'Wishing You Weren't Here …': Thinking About Trauma, Place and the Port Arthur Massacre

Maria Tumarkin

Michael Taussig, Columbia University professor and the Mick Jagger of Anthropology, giving his keynote address at a 'Space and Identity' conference in North Carolina,[1] says that, 'An island is as likely to be a prison as a utopia. A hell-on-earth as a paradise. Think about it! All these islands that were once prisons ... Devil's Island, Alcatraz, Norfolk, Greek Islands, the whole of Australia'.[2] The audience laughs, grateful, relieved. The point is made. There is no need for the esteemed speaker to continue with the list. There must be, at least, three or four Australians in the room. For a moment, our thoughts merge.

   Tasmania's unparalleled utopian beauty is recognised worldwide. Over twenty percent of the island's land surface can be found on the World Heritage List. As Tasmanian academic Peter Hay explains, 'no other polity has an equivalent proportion of its land surface on the World Heritage List'.[3] You'd be hard pressed to find more heavenly, more uncorrupted island in the world. Tasmania is a cradle of Australia's fighting-fit environmental movement, a refuge from the self-important major markets. It is, after all, the only state in Australia in which a local government directly sponsored a family of Kosovar refugees to return to Australia after they were forcefully deported by the federal authorities.[4] You'd be hard pressed to find a warmer, more soulful and more humane place than Tasmania.

   Carmel Bird writes:

> Tasmania, formerly Van Diemen's Land, is a small island about the size of Sri Lanka at the south eastern tip of the continent of Australia. Its shape, some say, is like a heart; others call it a cunt. It is, in any case, the butt of many an Australian joke, known in legend for incest, bestiality, birth defects and freaks. I recently saw a report of a young Tasmanian woman who has a thriving business making and selling two-headed Tasmanian dolls.[5]

Tasmania is also Australia's most ethnically homogenous and economically underachieving state with a history of violence and repression almost unprecedented in its barbarity. Its repressive social climate is well-known with Tasmanian state laws prohibiting homosexuality finally repealed only in May 1997. Tasmania's only maximum-security prison at Risdon has the worst conditions of any prison in Australia and has been compared to a zoo.[6] 'State of Decay' is how an article in *The Age* chose to refer to Tasmania in 1999, pointing to a death rate ten percent above the national average and predictions of further economic and demographic decline.[7]

   'Tasmania is more than a place', says Tasmanian writer Martin Flanagan, 'it's an idea, a potent one, since it presents certain fundamentally Australian themes in their most concentrated and focused form'.[8] Flanagan's words are echoed by Margaret Scott, another much-respected Tasmanian writer. According to Scott, Tasmania is:

a place in which elements of Australian life become intensified, where tendencies move to inescapable consequences, battle-lines are more clearly drawn and the moderate or partial becomes extreme.[9]

No place embodies the extremes and paradoxes of Australia's only island-state more diligently than Port Arthur. Established in 1830, Port Arthur functioned as a secondary penal settlement to which transported convicts were sent after being caught re-offending. With the passage of time, Port Arthur, writes Robert Hughes, has become 'our Paestum and our Dachau rolled into on'.[10] It is the largest monument to Australia's convict origins and the place once described as 'hell on earth'.[11] It is a national icon, a major tourist destination and the home for one of Australia's worst convict penal establishments. The setting for this country's worst single-gun massacre of non-indigenous inhabitants in the twentieth-century.

Port Arthur is a place like no other. It has the depth of meaning few places in Australia can claim to possess. The most recent layers of meaning were added to the site by the massacre of thirty-five children, women and men visiting or working at Port Arthur in April of 1996. Following Martin Bryant's rampage, the location of the tragedy became central to most subsequent attempts to make sense of what had happened and why. The actual place of the massacre was seen as somehow more significant, richer in meaning and tragic irony than a setting of just about any other Australian tragedy in the living memory. Why did it happen in Port Arthur and what would change if it happened elsewhere?

To a large extent, the location of the massacre shaped its aftermath, informing the experience of survival for those who were there and for the local community at large, determining the ways in which the massacre could be made sense of for the Peninsula community and for mainland Australia, and affecting the debates about appropriate memorialisation of the tragedy and the necessary public policy measures.

While the place of the tragedy was seen as profoundly important, this realisation brought neither clarity nor the smallest portion of relief. Outside of rhetorical flourishes, poetic evocations of evil and self-righteous historical exposes, it turned out to be painfully difficult to see why and how the setting of the massacre mattered so mercilessly, so deeply. The location of the massacre ended up being used, whether consciously or unconsciously, to mystify the event, to appropriate the massacre as the national tragedy and to hinder the eventual recovery of the around 2,250 Peninsula residents, all of whom were directly and profoundly affected by the carnage.

