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Music Endangerment, Repatriation, and Intercultural Collaboration in an Australian Discomfort Zone

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Abstract

To the extent that intercultural ethnomusicology in the Australian settler state operates on a colonialist stage, research that perpetuates a procedure of discovery, recording, and offsite archiving, analysis, and interpretation risks repeating a form of musical colonialism with which ethnomusicology worldwide is inextricably tied. While these research methods continue to play an important role in contemporary intercultural ethnomusicological research, ethnomusicologists in Australia in recent years have become increasingly concerned to make their research available to cultural heritage communities. Cultural heritage communities are also leading discovery, identification, recording, and dissemination to support, revive, reinvent, and sustain their practices and knowledges. Repatriation is now almost ubiquitous in ethnomusicological approaches to Aboriginal music in Australia as researchers and collaborating communities seek to harness research to respond to the impact that colonialism has had on social and emotional well-being, education, the environment, and the health of performance traditions. However, the hand-to-hand transaction of research products and represented knowledge from performers to researcher and archive back to performers opens a new field of complexities and ambiguities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants: just like earlier forms of ethnomusicology, the introduction, return, and repatriation of research materials operate in "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (Pratt 2007 [1992]). In this chapter, we recount the processes and outcomes of "The Junba Project" located in the Kimberley region of northwest Australia. Framed by a participatory action research model, the project has emphasized responsiveness, iteration, and collaborative reflection, with an aim to identify strategies to sustain endangered Junba dance-song practices through recording, repatriation, and dissemination. We draw on Pratt's notion of the "contact zone" as a "discomfort zone" (Somerville & Perkins 2003) and look upon an applied/advocacy ethnomusicological project as an opportunity for difference and dialogue in the repatriation process to support heterogeneous research agendas.

In 2011 the Australian and New Zealand Regional Committee of the International Council for Traditional Music issued a statement that describes Australia's Aboriginal music and dance traditions as "among the oldest and most endangered in the world" and estimates that up to 98

percent have been lost (ANZ-ICTM 2011). Not surprisingly, many ethnomusicologists in Australia have sought to address music endangerment. Recording has long been an approach to this task. However, responding both to recognition of Indigenous rights to cultural heritage and rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination in the conduct of research and management of research outcomes (AIATSIS 2002 (2012)),[1] the repatriation of recordings has increasingly entered the practice of many Australian ethnomusicologists (cf. Treloyn 2016a). The prevalence of repatriation in discourse around preservation in Australia is exemplified by the 2002 Garma Statement on Indigenous Music and Dance, which recommends that: "[t]he preservation of performance traditions is … one of the highest priorities for Indigenous people" and "the recording **and repatriation** of songs … be supported by universities and other institutions" (GFIPR 2002, emphasis added).

The growing prevalence of repatriation and the dissemination of legacy records in the work of Australian ethnomusicologists is evident. Early career and senior ethnomusicologists, such as Linda Barwick, Clint Bracknell, Reuben Brown, Genevieve Campbell, Grace Koch, Fiona Magowan, Allan Marett, Peter Toner, Sally Treloyn, and others, have woven repatriation of and dissemination of legacy recordings into their research agendas. Marking the increasing prevalence of repatriation as a documented research tool and/or activity, two of the four doctoral dissertations on Aboriginal song completed in 2014 – 2016 (Campbell 2014, Brown 2016, both at University of Sydney) extensively examine processes and effects of repatriation within the song tradition under examination.

In the history of ethnomusicological research that has sought to address the problem of how to sustain endangered music there has been a broad shift from salvage, collection-based approaches, towards approaches that also seek to understand and reinforce the social fields in which musical traditions are created and thrive (Grant 2015). This shift is demonstrated by new approaches to the assessment of music endangerment centred on music vitality that takes into account: social creative innovation; change as a factor in continuity; opportunity to practice; and social attitudes to the health of traditions (Grant 2014). Insofar as intergenerational knowledge transmission is a factor in music vitality and access to legacy records has been shown to be an important factor in the social production and transmission of knowledge in Australia (Marett & Barwick 2003, Toner 2003, Campbell 2012, 2014), and elsewhere (see for example Hilder 2012, Kahunde 2012), it is logical that repatriation and dissemination may contribute to music vitality. Repatriation has emerged as a widely used intervention and method to address the question of how to maintain the vitality of endangered musical traditions and the linguistic, epistemological, and ontological diversities that they sustain.

