

Department of Social Sciences and Security Studies

**A Position in the Field:
Aboriginal Experiences of Cricket in Western Australia**

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Doctor of Philosophy
of
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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Human Ethics (For projects involving human participants/tissue, etc) The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number # HR52/2010.

Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgements

This project had its genesis in the Western Australian Museum's 2006 exhibition on Western Australian cricket. But it was only in 2008, after a short period away from the Museum, that my enthusiasm for the project led me to enquire further about turning it into a research project. In large part, it was the encouragement of Dr Philip Moore that convinced me of the project's merit along with his preparedness to supervise my progress. His ongoing interest, support and gentle guidance over the journey enabled me to retain and grow my initial enthusiasm and interest in the topic. I hope that we can continue our discussions about life, sport and anthropology. Thanks and acknowledgement, too, to my co-supervisor, Dr Sean Gorman, for his perceptive and honest comments on various drafts.

This has been a project that has also relied on the willing participation of a number of individuals. First and foremost of these are the eight men who agreed to participate and be recorded: Harley Coyne, John McGuire, Clint Dann, Matt Abrahamson, Jeff Kickett, Jamal Principe, John Mallard and Troy Collard. Their generosity of time and willingness to talk about their cricket experiences has made this thesis possible and I hope that in allowing me to capture their words they will also take a measure of pride in their achievements and involvement in the game in Western Australia. Their participation has led to a richer understanding of the game and a meaningful contribution to the anthropology of sport.

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Abstract

This thesis explores and challenges what we know of cricket in Western Australia as a field of social practice. It seeks to capture Aboriginal experiences of the game and the individual and collective lives encompassed and expressed in these experiences and offer an alternative view. Using notions drawn from field theory the project develops biographical narratives to explore the ways in which the participant's makes sense of their engagement with the field.

Cricket is a game that forms a sub-field of a broader field that we recognise as sport. In an anthropological sense the game represents a field of social practice, with its own structures, rules and networks, where individual identity is informed by and established through individual and collective habitus and disposition. Engagement with this field obliges individuals to put on the cloak of the game, to learn its techniques and ways of being in order to be located within and recognised by others as one belonging to the field.

In Australia, with the exception of certain individuals and teams, an Aboriginal presence in the field of cricket has been absent from the dominant narrative. This is where my interest in the project began: how is an Aboriginal position in the game expressed? How do individuals position their accounts in relation to the field and to others within it? What lies beneath these accounts that makes meaning of a life in the field and how do the potentialities of this presence and their resulting trajectories contribute to an overall understanding of an Aboriginal place in the field?

What each narrative reveals is a sense of the way that the field of cricket allows the participants to express and elaborate an identity embedded within the field and its objective structures. In allowing each subject to explore their relationship to the field and to other agents they articulate everyday lives that are subject to the influence of individual and group habitus, and the strategic application of disposition that maintains a sense of self alongside an identity as cricketer. That is, while some have argued against the idea of Aboriginal cricket, there is efficacy and resonance in recognising the experiences of Aboriginal cricketers and the documentation of these narratives is well overdue.

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Chapter 1

Marking the ground: an introduction

One last word about approaching cricket in this way. What I have set down are not laws. They are not a logical construction. They are guidelines and from using them the careful historian can work historically at individual batsmen and emerge with certain hard facts in their hard places. These usurp the name of History. There is another history – the unrecorded hundreds and hundreds of games and thousands of players, boys, men and even some old men.

CLR James, introduction to *Cricket* (1986:p.xii)

In 2006 the Ashes Urn¹ toured Australia, travelling from state to state where it was displayed in all its underwhelming glory. Large crowds flocked to view a piece of Australian and English cricketing history, and to learn more about an event that has been mythologised and elevated to become a symbol of cricketing encounters between the two nations (Hilton 2006; MCC 2006). This was only the second time that the Urn had travelled away from Lords Cricket Ground and the occasion of its return to Australia was widely promoted. Using this interest as an opportunity to talk more broadly about cricket in Western Australia the Western Australian Museum developed an exhibition about the game in Western Australia. *Howzat! Western Australians and cricket* (Anstey 2006) was created to highlight the importance and history of cricket in Western Australia.

The exhibition examined aspects of the game and centred on a number of themes including notable players, the development of the game in Western Australia, the media coverage and administration of the game and the wider social significance and coverage of the game in Western Australia. Rather than merely telling the history of

¹ The Ashes urn is a small earthenware vessels reported to contain the ashes of burnt bails that were used in a game between a touring MCC team and a team from Rupertswood, an estate near Sunbury, located north-west of Melbourne. The urn was created in response to the mock obituary published in the London Times following Australia's first defeat of the English on English soil in 1882. The debate around the contents of the urn has become one of cricket's

the game it was intended to explore some of the ways that the game is experienced by many Western Australian's and how it contributes to a wider Western Australian identity.

My role in the project, as a member of the Museum's Anthropology Department and with more than two decades of developing networks within and relationships to Western Australian Aboriginal communities and individuals, was to gather the threads of an Aboriginal cricket experience. This story was intended to weave through the exhibition narrative, highlighting the impact of the game on Aboriginal people and, in turn, their impact on the game in Western Australia. The beginning point for my research was the story of the teams formed at New Norcia mission to the north of Perth, Western Australia (see figure 6) in the late 1800s (Russo 1980; Reece 2012; 2014). These teams achieved varying levels of success in local cricket up until the early 1900s, but faded from view after 1905.



Figure 1: Cricket at Moore River, Western Australia (no date).
Source: State Library of WA, 000722d.

In the histories of district cricket clubs and within library archives there was little evidence of involvement in the game by Aboriginal people, other than this very prominent New Norcia story. A number of historic photos were located that showed groups of Aboriginal people holding cricket bats or playing at Government missions (figures 1 & 2) but there was little to place, at least in a public way, Aboriginal people in cricket in Western Australia for the period between 1905 and the early 1970s².

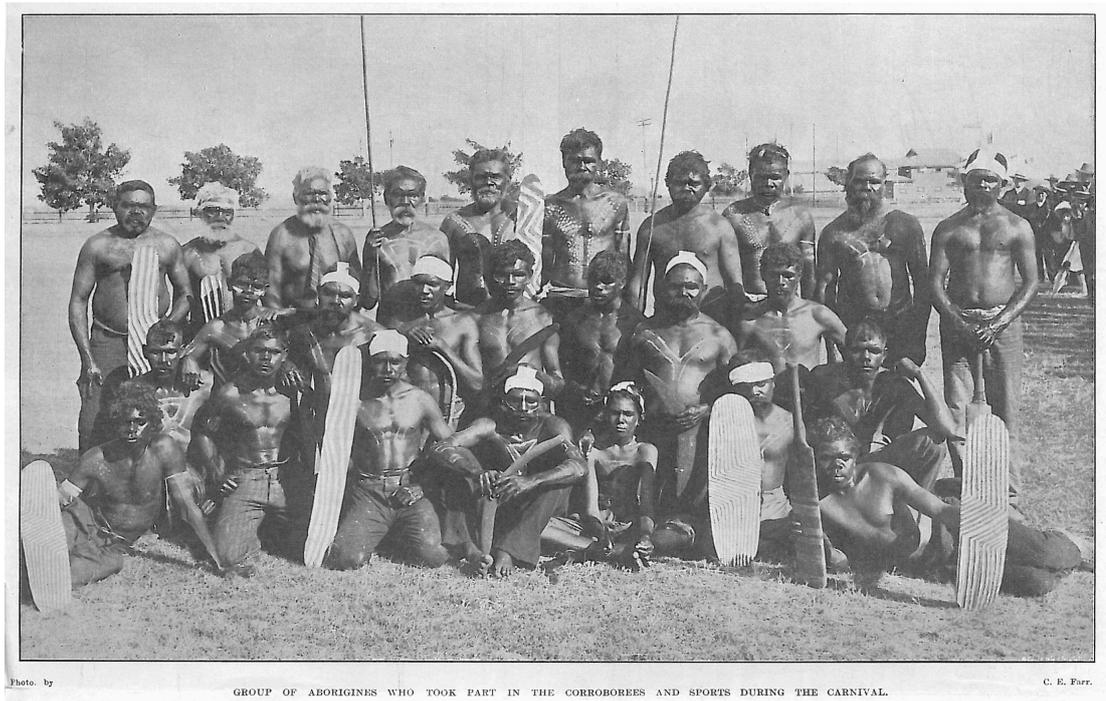


Figure 2: “Group of Aborigines who took part in the corroborees (sic) and sports during the carnival”, Perth, Western Australia.
Source: The Western Mail, 1910. Photo: C.E. Parr

It was an intriguing gap in the record but one that I lacked the time to examine in more detail. In the course of my work to uncover material for the exhibition I spoke to a number of Aboriginal people, both men and women and including those with sporting and non-cricket interests, about why this gap existed. I took from these discussions that there was much more to say about the involvement of Aboriginal people in the game, or more accurately, more that Aboriginal people themselves

² This period is bookended by the passing of the *Aborigines Act, 1905* and the last visit of to Perth by an Aboriginal cricket team and the period following the 1967 Referendum that recognised Aboriginal people as citizens.

could tell about their involvement in the game. In the end, the exhibition covered content that was already in the public domain, being the story of the New Norcia teams of the late 1800s and the more recent Western Australian Imparja Cup³ representation.

The experience left me with a feeling that more needed to be done to address this imbalance. That, within this lack of a public record and within the brief conversations with former Aboriginal players, there was a discrepancy between an understanding of the way in which Western Australian cricket is identified, constructed and experienced and the lived experiences of a section of its participants.

Project beginnings

The path taken into this project is not an unfamiliar one. Like other researchers before me (Robidoux 2001; Sands 1995). I participated in the wider sporting community that I entered as researcher and brought a knowledge and understanding of the sport to this project. As Robidoux (2001:p.13) suggests, in making this claim I leave it to the reader to assess the content to follow against the “authority” that this implies. In addition, I should also note that as a white, male researcher I carry other ‘baggage’ that needs to be considered in how I interpret and deliver the accounts to follow (Robidoux 2001).

This project has been produced from a variety of encounters with the participants over a period of time. If one point of genesis had to be named it was an incidental story during the development of the Howzat! exhibition that marks its beginnings. But in reality, the idea of the project emerged from long-standing and casual interactions and conversations with Aboriginal cricketers that I encountered through work and my own cricket experiences over a number of decades. What the incidental story created was the opening to take a fragment of lived experience as a point of entry to examine the subject of the accounts to follow. The story belonged to a

³ The Imparja Cup is a national Indigenous cricket competition held in Alice Springs in the North Territory in January of each year.

Western Australian Aboriginal Nyoongar⁶ man, John McGuire. John is well-known in Western Australian cricket as a batter who achieved great success in district cricket in the 1970s and 1980s, at a time when very few Aboriginal people played at this level. The story he recounted, however, centred on an experience where he believes his Aboriginality was used against him despite a record of proven success. At face value, it was a story of trying and not being good enough, a very human experience that many of us have shared. However, it also captured subjective perceptions of bias and mistreatment. McGuire's story had a deeper personal and social resonance and significance that potentially spoke to how Aboriginal people encountered cricket in Western Australia was organised and encountered.

It was just one story amongst others that were recounted during an informal interaction and ordinarily it would have simply become part of the amalgam of conversation between two individuals. However, there was something in its delivery, the manner in which it was recalled and the context in which it was raised, that led me to consider that it offered more than it seemed. It invoked a social landscape of differential power relations, making a claim for understanding this version of the story representing an alternative rendering to other accounts of the same event. The story's continuing impact became the catalyst to think about a range of issues around representation of self, of connection and relationship to others, of embodied experience recalled years later. It was another few years before I had the opportunity to take this initial brief encounter and turn it into something more.

That something more became this project: a series of narrative accounts that examine the nature of biographical experiences centred on a single subject and as a way of exploring how these narratives articulate notions of identity, belonging and negotiation within a field of social practice (Postill 2015). The field (of cricket) that is at the centre of the narratives is one that interests me and is a shared interest with the men who feature in the chapters to follow. As a site of meaning making this field

⁶ The name used by Aboriginal people in the south-west of Western Australia to refer to themselves.

sits alongside and in proximity to other fields, occasionally overlapping, often interwoven but identifiable and distinct in its being. These fields give individuals the opportunities and potentials to express themselves in thought, word and action, accumulating for themselves an identity and character that Bourdieu refers to as habitus. This habitus, as a set of generative values and dispositions drawn from different fields, accompanies each individual through their encounters with the world around them and shapes the internal and external expression of self (Bourdieu 1977). This set of inner values and characteristics figures in how we initiate social action, respond to external circumstance, react to the inner voice that guides us in our action and provides the symbolic capital that differentiates positions with the field (Krause 2017). For this project, the field can be expressed in two ways: as a *hard form*, reflected in the originating embodied experience of play captured in the memory of mind and muscle; and as a *soft form*, invoking the field by the recall of these memories, after the fact, and through interactions with others.

Stories are one powerful way of expressing who we are, and our lived experience. They do so in their selection, recollection and sharing, giving form to internal and external voice, and straining the bond between the need to engage with the desire to distance (Jackson 2012). They accumulate to become the narratives that trace our social lives, and can reveal much about how we frame and understand our lives as individuals and in relationship to other individuals. They are the expressions of experience, of observation and embodied practice, that allow us to trace our journeys as social beings, projecting back, looking forward and reflecting on the present, forming “unforeseeable sentences” that trace a path across the social spaces that we encounter (de Certeau 1984:p.xviii), creating multiple biographical selves that reflect something of our character and behaviour. These biographical narratives define us in so many ways yet never entirely capture all of who or what we are.

As I will show, the accounts to follow are an accumulation of smaller, singular stories that build to become a big narrative of individual experience, establishing a claim to talk on behalf of that individual’s place in the world. These smaller stories bind

themselves to an identifiable framing device that is the biographical narrative in a process that flows from the context of their production. As artefacts of ethnographic encounters, they are brought together here individually and collectively to create something more complex and faceted that can reveal deeper meanings and ways of knowing.

Ultimately, this is also a project about sport, and more particularly, about cricket. It revolves around a shared interest and experience in the game by the participants, but also with me. I played cricket for a number of different clubs and in different associations over many years. From time to time other teams in the competition included an Aboriginal player, and in one instance almost the entire team were drawn from the one family. My cricket experiences form part of who I am, though my identity as a white, middle-class Australian of Scottish and English ancestry is different to the social and cultural experiences of the project's Aboriginal participants. However, what it does provide is a familiarity with the field and its 'code' – the sense of the game. This shared connection is reflected throughout the project and my role within the ethnographic process must be recognised and acknowledged. That is, these are constructed biographies that resulted from a negotiated ethnographic process where my knowledge of the game was important in being able to talk the game, and to understand a sense of the game and its underlying 'codes'. My identity as a cricketer meant that I could engage them from within the field, though acknowledging that maintaining a reflexive position to the evidence is necessary to scholarly impartiality (Falzon 2009).

It was four years between the initial conversation with John McGuire described above and the beginning of this project. In that time, I had begun to reflect on what John had said and how he had said it. The encounter offered a place for the exploration of the way that people recall elements of their lives and how these, in turn, create meaning, significance and identity. This first conversation was specific, focusing on the development of a particular narrative for inclusion in a museum exhibition (itself a big narrative that was constructed and negotiated for a particular purpose). It

challenged my understanding and knowledge of the game and I became interested in knowing more about the gap that I was beginning to glimpse behind John's story. As a former cricketer, I had a sound working knowledge of the game and its history and position within the Australian community and I was aware of the wider public story of its development in Australia, including some of the stories relating to Aboriginal people's participation in the game at certain times and in certain locations. Less familiar were stories about a local presence and participation in the game; and less familiar still was the presence of these stories in the anthropological literature.

Most journeys begin with an idea, with an intention to go somewhere or follow some path. The conversation with John marked the beginning of my journey along a path that has led to this account of Aboriginal experiences in Western Australian cricket. It began as an interest in capturing stories that were largely missing from broader accounts of the game and developed into an exploration of how these accounts formed themselves into individual narratives as an outcome of the interactions between myself as anthropologist and the eight individuals who separately agreed to participate.

The Ethnographic Process

The struggle to define ethnographic research continues to be a source of debate for researchers (Robidoux 2001). In anthropology, the classic ethnographic approach is based on the "recording and analysis of a culture or society, usually based on participant-observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution" (Simpson & Coleman 2017). Ethnography is predicated on a long immersion with the studied, often 'exotic' communities but has attracted critique from within the discipline because of the concerns about the objectivity of the works produced and as an extension of colonial practices (Clifford & Marcus 1986; Howell 2018). As a consequence of this postmodernist critique there was an increase study of the 'other' closer to home but maintaining the idea of immersive fieldwork (Howell 2018).

Increasingly, there are time and financial pressures on how long a period can be spent in the field and this ultimately impacts on the kind of project undertaken. As a part-time student, juggling the demands of full-time work and a young family, it was not possible to cover all of these sites in the sustained manner that participant-observation demands. Where I could, I took the opportunity to watch and follow the participants in their cricket endeavours, and Aboriginal cricketers more generally. However, because many had retired or were not actively playing, it was not always possible to directly observe or spend the amount of time watching and noting their embodied practice. As a consequence, I chose to rely on casual conversations and interviews to gather the evidence that forms the basis for this project. The project became one of capturing biographical accounts that reflected on past, though occasionally current, experiences, as a way of considering their lives in the field. This should be considered a view towards a wider project that brings together these kinds of biographical accounts with recalled reflections of embodied practices to express a deeper view to the field.

Following Marcus my approach to the field was through a multi-sited ethnographic mode that moves away from the traditional single-sited model in order to capture to “identities in diffuse time-space” (1995:p.96). The understandings that are brought to bear on the narrative accounts to follow reflect this connection to the field and the multiple encounters across time and place that provide a means to construct a sense of the field. At the heart of the biographical accounts are the words and actions of the participants as primarily revealed through a textual analysis of recorded interviews. Their rhythm, tone and expression, content of stories and responses, presence and absence of self and others in the conversation can reveal deeper understandings of their lives in cricket.

The biographical narratives that emerge are supported by observations and understandings of the social field more broadly. This is a project that seeks to establish a presence of Aboriginal voice within the field of Western Australian cricket; to render the accounts towards an introduction to an Aboriginal biography of the

game. It does not follow the classic anthropological methodology of participant-observation, relying instead on the recalled experiences of interactions and encounters with the field. With limited options to follow the participants as active athletes memory and story are used to construct and carry their accounts. That is, their collected and negotiated remembrances build ethnographic narratives that explore social lives in ways that can trace a life journey as one instance of a biographical expression of identity, situated and constructed within a particular social field.

Ethnography, Ingold (2014) suggests, has become “overused” in anthropology and adopted by other disciplines as a replacement description for other methods, which has in turn diminished its efficacy as a term to describe the anthropological craft. Ethnographic encounters, he argues, are no different to any other engagement in our lives. The “ethnographicness” comes through a “temporal distortion”, emerging after the fact through the note taking and memorised experiences of the researcher. That is, ethnography is the combination of fieldwork and writing that is at the heart of the anthropological endeavour and sets it aside from other disciplines. Robidoux (2001) echoes these concerns in considering his role as ethnographer, though, in recognising the duality of the term (in the doing and the writing about) where both components are present, the concept of ethnography holds firm.

I have grappled with how to make best ethnographic sense of the accounts as a record of cricket experience. Is the project sufficiently ethnographic? Is it sufficiently “exploratory in nature, searching out new forms of social relationships” (Dyck 2012:p.10)? What do the accounts presented offer beyond a record of participation and memory? Do they represent something in between (Jackson 2012) in the way each participant recounted stories and recalled events that offers deeper understandings of their experiences in the field?

As accounts of a singular social pursuit they move towards an understanding from within the context of their field of production (Bourdieu 1993) and offer insights into

the nature of the field and the working of power, habitus and capital. Bourdieu's conception of field theory became a starting point for re-considering how each individual approached and acquitted their lives in the sport, and how these sporting lives and experiences were expressed through conversation and interview. It offered the tools to consider each story in relation to the key concepts of habitus and disposition. Each story reflects its field position and its relation to others and offers the potential to explore the operation of these theoretical concepts in the production of the narratives that emerge.

'Talking' about sport

Sport is a recurrent presence in the lives of many Australian people. It connects people into enduring networks of social practice whether as player, spectator, consumer and has become embedded in the nation's psyche as a narrative that is celebrated, reproduced and mythologised within the varied and myriad communities that create Australian society (Cashman 1995; Toohey & Taylor 2009). It can create a personal and shared dialogue that communicates observations, opinions, and understandings that contribute to the making of meaning and sociality. Sport is both a site of knowledge production and sociality, a network of social and power relations, a vehicle for the expression of embodied practice, an arena of potential divisiveness and conflict and often representative of wider community attitudes and behaviours.

However, this collective representation of sport is not homogenous or smooth; not everyone encounters the field in the same way nor take from it equally (Tonts & Atherley 2010). Each encounter with the field is shaped by complex networks of unequal and inconsistent social experience and relationships between individuals and between individuals and administrative and bureaucratic structures that inform their journey through this field of social practice. In this broad arena of activity, the choices individuals make and the choices that are made for them, as a result of the dynamic social relationships that form through engagement and negotiation with others and the objective structures, contribute to a singular view of the world and

allows us to position ourselves in relation to others in the social networks that run through our lives.

Sport is often episodic; cricket particularly so. There is a rhythm and structure to the way games are pursued. There is a formality in the way that they are transacted and this is often underwritten by some code that binds participants to particular ways of behaving. Moments of intense action punctuate more prosaic, less spectacular sequences and it is often these memorable bursts of effort that are recalled and remembered long after. We tell stories through sport that relate to who we are, how we position ourselves alongside or against others, the manner in which we mark events in our and other lives, the ways in which we talk about our lives and those who share them.

This is where my initial interest in capturing Aboriginal stories in cricket shifted to, with a focus on the practice of storytelling as a means of taking these recalled stories, events, observations and behaviours and understanding them anthropologically as deriving from the social practices, contexts and networks that constitute the domain of sociality that is Western Australian cricket. In doing so, and following Jackson's (2013) consideration of Herzfeld's (1997) concept of ethnographic biography, I will consider the manner in which individual life stories are brought into reality as a negotiated and constructed process and reflect on what this can say about the efficacy of interviews within the ethnographic process and their capacity to capture the modalities of a life in pursuit of a particular interest.

This project, then, focuses on two of my interests: anthropology & cricket. It grew out of the disjunction between the expectations of an idealised view of the game and the lived experiences of its history. It was an opportunity to consider this absence as a social problem and interrogate it as topic of anthropological interest that could reveal deeper notions of social identity and position and how these ideas manifest and reveal themselves as a way of constructing a view to the field and an individual's position within it.

The narratives recorded during this project present experiences that talk to what it is to play the game more generally; what it is for a small set of Aboriginal men to play the game more particularly; and what it is that can be said about the intersection between these two things as a means of examining the nature of the connections and social spaces that are created through engagement and negotiation with the field. The interactions involved in the capturing of these narratives also represent theatres of performance (Goffman 1959) that frame the ways that we recall events and experiences, tell stories, and inform understandings of ourselves and others.

This project centres on the ongoing negotiation and presence of Aboriginal men within a field of social practice that is threaded with the values and mores of a dominant white hegemony, and tethered to a colonial history of Aboriginal dispossession, disenfranchisement and disadvantage. Within this often entangled space the ambition to take a position within a domain of practice, to assert character and a desire to belong, to offer alternative renderings to the dominant hegemony, offers a way of exploring how an individual constructs a storied version of their life as a way of owning both their Aboriginal identity and the identity that is created as a cricketer in Western Australia. Equally, we should acknowledge the activity - an encounter between participant and researcher - that was the catalyst that brought these accounts into being, and all of the tactical and adaptable means by which we present ourselves to each other and the world (Jackson 2012).

This is a text that takes lived experience and frames it within a discourse of narrative biography in order to extend our knowledge of social practice. It is both a record of lived, embodied experience unrepresented in the literature and an expression of the manner in which biographical accounts oscillate between public account and private reflection in the production of strategic, dynamic identities that are animated by and give energy to their location within particular social fields.

The narrative accounts that give this project its voice come from a small group of Western Australian Aboriginal men living in the south-west of Western Australia, an area that is identified as Nyoongar country. Nyoongar refers to a broader language group that covers the southwest of Western Australia. However, not all of the men in the project identify themselves as Nyoongar⁷ and, instead, trace ancestry and connections to other language groups, and their presence in Nyoongar country reflects a broader historical process that accounts for the movement of people away from country and into other cultural regions. Only one of the Nyoongar participants lives in the country of his ancestors. All of the others make their lives in the capital city, Perth, and continue to trace connections to family and country, though with varying degrees of intensity.

Approaching the field

The selection of participants was made over a period of time and relied on a combination of existing contacts and further suggestions by them. I knew Harley Coyne and John McGuire through work or from the Howzat! exhibition development and I contacted them at the start to tentatively enquire whether they would be interested in sharing some of their understandings of the game. Harley is an Albany Minang⁸ man and as the idea of the project crystallised I would occasionally tell him that I wanted to talk to him about his cricket experience; he said he was always available to talk when required. John, a well-known former footballer and cricketer, was another man I wanted to participate in the project. His profile and career in Western Australian cricket is widely known and brief accounts of his story have been published (Graham 1988; Tatz & Tatz 2000). He is perhaps the best known Aboriginal cricketer in Western Australia. All of the Aboriginal men I spoke to about the game, and even a number of former non-Aboriginal cricketers, suggested I talk to John, or

⁷ There are also differences in the way Nyoongar people identify. Harley Coyne describes himself as Menang Noongar, reflecting a local dialectal identity around the Albany region on the south coast of Western Australia.

⁸ The Nyoongar language that covers the south-west corner of Western Australia consists of 13 dialects. Minang is the dialect from around Albany, and Nyoongar people from this region often refer to themselves as Minang.

at least mentioned his name, and his story features prominently in the account that follows.

Two of the other men, John Mallard and Jeff Kickett, were also contacts through my work at the Museum. Even before I had formally begun the project I could begin to see the emergence of experiences that were already broader than the public record suggested. The chapters to follow explore biographical accounts through recalled experiences and support the idea of these as articulations of everyday lives lived in cricket; that, in the context and performance of their remembering and telling, these are stories that in the singular and collective expression work towards an Aboriginal biography of cricket.

This articulation of Aboriginal cricket identity also speaks to the notion of a field where social practice is expressed through the enduring behaviours and values formed within the field, but also in the behaviours and values that are brought to the field. That is, one cannot be isolated from the other. Each narrative considers the nature of the field and the manner in which individuals negotiate and navigate within it to establish positions relative to the structure of their localised context and as enabled by the application of their habitus and dispositions. Each man's encounter is his own; and each is an expression of an Aboriginal presence in the field. While these are identifiably cricket accounts, they are also expressions of an engagement voiced by Aboriginal men and accompanied always by what it means to be identified as such. Their words evoke the field and what it is to have lived within it as an Aboriginal person. In the articulation of a sensibility of the game they are less about the sense of ownership (Robidoux 2006) and more about a desire to be themselves within it – to be remembered as Aboriginal cricketers.

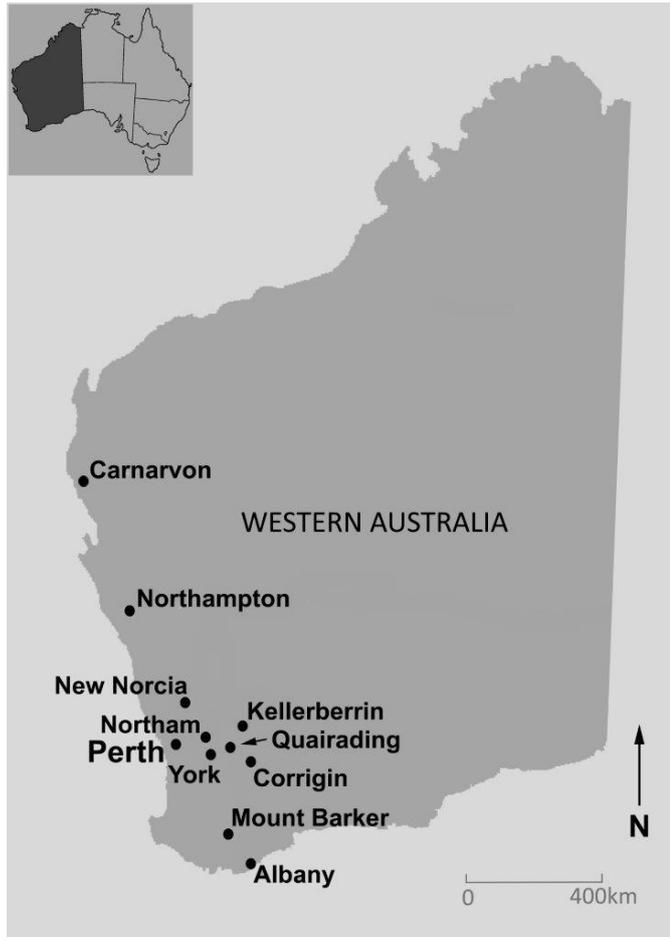


Figure 3: Locations of Western Australian towns mentioned by the project participants.

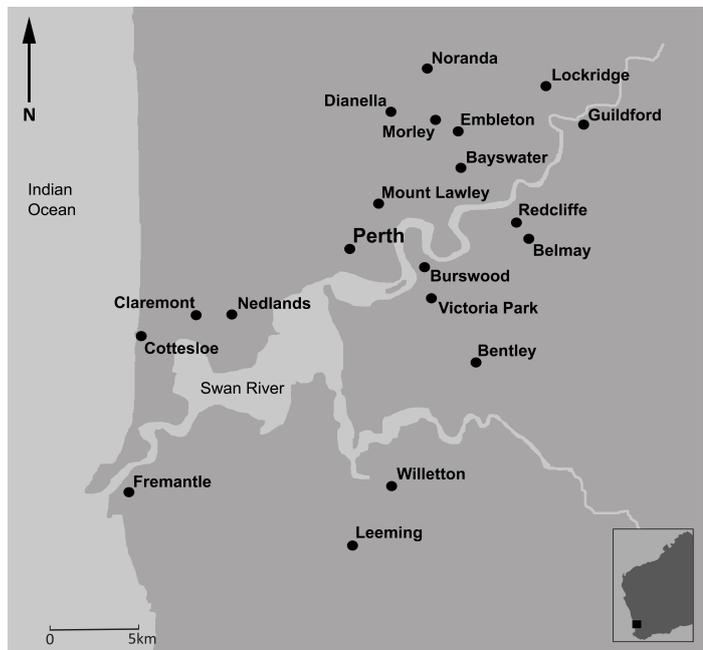


Figure 5: Locations of places in the Perth metropolitan area mentioned during the interviews.

Locating an Aboriginal presence in the game

This project's primary concern is to explore what it means to be an Aboriginal cricketer in a cultural form that is connected to and deeply embedded in enduring colonial practices and attitudes.

Whimpress, in his examination of the history of Aboriginal people in Australian cricket between 1850 – 1939, argues for the demise of Aboriginal involvement as a consequence of a discontinuous engagement with the game because “whites generally reneged on promises, regarding cricket, as they did regarding the promised benefits of Christianity, education and work. Plainly, Aboriginal cricketers could gain no stake in the game” (Whimpress 1999:p.259). He argues that there no such thing as “Aboriginal cricket” (Fogarty et al 2015, Whimpress 1999) favouring the idea of Aboriginal people in cricket, a point on which I would agree, and presents a case for a more localised and isolated involvement that declined over time.

In presenting the history of, and historical reasons for, this decline he provides a view to an activity where, for a time, the sight of Aboriginal people playing cricket, alongside and against non-Aboriginal individuals and teams, did not surprise and was not considered an alternative choice but, equally, did not have the popular support and coverage when compared to the number of non-Aboriginal players. The reasons for Aboriginal people adopting and then falling out of the game during this period are complex and tied to a myriad of issues including the perception and treatment of Aboriginal people by governments, missions, the media and the general populace, and, at least until the late nineteenth century, the absence of alternative games such as the rugby and Australian Rules football codes, along with other more personal considerations like whether to join a predominantly white team. To play cricket was to play a white man's game, with its rules, behaviours and traditions that shaped where and how individuals experienced the game – participants in the game but on the periphery. Even then, involvement was often as much to do with filling gaps and

making up numbers as it was achieving selection on merit and talent (Whimpress 1999:p.259).

With the exception of the teams from places like New Norcia in Western Australia, Poonindie in South Australia, Lake Condah and Barambah in Victoria, and of individuals like Johnny Mullagh, Albert Henry, Eddie Gilbert and more recently, Jason Gillespie, it is difficult to locate Aboriginal experiences that can give us an insight into their engagement with the game that allows us to frame an understanding of Aboriginal involvement. Even the more closely examined 1868 tour of England belongs to a different era to the one presented here and should perhaps be considered within the context of the exploitative treatment of Aboriginal people as commercial spectacle (Poignant 2004; Sampson 2009), rather than as a set of interactions between genuinely equal opposition.

The presence of Aboriginal people in the more senior levels of Western Australian cricket up until the 1980s was limited to less than a handful of individuals. Australian and Western Australian teams had enjoyed remarkable success during the 1970s and early 1980s (Barker 1998), yet it was international teams like the West Indies, and to a lesser degree, India and Pakistan that appealed to many Aboriginal cricket supporters (Judd & Hallinan 2012), including a number of the project's participants. While support of a team aside from Australia would not have proved a barrier in choosing to play cricket, the lack of suitable role models within the local system, compared to football and basketball, contributed to making cricket a less appealing sport to play (Fogarty et al. 2015). John McGuire enjoyed a long career in district cricket but failed to progress through to higher levels. Players like Ian King, who had played Sheffield Shield cricket for Queensland in the late 1960s, and district cricket in Perth during the 1970s (Tatz 1987), were no longer playing in the higher competitions by the time many of the participants were born. The increased presence of Aboriginal players in cricket by the 1990s suggests that there had been a shift in the way that cricket was perceived.

This emergent participation was possibly an influence of increased exposure to the international game and the performances of other non-white nations, but also through the concerted efforts by Cricket Australia and State cricket associations to promote the game amongst the Aboriginal community⁹. The game was perhaps becoming to be seen less as a 'white man's' game, with its lingering vestige of European (English) class and cultural values (Stoddart 2006), and more as one that accommodated a range of cultural groups and playing styles (Appadurai 1996; Beckles & Stoddart 1995; Manning 1981)¹⁰. Research undertaken by the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University (Fogarty et al. 2015) confirmed a continuing strong interest in the game but suggested that, structural barriers and a lingering sense of exclusion were limiting the uptake and participation amongst Aboriginal peoples.

The narratives to follow capture fragments of these experiences and examine them as reflections of field encounters. They describe each participant's effort to find a place in the field and negotiate the expectations of the game to become cricketers. Each account is considered separately before they are taken together to construct a wider view to an Aboriginal biography of cricket. Each narrative is identifiably a cricket story, and a cricket story told from the perspective of Aboriginal cricketers. As everyday accounts of lived experience there is a commonality between them in their efforts to engage and negotiate the field.

There are also differences, too, that arise through individual engagement with different parts of the field and in the differential mix of power, capital and habitus. This project captures the storied thoughts and actions belonging to an Aboriginal experience of the field to express the way that the game informs and creates enduring behaviours and identity. As such, it makes a contribution to our

⁹ In 2014 Cricket Australia released its Reconciliation Action Plan to increase Aboriginal participation in the game.

¹⁰ What cannot be investigated here but has the potential to provide some of the underlying evidence for recent success is the Imparja Cup and it should be noted that each of the four participants in this chapter have all played or represented Western Australia at the Imparja Cup.

understanding of the anthropology of sport by examining accounts that have received little attention to date. But more broadly, it is a project framed within anthropological concepts of everyday lives where thoughts, expressed as stories of personal experiences, finds “consummation in the public realm – connecting with others whose incipient thoughts and stories spring from comparable experiences. This is the only sense we can give the term objective – the sense not that our thinking or storytelling has attained a final or an eternal truth, but that it has connected with the thinking and storying of others, and thus made co-existence possible in a plural world” (Jackson 2012:p.15).

Context of the field

In order to make sense of the accounts to follow it is necessary to give background to some of the cricket specific details that will appear throughout the discussion. The first relates to the use of the label ‘cricketer’ when talking about the experiences of the participants. The second reflects on the nature and structure of cricket competition in Western Australia.

The distinction between a cricketer and someone who plays cricket is not always clearly demarcated and the terms are often be used interchangeably. The simple definition of a cricketer, for instance, is someone who plays cricket. But beyond this identification of a label given to those who participate in the game, is there something more complex in the designation or self-identity as a cricketer versus someone who will merely claim to play the game?

In Canada, to be a ‘hockey guy’ suggests that one’s identify is tied to the game in a way that is different to others who do not follow or play. In a story on the scars that hockey players acquire during their playing careers, National Hockey League player Mark Calvert describes a part of what it takes to be one of the ‘guys’: “I grew up watching old-school hockey guys -- we all learned from watching them, they passed it down -- the idea that to be a hockey player you have to be tough. So when it's your turn you want to be like the old-time guys, to react like them and prove yourself, kind

of, to carry on the culture” (Fleming 2017). To be a hockey guy suggests a deep understanding and immersion in the culture of the game, and an identity that is acknowledged by others.

In Australia, being a cricketer is perhaps not so tied to the same notion and is more interchangeable as a term for someone who plays. What is more typical is the accompanying descriptions of what kind of cricketer one might be that determines how deeply embedded one is or how much of cricketer a player might be. These adjectives describe a position within the field and are reference points to others: Australian cricketer, State cricketer, district cricketer, weekend cricketer. They suggest a level of talent and a commitment to playing and separate professional, semi-professional and amateur cricketers to those who might play ‘occasionally’. It also excludes those who follow cricket but don’t play. One can be a passionate supporter or fan of the game but have never played. It is a combination of location within the hierarchy of the game, as well as the ‘doing’ that is significant in how one will acknowledge their involvement or will have a value attributed to them.

The other part of being a cricketer is knowing the game. Knowing how to play, how to present oneself on the field, in an understanding of the rules and etiquette of the game, in demonstrating an awareness of the culture of the game. The higher the standard of cricket, the higher the expectation that one will demonstrate these behaviours. More generally, however, it is character that can give degrees of worthiness to the ‘cricketer’ claim. One can be a good technical player, competent in the mechanics of the game but demonstrate a lack of proficiency in other aspects. A preparedness to flout the rules or behave in a manner contrary to the spirit or code of the game will invite judgements about their claims to be a cricketer. However, rather than preclude their claims they will become known as someone who plays outside of the spirit of the game and their character will be judged accordingly as a result.

In acknowledging the 'kind' of cricketer, it is relevant to discuss the structure of the game in Western Australia in order to tease out the differences between some of the terms that will be used to describe the location in which their experiences emerge. The participants cover a number of levels of cricket competition in Western Australia, reflecting the organisation of the game into different tiers of ability and into different forms of competition. These differing levels contribute to the accumulation of different degrees of capital and contribute to the relative positioning of players in the field and to their social networks.

State cricket is the highest standard of cricket within Western Australia and is situated one level beneath Australian representation. District or grade cricket sits beneath State cricket and is considered to be the feeder competition to State selection. Grade cricket is based in the Perth metropolitan area and consists of 16 teams. Each club within this competition fields a number of teams, depending on the availability of players, and these teams are ranked from 1st grade (highest), 2nd grade, 3rd grade, etc. This grade competition is managed by the Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA), which as the peak cricketing body in the State is responsible for the management of the game. Grade cricket is the breeding ground of talent for the State team and players are expected to demonstrate a higher level of commitment, application to training and a more professional attitude than would be expected in other more social competitions.

The first and second teams of each squad begin training several months before a new season, employ a number of coaches to oversee the development of skills and mentor emerging players, maintain club rooms and training facilities and provide some form of payment to players and officials. Whilst these attributes can also be found in other competitions the level of commitment required and the seriousness in which the game is approached sets it above the other associations. Commitment to playing at this level entails playing on both Saturday and Sunday and attending training at least twice a week, though players will also undertake additional training

between the designated training days. At training players are expected to wear the training clothes approved by the club and attendance is mandatory.

There are a number of other competitions or associations that sit below the WACA grade competition and offer different levels of competition and experience. The upper levels of the Suburban Turf Association, for instance, play their games on turf wickets (like the grade competition) whereas other weekend competitions play their games on synthetic or fake grass wickets. While all competitions produce competitive and varying degrees of skilful cricket there is a clear understanding that some competitions are better. Notions of ability and talent are embedded within the organising structures of the game. Even within individual associations, the ordering of teams from first through to lower grades, indicates that there is a positioning of players within the field based on a mix of prowess, talent, discipline and performance. Cultural capital can also play a part in where an individual will play, though as will be explored in the accounts to follow, the intervention of objective power relations can disrupt the claims of inclusion and the impact of habitus and disposition in shaping subjective understandings.

What this ordering suggests is that when considering the accounts of individual experience, it is necessary to consider the field context that produces or has produced their narrative. These individual accounts, then, belong to a *category* of experience within the wider field of Western Australian cricket. Their relationship to each other will be determined by their relative position within the field and varying degrees of capital developed. Each account, therefore, is a reflection on the field that emerges from the impact of capital and habitus and through their capacity to talk to the category of their production. That is, the identity of the individual emerges from the field location (grade, suburban turf, mercantile, country, etc) as a signifier of their ways of knowing the game, the power that can be applied to claim and be transferred between locations, and through the cultural capital that may or may not be attached to and mobilised by their Aboriginality.

Thesis structure

Following this introductory opening Chapter 2 will present a view to the literature that examines the anthropology and sociology of sport and establishes a sense of the wider area of research to which this project contributes. Chapter 3 locates Aboriginal people within the field of cricket from a historical context and positions this local context within the development of cricket more generally. This will draw attention to the idea that the presence of Aboriginal people in the game is not new.

Chapters 4 to 8 are the player narratives developed from the evidence¹¹ gathered. Chapter's 4 and 5 are devoted to the story of one man, John McGuire. As the most prominent Aboriginal cricket story from the past forty years John's narrative talks to a range of issues around an Aboriginal involvement in the game. Chapter 4 presents John's story as the product of a negotiated and constructed biography resulting from the series of interactions that emerged from our ethnographic encounters.

In Chapter 5 the focus shifts to examine the way in which a version of John's biography is revealed and enacted, reflecting on the way that these fragments of evidence emerge in clusters as an active process between subject and audience.

Chapter 6 extends the idea of narrative construction by considering other motivations that frame how a narrative is negotiated and revealed. This chapter, covering the recollections of Clint Dann, also stands in contrast to John McGuire's and offers views to the field that render alternative understandings and perceptions.

Chapter's 7 and 8 cluster the experiences of the remaining participants within an identified structure that echoes the topography of district cricket in Western Australia. These experiences are located within their particular field context in order

¹¹ In quoting the participants words I have been less concerned with their verbatim transcription than with presenting the ideas that are formed by the words. Following a suggestion from an Examiner the quotes have been made more readable through the addition of punctuation and removal of repetition.

to understand the way in which its associated symbolic value and social relationships can shape and construct identity and meaning.

Chapter 9 considers all of the narratives as a combined body of evidence and examines a range of common themes that permeate each of the interviews. This chapter develops a broader biographical sketch of what it means for Aboriginal people to participate in an activity that is typically considered a 'white-man's' game, where the 'putting on the whites' is associated with the struggle for success and recognition (Manning 1981).

Chapter 10 provides a summary and considers a number points that have emerged from this account.

Chapter 2

Aboriginal experiences of cricket: an approach to the field

In examining the ethnographic evidence captured for this project it has been useful to consider how each individual's story and their experience within cricket make claims for a place in the field. It is possible to explore the ways what these individual biographies, as partial, fragmentary and contextualised versions of a lived experience, reveal about the characteristics of a life in the game as experienced by Aboriginal cricketers in Western Australia. The gathered evidence confirms the existence of a field of social endeavour as an "organized domain of practice or action" (Postill 2015:p.47) containing "actors who find each other relevant" (Krause 2017:p.3). Each account, therefore, is influenced by the field and through the relationships between those inside, but also outside of the game. Additionally, the field exerts itself in the relative location of each individual to each other and through the contestation of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1985; Portes 1998; Stempel 2005). The process of recalling one's life experiences in relation to a particular subject allows a view to the field. Through this lens we can consider the manner in which the selection of stories, their recollection and expression, can reveal deeper understandings of the enduring impact of the field. It reveals that habitus and disposition shape the nature and content of these stories as markers of individual identity and field position. This is a dynamic process for both the one telling the stories and the one/s hearing them. The meaning derived from the telling, therefore, shifts according to place, time and audience.

In order to make sense of this I will draw on notions of field theory, as formulated by Bourdieu and others, to re-imagine the social lives that result from encounters between the field and an assisted biographical production that is at the heart of the ethnographic interview. Before moving on to the narratives I want to explore the ideas that are captured in the concept of field, habitus and disposition and present these ideas as the theoretical ground upon which the stories will be positioned.

The heritage of field theories in the social sciences extends back to the Gestalt social psychologists, who stressed the understanding of individual perception in relation to a wider “perceptual field” (Martin 2003). It gained traction with Lewin’s social-psychology approach that defined field as “a totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually dependent” (Lewin 1951:p.240). Field theory moved into sociology in the 1950s, firstly amongst German social scientists, and then, more prominently, through the work of Pierre Bourdieu (2003).

Field theory, then, as an “ensemble of relationships between actors antagonistically oriented to the same prizes or values” (Turner 1974:p.135), provides a conceptual tool that allows us to explore and explain social action within an identifiable social space. This space also contains a topology composed of a “substratum of domains that can be considered analytically distinct” (Martin 2003). In the case of this project I have taken Western Australian cricket to be a “substratum” of sport. And within its topology is a further sub-stratum or layering that is definable as State, metropolitan and regional entities. Bourdieu employed used spatial terms as a useful means of accommodating disruption within the field as a consequence of the process of social change (Silber 1995). The topographical orientation of social fields and the manner in which layering works to differentiate and distribute agents within, gives relative sense to the field as “a multi-dimensional space of positions such that every actual position can be defined in terms of a multi-dimensional system of co-ordinates whose values correspond to the values of the different pertinent values” (Bourdieu 1985:p.724).

He also notes that distribution within this space can be a product of the intersection between two spaces that are “partially independent: an ethnic group situated in a lower position in the space of the ethnic groups may occupy positions in all the fields, including the highest, but with rates of representation inferior to those of an ethnic group situated in a higher position” (Bourdieu 1985:p.743). This intersection is most appropriate in the context of this project in allowing us to examine the relative

distribution of the individuals within differentiated areas of the field and according to their identification as differential social groups separate to others in the field on the basis of ethnicity but also because it enables the possibility of considering the strength of the effects of social action that takes place outside of the field. That is, fields are not fixed, closed entities but remain open and permeable (Silber 1995; Krause 2017). It also how this impacts on actors within the field, thus addressing one of the criticisms of Bourdieu's conception of field, which overlooks influences from outside of the field (Postill 2015).

The notion of a topology suggests that it is possible to read and map clusters of coordinates, and identify them with particular attributes in such a way that the field remains flexible, changeable and capable of being re-oriented around each of these co-ordinates. Martin (2003) describes some of the field theories that exist within other (scientific) disciplines and there is some attraction in considering this 'system of co-ordinates' as points within a social firmament whereby an individual's position and identity become a constellation of localities representing an individual's movement in, around and between zones within the field thereby encompassing and accommodating the multiplicity of roles that are possible.

This 'social space' (Postill 2015; Reed-Danahay 2015), then, can be applied as a tool for examining the presence and absence of the "social interactions and connections" (Reed-Danahay 2015:p.70). These localities can never be fixed entirely and they remain subject to the objective and subjective forces that work to push and pull them by means of the strength, influence and effect of the relationships that directly bind them or indirectly alter their orientation and position (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). As a result, these socially produced forces continue to alter and shape the landscape of both the localised social relationships as well as the aspects of the macro structure of the fields. That is, the articulation of the social experience represented by these social localities remains sensitive to the internal dynamics of the field as well as those that are derived from its place in and amongst other social fields. From within this firmament of twinkling points of sociality, some bright, others distant, some

discernible as identifiable patterns that we might name, each offering its own set of unique social interactions and understandings, it is possible to conceive of an overall form and describe it in terms of a larger field.

Bourdieu and field theory

Bourdieu's concept of field has been influential in developing a sustained research program in contemporary social science (Sewell 1992; Fligstein 2001; Shilling 2004; Stempel 2005; Smith 2006; Sallaz & Zavisca 2007; Eyal 2013) to the extent that his name is largely associated with the concept of field, eclipsing other approaches to field theory (Postill 2015). His publications amount to a vast body of work across a wide spectrum of subjects directed to developing a "mode of social enquiry of universal applicability ...but one that is highly distinctive in that it explicitly encompasses the activity of the social analyst who sets out to offer theoretical accounts of the practices of others" (Wacquant 1989:pp.26–7). As a body of work Bourdieu's publications are eclectic, diverse, complex and challenging (Jenkins 2002) to the extent that many of the key components of his approach, such as has often been used in a piecemeal fashion undermining the cohesiveness of Bourdieu's overarching thesis (Garnham & Williams 1980; Wacquant 1989). With this in mind I have drawn on Bourdieu's work to frame this project as an investigation of a field of social practice. While it is not my intention to draw upon all of the concepts that are contained in Bourdieu's extensive resume, I am conscious that selectively choosing parts of his oeuvre risks ignoring, glossing over or misinterpreting elements of his approach but they are a starting point to consider the gathered evidence, adapting and applying them as a "set of thinking tools" (Wacquant 1989:p.50).