On the following pages, I will attempt to describe, albeit very briefly, how the historical, psychological and political investments in the place of Port Arthur prior to and after the 1996 massacre served to mystify and appropriate the event and to hinder the recovery process for the Peninsula community and, in some ways, for Tasmania as well.[12] I will follow this necessarily abbreviated discussion with some ideas of my own about why and how the setting of Martin Bryant's rampage mattered so categorically.

The Lost Innocence or the Evil Place — Mystification of the Site in the Wake of the Massacre

The gunman, Martin Bryant, was part of the process of mystification. Asked to explain his choice of Port Arthur as the setting for his rampage, Bryant replied, 'A

lot of violence has happened there. It must be the most violent place in Australia. It seemed the right place'.[13] This response struck a chord with mainland writers and cultural commentators. Yes, Port Arthur was haunted, eerie, even evil. Leo Schofield writing for *The Age* in the aftermath of the massacre saw, 'the palpable melancholy that no amount of interpretation and cosmetic changes could erase from this fearful place'.[14] 'It was almost too perfect a venue for last Sunday's horrors'.[15] 'It is so beautiful, Port Arthur', commented Melbourne University historian Janet McCalman, 'which makes its aura of evil all the more terrible. ... the whole place reeks of human cruelty'.[16] 'Not the rolling greens nor the century of peaceful existence nor the Tasmanian scallop pies, offered as the local culinary treat, can erase the stain of misery that is Port Arthur's history', wrote David Humphries on the day following the massacre.[17]

Writing in the aftermath of the tragedy, Tasmanian academic Peter Hay pointed to the unconscious need to use Tasmania as 'Australia's psychological sink — a repository for all the displaced insecurities and cankering guilts that lurk behind the veneer of uneasy Sydney (etcetera) worldliness'. 'Perhaps', he mused, 'this explains the eagerness with which some mainland journalists took up the "essential evil" interpretation of the Port Arthur massacre'.[18] Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, a historian working on the site in the aftermath of the tragedy, noted, 'It would have been terrible no matter where it had happened. But I think that there's a small extra tragedy as well, where the massacre adds to the burden and the chains that were put on Port Arthur'.[19] As the genealogy of the site was employed to mystify the very real experience of living after the massacre, so is the massacre used to effectively de-historicise the site.

Whoever Owns Port Arthur Raise Your Hand

> I used to attend meetings of the community recovery committee of the time and we would ask for Port Arthur [Management of the historic site] to come and talk to this committee. Eventually we dragged kicking and screaming Mazengarb down there. I can see him in my mind's eye now, pulling himself up to his full five foot two, standing on the balls of his feet, while we are trying to get a bit of accountability, a bit of, you know, 'what's going on down there', 'what the site's doing for the community' etc etc etc. I can still see him standing there and saying, 'The site doesn't belong to you people down here, it doesn't belong to Tasmanians, it belongs to Australians'.[20]

The Mazengarb of the above passage is no one else but the former Chairman of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, who had the task of running the site through the aftermath of the massacre. As is evident in the cited passage, the question of the ownership of the site was central to the aftermath of the massacre. The site as the setting of the tragedy, a premier national icon, a focus for governmental assistance and national anguish and the chief employer on the Peninsula, towered over the Peninsula community and its experience of loss and survival. While a lot of Martin Bryant's victims were not local and the all-consuming shock in the wake of the massacre was felt in most parts of Australia and overseas, the small, close-knit Peninsula community still had to bear the brunt of the carnage. It was the entire community of the Peninsula that was devastated by the massacre, not just survivors and relatives of the victims. And it was the community that was re-traumatised in

the wake of the tragedy when it turned out that both their tragedy and its setting belonged not to them, but to the nation.

Indeed, the deep rift between the Peninsula community and the site, the Peninsula's chief employer and the number one economic powerhouse, present well before the events of April 1996, was profoundly exacerbated in the wake of the massacre. The disputes between the site's Management Board and the Peninsula residents were fuelled by this very question, 'which the massacre has rendered more insistent. Who owns Port Arthur? What does it mean? What purpose does its preservation serve?'[21]

While the site's Management believed that the site belonged to the masses, the federal and state government authorities, counsellors, media and church representatives and countless mainland well-wishers were completely unaware of the history of the growing divide between the site and the Peninsula residents. To them, Port Arthur was the Tasman Peninsula. The site was the community.

> There are those who think money was intended for the community. I think there was a lot of confusion outside this immediate area, even in Tasmania and very certainly on the mainland between the Port Arthur site and the whole area. ... There isn't really a village or town Port Arthur anymore, but people think there is. They don't realize that when they give money to Port Arthur, it is actually going to the site.[22]

The Howard's government donation of $2.5 million for the community recovery was fully spent on the new highly controversial $ 4.5 million Visitor's Centre, not on the actual community needs. The building of the centre was meant to resuscitate the flagging tourist sector of the island-state. Economic recovery of the state was unproblematically equated with the psychological recovery of the deeply traumatised Peninsula community. Once community was equated to the site and the site was proclaimed to belong to all Australians, the Peninsula community was literally left to its own devices. The relief funds went elsewhere and while the Port Arthur Historic site was revamped, dressed up and cleaned up, the community was even further alienated from the place of their biggest tragedy in living memory. If the site belonged to the nation, then it would become doubly difficult for the local community to even begin reclaiming the site for their own grieving and slow but all-important healing.