[1] Self-determination a trope of the Australian Indigenous rights movement that emerged in the late 1960s as a response to the dominant colonial assimilationist policies (see Kowal 2008). The Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (AIATSIS 2002 (2012)) cites Article 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations 2007), noting that researchers must '[u]nderstand the meaning of self-determination in relation to Indigenous peoples and their rights to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, including their traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and intellectual property' (AIATSIS 2002 (2012), 2).

Repatriation studies also produce substantial knowledge about the modern contexts in which music and musical styles are produced, shared, learnt and performed. Moreover, repatriation studies have also begun to produce knowledge about the political and social underpinnings of applied ethnomusicology, particularly that which has employed recording, archiving, and repatriation as methods to address preservation and cultural rights agendas. Speaking of the repatriation of the Klaus Wachsmann collection from the British Library Sound Archive to the Makerere University Klaus Wachsmann Music Archive in Kampala, Uganda, and to relevant materials to the Bagisu community, Nannyonga-Tamusuza and Weintraub (2012) suggest that "the study of repatriating" has forged a new field of research:

> Repatriation is a form of cultural critique: a critical and reflexive discourse about the social relations of power in cultural representations, and a model for dissembling and potentially undoing those relations (2012, 209).

Scope for critical and reflexive discourse on the power relations in the intercultural repatriation that occurs in the context of ethnomusicology in Australia is similarly marked by the idea that repatriation can fulfil a rights-based research agenda. Repatriation may indeed support cultural equity and be one way for cultural heritage communities to control records of cultural heritage and lead revitalisation efforts. This is particularly the case in collaborative approaches to repatriation. However, any uncritical assumption that intercultural collaboration via repatriation somehow redresses the problems of past collection-orientated research methods risks reinforcing relations of power that originate in the colonisation of the continent's First Nations and Peoples. Gregory Bateson's notion of the "double bind" (1973,173-249) as applied by Australian anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose in her critique of the pathological "passive violence" (1986) and "deep colonising" (1996) in contemporary Australian society, including in uses of the trope of self-determination, is useful here. In Bird Rose's model:

> 1. a "victim" chosen by those who have the power to choose; 2. [there is] a primary coercive injunction; 3. [there is] a secondary injunction, also coercive, and conflicting with the first (usually communicated at a more abstract level); 4. [there is] a tertiary injunction which prohibits the victim from escaping from or commenting upon the pathological communication of the first two injunctions. In short, a "victim" is faced with the paradoxical necessity to act in a no-win situation and is denied the opportunity to escape or to represent this situation to others (Bird Rose 1986, 25).

In the Australian situation, the actors involved in the roll-out of policies that served to kill off Indigenous linguistic and cultural practices can be seen to have enacted the first criterion of the double bind: "a 'victim' chosen by those who have the power to choose." An account provided by Chester Street, a linguist at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) in the 1980s, illustrates this:

> Confronted by force, ignorance and arrogant contempt, by the sheer weight of white numbers, by new authorities replacing the old, and by the illusory hope of white man's ease, the music and its embodied authority, power and cohesion were wounded, often to

death. … Aboriginal people were dispersed from the places where songs ought to be sung, often by direct prohibition of performances or by the death of too many of the song owners. The songs could no longer be passed on. As an initiated Flinders Ranges man said in the 1960s:

> We see everybody going to the pack boys and even girls—they just do what they like. The old people that went through the rules, they know better. White fellas interfered in our rules, stopping us from doing our corroborees. No songs—no rules. (Street in Breen et al 1989, 12; Ellis 1968, 5)

The "primary coercive injunction" was the requirement that, in order to survive, Indigenous peoples were compelled by the state to "assimilate," not speak Indigenous languages, or practice song or other cultural activities. This is fundamentally paradoxical, in that song and language are held to be essential for survival. For singers who survived to the early 1900s a "second coercive injunction," contradicting the first, came into play as outsiders sought to record and preserve song. Then in the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first, with the rise of applied ethnomusicology, a concern for cultural equity, and self-determination, Indigenous peoples are compelled to engage and collaborate with outsider-researchers and archives if they wish to retrieve their songs and cultural practices: we see "a tertiary injunction which prohibits the victim from escaping from or commenting upon the pathological communication of the … injunction[s]" (Bird Rose 1986, 25).