Within the broad articulation of Bourdieu's work there are a smaller number of features that will be brought to bear on the evidence in this project. These features, field (as described above), practice (practical sense or a feel for the game, improvisation), capital (cultural and social resources), and habitus (durable values and dispositions drawn from different fields), are at the core of Bourdieu's conception of a theory of social practice, and were central to his efforts in

investigating wider debates within the social sciences, covering an eclectic range of subject material from art and taste (Bourdieu 1984) to sport (Bourdieu 1978; 1988a) to academia (Bourdieu 1988b; 2000). As a way of exploring empirical approaches to theory these are some of the concepts that form part of the consideration of the evidence in this account. Each of the components listed above are important in making sense of Bourdieu's approach to examining social practice and exploring the tensions between the subjective self (habitus) and the objective world (structure).

Bourdieu's notion of capital is important in the conception of the field and enables a structure of the field to be laid out. Capital represents 'resources' transformed into objects that operate as "a source of power that socially differentiates" (Swartz 2013:p.28), and is central to the effort to acquire and exercise power. The worth given to the different capitals in a field varies between each one and to the extent that they are considered to have value. The power each individual has within the field is dependent on their position within it and the amount of capital they possess (Webb et al. 2002).

Habitus has been particularly useful in my consideration of each individual's experiences. The evidence captured through the interviews, statistical records and other forms of engagement are expressions of (self-)representation that can reveal habitus. They consciously reflect past practices of "behavioural and symbolic expressions" (Swartz 2013:p.32) that can be interrogated to reveal the impact of habitus, disposition and capital on the lives of each individual.

Habitus and its relationship to the idea of a cultural field, being a "group of entities joined together by, and recognisable in terms of, certain core imperatives, values, functions, rules, categories and characteristics" (Schirato 2007:p.45), provides the basis from which to assess the individual accounts and draw more generalised conclusions about the way they operate and make meaning within and about the field. In this way Bourdieu's conception of habitus as a way of understanding what people do in their everyday lives attempts to show that social life lies somewhere

between the sum of an individual's life experience and their experiences as artefacts of over-arching social structures (Jenkins 2002).

Bourdieu's consideration of the role of habitus in contributing to what he describes as "feel for the game" (Bourdieu 1990:p.63) is a useful one in analysing narratives derived from sporting contexts. This understanding or "feel" becomes central to understanding the way that the habitus expressed within each narrative addresses internalised structures and informs the actions and choices made by each individual.

As a theoretical position from which to examine ethnographic accounts Bourdieu's field theory allows us to examine the social patterns that exist in the recalled lives that individuals produce through conversation and embodied actions in a way that addresses "the split between objectivist and subjectivist explanations of human practice" (Webb et al. 2002:p.31). Bourdieu's academic quest of overcoming the objective-subjective dualism by focusing on the agency of the individual has been criticised by some as never quite letting go of a structuralist view of the world (Margolis 1999) and in not accounting for influence outside the habitus and its reproducing continuity (Shilling 2004; Postill 2015). But rather than ignore the contribution of his ideas they become useful as ways of thinking about the complexities of social life (Jenkins 2002:p.176) and in relation to this project.

Cricket as a social field

In identifying the field of cricket as a network of relationships, produced through the actions and interactions of its subjects (Bourdieu 1969) it positions the project's participants within an activity of common interest (Dyck 2012). The articulation and manipulation of habitus and capital to navigate and negotiate the field and its complex interactions is a useful one in which to consider how each participant talks about and creates meaning from their cricket experiences. However, in identifying particular social fields, Dyck cautions that it must also remain as a "tentative matter that requires continuing empirical verification of how the forces of effects detected

within such a sector shape some aspects of the behaviours of participants located at different points in it” (2012:p.14). Instead, it is the role of the ethnographer to observe and explain the actions and interests of the participants and the way in which their engagement with the field might impact on themselves and others in the same space (Dyck 2012). Martin, drawing on broader applications of scientific concepts on characteristics of the field and by way of arguing for the presence of social fields, describes as the susceptibility of elements to the “field effect”, where “the ‘force’ that impinges upon some object in a field is a “function both of the field effect, and some characteristic of the object itself” (Martin 2003:p.7). He argues that while not all individuals will be affected by the ‘social field effect’, there will be some that are, and this degree of susceptibility, I suggest, is influenced by an individual’s habitus and accompanying dispositions, and the relative strength of their capital.

The effect of the field is evident in manner in which identity is singularly expressed and collectively shared and by the way in which these identities are pulled and shaped by their positions¹² within the field. One of the risks that comes with clustering individuals who share something in common, something that positions them against a separate set of understandings, is the influence of pre-conceived notions of intent and motivation that might lend itself to the process of empirical enquiry. But as Dyck notes field theory allows us to consider the ways in which individuals coincide and diverge by creating an overarching framework that, like a game, is held together by rules (Dyck 2012:p.15) and allows individuals to position themselves, or allow themselves to be positioned, within the field. It allows us to trace degrees of susceptibility to the field effect and consider the forces at play. And perhaps because of the ‘sense of the game’ that individuals require in order to navigate and negotiate within the field, the use of Bourdieu’s notion of habitus has gained traction in the consideration of sport as a field of social endeavour (Dyck

¹² Over a period of time, and as individuals take on other roles or responsibilities their position can shift between locations within the field. In many instances a player can also be a committee member or a coach becoming a form of multiple positioning (Phoenix & Pattynama 2006) that shifts the complexity of interactions with those around them.

2000a; 2004; 2012; Washington & Karen 2001; Dyck & Archetti 2003; Lenartowicz 2013; Rosso 2014; Vilanova & Puig 2014).

As an “acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted” (Bourdieu 1977:p.95) habitus enables the *recalled accounts* of embodied experience to bridge the temporal gap between the moment of performance and the moment of re-telling. It does so through the durability of the dispositions that animate habitus (Swartz 1997), so that the way in which individuals reveal experience, the manner in which lived experience is brought forward through the use of language, speech, gestures, body position and movement, conflates time and makes the moment of re-telling meaningful as evidence of social practice to create a soft-form of the field.

The identification of dispositions as enablers of enduring social practice is present throughout much of Bourdieu’s work and adopted by others who work with habitus. As a theoretical construct though it remains a somewhat elusive and slippery concept in terms of how it maintains and supports notions of durability and strategy. Bourdieu defines dispositions as “the result of an organising action, a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body), a predisposition, a tendency, propensity or inclination” (Bourdieu 1977:p.214) and applies the term to describe a range of enabling labels that work almost as categorical devices to position or frame individuals in positions relative to the field. Dispositions underpin and are the animators of subjective behaviour and place, orient and enable individuals to engage with the structure of the ‘game’. They can relate to notions of honour, be manifest in mind and body, in perceptions and appreciations and in combination contribute to individual habitus. They are both structuring and structured (Bourdieu 1977) accruing over time and as a product of a constant process of negotiation with the multiple fields that agents traverse over the course of their lives.

This research project focuses on narrative accounts, recalled from various times in the lives of the participants and presented in a setting contrived for the purpose –

partial truths that satisfy particular situations and need. I am interested in the manner in which the biographical expressions that emerge from the evidence produce a sense of the field as a network of differential encounters; each one constructed and conceived as an individual expression of everyday life. In presenting the narratives I will show how we can consider both the habitus and disposition of each man and the influence these, in concert with their relevant capitals, have on their experiences of the field. The stories are brought together to identify a field of desire and struggle, which, in turn, develops a view to Aboriginal cricket experiences in Western Australia.

Developing a biographical narrative

As a project focused on capturing individual biographies interviews offered the most effective way of capturing story and voice. This was particularly so given a number of participants were no longer active participants in the game. Since the 1980s, the use of ethnographic interviews and narrative analysis as a method of qualitative research has been widely adopted across a range of social science disciplines (Miles & Crush 1993; Bruner 1997; Peterson & Langellier 1997; Sonsino 2005; Savin-Baden & Niekerk 2007; du Preez 2008). Interviews initiate encounters that capture descriptions of lived experience that can make meaning, construct identity, describe relationships and social networks and examine the position and impact of the researcher within the ethnographic endeavour (Agar & Hobbs 1982; du Preez 2008).

More recently there has been an emergence in the use of narrative to capture accounts of individual lives and examine social process and temporality (Cruikshank 1992; Elliott 2005; Mishler 1995; Riessman 1993; Riessman 2005; Robert 2014). As Rustin discusses with regards to the biographical approach, “we must necessarily expect connections to be made between individual life stories and wider frameworks of understandings” (Rustin 2000:p.42) provided a focus is held on a sociological frame of reference. And further to this that biographies make society and are not merely made by it (Rustin 2000).

The biographical approach is sometimes criticised as not providing the kinds of access to an understanding of social relationships and meanings that other more structured methods can provide (Alvesson 2011). So, rather than revealing identity this approach creates an identity (Walford 2007; Keightley et al. 2012) through its reliance on memory, subjective observations and interview context, so that this process of meaning-making obscures a clear description of life as it is lived (Elliott 2005). This is relevant to this project in the way that each individual claims a position - an individual identity - through their accounts and against others who have not been given an opportunity to voice their stories.

However, by acknowledging and recognising the limitations of the interview process as a product of a situated social context, as a vehicle to privilege individual accounts, it is possible to deal with the inherent issues of identity that arise from their use and demonstrate that original knowledge of social structure and processes can be extracted from them (Rustin 2000).

Interviews have long been an integral part of the ethnographic toolkit and they offer the means by which to capture evidence that supports evidence recorded through participant observation alone. The challenge in making use of interviews is to counter the lack of observed action with a familiarity and understanding of the embodied practice that was the catalyst for the production of recalled experience. Sport is one of the many potential subjects in offering the kind of activity that researchers can bring with them into the field in order to overcome any shortcoming of a purely interview focused approach. As a former cricketer and with an ongoing interest in the game as a researcher I share a connection with the participants to the field, which contains a mutual understanding of the field. To a certain extent it represented a short-cut that established a level of degree of trust so that each participant knew that I would understand the cricket related background to their accounts. The challenge then became making the familiar, unfamiliar. This requires the researchers to adopt two roles: one being the ethnographer negotiating the engagement and relationship as reflexive listener, taking the responses and being attentive to the embodied

performance and recalled experiences as the product of the field and habitus (Broom et al. 2009). The second is in the writing of the ethnography, which takes the evidence and uses anthropological theory to analyse and create meaning from the evidence (Wolcott 1990).

In using interviews to allow conversation and construct narrative it must be recognised that the process of interviewing is in itself a creation of place and time and a product of a relationship that connects researcher to participant. They exist in the moment, but encompass the interactions that precede and follow the event, and their outcomes are the subject of ongoing negotiation and in response to the topics discussed and the digressions that occur as a consequence of any social interaction. They are episodic in nature and represent one of a number of interactions that individuals encounter on any single day. They make visible the relationship between the researcher and subject as a socially constructed process that wraps the field around them.

The dialogues conducted were more conversational than structured interviews and were undertaken as part of a broader ethnographic process that included the interactions prior to, during and following the interview, that captured additional information to support the recorded narratives. This additional contextual information positions the participants in relation to myself as researcher and must be considered when examining the interview data. The interviews that were conducted, as conversational and informal as they were, are still a product of a formal interaction that is at once familiar (in that we all share an understanding of what an interview is) but can also be unfamiliar (in that their structure and requirement to remember and recall past events in response to particular questions may be different to a normal conversation) (Keightley et al. 2012). What I worked to encourage was an environment where the recorded discussion could be considered to invoke a soft form of the field where a former physical space containing social action and behaviour, was invoked or approximated through question, conversation, gesture and observation. Ultimately, this account strives to capture the experiences of a

number of Aboriginal men who had played (or are playing) cricket, as a way of understanding what it was like for them to negotiate a position in a game that is generalised as 'not an Aboriginal game'.

My preparatory notes and observations from the literature, previous conversations and interactions with other project participants or individuals outside of the project framed a number of potential themes to discuss, such as initial beginnings, influences, styles of play, etc. But each participant offered a different narrative to the next so while a set of generic enquiries was maintained our conversations left open the possibility of exploring a range of other themes and topics.

The invitation to participate was framed as a request to have a chat or conversation about their experiences. This approach was confirmed during the initial meet and greet and also included an introduction to the project. But there were other cues that would have suggested that this was more than a casual chat between two people as a social encounter. Firstly, in contacting each man to invite them to participate I had already identified myself as someone who was outside of their usual circle of interaction, and even the three men who I knew through work were not people that I interacted with on an everyday basis, so approaching them to talk about cricket offered a different context to the interaction. My initial phone or email contact included, or was followed by, sending a copy of a one page document briefly outlining the nature of my study, presented on a page with the university's logo on top and my supervisor's contact details at the bottom.

This was a very clear signal that the conversation was directed to a specific purpose and as a university-sanctioned project it possibly also gave some measure of importance to the work that I was doing, and cannot be discounted as impacting on the content and themes that emerged during the interviews that create and reveal identity.

Accepting the contrived nature of interviews and acknowledging that they may be used as vehicle of partial, selective or complete revelation, it is possible to consider the interview as an artefact in itself and interrogate it as one means by which people assert, construct and position their identity and themselves within closed or wider social networks. Where it was possible the interviews were supplemented by other sources of information such as club records and newspaper stories, though fitting with the impression of a lack of public record of Aboriginal participation, these sources were patchy and inconsistent. This ethnography is largely focused on cricket, and consciously so, as I am interested in analysing the men's knowledge, opinions or behaviours to reveal the nature and meaning of their experiences as it relates to this domain as a way of developing an ontological structure for the local game. How are these structures framed and how do the men position themselves within and constitute their identity from this domain?

With an absence of an Aboriginal narrative in the literature and in the broader understanding of the game I was interested in the ways that Aboriginal people talk about their experiences and the manner in which these experiences were organised and articulated. What were their understandings and how did they construct their view of the game? Was it possible to expand these experiences into a broader temporal coverage of the game as a way of tracing how these experiences might reveal other patterns of sociality and relationships that connect individuals through time and space. However, as I started to engage with the participants I realised that extending the number of individuals to accommodate a longer timeframe shifted what it was I wanted to examine, and while there continues to be merit in considering other stories I wanted this project to focus on contemporary accounts; accounts of individuals to whom the game is still a part of their everyday lives – even if it is no longer as a player.

My existing work connection to Harley (Coyne), Jeff (Kickett), and the two John's (McGuire & Mallard), presented four participants, and through work contacts other individuals were identified. This lead me to Troy Collard in his role as a member of

the Western Australian Aboriginal Cricket Council. Troy provided me with another short list of names and I made contact with them to gauge their interest. Not all of the names were approached and I gravitated towards individuals who lived in Perth, as this enabled me to schedule interviews with them during work time¹³.

Conclusion

This project began with a concern to examine a gap within the existing literature on Western Australian cricket. The absence of a recent Aboriginal narrative within the game ran against an emergent gaze to the impact and contribution of Aboriginal sportspeople in other sports. That people played and been successfully in the game was evidenced in the public accounts of John McGuire in the 1970s and 1980s and in the more recent success of the Western Australian Imparja Cup teams, which had won the national competition held for Aboriginal cricketers. What was less obvious was the stories and experiences of Aboriginal people within the game and this project is an effort to address this gap.

It uses evidence gathered from interviews, supplemented with archival and statistical records, to explore the nature of Aboriginal experience in the game. This evidence is then considered using Bourdieu's notion of field theory to explore how the individual accounts construct a place for each participant within the field as a way of developing a view towards Aboriginal biographies in Western Australian cricket. These accounts explore how individuals negotiate, through the application and influence of capital, habitus and disposition, their experience in the game and against the objective structures that work to position and locate them within it. What I will endeavour to show is that the objective influence of the field, and its management of a cultural form, is differentially spread between the localities of subjective experience shaping and impacting each participants experiences.

¹³ One of the aims in recruiting participants was to include a female cricketer. One contact was suggested but after enquiries at the work address provided I discovered that she had moved away from Perth and was living and working somewhere in the Pilbara and I was unable to locate where.

Before proceeding to the chapters that address the recorded evidence it is important to establish the broader background to the field of cricket. The next chapter presents an overview of the relevant literature that describes this field and marks this project's significance to the anthropology of sport. It also allows us to locate Western Australian cricket within the broader field of cricket and introduces a discontinuous historical Aboriginal presence in the game.

Chapter 3

Setting the Field: a view to the literature

Before talking about each of the narrative accounts in the following chapters it is necessary to locate them with the broader context of the game and within the wider research interests of the anthropology of sport. This chapter reviews the literature that places this project within the wider discourse as a contribution to our understanding of the way that the field of sport shapes identity (McGarry 2010) and provides the 'structures' that make social action possible (Sewell 1992). Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of field topology and the layered characteristics of the field this chapter will present a view to the field by tracing a line through and between the layers that constitute a broader understanding and consumption of the game as a social field. That is, how does this project build on and contribute to our understanding of the field.

The chapter will also consider cricket's emergence in Australia as a part of the cultural baggage of Empire (Stoddart 1988; 2006) and the discontinuous presence of Aboriginal people in the sport as a consequence of their position as colonised peoples. The chapter concludes with an account of the impact on Western Australian cricket in the late 1800s by teams from an Aboriginal mission to the north of Perth.

Sport in the social sciences

Since the 1960s sport has emerged as a topic of increasing interest within the social sciences, though the prominence of sport in anthropology has tended to lag behind disciplines like sociology and history (Blanchard 1981; Carter 2002; Dyck 2000a; 2004; McGarry 2010; Sands 1999; 2002). In part, this lack of "respectability" of sport as a theme for anthropologists versus the attention it has drawn in sociology is attributed to a sense that sport is a major element in the social systems studied by sociologists (Sands 1999:p.5). But, since the 1990s the number of publications examining the anthropology of sport has been steadily rising (Palmer 2002). Increasingly, sport is

being recognised for the significant presence and role that it occupies amongst the people with whom anthropologists work. Geertz's (1972) evocative description of a Balinese cockfight has been influential in demonstrating the potential that anthropology offers in accounting for sporting activity that, whilst intrinsically innocent and liberating, may not have previously been considered worthy for study.

The anthropological gaze towards sports offers opportunities to examine the way that sport organises behaviour and reveals social practice. As a field of human endeavour, sport is inextricably linked to expressions of individual and collective identity and the ways in which multiple identities can be created, and the nature of power relations in and between groups (Bourdieu 1985). In its networks of relationships and construction of community and place, sport reflects its context and the differential access to resources and capital (Rosso 2014). It offers the potential to examine the nature of sporting practice and what this offers to individuals in the way of meaning making in their everyday lives (Okely 1992; MacClancy 1996). This focus has generated a range of texts drawing on a disparate range of subjects, including Kenyan running (Bale & Sang 1996), US baseball and nationalism (Klein 1997), the Tour de France bicycle race as a mega event (Palmer 1998a; 1998b), the culture of the body (Brownell 1995; Mentore 2000), the working life and daily routines of American Hockey League players (Robidoux 2001), US college sprinters and notions of blackness and identity (Sands 1995), the social construction of children's sport (Dyck 2000b; 2012), soccer and the politics of culture (Moore 2000), Indian cricket and modernity (Appadurai 1996), cricket and identity in the UK (Werbner 1996), cricket and diaspora (Lin 2006), and cricket and Caribbean politics (Manning 1981). What was once considered as an "inconsequential" subject within anthropology is gaining momentum as a discourse to discuss cultural change and emerging national and trans-national identities (McGarry 2010).

In Canada, recent research has focused on the position of First Nations peoples in the sporting landscape. Robidoux (2006; 2012) has explored the manner in which First Nations games influenced an emerging sense of Canadian masculinity, firstly as a

more localised French sub-cultural expression and then as a wider national identity. This enduring indigenous presence with the Canadian sporting landscape emerged as an outcome of the early encounters between First Nations and Europeans and as a consequence of the “sensibilities” of surviving in a difficult environment that the early European (and particularly the French) learnt and mythologised (Robidoux 2006:pp.269–70). This inculcation of indigenous behaviours, indeed the sense of ownership that First Nations Canadians have for ice hockey, is not replicated in the same way in Australian sport, though there are echoes in the influences of a local ball game, *marn-grook*, on the development Australian rules football (Hallinan & Judd 2012a) and in the increasing representation of Aboriginal people in mainstream Australian football codes like rugby league and Australian Rules football (Maynard 2012).

Other research to emerge from Canada has examined the invisibility of First Nations women in sport. A lack of research that explores the participation of First Nations women in Canadian sport is considered to be a major contributing factor to this absence (Paraschak 1995). The beginnings of a broader picture is emerging, and it shows that this absence stems from an imbalance in power relations, the lack of pathways for First Nations women in sport and the perception of the value attached to the role of women in the community (Paraschak & Forsyth 2011). Some of these concerns (e.g. power, access and equity) are heard in the accounts and experiences to follow and makes this project an important contribution to this area of the field.

In sociology, the emergence of an interest in sport paralleled anthropology’s and has become a major theme within the discipline, supported by a broad literature, teaching programs and international journals (Luschen 1980). As Dyck notes in his consideration on anthropology’s marginalisation of sport, it has resulted in some anthropologists cloaking themselves within the confines of sociology or downplaying the focus on sport and giving additional weight to theoretical rigour (Dyck 2000a:p.2). The anthropology of sport continues to occupy a marginal place in the discipline though increasingly the number of publications devoted to this arena of human endeavour, and as evidenced in the references above, suggest that anthropology is

well positioned to make a contribution to the wider examination and understanding of sport in society. In part, this increasing consideration of the value that the study of sport offers to anthropology has emerged from an increased awareness of the potential of 'at home' anthropology where the field no longer means that anthropologists need to distance themselves physically from the communities they study (Jackson 1987).

It is possible to demarcate a space that acknowledges the study of sport to anthropology without making claims for pre-eminence or exclusivity (Dyck 2000a). While the concepts and approaches that I apply here are framed by the wider anthropological discourse and concern, and engaged with the theoretical issues that emerge from the ethnographic process, it has also been useful to consider approaches taken in other disciplines. In particular, there is a rich literature in both sociology and history that examines a range of themes with relevance to this project. Journals like the *International Review of the Sociology of Sport* and *Sport in Society* provide access to sport focused research from around the globe.

This literature covers a diverse historical and geographical range and reflects not just local, state or national interests, but also the staging of specific sub-field oriented events such global events like the Olympic Games or World Cups or as aggregated publications around a conference or special theme. For instance, Volume 15 issue 2 of *Sport and Society* carried the theme "New perspectives on the Social History of Cricket" and contained eight papers on different elements of the development of the game in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Earlier issues have focused on disability in global sport (14/10 2011), the politics of sport (14/2 2011), sport in Japan (14/4 2011), sport and social change (13/1 2010), the Beijing Olympics (13/5 2010) and sport in films (12/1 2009) to name only a few.

In Australia, the presence of Aboriginal peoples in sport has become an increasing focus in the social sciences since the late 1970s (Hallinan 2015). As a cultural landscape sport reflects the dominant hegemony and experiences of those in non-

mainstream groups can be overlooked, masked or smoothed over. Sport is often a contested space that offers both inclusionary and exclusionary practices, creating a complex relationship and multiple interpretations (Maynard 2012).

Many of the recent publications on Aboriginal people's participation in sport explore racialised understandings of their experiences (Adair & Rowe 2010; Broome 1996; Bruce & Wensing 2009; Gorman 2012; Gorman & Reeves 2012; Hallinan 1991; Hallinan & Judd 2009; Tatz 1995; 2009). A large number of these have focused on the presence of Aboriginal players in Australian Rules football (Gorman 2005; Hallinan & Judd 2012b) and can be traced back to a couple of well-publicised events that took place within the game involving racial vilification of Aboriginal players in the 1990s and the continuing high profile presence of Aboriginal people in Australian Rules. Other football codes, such as rugby league, are also prominent reflecting their importance as social spaces that offer a means to express a sense of Aboriginality and build community spirit (Norman 2009; 2012).

The contribution of cricket to this body of work has largely centred on contributions examined through a historical lens (Blades 1985; Mulvaney 1967; Mulvaney & Harcourt 1988; Reece 2012; Sampson 2009; Stanley 2012; Whimpress 1999). Absent from this discourse is the presence of contemporary voice to the overarching narrative of cricket in Australia. The historic accounts above establish a presence in the game, albeit one that is fragmented and incomplete. There is little in the way of ethnographic accounts of cricket and none that seriously consider the manner in which the field of cricket structures the complex relationships that exist between individuals or in the behaviours and values (*habitus*) that develop and emerge through an engagement with the field. This project, with its focus on exploring multiple engagements with the field through narrative accounts of experience, extends our understanding of socialisation, social trajectory and the importance of *habitus* and disposition in creating individual and collective identities.

Aboriginal people and sport in Australia

From the earliest days of Australia's colonisation sport has operated as a social activity to sustain, transform, produce and reproduce the social fabric, structures and identity of all Australians. Sport has become a quintessential element of Australian life (Cashman 1995; Zakus et al. 2009). As a way of bringing people together in a sparsely populated country, sport creates networks and relationships that bind people to each other and creates some of the shared experiences that give meaning to their lives. However, it also represents a complex domain that often serves to marginalize and discriminate (Tonts 2005; Tonts & Atherley 2010).

For Aboriginal people, sport offered a social space that enabled them to compete against the colonisers on a seemingly equal footing, though this rarely translated into improved social conditions off the field. Prior to colonisation Aboriginal people enjoyed their own form of physical 'sporting' activity through a range of activities, from boomerang and spear throwing, to contests involving sticks and/or 'balls', that developed skills and transferred knowledge that could be applied to living in country and as part of the extended network of family and kin relationships (Edwards 2009; Hayward 2006).

Aboriginal people also pursued a rich religious life that included a range of public and non-public ceremonies and performance that effectively established many of the rules for living (Berndt & Berndt 1985; Elkin 1974). Their lives contained the mix of physical ability and social relationships and networks that some believe contributed to an ability and capacity to succeed in the sporting activities that arrived with the European colonisers. But colonisation also disrupted, and in many areas destroyed, traditional patterns of life. As the boundaries of frontier worked inland from the coast, Aboriginal people were pushed or drifted to the margins of the new established towns. This process of dislocation and disconnection resulted in the destruction of the kinds of 'traditional' activities that had helped sustain social relationships, obligations and structures, provide enjoyment and give meaning to their lives, and left a void that was partially filled by sport (Tatz 1995).

The history of the experience of Aboriginal people in Australian society over the period of European contact has been well documented (Biskup 1973; Elkin 1979; Haebich 1992; Rowley 1972a; 1972b), and this literature provides the wider social and cultural context in which to consider the place of Aboriginal people in Australian sport. It articulates a broader experience of the way in which Aboriginal society was impacted and disrupted through the actions of the colonisers, and the consequences for Aboriginal people of the introduction of disease, alien laws and notions of land ownership, increased sedentary though marginalised lifestyles, legislated discrimination and an increased reliance on European foods and goods.

During the contact and post-contact period, Aboriginal people were drawn into introduced networks formed around sporting activity through the agency of organisations, such as missions and so-called 'native' schools, as a means by which to inculcate them into the values and mores of the transplanted English society. In the nineteenth century a number of the missions established to minister to the plight of people impacted by introduced disease and dispossession of their land introduced sport, and particularly cricket, as a replacement for traditional ceremonial practices (Reece 2012; Whimpress 1999)¹⁵. Aboriginal people took to these new games and they became an important part of their lives, enabling them to participate with varying degrees of equality alongside and against non-Aboriginal people. Cricket, pedestrianism and boxing were amongst the more popular sporting pursuits during the nineteenth century, though once other sports like rugby and Australian Rules football emerged from the 1870s onwards, these rapidly became the sport of choice for many Aboriginal people.

¹⁵ Perhaps the most prominent anthropological account of the incorporation of cricket into existing cultural practice is represented by Leach and Kildea's film *Trobriand Cricket* (1976). As an account of the way that an external social practice, introduced in the 1930s to break down tribal warfare (Stoddart 1988), can be transformed by replacing traditional structures with alternative opportunities for social organisation, the film encapsulated the "Trobriandization" of cricket and the way that it revealed cultural identity (Ness 1988). In Australia, and perhaps reflecting the influence of the missions, there appears to have been less adaptation and more adoption, so that the game replaced rather than incorporated and modified elements of traditional practice.

In understanding the impact of the government policies such as those represented by legislation like the *Aborigines Act, 1905* (WA), in the social restrictions endured by Aboriginal people over much of the twentieth century, and the enormous upheaval that resulted in the removal of children from their parents, it allows us to reflect on a number of issues that arise from the narratives recorded in the following chapters. In particular, it gives context to the lack of role models within cricket and to the closer association with teams like the West Indies cricketers that developed during the 1960s (Judd & Hallinan 2012). It also provides an insight to the kinds of barriers that exist in playing cricket, from the administration of the game to the financial cost of playing and to the wider perception of the game as one that is not welcoming of Aboriginal people.

Colin Tatz was one of the first writers to focus critically on the presence of Aboriginal people in Australian sport. *Aborigines in Sport* (1987) examined fourteen sports in which Aboriginal men and women had participated at the higher levels of their sport. As Tatz observed, the representative success between each sport was uneven and in the case of cricket and pedestrianism remembered in events from decades past. The book examines the impact of racism and racist attitudes towards Aboriginal people and offers a range of suggestions for why Aboriginal people are not represented in what might be described as high-status sports.

Tatz describes a wide participation of Aboriginal people in a range of sports drawing together the stories and contributions of Aboriginal men and women. In doing so he highlights the tension between the notion that sport offers a social space where inequality and discrimination are transcended and participation is celebrated and embraced but where a lack of success or failure to conform to the hegemony quickly reveals itself in racist attitudes and intolerance.

Tatz's revelation of the impact of Aboriginal people in sport fostered an emerging literature examining Aboriginal participation in many of the sports that he profiled,

including Australian Rules football (Gorman 2004; Hallinan & Judd 2009; Stephen 2009), boxing (Broome 1996), rugby league (Hallinan 1991; Norman 2009; 2012), and athletics (Bruce & Wensing 2009). Following Tatz's lead the majority of this recent writing has been framed by the analysis of race and the way in which racial constructs have been used to identify and position Aboriginal people within sporting contexts and wider social relations.

However, while this approach has been useful in identifying and revealing the way in which ethnicity continues to shape and inform our attitudes and understandings of participation and experience it does not always allow for the kinds of personal narratives to emerge in the way that I have attempted to record during this project. Such an approach risks conflating ethnicity with culture (Amit & Rapport 2002) so that only one type of meaning is produced and, drawing on Geertz, reduces the "complex web of multiple meanings and significances" that culture represents (Geertz 1975: 5 quoted in Amit 2002: 21). With this acknowledgement in mind this literature is useful in examining behaviours, motivations, social attitudes and barriers that underpin the experiences of Aboriginal people in Australian sport. Indeed, ethnicity and race are just one element of what it is that the project participants talk about when they remember their experiences and so, to privilege race as the dominant conceptual framework runs the risk of limiting or removing personal choice (Rojek 1992). Or, as Bamblett suggests, it risks contributing to a "grievance narrative" that in itself perpetuates racism (Bamblett 2011:p.12).

This is not to exclude issues of race from what it is that will be discussed in following chapters, but in presenting stories, and remembering that they emerge from a broader context of Aboriginal experience and ways of seeing the world, they are also stories told by individuals about their experiences of a particular activity. They reflect a defined period in their lives and are expressed from the perspective of their own lives in and outside of cricket. Within these narratives issues of identity will rub against styles of learning, motivations for playing and for how their cricket lives are produced and re-produced in their stories and reflections. That is, the participant's

narratives are marked by a temporal and social context in which the participants are as much “agents and manipulators” as discriminated or subject to injustice (Broome 1996).

There is a risk attached to locating this project within notions of a community where our understandings and perceptions of the label may mistakenly imply the presence of a “ready-made social unit” (Amit & Rapport 2002:p.14). Other than the shared identity as Aboriginal men, the narrative accounts to follow are individual reflections of social experience where the web of relationships reflects more on the position of each individual within the field as it does on the individual as part of a definable community. In labelling them as such, they become multi-vocal symbols, subjects to be regarded as a system of things rather than things as elements (Turner 1974).

The game of cricket

Before moving on to consider an Aboriginal presence within cricket it is necessary to explain something about the game and its emergence as one of the earliest codified sports. Cricket has a long literary tradition represented by the ever expanding list of player/administrator biographies and autobiographies (eg. Bird 1998; Gilchrist 2009; Haigh 2000; 2003; Moyes 1948; Sobers 2003), accounts of home and away series (e.g. (Ponting & Armstrong 2007; 2008; Waugh 2000; 2002), “how to” guides (e.g. Bradman 1948; 1958; Ranjitsinhji 1897; Woolmer 2008), cricket commentary, histories and memoirs of the game compiled by fans, academics, journalists and former players (eg. Birley 2003; Haigh 2002; 2004; 2006; 2016; Haigh & Frith 2007; Major 2007; Nyren 1998). This popular literature sets out to describe the game and its development from the perspective of the player, the journalist or the spectator and presents what might be considered as the public record of the game. It describes a social field and is variably successful in its depiction of a lived and observed social endeavour¹⁶.

¹⁶ I am mindful that contained within this broad literature there are a number of authors who offer a more reflective, critical commentary to the game, that goes beyond the popular account to examine what lies beneath, giving us a view to the field and how it operates to give meaning to our

However, they serve as useful reference material on which to draw in developing a picture of the game and its development over a long period of time. It is the back-story - the field's meta-narrative - to the stories of everyone who plays or follows cricket. It allows us to talk about a person's place in the game by creating a structure that is identifiable and reproduced by cricket players and consumers. It becomes a record that allows us to measure the fluctuating value of the game on the development of national psyches and identity and charts the way in which the game is memorialised and re-imagined from generation to generation. As such it is useful to know a little of this back story in order to develop a sense of the origins and spread of the game, the divisions that exist within the game, as evidenced by the hierarchical nature of representative cricket, and the values and ethos of the game that continue to be invoked whenever the spirit of the game is challenged.

The game of cricket developed over a long period of time and its codification pre-dates many of the popular ball and team sports such as Australian Rules football, rugby, basketball and baseball. Its origins are contested with various accounts of its development in England, France and Holland, though its emergence as a game that is recognisable and termed cricket began on the south downs of England, in and around a village called Hambledon (Birley 2003; Underdown 2000). It was a game played by a cross section of the village community, including the upper levels of English society and the early games were played on sheep-cropped paddocks with the wickets pitched without much consideration for the lay of the land. Initially, the game was localised to the area around where it was first played but in time, and with the interest and participation of the aristocracy in all aspects of the game, from playing, to sponsoring teams, to arranging matches and to placing often large sums on the outcome of the game, cricket spread throughout rural and metropolitan England. The move of the game into the cities broadened interest in the game and the number of players and teams, and the creation of specific playing fields like Lords

participation in and consumption of the game. These authors include, but are not limited to, CLR James (1993), Gideon Haigh (2008; 2009; 2011), and Mike Marqusee (1994; 1996).

and the Oval, popularised the game so that by the early 1800s it had become a national game followed by thousands (Birley 2003; Major 2007).

The game, and the way in which it was written and spoken about, was important in creating an English identity that epitomized a range of cultural values about what it meant to be English (Sandiford 1983). During the late 1800s these values were associated with a muscular Christianity (Sandiford 1981) that promoted the physical and psychological benefits of cricket in developing healthy, resilient, and god-fearing citizens of the British Empire. The game became inextricably linked to the “civilising mission of the Englishman abroad” (Allen 2012:p.209).

Cricket accompanied the British expansion to the corners of the Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and became a tool in the administration of the colonies as a means of inculcating local indigenous populations to British ways of thinking and living (Stoddart 1988). In countries like India (Guha 2002), Sri Lanka (Roberts 2007) and the West Indies (Beckles & Stoddart 1995; James 1993) the game was rapidly adopted by local communities who took the game and created their own national narrative from it. These national narratives become entangled with broader political aspirations so that the game, once a marker of colonialism, developed into a site for the struggle for nationhood and the construction of a broader national identity (Gemmell 2013; Guha 1998; James 1993; Manning 1981). For other former colonies like South Africa the game reproduced and embedded social structures that privileged the white population, accommodated the ‘coloured’ sections of the community and through the imposition of apartheid actively excluded, marginalised and oppressed the black community (Vahed 2001) despite their continued interest and involvement in the game (Gemmell 2007a). Even after the removal of apartheid, cricket and the national government’s effort to include previously excluded sections of the community the game and issues of selection and quotas remains a highly politicized issue (Gemmell 2007a)¹⁷.

¹⁷ There is something also to be said about the different styles of the game that can be identified between the countries mentioned and this embodied element of the game often becomes a marker

In New Zealand, the lack of Maori and other Pacific people's participation in cricket mirrors the Australian Aboriginal experience. Like Australia, the New Zealand football codes (rugby union and rugby league) have historically been, and continue to be, considered as the game of choice amongst the Maori and Pacific communities, despite the long history of cricket in New Zealand. Reasons for this dearth of representation in New Zealand cricket echo many of those heard in the Australian context, including mental and physical incompatibility, administrative apathy, broader social and cultural influences such as the lack of suitable role models and socio-economic factors, and exposure to a great number of sports; though none stand up to scrutiny and it is argued that the dominant European culture "has generally failed to appreciate that cultural and social circumstances often produce a rather different function for sport" (Ryan 2007:p.84).

In recent years there have been an increased number of publications that examine cricket from a more critical (mostly sociological) perspective. A large proportion of this literature relates to the game as it has been, and continues to be, played in England, reflecting both the profile and importance of the game to notions of Englishness but also as a product of the development of the sociology of sport programs in places like Durham University and Loughborough University. This literature examines the game across a range of issues including, gender (Stronach & Adair 2009; Velija & Malcolm 2009; Velija 2012a; 2012b), globalization (Guha 2006), identity (Fletcher 2012; MacLean 2009; Maguire & Stead 1996; Malcolm 2012; Wagg 2005), historical development (Allen 2012; Guha 1998; Vahed 2001), modernity (Malcolm et al. 2009), sporting nationalism (Ismail 1997; MacLean 2009), politics (Wagg 2013), racism (Lee 2008; Williams 2001; Williams 2002) and ethnicity (Adair & Rowe 2010; Roberts 1985; Wagg 2007). A similar research program would be applicable and relevant within an Australian context.

of identity grounded in ideas of cultural difference that are then often projected onto, or are seen to be drawn from, the wider community.

This literature makes claims for more generalised understandings of the game using local examples so that it is possible to draw parallels between the experiences of ethnic and minority cricketers in English domestic cricket in the way that they are marginalised and discriminated within local sporting systems (Burdsey 2010; Lake 2013; Williams 2001; Williams 2002) to some of the experiences that are articulated in the narratives to follow.

Aboriginal People and cricket

Cricket arrived in Australia as part of the coloniser's cultural baggage and quickly established itself, along with horse racing, as a leisure pursuit for the soldiers and free settlers. The first games of cricket in Australia took place in Sydney, New South Wales, at the turn of the nineteenth century and quickly progressed as ground was cleared for games, clubs were formed and equipment ordered from England (Pollard 1961; Pollard 1987a). Cricket soon became a major focus of sporting activity and inter-colonial games began by 1850; the first international tour was hosted in 1861-1862. These first representative games were played by non-Aboriginal players and the international tours in the early 1860s were organised as commercial ventures returning the players and organisers a tidy profit and inspiring further tours (Pollard 1987a). This was the decade that witnessed a transition in the development of the game in England, and consequently in Australia, with the adoption of new rules concerning bowling, including a new tolerance for overarm bowling (Mulvaney 1967).

In Australia the decade is also remembered for the 1868 tour of England by an Australian team consisting entirely of Aboriginal players from Western Victoria (Mallett 2002; Mulvaney 1967; Mulvaney and Harcourt 1988; Sampson 2009; see also figures 5 & 6). This tour, arranged just prior to the enactment of the Victorian Government's *Aborigines Protection Act 1869*, which was to impact on the players on their return, created enormous interest in England, as much for the entertainment provided by the players after the game in feats of boomerang throwing and running as for their cricketing accomplishments.

The first officially recognised match between England and Australia took place in 1877, by which time only three members of the 1868 team had maintained a presence in the game (Mallett 2002; Thomson 2001 (1958)). From the period of the first official Test matches in the 1870s, and despite this initial Aboriginal tour and the participation in the game by Aboriginal men and women on stations, missions and at Aboriginal schools, the involvement of Aboriginal players in higher levels of the game over the next century failed to eventuate with the exception of three or four individuals.

For much of its history cricket in Australia retained strong links to England, initially established and then fostered in the traditions that arose from the international contests that were given the moniker of Test matches; traditions that continue to be privileged today, though increasingly within a commercial environment that seeks to promote other contests to a similar status¹⁸. England versus Australia matches were the predominant international games during the nineteenth century and for the initial decades of the twentieth century, and young boys with aspirations to the elite levels of the game would dream of playing cricket for Australia against “the old enemy”. This contest contributed to a sense of emerging Australian nationalism albeit one that struggled to accommodate the presence of Aboriginal people within its ranks.

¹⁸ The recognition of other Test match series has developed increasingly over the past two decades. In a number of cases it has been an opportunity for the National cricket administration to recognise the contributions of individual players in naming the trophy awarded to the winning team. Examples of these series include the Frank Worrell trophy for Tests between Australia and the West Indies, the Border-Gavaskar trophy for Tests between Australia and India and the Aus-Africa trophy for Tests between Australia and South Africa.



Figure 6: The Aboriginal cricket team that toured England in 1868. This photograph was captured in 1867 alongside the MCG pavilion, some time prior to their departure.
Source: Mitchell Library.

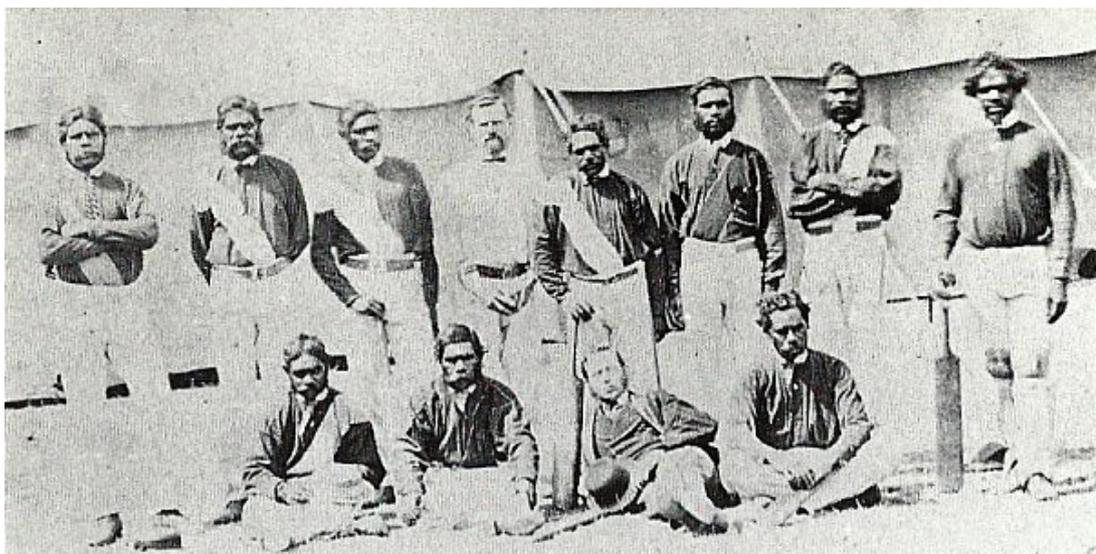


Figure 7: Members of the 1868 Aboriginal team in England.
Source: unknown.

The 1868 tour of England by an Aboriginal team, the first Australian team to tour overseas, failed to ignite wider participation and inclusion of Aboriginal people in Australian cricket. David Sampson (2009) argues for a re-assessment of the tour as a pure cricketing enterprise, suggesting that it should be considered within the broader context of exploitative performances such as those described by Poignant (2004) in charting the experience of Aboriginal families 'recruited' to circuses operated by the American P.T. Barnum. In focusing on the associated performances of boomerang throwing and other cultural spectacles the consideration of cricket performance is subverted so that the wider perception of cricket ability, whilst still acknowledged, is reflected in relation to these other expressions of Aboriginal cultural identity. Legitimate claims for a presence in games beyond this tour were never free of the baggage that developed around the association with the 1868 tour.

For a time after the team returned from England the three outstanding members of the team, Twopenny, Johnny Mullagh and Bullocky, managed to create a space for themselves as skilful cricket players. Twopenny and Mullagh played first-class cricket and Mullagh continued to play until the early 1890s and was impacted less by the control exerted by the Victorian *Aborigines Protection Act 1869* than his 1868 teammates, a result of his unquestioned cricket expertise (Whimpress 1999).

The fate of the remaining members of the 1868 team, who dispersed back into their communities and became subject to the constraints of the *Aborigines Protection Act 1869*, established a scenario that would emerge again and again over the next century and a half where the fleeting glimpse of what it was like to compete on an equal footing with non-Aboriginal players almost always failed to translate to an improvement in their lives or the lives of their families and community struggling under the weight of Government legislation and racist attitudes. The legacy of the 1868 tour is almost non-existent for more than a century but has begun to emerge as the achievements of the team are re-assessed in the literature (Gorman 2011a; Mallett 2002) and in calls by former players for official recognition of the tour by

Cricket Australia (Mallett, 2012). In particular, Johnny Mullah's feats are commemorated by a statue and museum in his home town of Harrow, Victoria, and in the competition for the Johnny Mullah Cup. Of the other players, little remains outside of the match records and statistics of the 1868 tour and a small number of profiles within books by Mulvaney (1967), Mulvaney & Harcourt (1988) and Mallett (2002).

Whimpress (1999) has described the involvement of Aboriginal people in cricket between 1850 and 1939 in his publication, *Passport to Nowhere*. One of the central contentions of the book is the idea that cricket as a 'civilising agency' was limited in time and space and that Aboriginal engagement with the game was discontinuous, fluctuated from place to place and was not the widely popular game that other authors have portrayed (Whimpress 1999:p.14). In pressing his claim for a discontinuity of experience he describes the introduction of cricket on a number of missions in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland and examines the way in which the game was developed and fostered in each location before it ultimately tails away and slips from public view. Following this initial period of mission-led cricket the presence of Aboriginal people in the game continued to follow a discontinuous path as barriers presented by the States and their legislated control of "the Aboriginal problem" deterred individuals from the game or actively worked against progress through it (Whimpress 1999).

However, at various intervals between the return of the 1868 team from England and the second half of the 20th century stories of Aboriginal cricketers emerged into public consciousness. In 1902 fast bowlers, Alec Henry representing Queensland and Jack Marsh¹⁹ representing New South Wales, played in an interstate match – the first featuring two Aboriginal players on opposing teams (Pollard 1987b). Ultimately, both players encountered a measure of resistance to their ongoing success as first-class cricketers and drifted out of the game. In Marsh's case accusations that he was a

¹⁹ Marsh was notable for playing games barefoot.

‘chucker’²⁰ who threw, rather than bowled, the ball, followed him throughout his performances and ruined any chance that he may have had of playing for Australia (Whimpress 2004).

A generation later, Eddie Gilbert emerged as another outstanding cricketer who attracted great interest in his few games for Queensland. Gilbert was a product of the Cherbourg Mission learning his game on the concrete pitches of North Queensland and dominating local competitions before his selection for the Queensland State team. Like Marsh and Henry, Gilbert bowled fast and his deliveries were often unplayable (Colman and Edwards 2002; Tatz and Tatz 2000). Despite bowling Don Bradman, considered Australia’s greatest ever batter, Gilbert was also subject to claims of ‘chucking’ and his career suffered as a result.

Wider evidence for the involvement of Aboriginal people in Australian cricket is difficult to locate. Faith Thomas, another outstanding fast bowler, is acknowledged as the first Aboriginal person to play cricket for Australia, representing her country against England in 1958 (Tatz and Tatz 2000). Fast bowlers, Ian King (1960s), Michael Mainhardt (1980s) and Roger Brown (1980s) all represented their states, and Mainhardt and King participated in the 1988 tour of England that re-traced the journey of the 1868 team (Tatz 1987; Tatz and Tatz 2000). More recently fast bowler, Jason Gillespie, became the second Aboriginal person and first Aboriginal man to play Test cricket for Australia (Colman & Edwards 2002; Colliver 2007). His acknowledgement of Aboriginal ancestry came some years into his international career and he has not established the same kind of profile of other Aboriginal sports men and women, like the Australian Rules footballer, Adam Goodes, Olympic athlete, Cathy Freeman and boxer, Anthony Mundine.

²⁰ The label ‘chucker’ is applied to bowlers who at the point of delivery straighten their arm and are deemed to have thrown the ball rather than bowl it with a straight arm. Chucking is not allowed within the rules of the game and bowlers receive a warning before being not allowed to continue bowling if caught again. There is a stigma associated with being a chucker and, if not corrected, can lead to the player leaving the game. In the case of Jack Marsh and Eddie Gilbert it was possibly a strategy by others to limit their chances of succeeding at higher levels of the game.

Marsh, Henry, Gilbert, Thomas, King, Mainhardt, Brown, Gillespie and Christian are the only Aboriginal players who have made it to the first-class level in Australian cricket. They are the ones whose names can be found in the published literature and represent the public stories (some better known than others) that shape an understanding of the game in Australia. Nine individuals in more than 150 years; four in the first 100. It strongly suggests that any understanding of the game is typically one that renders an Aboriginal presence nearly invisible – cricket is not an Aboriginal game in the way that people talk about football (rugby and Australian Rules) or boxing (Tatz and Tatz 2000).