Introducing Traumascapes

I would like to suggest that Port Arthur is a traumascape, which I define as a time-place materially and discursively bound by traumatic repetitions. This statement, which will be unpacked in detail in the following section, has very real and tangible consequences for our understanding of the legacy of Port Arthur, and may shed some light on the explosive and deeply ambivalent nature of the massacre's aftermath. I am, in essence, saying that Port Arthur is a different kind of place to other sites of major tragedies, different to say, Newcastle. As a different kind of place, it demands different kinds of ideas about survival, trauma, memory and the effect of trauma on landscape and local community. These different kinds of ideas have a direct bearing on public policy measures and governmental involvement in the short and long-term recovery process. Furthermore, to call Port Arthur a traumascape is to point to the pragmatic and discursive significance of the mythology of haunting and traumatic

repetitions woven around the place, and to suggest that this mythology may be implicated in certain colonial and postcolonial projects of national self-legitimation.

To unpack, if only partially, the notion of a 'traumascape', it is necessary to examine first its two main ingredients — trauma and place. '"Place" is one of the trickiest words in the English language', writes Dolores Hayden, 'a suitcase so overfilled one can never shut the lid'.[23] Similarly, as Cathy Caruth argues, 'the phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all-inclusive',[24] 'a category … so powerful that it has seemed to engulf everything around it ...'[25] In a sense, both trauma and place are, to use Robert Coles' idiom, 'the purest of cliches'.[26] Coles uses the term to refer to tropes of memory and identity and their stranglehold over the twentieth century's western thought, but his ruling stands in our case as well. Trauma and place are 'the purest of cliches' in terms of their seemingly boundless semantic elasticity *and* in terms of their persistence as forces with which to be reckoned.

I want to hold on to the thought of both trauma and place working us and the world around as two kinds of forces. It may prove dangerously pre-emptive to define straight away what these forces are, but I believe we can get *some place* by taking note of what it is that they do.[27]

What do places do to us? Scholarship on place attachment and place identity presents places that we inhabit as bedrocks of our identities as well as storehouses for individual and collective memories.[28] Indeed, the notion of 'place' is defined against the notions of space and landscape by the virtue of 'place' always being invested with meaning and impregnated with memory. The self is fashioned, re-configured and maintained through 'place', whether it be an actual place of identification and attachment or symbolic locales where identities and memories are stored and performed.[29] According to Edward S Casey, 'As much as body or brain, mind or language, place is a keeper of memories — one of the main ways by which the past comes to be secured in the present, held in things before us and around us'.[30]

What do places do to the world around? Place — as 'a bounded and controlled area of space ... with rules about what may or may not take place within' — is a key geographical tool that enables humans to transform the world around them.[31] Furthermore, the processes of place-making and meaning-making are firmly intertwined. As Robert Sack points out, 'Places everywhere tend to specialize in the mix of elements of nature, meaning, and social relations they draw together'.[32] Places can become key meaning-brokers not just because they undergird projects of social transformation, but also because they are often the foundation on which collective memory and 'the invented tradition' can be built and maintained. The significance of semiotics of place in the formation of collective memory was articulated by Maurice Halbwachs early in the twentieth century. 'The collective thought of the group of believers', he wrote, 'has the best chance of immobilizing itself and enduring when it concentrates on places, sealing itself within their confines and moulding its character to theirs'.[33] The national memory that seeks to enable nations to worship themselves by worshipping their past has a particular fondness for sacred sites. As John Gillis writes, 'In the course of the nineteenth century nations came to worship themselves through worshipping their past, ritualising and commemorating to the point that their sacred sites and times became the secular equivalent of shrines and holy days'.[34]

What about trauma? Until the end of the nineteenth century, the term 'trauma' was used to refer exclusively to physical injuries and wounds. Only in 1860s and 1870s when the after-effects of railway accidents and disturbing symptoms in soldiers on active duty demanded urgent specialist engagement, was the term trauma expanded to include mental or neurological injury.[35] In talking about psychic trauma now, it is vital to make a distinction between an event and an experience. In other words, a flood is an event which is *experienced as traumatic* by victims' families, witnesses, local residents, visitors in the area and so on. Psychic trauma is located in the immediate experiencing and the subsequent grieving, remembering and re-telling of a particular event (flood), series of events or a process. As immediate experience is confined to individuals, to talk about shared psychic trauma is neither to talk about a specific event, not about its immediate experience, but to talk about coming to terms with such an event through processes of grieving (or ignoring), remembering (or forgetting) and re-articulating (or denying).