Working from this problematic ground of deep colonisation, there is substantial scope for ethnomusicologists and cultural heritage bearers and stakeholders engaged in repatriation for the purposes of revitalisation to feel deep unease. Contributing to a broader body of critically reflexive research on intercultural collaboration in Australian ethnomusicology (Mackinlay & Barney 2014, Mackinlay & Chalmers 2014), repatriation on this problematic ground provides scope for collaborating researchers and community members to critically examine the power relations of the past and present in which they are entangled, thereby—it is hoped—disrupting the 'bind' through present action. Such reflection is also seen beyond Australia. In the case of the Hopi Music Project, for example, Trevor Reed describes how examination of the processes of repatriation led to the development of a critically and culturally informed "community-partnered repatriation" that supported social networks in the cultural heritage community, allowed recognition of local views on intellectual property and a more equitable practice (Reed 2009, 9).

Elsewhere, we (the authors) have approached our intercultural collaboration as a site of productive discomfort, drawing on Somerville and Perkins' reframing of the postcolonial contact zone as a 'discomfort zone' (2003, 257) where a tendency to homogenise experience is resisted and there is potential for new and hybrid knowledge to be produced (Treloyn and Charles 2014). In this paper, we recount some of the outcomes and discomforts of The Junba Project, a project based in the Kimberley region of northwest Australia (which has run since 2011) supported by AIATSIS, the Australian Research Council, and two Aboriginal organisations—the Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Culture Centre and the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre. The project has emphasised collaborative reflection on research methods and assumptions, with an

aim to identify strategies to sustain endangered Junba dance-song practices through recording, repatriation and dissemination. The successes of the project, in terms of how it has supported music vitality and addressed endangerment, are reported in a number of recent publications (Treloyn, Charles & Nulgit 2013, Treloyn & Charles 2015, Treloyn, Martin & Charles 2016). We have also reflected on the contested, intercultural spaces of our relationship and collaboration, and the relationships between individuals in cultural heritage communities and archives (Treloyn & Charles 2014, Treloyn, Martin & Charles 2016). In this chapter we revisit this conversation, looking now to the role that the recordings and a local epistemological framework to understand the departure and return of the voices of ancestors plays in intercultural collaboration to address music endangerment. The paper is in three sections. The first provides a brief introduction to the Kimberley region and lifeworld in which Junba is composed and performed and repatriated, with some insight into its revitalisation. The second turns to discomforts. The third turns to the local epistemological framework for approaching, listening to and conceiving of the return of recordings of Junba for the purposes of revitalization.

The Junba project: repatriation and music endangerment

The Kimberley is an expansive region of over 400,000 square kilometres in the northwest of the Australian continent. It is culturally diverse, with approximately 30 language groups and a population of approximately 40,000 people, approximately 50% of which is Indigenous, living in towns and remote communities. Junba is a diverse genre of dance-song that is indigenous to almost all of the language groups of the region. It is a public genre and performed at events such as festivals, art gallery openings and exhibitions, as well as at more private events. The composition, performance and sharing of Junba is done to teach young people, to honour and carry the legacy of deceased family members, maintain and reinvigorate connections with creative ancestral beings, and, intertwined with each of these, maintain connections with land. These connections are enacted through the composition and performance of song texts, performance practice, choreography and the carrying of elaborate *waringgi* (dance boards) upon which important stories, ancestral beings and places are painted. Junba has been a primary tool for the families of the Mowanjum Community to negotiate their displacement from traditional country further north and inland through the twentieth century to the present. The singing is done by a mixed-gender ensemble, within which men and women have distinct, alternating melodic parts, led by a composer and accompanied by clapsticks and clapping.

INSERT Fig. 1. Elder Pansy Nulgit teaching young dancers at Mowanjum Festival, Mowanjum, Western Australia. 7 July 2016. Photo: Sally Treloyn.

The primary aim of the Junba Project was to respond to concerns voiced by elders about the attrition of Junba songs and dances from current repertories and a reduction in participation by young people. As has been documented elsewhere, the project involved: teaching events in which elders pass knowledge and skills to young people (see Figure 1); community-led discovery, research, and repatriation of recordings of Junba from national archives and legacy collections; the recovery of songs from recordings and reconstruction of dances from archival photos and

videos, supplemented by knowledge of elders and associates; community-led recording and documentation; production of knowledge through Junba-based iMovie workshops; creation of databases of Junba dance song recordings for community use and dissemination; and use of these materials and their production as part of Indigenous ranger and art centre programs.