There is, however, a risk of dismissing the lack of an Aboriginal presence in the game by simply highlighting the lack of players at the elite level. There has clearly been an interest by Western Australian Aboriginal people over time. It exists in the photo printed in the *Western Mail* in 1910 showing a group of Aboriginal men from the Murchison holding cricket bats during a carnival at a sports ground on the fringes of Perth (figure 1); in the photo from Moore River of a game amongst the residents (figure 2); it is recalled in the story of Yamatji man, Charlie Sandstone, taken from his parents and sent to New Norcia before settling in the wheatbelt and playing cricket Wyalkatchem and Dowerin (Haebich & Sandstone n.d.; Reynolds 2006); it appears in various newspaper reports of country matches featuring teams like New Norcia and Albany; and it is observed in stories of men like Alan Parsons who played for the Mount Lawley cricket club in the 1950s and brothers Irwin and Willie Lewis from Morowa (Reynolds 2006). This evidence is fragmentary, or discontinuous as Whimpress would prefer, and no doubt misses many other players, but it points to an ongoing interest and an ongoing participation in the game that lies beneath the public gaze as reported and disseminated in the accounts of the time. These examples bring us up to the mid-1970s, a period in which the first all-Aboriginal team featured in Country week cricket (Reynolds 2006) and the decade that marks the starting point of the narratives presented in the following chapters.

In presenting this summarised view of cricket and its Aboriginal history I have sought to fill the gap in what we might know and understand about the Aboriginal presence within the game. The excellent histories by Whimpress (1999), Colman and Edwards (2002), Blades (1985), Sampson (2009) and others document some of the historical accounts of Aboriginal people in cricket. As contextual background to this project they identify features of an Aboriginal experience more generally - the lack of a defined and inherited tradition or influence, the kinds of discriminatory and explicit and implicit examples of racist treatment – as a way of positioning the narratives from each of the participants.

This historical context becomes another fragmentary narrative, constructed by me using an existing set of words and ideas, to be read alongside those presented in the following chapters. It is possible to identify some of this background in the interview responses but it is not a thread that is prominent in how people refer to their position in the game. What is perhaps more interesting is the way in which the interviewees developed this awareness of an Aboriginal presence in the game and incorporated it into an ongoing reformulation and re-positioning of their contribution and place within it. As the governing bodies of the game now seek to broaden the appeal of the game to new and under-represented audiences this concerted effort to shift the (pre-)dominant view will provide space for more of the ‘hidden’ voices to emerge.

In other countries, there is a real sense of the game as a local game. Appadurai (1996) traces the development of an “Indianess” in Indian cricket. Gemmell describes the efforts of the post-apartheid South African Cricket Association to create an identity around a rainbow team. Writers like Beckles and Stoddart (1995), James (1993), Manning (1981) and Westall (2009), and even to a lesser extent Sobers (2003), Richards (2006) and Lara (1995) have written about the development of a West Indian, or perhaps more accurately, a Caribbean, identity to cricket that unites around the idea of a team of united peoples and in the way that the spectators and consumers of the game use it to reflect a specific West Indian-ness. England, too, has been required to address the way in which its national identity is reflected through

its national summer game as a result of the increasing presence of players with Asian and West Indian ancestry at all levels of the game (Burdsey 2010; Marqusee 1994; Williams 2001). In all of these instances the emergence of a cricket identity and reflects wider constructions of national identity and aspirations so that the two become linked as form of cultural expression.

The history of Australian cricket is marked by a lack of cultural diversity and has created a view to the game that reinforces notions of whiteness, privileging the game's English origins, leveraging off its historical legacy and strength as an international competitor and chaperoning the emergence of diverse national identities in other countries rather than engaging critically with its own shortcomings in its embrace of indigenous and other minority ethnic populations. As Ryan (2003) questioned of Australian cricket, "when will we see c. Nguyen b. Yunupingu?". So, the place of Aboriginal people within the game raises a range of questions about their aspirations, motivations and experiences and these will be discussed in the following chapters.

Aboriginal experiences of cricket in Western Australia

Cricket has been part of Western Australia's sporting landscape since the earliest days of the Swan River Colony in the 1830s. The game arrived with the European settlers and was played sporadically over the first three or four decades before the establishment of organised clubs and more regular and structured competition from the 1860s onwards (Pollard 1987b; Barker 1998; Reynolds 2012). Its development played a role in the consolidation of the social structures in the colony and it became a vehicle of social striving for those who jockeyed for a higher position in local society (Stoddart 2006).

In the 1830's when the first games in Western Australia are reported to have been played, cricket was a game that had already been played for more than 150 years and, in England, was emerging out of its country roots, becoming as much a game of the city as it developed a wider national identity (Birley 2003; Major 2007). In April

1835, not even six years after the new Swan River Colony had been founded, workers engaged on building the new Commissariat Store challenged the workers constructing the new Government House to a game of cricket, “on any terms which may be agreed upon” (Anonymous 1835:p.469). A week later a reply was issued and the challenge was accepted. The exchange was published as small notices in the Perth Gazette and WA Journal in April 1835 and suggest that the game had already established a presence in the fledgling colony though there no record of the game was ever published (Stanley 2012).

The place of sport as a leisure activity in the early days of the Swan River Colony was important in fostering a sense of community. On the Easter Monday (April 19) 1835 the residents of Fremantle were reported to have engaged in a day of “sport, frolic and fun”, and pursued a range of “old games and gambles” from their mother country. There is no mention of the games enjoyed on the day but it is possible that cricket was included²¹.

The establishment of rivalries contained in the 1835 exchange and fostered by the growth of the population in Perth, Fremantle and Guildford, are echoed in the present day rivalries between neighbouring sporting teams, and manifested in present day rivalries, such as the one exists between the West Coast Eagles and the Fremantle Dockers in the Australian Football League. The early cricket contests were played before the formation of any organised cricketing association. These early matches were effectively challenge matches between teams that formed around workplaces, geographic locations or as invitational teams. The result of the game between the Commissariat and Government House teams was not reported, and

²¹ The report is anonymous, allegedly based on the hearsay of the Governor and his wife, and almost laments the author’s ill fortune in not being present to participate in the sporting activities. The report is followed by an entreaty to the citizens of Perth to embrace the example set by their Fremantle cousins and calls for a similar event to mark the foundation of the colony. Here was a plea for the new settlers to use sport as a means of creating an identity for themselves and sought to unite people more generally in an environment “in which every class may cordially join”. Whether this general call extended to Aboriginal people is not clear, but unlikely.

there is little reference to cricket for the next couple of years other than the regular classified advertisements from merchants selling cricket equipment.

By 1839 clubs start to appear, one of the first being the Perth Cricket Club. A club that the newspaper reports somewhat disparagingly describe as containing “few efficient hands”. It is not clear whether these clubs adopted formal constitutions or whether they were simply groups of interested players coming together to challenge other teams but the establishment of a generic “Perth” club indicates that sport had become more than just an extension of the workplace²². In April 1839, the Perth Cricket Club played against a team from Guildford prompting the Perth Gazette and WA Journal to report on the revival of cricket and its importance in providing a connection to England and as a “pleasing and innocent recreation” to counteract the toils of the week. The paper also noted that the game represented the opportunity for like-minded men to join together in an activity away from work as a leisure activity that occupied a different social space to work and home (The West Australia 1839)²³ - sport begins to establish itself in people’s lives as a field separate to other domains, such as work and family.

Participation in the game during the early decades of the Swan River Colony appears to be mostly limited to the newly arrived white settlers. However, in 1841 the Perth Gazette and WA Journal reported on the activities associated with the twelfth anniversary of the colony, commenting that in addition to the pony races, local Aboriginal people also enjoyed their share of the sports. These sports were focused around throwing spears at loaves of bread and the participants were rewarded “from the general fund” for their efforts, though no one is reported to have hit the target. But while Aboriginal people were tolerated a place in the proceedings in order to showcase their ‘traditional’ skills, students from the Native School were excluded

²² The Perth Cricket Club was established by William Glover, an indentured servant, and Stanley (2012) suggests that the team was drawn from the laboring class, rather than from what he calls the “gentry”.

²³ This idea of sport establishing new ways of behaving and interacting is reinforced by newspaper reports about the post-game celebrations that were typically held in a hotel close to where the game was played – a practice that endures today.

from joining in. The newspaper report is critical of the event's organisers for encouraging the practice of spear throwing whilst denying the enjoyment that younger members of the (Aboriginal) community would gain from engaging with the wider community. However, the school administrators believed that any contact between their young charges and older members of their community had the potential to distract them from the path that the school had chartered, which was to civilise and Christianise. The students "had their holiday, played at cricket, and were delighted with the pleasurable amusements afforded to them". They were clearly drawn to the events of a day where "all of the white inhabitants of Perth" were assembled. But there was a note of rebuke: the school's administrators had neglected the needs of the students by not allowing them to be part of an event that provided the opportunity to be involved in a social event where even their mere attendance would act to further distance them from what was considered as their 'natural', 'uncivilised' condition.

The practice of using cricket as a mechanism for transferring social practice through which to control behaviour, inculcate English values and beliefs and as a substitute or replacement of existing practices was pursued in various places throughout the British Empire during the nineteenth century (Stoddart 1988). It is interesting to note, then, that thirty years prior to Bishop Salvado's efforts to introduce cricket to the residents of New Norcia as an alternative outlet to traditional ceremonial practice, cricket was introducing young Aboriginal children to many of the virtues that the recently transplanted English game represented, i.e. notions of fair play, codes of behaviour, the discipline and orderliness that is derived from organised physical activity. The legacy of this early exposure to cricket is not recorded, though a letter to the editor of the Perth Gazette and WA Times in November 1865 includes a reference to the loss of many of the pupils to the school just as they were reaching puberty and to what was perceived to be a regression back into a former state, i.e., a return to living in a non-European manner. It was not until the 1880s that Aboriginal participation in Western Australian cricket re-emerged into the public consciousness and by this time any memory or recognition of an earlier involvement by the students

at the Native School had faded, so that the impact of this new presence jolted the stagnant competition and surprised the established teams in Perth, Fremantle and Guildford.

The 'Invincibles' of New Norcia

In the late 1880s a remarkable thing happened in Western Australian cricket. Into a game that had become staid and stultified, bogged down in a conservatism that had resulted from fifty years of insular competition, there came a team from the Benedictine mission at New Norcia, 130 kilometres north of Perth, that, after an initial nervous start, played with flair and panache and breathed new interest into the game in the colony (Reece 2012; 2014; Reynolds 2012). To some degree the excitement that they generated stemmed as much from the prospect of them defeating the established 'white' teams, as it did from the athleticism and physicality they brought to the game. But they also impressed and thrilled local observers with their recently acquired skills of the game and their ability to compete and defeat the best teams in the Colony (Bates 1992) .

For more than twenty years between the late 1870s and 1905 New Norcia teams competed against teams from Perth, Fremantle, Guildford, Northam and the area surrounding the Victoria Plains district. The team was the brainchild of Bishop Salvado who, with the assistance of local pastoralist and former Rugby school student, Henry Lefroy, introduced the game as a substitute for 'corroborees' (Bates cited in Reece 2012) and for the 'civilising influence' that cricket offered (Russo 1980).

For the period between 1880 and 1905 the New Norcia teams became part of the Western Australian cricket landscape. However, when, in 1886, Lefroy stood down as captain-coach to pursue other interests, games against sides in the Perth area went into a hiatus and the team was limited to playing local district teams from around the New Norcia/Victoria Plains district.



Figure 8: the first New Norcia cricket team, 1879.
Source: New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery, 78095P.

While an ability to learn and exceed at the game had drawn much comment initially, the loss of the non-Aboriginal coach suggests that the team had little free agency or control over its fate and that their presence in the game was subject to the control of others, in a way that would become more entrenched with the passing of legislation by the Western Australian government after 1905, a measure Parliament believed restored their obligation to make provision for the “‘protection and care’ of Aborigines” (Haebich 1992:p.90). The *Aborigines Act, 1905* had a significant impact on the lives of almost all Aboriginal people, removing mixed-ancestry children from their families, controlling access to employment, education and welfare and requiring those who wished to be excluded from the Act’s provisions to carry an exemption certificate (Delmege 2005).

There is an interesting paradox surrounding the success of the New Norcia teams that echoes in contemporary mainstream reflections on the success of Aboriginal people

in sport. To some degree it is a paradox that exists in the fabric of cricket and is characterised by what cricket represents versus how the game is played, i.e. the tension between competence based on learned behaviours resulting from dedication, self-discipline and hard work (civilisation) versus the precocious, natural, untamed ability that exists in opposition ('native' or natural state). In the case of the New Norcia it also exists in the rationale for the introduction of the game and the way that the team subsequently played. That is, as a means to distract from un-Christian practices and beliefs.

The paradox manifests itself in racialised descriptions of performance so that the success of the New Norcia teams is linked to an essentialist perception that Aboriginal people have an in-bred aptitude for games, developed through generations of living off the land where the physical attributes required to source one's food requires quick, instinctive reflexes – something 'in the blood'²⁴. Reece quotes the view of one of the monks at New Norcia, Reverend Joseph Flood:

The Australian native is nature's sportsman. Sport has been bred in his bone from the earliest history of his race. Careless, free and independent, he roams at large through the vast forests and over the sandy plains of his extensive country – careless of the morrow, consoling himself with the thought, 'sufficient for the day are the evils thereof'. All his requirements are supplied from the fruits of the hunt. In consequence of this – the old training of the race – the Australian native takes kindly to any form of sport he may set his mind upon. His inclination to labour is not at all so keen. But if it could be placed before him in the form of a game of some kind, he would be an undoubted success in the world. (cited in Reece 2012)

And the paradox is this: cricket is a game that is often perceived to be a slow-moving activity, subject to a set of culturally based rules and traditions, tied to lingering concepts of fair play and sportsmanship but lacking the sustained spectacular physical movement and action that games such as football and basketball display. Played in often oppressive, hot conditions²⁵ that accompany summer games in Western Australia the 'otherness' of the game is frequently cited as a reason for a

²⁴ This notion of natural ability is often referred to as 'black magic', denying the application of hard work and commitment (Gorman 2004) and suggesting that ability is somehow ingrained (Adair 2012) and a manifestation of 'race', becoming part of "the persistence of racialized thinking" (Hallinan & Judd 2012c:p.1229) in relation to Aboriginal sporting achievements.

²⁵ I acknowledge that this is a somewhat generalised view. There are some parts of Western Australia that experience cool, temperate conditions during the cricket season (October – March) but they are restricted to Western Australia's south coast.

lack of Aboriginal representation. But the manner in which the New Norcia teams applied themselves to learning and playing the game, in embracing a sport that was even closer to its English origins at that time dismisses the notion that application and suitability to the game is somehow determined by biology or that Aboriginal people were somehow culturally not suited to the game. The assertion that Aboriginal people gravitate towards games that are short, sharp and demand quickness of movement has become a commonly espoused view, including by some of the participants, so any sense of Aboriginal ownership of the game, or presence in it, is diminished. This is not to deny the popularity of other sports, and it should be noted that Flood's quote above applies to a period when football and basketball were in their infancy, but in suggesting that participation in cricket is based on factors other than those that are derived from power relations and social behaviours denies the agency of those individuals who have chosen to pursue an interest in the game.

In 1905 the New Norcia team travelled once more to Perth for a final series of games. By this time Western Australia was a different place, part of the new Federation and altered following the rapid increase to the non-Aboriginal population following the 1890s gold rush. The legacy of the New Norcia teams is difficult to trace, though there are sporadic references to Aboriginal cricketers in local newspapers from the early 1900s to the 1970s. The reasons for this lack of recognition are not clear, though Reece (2012; 2014) lays much of the blame at the door of the elitist cricket administration in Western Australia that subverted the otherwise egalitarian membership of cricket participation by excluding non-white players. In comparison, the "proletarian" origins of Australian Rules fostered in Aboriginal people a greater sense of belonging so that the number who played and succeeded at the higher levels far exceeded the one or two cricketers that emerged from the periphery. Stoddart (2006) confirms this view of an elitist administration and it goes some way to explaining the lack of others to follow the New Norcia lead, but it doesn't adequately account for the apparent tapering of participation in the first half of the twentieth century (Reece pers. comm.). While the lack of high level representation suggests the presence of institutionalised racism in Western Australian cricket there is no reason

to suggest that individuals would have been deterred from joining local teams that operated further from the control of the dominant Perth associations, and there is enough evidence in newspaper reports of matches to suggest that Aboriginal people did continue to play.

The revealing aspect of the New Norcia story is the way in which the New Norcia teams performed - the pursuit of something for the love and enjoyment of playing - that allowed them a freedom to reinvigorate the game in an environment where convention and tradition had worked to stagnate the manner in which the game was played and consumed. The question remains, would Western Australian cricket be different now if the legacy of the New Norcia teams had fostered a wider participation of Aboriginal people in the game? Perhaps we would have seen the kind of influence that we are currently seeing in the participation of Aboriginal footballers in the AFL and rugby codes, or at least a more frequent membership of State and National teams than the handful of players that have been selected over the almost two hundred years of Australian cricket²⁶.

Conclusion

A cohesive historical narrative of Aboriginal participation in Western Australia cricket following the New Norcia teams is difficult to trace and exists in scattered references in oral histories, newspapers and historic photos. Rather, these fragments of experience demonstrate that Aboriginal people continued to play, albeit in competitions and associations that remained removed from the public gaze. They were in effect hidden from view and often on what Brabazon (2006) would refer to

²⁶ It also highlights the kinds of control over the experiences of Aboriginal people that continue to echo in the accounts of the men interviewed. The New Norcia story stands alone in Western Australian cricket as a glimpse into an alternate history of the game, though it ultimately proves to be an anomaly, isolated in its impact on the lives of those who followed, leaving little residual influence on what is revealed by contemporary reflections of the game. As such, it sits above these contemporary reflections as a historical point of reference and serves to frame, though not connect, these recent experiences with those of long passed countrymen and kinfolk. For while the overall Aboriginal experience of cricket in Western Australia is scattered and largely hidden the New Norcia story creates an imagining of the game that can be embraced and celebrated as a remarkable story in its development in Western Australia.

as the 'periphery', an experience that is shared by other Aboriginal players, though some, like Johnny Mullagh and Eddie Gilbert, developed public stories (Colman & Edwards 2002; Gemmell 2007b; Tatz & Adair 2009; Sampson 2009; Marshall 2012; Heenan & Dunstan 2015).

The chapters that follow present a case for re-working our understandings of an Aboriginal experience of cricket, moving it from one that sits at the edge of our current understanding of the game to a position that is more embedded in the way that we understand and represent a wider social experience. In doing so we will see how individuals articulate their experiences as part of a field of social endeavour and examine the manner in which habitus emerges from these accounts as a mechanism that allows them to negotiate a sense of belonging, establish an identity and make meaning from their position in the field.

Chapter 4

“All I wanted was one game...”: the cricket story of John McGuire

This chapter presents an account of one individual's life in cricket, and more particularly, of one Aboriginal man's experience from the field of cricket. It is not intended to be representative of a generalised Aboriginal experience of the game because it is, in some respects, almost the antithesis of what might be considered to be typical. As an account that extends beyond an everyday cricket trajectory it explores how one individual makes sense of and moves through social space and is, in turn, engaged with the field through the conscious and unconscious influence of habitus and disposition (Bourdieu 1977). The overall intention of the project was to record a set of experiences and stories from a number of individuals so this account is one cricketing story amongst many but is presented here as a consideration of an ethnographic process that raises a number of concerns and issues within the anthropology of sport. The chapter to follow will examine the ethnographic encounters that realised the evidence drawn on in this project and from which this narrative is produced.

John McGuire's accounts engage his experience of the field and offer one version of his life in cricket. It moves beyond the perception of a place within the field, created in the public accounts of his story, to a position that is framed in relation to the position of others within the field. It is in the negotiation and articulation of these constantly shifting relationships that individuals test and validate or modify their sense of position and develop a sense of place and what is possible within the field. It also provides a view to the points of intersection with other fields that contribute to individual identity as well as to some of the structuring principles embedded within the field and the classificatory discernment of the power relations that exist within

an individual's mind (Bourdieu 1985). It allows us to consider the dispositions that are applied by individuals in their field location (Bourdieu 1988a).



Figure 9: a young John McGuire displaying his sporting (football) talent, early 1960s.
Source: State Library of WA, 61178P

This chapter further explores the ways in which an biographical narrative can be used to reveal deeper meaning within an account that is constructed and produced between the researcher and participant. While the use of narrative is useful as a

methodology to capture stories, it is also useful when applied to thinking about what these stories represent. By considering the ebb and flow of the conversation, the context surrounding it (e.g. the physical setting, arrangements and negotiations before and after) and by observing the interviewee's behaviour in delivering responses to questions or in supporting responses with gestures or embodied movement, it is possible to approach the narrative as an ontological expression about how and why people behave in the way they do. The construction and production of narrative, then, becomes a site of fluctuating negotiations, power relations and control and a process of mediation between the researcher and their 'subject'.

The narrative presented here examines the way that identity and awareness of one's self and 'sense of place' develops over time, in opposition to or in conjunction with other individuals who occupy positions within the same social space, and through a continuing process of internalised and externalised articulation of stories and experiences. It is this re-telling of actions, events and outcomes, along with the speculative musings of alternative scenarios that work to reveal the structure of the field, to establish a habitus that gives credibility to a claim for a social position, to capture notions of social capital and to mark a point (a co-ordinate) that allows others to identify and locate that individual within the context of the field. As such it is more of an impressionistic account of John's story than biographical record, and one that creates an overall image but where some details are necessarily vague allowing for a plurality of perspectives (Bourdieu 1985). It is motivated by John's wish to account for his life in the field rather than have others create one in its absence.

This account is placed first because of it articulates general dispositions of self that, whilst potentially shared by all within the field, very few will ever achieve. But in recognising this imbalance in the potential possibility contained within the field it should also be acknowledged that not everyone shares the same set of expectations and motivations in following a social practice of mutual interest. While this account is prominent within this social space, and extends beyond to other fields, this, and the other accounts to follow, carry with them a complex arrangement of

relationships, dispositions and timing that mark each one as unique. It is this uniqueness, this infinite variety, that allows nuance and subtlety to be teased out of seemingly similar stories and allows them to be held up as individual pieces of a larger picture that frames an ever-shifting view to the field. That is, no one account can be considered typical though each contains elements that allow us to explore the field more generally, and at particular places and times within the field's topographical and temporal landscape.

In this account, we have a view to an earlier temporal articulation of the field containing a set of contexts, concerns and issues that have shifted in their impact and emphasis over time so that what influenced and structured this account did not necessarily act in the same manner in the accounts of those who engaged with the field more recently. However, its efficacy as an account of shared experience remains current and useful, and perhaps more so in what it allows us to consider within the other accounts presented here. As Rapport (2002) suggests, it is individuals in their interaction with each other that make communities and this "ambiguous space" between individual and collective should be claimed as part of the anthropological process.

In this chapter John's story is presented as a narrative using a combination of evidence derived from interviews, archival sources and other published material. The account follows the form of a biographical narrative in laying out a series of roughly chronological events, though its construction also emerges from the tensions that exists in the relationship between the ethnographer and subject (Jackson 2012).

Lives from other fields

The quote that forms the sub-title for this chapter – "All I wanted was one game..." - comes from the first interview I conducted with John and was expressed in the context of his account in missing selection for the Western Australian State cricket team in 1986. In this case the "one game" was one of two chances to claim a place on the State team, an opportunity that on both occasions proved elusive despite

many successful seasons of district cricket. It captures much of how John's experience as a cricketer is remembered²⁷ and in doing so threatens to eclipse the reality of that experience, or at the very least subsume the total of a much wider experience into one that is characterised by the absence of something. Equally, this "one game" represents the potential for so much more; for the kind of resonance that may have altered the history of the sport in Western Australia. It represents not only the gulf between achievement and failure, but also much of what it has meant to be a Western Australian cricketer with Aboriginal ancestry. Its impact resonates through the account in a way that frames the story and its questions of inequality and injustice as a sociodicy (Morgan & Wilkinson 2001; Turner 1996). Ultimately, it has become a signifier of John and marked his story in the public consciousness as emblematic of an aggregated experience. And while his is not *the* representative story for Aboriginal cricket it exists as a major point of orientation in the landscape of Western Australian cricket for other Aboriginal players who have shared the field.

John McGuire was an exceptional dual sportsman. He played Australian Rules football and cricket at a time when it was possible to play both at the highest level and he represented Western Australia at both (as an under-17s representative). Football was his first love and he became an important member of the East Perth Football Club's teams of the mid-1970s. John's football story cannot be covered here but it is one of the lingering memories that people retain. In searching for published references to John I came across a blog site called, *After Grog Darkly*, on which an entry had been posted in 2008 entitled "Through the Past Darkly". The blogger had ventured upon a newspaper clipping in his files that showed the Narrogin Towns football team who had won the 1986 Upper Great Southern Football League premiership. John stands front and centre as captain/coach, one hand on the cup, smiling broadly, and showing all the signs of what appears to have been a torrid contest. The photo is headed "26-YEAR DROUGHT ENDS" and John poses proudly, almost to attention, as the leader and one of two Aboriginal men in the team. In considering the feat that the team

²⁷ And in this context I am referring to the public accounts of John's experience as captured in newspaper stories and other publications (see Mallett 2000).

realised in winning its first premiership since 1960, itself a notable achievement, it is worth reflecting on the presence of an Aboriginal man as captain/coach. Would this have been possible in 1960, before the 1967 Referendum²⁸ and before Aboriginal people were even considered citizens? While the lack of more Aboriginal players is surprising and would be worthy of further investigation it is notable that John filled both senior roles²⁹.

The blog is of interest not just for the memory that resulted from the re-discovery of the photo, but also because of the comments posted by other readers about John and their memories of him. Two in particular give a sense of John as a fierce competitor who was comfortable with taking the fight up to his opponents:

Macguire (sic)? Interesting. A friend was a Narrogin journo at that time. Towns' games were often brutal affairs and after one match he reported "Blood and guts were the order of the day..." At the next match Macguire (sic) called him a weak cunt. (Posted by: The Worst of Perth | 13 July 2008)

Johnny Mac certainly had a fiery temper. He had a big go at me once at half-time against Wickopin. And instead of yelling "FUCK!" he would yell "ROOT!"³⁰ which gave us no end of giggles. (Posted by: Tony T | 13 July 2008).

These recollections recalled my impression of John formed during the preparation of the Museum's cricket exhibition. It was an image of self-confidence and assuredness rather than aggressiveness. John had called into the Museum following a phone call I had made to him seeking information about Aboriginal cricketers, and we discussed the exhibition and the possibility of showcasing an Aboriginal history of participation in the game.

²⁸ The 1967 Referendum asked the Australian people to change their Constitution to remove two sections that discriminated against Aboriginal people.

²⁹ For instance, in country towns there was often a demarcation between teams to which Aboriginal people aligned themselves with one or other team based on the culture of the club (Gorman 2005).

³⁰ A polite Australian phrase for 'fuck'.

26-YEAR DROUGHT ENDS

Towns premiers



● A jubilant Towns league side in the dressing rooms immediately after their 22-point premiership win — their first since 1960. Back row (left to right) Peter Buzza (runner), Bruce Johnson, Kelvin Hardy, Robert Boyle, Geoffrey Whitehorn, Ashley Lock, Damien Rhodes, Harold Webb. Front (left to right) Peter Trefort, Brian Davey, Tony O'Neill (trainers), Mark Edgley, Murray Price, Kim Drage (vice-captain), John McGuire (captain/coach), Neil Clancy, Keith Ballard, Justin Pearce, David Virgo, Reg Stack, Lindsay Borthwick, Graham Broad, Tony Taylor, Robert Klastzorny, David Webb.

Figure 10: Premiership winning captain/coach (front row, fourth from left) for Narrogin Towns.

Source: <http://aftergrogblog.blogs.com/Towns.jpg>

As we chatted about cricket I was struck by the sense of authority that John displayed. This authority came through in the considered and expressive way that he spoke and in his knowledge and understanding of the game and the way in which it operated both on and off the field. And from this authority, as a product of a life in sport, but also from what this had allowed him to achieve in life away from the field, came a disposition of confidence in self-expression that gave weight to what was being expressed; it wasn't demonstrative but considered, controlled and respectful. There was a certain steel and determination underpinning his conversation and it was possible to imagine John standing up to the opposition and 'giving as good as he received'.

Some years later, and following all of the interviews, John revealed the way in which his father, despite living in a tin shack with hessian lined walls and a dirt floor, would

always make sure that visits to town were made with clean clothes, combed hair and shined shoes, and with the knowledge that he was a hard-working, law abiding, polite member of the community. John continues to adhere to these principles, they have become part of his habitus, and in doing so substantiates his claims to talk about his experiences from a position of strength and conviction.

Sporting success has always been something that Australian people have considered to be important (Cashman 1995), whether it is as individuals competing or as manifested in their support and barracking for district, state or national teams. There is a sense that this expectation is even more keenly felt when there are other issues surrounding the individual, as is the case with John as a Nyoongar man growing up in Western Australia at a time of enormous social upheaval for Aboriginal people. That John was successful, in his eyes and in the eyes of the general public, says much for his ability to channel his abilities and focus on a goal and flows from the influence of his father and uncle and the respect that they engendered in their local community:

...so my Dad and my uncle really made names for themselves as outstanding sportsman but also as outstanding people, which was just fantastic: hard workers, committed family men and they worked hard and provided for their families which was just terrific and they gained tremendous respect from non-indigenous people in the regions.

This social capital, which is a characteristic of sport in Australian country towns (Tonts 2005), allowed him the necessary space to develop an appreciation for a number of things that would be valuable as he progressed through the junior ranks and into senior level sport. The example provided by his father and uncle gave him the understanding that respect from others meant something but was a kind of intangible commodity that had to be earned. The path to respect was through behaving in particular ways and being seen to work to the level that was expected by others, even if that meant tolerating behaviours that worked against these efforts. To this extent the individual was responsible for the degree of control over what form this recognition and respect took, though this was also subject to a range of other considerations such as the ability to work, to afford food and housing, to provide opportunities for education. In other words, to behave and conduct themselves in

ways that the local community perceived to be socially acceptable, perhaps even to the degree where their Aboriginality was seen to be different to other less hard-working families or groups. For John's father and uncle acceptance within the wider non-Aboriginal community was something that reflected well on themselves and their family and in 1960s Western Australia would have been something to hold on to and nurture, if not for themselves, for their children and future generations.

John's cricket story begins with his father and the time he spent growing up around the Western Australian wheatbelt³¹. Ironically, it wasn't cricket that supports this beginning rather Australian Rules football³², which has long been a sporting arena popular with and important to the social and cultural lives of Aboriginal people (Gorman et al. 2015) and one that has provided mainstream Australia with high-profile stories of individual success (Gorman 2011b; Gorman 2012). John's father played Australian Rules, though in summer he played with John in games of backyard cricket. In these early recollections it is possible to trace the early foundations of a habitus forming through the values and impressions observed in his father.

Like so many other sportsman in Western Australia, John played cricket in summer and Australian Rules football in winter. Football and cricket were the pre-eminent sports in their season, though they would often be played in combination with other games such as rounders, softball, basketball, athletics and, to a lesser extent for Aboriginal people, sports like tennis, hockey and swimming.

Sport was an important part of the social fabric in many Western Australian communities and in country towns where there was a limited choice of formal and casual recreational activities the opportunity for children to be outside playing in whatever form of physical activity was on offer typically filled much of their spare time. Of course, the kinds of impromptu games that spring up whenever a group of

³¹ A zone of agricultural land to the east of the capital city, Perth, and extending into semi-arid country to the north and south-east where wheat is the dominant crop grown.

³² This irony exists in John's enduring public association with cricket that is regularly re-visited, though he first established his sporting profile through football.

children are together are important in developing a range of social and coordination skills and John, as the oldest child in his family, welcomed the chance to match it with children at different stages of ability:

... playing cricket with a...and generally it was a tennis ball and a piece of wood, honing our skills and having a lot of fun was the order of the day ... there were a lot of skilful Nyoongar kids around my age and so when we had a kick of the footy it was invariably sort of man on man stuff... the standard or level of competition was pretty high....

Sport is perceived as a way of mobilising sociality across cultural boundaries (Browne-Yung et al. 2014)., which, in turn, can shape decisions and aspirations of young, often social and economically disadvantaged, people (Singer & May 2011). But, the literature from the United States and United Kingdom suggests that the over-representation of black athletes in some sports (particularly team based and commercialised, eg. basketball, baseball, etc) (Jordan 1981) and under-representation in key positions in others (Wiggins 2014) has raised questions about the manner in which sport structures encounters and impacts on broader social benefits to marginalised communities. In seeing sport as the vehicle by which they might escape the perceived pre-determined life of people from within their community they focus on an identity predicated on notions of physicality (Hoberman 1997) and create a false sense of “racial progress” (Valentine 1999: p.108) and questions the role that sport can play. There are echoes of this effect in Australia with higher representation of Aboriginal athletes in the football codes of Australian Rules, rugby and rugby league.

However, in Western Australia in the 1950s and 1960s sport for Aboriginal people offered a means to grapple with some of the inequalities they faced. In their situation, as non-professional athletes sport provided the means to subvert some of the restriction to which their lives were subject. Many families lived on reserves on the fringes of towns and access to town was restricted between certain times of the day. Government policy also controlled and impact on many elements of people’s lives and sport offered an outlet to express themselves in an arena that was relatively free from these controls.

For John growing up as the eldest boy of a Nyoongar family the restrictions imposed on his father's and uncle's experiences were, until he moved to Perth for school, part of his habitus and framed his understanding of the social position of his and other Aboriginal families. The acknowledgement of the efforts of his father and uncle to transcend the controls that were imposed upon them recognises other possibilities and other trajectories. While the opportunities presented to Aboriginal children during the 1950s and 1960s had changed from the period when John's father was growing up, there was still a large degree of legislative control over the lives of Aboriginal people. And even in the 1960s the prevalence of Aboriginal figures in public life, from politics to business to sport, remained extremely low. But change was coming and John's recollection above suggests that for men of John's generation there were opportunities that were not available to his father's generation. And although John's quote refers to Australian Rules football there is within it the suggestion that John is already aware that there is a world beyond the local country football association. For John, the fact that his father played with men who later went on to star in the big city league was the realisation that here was a means to not only move on and up but a means to repay the hard work and commitment of his father and uncle in working and providing for the family. These values would become enduring dispositions.

It is also clear that John's comment on the standing of the family as good people and reliable members of the community is critical to the family's sense of worth. In a community that marginalised Aboriginal people and legislated so many areas of their lives this striving for recognition and respect by other non-Aboriginal people was clearly important. Whether this also expressed itself in relation to the importance placed on maintaining existing family and cultural obligations with the wider Aboriginal community is unclear but in expressing the importance of respect, John claims a position for his family, and by extension himself, within the dominant (white) hegemony that privileges stability and reliability. And this underpins much of how

John's 'sense of the game' when he talks about cricket and his representation a position within the field.

John's cricket story starts here – from a philosophy on life that is rooted in family and from his identity as a Nyoongar man. It is a story that is focused on a set of experiences and insights that arise from participation in the game over many years. It is a story that frames the man and gives meaning to him and to those who have shared time with him or have knowledge of him and what he has achieved. It is a narrative that exists in time and place and seeks only to give an account of itself not as *the* narrative of John's cricket experience but one that sits alongside the experiences that are recorded elsewhere or are remembered by those who have seen him play, heard him speak about these experiences or participated against or alongside him.

The following biographical narrative is one that has been drawn from interviews, newspaper articles, match results and other print, web and video sources that feature John. It is a conscious ordering of events and stories to form, as much as is possible, a sense of John's journey as a cricketer and the influences from within and outside of the field. In doing so I become the narrator for John's life, using his words to give life to remembered experience and thought and as a life story arranged along a temporal sequence it immediately becomes something familiar³³ and we can begin to see how identity is formed and shaped, and how individuals manoeuvre and locate themselves within and in relation to a field.

John McGuire's story

John chose to start his cricket story at what was the beginning for him – at the first experience that he could point to and say, 'this is me playing cricket'. In John's story it begins as a young boy in country Western Australia, mucking around with other boys out on the street or in the front yard, trying something for the first time and

³³ In ways that echo much of the existing cricket biography literature, cf. Colliver (2007), Knight (2002), Perry (2002), Ryan (2009)

finding that he enjoyed the activity. I didn't have to ask John to start at any particular place because that is where he chose to begin. On this particular occasion and in the context of discussions leading up to this point in time (the first interview) this is the opening that John wanted to make. He could have chosen any point along his journey but in responding to my request for an interview to talk about his cricket experiences John had already formed a view on what it was I was trying to collect from him:

... it's great that you've taken on this task and, you know it's an opportunity for my story to be out there but I, you know, it's a good story, particularly with how it all started, how I got into cricket of course and it was, it was just what boys my age and, at the time ... it was football and cricket ...

Already there was a sense that this story had a purpose; that there was a wider benefit in its telling. This was not to be just one individual's story about themselves; it was a story that contained something that reflected on the thing that it was about – an Aboriginal player's experience of sport in Western Australia. So, initially, at least, this was a story with a message and as such it promised an account in the traditional heroic narrative characteristic of male narratives “projecting an image of self-confidence in the process of overcoming difficulties” (Cruikshank 1992:p.3) that would render John's experience familiar and recognisable. But in beginning this way, John chose to position himself alongside an expectation of what I wanted, or what he understood it was that I was asking, so that I too became part of the narrative; these series of recollections became a discourse constructed by interviewer and interviewee (Elliott 2005).

Having established the beginning of John's interest in the game we began by considering the geographical starting point to John's story to frame it within its historic context and background. This positioned John within the Aboriginal community, as a way of confirming how John referred to his Nyoongar ancestry. But it was also to understand the kinds of family influences that shaped John's interest and participation in sport³⁴. It was a process of negotiation that worked between researcher and participant to create a shared understanding.

³⁴ Similar themes are covered by Hayward (2006) and Gorman (2009) in discussing the role that sport played in lives of the Nyoongar community in the south west of Western Australia.

John was born in the Western Australian regional town of Northam, some 100 kilometres to the east of Perth. As a consequence of his father's work history (farm hand, railways worker) his childhood was spent in a range of small country towns. His father worked in a range of mostly manual labour jobs that kept the family within the Ballardong country of their ancestors.

The towns are the sites of early memories, but, in and of themselves, they offer little in the way of detail about his early life. They provide a spatial coverage that suggests a transitory existence tied to his father's search for work and necessitated some moving, which created opportunities, though it is not clear whether they were good or bad, simply plentiful. Any possible negative connotations of manual labour are tied to notions of hard work and a preparedness to "take on these roles" and underpins the values that John admired in his father, but also reflecting a broader experience of Nyoongar people in that period and the limited range of opportunities that were available. What some might see a pattern of unreliability is instead a pursuit of respectability and stability in a system that often discriminated against Aboriginal people. To work was to provide – to survive (Birdsall 1988). But to work was to accommodate the range of choices available; John's father was "prepared" to work as a manual labourer, to adopt a role that that others expected of him.

In small country towns sport was one, sometimes the only, way of having fun and impromptu games of cricket and football honed skills and created reputations and tested young bodies in the movement and techniques of the games. John's early recollections describe the initial informal pursuits of children focused on socialisation and physical activity in mostly unstructured physical activities and, while sport in disadvantaged communities, as a means of assisting social mobility, is a familiar theme in the literature (Boyle 1971; Burnett 2006; Spracklen & Spracklen 2008), the games enjoyed by John and his friends were more about exploring the world through games than as a means of escaping a particular social condition. To some degree these unstructured activities developed a range of skills and dispositions that were carried with John as part of his habitus. Equally, these initial games and social

encounters impacted on the emergence of bodily practice and technique, in that, despite the good competition offered by these street games³⁶, with respect to John's emerging cricket ability the absence of coaching and advice on technique and style affected the way that John batted, creating the opportunity for the intersection with other agents in the field that helped shape identity and contribute to a disposition.

Expressing a sense of the field

A casual introduction to the game is the pathway by which nearly all young cricketers develop their first love of the game (Cannane 2009). But as an unstructured, unsupervised activity it can lead to bad habits forming and this can, in turn, limit one's ability to progress further into more serious structured cricket. John's casual exposure to the game resulted in the development of unorthodox methods though his natural ability as a sportsman glossed over any shortcomings in technique and allowed him to develop within the game with little interference; at least within the junior system.

The one piece of coaching he did receive was a piece of advice from a former Australian Test cricketer, John Rutherford³⁷, who suggested a change of stance and a modification to the way that John picked up his bat when in that stance. It was basic advice - the kind of advice that most cricketers learn from coaches of father's or coaches as they grow up in the game. For John, however, it was advice that he had not received. His father and uncle played football, not cricket, and this was the first

³⁶ Street or backyard cricket tends to rely on the ability to keep the ball away from the stumps (or whatever fulfils that requirement) or away from the grasping hands of the fielders. It is a style of cricket that does not engender orthodox batting and rewards batters who can make best use of the advantages offered by the venue for the game. In backyards that contain flower beds, windows or some other hazard along one side of the "field", it pays to keep the ball away from these lest one breaks a window, destroys carefully tended roses or dents the family car. In other places, such as in the school playground or when there are a lot of participants, it may be that holding onto the bat brings added prestige and keeps one away from having to spend all afternoon fetching the ball from neighbouring yards, paddocks or swamps. In these games, unless rules for the length of an innings have been pre-agreed, you can keep batting indefinitely.

³⁷ John Rutherford played one Test for Australia and is credited as the first Western Australian born player to represent his country. He trained as school teacher but continued to coach cricket and influenced the cricket 'careers' of a number of prominent Western Australian cricketers, including John Inverarity, Rod Marsh and Bob Massie (Barker 2012).

time that John had been observed by someone with a sound knowledge of the game. He could well have progressed in the game but without the tweaking of technique suggested by Rutherford, John's technique would have constrained the extent to which he could progress.

John demonstrated his childhood technique to me in the café. Easing himself down from the stool he moved into his batting stance as a left-hand batter would and gripping an imaginary bat he proceeded to mimic his position at the crease and the pick up that he had used as a young boy. It resembled a somewhat ungainly attempt to chop wood with an axe, where the hands remained locked together on the handle of the bat, which, rather than move freely in an arc running parallel to the body was roughly thrust in a motion perpendicular to the body. It was an action that looked crude and ungainly, more agricultural than the classic style that would develop, and one that certainly never featured in the 'how to bat' books published by the former greats of the game. I have seen similar, though less exaggerated actions from when I played and could see that this stance limited the range of shots that could be played. The minor change suggested by Rutherford resulted in a world of difference, "all of a sudden I was able to drive the ball and I thought, wow, and it was just something, just something very small".

It was perhaps not the first realisation that others have knowledge that can be acquired and used - that would have already been part of what John had taken from his father, mother, grandparents and uncles - but as a moment in his cricket life, as something "very small" in amongst all of the other facets and awareness of the game and of himself, it suddenly offered a bigger view of the game to the one that he had enjoyed to that point. To be able to play with a straight bat, "...play in the V..."³⁸, down the ground, through covers and mid-wicket, this single piece of advice suddenly transformed John from just another backyard slogger to a batter; from a player

³⁸ To play "in the V" is a cricket specific term used in batting to describe an approach that minimises risk and allows a batter to settle in to their innings by playing in a narrow arc on either side of the wicket.

constrained by the limitations of technique to one able to shape their game to meet new expectations and requirement, to be in control of the situation. It was a step that required the capacity to grasp the physical mechanics behind the change and a willingness to accept the advice, apply it, and then replicate it through practice and in the heat of the game. It was the merging of ability and technique that provided the bodily disposition to sustain motivation and realise ambition; motivation and ambition that was beginning to emerge as John's awareness of the world around him developed.

A sense of something more

John grew up in the 1960's during a period of significant social change for Aboriginal people. The restrictive government policies of the first half of the twentieth century lingered but were gradually moving towards recognising Aboriginal people as citizens (1967) and as citizens eligible to vote and to control their own lives without interference (Haebich 1992; van den Berg 2002). It was also a period when Western Australia was emerging as a force in Australian cricket, only a little more than decade after being admitted to the Sheffield Shield (Barker 1998). John watched this success unfold via the television, on the ABC³⁹, in a period when the national broadcaster would show the final session of Western Australia's Sheffield Shield and Australia's Test matches. This was a period when Western Australia produced players that went on to become household names: Inverarity, McKenzie, Brayshaw, Shepherd and Slater⁴⁰. John admired them and what they achieved but none became role models that inspired him to dream about representing his State – they just weren't the right colour. What inspired John more were the feats of the West Indians who were also emerging as a successful cricketing nation, having recently removed the last visible vestiges of colonialism by appointing a black West Indian⁴¹ as captain and bringing to

³⁹ Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

⁴⁰ John Inverarity (6 Tests, 223 1st class matches); Graham McKenzie (60 Tests, 383 1st class matches); Ian Brayshaw (101 1st class matches); Barry Shepherd (9 Tests, 110 1st class matches); Keith Slater (1 Test, 74 1st class matches) (source: www.espnricinfo.com)

⁴¹ Frank Worrell captained the West Indies cricket team from 1960-1963.

Australia a young team of athletic, skilful cricketers⁴². Tuning into the Test matches of the 1968/69 season these were the players that caught John's attention:

...the West Indies were touring and I can't remember which years - mid 60s - and there were these black cricketers doing sensational things. I thought [indistinct] love the game and I went "what?", cause I, I didn't, there weren't any black players playing for Australia or for Western Australia. The Shield games were telecast as well and I thought, wow, if they can do that I can do that.

There was this young Clive Lloyd who was just an amazing mover. His fielding, I mean, the West Indies would have a slip cordon because they had pretty good fast bowlers and there'd be no one forward of the wicket on the off side. Clive Lloyd patrolled it and he just stopped everything. He had an arm like a rocket; he could run like the wind and he just a big bloke but tremendously agile and athletic.

The impression that these West Indian players made on John changed his perception of the game and those within. It also presented him with an embodied experience of the game that allowed him to connect their physical presence to the manner in which they played. The memory of Clive Lloyd is an interesting one. From a team that bristled with household names the memory of Lloyd's athleticism – his agility and strength - anchors his recollection, and while it is not revealed here John later met and played against Lloyd during the Aboriginal cricket tour of the United Kingdom in 1988. Lloyd is also referred to in a later interview when John describes the bats he used as compared to those of Lloyd's.

The West Indies became the yardstick against which to measure others:

Graham McKenzie was just -I loved his action - it was just so rhythmic and he moved like a West Indian to the wicket which is most unusual because the other bowlers were not as coordinated and smooth in their approach to the wicket like McKenzie was. Hall and Griffiths, and later, of course, Michael Holding, was just sensational. So, Graham McKenzie, and being a West Australian he was fantastic and I wanted to do what Graham Mackenzie was doing.

Ross Edwards was a fantastic batter and he was young and in the team at that point. Graham, sorry, Gordon Becker who was a hard-hitting wicket keeper and so yeah, look I mean they were guys that were high profile West Australian cricketers at that time. Inverarity of course, but I wanted to achieve that but there wasn't, there wasn't a role model that I could say, I wanted to be like as far as a role model the same colour as me, as there were in the West Indian team. I thought, wow, this is fantastic:

⁴² For further reading on the initial impact of the West Indian cricketers during this period see Coward (2000).

black guys playing cricket and my knowledge of cricket at that point was pretty limited, just to Western Australian and to a lesser degree to Australian representation.

This was an awareness of a broader sense of the field that had been missing in John's knowledge of the game – the ability of black people to play at the highest level and to compete against and defeat all-white teams. It was transformative in the sense that for the first time he could see opportunities for himself within the game at a higher level and cricket suddenly aligned itself with football as a sport where black people, and including Aboriginal people, could participate, succeed and create an identity for. The observation is also instructive because it identifies a perception and an attribution of a particular way of playing, whereby a group of individuals can play the game as an embodiment of a wider (national) identity (Beckles & Stoddart 1995; Manning 1981), though there is no suggestion that John moulded his game on what might be described as a West Indian approach. Rather he took from this experience the idea that black people could succeed at the highest levels of the game and imbued him with a confidence in his place in the field. In essence, he belonged in the game.

What is striking in the way that John recounts this emergence of an identity based on a new understanding of cricket is that it stands in contrast to his experience and knowledge of football. It reinforces the role that his father and uncle played in unveiling football through playing the game and taking John to see games featuring Aboriginal footballers, in comparison to what John was required to discover for himself about cricket.

my Dad and my Uncle would, not that often, we would come down and watch a game of footy. Invariably it would often be, in the mid-60s, it would be an East Perth [versus] Perth game because they were the dominant teams. There was this bloke running around wearing the number 9 guernsey for East Perth, playing in the centre, doing sensational things and he was black; he was the same colour as me. I thought fuck, and they [said] oh that's Sydney Jackson, what a great player, and he was.

Syd Jackson became John's football role model and through that childhood link John eventually played league football with East Perth, having previously supported Swan Districts. John's football journey runs in parallel to his cricket and informs his habitus and social capital. But, more broadly, the role that parents, family or friends play in

nurturing interest and participation, even if it is just to draw attention to participants of a similar background or with similar stories, allows an individual to visualise themselves in a similar position alongside or continuing a presence within the team. In this case, understanding that Nyoongar men play football and with great skill and success at the elite level normalises this experience and provides a mimetic template for how to play and behave in the game (Bourdieu 1988a).

This knowledge establishes a link from outside to inside or further to nearer, drawing us into a closer position to a place in the field and allowing for the kinds of episodic encounters that produce meaning. It does so through the production of a shared identity based on a set of common characteristics, experiences or understandings and allows those on the outside to imagine themselves following on from or alongside those who they draw this link to. It is part of the generative principle that Bourdieu identifies as central to the habitus, that the movement of individuals through different fields produces the motivations, dispositions and embodied practice that people carry with them.