So what do traumas do to us? 'Normal experience involves an integrated sense of cognition, affect, sensation and behaviour'.[36] Traumatic experiences and their aftermath are often characterised by the dramatic disintegration of these four components. Traumas, more often than not, 'destroy the sustaining bonds between individual and community'.[37] They negate or, at the very least, throw into turmoil our systems of meaning and belief as well as our behavioural matrixes. They injure, sometimes fatally, our sense of self, often splitting us at the very core. They wreak havoc in our personal histories, creating air pockets of the unassimilable past that burst when we are least prepared for it. They follow us, sometimes just one step behind. As James Berger explains,

> 'trauma' is not simply another word for disaster. The idea of catastrophe as trauma provides a method of interpretation, for it posits that the effects of an event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously associated with the event. Moreover, this dispersal occurs across time.[38]

The relationship between trauma and place and identity is not an easy one to gauge. Its careful examination has been effectively overshadowed by the privileging of time and the excessive metaphorisation of space in most of trauma-friendly discourses and disciplines. A 'collapsing temporal structure' engendered by the traumatic,[39] the scattering of traumatic legacies across time[40] and the historical power of trauma's forgetting[41] have all served to focus the attention of cultural theorists on the temporal regimes of trauma. Space, on the other hand, has been de-materialised to a large degree by metaphoric evocations of inner and symbolic spaces, landscapes of memory and desire gradually moulded into master-tropes. Amongst these master-tropes, the *landscape of memory* has been imagined as the culturally constructed and 'metaphoric terrain that shapes the distance and effort required to remember affectively charged and socially defined events'.[42] The continuous allusions to an individual's psychic geography implicitly portray our traumatic memories and experiences as 'not so much managed as lived in offering vistas that reveal and conceal'.[43] Paula Hamilton's recent work on the 'material culture of the disaster' is an attempt to counter the dematerialisation of the traumatic. However, she remains primarily concerned with the modes of circulation of material objects associated with a

particular tragedy and its memory, shedding little light on the relationship between trauma and its location.[44]

On the other side of the spectrum, geographers and historians concerned with the phenomenology of space and place have, on the whole, shied away from any explicit engagements with the notion of trauma. *Landscapes of violence and tragedy*,[45] *places of the colonial uncanny*,[46] *sites of memory and mourning*,[47] *wounded space* — all these material and discursive locations appear to have been divested of trauma-impelled hard-core theorising. Dominick LaCapra's trauma sites are an uncommon acknowledgment of the relentless spatiality of post-traumatic memories and identities. LaCapra interprets Claude Lanzman's *non-lieux de memoire*, non-sites of memory, modelled after Nora's *lieux de memoire*, as referring to trauma sites.[48] '… [A] memory site', he further argues, 'is generally also a site of trauma, and the extent to which it remains invested with trauma marks the extent to which memory has not been effective in coming to terms with it, notably though modes of mourning'.[49] Of course LaCapra, Nora and Lanzmann are not concerned exclusively with material places, yet they are able to go beyond the rhetorical reliance on metaphorical spaces that permeate most of the non-specialist literature on trauma and memory.

The notion of a traumascape, a time-space materially and discursively bound by traumatic repetitions, is an attempt to push LaCapra's tentative articulation of the spatial co-ordinates of trauma a step further. Dissected, my definition tells about places with non-linear time and the categorically intertwined time and space flows, which are set apart from other real or imagined places by a history of multiple tragedies imagined as meaningfully linked.[50] Here is a quick guide to this dissection.

The notion of timespace comes to us from Einsteinian physics, but is not yet commonly accepted in the discourses of the social sciences.[51] In highly simplified terms, the introduction of such a notion to what is ostensibly an historical inquiry asks for understanding of time as non-linear.[52] Contemporary research on psychic trauma attests, if indirectly, to the relevance of the notion of timespace to the workings of psychic trauma by conferring the non-linear nature of so-called traumatic time. In a chapter from his *The Harmony of Illusions* dedicated to 'the architecture of traumatic time', Allan Young notes that time rarely works in a linear fashion — from the aetiological event to the post-traumatic symptoms — when it comes to traumatic experiences. In fact, clinicians have demonstrated that for traumatised patients time can flow in two directions simultaneously or move from the present to the past.[53] Cathy Caruth applies these insights to a broader historical context by contending that, 'The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all'.[54]

A timespace is marked not only by non-linear time, but also by the way in which its time and place cannot be pulled apart. This very quality has been noted by a number of scholars writing about places of unimaginable violence and trauma. Michael Perlman, for instance, sees Hiroshima 'as first place of the nuclear world [which] is also its first time, a paradigmatic time'.[55] In the Australian context, Deborah Bird Rose's powerful work on the lived experience of the Australian frontier imagines 'the frontier as a rolling Year Zero that cuts an ontological swathe between 'timeless' land and historicised land'.[56] According to Rose, the Australian frontier 'can be understood as a stretched time-space managed through a regime of violence'.[57]

