," in *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 24, no. 3 (1989): 214-27; Lee Sackett, "Promoting Primitivism: Conservationist Depiction of Aboriginal Australians," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 2 (1991): 233-46.

⁵⁷ Rosita Henry, "Performing Protest, Articulating Difference: Environmentalists, Aborigines and the Kuranda Skyrail Dispute," *Aboriginal History* 22 (1998): 143-61.

⁵⁸ For example, Diane Bell, *Ngarrindjeri Wurrurarrin: A World that Is, Was, and Will Be* (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1998), 361-474; Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, "Promiscuous Sacredness: On Women's Business, Publicity and Hindmarsh Island," in Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 117-34; James F. Weiner, "Religion, Belief and Action: The Case of Ngarrindjeri 'Women's Business' on Hindmarsh Island, South Australia 1994-1996," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 13, no. 1 (2002): 51-71.

⁵⁹ Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁶⁰ Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 115-34.

⁶¹ Strathern, *Property, Substance and Effect*, 168, 177, 194-95; Howard Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1998): 193-95; Shand "Scenes from the Colonial Catwalk," 60-62; Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, 6, 35, 92; Coleman, *Aboriginal Art*, 13, 20, 49.

⁶² Strathern, *Property, Substance and Effect*, 168; Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, 8, 41-42, 55, 74.

⁶³ Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, x-xi, 178.

⁶⁴ Kevin Keefe, *Paddy's Road: Life Stories of Patrick Dodson* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies, 2003); Banjo Clarke, *Wisdom Man* (Camberwell, Victoria: Penguin, 2005); Margaret Tucker, *Margaret Tucker, Autobiography of Margaret Tucker* (London: Grosvenor, 1983); [Mumshirl. MumShiri should capitalization be the same in each instance?](#), an autobiography with the assistance of Bobbie Sykes (Richmond: Heinemann Educational, 1981). These examples bear out global generalizations. Jacob Olupona, ed., *Beyond Primitivism, Indigenous Religious Traditions and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2004): 7.

⁶⁵ Guboo Ted Thomas, "The Land is Sacred: Renewing the Dreaming in Modern Australia," 90-94, and Mick Fazeldean, "Aboriginal and Christian Healing: An Interview with Mick Fazeldean," 95-106, both in *The Gospel is not Western: Black Theologies from the Southwest Pacific*, ed. Gary W. Trompf (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987). cf. Anne Pattel-Gray, *The Great White Flood: Racism in Australia* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

⁶⁶ Jacobs, "Earth Honouring," 306.

⁶⁷ Henry, "Performing Protest," 155-56.

⁶⁸ Jacobs, "Earth Honouring," 313.

⁶⁹ Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, 172.

⁷⁰ Shand, "Scenes from the Colonial Catwalk," 77-79.

⁷¹ Strathern, *Property, Substance and Effect*, 166-76, 202.

⁷² Marion Bowman, "The Global Village, Cultural Evolution in New Age and Neo Pagan Thought," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 10, no. 2 (1995): 142.

⁷³ Mulcock, "Ethnography in Awkward Spaces," 54.

⁷⁴ Mulcock, "Ethnography in Awkward Spaces," 47.

⁷⁵ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance, a Rebirth of the Religion of the Ancient Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Press, 1989), 214.

⁷⁶ Possamai, "Cultural Consumption," 201, 202, 204.

⁷⁷ David Pecotic, "Three Aboriginal Responses to New Age Religion, a Textual Interpretation," *Australian Religious Studies Review* 14, no.1 (2001): 65-81. See also Mandawuy Yunupingu, "Foreword, Yidaki," vi; and Karl Neuenfeldt and Kevin Carmody, "Ancient Voice-Contemporary Expression," 11-20; both in *The Didjeridu, from Arnhem Land to the Internet*, ed. Karl Neuenfeldt (Sydney: John Libby Perfect Beat Publications, 1997) [use short title: full ref. is in note 48](#). Possamai has pointed out that a few Aborigines offer New Age-style workshops of self-discovery ("Cultural Consumption," 199). Burri Dainghutti Jerome has revealed crossover philosophies. See Burri Dainghutti Jerome in Sheridah Melvin, "Interview with Burri Dainghutti Jerome," *The Mirror of Waranjari* (Sydney: Oral History Project, Blue Mountains, Held Katoomba Library, 1987), tape 2, side B.

⁷⁸ Mulcock, "Ethnography in Awkward Spaces," 45-65, 39-40.

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⁷⁹ Welch, "Appropriating the Didjeridu and the Sweat Lodge," 21-38.

⁸⁰ Gill concludes that the homogenizing concept of Mother Earth has emerged as part of the colonial encounter and stems from the creativity of scholars and Indians. Sam D. Gill, *Mother Earth: An American Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987): 5-7. Swain acknowledges his "uncanny parallels" with Gill's argument in an Australian context. Tony Swain, *A Place for Strangers: Towards a History of Australian Aboriginal Being* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993):195.

⁸¹ Peter Sutton, "Aboriginal Spirituality in a New Age," 15.

⁸² Muir, "The Good of New Age Goods," 234.

⁸³ Kehoe, "Primal Gaia."

⁸⁴ Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, 214.