The strength of connections within and between fields, and therefore of the meaning drawn from these encounters, will vary according to a range of variables including social position, gender, ethnicity, occupation, etc., variables that will shift according to who it is that is the focal point is centred on, resulting in what I have suggested earlier is akin to a constellation of connected points that may appear brighter in some positions within the field. For instance, as a supporter of particular team one shares something with other supporters of the same team, the majority of whom may have no other point connection or interest. They also share something with opposition supporters through a mutual interest in the game, though this connection may be weaker because interest is more diluted or generic or it may be stronger because of other shared experiences and connections, such as family, work, friendship or other mutual interests. In John's case, and in the experience of many of the other participants, their initial interest in cricket was weaker than their interest in Australian Rules football because of the shared associations that could be made

through family or community. This absence of role models and the recruitment of the West Indian team identity to create these links into the game are shared by a number of the men in the project.

Building habitus on and off the field

This period of the emergence of a strong unified West Indian identity coincided with John's move from the country and to the city as a boarder at Guildford Grammar school. Guildford Grammar is one of Western Australia's long-established and expensive private boys schools, and represents a social space in which to acquire the kinds of cultural capital that could be used to inform identity and standing.

This became an experience shared with others and the relationships that developed as a result fostered a sense of belonging and inclusiveness. More importantly, his attendance at one of Perth's elite boarding schools provided John with the capital that became important outside the school environment. He, along with childhood friend and fellow Nyoongar countryman, Larry Kickett, entered Guildford Grammar as Year 10 students having been offered places as scholarship students. Guildford was a quite different experience to the country, though the transition was eased by the student demographic, which was "largely country kids...being a big boarding population". In cricket terms, it also represented a very different experience and exposed John to a more formalised and structured version of the game, and this is where John's offers a point of difference that lifts his experience beyond the ordinary:

... I'd never played in spikes before.

I'd never played in long pants before.

It was always sandshoes and shorts and all of a sudden it was Guildford Grammar School. [I played for] the first eleven in my first year as a year 10 student, which was not always that common. Guys were mainly, if they had some ability were getting into the team in year eleven and if they were all right, year 12, of course.

It was more than simply looking the part. This was also an engagement with the field of school cricket and the need to learn its ways. In effect his was being shaped into the ways of the sport, of "obtaining from the body a form of consent" with the intention of "reinforcing social orchestration through its bodily and collective

mimesis” (Bourdieu 1988a:p.161). His talent was sufficient to place him in the First Eleven, in advance of expectations, but the game demanded an awareness and acceptance of other, almost ritualised, behaviours that imbued the activity with a deeper significance and transformed it into a series of on and off ground performances. John’s reflection on the cultural form of the competition articulates an emerging awareness of the nature of the field where how things are done are more important than simply doing them:

... the thing that struck me was the professionalism and the culture and the traditions of the competition, but the culture of the competition as well. A two day game, Friday afternoon off to start the game and finish Saturday afternoon and playing all day. Whereas I'd come from country under 16s or under 15s and you'd play for three hours in a morning in a limited over game.

And while we all took it very seriously it was a different, different game. All of a sudden Guildford, two-day game, long pants, spikes, you know, we got dressed and if we were playing away you'd wear your school uniform to the game and get changed into your whites. If it was at home you'd get changed in[to] your whites, had lunch you wore your honour blazer with your cricket, representation emblem on the pocket and went off to the game and it's just like the picture that you would see when Benaud⁴⁴ was tossing the coin with the Gary Sobers or Frank Worrell from the West Indies and they were out there with their whites and their blazers on and that's how we were rolling up to these games .

This was serious cricket: games over Friday afternoons and all of Saturday, drinks taken on the hour, an afternoon tea in the pavilion, wearing the school uniform to away games and the school blazer for home games. This was more like the ‘real’ cricket; the kind that appeared on television. It was an instance of the game that imbued the culture of the game so that an immersion in it developed a greater sense of the game as a set of ritualised performances and through which an understanding of the rules and behaviours could be inculcated. However, it is worth acknowledging that this part of the field is perhaps more structured and bound by convention because of its echoes of the elite ‘Test’ level game and therefore the development of habitus and generative dispositions is influenced accordingly.

⁴⁴ Richie Benaud – Australian Test captain during the 1960s, later a well-known and respected cricket journalist and broadcaster in Australia and England.

It was like a finishing school. It took a young man with raw talent and ability and taught him how to be a cricketer, to epitomise what it meant to play the game, to value the traditions and rituals of the game as it was played at an elite level. And this is partly what sets John aside from the experiences of others in this project. In combination with a personality that strived to be the best he could, John was provided with the environment and resources that enabled him to establish a presence within the game that slotted him into a place within the school system. By being selected for the first eleven in cricket and first eighteen in football he gained an instant profile that buffered him from the established hierarchy that saw senior students subject junior students what John describes as “power play [though, today] I think they call it bullying”. He played alongside these seniors and was consequently held in high esteem, especially within a system, that privileged sporting achievement over other more academic or musical ability in much the same way that Australian society is considered to privilege sporting achievement over other successes (Tonts & Atherley 2010).

John followed other Aboriginal students to Guildford Grammar, including his great uncle who had attended sometime at the end of the nineteenth or turn of the twentieth century, though at no time in the years before John had there been large numbers of Aboriginal students. John referred to a boy called Rex Scarlett who was still at Guildford when he arrived. Rex, too, had performed well on the sporting field and had also achieved academically and his presence and advice smoothed John’s transition into his new school. It also provided a link to a community that was not within the grasp of the majority of the Aboriginal community or for many of the wider European community. It drew John into a domain of networks and relationships that offered wider opportunities beyond the sporting field.

Guildford provided ideal preparation for the transition to the next level of cricket. John spent the next two seasons in the State under-17s team, playing in the team that won the 1972 Australasian championship. During this time, he met Kevin Bryant, and established a friendship that ultimately lead them to both play football and

cricket for the same sides. John's links to an old-Guildfordian initially bound him to play with the Claremont-Cottesloe club and he played a couple of games with them whilst he was still at school. But his friendship with Bryant resulted in him living in Dianella with Bryant's parents and ultimately to him joining the Mount Lawley cricket club where Bryant was also playing. The amount of travel time to Claremont where the Claremont-Cottesloe team trained was a factor in the choice to join Mount Lawley, but more critically it was John's emerging friendship with Kevin Bryant and the stable home environment offered by Kevin's parents that clinched the move.

The decision had a significant impact on John's future sporting achievement and illuminates some of the dynamics behind the kinds of choices and decisions that are made when choosing one path over another. It highlights the agency of others in framing choice and in supporting choices made, and this influence of outside agency can be traced at varying times throughout John's recollections. They range from brief incidental interactions to more complex relationships: the advice of John Rutherford in changing John's technique, the role that Rex Scarlett played in helping John settle into Guildford, and the support and stable environment offered by the Bryants to a young Nyoongar man recently moved to the city from the country. The impact and agency of other parties in shaping outcomes will be discussed in a later chapter but it is worth noting Broome's (1996) observation of boxing as a confidence sport where the trainer-manager is critical in developing physical skills and providing emotional security for the boxers in their troupe. And while this does not suggest that the power relations in the examples above mirror the kinds experienced by boxers in regional boxing tents, the relationships allowed John to settle into each new social environment.

Of course, underlying this was John's ability as a sportsman and in the end his experiences and stories have come from a combination of his capacity to learn, play, behave and represent himself in a way that fostered success and in his ability to develop and manage the relationships with others that allowed him to progress and establish himself to the levels that the field would accommodate. In the case of

cricket, it was to a level below what John believed he had earned, through his demonstration of ability and adherence to behaviours appropriate to the game. But that was in the future; for now, he was busy playing football in winter and cricket in summer.

Post-school cricket

By the time that John retired from playing district cricket in 1996 he had played 252 games and was second on his association's aggregate runs scored list⁴⁵. For the majority of his first grade 'career' he played in metropolitan Perth for the Mount Lawley Cricket Club, but finished playing for the Willetton Cricket Club (see map on page 16). In 1988, he was also awarded the captaincy of an Aboriginal team that travelled to England to commemorate the feats of the 1868 Aboriginal team.

Mount Lawley Cricket Club provided a stable environment for a developing cricketer. When John joined it was a young team, largely unsuccessful, but comprising the nucleus of a side that would grow into an outstanding team and achieve success over a number of seasons. John describes a culture at the club that developed as a result of a shared determination to do well. He had joined at a similar time to other young players and as a young team they suffered at the hands of other more experienced teams. John describes the "determination", "resilience" and "focus" that was fostered within the playing group as a result of these initial failures and with the addition of new personnel, including a former Test player as captain-coach, the team matured and began to win on a regular basis, becoming the competitions dominant team over the next decade. The notion of being "Mount Lawley" flowed from the success of the club on and off the field and stemmed "largely because we had wonderful leaders ... that were just dyed in the wool Mount Lawley people...". In this way the club became more than just a team of individuals taking the field each weekend, it represented an element of an internalised framework that created the objective structures that informed the development and engagement of habitus to

⁴⁵ John's total aggregate was 10007 (9204 for Mount Lawley and 803 for Willetton) a figure that was only surpassed in the 2012-2013 season.

create a sense of the field and a position within it (Bourdieu 1977; Sallaz & Zavisca 2007).

The team, and all it represents in terms of the value that was produced from the shared commitment and philosophy, became the point of belonging in the larger organisational structure that is district cricket⁴⁶. It provided John with the requisite opportunities to develop his cricketing skills through the provision of suitable training and playing facilities, and a stable team environment and provided John with the structure that contributed to his recognition as an outstanding player in the district competition. It also provided the social structure that allowed John to follow a path in district cricket in the absence of a corresponding strong core or support of other Aboriginal cricketers. In this case the team, and more widely the club, became the close knit support that replicated the kind of family or cultural environment the Aboriginal sports people often lack as they rise through their respective sports.

The statistics of John's 'career' at Mount Lawley District Cricket Club are impressive. He played the second highest number of games (249) and appears nine times on the list of most runs over 500 scored in a season. He has the fourth (199 no) and sixth (191 no) highest scores for the Mount Lawley first grade side and tops the most catches (161) by a fieldsman list by more than 40 catches. And yet, despite this weight of performance, long term dedication to the club and contribution to the success of the club over a long period of time, he has not been elected to the club's Hall of Fame.

⁴⁶ As King explains, a crucial element of Bourdieu's concept of habitus creates a structural position that allows individuals to "unconsciously internalize their objective social condition, such as their economic class, so that they have the appropriate tastes and perform the appropriate practices for that social position" (2000:p.423).



Figure 11: John McGuire in action for Mount Lawley Cricket Club, 1992.

Source: The West Australian

The list of nine (non-Aboriginal) players have all played representative cricket at a State or Test level, despite some not playing more than a handful of games for the club. John is not the only long-term Mount Lawley stalwart missing from the Hall of Fame so it is not necessarily an omission based on cultural identity, but it suggests that the achievement of higher honours, in this case representative first-class cricket, is the measure of excellence by which players are judged. And even John's captaincy of the 1988 Aboriginal Australian team to tour England could not contribute to the kind of local, club-level recognition that his playing record demands.



Figure 12: Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke and John McGuire at the Manly Oval in 1988 during a pre-tour practice match between the 1988 Aboriginal team and an invited team of former Australian players that also included Hawke.

Source: National Archives of Australia.

The story of John's captaincy of the 1988 Aboriginal team is one of the 'public' stories that contributes to and constructs part of John's public profile. The tour, which was organised by the National Aboriginal Cricket Association in 1988, commemorated the 1868 tour by a group of Aboriginal men from western Victoria which is recalled in a number of publications that examine the background and circumstances surrounding and following the tour (Mulvaney 1967; Mulvaney & Harcourt 1988; Mallett 2002; de Moore 2008). The 1988 tour also became the subject of a documentary, *Dreaming of*

Lords (2009), and records the journey of the McGuire lead team around the cricket grounds of England.

The 1988 tour received wide coverage in the Australian and English press and John, as captain, became a focus for many of the stories. Ironically, the prospect of a cricket tour by Aboriginal men in the latter part of the twentieth century prompted the kind of curious interest that had been shown for the first tour 120 years before. It highlighted not only the lack of a recognisable legacy from the 1868 tour and the subsequent lack of high profile Aboriginal cricketers in Australian cricket, but also the lingering attitudes to the deterministic representation of Aboriginal sports people as imbued with a kind of “black magic”. By 1988 it was a notion that had become a part of the popular vernacular and part of the wider public consciousness as a way of labelling the spectacular feats of Aboriginal sportspeople, usually footballers (Gorman 2011b). With the national media focus on the cricket tour it was a way of attaching something familiar to what was largely an unfamiliar story. In a story published in the *Age* in January 1988 John becomes another Aboriginal man with “black magic” (Graham 1988), wielding his bat as a seamless extension to his body and with an instinctive anticipation of where the ball will be bowled. Judd and Hallinan (2009) describe this invocation of a racial basis for displaying particular talent as a form of enlightened racism distancing the individual from the wider reality of Aboriginal experience and elevating success as something achieved through a kind of natural genetic legacy rather than through training, practice and hard work (Nelson 2009).

John contributes to this mythic representation by linking intrinsic ability to selective elements of ancestral life styles.

The skill must be related to survival in the bush through throwing spears to kill game to being ever alert and conscious of all movements whatever the environment. Most Aborigines are natural sportsmen.

At one level John’s statement supports the hegemonic view of Aboriginal people and sport, whereby skill is “in the blood” and not created through ability, self-discipline and application. In doing so, however, it risks subverting the years of hard work,

practice and proving oneself through performance that characterises the way that John played. I would suggest there is another way of reading the statement so that it also argues for notions of knowledge production and learned behaviours that are integral to an assertion of Aboriginal identity, a connection between ways of learning and tradition – knowing how to hunt, knowing how to make and use tools and weapons to assist in that practice, knowing where to go to procure food, knowing how to work with others and knowing the songs, dances and rituals that sustained the spiritual basis for life in country. At least three generations removed from living in country, and a reliance on traditional skills, it may be more of the case that John’s “in the blood” sporting skill comes from the inter-generational stories and behaviours that resulted in the face of experience as Aboriginal people living in Western Australia over the period of colonisation and subject to the discriminatory and racist policies and attitudes like the Western Australian Government’s *Aborigines Act, 1905*.

Ultimately, this measure of value based on performance at particular levels runs deep through the structure of activities like sport, where respect and recognition are built on the ability to play the game and the capacity to handle the stresses and pressures, both mental and physical, that the athlete encounters. For members of the non-dominant group, such as women and minority cultural or non-mainstream communities, achieving and then maintaining a place in the team is more than often not, the result of training harder and performing better than mainstream teammates (Gorman 2004).

The 1980s was a decade that John describes as “probably my most successful and consistent period” of cricket. It featured ongoing success with the Mount Lawley Cricket club in a team that became a dominant force in the WACA⁴⁷ competition, and earned John a second trial for the State team and a chance at that elusive “one game”. John’s account of the trial game and the treatment that he received came

⁴⁷ The WACA district competition is the premier club competition in Western Australia and represents the pathway to higher level selection such as State and National teams. The competition sits above the other cricket association competitions in terms of a hierarchical position.

early in our first interview and immediately after his story about junior football, the treatment that he received from the opposition and his father's advice about ignoring it, so that it presents as an example of the hidden, unspoken ways in which events can be manipulated to benefit one claim for inclusion over another.

...I played in a State trial match over at McGillivray against Test and State bowlers, you know, Chris Matthews, Bruce Reid, Ken Macleay, Tom Hogan and I opened the batting I cruised to a fifty - 57 [runs]...

As an opening statement John is stating his claim for his effort to be recognised. These were bowlers of quality one and two levels above John's regular competition. The 57 runs needed no embellishing; "cruised" implies a swift and smooth progress and underlines the absence of difficulty, which makes the outcome of the day harder to reconcile in John's mind even after an extended period of time.

I remember it like it was yesterday - there was a drinks break and the State selectors asked me to retire. We were, they were going to pick a squad of players on *performance* [emphasised by tone] to train on the long weekend, on the Monday. So this game's over Saturday, Sunday and they would pick a squad of players to train and out of that squad.

They would then pick the final squad to play the Shield match the following week whatever it was. I was batting really well and when they asked me to actually retire⁴⁸ I was happy with that, I thought, they've seen enough, yeh, that's it, yeh, I don't have a problem with that ...

In the way that these trials were arranged John had done all that was asked, he had controlled his place in the situation and applied himself in the manner that he believed was expected. He believed his expectation was matched by those who made the selection, even though the choice to finish his innings through retirement was not his call. However, between this anticipation of a role fulfilled and a requirement met, and the needs and perceptions of others, who were also playing their role and bringing their judgement and deliberations to bear, there was a disjunction that is clearly identified in John's mind as something other than an assessment of ability and capacity. To reinforce his interpretation of the events and the resulting outcome he recruits the support of others who shared the event.

⁴⁸ Retiring brings the innings to an end. The decision to retire is generally made by the captain or selectors and is used to give other batters a chance for a hit. It is most often used in trial, practice or warm up games. The innings is treated in statistics in the same manner as a dismissal. That is, the batter cannot continue their innings.

... but I didn't get selected in the squad for the day after ... the trial match and ... then I realised .. then I came to the conclusion, and, in fact, a lot of blokes, peers, guys who played in that game, and I've spoken to them since, and they still make the comment ...

"why did they ... why did they retire you?"

You tell me what your thoughts are and I'll tell you why"

... and their thoughts are exactly mine ...

The disjunction that John felt in being overlooked struck at the heart of his identity. For years he had plied his game at Mount Lawley cricket club as part of a successful team, establishing his place through application and consistent performances. This effort had provided two opportunities to press his claims for higher representation and he had played by their rules. He was a part of the system and with his capital drawn from Darlot Cup cricket at Guidlford Grammar, with its "traditions" and "culture", he had seemingly overcome the elitist barrier that was often identified in Western Australian cricket. In the end, selection was not always about performance; it was also about representation and in John's case his Aboriginality was a barrier to how the team was to be presented. As such, he is almost hesitant in articulating his conclusion, searching for "ploy" as an appropriate term to accompany "deliberate", because it exposes a system that he was part of and contributed to but clearly not able to influence or control. And whilst he experienced and endured the racist verbal taunts and abuse that was (is) an embedded part of many sports, this manoeuvring of outcome – the politics and power that permeates the administration of the field - was a more insidious form of institutionalised racism that was at odds with his understanding of the spirit and traditions of the game.

... all of a sudden there was this black guy and, you know, it's ... I don't like to ... it's horrible to say that there is this segregation. There is this lack of opportunity because of the colour of your skin but there was, it was as plain as the nose on your face that there was this "oh shit, if we allow this guy to make a hundred .. we're going to have to play him. We'll fix that and, you know, he only made fifty" ... so there was this, this very deliberate ... ploy to stop my innings from gaining, look, I could have been out the next ball, I could have been out five runs, ten runs later, but they thought if he doesn't get out then he might score too many and geez, you know, we might have to find a spot in the team for him so, we'll fix that...

John finishes with a lovely little piece of anticipation, as if he can hear the opposing rejoinder to his claim - "I could have been out the next ball" – that he balances with the equally possible 'what if I hadn't'. This tension between the known and the

imagined, the 'what if' moments that occupy much of the reflection and analysis of events, gives efficacy to the original claim of exclusion and renders mute any suggestion that his effort was insufficient. Ultimately, it's a moot point, we will never know the 'what if' so the actions must be considered for what they represent. As a story recalled so long after the event this dismissal of alternate outcomes demonstrates a reflexiveness that gives this event continuing significance in John's habitus.

Conclusion

At the time of the interviews John was still playing cricket for the Leeming Spartans cricket club as part of the South Metropolitan Cricket Association (see figure 4). The team is based at a ground close to John's home and since the 2007-2008 season he has played 34 games with the club. John explained that during this time his work commitments meant he was not able to train, though the club accommodated his schedule, allowing him to play, and in a grade that was "fantastic fun and good for the level that I wanted to play at, where I could have bit of success and enjoyment as well". His ability as a cricketer and the skills and techniques developed over many years made it possible to succeed without much training and he spoke about his approach to batting that remained a constant in his approach to the game: "the same principles apply ... the same principles applied if I was playing in a social game, if I was playing WACA cricket for Mt Lawley, you know, it's about, yeah until you get set - playing straight".

Indeed, John's use of the term "playing straight" encapsulates and expresses his habitus. It is a phrase that implies discipline, application and knowing the codes of the game. Beginning as a young boy, raw and enthusiastic but lacking in technique, he eventually becomes part of the establishment through a combination of timely external intervention, strategic opportunity and self-generated application to develop the requisite skills and knowledge to contribute to a position within the field.

In finishing in a competition of lesser quality to the one in which he established his reputation and that shaped his position in the field, he has moved almost full circle

back to the beginning, in a trajectory that traces a line between points within the field, developing a temporal aspect, and characterised by a constancy of self-belief, commitment, application and adherence to the code of the field in spite. As a Leeming player his life in cricket moves to a different phase as part of an ongoing journey through the field, where echoes of his former self continue to inform his identity and extend the frame of his biographical narrative. The Leeming story becomes one of his partial truths, a conscious inclusion as part of an “econom[y] of truth” (Clifford & Marcus 1986:p.7), that serves the purpose of re-confirming a back story of success and reputation, and reaffirming the efficacy of habitus as a means by which a position in the field is established and maintained.

Indeed, the biographical narrative above captured in the broader collation of stories is another rendering of a partial truth based on a re-ordering of the interview text to create a narrative that seeks to give a regular order and rhythm to a life story. It is, in this respect, an artifice, though it seeks to represent and understand a life by presenting it in a way that unfolds from the beginning. It is the water that runs smooth and in a single direction (Jackson 2013) ignoring the ephemeral, episodic and disruptive events that mark the expression of any life, to make sense of how one individual’s experience in a social field can be expressed through the curation of disparate, often unconnected stories. In doing so then, it is possible to take isolated stories and examine them as part of a web of social relationships (Arendt 1958 cited in Jackson 2013), exploring the way in which habitus plays a role in the selection and expression of certain stories, which in their selective, often repetitive re-telling reveal both the foundational dispositions and behaviours that emerge from habitus and something of the way that field works to position and shape identity and trajectory.

As an ethnographic narrative, it is a fiction (Clifford 1986) that largely masks the relationship and interplay between the researcher and subject. It becomes a story in its own right (write) but one that is authored as a collaborative effort rather than owned as an individual. Its purpose is to create order and familiarity for the reader (and to an extent for the subject) and to answer John’s question of ‘what will I do

with the evidence'. Ultimately, it tells only a part of the story and it is to this that I turn in the next chapter. It will consider the "tactic of ethnographic biography" (Herzfeld 1997:p.1) to show how a fragmented journey along a path that captures the stories of the life that we remember and by which we want to be remembered.

Chapter 5

Playing to the field: building a narrative

The previous chapter presented a biographical view of John McGuire's journey as a cricketer, as revealed through interviews and embellished and supported by published newspaper stories and statistics. The narrative provides a familiar, yet contrived, view of the way in which John moved through the field of cricket following a trajectory within the game and building his habitus as he developed and negotiated his place as a player of some distinction and presence.

The ethnographic account that forms the previous chapter captures a broader individual story and presents it as a re-organisation of the evidence that was captured through an engagement with the field. As Wolcott (1990) suggests ethnography is process of doing and the product that emerges from the prose that is written from the doing. The ethnographic biography enables us to move along a life's trajectory (Herzfeld 1997) and consider it as a series of negotiated and contextualised interactions. The biography that emerges offers an "ontological narrative" (Somers 2014:p.618) in which stories are selectively chosen and recalled for specific purposes, as partial truths that reveal some, but not all there is to know about an individual.

This chapter presents John's stories as artefacts of an ethnographic process in order to gaze behind the constructed narrative journey, to reveal their episodic nature, to examine how they were staged, and to consider the way in which his responses worked with or against my questions and observation. In doing so this chapter will explore the meaning revealed as a consequence of our encounters, the performative nature of the process and the manner in which habitus informs the constancy of particular stories within individual narratives and as a means of anchoring identity to events that encapsulate acquired understandings, strategies, motivations and manoeuvrings. In approaching the 'evidence' in this way it continues the "dialogue to

define and redefine [ethnography] both as a process and as product (Wolcott 1990:p.47).

The interactions reveal the struggle to account for the 'self-other' divide and the effects of this relationship on the development of knowledge (Hampshire et al. 2012). It makes possible the capacity to address the way in which stories are invoked, ordered, attached to specific points or issues, and used to bridge different topographical and temporal points within the field, as way of considering social structure and the interconnectedness of social relations and systems of meaning (Hays 1994). This process of meaning making is revealed through a closer examination of the evidence, taken as an accumulation of events that developed around a single idea (i.e. interviews focusing on capturing something of John McGuire's view to his cricket story), and is not something that John necessarily considered as an outcome of the responses and stories that he offered. At least, it is perhaps only in his opening statement and final question that John articulates an awareness that his story is one of broad temporal and topographical extent; that his position in the field is such that his story offers something of substance upon which to consider the experience and place of Aboriginal people in the field.

This chapter focuses on interviews conducted with John but also relies on the interactions that came before and after the interviews, and is informed by my broader engagement with the field over many years. Making this chapter separate from the biographical narrative overcomes the limitations of biography as an autonomous record of one person's life by examining the social space and context which is the focus of this project alongside other social spaces as a part of a "universe of practices and of consumptions that are themselves structured and constituted in a system" (Bourdieu 1988a, 155). Or as CLR James observed, "[w]hat do they know of cricket who only cricket know" (1993, preface).

That is, rendering the interviews as part of broader corpus of engagement with the field offers the possibility of a deeper narrative that allows for the emergence of a

more complex understanding of the field and the influence from other fields. In particular, a consideration of the reflexive nature of the ethnographic process develops an understanding of John's experience as both a product of the storytelling process and as an outcome of a negotiated, situated and bounded social interaction. It is, in effect, a biographical ethnography that seeks to position his cricketing life, as "socially plausible" (Herzfeld 1997:p.7), within an expanded frame of reference that situates cricket as one, albeit dominant, field of social practice amongst other fields of social practice.



Figure 13: John McGuire, 2013.

Source: Iain Gillespie, The West Australian

Metacommentary: saying something about something

At the end of our third interview John sat back and asked me, "so how will all of this work? How do you go about putting this all together?" The question was unexpected because it was only then, and after a series of interactions in person, via email and phone, was there a sense that John had thought ahead to the outcome of the project. That our interactions had brought us to a point where he felt it necessary to ask about the future of the stories and experiences that he had willingly presented during our interactions. It suggested that perhaps John was forming a different understanding of what it was that I had originally proposed when he agreed to participate. Perhaps

this project was more than simply telling a story about a life, or at the very least, expressed some concern about how this life might be taken and consumed within a bigger project. For me, it also reinforced the notion that this project was more than our conversations. It was a project of social enquiry framed by a set of interactions between a researcher and participant and there was an obligation on me to take these stories and somehow give them a life that John's investment in time warranted and his participation demanded; to write about them in ways that would give them meaning.

While the question was very much directed to this project, there was a sense from John that my interest in his story had also triggered a response whereby John was thinking more closely about his story, balancing "seeing things from without and seeing things from within" (Jackson 2012:p.3). It was a realisation that this had been a different process for John to those that he had encountered during his playing and post-playing days. That what he had revealed, sometimes easily, sometimes with a little hesitation or a searching for words, reflected a selection of stories that he wished to tell to present and position his life and his thoughts on particular events within the wider context of cricket in Western Australia. It also acknowledged that this process had been about identity and about the expression of that identity across a wider field (sport) and in relation to others. It was possibly also a moment of reflection that these stories would be taken and shaped in ways that were no longer under his control so that in raising the question John was seeking some kind reassurance that they would be used appropriately.

From his opening statement – "it's an opportunity for my story to be out there" – there was a sense that John was contributing to the construction of a sense of himself, but a sense that contained a public component beyond the confines of a delineated social space. This was a story that people needed to know so that his experience and legacy could be assessed and understood more broadly within the specific context of the game and Aboriginal achievement more generally.

So, what do his accounts mean? How do they represent the man who experienced them and the man who articulated them some years after they were lived? Does their re-telling support, enhance or constrain the things that John wants people to know about himself, his position within the community and the memories of him as a successful sportsman and individual?

Our third interview moved us to a point beyond the public narrative of John's story; the one already published in newspaper accounts, heard directly from John in discussions prior to the project starting and in the first interview we'd had some months before. By the third interview, all of what might be described as the accessible version of John's story - the accounts that everyone knew, the things that went into creating the public image of John McGuire the cricketer (and to a lesser degree footballer) – had been captured and re-worked and it was possible to contextualise the public with the private.

The choice of the Casino as the venue for the third interview followed a puzzling lead up, in which I had emailed John at his work address only to receive a short, automated message telling me that John no longer worked there. I ended up ringing John to organise the interview and when I mentioned the message he suggested that in future it was best to ring him on his personal mobile. Nothing was offered at the interview to suggest that John had changed employment [and for some months after I was unsure whether John was working there or somewhere else] and he arrived for the interview in the smart casual clothing and carrying his phone and organiser as he had for the previous interviews. In the end the story of John as an employee or, at least, outside of cricket, is one that continues to be shaped by the image of John the cricketer, footballer, commentator, and is suggested in John's reflection on himself as role model:

[S]port opened a lot of doors you know in terms of ... employment, plus you gained a bit of a profile as a player, whether it be cricket or football and I played league footy and district cricket so that gave me a bit of a double-edged sword in terms of employment and other opportunities.

Little detail about John's working or personal life emerged during the interviews and suggests that he is careful in maintaining some degree of separation between the different elements in his life. Or perhaps more so that he doesn't reveal the connectedness of these different parts easily to those who are not close to him and as such I remained outside of these non-sport related parts of his life. This was where we arrived by the end of the third interview. To understand the path to this point, to consider why only then John chose to ask this question, we need to return to the start and trace our way through the conversations that occurred over a longer period as a part of the interactions that built up around the idea of a project about the experiences of Aboriginal people and cricket.

Recording a life in cricket

Following a series of phone calls and emails I agreed to meet John for a preliminary discussion at a café in a suburb of Perth called Victoria Park. It was a Friday morning around 10.30am and John had suggested the location because it was on his way back to work from a meeting at Curtin University. I was still unsure about what this first meeting would produce: was it just to have coffee and talk generally about the project or was John expecting an interview with set questions? I was ready for the former but tentatively prepared for something more if needed. Aware of the possible impact on an audio recording of intrusive background noise I had chosen a table well into the café and sat facing the windows on to the street so that I was able to spot John as he entered the café. After ten minutes and no sign of John I ordered a coffee and waited some more. After half an hour had elapsed John rang to explain that he had been caught up at work and was unable to make the appointment. We agreed to organise another time after the weekend, at a location closer to John's work, and I returned to the Museum putting the experience down to the vagaries of work commitments. The conversation also allowed me to ask John whether we needed a preliminary meeting before any interview. He believed that wasn't necessary and his expectation was that we would launch straight into the interview when next we met.

The following week I arrived at the agreed venue - the recently refurbished Steve's Hotel in Nedlands, a prosperous riverside suburb in Perth's western suburbs - and selected a table inside the front room, away from the serving area and coffee machine so that the recording would be free from excessive noise. My concern to capture a clear and understandable recording preyed on my mind across all of the interviews but particularly those in public locations. Fortunately, the morning coffee drinkers at Steve's were few and with the exception of muted intrusion from a road crew working outside there was only the quiet chatter and ubiquitous sound of the coffee machine as accompaniment. As a location to talk about cricket it worked well; the kind of casual, third place environment that was familiar to both of us as sportsmen, and rendered more acceptable as a morning meeting place because of its café ambience. It was also 'down the road' from where John was working so he was able to slip away for an hour during a normal work day.

At ten minutes after the agreed time, with the memory of the recent false start fresh in my memory and as a niggle of doubt began to surface, John arrived and made his way to where I was sitting and preliminary greetings were dispensed. Coffee was ordered and we began. The interviews started, as they all did, with an agreement by the participants covering their involvement and preparedness to be recorded and identified. In effect, as much as I had envisaged these as semi-structured conversations this declaration marked the interaction as one that was more than simply a conversation between two people in a social setting such as a café or bar. There was a power dynamic within the interaction that referenced the long history of Aboriginal disempowerment and disadvantage and needs to be acknowledged. This was more than casual conversation. The agreement to participate established an expectation of what this moment in time would be about and framed it as something grounded in the content to be discussed (though this had not been explicitly raised), the negotiated ground that would be covered, and the expressions and experiences that belong to the collective (Jackson 2012). We had moved from an opening greeting between two acquaintances into a different performance space - with each of us undertaking specified roles (Goffman 1959). The encounter operated according to

an unconscious set of behaviours and expectations that distinguished this as a post-colonial engagement. The balance between became a space of differential understanding. The overall direction and flow of the interview developed as a negotiation between the two of us and as an outcome of our individual habitus and shared understandings of the field.

In organising this first interview John and I had briefly discussed my project and he had received an invitation to participate as required by the conditions of candidacy (see appendix A). This invitation sketched the topic of the project and some of its intended aims. It was by necessity a vague statement that steered clear of pre-empting discussions and making no claims as anything more than a project focused on recording (and “investigating”) stories from Aboriginal people who had played cricket. It established a loose methodology (a formal interview) and provided some guidance about the potential use of the gathered information. There was no mention of anthropology, ethnography or anything else that suggested a specific disciplinary approach to the research.

It is perhaps not unexpected that participants would form their own understanding of the project and approach the interviews with a sense of what they believed it would offer as a vehicle for their story. John grasped this immediately and his opening resonated with a tone and structure that reflected a confidence with the topic and format, acknowledging both the scope of the project, the potential audience and the commodity represented by a unique set of experiences. It showed, too, his ability to think through things as he was speaking, treading the line between self-interest (subjective) and collective belonging (objective):

absolute pleasure and it's great that you've taken on this this task and, it's an opportunity for my story to be out there but I, you know, it's a good story, particularly with how it all started, how I got into cricket of course and it was, it was just what boys my age, at the time, did ... you know, it was football and cricket...

Flowing from this introduction was a thread about John's life growing up as a way of establishing a context and creating a frame in which to build the bigger story of his life. It presented what John was prepared to reveal about his background, his family,

his life as a boy of Nyoongar ancestry as a way of establishing an identity that fitted with the theme of the project.

These initial reflections captured the experience of his family life in the Western Australian wheatbelt and the reality of chasing the work from town to town.

rrc: yeh, that's following your father's working ...

jm: yeh, absolutely, it was about Dad looking for employment and gaining employment and moving around a little bit. That was important...it was, it was about survival and there were some great opportunities but they were certainly...jobs were relatively plentiful in terms of farm hands and, railway workers and things like that. So, manual labour was there and he was prepared to take on those roles and tasks and he was a hard worker.

John worked his initial responses to sketch a set of experiences that were common to many Nyoongar families in the south-west (Haebich 1992), positioning and defining a set of what could be described as foundational dispositions: the importance and value of work to individual and family identity.

Narrative rhythm and flow

The rhythm that an interview develops reflects both the ebb and flow of conversation but also the manner in which control or power over the discussion is asserted, maintained or managed (Ribbens 1989). The other interviews that are the basis for the chapters to follow all established their own persona as an outcome of the interaction between researcher and participant and to a certain degree it is possible to characterise each interview as a product that reflects something of the individual. The control referred to above is not necessarily an explicit action (e.g. refusing the answer or stating a wish not to answer) and the interviewee is able to use other strategies to craft, guide and negotiate the narrative that unfolds, including shifting emphasis away from the aim of the question or choosing to tell a different story that may not directly engage with the question⁵¹. John had developed these skills as an

⁵¹ In some positions, this ability to re-direct responses to a different perspective or alternative agenda is something that is seen to be an asset and is often a skill that is learned through coaching and practice. In 2006, I participated in media training that included a session on interview skills and techniques. One of the main points stressed in the training was to acknowledge the question asked but to control the response by shifting the response to the message that was most important to impart. Politicians, for instance, are skilled at steering responses to questions as a way of communicating their message rather than directly answering difficult questions.

elite cricketer and through the kinds of public interactions that form part of the obligations of players – both during and after their active participation. He also worked on local radio so is practised in working for and with the media and is comfortable responding to specific questions or commenting on broader issues. His responses were typically extended and descriptive, and there was generally a marked imbalance between the length of my questions or linking comments and his responses. Being attuned to this made it possible to use the momentum in the responses, or lack of it, to push further along that line or to shift the conversation to a different topic. Being attuned to the rhythm of the conversation made it possible to detect the stories that John was comfortable telling, those that sparked from within a thread of discussion or those that were constrained or possibly covered peripheral detail that had limited support from John.

At this point in our conversation, with one topic seemingly covered to the degree that John was willing to engage, I needed a bridge to the next discussion, though without pressing for more of the same. I asked John to place us within a period of time as a way of creating a temporal marker. It was a way of marking a form of mental tag that was useful in this part of the interview with its initial focus on capturing a linear narrative.

rrc: this was back in the 1960s period?

jm: yeh look, the '60s through the '60s we sort of we were travelling around. We spent I think '63 to '68 in Kellerberrin. It was then that I really sort of started to develop my football and cricket skills I suppose and I mean no coaching - well I did, I got one coaching lesson in Kellerberrin when they started a junior cricket competition ...

That is, by locating some experiences along a temporal progression it enables us to reflect on the impact that an individual's movement through a field has on the creation of habitus and reveals something of the formative influence of events on enduring strategies and dispositions.

In effect, to place John in an earlier part of his life allowed us to draw back from the specific to a more generalised level that opened up other conversational paths to

follow. It provided the basis to frame another set of experiences stemming from both the period that was spent “travelling around” and with a fixed period in one place. This was when his (cricket and football) skills developed as part of a structured arrangement involving junior teams and competitions within the district. This was where the ‘real’ game was learnt and moved John to physically demonstrate his un-tutored batting grip and stance. It was a performance that revealed John the cricketer, conflating time and place; the temporal detail that prefaced the story is largely irrelevant; that was only used as the hook to locate the story. What is significant is the moment of impact that a casual interaction between two individuals can produce. The following interview extract follows on from the quote above:

...John Rutherford was fantastic. I mean, he looked at the kids and gave them some ah some tips, tips and sort of suggested a change of stance. The picking up of the bat toward first, second slip [demonstrates straight backlift], stance, looking over the shoulder. It was that technical stuff that I didn't have that all of a sudden, I got. I suppose when I played and I played maybe a summer or two in the competition before John came down and coached, and I had good hand-eye coordination but my stance limited my shots. The shots that I could play with the stance that I had, which was basically a wide stance, picking the bat straight up to point gave me two shots. Basically square cut and the hook shot and because I was picking the bat up there [demonstrates action of picking bat up towards point], getting into a position to drive the ball through the covers or straight was, was limited and very difficult
rrc: yeh, and that had, you'd just developed that naturally that has just been....
jm: yeah, that was just a natural, that's how I just picked the bat up that's how I, that's how I learnt to play. John saw me bat in the nets and he said
“look, you play the shortish ball outside off stump and the short ball on middle and leg very well”
but he said “you’re not, you’re defending balls that you could drive through the covers and the off side. But you’re not doing that because of your stance”
and he said “look put the bat behind your back foot, lift it up toward first, second slip and you'll find that those shots will come”...it was just something, just something very small...

This exchange revolved around two interdependent acts creating a single moment that conflates time and illuminates a moment in a social trajectory. The first act is the remembrance of the lesson learnt as a young boy and the impact of that advice in shaping the immediate space within the field as well as making possible an infinite number of future possibilities. It was, as it were, a trigger that provided a catalyst to progress to the next level, the kind of necessary intervention that energises agents within fields and enables both the field and the social agent to remain fluid and

dynamic. Of all the moments from this period in John's life this seemingly simple advice, proffered to a young boy and adopted willingly, is the one that flowed like the movement of John's arm as he demonstrated the arc of the bat lifted straight back. The demonstration of the original, "natural" technique compared to the new, "technical" one was unnecessary; John had described the stance in such a way that, as a cricketer, I knew what he meant. He probably also knew that I knew but he just had to show me, as if the physical act put him in that moment once again.

Supportive expressions of embodied practice

As a project centred on recorded interviews the physical expression of embodied experience was a relatively rare occurrence. Perhaps it was the public location of the majority of the interviews or the type of seating that was used in the other venues that worked against other overt demonstrations of technique, but when John stepped down from the café stool to stand, imaginary bat in hand, in his boyhood stance, it brought the words to life and they became embodied. It was only one instance of embodied practice but it supported other images of him as a player and contained in the documentary *Dreaming of Lords* about the 1988 tour of England or in the observations of others who witnessed John play (Brayshaw 1978). Ideally, more interactions like this would have given greater emphasis to the story but as a fleeting moment it confirmed the existing images and John's own description of "wristiness" and "flourish" when batting⁵².

⁵² A number of writers on cricket have drawn on this sense of movement and the character it reveals to describe individuals within the game: CLR James (1963) makes the case for the aesthetic of cricket as an 'art' and Bradman (1969) titled his guide to cricket, *The Art of Cricket*, a publication studded with instructional images capturing the poise and grace of Bradman and his contemporaries.

This embodied aspect of the game is an integral feature of its performance:

A recent description of former Australian leg-spin bowler, Shane Warne, by Gideon Haigh (2012, 43-44) captures some of the theatre behind the performance:

"For Warne, the walk back was a social occasion. If it wasn't the umpire, it was the captain, a fielder or an opponent. Anything to add a little spice to the contest, a little theatre to the event, to enhance the sense of ease, command and imminent opportunity. All the while, Warne would also be unconsciously rolling the ball from his right hand into his left, savouring the physical sensations of imparting and experiencing spin, the muscle and metacarpal memory...Warne rotated the ball from hand to hand languidly, voluptuously, like somebody feeling warm sand run through their fingers. It was amiable and intimate as a friendly handshake.

The awareness that individuals are moved to express themselves in other non-verbal ways gives a depth to the interview process and is easy to overlook or ignore as incidental. In the case of this story of John's, however, it gives the act a stronger sense of primacy, of a story that has added weight and requires additional support to reinforce the sense of release and impetus that it provided. And while hindsight stalks interviews, threatening to render their insights impure and their claims slippery and self-serving, the spontaneous intervention of the body offers a form of impartial witness that supports the evidence and gives strength to the claim as an accurate one. That is, the body retains durable memories of action (Bourdieu 1977). In these situations, it is possible to consider these as points of transition where accrued knowledge and imprinted, unconscious bodily memory are revealed; it is a moment that peels back time to offer a place marker where what occurred as a single action (it may also be a set of associated actions and outcomes) made possible what was to come⁵³. By now John was warming to the interview and his control of the flow and timing of the discussion shows in the extended and fulsome responses – they had become storied accounts rather than answers to questions.

The summary of his father's football exploits was framed in relation to the presence of other men who are recognised for their place in the game, positioning our understanding of a place in the field relative to others as a way of legitimating a claim and a connection.

...my father, his name was Steve, he was an outstanding footballer played in premiership teams with York and Meckering in the Avon Association. ...He played for York ... was their number one ruckman and played against some high profile and some fantastic players who played in the country before making their names in league footy. A couple of those blokes were people like Jack Clarke and Merv Macintosh, Bert Wansborough, who played in the same team at Meckering I think.

As Warne rounded his disc, his demeanour began to change. He did not switch on – Warne was always 'on'. No, he switched the rest of the game off, brought all of the activity on the field into himself. There was a pause. It was the best pause cricket has known: pregnant, predatory...But what I wish to convey is that the delivery – and indeed the whole introductory choreograph – were invested with an additional dimension by the identity of the bowler."

⁵³ And while I have focused on a single point in time to suggest something of John's character and identity we cannot overlook the other unspoken or unremembered actions and interactions that contributed to John's expression of himself as a cricketer.

In fact, Brian Peake's father played for Meckering as well so my dad and my uncle really made names for themselves as outstanding sportsman ... Dad's ability as a sportsman rubbed off on me as a kid growing up...

There is a certain mutual dependence between summer and winter sports, as sub-fields of sport, and experiences in one can often contribute to defining a place in the other⁵⁴. Extending the background that established his father (and uncle) as an “outstanding sportsman”, “outstanding people”, “hard workers” John moved his response to detail another story that shaped a number of strategies and dispositions by firstly establishing an inherited sporting ability and, then, as an influence in establishing a set of behavioural and moral attitudes - “they gave me some wonderful tips on playing the game but I think probably the best lesson I learnt was to ignore racist taunts”. What is interesting in this segue is the use of “tips” as reference to game related improvements and “lesson” in relation to the presence of racism that existed in John’s day⁵⁵ and during the period when John’s father was playing.

The lesson warranted the need for a deeper story that examined the manner in which habitus and disposition rub against the social field creating the opportunity for social practice to be revealed, and enabling the habitus and social behaviour to adjust to the social field (Jenkins 1992):

...but the lesson that I learnt was, we were playing football one day in a country town and this kid just kept giving me a hard time - I was having a pretty good game - and, you know, it was well "you can go back to the reserve now, nigger". So, it was the "nigger" , and the "boong⁵⁶", and the "black" and all of those things and it annoyed me but didn't put me off my game. It got a point where at half time I sort of had enough and he said, I think he made the comment “eh, um nigger you can go back to the reserve now it’s a break in the game”, or something along those lines. It was sort of in my face and I pushed him away [motions pushing someone on chest]. Didn't hit him just pushed him away and my father saw this as we came to the team huddle and we were only primary school kids. After the coach gave his address you know we

⁵⁴ See the account of Harley Coyne in chapter 8 for an example of the influence of a mutual relationship between to the two codes.

⁵⁵ John prefaces this by adding “the stuff that obviously isn’t tolerated now but was prevalent in, on the sporting arenas during that period”. While there have been a range of programs introduced to remove racism from sport this observation is, I suspect, made as a former player looking in rather than someone still playing. A number of recent publications have focused on the issue of racism in sport and the efforts that organisations and leagues have made to eradicate it from their games (cf. Gorman & Reeves 2012; Maynard 2012).

⁵⁶ A defamatory insult against people of Aboriginal descent.

were getting oranges and a drink and the usual things that happen my dad said “what was that all about” and I said this kid just keeps on calling me names "black" and "nigger" and "boong" all the horrible things. He said “ignore it but I'll talk to you after the game”. So, in the car driving back home to Kellerberrin and this, now, he said “if I ever see that happen again he said you won't play the sport” .. and I thought, gee that's a bit tough.

He said, “there's no need, he said ignore that, he said, actually take it as a compliment”...and I thought...hang on what are you talking about...I said, what do you mean?, he said “look, you had a pretty good game”, and then he said, “what happened?”

[I] said, yeh, they got stuck into me ..

He said, “you'll find that the better you play the more abuse you'll cop, and particularly the racist stuff”...so he said that's the compliment, when you, when you're playing well they'll be really getting stuck into you. You'll know you've got the wood on them...he said, when you're not playing well he said you'll find it completely different...

As I got older it was great advice...as I got older in cricket and in footy ... if I was you know, forty or fifty and batting well I was copping it. And if I was playing well on the wing for East Perth I was copping it. Then I noticed that when I had a bad day - and I had a lot of them too (laughs) – nothing - blokes were too busy getting the footy themselves or, you know, knocking me over or getting me out or making runs themselves to even notice the colour of my skin or anything like that.

So it was, it was a great piece of advice and consequently you know, I've never, ever punched anyone for calling me a “nigger” .. it was great advice and you know, he, my father, copped it all the time because he was an outstanding sportsman and really set the standard in that competition .., yeh, he copped it and it was pretty prevalent during his period of time as a player but then obviously as mine as a player as well 'til, you know it became part of this racial vilification rule that it wasn't allowed.

There was one further dipping of the toe into the past courtesy of the 1988 interview published in *The Age* newspaper. The conversation had shifted further back in time as we touched on some of the restrictive measures applied to Nyoongar people in south-west towns and on the efforts to maintain a good standing in the community.

rrc: I, I didn't grow up in the country but I sort of get a sense that the people living in country towns were, you know, they got on pretty well for the most part (jm: yeh) that they worked hard and then they were part of the community they ah, as you say, got respect , you know, without...[trails off]

jm: and look I, and incredibly, my father and my uncle, his brother, were pioneers in lots of ways because, ok there were quite a few Nyoongars playing in the good, you know in the top competition in that country sort of league at a time when there was lots of restrictions for Aboriginal people. You weren't allowed live in town, you weren't allowed to be on the streets after dark and, you know, you had to live of the reserves outside of town, you weren't allowed to go to school all of those bizarre and

archaic laws and policies⁵⁷ that impacted on Nyoongar people, on Aboriginal people across the country. So they were, they were subject to that but they rose above it and became leaders in their own right and trailblazers, pioneers for the sport and for Nyoongar people to show black and white that it could be done.

Sport was one method in which to demonstrate good character and community standing but clearly a capacity to work hard and be responsible members of the community was also important. At the time of the interview my reading had included a number of publications covering the rise and success of the 19th century New Norcia teams and the lack of a lasting legacy (at least as it appeared in the literature) was noticeable and a topic on which John had previously commented.

A discussion on the place of Aboriginal people in the game ensued, touching on issues of opportunity, lack of role models and the experiences of those, like Eddie Gilbert, who found themselves excluded or “forced out” by the authorities. John used this opportunity to draw parallels between those experiences and that one State selection game that is discussed in the previous chapter.

In the 1960s the WACA recruited the West Indian batter, Rohan Kanhai to play for one season:

...the acceptance of a West Indian or an American Negro or an Indian player or someone from another country with black skin was far more acceptable than a local black skinned player. There weren't role models coming through and consequently we didn't have [Aboriginal] kids aspiring to be State cricketers or playing for Australia...