These regimes of violence are given a particular twist in the case of 'traumascapes'. Traumascapes are marked by multiple tragedies, yet these tragedies seem to have a common thread, a common core. This commonality is often imagined as 'a history repeating itself'. To link these historical repetitions with the notion of trauma is tempting, potentially useful and maybe just a tiny bit cheesy.[58] John Frow, amongst others, warns about the dangers of transferring insights about an individual's trauma to a historical arena. 'There is something glib', he writes, 'about the attempt to apply the concept of trauma directly to historical events'.[59] Yet this transferral and the accompanying introduction of the associated terminology, including the notion of traumatic repetition, has already taken place in non-scientific literature. For the majority of historians and cultural theorists writing on the subject, 'the idea of trauma ... allows for an interpretation of cultural symptoms — of the growths, wounds, scars on a social body, and its compulsive, repeated actions'.[60] Trauma, including a collectively experienced one, is commonly understood as not arising directly from a so-called traumatic event but stemming from the collapse of both individual and collective witnessing *and* memory which effects a repeated involuntary reliving of that event.[61]

In my mind, the application of psychoanalytical vocabulary to the world of historical catastrophes is both risky and inevitable. After all, psychoanalytic terminology and insights provide just about the only language we have to speak meaningfully about the phenomenon of 'history repeating itself', especially as applied to places and peoples. The notion of traumatic repetitions, if applied lightly and with great discernment, can free our thoughts just enough to let us speak about what Avery Gordon calls 'haunting'.[62] According to Gordon:

> Haunting is a constituent element of modern social life. It is neither pre-modern superstition nor individual psychosis: it is a generalizable social phenomenon of great import. To study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it.[63]

In the case of Port Arthur, haunting is undoubtedly 'a generalizable social phenomenon' and an historical presence made explicit in the language used to describe the place both in literature and in everyday encounters, in the extremely popular ghost tours conducted nightly on the site, in the discourses around and the genealogy of the place. Haunting is, indeed, a 'constituent element' of the lived experience of Port Arthur.

The insights about trauma, repetition and haunting from psychoanalytic and psychological literature can indeed be useful, least we drown in silence everything that so categorically sets Port Arthur apart from other places of major national tragedies or intense myth-making in this country. The psychoanalytically informed body of work gives us three major links between the notions of psychic trauma and repetition. Firstly, repetition is inevitable when particular traumatic memories are repressed or not integrated into the overall narrative of the past.[64] Secondly, repetitions do not have to be compulsive manifestations of unprocessed trauma; they could be used as a way of 'working-through' that very trauma.[65] Thirdly, there are situations in which the presence of repetitive patterns can itself be traumatic and can result in repression or dissociation of the very experience of repetition.[66]

Traumascapes are bound by traumatic repetitions in the way that they are bound by a mythology of haunting, repression, trauma and forgetting. Port Arthur's genealogy, its entanglement in the mythology of repression and haunting, is exactly

what made the site itself so significant in the aftermath of the 1996 massacre and is exactly what made it doubly hard for the Tasman Peninsula residents to effect a recovery process in the wake of the carnage.

The Work Traumascapes Do

'Every state needs an island', Michael Taussig announces, looking directly at everyone in the audience. As a fantasy of escape from domination and, simultaneously, as a very embodiment of that domination. As a way of extruding and isolating social evil. We need Port Arthur. More generally, we need Tasmania just like Europe needed Terra Australis from the sixteenth century onwards, its 'geographic unconscious', the Fifth Continent, one of the last places beyond the edges of the known world.[67] For over a century now, Tasmania has, in turn, performed a similar service for mainland Australia — repeatedly serving as a container of our unconscious anxieties and fantasies, a warden of the Antipodean curse. From the sixteenth century onward, the carving out of the Fifth Continent, the Antipodes, allowed for a sense of degeneration and impending doom to be physically cast out of the European imaginary and contained elsewhere. Until this day the Antipodean geography, the direction of a colonising vector has been faithfully preserved. The further south Europeans travelled in their imagination, the more grotesque their vision became. South is where mainland Australians travel too to relieve symptoms of postcolonial anxiety — south to mainland Tasmania and then further south, right through the narrow neck of the Tasman Peninsula and straight to Port Arthur.