From a glance at the data on the number of songs and repertories performed at the annual Mowanjum Festival between 2010 and 2016 it appears that repatriation-based activities of the Junba Project have supported the task of addressing the health of the tradition. While there was attrition up to 2010, over the five-year life of the project and through 2016 there has been a recovery and increase in the quantity of songs and repertories. With this increase comes an increase in the musical and linguistic diversity. An increase in factors such as the age of singers, and opportunities for performance and knowledge transmission, can also be observed.

INSERT *Fig. 2. Vitality of Junba in Mowanjum 2010 – 2016.*

While a fine-grained examination of the link between particular acts and histories of repatriation and the revitalization indicated in Figure 2 is needed, it might be asserted that the Junba Project exemplifies how repatriation can support music vitality. In assessing the role of repatriation in countering music endangerment in neo-colonial Australia, however, we must turn to how participants—the authors of this chapter and others—have approached and experienced the transactions and its products. To do this, we approach the contact zone of our intercultural collaboration as a 'discomfort zone,' looking upon the intellectual and social spaces of our project as defined by both difference and as an opportunity for intersubjective identification that allows for transcultural, postcolonial knowledge production and cultural maintenance. Secondly, we approach the legacy recordings according to local regard for them as subjective participants in knowledge transmission, rather than as objective relics of past research and research relationships; and, we approach our collaboration for cultural maintenance via an Indigenous epistemology: as an enactment of the northern Kimberley Law and ethos of *Wurnan*.

The discomfort zone: Double binds of intercultural collaboration

The Kimberley region has a violent history marked by attempts to depopulate the territory for townships and pastoral leases: massacres, war and resistance, slave labour, and human rights violations. The injustice of this persists today in the re-traumatisation of non-recognition, ongoing struggles for access to land, equitable health, housing, education and representation. In the Kimberley, the work of ethnomusicologists shares a particularly uncomfortable history with research that was complicit in this violence. As previously discussed, on the same expedition that Swedish biologist and ethnographer Eric Mjöberg stole remains of descendants of Ngarinyin and Nyikina peoples (the two groups to which Charles belongs) from burial platforms in 1911, Yngve Laurell made the first recordings of song in the region (Treloyn & Charles 2014). The reverberations of this are felt by Charles with the steady stream of researchers that have come through her communities from the 1930s onwards. Charles has previously reflected on her initial

concerns of Treloyn's presence in the Mowanjum community in 2000 to 2002, when Treloyn was a graduate student working almost exclusively with elders:

> Sally…was doing a lot of recording with some of the older people, [a] lot of the seniors. … I thought to myself, 'She gonna come in there, get all this stuff, take him [the recordings and research] back, and lock it up somewhere', you know. That [was] what I was thinking. (Treloyn & Charles 2014)

While recording does not necessarily remove a song from a cultural heritage community, it is the experience of many that *something is* taken when a song is recorded and when that recording is transported away. This concern is not remedied by simply ensuring that communities have access to the end products of research. Charles's concern was that Treloyn was claiming a possibly unique opportunity for transmission of song knowledge that comes about when an elder feels that are ready to pass on:

> I used to always think that "They are preparing themselves to die, when they want to give their knowledge". … I used to say to myself, "They'll ask me to be part of them when they are ready". I used to think [that] they want to put all that knowledge … in the CD with you, because they might be running out of time. (Ibid.)

For Charles, Treloyn's presence compounded her difficult task of repairing the ruptures in intergenerational knowledge transmission that were caused by policies that harmed people, language and cultural practice.