Acceptance of place is important in generating the necessary sense of inclusion in a field because that acceptance also involves a recognition and acknowledgement of the ways of operating according to the structures that frame the domain, ways of being (behaviour) and expectations (rules) that mark the space as a field. And in the same way that habitus can operate at an individual level to provide momentum along a social trajectory within a social domain it can also work in a negative way when

⁵⁷ John is referring to the impact of the Western Australian Government's *Aborigines Act, 1905* and other acts of parliament on the lives of all Aboriginal people.

applied to a wider group. In this case if it was not skin colour that was barring representation at higher levels it must have been something else, though John doesn't finish that thought – "...and, you know, that was, so, so there weren't...." – opting instead to stress a lack within the system. It's not clear why John seemingly pulls back, but he does so because there is a richer more relevant point to be made by drawing two fields together in comparison, and after a pause he explained exactly why cricket had failed in this area:

see in Aussie Rules footy...even through all of the period of time when Aboriginal people weren't accepted into playing league football we had a few that played and set the example. In the country teams there were lots of them. So kids grew up watching their fathers play in country competitions and it was natural that they wanted to play the game at that level and if they were good enough they might be picked up by a league team. [For] example - Polly Farmer, Syd Jackson, Ted Kilmurray ... Jack Hunt... - and most of those guys played for East Perth. The Royals were fantastic in getting the Aboriginal guys in, they saw the value and the worth, but also acknowledged the ability of them to perform and be part of great teams, which they were.

This reflection suggests broader notions of how objective structures accommodate or discourage certain individuals from progressing within a field: how much did this reflect the approach of the differing administrations; was there a different sense of value and worth that permeated the 'culture' of the game in relation to Aboriginal people; was it somehow a reflection of Aboriginal-European interaction that marginalised Aboriginal people but tolerated other 'darker skinned' individuals? But this was a tangential path of discussion, leading away from the personal narrative that had been established, and it represented uncertain ground. We were both feeling our way: me with my speculative musings about the possibility of alternative ways of running each game; and John with his assertion of cricket as a class-conscious, transplanted English game that was played by a predominantly white population. At this point we hit a wall. In response to my clumsy attempt to explore the paradox between the notion of a broader ingrained racist attitudes amongst the game's (white) administrators versus their acceptance of (West Indian or Indian) outsiders John struggled to respond using what he thought were words that I wanted to hear, and not fighting for its ownership.

jm: yeah, look, I don't know I...maybe there was this, you know, Aboriginal people have been pigeon-holed as trouble makers and you wouldn't trust them because they'd probably steal your gear, or your wallet or your watch so we can't have them in the change rooms with us because, you know, they're thieves or they're criminals or, you know, there was this ...perception, it seemed I mean I'm just throwing that up ...

It was a moment of disconnect. Sometimes the idea that forms around a question fails to make it into speech: I had asked him (one Nyoongar man) to comment on Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationships as a driver of broader attitudes and perceptions by non-Aboriginal people to Aboriginal people. He should have told me to bugger off; instead he gave something that he thought I wanted to hear though the beginning and end indicated the problematic nature of my enquiry: “yeah, look, I don't know...maybe there was this ... perception, it seemed, I mean, I'm just throwing that up...”. It left me feeling exposed as the product of the privileged, middle class upbringing and revealed more about my somewhat questionable perceptions and attitudes than helping to reveal any pattern of meaning about John's experience in the field.

Interviews, even those that might be introduced as unstructured, are characterised by certain obligations on both participants. One is that a question expects a response of some kind (Schegloff 2004); another is that the topic for discussion will have already been agreed, even though the parameters or extent of the topics to be covered are not fixed. That is the expectation of the participant about the range of topics to be discussed may well vary from those of the interviewer/researcher. As a first interview that sought to capture John's cricket experience the exchange above and John's broadly dismissive response was a cue that we had moved away from the primary purpose of the interview.

The remainder of the interview refocused attention on to John's story and he spoke about his participation in the State under-19 team and referred again to the State trial games in the 1977/78 and 1985/86 seasons. He continued to move between football and cricket in describing his sport because one was an extension of another, and at this period in time both could be accommodated. This part of the interview

references names, events and reflections that represent both an assertion for a place within the wider field but also a narrative that frames specific locations and the authority to make claims for occupying this space. It begins with his journey from Guildford Grammar, into the State under-19s team (Graeme Wood, David Bell, Kim Hagdorn, Jamie Prendiville, Colin Penter, Graeme Porter, Kevin Bryant), through the Colts (Kim Hughes, Graeme Wood) and linking to others who forged a similar path (Ken Macauley, Derek Chadwick, Mick Malone, Bruce Douperouzel⁵⁸) and places John as an equal alongside these individuals, many of whom represented Western Australia and/or Australia.

It also locates him in the field in a particular space, at a different topographical location, that other participants in this project were unable to achieve, and this in turn contributed to different set of experiences and therefore different identity. This identity is part of the way that John is remembered in the memories of those who played with or against him or learnt his story through the words of others. It creates a profile that he is able to carry an identity to other fields where it continues to contribute to his habitus. These stories, in effect, are the 'hard' form of habitus that is central and crucial to his identification as a player of substance. They become a 'soft' form when carried with him into other fields, not necessarily central to the needs of the habitus in a field outside of sport, but still important in positioning him relative to it.

Throughout this discussion the sense of sport as a wider field than just cricket was revealed as John switched between football and cricket.

rrc: yeah, so the 57 not out was 77-78 when you were Jm: ah no, no, no it was 85-86
rrc: ok, so your first state trial back in 77-78 was that...

jm: I played in those and I, my memory isn't that great on, on those but .. I'd just come off a football season with a dislocated shoulder had an operation ... because I suppose at the end of the day at that point or at that time football was the priority

⁵⁸ The individuals referred to here are other non-Aboriginal sportspeople that moved in and out of the field during the period of John's cricket experiences. They form part of the network of relationships that defines the field and positions John within it.

... I loved playing league footy. It was a high profile game. I loved my cricket and we were able to that as well during the period ...

His capacity to straddle the two enabled us to examine the differences in the experience of John in cricket and John and others in football.

rrc: yep, yeah that's why I find it amazing that with all the social changes throughout you know the sixties and then seventies you know, you'd think that some of that would be flowing through the system and you know, some of those barriers would be broken down a little, but um ...

jm: yeah absolutely, and particularly with you know the, not so much the saturation but the greater numbers of Aboriginal blokes coming in to league footy which is a high profile game and highly accepted and they'd play Shield⁵⁹, they'd play State football and be superstars: the Rioli's and the Krakouers and Vigona and Michael and Narkle's and, yeah, the list just went on and on. And Aboriginal people could have done the same thing in Shield cricket but was never, you know, they were never given an opportunity. Now, if I was given an opportunity and played Shield cricket that would have ... that would have, as a role model, that would have got an influx (of Aboriginal kids into the game of cricket at the best level, at district cricket level because they would have seen that as a door opening for an opportunity to play. That not happening simply gave them the message that you won't get a chance (rrc: yeah) and that was true

rrc: so did you see yourself as a footballer first (jm: yeah) and then cricket in the summer for a little while until the footy tailed off, maybe⁶⁰?

jm: absolutely, football was my first love and playing league footy was just the pinnacle of what I, the goals that I'd set myself and the things that I'd achieved at that point. And so football was number one and cricket was a bit of fill in time until footy started, you know, but as my career went on and obviously the physical demands of football takes its toll. Whereas cricket, and being a batter too, an opening batter and a first slipper (laughs) I was able to, I was able to, my longevity was enhanced⁶¹.

⁵⁹ The Sheffield Shield is the first-class cricket competition in Australia, involving matches between the six Australian states (Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales).

⁶⁰ Australian Rules football is Australia's most popular football code and is played during the winter months (April-September), while cricket occupies the summer months (October-March).

⁶¹ There are marked differences between Australian Rules football and cricket in terms of the physical effort required in each. Football is a high impact, running game that often leads to soft-tissues injuries as a result of the tackling, bumping and contact when contesting possession of the ball. Player's tend to retire from the game earlier than cricket. But in cricket different fielding positions and different bowling styles have differential levels of physical effort. A "slipper" is a stationary position that requires great concentration and hand-eye coordination but little physical effort. An opening batter's role is to blunt the effect of the opening bowlers and establish the foundation for the team's innings. It is a role that requires discipline, concentration and a sound technique.

As focused conversations that allow the opportunity to consider themes and topics that are not typically part of a casual conversation interviews make it possible to reveal the manner in which fields, such as sport, are conceived as compartmentalised spaces, consisting of separate regions of social identity. Goffman writes about the spaces in which individuals perform as front and back regions, contrasting the former as a public space, bound by certain standards of behaviour and manners, to the latter as contradictory and where the elements that make the front region possible are contained though concealed from the other (Goffman 1959). Goffman describes these as physical spaces but they can also be taken as public and private versions of a story. That is, the interviews enable us to look behind the things that we see and hear to provide insight into the way that a social agent's habitus influence their behaviours and motivations. They provide the links between moments of experience, often from other fields, that reference broader issues and understandings. We can see this in the way that John is influenced by the performance of Syd Jackson, who was playing for East Perth in the Perth metropolitan Australian Rules competition known as the WAFL⁶², identifying himself with an Aboriginal identity he wanted to emulate,

Syd was my football role model (rrc: yeah) I'd barracked for Swan Districts. I barracked for Swan Districts and Syd Jackson you know, in the end I played for East Perth....

and the contrast to learning of his cousin's ancestry long before this knowledge was known more widely,

my father would say he said, "see that little bloke out there with the blonde hair and wearing the number 2?" He said, "he's actually, he's your cousin", "get out of here, he's a wadjella", that's a white person and he said, "no, no", he said "he's a Nyoongar..." Barry Cable's mother and my dad are first cousins and this chap, Uncle Ernie Ninyette is Barry's mother's brother but, you know, Barry didn't identify as an Aboriginal person until he got run over by a bloody tractor⁶³ ...

John's initial disbelief regarding Cable's Aboriginality and the admonishing tone in his recollection that identification only emerged after the tractor accident, separates the

⁶² Western Australian Football League

⁶³ Barry Cable's accident in 1979, when a tractor he was driving flipped and crushed his leg, took place after he had retired as a player.

front and back region. It suggested to me that the struggles John experienced on the sporting field (and possibly more generally) as an Aboriginal man were absent in his cousin's experience. That is, the public presentation of John was subject to different scrutiny to Cable's and therefore the roles they played were also subject to different levels of expectation.

The first interview ended here and the recorder was turned off. We chatted for a few minutes on how to proceed and agreed to meet in a fortnight's time. His view of the project as a biographical one was reinforced when he suggested the idea of talking to some of his former teammates and colleagues for their views on him as a player and for their opinions on why he was never selected for the State. I also showed him a photo that I had come across on the internet showing him standing with his Narrogin Towns teammates after they had won that year's Grand Final. He recounted the circumstances for his participation in the side telling me that a friend of his brother had approached him because he could bring "a hardness" to an already skilful side. He was referring to a physical approach to the game that he had developed under the coaching of Mal Brown and Polly Farmer at East Perth Football Club, who had stressed that success came from not just being mentally prepared but physically tougher. He had taken that attitude and instilled it in the Narrogin Towns team, nullifying opposition physical intimidation that resulted in the capacity for Towns players to be 'knocked off' their game by more aggressive opponents, and ultimately contributed to grand final success.

This was to become one of John's enduring dispositions. In an interview with *The Age* in 1988, just prior to the Aboriginal tour of England, John is reported as describing himself as a "tough disciplinarian who takes his sport seriously and hates losing". Interestingly, this interview contains a number of the same stories that we have covered, though recounted in less detail. It touches on his family background, his school days at Guildford Grammar, football with East Perth, unsuccessful state selection game and West Indian role models; in effect, his public story. So, with these stories covered it created space within his narrative to explore the gaps in more detail

and examine the events and actions that existed between and around those stories that were comfortable and practiced with those that were less public.



Figure 11: The 1988 Aboriginal Cricket Team in England. John McGuire sits in the front row flanked by bats and behind the toy koala.
Source: The West Australian.

Building identity

Two weeks after the first interview we returned to Steve's Hotel to continue the conversation. The first interview had provided a broad overview of a version of his story but contained areas with little detail and only superficial context⁶⁴ for events. As much as the first interview offered a set of experiences that John wanted or needed to recount, the second and third interviews promised similar interest in terms of other stories that would be revealed or previously discussed stories recounted in different ways or as claims in other areas. It made it possible to re-visit stories from the first interview to check details or push for further detail or reflection. However,

⁶⁴ I use context here to refer to a set of overarching statements that locate events within particular places in the field and at specific or as generalised temporal markers but acknowledge that context is fluid and not always satisfactory and the manner of its use will shift between individuals and even at different times by the same individual as a way of imparting a set of understandings that assist in making meaning or to legitimise the claims made through the recounted story.

in the end, the only point of overlap between the first and second interview came with the opening question.

The opening exchange referenced the story of the 'lesson' imparted by John's father and worked to make a connection to the previous interview by looking for further detail on a story that had revealed a key attitude. John's response pushed on from the earlier response and moved deeper in what motivated him, encapsulating more of what informed his habitus:

rrc: March 1st, back at Steve's with John and Ross continuing their chat. There was something that I was going to follow up from last time and this is your story about your father talking to you about the...the...the attention you got in the game when you were a junior. That idea of just ignoring it and, you know, it will be there when you're playing well but then if you have a bad game it wouldn't be there as much. I was just wondering if that's the case and that's how you structured your game. How did you yourself put pressure on other players? Was there any verbal stuff coming from you?

jm: ... from a verbal point of view I gave as good as I got, and that came with a confidence and an education and with a belief , a self-esteem and a belief in in my own ability. But not just my ability as a footballer or a cricketer but as a person knowing that I was as good as the next bloke...didn't matter whether I was, you know, or didn't matter about the black or white thing I just knew that I had a place in in society

The reply linked the interviews and established a focus for moving forward with the conversation. While the first interview covered a number of the known stories this second interview became a more focused examination of John as an agent. If the first interview had established his presence and place in the field, this next interview focused on discussions behind the more obvious stories. John began with a locational statement of place - "I just knew that I had a place in society" - and the conversation moved down this path further through questions that covered enjoyment of sport, the nature of and considered personal sense of role model, and the need to develop different strategies for different domains. The responses developed within a more tightly framed sense of self than many of the more expansive accounts in the first interview as an indication that we had moved on from the broader contextual positioning stories and were now able to concentrate in greater detail on the more

intimate renderings of experience embedded within. That is, we were moving from an objective view of John's world, as a realm of "structurally provided possibilities", and along a continuum on which we could locate agency (Hays 1994:p.64).

This increased subjective view is revealed in the manner that John introduces his actions as one of the outcomes that were available to him, and given efficacy by reference to a combination of supporting and oppositional examples drawn from within and outside of the field:

... I wanted to be good for me and that was important. If I as, good for all of the other things would fall into place, you know, my father and my family were enormously supportive and they gave up a lot to give me the opportunities to play league footy and to play cricket now if I played well that was me repaying them for the effort that they'd put in that allowed me to do that...

... I think one of the great things and one the things that made it easier for me was coming from Guildford Grammar school, an elite school playing in an elite competition, Darlot Cup cricket, Alcock Cup footy, gaining that experience and learning the culture of the sport was really important...

But the availability of alternatives requires a choice between these alternatives, a process that is often assisted through the interaction with, or intervention by, others. We have already seen the impact of this in the first interview story of John Rutherford's intervention in showing John how to alter his technique and further examples appear occasionally throughout the interviews, as in the Syd Jackson earlier or in reference to "his wonderful friend", Kevin Bryant, who encouraged him to join Mount Lawley cricket club.

We can begin to see how strategic choices have shaped John's sporting journey and, increasingly, his cricket journey. The straddling of two sporting domains that characterises much of the first interview, the switching between football and cricket in creating a habitus and set of dispositions based on broader notions of a sporting field, settles over the second and third interviews to become a more focused appraisal of experience from a cricket perspective and enables a more detailed

consideration of localised choices and the motivations and strategies that drive John's participation and engagement within a specific space within a social domain.

It clears the ground to enable the kind of narrative to emerge that is recounted in the previous chapter by drawing the connections between what might be considered as the hero stories – those signature experiences that have become the public view to his cricket identity – and less public accounts. It also allows John to talk about his experience in the game from a position of authority, having established a claim for a place based on a set of understandings and a network of relationships that gives his story the prominence and interpretive potential that is not just recognised by others but is consolidated through projects such as this one that accommodate three interviews and two chapters versus the mostly one provided to the other participants. It is also expressed in his articulation of his place in the field, drawing on actions and understandings developed on and off the field, and ultimately revealing one of his key dispositions:

jm: yes, look, I came to the team [1988 Aboriginal tour of England] with a, a fairly high profile and, and as a high profile Indigenous cricketer and, and you know the guys knew about it, I didn't know at the time but as we got on the tour we talked and guys would say, Michael Maynard who opened the bowling for Queensland in a Shield game a couple of times. Terrific bowler great bloke he was, one of our deputy vice-captains and one of our tour selectors.

We were sitting down in London having a chat and he said, you know, he said, I saw the list of players I heard, prior to going to Canberra, for the team camp training camp I saw this name John McGuire and I read, remember the Australian cricketer magazine, and they used to have some State summaries on grade cricket. He said I was reading about this bloke John McGuire from Western Australia had been making runs and I read an article from a bloke called Kim Hagdorn about how you'd made a 191 against South Perth and that you were an Aboriginal footballer and just that you played in the '78 grand final team and that 191 came just after the grand final in '78 it was during that next season. And he said I'm thinking this is the bloke that's going to be with us and, he thought, he said, he was dying to bowl at me cause he wanted to sort me out. He said I just wanted to, you know, fix some short ones in, get the ball to move around a little bit and I wanted to show you that I could ... you weren't such a good batter. He said, it didn't happen, you smashed me all over the ground he said it was then I realised yeah, you're a damn good player; which was lovely.

rrc: yeah, yeah, so that whole experience then, because following in the footsteps of the [18]68 [Aboriginal team] it's been written about so much and ah discussed at length but there was such a gap between that international representation back in

the 1800s and then this only, next four 100 years later, I mean it took, it speaks volumes about just what happened to Aboriginal participation in cricket.

jm: look it saddens me enormously I just ... I don't think Australian cricket and I don't think state associations they couldn't give a give a stuff whether Indigenous blokes play the game, they don't care, and they don't do anything tangible to make it happen, and that really annoys me...

The WACA have an Indigenous Advisory Committee. I was part of that...I mean I didn't continue in there because work was busy and I didn't have time. At that point I was also travelling away with the mining company I was working for but one of the reasons I thought, you know, I know I put up all suggestions about development for Indigenous cricketers and I said we need to embark on the same program as you have for your state schoolboys teams. Because if we don't we're not going to get that development in the Indigenous players. They'll have great hand eye coordination, they'll catch better than anyone, they'll throw better than anyone, they'll run faster than anyone and they might bowl quicker than a lot of guys their age too, but as batters because of that great hand eye coordination they'll see the ball and they'll hit it and that will come off ... five times out ten.

But they'll be happy with that, and that will happen. But, if we don't teach them the proper technique as batters, and teach them the proper technique as bowlers and give them the ability to move the ball around they won't be effective. It doesn't matter if you're black or white if you don't have that the basics of playing the game it's not going to happen. It won't happen regularly, consistently in their careers, so we, that's what we have to do and they didn't listen. It was like oh, they'd pick a squad of players and they'd enter them into country week cricket. They'd then started, through the Cricket Australia or the ACB as it was then, the Imparja cup competition and I sat in with the ACB in Alice Springs when that was in its infancy setting it up but then I just disagreed totally with the competition as it was.

As it is now the thing is when it first started it was a great way of getting that participation, as it developed it as the game has developed it only started with a couple of teams initially and then it became a national Indigenous cricket competition but the concept is wrong for the development of the game for Aboriginal people. It's a hit and giggle, it's a very short form of the game and you're not going to develop great cricketers, A-grade or district cricketers let alone State players or Australian players...

This aggregation of accumulated experiences places John in a strong position to reflect on the broader impacts of the field on individuals. The networks that he has developed and the relationships that have been forged over a long period of time in the game, in its performance, administration and management provide an informed and expansive view to the field that is not available to all. However, it also confirms a particular view to the game that attaches itself to John as a successful player and product of the system – to John's habitus. The shift in narrative flow from the personal to the general broadens our gaze to the fundamentals of the organising structure. In John's view, a broader Aboriginal participation in the game has been

positioned in a way that acknowledges their presence and interest but does not contribute to long-term benefits. For John, the long term equates to longer versions of the game such as representative cricket. This then, reveals a fundamental aspect of John's understanding of his place in the field: that his narrative offers a way into places within the field that others may seek to follow but that this requires the field to create the objective conditions that others will inculcate into their habitus in the way that John developed his.

As this second interview continued we began to explore more of the framing stories that connect the structuring stories of the first interview. These stories provide the narrative material that enabled me to construct, in concert with the other non-interview content (e.g. newspaper articles, statistics), a biographical sketch of John's life. The quote on the previous page is recognition of a point of conceptual separation that allows John to talk about cricket as a distinct entity; it creates the space into which the conversation can flow and develop, apart from but informed by the wider field of sport and other domains of social practice. This shift in emphasis towards a more localised experience also allows for the introduction of other agents that are more immediately connected to John as part of a network of personal relationships, where their impact is of a more direct impact than some of those that were part of the initial structuring stories. For instance, Larry Kickett - "a mate of mine", who also attended Guildford Grammar School on a similar scholarship to John's, and Kevin Bryant - "...remains like a brother" - who John met and befriended during an under-19s State cricket tour, are given prominence in a number of responses that move John from the country to school and into senior sport and we begin to see how John's choices are shaped though the actions of other agents:

having Kevin Bryant there gave me the opportunity to go to Mt Lawley and be part of that club where, a Nyoongar had never played. In fact, not too many Nyoongars had played grade cricket and when I first started there was myself, Larry Kickett, of course. Larry had gone to West Perth and he was playing cricket there at West Perth ... so going to Mt Lawley was simply because I had a wonderful friend ... that our acquaintance came about on this cricket tour and I was living with him at his parents. Mt Lawley was just down the road and so that made it easier but I think ... funny story, I was actually bound to Claremont-Cottesloe through Bruce Duperouzal who was an old Guildfordian and I'd played a couple of thirds or fourths games with

Claremont-Cottesloe, as they were then, to qualify and at, while I was still at school, and when I left I still intended to play for them but I was living in Dianella with the Bryants. Claremont-Cottesloe was a long way away in terms of travel. I did have transport but Mrs Bryant said well you'd better get a clearance to Mount Lawley because if you don't you won't be fed (laughs) and I didn't know whether she was deadly serious or not, but I thought, and I liked my food, so I thought I'd better get a clearance...

We were moving deeper into what motivated John to pursue cricket and while I have suggested the increasing prominence of cricket as the focus of his sporting attention, the influence or effect from the broader field was never far from the conversation:

rrc: so when you joined Mt Lawley then what was, did you feel that there was an expectation on your game or on how you would fit into the club

jm: well I came with a bit of a reputation as a pretty good cricketer [that came from] state schoolboys and so you know they were keen to get hold of me...plus Aussie Rules I mean, sorry, League football was right up there in Perth at that time and so having a league footballer play with your district cricket team was a bit of a coup for the club

rrc: so you have already started playing league footy?

jm: I'd had my first year of league footy...

rrc: I was going to ask sort of what the, I mean, the reflected sort of reputation, how was that sort of meshed in with how people saw you? Were you a league footy player first, and a good one, and then became a cricketer, sort of, and you made that decision to be a dual sportsman (jm: yes) I guess at a time when you could do it

jm: yeah, look and fortunately we were able to do that and as I mentioned earlier I think in the early piece, sport for anyone and particularly living in the country was footy and cricket and so that was just a continuation of what I learnt and how I'd... the sports that I enjoyed and loved to play and as a league footballer you were able to combine the two because there wasn't that demand on your time in football alone it got to that point a bit later in my career as a footballer, but at that point footy and cricket was the norm for league footballers.

Indeed, football is as much part of John as is cricket, though, in examining John's wider sporting experience⁶⁵ it often competes for a place in his narrative and is often

⁶⁵ The perception of prominence of one aspect of habitus over another is fluid and dynamic and can shift according to circumstance and context. It is likely an interview with a specific focus on John's football experience will present a similarly skewed view of cricket, so that one's recognition of another's habitus will vary and is dependent on a range of factors such as social proximity to the actor, access to public and private narratives and the influence of the observers habitus that allows them to make sense of what they are seeing.

relegated to a back story, whereas its initial, and then residual, influence on a set of dispositions and behaviours is critical in framing the broader sense of John's habitus. For our purposes football is peripheral to this project; but as a set of primary experiences, established in parallel but more prominent in the public consciousness, they become important as a counterpoint and as an illumination of the broader sense of field.

These 'football moments' created points of leverage to purposely direct the conversation back onto cricket specific topics. It became part of the ebb and flow of the conversation and reflected the underlying sub-conscious tension between my sense of need to control particular points of interaction and John's efforts to assert his claims of ownership and control in what and how he responded. This can be shown in the openings to responses, as a kind of barometer that measured the fluctuations between question and response, such as affirmation ("absolutely", "yeah, yeah...", "yeah, absolutely..."), assertion ("look..."), rejection ("nah", "no, no...") or combinations of affirmation/assertion ("absolutely and look...". "yeah, look, absolutely...") or rejection/affirmation ("oh, no, look..."). The first two openings were the most commonly used. The affirmation openings developed into responses that confirmed or reinforced the intent of the question or observation:

rrc: so, going to Guildford as a someone recognised as being good at sport do you think there was a difference, a different experience to say if you'd gone as someone who was good academically? Within, I went to Scotch for a couple of years and you almost get that sense that you know if you're good academically its taken for granted, but if you actually can achieve at a sport or a couple of sports at a private school then somehow you get more respect and you're elevated in people's estimations a little bit because that's also a mark of, you know, the person in a sense.

jm: yeah, oh, absolutely, absolutely, academically, I was pretty good I got a scholarship to pay for my education after primary school so and that was that was wonderful for me personally but it was great for parents because they they'd invested a lot of time and they gave me a lot of support and they were just brilliant particularly with the restricted resources...

and

rrc: I don't know what it is about the first ten, fifteen overs or ten overs maybe when you are nervous

jm: oh absolutely I was a very nervous starter I loved to obviously, all batsmen, [tapping the bat on his hand mimicking the bat striking the ball] love to feel the bat ball hitting the bat...

The assertive use of “look”, either by itself or in combination, positioned the response as a more active engagement with the question or observation, even as a device to indicate where a comment or observation was incorrect. In these cases, John would express a position or provide further detail that was not necessarily contained in or implied by my prefaced enquiry. It opened up the response to John’s control and allowed him to make a claim for control over the content and direction. At the same time, it also made room in the interviews for a shift in our roles and we moved away from interviewer/interviewee into a mode of exchange where the discussion could flow back and forth as a negotiated conversation. The following exchange from a longer passage related to the 1988 tour of England captures some of this:

rrc: did people expect you to play differently because you were Aboriginal?

jm: no, look, I don’t think so I didn’t expect us to play differently, just play your natural game, your normal game. I'd come up through the grade ranks and there were a couple of other guys in the team who had, but most of the others were largely country cricketers. Yeah, it was just approaching the game. How you would normally approach it but obviously we were playing at another level now so the intensity ...

rrc: that's what I was wondering whether as you get to that level and the intensity builds that suddenly you go back, you abandon your natural game to a certain degree because you feel you gotta do something different to perform at that level.

jm: look, I know what you're saying but I don't, I think you can still play your natural game but maybe with just a little bit of tweaking of how you approach the game. Rather than play the lairy shots you get away with in country cricket or grade cricket all of a sudden you're playing against largely professional cricketers at county level or minor county level. These guys were there day in day out playing the game so their experience and their ability and obviously the condition they played under you know they were just students of the game and they had a few tricks of the trade and you had to be on your guard. You had to be on your game to survive.

rrc: but that means you have to think a bit differently about the game as well you just can’t imagine yourself back in a country town on country grounds playing that way.

jm: no, look absolutely and again I'd emphasised that, our coach, our manager emphasised all of those things. We were there. We were seriously representing our country. We were seriously representing our people and so from, from the playing side of it we had to be absolutely professional and fair and play the game in the right spirit of the game from a professional but also sportsmanship all of those things...

The response becomes more reflexive as a consequence of the discussion and allows John to explore some of the mechanics that is a part of playing the game. It also illustrates some of the experience that John offered to the team through his long experience as a successful district cricketer, and his knowledge of reading conditions both on and off the field.

Interestingly, the second and third interviews contain more of these kinds of interactions reflecting the greater explorative content made possible by the coverage of the 'public' stories in the initial interview. However, the repeated use of response openings (i.e. "look", "absolutely") featured throughout all of the interviews and I became attuned to their use and, in places, paid more attention to the way that I introduced topics or made follow up questions so that the responses were not simply affirmation of points already expressed. What they suggest, however, is that interviews shift in their degrees of conversation, shifting between the casual conversational mode of two equal partners to the more formal question/answer format that positions the interviewer and interviewee in a different power relationship. Interviews exist as an episodic pattern of passive responder and proactive instigator events, negotiated and constructed between two agents working to produce an understanding from different positions within the field - much as would be the case on the field, in the way that an innings unfolds as dynamic and shifting pattern of passive and pro-active episodic interactions between batters and bowlers.

Interactions between the interviews

In July 2012 I presented a paper to a conference in the United Kingdom (Chadwick 2012). Before I left I forwarded John a draft of the paper and tried unsuccessfully to contact him to discuss the paper and to source some images for the presentation. On returning to Perth I discovered that John had emailed me two days after I had left requesting that I call him to discuss the paper. Thinking the worst and that I had somehow insulted him or used his quotes in a way that he was unhappy with, I tried calling him to arrange a time to discuss the paper. I was not sure where John was

working but soon discovered that he had a job with a company that required him to travel to the north of the State on a regular basis. John had provided no clues about whom he worked for and we continued to trade phone messages as we strived to make contact.

We eventually spoke directly and a meeting was arranged at John's office in West Perth. It was only when I arrived at the meeting venue that I learnt that he was working for a mining company with interests in the north of Western Australia, but not what the company was mining, nor what John was doing for them. We bought a coffee and went back to the boardroom where I gave John the transcripts from the second and third interviews. I gave a brief account of how the paper went and I expressed my initial concerns that he had found issues in the tenor of my argument or in the use of his words. John was happy with the paper acknowledging that a 15-minute presentation could only skim a few basic points, but expressed the view that there was more to say in terms of some of the points raised and that this detail was critical in presenting a richer account of the experiences of his family.

John spoke about his life as a young boy living on the fringes of towns in the Western Australian Wheatbelt. He recalled how the shacks that his family lived in had a dirt floor and how his mother would line the tin walls with hessian sacks to keep the warmth in during winter and to insulate them from the radiated heat during summer. And he re-visited a point he had made during one of the interviews when he told me about the care and pride taken in maintaining a clean, neat appearance whenever trips into town were made. Shoes were always polished to a mirror finish, hair was combed neatly and the clothes were cleaned and pressed. This was detail he felt I needed to know to support one of the points made within the paper; those points that I had inferred from what I had been told. And from this discussion came the suggestion of a biography, beginning with the story of John's parents and drawing a path through their lives to join up with John as a young boy and then through to John as cricketer/footballer/Nyoongar man.

This was a conversation that only resulted from John's continuing interest and involvement in aspects of this project and the time he had taken to read what I had written and to follow through on providing feedback to me. This discussion, as brief and ephemeral as it was, extended my understanding of how John's family life informs his life and how he draws on those early memories to make his way in the world. As he said to me, our parents strive to provide their children with better lives than theirs and we [as parents] do the same for our children. These and other fragments of insight that took place outside of the more formalised interview context are useful in the analysis of the interviews as products of a particular social practice and separated from the content of the stories and anecdotes provided in response to my questions.

Playing the interview game

I have already described my prior connection to John and some of the lead-up discussions with him before the first interview. It is worth acknowledging again the issues that emerge from an invitation to participate. As a special kind of performance an interview requires the "mobilizing [of] behaviours" (Goffman 1959:p.43) as a both a performer and as a character so that, in leveraging the theatrics of the performance (the setting, the context, the drama), a plausible appearance is presented. The participant's degree of comfort and familiarity with the interview format helps contribute to the way in which they flow and John's prior experience in this activity disposed him to make the experience one that was characterised by considered and fulsome responses that at times benefitted from practised (re-)telling and the ability to position and shift responses in and around themes.

In working back through the evidence it is possible to identify patterns of social experience that make claims for an understanding of John as a social agent. It is possible to trace the negotiation of a path through a complex and structured social field to establish an identity that is drawn strongly from his habitus. He uses this identity to locate and position him within the field, but is equally comfortable with the switch between domains of experience. He calls on understandings and

relationships from another part of the broader sporting field (football) to articulate and reflect on the attitudes, strategies and behaviours that he develops in cricket. This switching is made possible through his habitus and creates a faceted identity that is supported by both sports. Football, through its greater connection to and involvement by of Aboriginal people is an important frame for an aggregated set of experiences they have greater resonance and applicability in John's generalist dispositions. And to talk more generally about his habitus is to consider that it formed by his encounters with other domains within the sporting field, as well as from his experiences from other fields. Equally, John's experience of growing up in cricket as part of an elite school team and State representative and the capital that derives from this connection, establishes another pattern of behaviours based on an orthodox and structured understanding of the game. John's habitus is a construction of social identity, based on individual choice and ambition, smoothed by the overarching structures and possibilities, and encompassing a mix of foundational, generalist and context specific dispositions that establish a form of hierarchical ordering applied to animating and negotiating a place or places within the field.

His accounts chart this construction of identity by establishing a path that shapes his life in cricket as a product of a system of networks and relationships. What emerges is a construction of identity that shifts from the accounts that contain elements given over to the "public sphere" to those that are expressed as personal expressions of self (Jackson 2012). By the end of the third interview, and concluding with a conversation about the relatively casual (personal) outings with the Leeming Spartans cricket club, we had drawn John's story through to the end of his regular active participation as a player and had acknowledged an ongoing interest in the presence of Aboriginal people in the game. It was a biographical sketch, negotiated and rendered from a series of interactions at a fixed point in time and place. Something that was identifiably a cricket story sat in the centre and held our gaze, though was supported by a background landscape that contained points of reference to other areas of his life, with football appearing more prominently in some places,

overlapping and threatening to encroach on parts of the cricket content. It was a version of a life captured and worked to produce a broader view to the subject.

Yet, even as a sketch, it felt like we had covered an enormous amount of ground over the time and had explored stories that may not have been offered if there had only been one or two interviews. The first interview had covered some of the more public and easily accessible stories establishing a profile of John as a successful sportsman who had experienced the highs and lows of the games he played. The second interview consolidated some of the themes that had emerged during the first interview and elements of those topics were re-worked or pursued down different paths. It enabled me to take John back to earlier stories from his childhood and youth that filled gaps in the narrative account that had been provided in our initial conversation. At that first interview stage there was a suggestion but no real commitment to more than one interview so the questions asked and the responses given reflected the need to record a more general overview of John and what he'd achieved. This was almost the story for posterity, the one that gave form to John the successful Aboriginal cricketer who was denied the chance to demonstrate his skills on a bigger stage. I had sensed that this is what John expected to tell me, and in anticipation of establishing this recognisable identity, the commitment to more interviews would make it possible to see through and behind this public image to interrogate what it was built on – these were the stories that I hoped would reveal the connections, networks and meanings that contributed to the construction of this image of John.

As a result, the second interview flowed more freely because there was structure to John's story that provided temporal markers or reference points. These points guided further questions and offered the opportunity to trace lines between the more publicly known stories. More detail emerged about other players that shared John's cricket journey and he was able to reflect more widely on aspects of the game that he had observed emerging in recent years. These clarifications were shaped and informed by his habitus set against his experiences and expectations of the game. His

inability to represent Western Australian impacted on a generation that followed and became a dominant and foundational story that encapsulated much of the way that the field operated to structure the story. His reflection on events like the Imparja Cup, and its failure to nurture and develop technique as a fundamental of what it meant to play the game, revealed an underlying disposition of discipline and learning that was essential to the making a complete cricketer:

I mean playing the defensive [chair scrapes as John stands to demonstrate], forward defensive shot sort of down the wicket [mimes playing a defensive shot where the bat is away from the leg leaving a gap between the bat and pad] and with an angled bat and I just thought well this is if this the best then we're not very good at all ...

The second and third interview created other connections within John's story and wider narrative emerging to extend other published accounts such as those associated with the 1988 tour and capturing the essence of an identity attached to historical threads within the game, lending his individual biography to the larger story of Aboriginal cricketers. For example, a reference to the New Norcia teams of the 1880s and the presence on the team of his great-grandfather, John Blurton, considered in reflection of the idea of a hidden Aboriginal presence in the game, allowed John to conflate time and place to establish a link between the treatment of Eddie Gilbert in the 1930s and John's own experience at the State trial game in the 1980s. It constructs a shared, almost timeless, story, where the actions of others are repeated in similar scenarios, for the same reasons and suggesting similar motives, stripping the individuals of agency and making them subject to some kind of supra-individual control and giving power to those who administer the game.

As a project with an ethnographic focus the interviews were a crucial part of the process as a way of capturing the stories and reflections of a life in the field. However, it is in the writing of these biographical narratives from them that realises the ethnographic relevance of the project (Wolcott 1990). This process of writing from the evidence creates the space to link fragments of memory and knowledge and create something that expresses an underlying feeling about a situation. This is the duality of ethnographic research. Without this duality of process and product, the

evidence from interviews or field notes remain just that, unless the evidence captured can be transformed into something that says something about the experiences and behaviours recorded. In presenting the process that captured John's biographical narrative I have strived, through writing about it ethnographically, to transform that experience in such a way that is more than simply representing it.

Conclusion

This idea of transforming the recorded evidence of human experience into an ethnographic product is extended in Clint Dann's account in the next chapter, where different strategies are expressed to capture an experience that is both similar and distinct. For John, to be denied a chance of higher representation requires a framework for understanding and he finds it in the experiences of others, allowing him to position himself in relation to something beyond the confines of the field, which in this case becomes the wider marginalisation of Aboriginal people within Australian society. But this created link emerged after the first interview, and after we had established an agreed commitment to enough interviews that might be required, so that there was a sense of shared interest in the process of meeting and discussing aspects of John's cricket experience.

The first interview realised two things: it created a focus for the second and third interview by allowing the initial discussion to ebb and flow from cricket to football and back again; established the presence and importance of football in John's life and in its contribution to John's sporting identity; and acknowledged John as footballer recognising this important element of his life. These football stories also contained examples of interaction and observation that served to shape John's approach to sport and everyday, featuring the values and motivations that contributed to his habitus. This combination of sporting endeavour offers further opportunities for research as an insight into the ways in which the two sports managed issues of identity. But the focus here is on cricket. Whilst the football content is important in contextualising the cricket at that time it became less of priority by the early 1980s, the period that established John as a quality cricketer.

The second point to make is to note the coverage of what have been described as John's public stories. These are the accounts of experience that featured in newspaper reports, feature stories and publications – the “only one game” references – that have helped define an understanding of Aboriginal participation at elite levels of cricket. Limited to one interview this would have been the dominant narrative. In allowing this to emerge at the outset it offered due recognition to that enduring event and cleared the ground for other experiences from which it was possible to identify other themes that formed part of the construction that is John's life in cricket. These stories, such as the school cricket, Mount Lawley club cricket and the even more recent story of the Leeming Spartans, are as important in John's story as the State trials because these are the ones that, in their portrayal of John as a cricketer of quality, stability and reliability, heighten the tension within other negative experiences and allow us to understand why there was such impact in the selectors' decision.

There is also a sense that John wants these public stories to define his identity because they serve to demonstrate what Aboriginal people have had to endure in choosing cricket as their sport. “How are you going to use this stuff?”, he wondered at the end of our third interview. This may not be the narrative that John was expecting but as an account about one life in cricket, about learning the game, negotiating identity and being an agent within a structured social field it offers us a kind of John McGuire-like opening innings, a disciplined, considered and measured performance, that sets the foundation for others to follow.

Chapter 6

Desire and Worth: Clint Dann

I was adamant with my talent I was going to be playing Test cricket for Australia...

We use stories to craft and order social space in order to position ourselves within that space and in relation to other spaces that are established through their recounting, in order to be “found” within the field, thereby legitimising claims for a place in the field (de Certeau 1984:pp.123–5). So, when Clint Dann expresses his approach to way he batted – “I just ... take every ball on its merits basically; more times than not I had some success you know I made a few runs so you know it was good I really enjoyed the challenge ...”, he is telling us that his claims for a place in the field are grounded in an accepted orthodoxy, and articulated modestly as a way of avoiding accusations of ego and smoothing over the tensions that run through his narrative. However, while his transcribed words can be read at face value they are also stripped bare of their spoken delivery that lends them tone and atmosphere. While we can read them as a product of habitus and, in the case of the quote above, as part of the habitus of a batter (considered, careful, watchful), their aural expression, the manner in which they were delivered in the context of an interview, gives Clint’s stories a hard, strategic edge that runs counter to the modest claims above and opens up his narrative to allow us to explore how he mobilises his stories to create his view of the field and support his position within.

The disconnect between the what and how did not result from a reticence to tell stories; the stories flowed. It came from what I considered to be a pre-determined, packaged for the audience, approach that ran in opposition to the careful technique suggested above. It was less, ‘let me consider that question and comment’ and more, ‘here’s what I want you to hear’. There is a description in cricket that applies to periods or moments in batting that are characterised by their premeditation; a gap

between 'right' and 'wrong' ways to bat. Typically, it manifests itself when a batter plays an innings or even a single stroke that is less about careful observation, patience and control – 'playing the ball on its merits' - and more about deciding how each ball should be played before it is bowled; or, playing an innings without regard for the state of play (and it is usually an aggressive approach rather than defensive) where every ball is to be scored from no matter where it pitches or how it is bowled. These kinds of innings/strokes can be thrilling and unpredictable, but traditional wisdom⁶⁶ is that they generally burn bright before a quick extinguishment.

Premeditation can build tension on both sides by creating an expectation that the next ball will result in a wicket. Bowlers sense this and are often frustrated when a ball is played streakily through slips or hit in the air, falling tantalisingly short of the fielder. The premeditated approach offers hope to both bowler and batter alike, but is ultimately an approach that fails to provide any regular measure of success, and it is an approach that many of the former greats advise against (Synge & Anns 1987). It may, in time, result in questions about character and temperament, much of which may be mis-directed or mis-interpreted, leading to an impression or reputation of unreliability, selfishness or untrustworthiness. Premeditation also reflects what Bourdieu termed dispositions or an "inscribed schema in the body and in the schema of thought" (1977, 15), so that its impact on social action in different contexts reflects the enduring nature of dispositions in shaping habitus. Ultimately it is about desire and the coordination of available resources that will achieve this predetermined action. It is about projecting the body and thought into a future space to assert claims of control and place. In this chapter I will show how this disposition of desire reveals

⁶⁶ The practice of being and doing develops the kinds of understanding that accrue over time transforming into a sense of the game against which to compare and consider actions relative to other understandings that have been shared and inculcated through stories, conversation, and training. Perhaps this 'traditional wisdom' should be considered more as popular convention, as something that is shared across the field and becomes part of the process of creating habitus, though it could also be considered as a reproductive mechanism rather than as a process that engages with temporality, i.e. one can know a convention without knowing how and where it derived.

itself in both the accounts of Clint's cricket experience and as a product of the ethnographic experience.

Stories as authorising claims

As I was recording the audio for this next narrative there was a sense that these were stories and accounts that I needed to hear, things that needed to be told and that this was, at last, an opportunity to articulate them. They were the kinds of stories that were chosen and selected in an expedient way as a means of relaying certain truths. Jackson, reflecting on his experiences with refugees in New Zealand, observed that stories can be told in ways that close the gap between individual and state narratives – “conformity not criticism” (Jackson 2013:p.14). People who were vulnerable and beholden to the generosity of their new country offered these stories as a means of covering their true experiences. In this account, the stories that Clint reveals work in the opposite way, critiquing his experience by revealing his struggles with conformity within an environment that, whilst not outwardly hostile to Aboriginal participation, is generally perceived as exclusionary (Fogarty et al 2015).

This sense of premeditation was heightened during the transcription process. It's almost as if the repeated stopping, listening, repeating, distorts the speed of the spoken delivery and I had a sense of a weight of words tumbling out in a short space of time. They were carefully chosen words but they came almost in anticipation of what was to be asked. They detailed personal experience articulately and fluently without any theatrical raising of the voice or use of expletives, and they came, initially at least, in an order that ran from the beginning, from where the cricket started. It was a declaration of intent; an opening salvo that told me, you asked about my experience, well here it is.

The statement was accompanied by a laugh that I took as a slightly ironic acknowledgement of a happy memory, a recognition of the way in which a simple statement can collapse time, one that described an experience that suggested a wider sense of belonging, established a link to everyone else who had ever played

the game, acknowledged humble beginnings and gave context for the experiences to come. After all, many of the greats experienced their first games, and developed a love of, cricket in the backyard (Cannane 2009). It was an almost wistful recollection but also inflected with a reflective edge that the way it started was not how it unfolded: “me and my brother just started playing in the back yard basically (laughs) ... yeah just really took a liking to it”.

Perhaps I should have been prepared for this sense of premeditated delivery following the reaction to a comment made during the initial pre-interview welcome and warm-up. As part of the background introduction that I performed before each initial interview I would summarise my project and give a little background to what I had been doing to that point, including other individuals who were involved.

This was the project’s third interview so there were only a couple of names to quote - one being John McGuire. The mention of John’s name drew the following response: “yeah there’s John McGuire. He did well but there’s plenty of other guys who should be just as well known. No one ever talks about Clint Dann, but I played many years of first grade cricket and for the ATSIC and Prime Minister’s eleven. I was good but no one ever heard what Clint Dann achieved”. There was more than hint of frustration in the response and I felt slightly rebuked – was there a history between the two? - but was also interested in what this offered as a claim, on behalf of himself and others, for a position alongside the likes of John McGuire. Indeed, would Clint allow others to share this stage or would they be kept in the margins? As the interview unfolded it became clearer that his push for a place in the broader arena was personal, an application of disposition, that was tied to the way in which Clint recalled his experience and responded to my presence as audience and researcher.

In proffering the names of the other participants, with the thought that it might establish a link to a wider network, I had touched on an issue that many others have faced, which went beyond an experience of cricket and touched on aspects of belonging: how do we feel measured against our peers or colleagues; what is the

tension between our own sense of self-identity versus the perception that others have of us? Do we acknowledge that the perception of ourselves may not align to the perceptions that others have of us – is this why Clint felt annoyed? Had I wronged him by not acknowledging his sense of his place in the field near or alongside John? These questions were not directly addressed during the interview⁶⁷ so in seeking insights to the above it is necessary to consider the way in which Clint addressed his responses and it becomes clearer still that this is a personal account that makes no claims to talk for the experiences of others.

Towards the end of the interview he offered the following reflection of an experience that sat outside of the mainstream. We can begin to understand that behind his claim for his position is an account that contains different experiences to John's in the early chapter and, while the record of participation is significant, so too is the revelation of the transitory nature of this experience and its attribution to cultural difference, which stands in marked contrast to John McGuire's single club experience.

I played over 100 games of A-grade at 5 different clubs ... I'm not proud of this but because of the cultural barriers I couldn't stay at the, I would have loved to have been a one WACA club player. But, in hindsight, because of who I am, it just couldn't happen. I'm not saying this would happen to another Indigenous cricketer, but I'm just saying because of who I was I couldn't stay at the one club because they couldn't understand that cultural side of things. Now, the young Nyoongar boys are more educated in that way and it's a requirement and try and be there. But back then I didn't have that education, yes I was getting educated at school, you know, and I done alright in that regard but I still didn't have that culture about me in terms of those requirements, it was just me, the person, Clint Dann, the Nyoongar boy from Perth. I just didn't fit in with my programme, the way I operated and they couldn't understand that ...

This is Clint's story – a skilful and successful cricketer who played more than 100 1st grade games of district club cricket in Perth during the 1990s and 2000s, represented his State in the Imparja Cup team, was selected to play in the 2001 ATSIC XI team versus the Prime Minister's XI and, following a man-of-the-match performance in this game, in the Prime Ministers XI versus New Zealand game the same year. But he also

⁶⁷ I should note, however, that what I had observed during the interview and identified in transcribing the recording was confirmed by other project participants; never directly, but expressed in knowing looks and casual, abstracted comments.

played at five WACA grade clubs, regularly moving from club to club following misunderstandings and disenchantment so that his experience, like John McGuire's before, also becomes one of 'if only'. Rather than the distinction and achievement of 100 games it is the five clubs that becomes a signifier of character. And while players move from club to club for various reasons (e.g. moving residence, more opportunity at other clubs) a high number reflects something about the player and raises questions about why they keep changing. The fragility that is embedded in Clint's identity results from this regular shifting from club to club, and therefore, contributes to perceptions of character rather than ability.

Clint's story reveals the manner in which position within and movement through the field, and the accompanying development of habitus, is shaped and negotiated through dispositions. These dispositions establish a matrix that assists in ordering perceptions (Bourdieu 1969, Martin 2003), and work to position agents in relation each other (Bourdieu 1969) and to a predestined field location (Bourdieu 1988b). And in following this trajectory, which is rarely a smooth line, we can identify the influence of dispositions on the agent's relationships with those around them, and as a ripple effect to those in other parts of the field. The result is that their experience of the field will, to varying degrees, be perceived as different to other agents who share a different dispositional mix or even a similar mix applied in different ways. It means that while dispositions may be deposited in a group (Bourdieu 1977), they are also inculcated within individuals as a product of their movement through other fields. This accumulation results in a differential that is revealed in situations of social stress or at points of intersection where the expectations and perceptions of others within a field create situations that require particular ways of responding or demand choice to be made.