In the year 2001, Australia is, in the words of Mishra and Hodge, a country of 'complicit postcolonialism',[68] a place where colonial chains of cause-and-effect are still hounding the country's only legal inhabitants and its crippled land. In a country of 'complicit postcolonialism', the national legitimation project must be relentlessly inventive. The invocation and active maintenance of Antipodean places is one of the most pivotal manifestations of this legitimation project. It is one of the most striking examples of 'spatial forms and fantasies through which a culture declares its presence'.[69]

Trauma has, in the instance of Port Arthur, been used as the key enabler of the project of national self-legitimation. Port Arthur is one of Australia's model traumascapes. For some time now, it has functioned as a repository created for the containment of particular national anxieties or traumas.[70] It is, therefore, not surprising that the notion of traumatic or 'uncanny repetition'[71] became a key interpretive device for the majority of those grappling publicly with the enormity of the 1996 massacre and the bitter irony of its setting. This was the case whether you believed in 'the return of the repressed' scenario or passionately denied such an explanation. While I have spoken earlier about the importance of thinking historically about trauma and haunting, I can only wonder about the reasons for and the consequences of exclusive application of the concepts of trauma and repression to a geographically bound area, deliberately unrepresentative of the rest of Australia. Could one not argue that the whole of Australia is one giant traumascape built directly on the burial ground of indigenous histories and memories? If this is the case, then the whole of Australia could have been 'almost too perfect a venue', to paraphrase Leo Schofield, for the slaughter of thirty-five people in April of 1996.

A cautious attempt to see Port Arthur as a 'traumascape' can lay bare a great deal of unexamined historical, psychic and political investments in the site. It can also question to what extent those investments have informed the aftermath of the 1996 massacre. A cautious attempt to see Port Arthur as a 'traumascape' can lay bare an implicit understanding that we have as a nation of 'haunting' as a social and historical force that needs to be managed. The confinement, imprisonment of the historical ghosts in time (past) or space (far away, south, down under) seems to be the most persistent of these managerial practices.

The place of Port Arthur and Tasmania, in general, in the collective imagination is a testimony to the historical power of trauma, haunting and the consequences of their spatial containment. Humphrey McQueen argued in 1982 that 'the existence of a "Tasmanian problem" was recognised long before many of its causes and effects could be related to an "Australian problem"'.[72] In *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, Lyndall Ryan demonstrated that the extent of violence against the indigenous inhabitants in Tasmania was not at all exceptional, but, on the contrary, representative of a broader narrative of colonisation. Tasmanian experiences of dispossession and slaughter were invested with some unique, almost freakish quality so as 'to minimise the horror of the continent-wide story'.[73]

Anxiety about violent national beginnings have been projected on and contained by Port Arthur, which represents the end-point of the British Empire *and* epitomises the genocidal colonising culture out of control. When the ghosts return to haunt Port Arthur in the wake of the 1996 massacre, this perversely reassures some, as the paranoia over the price of national repression and forgetting can yet again be projected on and physically enclosed within the space of Port Arthur. The fantasies of Australia's culture of complicit colonialism about Port Arthur and Tasmania in general have served to expel anxieties of the illegitimacy and savageness of national origins from the mainland imaginary, this has occurred by means of the psychological ghettoisation of Tasmania. The creation of the repository of national repression in Tasmania has served to legitimise both the right of the Australian nation to exist *and* the deadly persistence of the chains of colonial cause-and-effect in Australia of today.

Writing about colonialism, power and space, Australian cultural geographer Jane Jacobs argues that the 'map has in a sense become the over-determined signifier of the spatiality of the imperial imagination. But the intersection of the imaginary and material spatialities was present in other areas of the colonial project'.[74] I believe that these intersections are apparent in Port Arthur and Tasmania as a whole. The projection and containment of the continent-wide trauma onto the island of Tasmania seeks effectively to obscure the fact that Australia is, in a way, her own Tasmania — begotten in violence and shame, unable to give her ghosts a proper burial, entangled in the web of haunting repetitions. It is the spatial ordering of the 'other' that allows the differentiation between *colonial* Tasmania and *postcolonial* Australia to take place. If Tasmania and Port Arthur didn't exist, mainland Australia would have invented them.

Notes on pages 237-240

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'Wishing You Weren't Here …': Thinking About Trauma, Place and the Port Arthur Massacre
Maria Tumarkin