As a non-Indigenous researcher in Australia, Treloyn's discomforts centred on the risk of perpetuating the passive violence of intercultural research. Critical discourse on music endangerment, and music revitalization, has become nuanced by corresponding awareness of the political connotations of the deficit language that is often used to describe the state of musical traditions: preservation suggests that song practice is separable from living people; loss connotes a lack of care on the part of heritage communities; endangerment connotes association between Indigenous peoples, and animals and plants; the notion of 'dying cultures' connotes Aboriginal Protection Acts predicated on the notion that Indigenous peoples were of a 'dying' race—a discourse that featured prominently in the early twentieth-century anthropological work in the region (see for example, *Sterbende welt in nordwest Australien* (The Dying World in Northwest Australia), Petri 1954). As such, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, collaboration and repatriation risks a pathological double bind. At best, such terms also risk positioning the ethnomusicologist—typically from outside a cultural heritage community—as coming in to save or protect. As Grant (2014, 3-4) has pointed out, such notions point to the paternalistic notions underpinning discourse of music endangerment.

In practice, when thinking of the harm of the coercive injunction of the double bind, Treloyn's concern centres on the impact that she has on intergenerational knowledge transmission. Today she finds herself in the position of holder of song knowledge. This manifests in numerous ways, but the most recent is that emerging singers aged 17 – 35 have come to her to elicit the lyrics of

Junba songs. Singers – old and young – call on her to support performances as a back up singer. She finds herself contributing to the search and identification of photographic and video materials to support the recovery of dances. Digital Heritage Officers turn to her to populate community databases, that she has supported the establishment of, and that are inadequate in their structure when faced with the complexity of the song system. Treloyn has produced documents—namely her 2006 dissertation—that culture bearers have used to support their learning lyrics. While she is pleased to have produced and mobilized knowledge and products that are of use in the community, this is perhaps a striking example of the symbolic violence of colonial Western discourse described by Edward Said in action, wherein "knowledge about Indigenous peoples … [is] collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012 (1998), 31).

Thus, while supporting music vitality, the applied collaborative project is marked by discomfort and risk, for both of the authors. For Charles this could understandably result in her abandoning the notion of research—as Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes, for many research is a "dirty word" (Smith 1999). For Treloyn, it could be easy to feel paralysed (see Lancefield 1998).

So, we (the authors) ask ourselves, how do we proceed? For Charles, supporting younger generations as emerging singers, dancers, composers and researchers is essential, as is listening to the wisdom of elders and country. For Treloyn, a way forward has been paved by the willingness of Indigenous stakeholders to engage with her and her institutions, coupled with generous funding support and mentorship. For both of us, along with increasing community agency in research design, process, and outputs, our collaboration is framed by a local epistemological basis for dealing with strangers and strange things: the subject-status of repatriated voices and the Law and ethos of sharing known as Wurnan.

Relational repatriation and revitalization

As repatriation becomes a subject of ethnomusicological research, rather than just a tool, so too recordings -- tangible receptacles such as tape, disc, USB, computers, holding instances of song and voices of singers -- have a subject-status. In the course of Treloyn's work in the Kimberley, beginning in 1999, sharing of materials has developed from cassette tapes, to compact discs, to USB sticks and hard drives, and increasingly shared cloud-based folders. The media in which materials are returned is significant—durability, compatibility, currency of technology, ease and cost of access, and access control, are all important factors to consider. The power and efficacy of a recording resides in its potential to bring the voice and sounds of family now deceased into the present. Elder Ngarinyin and Wunambal singer and teacher, Matthew Dembal Martin has explained:

> The old people beside you sitting, you can feel the spirit. Makes you remember songs too—songs you don't forget. You get them back on your mind; the old person that is singing there—you get the words off him. That's how it worked. … The spirit it is like a magnet that goes into your mind. It might be that the composer is beside you. The songs that you pick up, he put them in your mind. You think you have the words and

> you have the tune. You pick it up, like a magnet in your mind. … It's like a recording. It's like that spirit is singing that song in the recorder while you are singing, picking the words up, and the tune (Martin in conversation with Treloyn, 7 December 2014).

Similarly, speaking of the recordings of Hopi singers and song recorded by Laura Boulton at Columbia University, Reed (2009) notes that "the item being repatriated is not simply a historical object, but a "performable" voice" (2009, 9). The subject-status of legacy recordings for cultural heritage communities has emerged as a common theme in repatriation-centred ethnomusicological scholarship, by virtue of the presencing of the voices, messages, humour, and affect, of deceased family members stored in the recordings, when recordings are auditioned (see, for example Toner 2003). Several community leaders in repatriation initiatives have articulated the presence of the spirits of deceased singers in legacy recordings. The association of repatriation of legacy recordings with the repatriation of stolen human remains is also articulated (see Treloyn & Charles 2014, Treloyn, Martin & Charles 2016).