Engaging the game.

Clint is a Nyoongar man who was raised in suburban Perth with his parents and younger brother, Tim. His father worked for Main Roads, as a Christian pastor and, along with his mother, provided a stable home life:

... I had the support at home too and that's a big barrier to our young Nyoongar kids. From achieving and being a part of, I guess, having a successful life you need to have that background, that support at home ...

An enjoyment of the game developed from games of backyard cricket and kindled a desire to play that resulted in Clint and his brother registering with the local cricket club. Around 1987 the family moved to a new house in Beechboro, a suburb in the inner north-east of Perth. The change in district meant a change in clubs, so Clint and his brother joined their local district club, Bayswater-Morley, where they forged successful records as "stand out" players.

In 1988, shortly after the move, the two brothers attended Kent St High School in Bentley as scholarship students in the school's specialist cricket program⁶⁸. Entry into the program required testing at the University of Western Australia and the confidence born of ability and success that was expressed in relation to their early junior cricket at Bayswater-Morley was repeated in relation to their entry into the school's program and becomes an enduring disposition throughout his period in the game. It also demonstrates an awareness of and capacity to deal with the structures that organise the game across different levels and in different locations:

... obviously changing zones, I had to play for Bayswater Morley. Me and my brother both, we played there for 15s, 17s. So we played 2 years in 15s and 2 years in 17s and, yeah, that went really well. We won a premiership I think in both those junior years and me and my brother were the stand out two players.

Up to the end of high school Clint's shared his cricket journey with his brother. They both attended the same clubs and succeeded for their teams and themselves. They were the only two Aboriginal players in their school program and this sense of both uniqueness, but also separateness, reveals itself as Clint begins the transition from junior to senior cricket. With high school finished and having graduated from the academy program the brothers needed to choose where to continue their cricket careers. Clint played with Bayswater-Morley throughout his school years and chose

⁶⁸ According to the Kent Street High School website the cricket program started in 1988, which means that Clint was in the first intake.

to continue with the club following the completion of year 12. As a 17-year-old he was selected to their first-grade team and opened their batting in combination with more senior partners, including Ryan Campbell who went on to play one-day cricket for Australia.

Choices such as where to play adult cricket are commonplace in the sporting trajectories of all players and the transition from junior to senior cricket is dependent on a range of factors that is individual to each player. In Clint's experience, continuing his junior club was a familiar and local entity where he knew the players and administration and where he was comfortable with the environment.

However, this feeling of comfort quickly disappeared when he began to play cricket in the club's 1st side. The narrative shifts to focus on Clint's story and his brother's presence becomes less visible and largely omitted. It becomes a story of a single agent where action and outcome are expressed as an individual's interaction between subjective disposition and objective structural constraints⁶⁹. While Clint shared much of his early cricket with his brother, this is his account.

It also marks the point where other more publicly recognisable names appear in the narrative, marking boundaries between different spaces within the field and establishing points of intersection (de Certeau 1984) against which Clint's narrative is allowed to bump, finding a place within the field and creating potentialities that may or may not be subsequently realised. They become points of animation that create moments of sociality that can have positive, negative or benign consequences depending on the interplay of social actions between those who share this point of engagement. As part of the stories told they are the actors recruited to give sense to the theatre of the story and give reason to the social actions that it describes. At least for the stories where there is a rupturing of the narrative and boundaries are challenged or contested.

⁶⁹ Indeed, Tim is rarely mentioned throughout the remainder of the interview.

At this point in the interview we had moved from question and response to a mode of expanded recollection (premeditation) with Clint controlling his narrative as a means of exploring something that he clearly believed was important to tell. It echoes the “one game” story that captures so much of John McGuire’s experiences and contains the characteristics (dispositions) that are threaded through a number of the recalled events to follow. It begins immediately following the quote above and straddles the boundary between domains of social practice, in this case junior and senior cricket. This is where the sense of premeditated story telling was most obvious - I needed to know this in order to understand the rest of Clint’s experiences:

rrc: any other Nyoongar [indistinct] any other Nyoongar kids

cd: nah, me and my bro were the only two. Tim, my brother is, we were the only two that um really were playing cricket

rrc: so how did you find that?

cd: no, it didn't phase me at all. The issues started to happen, Ross, when we got into the, not so much my brother but myself, cause when we got a point where, ok, we want you to choose cricket as a career. I was 17 and I was opening the batting with Ryan Campbell, who’s played a lot of cricket for WA. I played probably three years or two years even, under Bob Massie. I don’t know if you've heard of him, he played for Australia very, in my view this is where I'm saying, where there's going to be a lot of negativity, very racist. I remember showing up at training a bit late - for seniors and having my socks down a bit or my shirt out a bit - and he'd single me out of everyone and he'd stop the whole training session and really try to belittle me in front of everyone, all the seniors. That just didn’t sit well with me. And that just kept going on.

[W]ith regards to the functional side of things where you'd be expected to, ok, you're talented at yer (sic), what you play. That is cricket, your requirement was to be a part of selection night, Thursday nights. Attend, have a beer or have a soft drink and wait around for your name to be called and socialise with the boys. With my culture it was hard for me to understand that. I never got taught to, to be a part of that type of culture so after training, Ross, most of the time I'd just get my gear, pack my gear up and go home even though I was part of the senior group, squad that is, for all four grades; and maybe they didn't like that. I don't know, but I was still getting picked in the top side because of my talent, and it was just hard to grasp and as a result of that I think that’s probably why I got stereotyped a lot because I didn't want to be a part of that.

[O]k, functions, you know on a Saturday night they would have a barbeque, team dinner whereas I[d] probably want to go and have dinner with my own family, with my mum and dad and my cousins. Because that’s where we've come from and the WACA's setup doesn’t understand that the Indigenous culture, the Nyoongar culture, you were supposed to be that way or else. So slowly as a year or two went by, playing

A grade, there was a lot of breakdown in communications and just me feeling very uneasy and even though that I played, like I said, 15s and 17s and went into the WACA seniors team there at Bayswater ... then I moved over to Midland Guildford and I spent two years there...

This lengthy response provides an assertion for Clint's ongoing negotiation of his place in the fabric of the club as an expectation that develops from more than simply playing cricket. There is a tension between the pressured homogeneity (Robidoux 2001) to be part of the enterprise (the "functional" side) and what is implied or expected by others (the supportive side that captures the relationship and networks that frames the doing) and it reveals something of the inclusive/exclusive divide that defines a position in the field.

It also reflects the changeable nature of any social interaction when the mix of individuals, and the guiding hand of their habitus, can disrupt stable structures through a considered assessment of the effort and value necessary to choose between paths of action (Bourdieu 1989). It is an appearance of rational choice that Bourdieu argues is the revealing influence of habitus, where "(w)e can always say that individuals make choices, as long as we do not forget that they do not choose the principle of these choices" (Wacquant 1989:p.45). Rather, habitus, in commanding lines of action, guided Clint's response and established a template or strategy that could be applied in similar scenarios to animate social practice. This practice, then, emerges through "the encounter between the habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the constraints, demands and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or with which the actor is moving" (Jenkins 2002:pp.77-8). Clint was disposed to acting in the way that he did and was motivated to do so by the manner in which the situation he was in developed and unfolded and worked to create tension between his dispositions (strength his culture, commitment to family) and the choices offered. In the same scenario other agents may have reacted similarly or differently depending on their particular habitus and mix of disposition.

Clint describes a period of “negativity” and “racist” attitudes and the manner in which he was singled out in front of his teammates because of what he considered to be minor indiscretions or from a disconnection to the way in which things were done at the club. He was young and fit, coached in cricket at school during the week and also attending club training twice a week; what he describes with the benefit of hindsight as an overload.

In presenting at training a little late or wearing the wrong training gear and being singled out by the coach represented a challenge to Clint’s membership of the group, not on the basis of his cricket ability but for behaviours that he believes reflected the negative stereotypical values of the coach. There is no way of knowing the coach’s motivation for choosing to make an example of Clint. It may well reflect the coach’s ingrained racist views of Nyoongar people as Clint suggests - a part of his (coaches’) habitus and disposition - and there is merit in this in Clint’s claim that other senior non-Aboriginal players escaped rebuke for similar indiscretions. In this scenario, the tension between the two is enhanced by the power imbalance in the structural position of the two so that the choice becomes one of compromise and accommodation or one that can only be resolved by physical and structural separation. Perhaps it also articulates a broader incapacity by the club as an objective entity to accommodate the subjective expectations of an individual agent. But equally, it is also suggestive of the modes of behaviour applied to new members of any group; the kinds of almost ritualised challenges that are intended to mould and shape; to instil and privilege the team culture over individual identity. Ultimately, it produced a scenario that required a conscious choice and where the sub-conscious influence of dispositions provided a mechanism to decide between the available options.

In the end Clint chose to move from a situation that he clearly found to be in opposition to the manner by which he wanted to conduct himself. There was clearly tension between the objective world as represented by the club and the practices

that were produced through the dispositions of not only his, but other actors in that structure, including that of the coach.

The expression of a strong personal identity, supported by his Aboriginality and family, a feature of Clint's account, as is the tension between identity as an individual cricketer and team member. It characterises his experience in different ways to other participants in this project by exploring the nature of the fields influence on individual experience. It assists in our construction of the field as a space, and where, through negotiation, validation and contestation, subjective agents make claims for a position. This position is made possible by the possibilities of dispositions that operate as a "matrix of *perceptions, appreciations and actions*" (emphasis in original)(Bourdieu 1977:p.83). In the context of this project, with its predominance of white cricket administrators, players and perception of 'white-ness', Clint's account is one that goes to the heart of an outsiders (Aboriginal) encounter with the game.

Feeling upset and let down by the club that had nurtured his talent Clint was ready for a move. The opportunity to do so was provided during a chance conversation with the owner of a sporting goods shop.

Kevin Gartrell, you know Slater-Gartrell sports, old boy, he got me along to Midland[-Guildford]. I went into their store there in Midland and just shared a bit with how things weren't working for me at Baysie and he said well, Clint, come along, come on board so I went over there ...

The intervention by Gartrell operated in a similar way to that of John Rutherford with John McGuire and provided a link and introduction to another part of the field, albeit one that existed in the same domain. It is not clear whether Clint knew that Midland-Guildford Cricket Club could offer conditions different to those he was leaving or whether the offer, being simply the chance to continue in the competition at an appropriate level, masked the possibility that he might encounter similar behaviours. He spent the next two years playing at the club, alongside the likes of State and Australian players, Tom Moody, Brendon Julian, Jo Angel and Tim Zoehrer and England representative, Alec Stewart.

I have found no records for Clint's period at Midland-Guildford and no detail was provided during the interview. Indeed, the interview revealed little of individual or even seasonal performances⁷⁰, and statistics were not part of my enquiries at this time, partly to let the conversation progress but also because the lack of specific detail about performances by Clint supported my understanding that this move failed to meet his expectations, on and off the field.

After two years at Midland-Guildford it was not the experience of playing in a strong, successful club, with representative players that framed Clint's recollection but his experience of problems similar to those at Bayswater-Morley. Initially, it was the presence of established, elite level players that had contributed to Clint's sense of belonging and his sense of himself as a talented and valuable member of the team, but, as at Bayswater-Morley, any indiscretion was treated harshly. He describes a breakdown due to "cultural issues" where he felt stereotyped so that his behaviour was judged against his Aboriginality. Being late for training brought a rebuke that wasn't replicated with other high-profile teammates when they were late and fostered this feeling of discomfort. This stereotyping stymies identity by masking it under a layer of generalisations that work against revealing individual character.

cd: ... so I went over there for two years and then again there was a breakdown because of the cultural issues at Midland Guildford. I felt as though they were stereotyping me. I would be two seconds late for training or two seconds late on

⁷⁰Recounting batting averages, number of centuries, and notable innings differs from player to player. Some players know exactly how many runs they've scored, where they've scored them and what their average is at any given point in the season. Others aren't bothered with the numbers, will be vague about the results but will recount stories of specific events that they'd seen or in which they'd been involved. In these stories the runs scored or wickets taken act to frame the account and to provide a measure against other performances; they are fragments that become part of a larger narrative that includes a combination of one's own stories and those told by others. For many stories it is more likely to be the contest that becomes the signifier of value to the player rather than their actual statistical contribution. However, when the context and performance are both noteworthy the statistical detail is often more clearly recalled. There are also those universal statistics that have become part of imagining the game. Most notable of these in Australian cricket, and the one is help up as the pinnacle of performance to which all are measured against, is Don Bradman's Test average. His average of 99.94 runs per innings is memorialised in the post box number for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. But these universal statistics are relatively few and tend to only be attached to outstanding performances that are quoted and discussed widely and regularly so that they become part of a collective memory.

game day, five minutes late or whatever and I'd be put over the coals for it. Whereas if a Simon Katich came five minutes late, ten minutes late it was ok for Simon Katich. Or if Brendon Julian or Jo Angel or Tom Moody come late it was ok, there was no issue

cd: the core of all of it is where I've come from, my upbringing. Now my mum and dad, they're lovely people, you know, they're beautiful. I love them to death - they're my favourite people in the world. It's been so positive to me and my brother and our all my other brothers and sisters and they're just people that we've always looked up to. We've been lucky in that. My mum and dad, my dad especially got brought up on Mogumber mission, taken away from my nan up in Geraldton put on Mogumber mission. He was with Main Roads when we lived in Carlisle. He never missed day in over thirty years and that was such a role model for me they've always provided for us, never drunk, never smoked. Always just very clean living parents: my dad's a pastor, a Christian pastor so brought up on Christianity; my mum, they're still in the church today. I've just had a lucky life especially coming from an Aboriginal background. There's the stereotype: they're always drinking and smoking and carrying on and their kids are on the streets walking around that's not in every family, Ross. There are plenty of Aboriginal families that are doing really well for themselves, got nice homes, got nice cars, educated, got good jobs but that stereotype will always be there I don't know why...

This expression of broader values and foundational influences was a pro-active counterpoint to the repeated experience of contested encounter at Midland-Guildford. Clint's response turned around the reflection on potential discord so that rather than speculating on a social space created by other he revealed a cluster of personal values and influences that actively informed his habitus and framed his strategy for encountering this tension. In understanding this as the cornerstone of Clint's social practice we can begin to identify a trace that runs through his story from the time that he emerges from the objective environment of structured school cricket to the wider social world of senior cricket where the individual is more able to establish their subjective will by establishing and following their own path in the field.

Whatever the source of tension was, Clint was unable to make headway against what he believes were the entrenched views of the club's administrators and the underlying club culture. He was confused about what it was that the club expected of him. He struggled to reconcile the importance of his family and upbringing - with his Christian parents, stable home life, hard workers and good values - against what he believed were the club's (as represented by the coaches and officials)

stereotypical attitudes and perceptions of Aboriginal people. This is what he believes marked him as a cricketer: not the useful top order batter but an Aboriginal person carrying the negative weight of expectation and stereotypical attitudes.

He became a journeyman of sorts for the next decade, moving between associations and clubs, playing for a year or two before moving onto to somewhere else. It is part of Clint's story, part of who he is and contributes to his identity as a player. So rather than recall premierships, close games or notable innings his cricket was marked by the number of clubs that he represented, by the regret of not being a one club player; almost as if he was searching for something at each place but never really finding it. And in some way, this is precisely why he did move so regularly: there was no club that could offer him the understanding, team environment or club culture that would meet his expectations and aspirations or allow him to be the Clint Dann that he wanted to be.

There were three more WACA district clubs and at least two other clubs that accommodated Clint over his more than 100 games of cricket at this level. We were unable to delve into his experiences at each one and I suspect that his recollection for each may exist as a collection of fractured memories and detached from any sense of chronological sequence. What we can understand of Clint as player must be gleaned from what and how he talks about his game, and considered in reference to the context of his biography's construction and subsequent recollection. He played his cricket predominantly as an opening batter - "I used to love I guess the contest especially when you[re] batting to a good bowler - it's just you and him" - though he also bowled. I was unable to see him play so it was not possible to attach a physical sense to the statistics or to position what he was telling me against the way that he played. He told me that "I just approached ... every ball on its merits" but I couldn't observe whether he played in a compact way, building an innings through a measured and disciplined approach, or whether there was a freedom and looseness to his stroke play. Sitting across the table I could see that, whilst not big in stature, there was an athletic physicality and a sense of restless energy that characterised a disposition

to be always moving, always engaged with the next engagement, encounter or delivery. In the end, although constrained in its telling by the absence of physical action, his biographical account is given efficacy through the interview process by capturing his words and the way they are phrased and emphasised in tone and gesture.

Figuring identity: chasing a statistical view to the game

Clint played during a period that is covered by the website, MyCricket⁷¹. By trawling through the database it is possible to trace the movement of players between clubs and follow them as they play, year by year. However, the archive is only as good as the numbers that are entered after each game or season and a full account of a player's career is not always possible. Sometimes the identification number assigned to a player in one association or at one club does not always follow him/her to their next club so there is sometimes no way of simply viewing a player's record over an extended period. Such is the case with Clint. As a result of his frequent changes of club and competition his statistics are difficult to capture in one place and there is no easy way of tracking where he went and when he moved. However, by interrogating each of the iterations of Clint, Clinton or C. Dann it is possible to capture a clearer view to the locations where Clint's experience is situated, and it allows us to consider these locations as geographic markers of a physical space but also as nodes within a social space, each containing instances of negotiation, belonging, and meaning.

This coverage of clubs is commented on in the interview but not detailed and yet it provides another way of constructing a form of sporting biography that is familiar to sports followers. This biography is stripped of causes and reasons and merely

⁷¹ The MyCricket website is a publicly accessible resource that contains player and club statistics from competitions around Australia. It is a product developed in partnership between Cricket Australia, InteractSport and Sanitarium Weet-bix to provide a range of tools to everyone involved in Australian cricket. It is limited in the period it covers and doesn't capture information before the 1997/98 season making it more useful for players like Clint Dann, Matt Abrahamson and Troy Collard than the older players who were playing before the website was established. The site captures the performances of thousands of players and across all associations and grades, from Test match cricket to junior cricket.

presents the statistical numbers and chronological order that talk to Clint’s on-field performance. It is the skeletal view of how a player performed, stripped of description and individual actions but it can be useful in gauging or confirming aspects of remembered stories. Although, in the same way that a skeleton cannot show us how that person actually looked, the statistics are not able to reveal the personal interactions, thoughts or behaviour that accompanied the formation of the numbers.

The MyCricket database offered the following set of figures as a record of Clint’s batting:

Period	Club	Matches	Grades
Oct 1999-Mar 2000	Bayswater Postals	10	
Oct 2001- Dec 2003	Perth CC	14	1 st & 2 nd
Jan 2004 – Feb 2004	Bayswater Postals	3	-
Oct 2004 -Jan 2006	Gosnells CC	22	1 st
Oct 2006 -? 2007	Joondalup	5	1 st & 2 nd
Oct – Dec 2007	Kenwick	6	-
Dec 2007-Feb 2009	Joondalup		1 st & 2 nd
Oct 2009	Maylands	1	-

Table 1: Clint Dann’s club career, 1999-2009.
(as contained in the MyCricket database)

The table above confirms the restlessness that characterises Clint’s cricket career and is in marked contrast to his desire to have been a “one club player”, which is an ideal across many sports. It reads almost like the record of a professional journeyman who plays at a succession of clubs fulfilling a contractual obligation and always looking for the next pay cheque. But the WACA cricket competition never offered the same monetary rewards as competitions elsewhere, such as the Lancashire League in England, so Clint’s reasons for constantly shifting become more of a personal quest to find that missing ingredient in his cricket: a club that would accommodate him and his needs, rather than Clint having to fit to it. Ultimately, a ‘career’ in statistical form

does not reflect on the manner in which biographical narratives unfold as a series of places and events and therefore can only ever be supplementary to what can be revealed through words and actions by supporting, confirming, and possibly subverting, asserted claims but not revelatory of habitus and its associated dispositions.

Disposition's of desire

There is a resistance reflected by Clint's regular change of clubs and within the choices that he made in accumulating 100 games at eight clubs; resistance that is ultimately a strategy developed to manage this constant change. Clint's habitus is formed around a matrix of dispositions that includes his Aboriginality and family, the principles and values attached to both, and his desire to make it in the game. His underlying identity that this informs did not always align with the ethos and values (habitus) of the club, team or individuals with whom he was interacting and the often-invoked rhetoric of 'your team is like a family' is absent from his discourse. The team was a way of participating in a game he enjoyed and was a mechanism that allowed him to express his ability and character in a social space that recognised and validated potential and performance.

It was a vehicle that offered him access to the experiences that he desired and believed worthy of, but one that included pressures to conform to the behaviours and expectations of the club/team and this cut to the heart of his struggle with identity and self. The experience of belonging to the team became a series of entangled interactions that often pulled Clint in different directions. It would seek to draw him in and expect a greater subservience (Robidoux 2001) from its invitation, a pressure to adhere to team rules, to replace one identity with another, exposing fundamental differences in what Clint believed he offered to the team versus those to which the team believed it was entitled. His dispositions pushed him to constantly seek to fulfil his own desire to test his ability against the best he could. John McGuire expresses his identity as a cricketer and a sense of belonging to the team that flows from this, including the dispositions of honour and mateship created in participating

in sharing goals with others and a commitment to the game. In Clint's account it becomes a desire to demonstrate his cricketering prowess as an expression of his talent and cultural identity but resisting the homogeneity that comes with giving oneself over to the team. It is this desire for belonging in his own right – as a Nyoongar man and talented cricketer - that becomes part of his matrix of dispositions and animates his subjective behaviours.

Clint's ultimate goal was to play cricket for Australia, and he expressed it in this way without the qualification as first Aboriginal man to do so or as a representative of his community; this was a personal desire for success. In this regard, he is no different to the countless number of children, myself included, who have aspired to the same dream. He is also no different in not achieving this goal and in highlighting this as something more than a passing childhood wish is to possibly attach more emphasis than it can sustain. But as an ambition and desire it represents something pivotal to Clint's persona and he carries it with him through his junior life, into school and to at least the beginning of his adult life. Indeed, desire characterises Clint's account – the desire to achieve, to be in control, to belong and to be accepted.

Desire was a disposition that was brought to bear on who he wanted to be and he used it as a beacon to guide him through the field to a position where he believed it was achievable. It shows a disposition of unshakeable confidence, in both himself and his preparation, in his knowledge of how the field worked, and his handle of the field's code – 'if I do everything right, why would I fail to achieve my goal'. In not achieving his goal it suggests that Clint applied a different understanding of the field to those around him, and that his mastery of the code combined elements that were not just confined to the field, including elements of his habitus that came from his Aboriginal family and culture. Indeed, this tension between his identity as an Aboriginal man first and as a cricketer second rendered the field as an arena of contested meanings and identity where the field pushes conformity to its culture. Therefore, any acceptance of the code and broader field culture was predicated on the capacity of

his habitus to work within and against the conforming behaviours and values of the clubs.

An agent's capacity to manage and adjust their social space is bound to their mastery of the code and to the "mobilizing agents" who share similar aspirations and world views (Bourdieu 1977:p.81)⁷², which in Clint's case often conflicted with his own and aligns with the experience of others (Fogarty et al. 2015). It is the capacity to resolve the tensions between the competing identities (Aboriginal versus cricketer) that is shared across the other accounts in this project. Others found ways of balancing this tension, Clint struggled to do so. The exceptions come in his recounting of selection and performance in two games, one blending his Aboriginality with his ability as a cricketer and the other acknowledging his potential at the elite level of the game. Both games gave expression to his pride in his identity as a Noongar man and cricketer; the first generating recognition and pride about his identity, the second building Clint's habitus by confirming his belief in the ability as a cricketer capable of matching it with the best:

I won the overall man of the match so it was a real good. In the *West Australian* if you want to have a look at the 20th or 21st April 2001 and you'll see on the front "Dann's bat for reconciliation". You have a look. Oh, it was brilliant. Our Mum and Dad were so proud of us. So, I got overall man of the match and Tim [Clint's brother] got Indigenous player of the match.

Later in the year and on the basis of this performance Clint was selected in the Prime Minister's XI to play a representative New Zealand team. He again took to the field alongside current Test players and acquitted himself well, including taking a spectacular catch:

he just skied one, and I was fielding at mid-off, mid-off or mid-on, one of the two I can't remember. It was there and I'm thinking, I'm getting this, I'm getting this. I was lookin' at it, running back, looking, running back and then last minute I just went like this [mimics falling back having taken catch]. They come to me. All Pura Cup players, Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Stuart Clark all the, Shane Watson played that day, oh, it was just beautiful ...

⁷² Bourdieu (1977, 81) gives prophets and party leaders as examples of mobilizing agents. In the context of this project we could usefully substitute coach, captain, role model.

This was a moment of particular satisfaction and confirmed one of Clint's durable dispositions, the desire to prove that he belonged, that he had what it took to succeed at this level. It was a moment of enduring recognition that rippled beyond the event and offered a rendering of identity and potentiality within his habitus:

Well, you see, I could do it at that level Ross. I opened the batting with Brad Haddin and made 21 that day ... So, I knew from that day on that I could match it with these guys at that level you know. And I remember seeing Mike Hussey one day [at the main Perth hospital]... this was before he debuted for Australia. He was just playing for WA at the time - we had a lot battles in juniors, you know he played for Wanneroo, I played for Bayswater Morley, we had a lot of good battles ... [I was] there with my Dad ... "hey, Clint Dann, how are you going mate". This is the guy's who played like 5 or 6 years of cricket for WA, here I am just playing grade cricket. For him to do that it just, and my Dad was with me and he smiled you know and he said, "see they ... remember even though they make it to the elite levels".

Conclusion

In his narrative Clint chose to offer a sense of the struggle by Aboriginal players for identity that all of the accounts express. The paths he chose to take in doing so reflected his disposition to be a part of the field and his desire to express an Aboriginal identity within it; one where he struggled to represent both equally. But he wanted me to be a part of this narrative and to understand something about his position and the reasons his account 'looks' like it does. His frequent use of my name throughout his responses was more than as acknowledgement of my role as audience. I offered a conduit through which his story would be told more widely. Clint's account is of the field and beyond its boundaries⁷³ and expresses an important portrayal of the interaction between fields.

This is where we departed company:

rrc: yeah, so how did you manage the um, you talked about that decision you made after you were 17 making cricket or going down another route, I mean you went on and did a Bachelor of Business, but you had to choose to do something in terms of work because cricket wasn't going to be the (cd: no) main career ...

⁷³ See CLR James (1993).

cd: I remember this old guy John Moore, old fella from Bayswater-Morley and I think he's still around now I'm not sure. He used to support us all the time, loved to come down and watch the junior games. I remember I got a lift with him one day to the game.

He said, "Clint what do you want to do with your life?",

and I said, "I'm going to be a Test cricketer",

"yeah", he said, "that's good".

That was then, that was like 15, 16, I was adamant with my talent I was going to be playing Test cricket for Australia, I had no doubt in my mind.

He said, "yeah, nah, that's good Clint but you've always got to have a backup",

and I, because I was young, and I was fit and I was energetic and I had an ego [chuckles] I sort of took offence to it,

"what are you talking about John. You don't think I'm good enough?" ...

and I don't know whether he was taking it from the black/white thing and opportunity that way or whether he was just looking out for me full stop. So, it was really good, it was positive and I ... just thought that I'd make it. If I do everything right, if I do all my training, I do everything right in that regard well I'll make it. What really just deterred me is that ... I never got the opportunity. Simon Katich and Mike Hussey and all these other younger guys, Rob Baker's got ... I played a lot of junior cricket against them and I did well against them soon as they finished 17s, got in their 17s and 19s State squads I was ...

[CD's phone rings and he asks me if its ok to answer - the call is about work and he needs to get to the office]

[Interview ends]

I mentioned at the beginning of this section the frustration, and to a degree, bitterness, that I felt from Clint when he spoke about his experiences. I only interviewed Clint once, and an invitation for a second was not taken up. The request may have been made too long after the initial interview or maybe there were other things in Clint's life that were more important. It was, perhaps, a missed opportunity to go behind Clint's public story. I caught a glimpse of something more in his closing response above and it may something to pursue outside of this project. What is left is a sense that I missed something deeper within Clint's experience, something beneath the frustration that might reveal the complex nature of his journey as a Nyoongar man in Western Australia: both as a cricketer and as a member of his family and wider community.

Chapter 7

Making the grade: the impact of habitus on social trajectories

This chapter and the next feature narratives that have been clustered together, partly to structure the project and make it manageable, but also to consider how biographical accounts prepare the ground for the presentation of self and the representation created within the relationships between the physical world and sociality (Reed-Danahay 2015). This social space, in this case the arena of district level cricket in Perth, Western Australia, provides the place to locate habitus (Reed-Danahay 2015) and makes it possible to consider how situated contexts shape identity (Bourdieu 2000; Reed-Danahay 2015). This space works to structure experiences by establishing hierarchies of order (grades) that locate individuals in layers according to ability and performance. This social space creates the conditions for asserting claims of belonging and presents the contexts and incipient audiences that create biographical interactions – the stories “directly undergone” versus those that become “thought through” (Jackson 2013, 15). In this chapter, then, I will consider three narratives that exist within a narrow social space that is Perth grade cricket to develop a sense of the commonality and variability resulting from the proximity of engagement with other social agents. The narratives reflect a shared sense of the field, consider notions of social trajectory and explore how this can be applied more generally to Aboriginal experiences.

This chapter’s narratives belong to individuals who played the majority of their cricket in the district cricket competition run by the Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA)⁷⁴. In grouping these players I want to present a view to a shared Aboriginal experience that is often difficult to locate within our broader understanding and

⁷⁴ See pages 22-23 for a description of the structure of cricket in Western Australia.

perception of cricket in Western Australia, and largely lacking from the higher levels of the game such as the WACA grade competition. Read together these accounts build on the previous accounts of individual habitus and social trajectory by looking more closely at experiences that can be located in a particular location within the broader social space. I will consider how learned knowledge and behaviours accrue as part of the process of habitus creation given that “the corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose their mastery of a common code” (Bourdieu 1977, 81).

It is the capacity to actively engage with this code, to select and make choices, to share and negotiate elements of it – jointly or individually - that shapes and manoeuvres social trajectory. What does this ‘common code’ reveal about an Aboriginal cricket experience and how is it articulated through the evidence? How far can a ‘common code’ be said to assist in the framing of experience and the smoothing of the social space and does it in some way provide an indicative view to wider Aboriginal encounters with the social space? Or does an individual’s habitus shape the field in subtly different ways, enabling individuals to position themselves, to create a front, in a way that “maintains and embodies certain standards” (Goffman 1959:p.110)? Does this ‘front’ attach to a performance representative of particular field localities and contexts, suppressing (or enhancing) the influence of others in the field? As such, I want to also examine the movement of agents into and through the social space, where, in bringing to bear habitus and disposition, they trace a social trajectory that can express both individual and group identity and consider whether it is possible to characterise shared experiences in the game as a consequence of identity, but possibly also something that might begin to describe a biography of an Aboriginal engagement with cricket.

The accounts that follow talk to a commonality of engagement (Widdop et al. 2014) as encountered within one category of cricket experience in Western Australia. Indeed, a former non-Aboriginal district cricketer suggests that WACA grade cricket represents a separate and identifiable location of sociality within the broader cricket

experience and contains a complexity that would sustain a research project in its own right (Whisson pers. comm.).

What these narratives offer, then, are partial truths: instances of recalled events, actions, reflections from one moment in time, from individuals belonging to an identifiable cultural group participating in a category of competition and captured under a specific set of conditions. They articulate and reflect a social space where shared cultural identities and accrued experiences are generative of meaning and understanding. To this extent, then, they can be considered an expression of what it is to be an Aboriginal person and to play cricket.

Matt Abrahamson

...cricket was natural...

Cricket looms large in the world of Matt Abrahamson. He played competitively over a number of years, coached the State's Imparja Cup team and is an active member of the Western Australian Aboriginal Cricket Council. As such his exposure to different areas of the game at a number of levels offered a broader view to the game and its organising structures than only his performances as a cricketer. His knowledge of the game and his involvement in the administration of an Aboriginal presence in cricket allowed him to move within the discussion to open up areas that were not explored in the majority of the other interviews. Over the course of this project I have continued to consult Matt on questions relating to this project and more generally on issues relating to the Aboriginal participation in Western Australian cricket, including seeking his support for my application to join the Western Australian Aboriginal Cricket Council. As Wulff (1993) has observed, it is often the informants that possess analytical talent that go on to become key informants.

This enhanced role is reflected in his narrative, which is characterised by strands of understanding that tie Matt as a player, to Matt as a coach, to Matt as an agent in shaping and directing the wider experience of Aboriginal people in the game. These

strands have become entangled in recent years as he has moved within the game gaining experience and knowledge of himself as a cricketer, coach and administrator so that his account of his 'game', and those of others in his social surrounds, frames a view to the field as an arena of contested networks and relationships, that, in its ever-shifting aspirations, expectations and outcomes, is in a constant state of flux.

Matt enjoyed success as a player at the highest level in the WACA district cricket competition and captained Western Australia's winning 2010 Imparja Cup team⁷⁸. When he talks about his cricket it is in a considered and reflective way and he has the capacity to analyse his experience in the context of the wider international game and within the context of Western Australian cricket. I conducted two interviews with Matt in 2011: the first was held in August 2011 before the 2011-2012 season had officially started and the second interview in November 2011. My contact with Matt continued after the interviews as he provided further contacts for interviews and on these occasions, I would take the opportunity to enquire about how his season was unfolding or how the preparations for the forthcoming Imparja Cup were progressing. On all of these occasions he was more than happy to contribute further information and this resulted in the offer of an invitation to attend a meeting of the Western Australian Aboriginal Cricket Council to brief them on my project. In November 2012, I caught up with Matt at a cricket ground close to where I lived to watch a game between a team consisting of Imparja Cup squad members and a representative (non-Aboriginal) Suburban Turf side. He was padded up to bat and wandered over to where I was sitting under a tree watching the game. Matt was coaching the Aboriginal team but had been forced to play when a couple of the players pulled out of the game late, a situation that clearly frustrated him in his aspirations of developing a competitive and 'professional' side, and one that would be judged their performance on the field rather than what might happen away from the game.

⁷⁸ More recently Matt coached the winning 2014 Western Australian Imparja Cup team.

Matt articulates his view of the game and the manner in which it operates as a part of a broader set of experiences and activities, including its administration and development, and is not just limited to what happens on the field. His interview responses were extended and considered and examined subjects in a more holistic manner than some of the other participants and it provided the means by which he could generalise about issues so that it is sometimes difficult to separate his personal experience from one that conflates the experiences of others who share the social space. His response to my enquiry about the nature of moving from junior to senior ranks clearly illustrates this ability to capture a sense of a shared cultural experience extrapolated from a personal one:

That third year of junior cricket going into that district system it's a whole lot more structured again. You've got your uniform you train in [and one] that you play in. You've got your structured warm up. You've got to arrive at the ground, you're put into a very set routine. It's always been around from the age of 12 where you've got routine this is how you prepare this what you do this is what you wear it's just natural. I can appreciate for some that their there for a social game of cricket and that's fine but as long as I've been involved it's been competitive: you play it hard, you play to win and if you don't win, well, as long as you've given it your best you can walk off with your head held high. That's ingrained into you at such a young age and playing around mature guys who have been in the game for a long time.

The difficulty that this brings is teasing the personal from the generalised, the individual from the collective. At the core of this account is Matt's own set of experiences but he presents it in such a way as to suggest that this could be any junior cricketer's recollection that he shares along with all of the other young cricketers in the field. It presents a view to the behaviours of the game that are inculcated and became part of a personal and collective habitus. In learning the ways (codes) of the game this habitus allows each player to develop a feel for the game and follow a path within it.

When I first sat down to record Matt's stories I was aware that the previous interviews had developed a pattern that, initially, at least, started with recollections of first learning the game and stepping through various forms of junior and then adult cricket. I wanted to try something different with Matt as a way of seeing whether narratives unveil themselves according to a familiar structure or can be revealed as a

series of anecdotes independent of any ordained order. My first question asked him to recount his most recent cricket experience, which he did for the first half of his response before moving back in time to his early recollections of playing as a young child. The response was seamless but conflated the very recent to the distant beginnings and re-oriented or, perhaps, re-established a more familiar order of events almost as a way of providing a more natural starting point from which to explore wider experience. It required me to shift my thinking by offering information that almost demanded another question. So rather than pursuing the impact of the birth of his first child on his cricket I followed up with a request for more information on the role his grandparents played in the formation of his interest in the game. Immediately I had locked into a pattern that enabled us to talk about the events that took place from first beginnings to more organised forms of the game.

Our discussion moved through the series of under-age competitions that eventually delivered Matt into adult cricket. His recall of clubs and grades was precise and well ordered. There was no searching for dates or names and no long pauses or backtracking; this was a narrative that was marked according to time and place as an organised set of familiar events. It reflects his long term association with cricket in his local area.

Matt grew up in the south-eastern suburbs of Perth in an area characterised by a high Aboriginal population and low incomes. He traces his Aboriginal ancestry through his grandmother, a Yamatji woman born at Mount Magnet in the Murchison district but sent more than 500 kilometres to Wandering Mission, in the State's south-west, as one of the Stolen Generation⁷⁹.

Matt began playing structured cricket as an under-11 at the Thornlie cricket club. The regular progression through this club, along with the talent that he showed as skills

⁷⁹ This was not simply a journey marked by distance it represented a move away from traditional country and family to a place in different country, with different cultural traditions.

and knowledge developed, brought him to the attention of district selectors and made it possible to transition smoothly into adult cricket:

I'd played a lot of junior cricket right up to under 17s at district level and community or suburban level and the natural progression was that when you're the 15, 16, 17 year old age group the senior club wants to have a look at you. So, you go and fill in on a few afternoons or you may even play the whole season that I ended up doing playing the suburban senior competition and then being poached to go across to the district seniors. Being at Gosnells cricket club for the latter part of my juniors and dovetailing straight into seniors it was a pretty smooth transition.

The path to becoming identified as a future prospect was different to that of John McGuire's and Clint's, although, the stable and consistent Thornlie cricket club environment has echoes of the formalised and structured program of the cricket academy of Kent Street Senior High School and the privileged, well-resourced cricket teams of Guildford Grammar school. That is, Matt's junior cricket experience was situated within a social structure that provided a consistency of experience where he could produce and reproduce his cricket skills and negotiate many of the boundaries that exist within a space such as a competitive sporting club. The club became the place where his identity as a cricketer was formed. It is a product of being in the field where being "around long enough" to be noticed – demonstrate commitment, application along with some ability – so that while "nothing's a given...your name's up there to be invited to future try outs". In forming this habitus it becomes possible to "infiltrate the senior system" where new relationships and associations to the ongoing process of habitus construction.

By the time Matt was ready to move into the senior ranks the group that he had joined at Gosnells had splintered, as study, cars and girls competed for the attention of the budding players. The move into senior cricket placed Matt in a group of players with a wider range of ages than he had experienced in junior cricket. Suddenly, he was training and playing alongside players who were much older, with more experience and knowledge, though not necessarily sharing the same interests or background. This offered a chance to learn more about the game through watching and absorbing the way that the older players approached the game and behaved on the training track and on game day; it was the chance to be socialised into some of

the etiquette and traditions of the game that had not been taught in the junior competition:

I'm not convinced that you're instilled with all the etiquette and sportsmanship of the game from a young age but as a kid your parents teach you things, how to respect other people, what's generally acceptable. You just carry that into the game and as you become more entrenched in the game you start to come across other people and certainly playing senior cricket there's little traditions that are in the game.

I remember playing my first senior game when the opposition came out to bat the fielding captain would acknowledge him say to the team guys this is the opposition captain and you'd clap him and you'd pick things up walking on the field, respecting the umpire's decision that sort of thing is ingrained in you...

Unlike, Clint and Jamal (in this chapter), Matt learnt this background cricket knowledge over a longer period of time and in situations that occurred organically as part of the game – knowledge was gradually revealed and the identification of oneself within the game came from growing up in it. Whether this resulted in a deeper understanding of the game to the one that was part of the formal education program undertaken by Clint and Jamal is debatable but what it did instil was a respect of the more “seasoned campaigners”, and particularly former State and Test players, which was how it was understood a young bloke should behave:

well certainly coming up as a kid against those guys, you had to walk the walk and you know there's a whole lot of respect and as a young bloke you simply can't rock up and be an arrogant turd otherwise you get pulled in pretty quick.

According to the MyCricket database Matt played 85 games for the Gosnells cricket club between 2002 and 2008, playing predominantly with the 2nd and 3rd grade teams in the initial years before being elevated to the 1st and 2nd grade teams for the period 2005 – 2008. The statistics show that his highest score for Gosnells was 86, and he confirmed this during the interview in a response to my request for a description of his favourite shot: “I certainly made a number of 50s and got into the 80s a few times opening the batting”. In recent years Matt has played for the Southern River Falcons in the South Metropolitan Cricket Association. According to their website the Southern River Falcons were established in 2006 by past members of the Gosnells cricket club because it was no longer affordable to operate the club under the banner of the Gosnells cricket club. In creating the club, it was recognised that there was a

need for a club that allowed local players to remain in the local area and to play for a side that promotes itself as affordable and family friendly.

Period	Club	Matches	Grades	Innings	HS	Agg.	Avg
2002-2008	Gosnells Cricket Club	85	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , Colts	105	86	2189	21.4 6
2008- 2009; 2012-2015	Piara Waters Cricket Club*	45	5 th , One Day A & B	42	12 6	1651	40.2 7
2009-2010	Maddington Cricket Club	1	2 nd	1	14	14	14.0 0
2008-2010	Western Australia	13	Imparja Cup	11	65	264	29.3 3
2010; 2015	Psychosocials	4		3	50	123	41.0 0

* Originally registered as the Southern River Falcons.

Table 2: Matt Abrahamson's cricket 'career' in statistical form.

The Falcons club was never mentioned during the two interviews and it was only when I looked for Matt's statistics on the MyCricket website did I come across his record at Southern River. I emailed him to check he was the one reflected in the player lists though he didn't offer anything more than confirm that it was case. This lack of reference is curious given the success that he has enjoyed with the club. On their list of club milestones he is mentioned twice, once for achieving his seventh 50 for the club and again for becoming the 12th player to make 1000 runs. While it is not obviously stated I suspect that Matt has drawn a distinction between the games he played for Gosnells in the WACA competition and those that he has played for Southern River. This distinction may simply be a seamless experience that is conflated in Matt's recollections, particularly given the origins of the club and its associations.

But perhaps there is also an unconscious distinction of hierarchy that layers one level of the field above or below the other.

This perception of difference between the different suburban cricket associations is something that is clear in Matt's understanding of the structure of the game. He describes an ethos associated with this upper level of competition where respect for fellow teammates was important in demonstrating commitment. Robidoux (2001) notes this homogeneity as part of a subordinating process that privileges the team over the individual. Fitting into the team was reinforced publicly:

I remember one particular captain if you stepped a foot out of line, he'd drill you, he'd make an example of you in front of the team and you wouldn't want to be that person. You made sure you did everything right. You didn't rock up on time, you rocked up early. You were dressed ready to warm up. You had the right training gear on otherwise you just wouldn't survive ... and that was a real competitive environment and a successful environment.

There is a correlation between effort and reward and maintaining cohesiveness and focus on shared goals. It is something that creates a separation between those that are in the system versus those who are outside, and for those outside it requires a "desire" to want to be a part. Matt believes that the players who grow up in the system are better placed to understand and deal with the pressures that come with the competitive environment, otherwise

... if you didn't want to do it [play for a WACA club] then you'd just be mucking around down at your local club and having a bit of a hit and miss on a Saturday...

The "hit and a miss" is represented by the Southern River Falcons, a level of competition that he considers to be "fiercely competitive" but "not at the elite and premier level". With his playing career winding down and recently a father it is a level of competition that more closely aligns with where his priorities currently lie. It provides a level of engagement that brings other parts of his life together, rather than maintaining the separateness demanded of more serious participation.



Figure 14: Matt Abrahamson (left front), captain of the WA Imparja Cup team that won the Imparja Cup in 2010.

Source: Western Australian Cricket Association.

Matt's story continues in his behind the scenes work with the Aboriginal Cricket Council and as coach of the Western Australian Imparja cup team. Both roles move him into a position of administrator and mentor, "using my experience in the game to sort of help them get through different situations ...". His narrative offers us a wider view to the manner in which people can move within the field, building relationships, creating identity and making meaning from their experience that informs a sense of themselves as a member of the group, and also as an account that stands in contrast to the first of this chapter. Matt enjoyed less senior level success than John McGuire and Clint Dann. But, in his role as mentor and administrator, and in his habitus that has informed his maturity and leadership, he has become an important figure in positioning an Aboriginal presence in the Western Australian game. He has done so by developing a sense of what it means to be a cricketer – and not just an Aboriginal cricketer but in the broader sense of what it takes to play the game. In the words of CLR James (1975 (1986)): "He plays the game of powers

emancipating themselves in a field that needs emancipation". In this way, his buy-in to the culture of the game enables him to argue for this broader presence from a position deep within the field.

Troy Collard

I wanted to play A-grade and I did that, you know what I mean, and I wanted to bowl against household names and I did that...

If the account above talks to a social trajectory of regular progression, order and orthodoxy the next charts something more spontaneous and freed of the generic encounters with junior sporting structures, coaching and shared ambition. Yet, it is positioned in proximity to the others in this and the previous chapter, and even to John McGuire's, in its location within the social space and field.

I had not met Troy before the interview. I had phoned him at the beginning of the project on the recommendation of John McGuire because of Troy's role on the Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council and as a contact to the wider network of Aboriginal cricketers in Western Australia. In the early phase of recruiting participants I had focused on securing John's assent to be interviewed, and had pursued my existing contacts being Harley Coyne, Jeff Kickett and John Mallard, without giving much thought about how I would recruit other participants. In my initial contact with Troy I had pursued suggestions of potential participants and he was quick to send back three or so names though didn't explicitly include his in the list. I rang and spoke to him as a follow up and gained the impression that he wasn't desperately keen to be interviewed so I pursued the other names thinking that I could talk to Troy if and when required. Given the generally positive responses by the other prospective participants to my invitation I did wonder why I had sensed some diffidence from Troy. I contacted him again once I had interviewed the majority of the former players because I was interested in understanding more about his story. What I found interesting was that Troy was clearly involved in similar aspects of the game to Matt Abrahamson, including being a member of the Western Australian Aboriginal Cricket Advisory Committee, but he had been more focused on putting

forward other names in the first instance. What did this say about him as a player? How would this be reflected in what he had to say?

As with all of the other interviews I was prepared to see where the discussion would go following what I sensed was of interest or from reading Troy's voice and movements to anticipate points for discussion or questions. We began with an exchange about my reasoning for undertaking the project, my bona fides as someone who could talk about cricket and a comment by Troy that he was interested in gaining some sense of what my family background was; where were the connections that would link me to his world. This, of course, was not something that had been required for four of the other participants and it was interesting to reflect on the way Troy positioned himself in relation to those around him. It was his way of establishing what he could discuss, how he could discuss it and how much he needed to explain what he was saying.

Troy is a nephew of Clint Dann and a work colleague of Matt Abrahamson so my previous interviews also added to his consideration of me as someone qualified to be asking questions. He explained that knowing someone's background stemmed from his experience as a policeman and as an officer in the Corrective Services Department but it also reflects his Aboriginality and linking people back to family and place. What I mistaken as initial reluctance was more a kind of hesitation whilst Troy processed the request and who was making it; a wariness borne from professional experience but one that had a basis in cultural sensibilities where a request from someone outside of one's network required further information to position the request and test its legitimacy:

tc: well I want to know if you're interested in the game first of all or is it your sport, do you have links to your family in history in, you know, working at the Museum and a bit about your profession ...

Our discussion began by reflecting on the broader story of Aboriginal participation in cricket and the relative obscurity of peoples experiences. Troy described his own research into the history of the game in Australia, including some background work

on the New Norcia teams, conducted during his time as President of the Aboriginal Cricket Advisory Council. He could see the gaps that existed in the understanding of the Aboriginal contribution to the game and ultimately my project, and his participation in it, was a way of addressing that gap by capturing stories that might sit alongside those of the 1868 team and the teams from New Norcia and other missions and reserves.

Out of all of the interviews and interactions this one felt the most contrived. The initial opening conversation slipped to become question and response, occasionally opening up into spontaneity that revealed glimpses to the personal that lay under the mostly mechanical recounting of stories and events.

It would be easy to characterise the stilted nature of the encounter as some sort of reticence but there is some deeper understanding about the nature and context of storytelling that can be considered here. As Jackson (2013) observes, stories take us on journeys that shape or effect who we are but they also tell us about those journeys and the boundaries that we cross along the way. They explore the divide between public and private lives that often requires a decision about what to make public and what to keep hidden. In this instance my interview Troy is a journey undertaken in pursuit of a story but also a story about a journey to reveal identity and individual experience and the momentum that is generated by tension within what Jackson describes as the “intersubjective encounter” (2013:p.47).

Troy’s story, like nearly all of those featured in these pages, begins with the generation before and particularly, in Troy’s case, his step-father. Unlike the majority of the other narratives, Troy’s story emerges through the cricketing experience of his step-father and not merely as a knock-on effect from an exposure to other more popular sports like football. The presence of this connection gives Troy’s narrative a greater sense of continuity and stands in contrast to the broader perception of a disconnect between Aboriginal people and the game as suggested by Whimpress (1999) in his account of game at the turn of the twentieth century.

Troy's step-father grew up at New Norcia where the game continued to be played by successive generations from the period of the 1880s team. Reece (2012) in his history of the New Norcia teams of the nineteenth century includes a photo of a New Norcia team from the 1960s confirming this ongoing presence and suggesting that the gaps that exist in our knowledge exist more because of a lack of awareness of stories of the everyday cricketer than as a result of a lack of interest and participation. And Troy's story may well have fallen into this gap if it had not been for his determination to make an impact as an Aboriginal man who could bowl fast and terrorise opposition batsmen, but also play a role in the greater promotion of the game within his community through his work with the WACA's Aboriginal Advisory Council.