1   *Disciplinary Diagrams // Political Fields. Mediations of Space and Identity in the late 20th Century*, Duke University, North Carolina, March 30 - April 2, 2000.
2   Michael Taussig, 'Keynote Address', *Disciplinary Diagrams*, March 31, 2000.
3   P R Hay, ' The Politics of Tasmania's World Heritage Area: Contesting the Democratic Subject', Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, Published on-line at (http://www.geol.utas.edu.au/staff/prhay/WHADEMO.html).
4   See Andrew Darby, 'Expelled Kosovars to return to Hobart' in *The Age*, 25 October 2000.
5   Carmel Bird, 'Fresh Blood, Old Wounds: Tasmania and Guns', *Meanjin*, vol 55, no 3, 1996, p 390.
6   Legislative Council Select Committee, Parliament of Tasmania, *Correctional Services and Sentencing in Tasmania*, 1999, pp 1-9.
7   Andrew Darby, 'State of Decay', *The Age*, July 10. 1999, p 6.
8   Martin Flanagan, 'The hunt for Tasmania', in *The Age*, 14 August 1999, p 4.
9   Margaret Scott, *'Uneasy Eden' Peace and Conflict in Rural Community*, The Tasmanian Peace Trust 1997, Annual Lecture, p 2. Elsewhere in the lecture, Scott continues the theme of polarisation within the island-state, 'More recently the place has been home to some of the most convinced conservatives and some of the most impassioned radicals in Australia', p 3.
10 Note that Hughes described Port Arthur in such striking terms almost a decade prior to the 1996 massacre. Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore. A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868*, London, Collins Harvill, 1987, p 400.
11 The novel that has popularised this vision of Port Arthur is Marcus Clarke's best-selling *For The Term of His Natural Life*, published in 1874. See Marcus Clarke, *For the Term of his Natural Life*, Tasmania, Book Agencies of Tasmania, reprint 1994.
12 I understand recovery process as a mixture of overlapping and interdependent processes, such as grieving for and honouring the dead, making sense of what had happened and attempting to memorialise the tragedy.
13 See John Frow, 'In the Penal Colony', *Australian Humanities Review*, April 1999, Available online (http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-April-1999/frow3.html).
14 Leo Schofield, *The Age*, 30 April, 1996, p 1.
15 ibid.
16 Janet McCalman, *The Age*, 30 April, p 17.
17 David Humphries, 'Where misery still dwells', *The Age*, 29 April, 1996, p 13.
18 Peter Hay, 'Port Arthur. Where Meanings Collide', *Island*, no 67, Winter, 1996, p 73.
19 Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, *Interview with the author*, Melbourne, 1998.

20 James Parker, Chairman of the Tasman Trust, *Interview with the Author*, Tasman Peninsula, February 1999

21 Margaret Scott, '*Uneasy Eden'*, op. cit., p. 5

22 Margaret Scott, *Interview with the Author*, Tasman Peninsula, February 1999

23 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place. Urban landscapes as Public History*, The MIT Press, 1996, p 15

24 Cathy Caruth, 'Introduction', in Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1995, p 4.

25 ibid., p 3.

26 quoted in John R Gillis, 'Introduction. Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', in John R. Gillis (ed.) *Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994, p 2.

27 In this seemingly anti-definitional stance, I side heavily with anthropologist Michael Taussig, who sees his role in the nuanced and guileless characterization of certain phenomena not in their hurried theoretical encapsulation. See Michael Taussig, *Defacement. Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative*, Stanford University Press, California, 1999, pp 1-3.

28 See, for instance, Irwin Altman Setha Low (eds), *Place Attachment*, New York, Plenum, or Leonard Duhl (ed.), *The Urban Condition*, New York, Basic Books, 1963 or Claude Fischer et al (eds), *Networks and Places*, The Free Press 1977.

29 See, for instance, James Duncan and David Ley (eds), *Place /Culture /Representation*, New York and London, Routledge, 1993 or Stephen Daniels and Roger Lee (eds), *Exploring Human Geography. A Reader*, Sydney, Arnold, 1996.

30 Edward S Casey, *Remembering. A Phenomenological Study*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1987, p 231.

31 Robert D Sack, 'A Sketch of a Geographic Theory of Morality', *The Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, March 1999, V89 i1.

32 ibid.

33 Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J Ditter and Vida Y Ditter, New York, Harper Colophon, 1980, p 156.

34 Gillis, op. cit., p 19.

35 This cursory summing up of the emergence of the notion of trauma has been extracted from John E Talbott, 'Soldiers, Psychiatrists and Combat Trauma', in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Winter 1997, Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1995, and David Healy, *Images of Trauma: from hysteria to post-traumatic stress disorder*, London, Faber & Faber, 1993.

36 See James A Chu, 'The repetition compulsion revisited: reliving dissociated trauma', in *Psychotherapy*, vol 28, Summer 1991, no 2, p 329.

37 Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, New York, BasicBooks, 1992, p 214.

38 James Berger, 'Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma', in *Contemporary Literature*, Fall 1997, vol 38, no 3, p 570.

39 Geoffrey H Hartman, 'On traumatic knowledge and literary studies', in *New Literary History* 26, 1995, p 548.

40 See James Berger, 'World of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma', in *Contemporary Literature*, Fall 1997, vol 38, no 3, pp 572-73.

41 See Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1995, p 8.

42 Laurence J Kirmayer, 'Landscapes of Memory. Trauma, Narrative and Disassociation' in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds), *Tense Past. Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, New York and London, Routledge, p 175.

43 Laurence J Kirmayer, 'Landscapes of Memory', p 182.

44 Paula Hamilton, 'Memory Remains: Ferry Disaster, Sydney 1938', *History Workshop Journal*, Spring 1999, 47, p 197.

45 Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground. America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, University of Texas, Austin, 1998.

46 See Jane M Jacobs, *Edge of Empire. Postcolonialism and the City*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996.

47 See Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, sites of mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History*,

Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

48 Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1998, p 10.

49 ibid.

50 Baktin's notion of 'chronotope', and Victor Turner's thesis on liminal entities may also be helpful in an attempt to imagine traumascapes and the work that they do. See Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1997 and Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1969.