In bringing attention to the subject-status of recordings, our intent is not to suggest that they are a third-party in the repatriation transaction, from archive to community. However, the subject-status of recordings does bring attention to the relational nature of singing, listening, recording and repatriating. To explore this, we turn to the local framework of Wurnan, explained below.

Wurnan refers to a network of trade routes linking groups and clans throughout the Kimberley region. Wurnan underpins social institutions and collaborations such as the skin system, marriage, intergroup negotiations, land care and management, the distribution of goods and dissemination of knowledge. It was laid down in the ancestral present – the Dreaming – but, far more than a rigid system of trade, Wurnan is flexible and inclusive. As anthropologist Anthony Redmond has explained, Wurnan continued through the colonisation of the region by what he terms "strange relatives," including pastoralists, displaced groups, governments and other outside entities, entered the social and economic world (Redmond 2005). Not surprisingly, Wurnan also accommodates its strange relatives that appear in the form of ethnomusicologists and archives. Matthew Martin was the first to explain this:

> Wurnan only coming to [us] for sharing. Share a lot of things, like food, Junba. Share, sharing with spears, woomeras, it's sharing. Wurnan is for a gift, you know. Free gift. Like you [Treloyn] are working with me and I got a Wurnan for you. I go, I Wurnan with you see. You do the recording for me and I do the talking and I'm, it's just like Wurnan giving us. I giving you the stories and you work with me and it's a gift. Recording – that's a gift. You record things. (Martin in conversation with Treloyn, 7 December 2014; see Treloyn, Martin & Charles 2016)

In this Matthew is referring not just to Treloyn recording his voice, or contributing to skill development in his community, but also to their cooperative responsibility to continue Wurnan that was started by singers and researchers, who recorded their voices, of the past. Looking back to archived recordings, Matthew explains that these singers of the past, whose voices and spirits are present in recordings, left the promise of a gift for their future generations; a promise that he and Treloyn through their collaboration now fulfill. Key to this is that, in the Ngarinyin life-

world, recordings carrying the voices of ancestors must be returned to their homeland, just as stolen human remains are:

> [The] old people are gone but their spirit is still there. What you call that archive place? They still there, they still remain. [We need to] bring the whole lot back, … bring them back to Country. (Martin in conversation with Treloyn, 16 January 2014; see Treloyn, Martin & Charles 2016)

Such a formulation of Wurnan as a model to understand relational recording, repatriation and revitalisation resonates with other Indigenous research methodologies that foreground the importance of accountability, connection, responsibility, namely "relational accountability" (Wilson 2008).

Reflections on the relational status of repatriated recordings, such as those provided by Martin, illustrate some of the ways in which digital heritage items and the metadata that guides their discovery and use circulate and generate complex social and political environments and relationships that cross histories and tensions of ethnomusicology, nation states, and personal relationships. These relationships stretch across time (from past research relationships to the present), across institutions (archives, university and community organisations), and individual people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous, researchers and singers, elders and young people). In so doing, repatriation in the Australian settler state is at once an opportunity for empowerment, resurgence, and reclamation, but also references a number of boundaries or ruptures: cultural materials taken away, paternalism, deep colonisation, and passive violence. Repatriation references a field of loss, for some grief, for many anger, and disconnection, that extends well beyond the removal of tangible objects, to the loss of song practice, children, language, land, and connection. In resisting an evaluation of repatriation that rests solely on markers of revitalisation, notions of equity, and self-determination, and recognising the limitations of our endeavours, we find ourselves conducting our research in the post-colonial territory of relational discomfort.

Australian anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose came to understand boundaries (geographical, temporal, and personal) in the Victoria River District (to the east of the Kimberley) as a productive zone in which relationships are affirmed:

> Tracks and songs are the basis to Aboriginal maps and are often called 'boundaries'. To say that there are boundaries is to say that there are differences; the universe is not uniform. Unlike European maps on which boundaries are lines that divide, tracks connect points on the landscape, showing relationships between points. These are 'boundaries' that unite. The fact that a Dreaming demarcates differences along the line is important to creating variation, but ultimately a track, by its very existence, demarcates a coming together. Dreaming creativity made possible the relationships which connect by defining the differences that divide. (Bird Rose 1992, 52)