Troy's interest in cricket developed in the heat and dust of Port Hedland, an industrial port in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, at a time in his life that he failed to fix in time. When prompted he suggested sometime in the late 1960s. He must have only been a young boy but that memory mingled with other connections stemming from a question on the identity of his step-father's family:

rrc: ok, who's ... his family?

tc: he's a Taylor-Drayton breed so, and they used to stay in the, what do you call it where the church's are [rrc: oh, the monastery] monastery and they used to make the boys play cricket and then, cause we lived up at Port Hedland, watch him play cricket in the hot heat and it just, I don't know, just steamrolled from there ...

This passage could almost be said to capture the essence of the Aboriginal cricket experience in Western Australia. It conflates the historical past, recognising the legacy of the monks at New Norcia and the continuing role that cricket played in the lives of the boys and young men, with the silent undercurrent represented by the many Aboriginal men who played and enjoyed cricket as part of their everyday lives but are remembered only by those who knew and played with or alongside them.

Troy's account of his cricket is fragmented and difficult to follow and the brevity of some of the responses and the lack of detail provided about certain parts of his cricket make it difficult to trace the influences and motivations that drew him into

the game. The memories generated through watching his father were strengthened some time after in games played on the family farm at Popanyanning (a small town in the south west of Western Australia), where Troy and his relatives would fashion a cricket pitch from the scrub near their house, and, later, in the front yard of their house in the city. Cricket was a distraction but also an activity that fitted with the way in which the family was raised: "...see, cause we were Churchies, so...to keep out of trouble you play a sport, you know, and cricket was a sport in the summer". Cricket was social and continued to be until such time as Troy's uncle, Clint Dann, encouraged him to join him at the WACA side where he was playing.

Troy was 26 years old when he eventually joined a WACA club, though whether there was other competitive cricket for him before then is unclear. He recalls playing with Jeff Kickett in the Swan Helena competition, a lesser Sunday league association, and his preference was to join a club where other Nyoongar men played. But developing an overall story for where he played his cricket is not possible from the interview responses. Looking back at the transcription there are echoes of the kinds of exchanges that characterised the way the interview with Clint Dann had unfolded so that in order to understand the thrust of the responses attention is drawn to the spaces within and around the statements where one would expect further context or meaning. The following exchange illustrates this point:

rrc: ... talking about your career as well that, Clint had a very different path through cricket, Kent St cricket stream, obviously identified as a talent so supported and pushed, but you obviously worked hard and followed your interest to the point where you got better and better and then you sort of got into more elite teams
tc: yeah.....well I was 26 when I went to a WACA club
rrc: so it is quite late isn't it.
tc: and I went and played on the carpet for four or five years and, dominating, and hitting the carpet hard, and, to me I didn't feel that there was racism because I felt in control particularly bowling because I knew I could put the ball where I wanted, generally, and I felt like, there was one or two good batsmen and I could tie up my end or do strategy which kept them honest and the other bloke would get him out, but play shots against the weaker bowler whereas I'd scare them a little bit ...

The exchange is disjointed and lacks a familiar, temporal perspective and one is unsure about how to make sense of the apparent lack of structure – was the WACA club his first contact with competitive cricket and if so, where do the four or five years

on “carpet”⁸¹ fit in? There is a disconnect here between my knowledge of the WACA competition and Troy’s experience, between my outsider perceptions of the WACA competition as an elite, turf-based competition versus other, lesser associations that play only on synthetic surfaces, and between my understanding of the progression that players take as part of their development in the game. Underlying it all was what to make of the notion that a 26-year-old player with apparently no history of competitive cricket would make his start at a WACA club, and presumably in a high grade – it is just not how I understood the system to work.

My initial comment was intended to tease out the path taken from junior to adult cricket, or in his case from social to structured cricket, where social was intended to refer to casual games independent of an association. At first I believed that Troy had mis-understood my reference to elite to refer to only the WACA level competition, so that in responding he had ignored any possible previous non-WACA experience as not the “elite”. But, according to the MyCricket database there was no previous club experience – Troy’s first game was at the WACA club, Perth District Cricket Club, in the 2001-2002 season. He played three seasons at Perth and for the most part was selected in the first and second grades, though with a few games in thirds and fourths in his second and third year. By the 2004-2005 season he had shifted clubs to Gosnells and was back playing in the one’s and two’s. I can only assume that his use of the term “carpet” was a term he used to describe all of the wickets he bowled on rather than specifically referring to the wickets laid with synthetic material that I, using my own knowledge and experience, would label as “carpet”. The delineation between turf and synthetic pitches is often also a way of positioning experience within a hierarchy of competitiveness and standard with turf (natural grass) occupying the higher place over synthetic cricket in the standard of cricket competition.

⁸¹ ‘Carpet’ is a term used to refer to the manufactured synthetic grass matting that is rolled onto a concrete base to form a cricket pitch. It is commonly used on local council ovals because it is hard wearing and requires no maintenance.

This passage talks to some of the issues that can arise through an assumption of shared knowledge or a shared understanding of a subject and is perhaps more observable in the kind of interview context in which this interaction occurred. Troy used our opening conversation to locate me within his own understanding and knowledge of the game by asking questions about who I was, where I had grown up and whether I had played cricket, and in order to understand how to respond to what I wanted to know. Firstly, my request to interview him for this project created a link to an interest and concern that Troy had identified from his position as an Aboriginal cricketer so I could talk about one aspect of the game in a different way to other non-Aboriginal people and this was perhaps also reinforced by my role as a curator on the Howzat exhibition. Secondly, I had already spoken to John McGuire, Clint Dann and Matt Abrahamson, so that it was possible that he may have assumed that some of his exploits had been referenced in their interviews. Finally, I was a former cricketer and had spent time engaging with cricket so I understood what it was to play and talk about cricket. From this constructed profile of who I was and what I had done there appears to be certain level of understanding demanded in the responses such as those above and in others like:

rrc: so when you then got into cricket were you a bowler or a...

tc: yeah I was bowler...I used to try to kill people

rrc: so a quick bowler? off the long run?

tc: no, no, only about twelve steps, hit good lines, the odd bouncer

rrc: so how did you learn how to bowl - was it through practice, over and over again or had you worked out a strategy

tc: yeah, learn to swing the ball, learn to have that LB ball which decked in, learn the right lengths and you know learn to out think a batter - try to.

rrc: so that just came through practice?

tc: yeah, yeah, experience, more experience but also listening to old people, you know, that you play with

rrc: someone pulled you aside and had a chat to you and do this with the ball and it'd do something a bit different [tc: mm], yeah?

tc: yeah and just enjoying people's company too you know

Troy's entry into cricket was less structured than the two previous accounts. He initially took up the game in "social" competitions and joined a WACA club on the urging of his uncle (Clint Dann). The distinction consolidates the notion of value that is attached to his time with the Perth Cricket Club. Troy's comfort in talking about his

cricket from this period fits with his ambition to play at the highest level he can achieve. In taking this as a starting point for what could be considered the start of his 'serious' cricket I asked him what it was he wanted to achieve:

I wanted to play A-grade and I did that. I wanted to bowl against household names and I did that. I got household names out

In order to develop of broader sense of when and where Troy played his cricket it is necessary to consult the records that are contained on the MyCricket website, and in the same way that Clint's journey through Western Australian cricket is laid bare in the statistics that are kept on the game, Troy's experience can be given a form and structure that is not discernible from the interview. That record is shown below.

Date	Club	Season	Games played	Grade/s	Wickets taken
2001-2004	Perth Cricket Club	2001/02	2	1 st	2
		2002/03	14	1 st (7 matches) 2 nd (6 matches) 3 rd (1 match)	6 9 5
		2003/04	11	1 st (4 matches) 2 nd (3 matches) 3 rd (1 match) 4 th (1 match) One-day (2 matches)	4 3 1 1 2
2004-2005	Gosnells Cricket Club	2004/05	10	1 st (5 matches) 2 nd (5 matches)	10 7
		2005/06	3	2 nd (1 match) 3 rd (2 matches)	0 3
2006-2009	Perth Cricket Club	2006/07	18	2 nd (8 matches) 3 rd (10 matches)	9 12
		2007/08	8	2 nd (3 matches) 3 rd (5 matches)	3 17
	Kenwick Cricket club (one day competition)	Oct – Dec 2007	6	-	15
	Perth District Cricket club	2008/09	9	3 rd (6 matches) 4 th (3 matches)	4 5
	WA Imparja Cup team				

Table 3: Troy Collard's cricket records compiled using the MyCricket database.

There are a couple of points to make about the figures in the table, other than the qualification that these are the record as entered by some anonymous individual associated with each of the clubs shown in the list. We assume that they accurately

reflect what happened as they have become part of the public record and are viewable by anyone with access to the internet. How often players check their stats against this public record is not known but as a public record it makes it possible to highlight discrepancies between an oral recollection and the archived record. For instance:

it was hard, it was hard for me because I went, I played my first game, I took ten wickets in second grade - 3 in the first and then 7 in the ... second game - and I terrorised them you know and it was a good side that I terrorised and they just kept me there and I was there for about a couple of years I took about 40 wickets in the first year...

The MyCricket records show him playing two games in his first season - both first grade games. The quote from Troy shown above occurs shortly after a comment in which racism is mentioned in passing so that underneath this narrative built around an assertion on his ability and skill with the ball is a reflection of his identity and the way in which he was relied upon to fulfil a certain role. So his memory of being kept in one place for a “couple of years”, of playing on “carpet for four or five years and dominating...to me I didn’t feel there was racism”, of situations where the captain “wanted me to, you know, if there was a big opening batter who didn’t like it around the ears he wanted me to give it around the ears and then he realised I started thinking for myself” talks to the way in which players can be controlled or applied to particular tasks on the basis of identity (Malcolm 1997). Troy touches on this but immediately rejects it so that his role is elevated beyond simply one concerned with ethnicity: his task was to bowl fast, according to the captain’s instructions but applying his own awareness to bowl to the situation. In this way, he asserts his agency and positions himself more centrally to the action, shifts his power relation to the team’s captain and claims a greater degree of control over his performance.

As the interview continued Troy’s responses became less reflective and briefer so that the conversation required more intervention from me to keep it flowing. It challenged me to think of ways of eliciting responses that were more than simply confirmation of points I had made or limited answers that contained no contextual detail. As the balance of our interaction shifted from Troy as dominant voice to me

as the main driver of the narrative it risked re-locating the conversation into one which centred on the construction of a view to the game that reflected a different set of understandings. In searching for ways to continue the conversation it moved the interview towards something that I had wanted to avoid, which was a situation where Troy was responding with answers that merely confirmed what he believed I wanted to hear. It is perhaps why, in our preliminary introduction prior to the interview proper, he was interested to know more about me, my background, and the rationale behind this project - it provided him with a framework to which he could fit his responses.

Our last detailed exchange revolved around the Imparja Cup competition and my suggestion that it created a tension in the way that people developed in the game and a gap between the mainstream and community-based competition. Troy picked up on this - "it's a good comment because I think people have a perception that that's where it lies" - and grounded his response in a mutual understanding. As he reasoned: "Imparja Cup used to have a variety of forms like you're 20/20, 40 over and a fifty over game, now it's just 20/20 and that's something that's done through a higher level that makes those decisions". I followed on with a view that I had heard expressed more widely by former non-Aboriginal players regarding the lack of application to longer forms of the game drawing Troy to reflect: "I think sometimes they're going over there for a holiday you know catching up ... we can get statistics and we can say ... this is happening but when you look at the longer format, you know what I mean, and developing players both batters, bowlers and fielders and having game sense you've got to look at all facets."

As much as this exchange touched on wider issues of the location of Aboriginal people within the game it pushed for a response to a proposition of my creation, and placed me at the centre of the enquiry, and increased my sense of the interview becoming something different to what I had intended. This was where the interview finished. Our lunch hour was over and Troy needed to return to work. As we drew the interview to a close Troy offered, "you can email me some questions too and I might

be able to answer them better. I don't know if I'm answering as good as I can", so that the impression that I had formed about the flow of information had been something that Troy had also been mindful of and highlights the sometimes fragmentary way that experiences and stories are recalled and constructed. Where Matt and Clint were able to weave context around their responses Troy's style is characterised by less embellishment and a more direct approach.

Jamal Principe

... best seat in the house

It was Matt Abrahamson who provided me with the contact for Jamal as a potential participant. Until his name was suggested my intention was to talk to active or former players and I had given no thought to pursuing stories from people who had performed other roles within the game. With the offer of including an umpire in this set of stories I was able to fill out the field by including a view to it from a non-playing, official's point of view. If the awareness of Aboriginal people in cricket is generally low amongst those with an interest in the game, the knowledge that there are two Aboriginal umpires⁸² in the Western Australian cricket system would, I suggest, be even lower. But then umpires are not usually considered much when thinking about the game. Our gaze is only drawn to them at times when they are called on to make a decision or when their behaviours or actions are considered slightly odd or different.

In recent years Billy Bowden, a senior member of the International Cricket Council's (ICC) umpiring panel, has received mixed reviews for the attention he brings to his role because of the unorthodox way in which he signals fours, sixes, leg-byes and dismissals. For some, the place of an umpire is to control the game and uphold the standards and spirit of the game (as it is for players) and in doing so they should not

⁸² Jamal ceased umpiring in 2016 as a result of what he describes as the overt politics within the organisation of umpiring at the grade level.

be placing themselves on the same entertainment level as the players (Agnew 2003). Jamal agrees with the sentiment believing that the best umpires are never noticed and he restrains from improvisation so that his signals are presented in an orthodox, WACA-endorsed manner. However, this renders umpires almost invisible within the game and yet they mediate the game and are the only participants in the game to spend all of their time on the field - their presence and contribution cannot be ignored. In dictating an expectation of an umpire's performance and role, cricket associations such as the WACA seek to maintain an order in the game so that players, administrators and spectators have confidence in the umpire's capacity to control proceedings and make good decisions. As Jamal observes in reference to Billy Bowden: "if he makes a mistake and then he's doing all of his showman stuff then he's an idiot, people are going to say well he's an idiot; I'm not sure why he's got away with it, as I said the decision making, I personally wouldn't do it". There are extenuating reasons for the way that Billy Bowden signals, but in embellishing his actions he may be considered all style and no substance, and therefore a poor umpire who is using his position to achieve notoriety (Fowler & Manthorp 2003). This is not the case with Jamal.

Jamal is in his mid-twenties and has only been umpiring at the senior WACA level for a few years. He began his umpiring as a student as part of the John Forrest Senior high school cricket program, a decision that resulted from an injury to his back sustained a year earlier at primary school. The interest in umpiring began almost incidentally. As part of a specialist cricket program but unable to play Jamal would ask the teacher for permission to assist in umpiring the school games. It was a way of being involved and by volunteering to be the square leg umpire Jamal took on a role that is sometimes difficult to fill⁸³.

⁸³ Cricket is a game controlled by two umpires – one for each end of the wicket. In games where there is only one controlling umpire the role of square leg umpire is usually filled by a member of the batting side. It is a role that is often avoided because it entails standing in the field, often just after a long period of fielding, and with the expectation that when called on to make a decision against a player on the same team, the decision will be made without prejudice or favour.

His interest in cricket began as a young boy and was heavily influenced by his grandfather, a “big cricket fan”, and the two would sit together in front of the television watching the game. Jamal has mixed ancestry that includes Swedish and Italian along with his Aboriginal Yamatji connections, though a family history in the game is largely non-existent. His mother has become interested following Jamal’s involvement in the game but, like some of the other participants, there is no inter-generational involvement as players to underpin Jamal’s interest. In this case an active participation in games of backyard and schoolyard cricket was substituted by one based on observation of the game and of his grandfather watching the game. It was good preparation for his later move into umpiring and contributed to the durable dispositions that would be applied to his umpiring through his habitus.

Jamal’s cricket playing experience began in 1997 when he joined the Morley PCYC junior cricket club, though he regularly played each Friday for his local primary school, Embleton Primary. The back injury first flared up during a primary school sports event and eventually kept Jamal out of the game for a couple of years. By the time he had started playing cricket again he was enrolled in the John Forrest cricket program and was close to moving into senior cricket. He began to consider his future as a player and using the umpiring experience that he’d gained from John Forrest High School he decided to take the WACA umpires accreditation course. Jamal achieved a score of 68% in the exam, which was not sufficient to gain a place as an umpire in the WACA system. Undeterred, Jamal took up a suggestion by the director of umpiring to develop his skills in a different association. This was at the end of the 2004-2005 season. By the beginning of the next season, and still only 17, Jamal began the switch from player to umpire and began officiating in the Suburban Turf competition. He spent five years in Suburban Turf, starting in the lower grades and moving up as each year passed. For the 2009-2010 season Jamal moved back into the WACA system where he continues to participate. In the initial years at Suburban Turf he would umpire on the Saturday and play on the Sunday, though by the time he had become a WACA umpire he was umpiring on both days.



Figure 15: Jamal Principe (left) and Reuben Garlett – Aboriginal cricket umpires, 2013.
Source: Koori Mail.

Jamal's story is still emerging. As a young umpire in the district association there are still many opportunities for Jamal to develop his skill and knowledge of umpiring. His is a narrative that has really only begun and lacks the depth of experience of other participants, but already the way he talks about the game and his place within it resonates with the seriousness and professionalism that fits with the role of officiator:

I've got a routine I don't drink the night before I'm not a big drinker but I don't drink the night before, I never drink when it's hot cause you get dehydrated I have a fairly early night maybe nine, ten o'clock ... district starts at 11.30 so, the laws of cricket say that umpires have to be present 45 minutes before. the WACA encourage us to be there an hour so I get there, I may get there at 10 o'clock just getting into the mode "

Jamal's transition into umpiring has been successful, driven as much by his desire to remain a part of the game, but also in his approach to learning the umpiring craft: "I'm always reading the laws, playing conditions because you never know you might

get a situation where something odd crops up and you've to know it". In becoming an umpire it has been necessary to think about the game in different ways, as a part of the action but independent of either side, where

the best umpires are not noticed they're almost the shadows of cricket they're not noticed. They're match managers. They're there to facilitate the game, the players run the show, if we need to step in because we think it's unfair we will, if not, we let them play.

Jamal's story provides an insight into another element of the game and one that is rarely considered. It allows for a view to the game that sits off to the side of the experiences that are discussed in the narratives of the other participants. Umpires occupy a unique position within the game and are both observers of performance and performers in their own right. "Umpiring is the best seat in the house, you're right there; obviously you've got a job to do but you can sit back and watch some great cricket being played especially when it gets really tight, like when you get down to the last over, last ball, you've got to be ready to make that call if possible".

Conclusion

These three narratives explore other stories in Western Australian district cricket and extend the experiences of this space that are expressed in the stories of John McGuire and Clint Dann. They offer a sense of the field that is collectively shared but engaged and understood individually. They reflect an outcome of the field that emerges through the application of habitus and are, in turn, shaped by the field structures and situated contexts in different ways to the three narratives to follow. More particularly the narratives explore the idea that fields are multi-dimensional spaces that consist of clusters of sociality sharing a common code but constituted differently from location to location, akin to the dialects of a language. In this way, the manner in which each experience was framed and articulated, and the degree to which their stories developed a broader sense of the particularities of a social and field context (i.e. district cricket), flowed from the location of their creation.

What these stories show is the emergence of ways of seeing and engaging with the game that are informed by a shared understanding of the place of district cricket within the wider sphere of the game in Western Australia. Belonging to this social place is accompanied by an acknowledgement of the underlying values and attitudes that are attached to being a district cricketer. With respect to the participants' Aboriginality it also shows that membership can be subsumed within broader constructions of a cricket identity based on individual teams or as part of a wider group of participants, so that being a district cricketer masks other social or cultural identities. However, in recognising this, it is possible to consider how each player's identities (Aboriginal man, district cricketer) come together to reveal some of the processes that allow them to bend or manipulate this identity mix in order to maintain a position within the field.

The narratives capture the way in which individuals utilise particular strategies that contribute to a definition of their experience, e.g. the strategy of resistance in Clint Dann's regular journey from club to club, the way in which Troy Collard manages his place on a team in relation to the presence of his uncle, and in Jamal's choice of umpiring as a means of staying in the game. The field expects each player to put on the cloak of cricket, with its associated habitus of learned behaviours and values, so that other identity, while never irrelevant, often becomes secondary, emerging in instances of tension between the call of one and the interests of the other.

As stories from a particular dimensional location they contain cues and markers that express the logic of the social space and reveal the acquired strategies (Bourdieu 1977; de Certeau 1984) that are applied in order to realise a role. In this generated guise, and through the selection and re-counting of lived experience, they chart a path through space and time in order to reaffirm identity and to reclaim a sense of self and belonging as one amongst many (Jackson 2013). In recognising this notion of a topographical arrangement and the presence of others within, around and in relative position to, the next chapter examines experiences that similar claims to those above but does so from a position that sits in proximity to the narratives of

Matt, Troy and Jamal, sharing many of the same conditions but establishing an inflected character that derives from the location and context of encounter and engagement.

Chapter 8

Topographical expressions of field encounters

This chapter focuses on the accounts of the three remaining participants. In the preceding chapters, there has been a focus on experiences derived from 'higher' grades or more elite competition. The narratives in this chapter reveal something of the experience of playing and learning the game at a level of competition generally considered below or lower than that of the other participants. The narratives in this chapter offer a different view to the field and are conceptually situated in the field further from the objective forces and pressures that apply to the narratives of those in more elite levels. The individual expectations are shared with those within and around the same level. Their impact is more localised and contained within the networks and relationships of each individual. And because they represent singular instances of often disconnected experience they are important in their capacity to broaden our understanding of the complex of networks and relationships that establish cricket as a domain of social practice⁸⁵.

The other defining reason for presenting these three men together is that I knew each of them prior to this project. Jeff Kickett worked at the Western Australian Museum as a visitor services officer where he was involved in greeting visitors and patrolling the public galleries. Harley Coyne worked (and continues to work) as a heritage officer for a Western Australian Government department in Albany, a regional city on

⁸⁵ The bulk of the cricketers playing in Australia will be members of a team participating in these metropolitan or country teams. Along with the general public who consume the game as viewers and spectators, these non-elite associations represent the broad base of cricket involvement that supports the game but is generally not seen to be the pathway to higher-level cricket. The players who participate in these competitions are the men, women and children who enjoy playing the game, who gain a sense of belonging from participating in a team sport and cherish the camaraderie and social benefits that accrue. This is the grass roots space, where away from the public gaze individuals create and reproduce the knowledge and experiences that give meaning and value to their lives. And this is where I played much of my cricket.

Western Australia's south coast, and has collaborated on various Western Australian Museum projects. John Mallard is a long-standing member of the Museum's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, providing advice and direction on a range of issues relating to the collection and the work of the Anthropology and Archaeology Department.

As with the previous chapters that chart narratives of similar journeys and the construction of individual identities within the game, the following narratives share another common characteristic that bind them to a shared understanding of the game. In this case they occupy a space within the field that sits just below the level of public awareness and consciousness. They are not remembered through television coverage, media reports or from the stories and anecdotes that attach themselves to the elite level. However, they represent a part of the field where cricket is made and reproduced every weekend during summer. They are personal stories and memories that exist within a constrained social experience and shared with and remembered by a limited number of people, and in the bigger story of the game they reside as hidden reflections of the more public version of the game that is performed by representative, state and national teams.

The following stories contain a version of cricket experience that, in part, runs parallel to my experience of cricket. There are elements that are familiar and shared, as there must be in any form of activity that is subject to a codified set of rules and laws or subject to the influence of the field. These are the basis for the shared understandings that emerge from the interview process, and as an outcome of how I positioned myself as researcher in the process. That is, I was able to present my cricket character in a way that aligned with theirs. But there is an unfamiliarity in their accounts that emerges from the differences between us; between their Aboriginal and my European ancestry. This unfamiliarity also exists in the lack of a structured experience of learning the game as a junior player that draws the accounts of these three players together and presents a different insight into the game compared, not to just my personal experience, but also to the other participants.

These accounts extend beyond the kinds of expectations attached to pursuing a more structured path through the game from a young age and draw in other experiences from their lives to construct identities that jostle with other constructions of their identity (from other fields). That is, their continuity of contact with and position in the field continues to draw on their wider habitus to sustain a cricket identity in their minds and in the minds of others, but an identity that is less separated from other domains such as work, family and community.

Jeff Kickett

it all stemmed from ... watching two people bowl and that sort of taught me to watch other people batting and that taught me to watch other people in life ...

In reading back through the transcript of the interview with Jeff I was initially struck by the sense of variable rhythm in what was recorded. There was an initial period where Jeff seemed to be feeling around for how best to respond to the request for information about his experience.

jk: geez..um...I think it was a friend, a friend sort of said "ah do you want to have a game of cricket".

I said, "oh yeah alright".

So we ended up ... his father or a friend of his father ran the local cricket club, and that's how I started ...

rrc: yep, so you were playing footy as well at that stage?

jk: I might have been, I'm not too sure. I'm trying to work [it] out. I think it was under 15's for cricket when I started that and it would have been about under 16, yeah next year, the next year under 16s or 16s and under I can't remember exactly for the footy...

There was no outwards sign of nervousness and the venue was known and familiar. Jeff knew me and while he worked in a different area of the Museum we shared a history of interactions and experiences. We often chatted about his cricket exploits and our mutual interest in the game became a point of connection to an activity outside of the workplace. The interview represented a different encounter (Ribbens

1989) in our relationship where my previous casual interest became a more serious exploration of his life in cricket.

There was a comfort in talking to Jeff about cricket because of our shared interest in the game and how each of us had performed when we were both playing. Jeff played more consistently and we would talk about his recent games or results. When he started showing signs of the physical wear and tear inflicted by the game, our conversations would sometimes shift to consider how Jeff's role as a player was changing. But these were fragments of conversation generally held in passing the front desk where Jeff was stationed or during the day when I found myself in the Museum's foyer waiting for a visitor or after answering a public enquiry.

As with the majority of the other interviews Jeff began with how he started playing; what influenced him as he learnt to play the game. His initial tentativeness was surprising and the following exchanges slipped into a series of questions that only expected affirmative or negative responses. It felt, and reads, like a stuttering start and though there are a couple of the longer responses. Jeff's sense of self-narrative is less well defined or practised as compared to the likes of Clint Dann, John McGuire and Matt Abrahamson. It's almost as if Jeff's conversation with himself about his cricket stories has not embedded them as deeply. An internal dialogue is both a part of the unconscious expression of habitus and disposition and is revealed through the process of storytelling. This dialogue builds as a series of partial truths, selecting and censoring those parts of the stories that fit the context (Clifford & Marcus 1986) as a creative expression that is a part of the dynamic and shifting nature of our social lives (Herzfeld 1997).

Jeff's narrative is not clear in what it tells about these initial years; there is no rehearsed or clearly recalled set of memories that give structure to his account. We initially worked to find his narrative as a collaborative process; question followed by response. He begins by recounting that it was a friend who took him down to play at a local club and when prompted about family influences there are none. The initial

impetus comes from this third party who has a connection to the team that enables Jeff to negotiate the transition between the boundary of outsider to team member. He began at a junior club in the under-15s, and again there is a divergence to other interviewees in the lack of a period where he mucked around in the backyard or street with family or friends. A starting point in under-15s would be generally considered a late start in a game and it seems unlikely that he had had no exposure to the game before then, so I asked about his primary school experience: “what did I do? Nah, couldn’t bowl, couldn’t bat, so I didn’t do nothing...”. But there was some contact in primary school, although it appears to have been a passive involvement that included watching other people (children?) and learning some of the basics by simply observing.

This lack of childhood exposure to the game was at odds with my own experience and with the stories that other participants had been telling me and while there was no expectation for each participant to reel off a list of experiences in strict chronological order from their earliest days, the lack of any temporal framework made a different claim for understanding. As an expression of the influence of habitus this was outwardly, at least, the opposite of John McGuire’s and Clint Dann’s. Where they learned the game within a controlled and guided program, Jeff learned by watching and doing and with little of the external voice that comes through the intervention of coaching or familial influence. Where habitus develops as an acquired set of understandings it can also reflect on the journey through the field that gives form to an internal rendering of stories and in their external representation; that is, habitus contains within it the imprint of the field’s requirements to act and behave in ways that align with its internal logic and the stories we recall contain the clues to the extent that this internal logic was inculcated as a social pattern.

Without this template or any other identifiable analytical frame to follow Jeff’s stories seemingly lack the temporal thread that gives them order and without much of the background context that makes them fit with the logic of the field:

rrc: so when you got down to the club was there a bit more coaching when you go down there?

jk: yeah, well, it was a new club in Belmay, that was in Redcliffe, but when I started playing that would have been probably five years later, would have been around the age ten or something, maybe 11, 10, grade 5 or something, 6, something like 10, 11 something like that, and then from there I went to Redcliffe, from Redcliffe went to Lockridge, of course, and started playing under-15s around there so would have been would have been around 13 or 14 yeah

rrc: ok, ok, cause it was quite late really

jk: yeah, cause most kids well there was no, there wasn't even a football club, there wasn't a cricket club, a junior cricket club or junior footy club, so it might have been one of the first junior sort of sporting things in Lockridge because its only small suburb it's like only 800 households, that's it ...

In understanding my question about where did it start Jeff has taken it to mean the point in time when he consciously committed to playing cricket, as a game played in a structured competition between opposing teams, and not as an unwilling participant in a school activity that his experience of primary school cricket suggests: “the only reason I got in was because I had a white pair of shorts and that's it so I can't even remember training for the squad or anything”. Although later in the interview when framing the length of time he has spent playing the primary school years are included in his estimate.

After his family move Jeff continued to develop his cricket skills, though, again the narrative that emerges is not clear and there is a struggle to align clubs and years. This is the point where the lack of rhythm is most keenly felt, as if fragments of memories are plucked and presented stripped of context, out of sequence and it suggests that these aren't the important things to be remembered or, at least, that Jeff remembers.

jk: there was after under 16s there was no underage cricket in the metropolitan area

rrc: oh ok

jk: in those days

rrc: so when are we talking about is it 19...

jk: ah it would have been 76 (rrc: 76) yeh, 76, 77, 76

rrc: yeah....

jk: and then we started, then someone started up the Rangeview cricket club, which was based in Lockridge, Rush Road oval and so we went from juniors straight into seniors in that area which was in those days Perth Merc ...

rrc: oh ok, Perth Merc yep....that was the one I played in...., so when you say you got hooked...what did it actually...how did you get hooked, what was it about cricket that you just enjoyed?

jk: no idea .. just, I, I can ... I don't know it was just one of those things ... it's just, it's like footy I suppose, like fishin'. Just catch a fish and you catch another one, you know, like get away with something like...especially if you're bowling - you bowl a crappy ball and you get away with something. I don't know it was weird. It's a weird feeling but just hooked

rrc: or you just went down to join in?

jk: just went down, yeah just went down there was no bowling no bat. I tried out for a lot of clubs and in the middle of my career sort of thing... juniors that is... and Perth turf, nah, I can't think what it was called ... there was because you had Perth Merc and then you had the turf

rrc: suburban turf?

jk: that could have been it yeah, there was one in Basso, and I went down there and give it a crack and someone handed me a set of pads and handed me the bat and have a hit and ... "try it next year, mate" and I went "fair enough" and that was it ...

The arrhythmic flow of this passage contains a disconnect in the stories that Jeff employs and in the manner in which they become representative of his experience. There is an intersubjective tension (Jackson 2013) in Jeff's attempt to represent the stories that will best illustrate his reflection on his initial dalliance with the game. These memories are more reflection that he played rather than the ones that establish what it means for Jeff to play cricket. It's almost as if the initial journey is less important in revealing identity and character than the actions and performances that bring the game to life. However, there is within them a suggestion of a deeper existential desire that struggles to find voice. The reference to fishing is an allusion that Jeff hopes will provide the way in to a representation of a state of being that can explain the feeling and worth that cricket provides, even though it also demands some form of other understanding on the part of the audience.

Jeff's muddled account reflects the lack of a delineated path of progression, no back story worth recalling. The initial recall of the narrative seems clouded and it is not until the discussion shifts to talk about the game and how it was played that the narrative develops a rhythm and the stories become more confidently expressed and more nuanced. They become about the journey (Jackson 2013) rather than any attempt to diarise a sequence of events. This, then, could be considered to also be a

reflection on the habitus of the interview where negotiating the boundaries of social practice can result in the moments of upheaval that require each participant to re-orient themselves against themselves in order to move on to the next stage of the conversation.

So, if Jeff's initial account of his own history is somewhat stilted and halting, reflecting in part his habitus and the interview process, what is that can be taken from it to frame his overall experience? Is it possible to draw from it a trajectory within the game that can be analysed with or against the other interviews in order to describe a more general experience? Or is it more appropriate to consider the narrative's framework as a "being a part of and being apart" (Jackson 2012:p.2) from the field as a way of exploring behaviour and the representation of behaviour and experience. Because in the end a conversation about cricket could easily be a conversation about any other aspect of Jeff's life: the way that it is constructed and the context (the rhythm and timing) in which it is told are likely to be more revealing than the re-creation of chronological events.

What makes Jeff's narrative more challenging is the lack of detailed context to accompany the stories and experiences. It may be that Jeff assumed that I knew much of this story already, that he had shared his cricket stories with in conversations during the preceding years, but it is more likely that Jeff had not spent a lot of time reflecting and recalling past events and his early cricket memories were just one more set of experiences from his time as a child and young man. It was only as the conversation moved into a discussion about how he played the game that the responses began to expand to become more complete stories of events and action.

It is difficult to trace the path that Jeff took in playing his cricket simply from following the information presented in the interview as it contains few clues about clubs and dates. What I have been able to glean is that Jeff spent much of his cricketing days playing in local Perth suburban cricket competitions, even as a member of teams within his local district. It doesn't appear that there was much shifting between clubs,

though shortly after finishing at Lockridge Jeff tried out for a team in a higher standard of competition, only to be told to come back to try again the next year; there is no indication that he did.

In an attempt to re-create a chronology for Jeff I consulted the MyCricket website only to find that of the three Jeff Kickett's to have played over the past 15 years, only one was this Jeff Kickett (Noranda – 4 games, 2000/2001). The record of Jeff's participation is difficult to construct and even when I rang him later to clarify what teams he did play for he told me that it was hard to recall all of the names of the teams because as "bad bastards" they were required to regularly change their team name to avoid being excluded from the competitions they joined: that is, it was the same team under different names. This explanation provided me with two things: firstly, it clarified the lack of detail in the interview. In constructing a recollection of his cricket Jeff creates meaning through the stories attached to particular events rather than to a wider attachment to an organisation or group of individuals. Secondly, it revealed a strategy that was used to maintain a presence in the game. His reference points then are not the usual markers of shared experience, though clearly the "bad bastards" indicate a shared experience. Rather, it is the appearance of individuals that appear in the narrative when it is necessary to establish the basis for a connection to something, either a transition experience such as that encompassed by learning something new or as an active agent in causing an event to take the shape that it did, that represent the mnemonic triggers. Background context is only ever loosely provided so that the stories become almost timeless and there are only ever fragments of a wider network that can be used to create points of orientation to more specific places.

Jeff was not the only participant to provide little detail about runs scored or wickets taken. When he did mention a score it was in the context of a story that highlighted part of his experience:

jk: I'm not blowing my own smoke here but I was a pretty good at my batting when I needed it. I played in a grand final a couple of years before that scored one hundred and something odd runs, 108 and got 10 runs taken off me ...

rrc:...taken off?

jk: yeh, instead of 108, I was 98 - don't ask me why [but] I've got an idea the President of the Association was also one of the umpires of the day and his son was playing against us (rrc: oh right) and I was out leg before [both laugh] (rrc: so that's a cruel...) there's another one (rrc: ..a cruel way to go anyway) yeah

This is often the way that many scores or wickets are recalled. They become incidental statistics in wider stories that describe performance, action, attitudes or behaviours and are remembered in the recounting of the events that become conflated into a single batting score or set of bowling figures. They operate as another mnemonic device that recalls memories to frame an experience or demonstrate a point or reinforce an opinion or belief.

There is one particular exchange from Jeff's interview that demonstrates how this often works. Jeff by his own admission was a combative player with an approach to the game that bordered on fierce:

I don't go into it to lose, I'm not, I'm not there to let someone else walk over me or my team and if I can stop [them]. Anyway I can, I'll do it [chuckles] so I did, I did a lot of things I should, I'm not proud of ...

He saw the game as a contest, almost as a personal challenge – this was what he loved about the game: “one bloke bowling at a one batsmen ...” – so that there were occasions when certain situations resulted in certain behaviours. On one occasion when Jeff was opening the batting a “pretty decent bowler” bowled two beam balls⁸⁸, followed by three bouncers, at him. He had accepted the first two as possible slips of the hand but by the third bouncer he had had enough and threw his bat at the bowler. Fortunately for the bowler the bat curved like a “boomerang” and hit Jeff's less fortunate teammate at the other end. Still enraged by the incident Jeff proceeded to chase the bowler back to the changerooms with the intention of “throttling him”.

⁸⁸ A beam ball is a ball bowled at a batter's head without bouncing it off the wicket, much akin to a baseball pitch. A bouncer is a fast, short-pitched delivery bowled to bounce above shoulder height and usually directed at the batter. A beam ball is an illegal delivery and will be called a no-ball by the umpire, whilst a bouncer is part of a fast bowlers arsenal and is intended to draw a false stroke or to intimidate. There are now rules about how many short pitched deliveries are allowed in one over though when Jeff was playing this rule would not have counted.

Jeff was reported for his behaviour and after failing to attend the tribunal hearing – “no one told me when I was supposed to front the tribunal so they suspended me for a year”. The suspension meant he missed his team’s grand final win. When I asked him why he felt targeted by the bowler he recalled the story above regarding a previous grand final where he had scored a hundred. The revelation that he had played well in a final was as a way of explaining why he had been singled out for the bowling. Although, in making this claim he was also ensuring that his ability with the bat was not only noted but emphasised. It was a way of giving this representation the same “concreteness” (Jackson 2012:p.9) as the experience and embodied practise that it reflects.

Jeff’s interview revealed a wider experience of embodied action placing himself at the centre of many of his stories in ways that captured his behaviour on and off the ground. Jeff played around the margins of the spirit of the game:

one of the grand final[s] that I played, two guys that played, used to play for us, played for the opposition side. They won the grand final but before that they were making runs and ... this guy went around the corner for a single and whoever was down at fine leg stuffed it up a little bit and he yelled out to me ah you “C U N T”, and I went, “you bastard”, so as he was coming up, as he stopped and turned around I kicked him in the ankle [laughs] so he only made one didn’t make two, he was going for two, and the umpire’s “woah, woah you can’t do that” and I said “well, what are you gonna do, already done it” ...

and

all I used to do after cricket people have a beer, I never used to drink, because I’d drive ... and I used to sit there and listen to these guys and then you start talking to them and they’d tell you intimate things that they shouldn’t when they’re full of juice, you know, so I used [laughs] I used it, I used everything. So they reckon the Aussies were really bad but, no way, if they’d seen what we used to do.

There was a combativeness to the stories that was at odds to not only the experiences of the other participants but also to my experiences of playing cricket. At times, it resulted in official sanctions and the bat throwing incident above meant Jeff missed at least one grand final. But this hard approach, coupled with an ability to observe and read situations, also won the respect of teammates and was recognised by the opposition:

I knew my bowler. My bowler, this guy, just all his does is leg stump and these guys flick him down the leg side all the time and I got really sick of it. So I brought my fine leg in ...

I said "come up here Mal"

and he came up and I brought him right up close, I said "keep coming, keep coming", it was sort of a leg slip ... for a flick off the toes, the very first ball this guy bowled it was down there flicked off the toes. Mal caught it. Best catch I've ever seen. It worked, you know, and I think that's when I started getting a little bit of respect from ... the guys. They understood. They started to understand what we were trying to do and I mean I'm still getting calls from teams now to come and play for 'em.

There was a real sense that the contest was what motivated Jeff and satisfied something within him that responded to its mental and physical demands. It suggests that the interactions resulting from a sporting contest, and extending to activities off the field once the game is over, offered an environment in which to express behaviours that may not be considered appropriate in other places, such as at the front desk of the Museum where Jeff spent much of his working week.

As our hour came to an end I wasn't sure whether I had captured what it was that made Jeff a cricketer. We had covered ground back and forwards as memories surfaced and as questions led to other enquiries or I remembered other themes that I thought would be interesting. Ultimately, a somewhat muddled chronology had emerged from our conversation. It charts an engagement with the field from within the narrow confines of Jeff's ambitions and expectations and expressed through his habitus. These experiences put us on the ground, out in the middle, part of a contest that carries expectation and consequence: "...my place was to show these guys how to play ...". At the end of the interview Jeff revealed one more piece of the puzzle, a view to a purer motivation for playing and one that, along with all of the combativeness, transcended the physical:

when you hit it in the middle of the bat and you stand there and watch it and you look at the bowler and you smile, you know, that's pleasure, the pleasure of it, its, its, I don't know, it just hits you here (presses chest) I mean *you just feel it* [my emphasis]...

Harley Coyne

we played hard cricket and you didn't take a backwards step ...

Harley is the only participant not living in the metropolitan area. He grew up and continues to live in the Western Australian south coast city of Albany, where he works for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as a Regional Heritage Officer. I had previously worked with Harley on a repatriation project involving the return of Aboriginal Ancestral Remains to a south-west community so we knew each other in a professional capacity but had never formally discussed other aspects of our lives. But from the shared conversations over the course of our work I had learnt that Harley played cricket and had been playing for many years. When this project was being formulated Harley was one of the men that I had already identified for an interview.

Harley's cricket experience is echoed in all of the other participants' narratives in that in asking for an account of experience one is inclined to start from earliest memories. Each set of recollections differs to the next because of the context in which this experience occurred and in the events and actions that mark each set of stories as individual and unique. Harley, like John McGuire and Clint, also experienced structural barriers within the game; he shared a similar set of early childhood experiences to John Mallard, John McGuire and others; and he spoke about some of the underlying issues in the administration of the game that worked to preclude Aboriginal people from playing, in a similar vein to comments by Matt, Clint and John McGuire. These echoes are more than merely a product of the ways that this first interview informed the others. It suggests a pattern of encounter that repeats itself across a particular cultural landscape and establishes an alternative understanding through which we can frame and make meaning.

As much as the accounts of Clint, Matt, Troy and Jamal are useful in what they can collectively say about an experience of district cricket, Harley's account provides recollections that are independent in time and place and are largely free of

‘interference’ from the other participants. This is not to say that Harley acts as some sort of control or independent corroboration to the other interviews but more that his account widens the focus of experience in the same way that the other two narratives featured in this chapter mirror the kinds of individual accounts that have characterised a historical understanding of the Aboriginal experience of cricket. It talks to the difference between field and social space by examining a narrative that draws identity from the field but is framed by its mix of physical and social dimensions in order to examine the arrangement of the whole (Postill 2015; Reed-Danahay 2015).

Harley is a Minang Nyoongar man and the youngest of three cricket playing brothers. He started playing cricket on the street with his neighbours and his brothers, as well as in the playground at primary school, building habitus and learning the code of the game. Cricket was only one of a number of games that he played as a child and his enjoyment of all games was enhanced by “good hand-eye coordination”. His interest in cricket waned once he entered high school and it wasn’t until he was 17 that he began to play competitive cricket again. His first attempt to join the Railways Cricket Club was unsuccessful.

Harley explained that in Albany a couple of the Australian Rules Football teams also fielded a cricket team in summer. These associated teams were, in his experience, difficult to break into because of their established playing group that was largely drawn from the football team. Harley sat outside this arrangement in which playing football for the club gave one preferential treatment when it came to cricket season. He was on the wrong side of this insider/outsider divide and his desire to play was left to the discretion of others who told him “we’ll consider you when we get to you”.

Following this disappointment Harley accepted an invitation from his elder brother to play with them in a competition that Harley referred to as “industrial cricket”, meaning the teams in the competition were formed around workplaces such as the local electricity utility, Western Power, and the Albany meatworks. This was a relaxed

competition, though still competitive due to the number of good cricketers who found the flexibility of only playing every second weekend more conducive to their lifestyle.

After one season with Western Power an Aboriginal team was entered into the competition and proceeded to win the next two premierships before the competition folded. The team “had an immense amount of talent ... the team we had was filled with blokes that could throw and catch and bat and ... it was just a delight to participate in that because well it, for one [as] an Aboriginal team there was no, there was no restrictions placed on us about how you were doing, you were able, we were able to play cricket and I actually enjoyed that period”.

The experience of playing cricket with other Nyoongar men echoed the earlier teams from New Norcia Mission and further highlighted the barriers to participation. In time, this lead Harley and other local Minang cricketers to conceive of a team that allowed "Nyoongars to play without restriction apart from having a commitment and positive attitude towards training and game planning"⁸⁹. But with the “industrial” cricket competition closed down, and with memories of the obstacles encountered at Railways⁹⁰, he joined the North Albany cricket club.

The lack of Nyoongar players within the competition appears not to have been as a result of the lack of desire, as demonstrated by the success of the “industrial” competition team, so the lack of participation stems from other causes. As Harley explains:

we weren't encouraged to go along. There wasn't any if you liked cricket at school. There wasn't that extra step you could take for us. We sort of found it difficult and it as only through my own interest in cricket that I allowed myself, that I got myself into a position that I was able to play on other teams. But there was no favours [from]

⁸⁹ Taken from an email from Harley after he had read an initial draft of this chapter. In extracting a record of his ‘career’ from the interview I had mis-understood the sequence of his movements between teams. His email provided clarification

⁹⁰ The membership of the Railways Football Club is characterised by players drawn from professions like the banking industry and police, whereas North Albany Football Club always had Aboriginal players in their teams (pers. comm. S. Gorman)

the Cricket Association. There was no, particular strategy to encourage Aboriginal players to play. Quite the opposite, we were sort of not very welcome at all from what I felt...

and

Well, generally, our people were still going through the throes of removing some of the 1967 stuff that affected us. You know, I was born in 1958 and the referendum changed things in 1967 for Aboriginal people but it only changed it on paper and we didn't find, we're still coming to grips with the effects of being a minority in this community, and cricket seems like, it's an Englishman's game obviously but this pomp and ceremony that people have around the game. It's a bit of a myth as far as I'm concerned, but I played cricket because I enjoyed it...

At the North Albany cricket club Harley played alongside two other Nyoongar players and an in-law ("one of me mates, you may as well say was a Nyoongar bloke – he married into our family"). But there was frustration in this experience, too. Rather than it being the fight for inclusion and recognition, the lack of ability of some of the non-Aboriginal teammates was limiting the team's success and the enjoyment of the Nyoongar players. At the end of the season the three players sat down and formulated a plan to enter a Nyoongar team, effectively reclaiming control over the way that they wanted to engage with the game. Following a recruitment drive in the off-season a team of predominantly Nyoongar men joined the Albany Cricket Association in the B-grade. Their impact was immediate, playing in a (losing) grand final in their first year and playing in another seven grand finals in subsequent years, winning three. In their initial year there was interest to see how they would fare and in playing in a final they surprised many of the other sides. In an echo of the reaction to the 1880s New Norcia teams fielding performances Harley recalls that "the opposition teams couldn't work out why our throwing arms were so good, 'cause what happened was a lot of the Nyoongar boys used to play, softball on Friday nights...and it was unbelievable to see blokes, but, no, it wasn't unbelievable, it was, it was bloody brilliant to watch the throwing arms of a lot of these blokes because they all had a good throwing arm and these, these cricketers couldn't work out what was going on. We were practising our arm the Friday night before and most of us had pretty good throws...".

Freed of the constraints that come with playing in predominantly white teams this Albany Nyoongar team could develop their cricket skills in an environment that suited their needs and expectations: “we had more fun at cricket training than anything else. It was based on just sharpening your skills and, as I say, most of the blokes had fairly good hand eye coordination, some of the blokes that, you know, needed to improve their skills did that and they did it in their own ways, we didn't have a lot of coaching, we were just a lot of raw talent ...”. As an expression of habitus this quote captures the essence of individual and collective disposition. They were cricketers but their sense of the game established a unique identity that fostered personal interest and enjoyment and a character that connected the individuals to the collective. It was a situation occasionally repeated in other locations where the idea of a collective group created a connection that allowed space for an Aboriginal approach to the game⁹¹. The concept of the Raiders team continued to develop though, at that stage in the 1990s, Harley recalls there was little strategic support for developing a pathway for the inclusion of Aboriginal people in cricket at different levels; there was enjoyment in participating but little formal coaching.

Association support eventually came but only after an A-grade team had been entered into the competition. It's not clear why support was only offered at this level but it is likely that the Association wanted the team to succeed at the top level. The ongoing success of the B-grade team was seen to be proof that their talent base and commitment was sufficient to sustain their presence at that level of the game; that they were 'real' cricketers and capable of sustaining that identity. The move to A-grade required a pool of players to support the team and the (unspecified) support is likely to have focused on maintaining this pool so that the team could maintain the standard required for an A-grade competition.

The Raiders team eventually folded and Harley found himself back at the North Albany club, which was the team that he had joined, after his efforts to join Railways

⁹¹ The Imparja Cup competition grew out this desire to create a space within the game that was devoted to a purely Aboriginal involvement.

and before the concept of the Raiders club had formed. Over the next couple of years Harley played in the North Albany A-grade side, beating the Railways club in Grand Final games.