51 Recently, a number of volumes have appeared eager to apply new theories of time and space to social discourses. See, in particular, Jonathan Boyarin (ed.), *Remapping Memory. The Politics of TimeSpace*, Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

52 The rarely questioned notion of the linearity of time hides in it the insidious importation of a specifically spatial model into our experience of succession in time, 'at once abstracting from this experience and homogenizing it'. (Jonathan Boyarin, 'Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory', in Jonathan Boyarin (ed.), *Remapping Memory*, p 4) In other words, by thinking of time as linear, we spatialise it. Indeed, as Boyarin argues, 'the metaphorical structures of our language betray … bifurcation, displaying in particular a tendency to borrow terms connoting spatial relations in our references to change over time'. (Jonathan Boyarin, 'Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory', p 7.) Notions like the progress of time, distant times, to go back in time are evidence to this linguistic betrayal'.

53 Allan Young, 'The Architecture of Traumatic Time' in Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press,1995, pp 135-136.

54 Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*, p 8.

55 Michael Perlman, *Imaginal Memory and the Place of Hiroshima*, New York Press, Albany, State University of 1988, p 85. Later on the same page he notes that, 'Hiroshima is also a first place of the nuclear end-of-the-world time, a time that is both past and future' (p 85).

56 Deborah Bird Rose, 'Hard Times: An Australian Study' in Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Eriksen (eds), *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, Syndey, UNSW Press, 1999, p 9. Rose elaborates further on this fusion of time and space in the colonial project. Frontier, she writes, 'is stretched across space and through calendrical time, a Year Zero sustained through the past century as a more or less suspended moment awaiting transfiguration' (p 13).

57 ibid.

58 In most research on trauma in individuals, the link between trauma and repetition is undisputed. In the words of a contemporary researcher, James A Chu, the clinical experience suggests that in traumatised patients, 'the compulsion to repeat takes on almost biological urgency'. Chu compares such an urgency to the need to urinate — the realisation of this need can be postponed, yet it cannot be delayed infinitely. James A Chu, 'The Repetition Compulsion Revisited: Reliving Disassociated Trauma' in *Psychotherapy*, vol. 28, no 2, Summer 1991, p 328.

59 John Frow, op. cit.

60 James Berger, op. cit., p 570.

61 According to Caruth, 'The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site'. Cathy Caruth, op. cit., p 10.

62 See Avery F Gordon, *Ghostly Matters. Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 1997.

63 ibid., p 7.

64 This is the classical psychoanalytical notion of repetition-compulsion. In the dramatically simplified manner it can be argued that most interpretation of repetition-compulsion take Sigmund Freud's or Pierre Janet's work on traumatic repetition as their starting point. While the Freudian-inspired view posits the repression as the root of the repetition-compulsion, disciples of Janet argue that disassociation, collapse of the individual's unitary sense of self and inability to integrate traumatic experience into a person's narrative or semantic memory is at the heart of repetition-compulsion. See James A Chu, 'The Repetition Compulsion Revisited' and Bessel A Van Der Kolk, Alexander C McFarlane, Lars Weisaeth (eds), *Traumatic Stress. The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind and Body and Society*, New York, London, The Guilford Press, 1996.

65 This is the so-called induced repetition. The notion of induced repetition was put forward by

Sigmund Freud, who argued the compulsion to repeat was not only a passive manifestation of repressed memories but that it could sometimes be an attempt to master retrospectively one's states of tension through the voluntary or active inducement of anxiety and the gradual development of an ability to attribute meaning to this anxiety. See Max M Stern, *Repetition and Trauma. Towards a Teleonomic Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Hillsdale, New Jersey, Hove and London, The Analytic Press, 1988. This line of argument has been taken up most notably by Dominique La Capra in his work on 'acting-out' versus 'working-through'. See Dominick LaCapra, 'Trauma, Absence, Loss', in *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 1999, vol 25, no 4.

66 This is an argument advanced in the work Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze reverses the causal link between trauma and repetition. 'I do not repeat because I repress', he writes, 'I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat. I repress, because I can live certain things or certain experiences only in the mode of repetition'. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p 18.

67 George Seddon, *Landprints. Reflections on Place and Landscape*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

68 V Mishra and B Hodge, 'What is postcolonialism?', *Textual Practice,* vol *5*, no 3, p 407.

69 Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay. An Essay in Spatial History*, London, Faber and Faber, 1987, p xxii.

70 The concept of trauma is used throughout this paper to refer to 'an overwhelming assault on human mind and emotions', which cannot be integrated into an individual's or collective's narrative of the past. See 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder', in *The Harvard Mental Health Letter*, July 1996, Part II.

71 *John Frow*, op. cit.

72 Humphrey McQueen, *Gone Tomorrow: Australia in the 80s*, Sydney, 1982, p 100.

73 Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, The University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1981, pp 2-3.

74 Jane M Jacobs, *Edge of Empire*, p 20.