Similarly, through Wurnan relationships, Indigenous people in the Kimberley have been able to overcome massive differences between their lifeworlds and those of others. Redmond's description of Ngarinyin peoples' adaptation to the pastoral industry in the east Kimberley in 1930s is eerily reminiscent of the repatriation today:

> The operation of Wurnan helped sustain an uneasy accommodation between the original landholders and those who appropriated the country for cattle grazing. … The expectations of reciprocity … helped to shape the tenor of these relationships, incorporating the alien behaviour of the intruders into a local social reality that contained its destructive effects to some extent. The exchange relationships that were an integral part of Wurnan, and the prestige of introduced goods that were obtainable only by working for station bosses, promoted some stability in the decades following the extreme violence of invasion. The station bosses were largely oblivious to the importance of Wurnan, allowing it to continue as a relatively autonomous form of governance. … For decades after white settlement at Karunjie, Aboriginal people maintained the prestige of a traditional system of trade, sustaining a parallel economy within a system designed to strip them of any economic power. (Redmond & Skyring 2010, 84)

Similarly, Charles explains that the use of Treloyn by elder singers in 1999 - 2002 to record songs and song histories may have been a strategy to ensure that their gifts (that is, their knowledge of song, history and country) could be held for forthcoming generations of singers yet to emerge.

Read this way, through Wurnan the discomforts that arise between culture bearers and strange researcher-relatives allow for productive intercultural collaboration that supports cultural maintenance. Such a view can also be seen to emerge in singers' and emerging singers' negotiations of Treloyn's song knowledge. In the position of being asked to sing at the most recent Mowanjum Festival, riling concerns within Treloyn about her own acts of neo-liberal cultural appropriation and homogenisation, Treloyn said, as is appropriate in the situation, "I can't put myself front!" (i.e., with no shame; as an unsocialised person, or dog for that matter, would). Elder singer Lucy Ward said to her "You *have* sing, because you have followed me all the way". Treloyn had followed Lucy since 1999 and spent the previous week with her, singing more and more with the high, loud tone preferred by the elder singers. She did this because it in turn brings Lucy's voice up, giving confidence to young learners to also sing. So, in the festival, Lucy considered that Treloyn had to sing, for Lucy, for Lucy's grandchildren and Lucy's country, and for their shared relationship. Relational accountability can be seen, where Treloyn is a privileged guest, and Lucy ensures that there is benefit, through this relationship, for her community. Echoing this, Charles explains that secondary products of research such as Treloyn's 2007 dissertation, the source of discomfort for Treloyn, and for Charles, similarly became a subject of Wurnan.

> You went and worked with Scotty [an elderly singer]. You got a lot of his stuff and wrote it down, you know, but he is also teaching about his culture to you. You returned it back to us, we're younger ones with technology and writing. So *he* [is] giving it back to us, and we [are] learning off that. We [are] learning both ways, we [are also] learning from him. (Treloyn & Charles 2014)

Conclusion

As observed by Australian education researcher Catherine Manathunga (2009, 166), the production of knowledge in the post-colonial intercultural research contact zone is contingent on boundary crossing, wherein difference is treated as productive, rather than something to disavow, allowing mutual identification, cultural exchange and transculturation to enter the research process and product. In Wurnan epistemology, hereditary, cultural, ecological and linguistic difference and diversity—embedded in the kinship system that guides marriage, the distribution of food and knowledge and so on—is essential for life. This extends to the modern lifeworld of strange researchers, strange ethnomusicologists, and strange archives. In terms of Wurnan, Treloyn's withdrawal from collaboration—or the inability of an archive to release legacy recordings—would not be read as a closure of the matter, but rather a stagnation or ossification that results from a temporary failure of participation (Redmond 2012): a denial of intersubjectivity and relatedness. The vitality of Junba has been stimulated and sustained not simply by the repatriation of the legacy recordings, but by:

1. The relationships past and present that brought the recordings into being and that mobilises them through repatriation today;
2. An applied approach to ethnomusicology that acknowledges histories of research violence; and,
3. An applied approach to ethnomusicology that embraces heterogeneous intercultural research epistemologies, in this case postcolonial notions of productive difference, and a local epistemological framework for relational accountability that encompasses recordings, singers, researchers, archives and the academy past and present.

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