Harley was never tempted to try again at Railways. The memory of his treatment there has stayed with him down the years. He has found a place in the game and an enjoyment in performance that has sustained his interest. His identity as a Minang Noongar man has been unwavering and continues to inform his sense of self and place. In his cricket, from a talented but untried and untested player, he has walked a path between seeking experiences that enhance his connection to and sense of community ('industrial' and Raiders teams) and those that give him access to the kinds of competitions that fulfil his connection to the game (North Albany teams). His habitus is sustained by this enduring duality of connection and the dispositions of purpose, confidence, commitment and pride in his culture and community.



Figure 16: Harley Coyne in action for the North Albany cricket club, 2012-13.
Source: Albany Advertiser.

Harley is still playing competitive cricket in the Albany area⁹². He maintains an active interest in the game and has worked hard to establish a presence and reputation for Aboriginal people in the game, identifying aspects of the competition that he believes could be changed by the injection of more Aboriginal players and this is reflected in the inclusive use of “we” when talking about these changes:

I reckon we could do a ... we could be successful at this level if we got the opportunity...

we just didn't seem to have the same sort of support mechanism and I knew there was a bit of a distinction there ... based on your culture and we weren't included; cricket was...was a white man's game as well and you knew that, but I knew that given the opportunity ...we could, we could be equal...

I've had some good memories there but success, yeah, we've had a lot of fun playing cricket...

There is a smoothing over of the personal in much of what Harley said and while he positions himself as an individual actor within the game he also adopts a role of facilitator, creating pathways for others to follow and offering experiences organised according to shared cultural understandings:

the highlight was actually getting the team, a Nyoongar team, out on the field knowing that there were a few obstacles in the association that just didn't lend towards the inclusion of Aboriginal people very much. The thing I thought was, shit, you know I reckon we could ... be successful at this level if we got the opportunity and we were we very successful at the B-grade competition down here that fitted our lifestyle, our playing our skills...

The difference between B-grade and A-grade down here was ... fairly evident: A-grade was filled with blokes with technique and there was a bit more of this ... what's the word, pomp and ceremony, and everyone bloody playing cricket at an A-grade level and you had to be fairly switched on and show all those signs. Whereas B-grade we enjoyed it, we actually went out there and threw caution to the wind and enjoyed cricket for the sake of just playing cricket there was no there was no ... we broke down a lot of barriers and some of the barriers as I say were those blokes that were semi-retired cricketers that were just standing in the way of young blokes coming through...

I reckon we would have retired about a team of older type cricketers in the first two or three years of the Raiders coming in because we were quick and fiery and we ... changed the game ... changed the game ...

⁹² In 2018, he was captain of the North County (formerly North Albany) C-grade side, winning trophies for his performances during the season.

It is clear in how he describes the stories and accounts that there is a sense of something greater than the individual in Harley's perception of his place in the field. In his frequent use of the pronouns, 'we' and 'us', the accounts open to become more than simply experiences lived in isolation. These are narrative accounts of events from Harley's life but in the company or with the close presence of family, kin or countrymen. It is an oft-repeated theme and he returns to it throughout the interview. The pronouns are a reminder that the landscape of the field is more densely populated with Aboriginal cricketers than is revealed in other accounts. Their use also indicates a reluctance to stand out from the field (in the way that Matt Abrahamson also positioned himself) and develops an individual habitus that extends to identify with other Aboriginal cricketers in a shared sense of the field.

Harley claims a Minang Nyoongar space within the game in Albany, bringing expectations and attitudes that emerge from a different appreciation of the game, not as a white man's game instilled in the kinds of rituals and behaviours that often made it an un-welcoming experience for Aboriginal people, but seen as a contest freed from the constraints of its traditions, in opposition and resistance to convention and the authority of the game and the values that it is held to represent.

When pressed for a more personal reflection Harley expresses his enjoyment of winning grand finals and relaxing with mates after a game. There were no stories of match-winning performances or recollections of personal moments of triumph to counter the more general sense of narrative lived as a shared experience. In an effort to capture something of the individual, something that was his, I asked him about his enjoyment in bowling:

oh man that yeah...well, when I was in my prime ... I actually really enjoyed bowling flat out. There was ... sometimes you ... cricket was a game ... when I was a kid we used to walk to school.

We walked through about a kilometre and a half maybe two kilometres of bush to get to a bus stop from our place...and on the way home from school I used to run through the bush like, I don't know, I just used to run flat out through the bush.

It was a place that I knew like the back of my hand and I could, I was really sure footed through this country and I used to fly through the bush ...

I found that playing cricket ... when you were chasing a leather cricket ball, took me back to my childhood at being able to run fast and flat out through, and I enjoyed just running ... the ability to run flat out.

I still enjoy and I'm 52 now but I reckon I could beat most young blokes off the mark ... pretty light on my feet ... but one of the things as I say I enjoyed is ... is to run and to run flat out and if you've got a cricket ball in your hand and you're bowling with it at the same times its all the better ...

As he spoke these words I could sense that here was something that spoke to the essence of participation: a joyous, visceral expression of letting go and living in the moment. This is what lies beneath Harley's narrative and what continues to connect him to the game and to the aspirations that he expressed when talking about his and his community's position within the game. The physical desire to run, to bowl, to demonstrate to younger players that he still has what it takes, draws him back each season and continues to create value and meaning in his life.

John Mallard

we speak the same language, we have a similar culture

John Mallard⁹³ is a self-professed cricket 'nut' and has played cricket since he was a boy. He grew up in Northampton, a small town north of Geraldton on Western Australia's Murchison coast, before moving further north to Carnarvon. His first interest in the game emerged through the influence of his father, who maintained an interest in both cricket and Australian Rules football, and crystallised watching a mate of his father's play for a local Carnarvon team.

⁹³ I have known John for more than a decade through his membership of the Western Australian Museum's Aboriginal Advisory Committee and until the suggestion of an exhibition on Western Australian cricket in 2006 this was the basis for the interaction. Advisory Committee meetings are held a few times a year, so our contact was sporadic and usually framed by a focus on agenda issues relating to the work of the Museum's Anthropology & Archaeology Department. The meetings offered little opportunity to talk about other matters though I knew that John played and followed cricket. As with the other men in this chapter I had already asked John whether he would be interested in participating in this project so his recruitment was already tentatively in place when I enrolled in 2009. For the majority of the time leading up to the interview John worked in various roles for the Centre of Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University and this is where we arranged to meet to conduct the interview.

John's reflection on this emerging interest echoes the other stories that we've heard throughout. It is a shared recollection that places a senior family member, typically the father and/or uncle, at the core of the initial emergence of interest. And this close, usually familial connection, is often the point of leverage that lifts casual observation into something more tangible. For John, his father's interest in sport ("he had a passion for cricket as well as Australian Rules football"), in concert with seeing an Aboriginal man "hit a six over... one of the biggest sixes we saw hit at the ground it went over one of the ... water tanks that fed the oval [laughs] and I still remember that" was "quite inspiring for me just to see that and see and an Aboriginal person playing cricket".

In Carnarvon, as in many other parts of the State, Aboriginal men did not generally play cricket. John suggests a combination of the hot conditions ("in the sun all day") and more attractive leisure options ("they could go out fishing), though, more telling is the club cricket environment that was unwelcoming that created a barrier to participation - "particular sports where you felt you couldn't participate in". The inspiring vision of his 'uncle' hitting one of the biggest sixes that he had ever seen was the sort of affirmation that propelled John into cricket.

His junior cricket was limited to lunch time games at school, struggling as an eight-year-old to establish a presence against bigger and older boys. Their ground was more mud flat than cricket ground and the chance to bat was a precious event. The "young fellas" would spend much of their time fielding or bowling, and, if lucky enough to dismiss the batter, earn themselves the rare chance for a bat. The playground was a competitive and combative place that lacked many of the niceties that come with playing in structured competitions. This casual cricket extended into high school where John and his mates would engage in self-generated competitions in the cricket nets on the school oval. These games centred on the accumulation of 'runs' based on a scoring system designed around where in the net a ball was hit. Played in the confined space of a practice net these games were intense and reputations were established and traded with a "lot of pride on the line...". This was an Aboriginal set

of experiences, “when it came to doing these sorts of things we used to stick together like ... extended family”, that reflected existing social structures and allowed the friends to interact without the tensions that might arise from the inclusion of outside [white] influences.

There was no coaching, and like Jeff Kickett, John learnt through observation: he bats left handed because his cousin bats left handed even though he is right handed for everything else. His habitus developed as a product of the connections he made to others around him and through mimicry and practice of what he was beginning to see in the actions of others. He learnt to swing the ball in this way, using a tennis ball that had been taped to create one rough side and one shiny side. This ability to swing the ball is a skill much prized by medium to fast bowlers and the direction of the swing is dependent on a combination of body position, arm and wrist action, the presence of shine on one side of the ball and the orientation of the ball when released. One of the benefits that came from the backyard and casual cricket was the experimentation that came from bowling in an environment that was not governed by the official rules of a ‘proper’ game⁹⁴.

John started playing more formal games of cricket with adult teams, an observation that only struck him when recounting the background above: “I didn't play any junior competition at all, just straight in with the men I hadn't really reflected on that before to be honest...”. Again, like Jeff Kickett's story, there is a sense of finding a narrative to the early development of his game and the casual cricket that he did play lacked the exposure to the philosophy and etiquette that is part of growing up with the game. After leaving Carnarvon for Perth to attend Teachers College he was encouraged to join the college team by one of the Aboriginal lecturers at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education in Mount Lawley. Again, it is the actions of

⁹⁴ Backyard cricket is flexible and fluid and rules are typically less rigid. Ball tampering of any sort is banned in real cricket because of the unfair advantage it offers the bowler; in backyard cricket taping the ball to generate swing or playing with a ball that produces erratic bounce contributes to a quick and interesting game. By playing with a ball modified to swing John was learning the principles behind this skill, developing his habitus, and was able to transfer this knowledge into his senior cricket, to the extent where this ability contributes to his ongoing enjoyment of the game.

an intermediary in facilitating the introduction to a team that enables him to navigate the boundary of the field: here was John, a young Yamatji man living in the city for the first time assisted into a new social environment by a man of similar ethnicity and interests.

The local club was a five-minute drive from his home so the transition was eased a little more. For a country man who had only played a handful of games the level of competition was a significant step up in quality and intensity. It surprised John to see how seriously the game could be played when, in his experience, cricket was something played between football seasons and not “for cattle stations”. It is a reflection on the way that the field can manifest itself within different contexts as a space that presents itself in different guises and that develops habitus as product of this context. The presence of a colleague was even more critical in fitting in, though the difference in standard had the potential to create the opposite effect by reducing the value of the initial introduction when John found himself in a different and lower team to his colleague. In the context of John’s transition into a new club, which, like the majority of cricket clubs in Australia, had only one or no Aboriginal players, this separation threatened to strip away any feeling of familiarity and locate him in a position that confirmed the commonly held perception that Aboriginal people do not play cricket. At the very least the higher standards tested John and clearly challenged his expectations so that a move to another Mount Lawley team in a more relaxed competition allowed him to feel more comfortable as a cricketer and provided the space to improve his cricket skills. This, then, becomes a product of habitus working to find a place within the field and allows him to adjust his actions in order to create the “paradoxical products” of social practice (Bourdieu 1977:p.95).

John played at Mount Lawley for the duration of his study at Teachers College but stopped after he secured a position in the public service. He only started playing again at the suggestion of colleagues in the Central for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin

University who encouraged him to join the Curtin Victoria Park⁹⁵ (CVP) club. It was a move that connected different domains of his life. The move back into playing also represented a move back into the competition that he had first joined on arrival in Perth. By now his knowledge and skills had progressed since first playing for Mount Lawley, and he carried a more confident attitude to the club. This translated into a feeling of comfort that had not been present when he first played in Perth.

The intensity was still present and there were elements of what John hesitantly described as a professionalism that attached itself to training and preparation. This hesitation in identifying something as professional highlights a lingering tension in his wider view of the game as a leisure activity rather than an activity that could be pursued as a career, despite the acknowledgement that some players are paid as “professionals to come and play”. And the presence of professional players, particularly those from sub-continental countries like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka who bring an almost “religious” passion for the game, creates an atmosphere where cricket is treated seriously.

What is interesting about John’s accommodation of this professionalism is his qualification of the ethnic diversity present within the club, which he believes contributed to the tolerance of cultural difference. In this diversity, the passionate approach of the Indian players is seen as a positive influence because, as an almost religious experience. The intensity of their connection to the game is embedded in their cultural identity (Appadurai 1996), so that their role in maintaining standards of behaviour appropriate to the common code of the field, “they take it very serious[ly]”, creates space for other players to approach the game in their own manner as long as it aligns to the interests of the team. Clearly, the diversity of ethnic and national backgrounds lends itself to a need to accommodate different approaches and attitudes and establishes a connection between teammates that straddles differences that may exist outside of the club. It is a point of difference to

⁹⁵ The Curtin Victoria Park club (also known as the Redbacks) play in the Suburban Turf Cricket Association.

the other teams that he played in, which consisted of mostly young players who were “working class type people”, but without the mix of religious and cultural identity offered by CVP.

This sense of various states of belonging runs through all of the stories in this and previous chapters. John’s story contains features shared by the other narratives and suggests that the experience of casual sporting activity involves a constant re-working and re-positioning of self in relation to the requirements of the team, the structures within the club and against personal aspirations, motivations and networks. The narrative that flows from this works to frame the fluidity that characterises the changeable nature of a sporting experience and demands that individuals adapt to situations that may be otherwise aligned to their perceptions of worth and place. John describes the shift between teams in a club, capturing an essence of the field and touching on its complexity:

At one time, I was playing in seventh grade and took 7 wickets for 20-odd runs and I got promoted up to 4th grade, which is our second top team.

So, I went from a synthetic wicket, you know, the hard surface, to playing on turf. A bowler, [I] went up as a bowler but played in the top team as an opening batter (laughs) who bowled one or two overs [rrc: oh you didn't bowl very much]. No, but I did pretty well, you know, opening batter at that level.

I found the transition to turf wickets to be quite easy ... they didn’t bounce, the pace wasn't as quick ... because of the nature of the wickets, perhaps, as on the synthetic one. Consequently you had to adjust your stroke play. As a batter you have to time it, the timing was more important, so you work on your timing of the ball and I always found that I had more time to think before playing shots if that makes sense.

The step up in three grades required John to re-adjust his thinking and his game to cater to the changed physical conditions and to the increased mental pressure that a higher standard of cricket demands. For players, moving up (or down) can often alter their approach to the game because of the implied and explicit expectations of fitting into a team that share a perception of themselves in relation to other teams within the club or to other teams in their association⁹⁶. In John’s situation as a player

⁹⁶ Jeff Kickett touched on this in his interview when he talked about facing teams that fielded players who were clearly performing outside of the level that their skills demanded. Players can recognise when another player is at their level, usually through the kinds of discussions that occur on the sidelines once the team lists have been submitted and the captains have returned to their teams following the toss of the coin. In these situations, however, it is my experience that the player

promoted to a higher level there is a sense that repeated and consistent performances are required in order to feel comfortable in this new environment.

There is a hierarchy that exists in the binding of individuals to a team to create a club structure that separates clusters of individuals into discrete, though permeable layers. The structure allows for the movement of individuals between teams according to particular sets of rules and shared understandings so that performance can be recognised and rewarded. Equally, manipulation of the space between the layers can also be controlled in the way that individuals are selected in one team or another. As a complex set of power relations based on personal networks (in the way that captains and coaches choose teams), collective expectation and identification (in the way that clubs generate a club ethos and culture) and embodied performance (in the way that an individual develops and performs over one or many seasons) the club offers a space where identity and self-worth are constructed in a way that extends beyond the confines of the sporting area.

John tells a story about his maturing as a player around the time that he'd been promoted to 4th grade. As a late starter in organised cricket he lacked the experience of developing a game based on practice and training but one that had emerged from his own concepts of what it was to bat and bowl. Catching, and particularly slips catching, was a real issue and his lack of technique and knowledge threatened to mark him as a less than competent cricketer. John understood that without this skill his value to the team was diminished so he set himself to learn how to catch in slips; he now ranks it above scoring runs as one of the enjoyable aspects of the game. He recalls a game, played on turf, in which a number of slips catches had gone down. John was fielding as fourth slip⁹⁷, where "the catches weren't coming" and was

coming into a team from a higher level is generally the one that opposition teams become most animated about as they are the ones that represent a measure of talent that can be used to compare personal abilities.

⁹⁷ Slips are one of the fielding positions that stand alongside the wicketkeeper. The number of slips employed by a captain is dependent on a number of factors including the pace of the bowler and situation of the game and can typically range from none to four. The position is a static, standing position and is intended to catch or stop balls that are edged by the batter.

moved to first slip, alongside the wicketkeeper. Within two overs he had taken two catches, one of which was taken diving away. As a result his confidence grew, the bowler gained confidence in the knowledge that he could bowl the lines he wanted and he earned the respect of other teammates. He felt like he belonged. John delivered the story with animation and a real sense of personal satisfaction – this to him was an achievement that helped define him as a cricketer and earned him wider respect and recognition within the club.

John was 50 when we conducted the interview and was playing 10th grade, a team that he referred to as the “good old boys”, and while he wasn’t the youngest he was sure he was one of the fittest and most mobile. The 10ths is a social grade and their enjoyment continues to derive from the ability to play the game. Team lists are by necessity variable, as work and family commitments dictate a fluidity to the roles that players are expected to adopt. Weaker players are accommodated and slotted in the lineup in positions that they could never expect to achieve in more serious grades, but there are still opportunities to contribute significantly to team performances. John recalls the game where he strode to the crease with his side in dire straits at 6 for 40-odd, and settled in to eventually score 40 out of a team total of 140 – the reward in continuing to be a valuable member of the team keeps drawing him back each season.

For John, the cricket team is a comfortable and enjoyable social space where a common interest in cricket provides an experience of shared belonging and understanding, and where recognition of ethnicity or cultural diversity represents the opportunity to learn and understand more about the world, and more about what it means to be human. This sense of comfort was evident during the interview and his responses were reflected his easy familiarity and connection to the field but also his experience drawn from his work life, where he is required to lecture and mentor Aboriginal students. This connection between work and sport is maintained in his work at Curtin University and his connection to the CVP cricket club. Over the past few years John has moved away from the University to other roles in private industry

but is now back working at the university in a role supporting overseas students. CVP remains his cricket club. It continues to be a place where his identity as a cricketer is reproduced with each new season, which, in turn, represents the application of his habitus and dispositions. His longevity in the game and his position within a relatively fixed location in the field talks to mastery of a code that enables him to maintain his interest's relative to what the field makes possible (Bourdieu 1977).

Conclusion

The clustering of these narratives follows a hierarchical ordering that echoes the kinds of experiences reflected in each. This ordering contributes to what Bourdieu describes as a "multi-dimensional space of positions" (1985:p.724) as a way of establishing relative positions within the field where each account has a value applied to it as consequence of its position, which, in turn contributes to the identity of the individual. While each individual will hold their account significant to their own sense of identity and self, the context in which it is produced cannot be said to be equally weighted.

In this sense, the structuring of the accounts is part of the general artifice of the project and characterises something of the ethnographic process to craft and shape a view to the data. The choice to present the order in this way is mine, though there is a sense within each of the narratives that the participants themselves recognise and agree as degrees of seriousness within the structure of the game. Harley's reference to the greater requirement for a sound technique in A-grade and Matt's reference to the "hit and giggle" of his Sunday league competition suggest that one of the elements that binds players is an internal understanding of sameness and difference that in turn informs their perception and consideration of others. My point here is that the three narratives that form the basis for this chapter contain experiences that reflect a more generalised experience of cricket at a level lower down in an order of value that is constructed by those who play the game. In this way it reflects the wider objective structure of the field.

What the narratives also reveal are experiences that capture a view of the game that could be considered more distanced from the rarefied traditions of the game that are manifested in practices like specific training uniforms, adherence to accepted ways of behaving on the field, and to the spirit of the game as contained in the laws of cricket. What is striking about these three players is their longevity in the game, each one playing into their 50s. While this may be more a reflection of the level of physical effort needed to play the game, it also demonstrates that the game remains a sustainable activity, fulfilling a social need over a long period of time. Their identity as cricketers is drawn from this sustained connection and from their efforts, as Aboriginal men, to negotiate the structures of the field. This identity shapes a broader view of themselves as weekend amateur cricketers, and as part of wider social networks that can accommodate or limit inclusion according to context.

It is also clear that each of these narratives contains a sense of comfort in what might be considered more modest ambitions that accompany participation in this area within the game; that habitus responds to more modest expectations of aspiration. There is less insistence on making the big claim that marks both John and Clint's story; less of the competitive push to play at higher levels. As individuals making their way in the game they articulate an increased connection to a community where their experiences are shared more closely with others who similarly share this continuing interest. This connection grows from the relationships that develop and the shared meaning that is created in the pursuit of common aims. At this level, there is less compartmentalisation between different fields and the spaces between are more permeable. We can hear this in John Mallard's expression of a microcosm of his work and leisure joined through cricket and in Harley's desire to create a local Aboriginal presence in his local town competition. These narratives are an expression of the everyday; ordinary in their claims for individual endeavour and recognition but powerful as claims for the importance of considering the manner in which the singular is an ever changing representation of what it means to belong (Jackson 2008).

Chapter 9

Towards a Collective Aboriginal Cricket Narrative

Like other sports, cricket is a game that is as much imagined through conversation and the written word as it is performed on the field. There is much to imagine: from the recitation or invocation of past deeds and players; to the events that unfold in real time and are witnessed close up on the field or from a distance on the boundary; to the endless possibilities of current and future action, performances and results; to the very nature of the game and the way that players, administrators and promoters can influence and shape the cricket experience. Of course, how the game is digested, imagined and re-told as a balance between shared and personal is as unique as the individual observing the game or (re-)telling the story.

This is where the game and what it represents continues to be produced and reproduced, where what we understand and know about the game as a way of negotiating relationships and identity is made and re-made. It is also one of the ways that cricket, as a domain within the wider sporting field that enables social action and practice (Postill 2015), creates the structures in which habitus is produced (Bourdieu 1977). By engaging with this discourse, it is possible to reveal the ways that the character and code of the field are inculcated into the behaviours and thoughts of its participants, and trace links to other fields that also contribute to process of identity construction.

This project was conceived around the notion of biographical narratives constructed from what individuals told of their experiences, rather than direct observation because in most cases it was only possible to access the products of embodied practice through the stories that each man told about themselves. What is it about each set of experiences and the way that they are remembered and recounted that allow us to derive a deeper understanding of each individual and the impact that

cricket has had on them and their lives? How do the participants construct their narrative and what do their stories illustrate about themselves and the game – can we derive broader understandings from the narratives or are they merely reconstructed entities that restrict or mask access to deeper meaning and context?

In this chapter I bring the individuals together to present a collective view to what can be considered to be a reading or description of an Aboriginal cricket habitus, framed around the same structures of shared common experiences that will have formed an aggregated habitus that can be applied to the group (Bourdieu 1977; Browne-Yung et al. 2014; Burnett 2006).

Individual lives as collective expressions

The previous chapters have presented a reconstructed story of individual cricket experiences and in doing so frame a view to the field that captures the singular. In creating clusters to form each chapter I have already presented some ways that these narratives can take on particular views to the field and in ways that can be useful in considering the development of habitus, use of dispositions to animate social practice and as a way of charting a journey through social space. But as reconstructed stories they become artefacts, constructed as a negotiated process and then re-produced as biographies, often smoothing the 'voice' of the individual and only considering individual experience and contribution.

The individual accounts, however, are more than just the where and when – as important as this is in considering how intersubjective lives work. They are also about the how and why and reflect on the game in a way that creates definition and understanding. They articulate cricket as a game with its shared behaviours, rules and internal logic, reproducible through the actions of the participants so that we can recognise it and name it as field (Schirato 2007). The purpose of this chapter is to consider the individual in relation to the experience of other individuals in order to develop a sense of a collective identity. In doing so it acknowledges a range of variables specific to each individual. And while a journey through the game may

follow similar directions no two stories can be the same. Similar in their broader experience, certainly, but different according to a range of factors dependent on personal and community influences. Yet, while each narrative is unique, considering them in combination and connected through a shared field reveals shared understandings, motivations and expectations, obligations and behaviours.

In bringing the accounts together, what they say more broadly about an Aboriginal experience of the game, explores what Jackson refers to as the “singular universal” (2013:p.259). It becomes a way of examining a shared cultural identity that engages with a field of social practice, recognising that in doing so this gives up the self, stripping each account of its independence (Herzfeld 1997). However, it is necessary to do so to create the nuance in what we know about the experience of Aboriginal cricketers and build further towards a biography of Aboriginal experiences of cricket. For example, John McGuire, Clint Dann and Matt Abrahamson were district cricketers whose talent was nurtured and shaped at junior level, and describe a different experience to Jeff Kickett and John Mallard, who entered the game later having missed the kinds of regimented coaching that is part of school and junior club experience. And even the narratives of John McGuire and Clint Dann can be viewed as diverging representations of experiences that share a number of similar characteristics. Individual stories contain the potential for possible circumstance; taken together it is possible to see more of those circumstances in action.

In recognising difference, it can be argued that we create an order or hierarchy that acknowledges a range of other variables and shared understandings and which we use as a means of orienting ourselves in relation to others. And this orientation is fluid and socially distributed; it can change, shift or be re-cast through our own action or through the actions of those around us and it requires a constant negotiation. It may be something as simple as choosing to play in a lesser competition (in the sense that competitions are structured around standards and expectations of skill) or because a coach or selector has chosen to include or exclude a player from a team.

The positioning of oneself in relation to others who play a game requires not just the mutual understanding between those who choose to participate, but knowledge about the game, how it is structured and what it takes to move within and between different parts of the game. Position generates context for the social practice that creates meaning and identity because to simply be located is not enough. One has to engage, to be active in that position in order to establish the relationships and networks that give their experience validity. Ultimately, where one fits and the social practice that is produced will depend on factors such as: are they a player or spectator, are they skilful or merely competent, what are their motivations for playing or viewing, what knowledge of the game and its traditions do they possess?

An awareness of the way that decisions are made, along with the recognition of those with the authority to make them, allows for the capacity to distinguish and negotiate the politics that continually shape both individual and collective experience and ascribe value according to a range of variables. Professional sport attracts wide media and public scrutiny and the worth of professional athletes and their importance to the business of the team can be measured in financial terms (Robidoux 2001). Their worth, therefore, is considered greater than those who play at lower levels or for not monetary gain.

Cricketers playing at the elite level can be said to be more worthy cricketer than players in more social grades. This recognition is supported by an understanding that the elite level player will have worked hard to achieve the results necessary to establish their reputation and place within the elite. In order to maintain their place, they will then be expected to maintain that level of commitment if they wish to continue their membership of the group and the benefits that it brings. There is also the expectation that as an elite player they will have developed a habitus that upholds the traditions and ethos of the game and act as role model for those who aspire to join them or those who, knowing that they could never join them, follow them as supporters and fans.

Talent plays a major role in how far someone will progress towards the highest levels, though, equally, personal passion and commitment can often overcome any perceived lack of talent so that the more driven and focused individual may achieve greater success than someone who does not work as hard or apply themselves as diligently⁹⁸. This also translates into wider perceptions of reliability, dedication and character (*habitus*) where personal virtues and behaviours (*dispositions*) become more important than mere ability. The value assigned to these attributes of hard work, diligence and focus is not just limited to those involved in the elite level and apply equally to those further down the ranks, where competition is often no less intense, and in the absence of the opportunity, encouragement and support that elite players may have enjoyed, they act out many of the same scenarios as their higher ranked peers.

However, this shared understanding and experience, while unifying in one sense, is also the point of separation between the various levels of the game and the level at which someone participates is, in itself, a marker that informs and positions an individual within the game and contributes to the construction of their identity. Cricket is no different to other sports in creating a gap between the different standards of competition that accommodate the many thousands of adults and children who play each weekend over summer. Across each level and in each association the pursuit of the game binds its participants to an idea of the field and their experience of it then grows through their journey in it. Experiences will be graded, sorted and differentiated according to the context of their location but each individual is contained within the macrocosm. This suggests that there are other ways of measuring worth that are embedded in their motivations and is attached to the context in which the production of experience occurs. This worth flows from the sense of contribution that individuals have in their efforts to participate and negotiate the field or in the efforts of others around them to create the conditions of

⁹⁸ Australian cricketer Justin Langer is often discussed as a cricketer who's capacity to work hard and achieve results overcame a lack of pure talent: "in a land of dashers and crashers Langer was seen as a grafter, a battler, only ever a couple of failures away from oblivion".(Cricinfo 2007)

practise that creates experience and meaning. For instance, Harley's efforts in forming a Nyoongar team may be considered to have more worth in its context than the action by someone in another, more elite location. That is, the potential for this action to have a significant and enduring local impact would give it a worth that could shift wider understandings of the game. In this way, the accumulation of single instances of experiences from across the field, in this case Aboriginal lives in cricket, build towards a collective understanding of how worth is measured through the shared meanings and impacts of these lived encounters.

The eight participants in this project represent a window to parts of the game across a range of levels. Together, what they say about the game from an Aboriginal perspective and how they say it provides us with a unique view to the game, albeit one that captures an understanding of the game at a particular time and place and under particular conditions. That is, as narratives they should be viewed as socially constructed texts based on memory and conversation, as a product of a formal research project, and offer merely one insight into what we understand about what its like to play cricket; and in the case of this project, what it was like for eight Aboriginal men to have played or been involved in same way in cricket in Western Australia.

This chapter is divided in four sections covering learning the game, playing the game, imagining the game and being an Aboriginal cricketer. The sections derive from a number of themes that run through each of the interviews and each works to establish the underlying narrative that structures and supports each interview. They provide the words that allow us to understand how each player positions themselves within and against our understanding of the game and what this allows us to say about the place that Aboriginal people are perceived to occupy within the social networks and structures that give cricket in Western Australia its place and identity.

Learning the game

At its simplest cricket is a game between bat and ball. It only requires two people and can be played almost anywhere and by using whatever objects come to hand⁹⁹. In this form, its rules are also pared back to their purest form: a ball is bowled and an attempt to strike it is made. If the striker (or batter) misses and the ball hits what has been agreed to be the stumps he/she is out and the roles are reversed. Similarly, if the batter hits the ball and is caught by the bowler, without the ball touching the ground, the batter is also ruled out. Other games, such as baseball, might also be stripped back to a similarly simple form, with each only requiring that their participants possess a basic knowledge or awareness of the bigger, more complex game that it mimics. Cricket, like baseball, is a game of tremendous complexity combining rules, traditions, behaviours, actions, sign systems, knowledge and language that might appear to an observer with no prior knowledge to be simply a series of orchestrated actions.

Even in the simplest forms of a game there is a rich potential for any number of social interactions between the competitors: there is the playing area to demarcate, who bats and who bowls to be contested, modes of dismissal to be agreed to, identity of teams to be decided, length of the contest to be considered, scoring zones marked and action to be called. Where the chief protagonists are young children these contests are important in developing a range of social skills that, in turn, help establish self-identity, self-worth and an ability to negotiate and make meaning from these social spaces. These early contests very often unstructured and impromptu and while appearing to contain no obvious pattern or structure clearly resemble a contest between bat and ball as learned from watching and listening to adults or older siblings play or through the intervention of older children or adults. They may have been told that cricket is played in certain ways, that it contains certain rules and

⁹⁹ Though it is the practice of the game that is important in recognising it as cricket. That is, the ball should be delivered (bowled) overarm and the batter should hold the bat (in whatever form it takes) in a way that marks it as a cricket bat and not, for instance, like a baseball bat. This practice forms part of a common code that each player is expected to conform to and, which, in turn contributes to a sense of the game.

through their doing and playing they will learn what roles are more important or fun (batting versus fielding versus bowling) what feels good (bowling a batter, taking a catch, striking a ball into the outfield) and what roles are best avoided (running after a well hit ball, standing around without anything to be involved in). In a child's sporting development these games generally take place before exposure to more carefully structured and supervised community sports. With the move into a more formal sporting structure the child is exposed to a different set of challenges and demands set around the expectations of others (Dyck 2012).

These early experiences of carefree cricket, with its underlying testing of oneself against siblings, cousins, or mates, are often the path to more serious cricket. Many of the greats of the game began their cricket stories in humble conditions and from these experiences developed traits and skills that became synonymous with how they played. Cannane (2009) describes the manner in which many of the biggest names in Australian cricket developed their trade in backyards, rear lanes, orchards and dusty country blocks using whatever came to hand for equipment and negotiating any manner of hazards that the local environment would present. He shows that it is the skills developed from challenging conditions and the need to respond to situations of intense activity that foster skills and techniques useful in more formal versions of the game.

This early mucking around type of cricket is important in sparking initial interest, building capacity and capital, and was important for each of the participants and almost all could recount a beginning to their cricket that was embedded in interactions with family or friends. Matt Abrahamson spoke about the bat made by his grandfather from a plank of wood that he used from the time he could walk, "smashing" a tennis ball around the backyard in games with his mother:

Mum's also been or had an interest in cricket and watched the game when I was young so it possibly it was the natural progression that she was interested in it and I took it up ... [Matt Abrahamson].

Encouraged by his mother and her interest in the game (and her son) this taking it [cricket] up suggests the presence of a pathway from one conception of the game to

another; from casual backyard or school yard games to a competition with structure and rules and expected behaviours, smoothing the way between one level to the next. The transition between casual games and structured sport is a move from an environment of autonomy and ownership over an activity where motivations and outcomes are negotiated and maintained within the confines of a small group to a world where the decisions and agendas are controlled by other agents, and typically coaches, administrators and parents (Dyck 2012¹⁰⁰). This is a whole new way of learning that requires the accommodation of a different set of motivations and expectations, usually someone else's, and the relinquishment of many of the freedoms that unstructured games allowed. It begins as soon as joining the team and continues as long as one has involvement in structured, team or association based sports.

But what defines one's sense of natural progression varies according to expectation, motivation:

I found it to be really interesting cause, well most[ly] I got good hand eye coordination, I don't know whether that's part of heritage, culture or not, but generally my hand eye coordination is fairly good...cricket has allowed me to practice that skill and improve it [Harley Coyne]

seeing one of my uncles playing cricket and doing pretty well was ... quite inspiring for me just to see that and see and Aboriginal person playing cricket ... that [school yard games with mates] then translated into driveway cricket ... [then] just straight in with the men [John Mallard]

we used to just play because its on TV in the summer and just go and make a little patch in the scrub and play against each [other] ... to keep out of trouble you play a sport, you know, and cricket was a sport in the summer so I never really played, I just played socially then Clinton wanted me to go down with him at a turf club [Troy Collard]

Generally, there was little coaching, even at school, and technique developed sufficiently through observation and practice to a standard required for senior cricket. By the time Harley and his peers emerged as adult cricketers they were more than a match for their opposition and played in seven grand finals in a row, winning

¹⁰⁰ Dyck writes about sport from a Canadian perspective though the experiences of moving through early levels of sporting experience are similar to those described in this project.

three. John Mallard's early cricketing experiences allowed him to spend time with other Yamatji boys or what he referred to as "extended family", organising competitions between each other in the nets on the town oval, before starting the seniors. These were clearly experiences to be enjoyed within a familiar network where the intensity and rivalry from the competition remained unhindered by the potential for the kind of tensions that lurked close to the surface between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in many parts of Western Australia.

Learning about the game isn't always limited to an experience of physical engagement. Jamal Principe recalls that his interest developed in front of the television as something shared with his grandfather, a man of Swedish ancestry, who loved his cricket and instilled this into his grand-son. Jamal's cricket world revolved around a consumption of elite level cricket that is far removed from the kinds of interactions, immersion and movement involved in backyard and street cricket. Jamal's journey into cricket followed a path where knowledge was accrued through observation and conversation, an understanding of the game as a ritualised spectacle rather than as an embodied performance. His aspirations were not fostered in response to the acts of a father or uncle but in reaction to the feats of the players seen up close on the screen in front of him. It created an interest that was sufficient to draw him into participation when that opportunity arose at school.

There are other, more formal ways, of developing knowledge than simply playing in the backyard or watching the game on television. John McGuire, Clint Dann and Jamal Principe were all offered opportunities to extend their proficiency and knowledge of the game through school-based sporting programs. These programs offered more intensive and more focused learning and coaching opportunities. But not everyone was in a position of learning the game this way so that the complexity of the game, from its skills, to its rules and values, is learnt along the way and is supplemented by other attitudes and beliefs. Matt was not convinced "that you're instilled with all the etiquette and sportsmanship of the game from a young age but as a kid your parents teach you things, how to respect other people, what's generally acceptable and I

think you just carry that into the game and as you become more entrenched in the game you start to come across other people and certainly playing senior cricket there's little traditions that are in the game ...". It's about immersion in the game, practicing skills and applying them in games that is the place where:

... you start to learn more about your strengths and weaknesses and adapt to that and become a more consistent player and I enjoyed the challenge later on of being an older guy in a young team to go out there and try and show them the way go out and open the batting, prove to them that the opposition are human and if you want to knuckle down you can so it became a game of very much learning your own game and then showing others the way [Matt Abrahamson]

However, some formal opportunities do provide additional benefits in the way of social capital. John McGuire attended Guildford Grammar on the strength of his football and cricket ability and became part of a system that had well-established protocols and expectations. Unlike Clint and Jamal's school program, which offered a set of specialist cricket classes covering topics like the history of the game, coaching, match strategies and fitness, John McGuire became immersed in an environment that was built on professionalism and tradition where sport was part of a wider school curriculum. So, like Matt, it was learning through being and doing: wearing the school uniform to the game and the school's honour blazer during lunch; donning long pants and spiked shoes, "understanding what the behaviour was, what the etiquette was, what the protocols were". The Guildford Grammar School team played against other Public Schools Association (PSA¹⁰¹) schools in a competition that was considered to be the elite schoolboys competition in the State¹⁰² and which mimicked the behaviours of the professional cricketers that appeared in television and newspaper images. More importantly this experience of representing an elite boys school placed John within a wider network of relationships that flow from an association with an institution such as Guildford Grammar.

¹⁰¹ The PSA schools are seven independent fee-paying schools: Aquinas College, Christchurch Grammar, Guildford Grammar, Hale School, Scotch College, Trinity College, and Wesley College. The PSA Sports code of conduct promotes the physical and mental benefits of sport and a range of associated values that echo the values of nineteenth century masculine Christianity.

¹⁰² The first XI of each of the PSA schools compete for the Darlot Cup.

As CLR James (1993) observed, a sporting experience such as this cannot be seen in isolation from the wider spectrum of power relations and social structures in which it is embedded and schools like Guildford Grammar are particularly bound up in networks of privilege and the reproduction of entrenched social structures. For John the benefits of attending Guildford Grammar contributed to what Bourdieu describes as habitus making it “easy then to transition...was tremendous preparation particularly with the culture and traditions of playing ... the game”, something that “a lot of Aboriginal kids just really struggle with this culture that's completely different from what they're used to”.

Clint and Jamal both attended public (government) high schools as part of a specialist cricket program. Entry into each of the programs was subject to the results of testing and both negotiated these successfully, earning what Clint (following a prompt question) described as a scholarship; what this scholarship offered at a government school was not discussed. Jamal's test took place at the WACA ground where he was required to run two and a half laps of the ground, and take part in a net session and trial game; he was selected to join a group of 24 students that by Year 12 had dropped to 11 or 12.

Clint attended Kent Street high school in Bentley, as part of that schools first intake of students into its cricket program. The school's website promotes the program as an opportunity for students to “enhance” their cricket skills, to participate in tours both at home and overseas and to play teams from around the country and from overseas (KSSHS 2013). It claims that 80% of students who undertake the program play district cricket, which is the pathway to elite level cricket. From the outset the students, and by his own recollection, Clint and his brother, achieved results on the field:

we were successful and yeah, we ... went well, used to play a lot of private schools and government schools you know we used to belt em all (laughs) and um yeah Tim and I, even at school we were the standout contributors, not every game ... [Clint Dann]

I have described in an earlier chapter the progress that Clint made following his high school days and it is clear that the transition between the school environment and adult cricket represented a move from an environment that was controlled and managed, in terms of a structured program of subjects, training and games, to one that contained a different set of controls and measures. It is easy to suggest that at school Clint was a big fish in a small pond but there is real feeling of displacement and disconnect between the confidence gained from success at school to the unequal pressures and scrutiny that was applied to him in district cricket.

Considered in isolation Clint's experience articulates wider perceptions of the game as a white man's game, fostering a culture of intolerance towards players who did not conform to the club rules. Clint's encounter with club coach, Bob Massie, calls out attention based on Clint's Aboriginal identity. It suggests that within the management of a cricket team there are ways of excluding and segregating on the basis of cultural identity and that this can be masked under the guise of so-called legitimate assertions to not being part of the club culture and akin to the stacking in English cricket that marginalises or excludes non-white players (Malcolm 2002a). That this occurred to Clint immediately after leaving the more rigidly constrained school environment thrust him into a culture that was grounded in different understandings. In this case learning became more about negotiating relationships with individuals in roles of varying degrees of power, than it did about the skills and ability to play the game, which Clint clearly demonstrated on the field and as shown in his continued selection in A-grade teams over a period of time. Grounded in the particulars of the field engagement this learning was driven by, and contributed to, his habitus and understanding of the field.

Learning the game also requires an ability to shift one's expectation of what the activity can deliver. In part, this is bound up with self-belief and an understanding of what one can contribute to the game, which in Clint's case became something that was largely unfulfilled as he moved from club to club. The durable nature of habitus and disposition supported Clint within the game and sustained his role as

batter/bowler throughout. His reinvention as a player at each new club was made possible because of his skills and acquired knowledge of the field - through his identity formed as a cricketer - so that what he was required to learn each time was the particular ethos and culture of each club and not new ways of playing. Jamal, on the other hand, in becoming an umpire - having grown up with a view to becoming a player - needed to shift his thinking almost completely, though as it occurred relatively early in his cricket experience, his transition became almost a natural progression and he successfully re-invented himself in a different role within the game.

Each participant in this project continued to gain knowledge as they made their way in the game: mastering the technical skills and learning the laws, identifying and absorbing other behaviours and protocols. But the effect of individual habitus and the influence of disposition works to create differential experiences. In the cases above the sense of belonging that became attached to their location and identity within the field (Aboriginal cricketers) move between a restless connection to particular localities of practice (e.g. district club) to an enduring expression of identity resulting from a shared system of practice (e.g. umpiring). In turn they both contribute to the wider habitus of Aboriginal cricketers.

Joining in: negotiating liminality

One of the commonly quoted reasons for the lack of involvement of Aboriginal people in cricket has been its perception as a white man's game, as a pursuit outside of Aboriginal social networks and interests, representative of the dominant white hegemony, embedded in colonial practices and with an underlying presence of racist and exclusionary attitudes and behaviours (Fogarty et al. 2015). The anecdotal evidence, including recollection of this project's participants, suggests that Aboriginal people have always had some kind of presence in the game so that the social barriers attached to its perception as a game of the 'other' have been negotiated somehow by those who have played. The way in which people attach themselves to a group varies and may range from a conscious decision to seek out a group that has elements

of something that the individual seeks, is initiated and negotiated by a friend, colleague or acquaintance and relies on a sense of obligation to become involved. A connection can also occur through a more informal, less intentional process where there is no invitation or sense of social obligation towards the group or individual within the group other than the desire to participate in a shared task or event.

This attachment is grounded in the particulars of the engagement with the field; habitus is made and shared publicly and under the influence of dispositions identity is established. As a transition from outside to inside a zone must be crossed and within this liminal space there is often a complex set of behaviours and understandings to be negotiated and new knowledge to be absorbed and understood. The successful negotiation of this space by some brings acceptance; the moment when the tension between the expectation of reciprocal value between the new player and the team is neutralised. But, even then, the struggle to maintain these positions is grounded in negotiating and resisting racist behaviours and attitudes and that many who have joined the game do not always last long in it.

One of the themes shared by each of the participants is the requirement, and part of the natural progression of one's time in the game, to select a team on which to play or represent, and the experiences captured by the interviews talks to some of the ways in which this process of choice is resolved. In choosing a team one is required to negotiate a social boundary that carries varying degrees of permeability or layers of transparency that may immediately appear clear but become murkier the deeper one penetrates. In the context of this project and with consideration to the way the field of cricket is socially constructed it was interesting to hear not just what motivated each player, as a man of Aboriginal ancestry, to play the game in the first place but also the way in they found themselves as part of a team or club. Why is it that these men enjoyed a long association with the game when others felt excluded or unwelcome? What accommodations have the men made to participate and have they shifted wider expectations within and outside of the game?

Clint Dann, in recounting his time at Bayswater Morley, and Harley Coyne talking about his efforts to crack the first-grade team in Albany both suggest that belonging within a structure is dependent on an ability to know and understand the rules, but that this is only a part of what it takes to be accepted and there are other factors that mark one's suitability for membership:

... I was getting all the cricket coaching in the world ... [but there was a requirement] ... to be a part of, you know, selection night, Thursday nights, attend, have a beer or have a soft drink and wait around for your name to be called and socialise with the boys and with my culture it was hard for me to understand that, we, its really ... I never got taught to be a part of that type of culture ... [Clint Dann]

Harley is less up front with the reasons for his non-selection, though he implies that his ethnicity was an obstacle, and more than his actions in demonstrating his bowling prowess to the team's captain. That, like John McGuire's state trial performance in which his talent and ability was expressed through his mastery of the game, there was an unspoken reason for his exclusion; one based on cultural identity. Clint is more open about asserting what he believes is a more overtly racist approach by those that he encounters:

...he'd target me and single me out um and I just feel that that was racism, straight out racism ...
[Clint Dann]

I cleaned bowled the captain at training, the B grade captain ... I flattened three stumps out at training one night. Couldn't break into the team He just had some problems I think. And he stuck one stump up and I flattened that out next ball and I still couldn't get a game in the B grade. I eventually got a couple of games with the Railways cricket club after persistence and training and I thought there was some obstacles there that probably shouldn't have been there ...
[Harley Coyne]

What is it about Harley's performance that lead to the outcome he describes? Bowling the captain in consecutive deliveries is a demonstration of ability and success as a bowler. It demonstrates a measure of mastery of his technique and bodily control and would usually have counted towards a selection. It suggests that Harley had not yet developed the capital within the club to position his performance in a positive light. His identity as a Minang Nyoongar man challenged and potentially threatened the non-Aboriginal captain who occupied a position of higher power within the club's

structure. While not explicitly expressed, the “obstacle” points to the underlying impact of racism that is an enduring presence in the majority of the participants’ experiences. In this case Harley’s disposition of hard work and persistence gives him an opportunity to claim a place in the structure but the unsuccessful outcome works to shape and inform his developing habitus.

There are generally no explicit rules about how to conduct oneself in the context of training and as shown above this becomes learned through experience. Players will often bowl as fast as they can to the batters or, at least, try to dismiss them as many times as possible within the brief time that batting practice lasts. This is an opportunity for teammates to come face to face with each other and to test their abilities in an environment that, while not always safe, is contained and observable. Jeff Kickett’s appraisal of his team training performances is testament to the combative attitude that often arises: “our bowlers used to try and kill our batsmen ... you get someone quick all they want to do is... knock your head off [rrc: so train as you play?] yeah, you give as good as you get...”.

It is not clear from Harley’s account what his motivation was in trying out for Railways. His initial foray into senior cricket as a young adult was a couple of seasons with a team that also included his brother, and had resulted from his brother’s invitation to play. In this case the boundary that exists between those on the inside and those who are not yet part of the group, who may not even aspire to be part before being invited, is negotiated with the support of someone on the inside with the ability to make the boundary traversable. But it is not always as simple as putting out an invitation. In some cases, the person with authority to accept a new person to become part of the team may not be the one with a relationship to them. Typically, a request will be put to the team captain or coach or administrator, though the support of a senior, established member of the team will also hold some degree of influence. Generally, these invitations are accompanied by a recommendation from the person making or receiving the invitation along the lines of “he can bat a bit” or “he’s pretty handy with the ball”, though the credence placed on the

recommendation will depend on the reputation of the player making the claim as there is a degree of trust that exists in accepting new, unknown players. The decision to accept a new player is generally weighed up against existing numbers available, the potential for the newcomer to add something that the team doesn't already have, whether the recommendation can be supported by the testament of others, whether the team harmony will be affected by the new addition and, for some, ethnicity may also be a consideration.

For Harley's initial entry into the game with the Western Power team, the presence of two brothers already in the team will have made joining the team a smoother process, for both him and probably the team. However, in choosing to take up cricket again after a break of some years his choice of a different team (the original team no longer existed), and one without the same familial connection, placed him in a position where negotiating his place required more than simply appearing at training before the season's start. This new team played in a different competition, though still within the same geographic region, so it was unlikely that there would have been much overlap in the personnel. His performances for the Western Power side would have been unlikely to have been well known to those in the Railways Cricket Club and without an agent to assist his introduction to those in Railways who wielded the power by determining selection he would have had to start again and establish his claim for selection – something that he struggled to do.

John McGuire's experience was something quite different and it illustrates a key difference in the way that acceptance works. John benefited from the school he attended and from his performances as a member of the State under-17s schoolboy side. He had demonstrated ability in the game and a capacity to embrace the game for what it offered and for what it represented. John was already tied to a district club, Claremont-Cottesloe, through contacts aligned with Guildford Grammar School. The old boy networks of the elite private schools are an efficient and supportive set of links that provide opportunities to former students that are not always available

to outsiders. John had already proved himself by competing well at school and beyond and the invitation to join a club was already assured.

Although he played a couple of games for Claremont-Cottesloe, John didn't end up playing for them beyond this initial foray. Instead he chose a team where he had no previous point of contact and no previous association with affiliated junior clubs. As Harley's experience has shown that the boundary between outsider and insider is not always permeable and automatic acceptance is no necessarily a given. In John McGuire's case the presence of friend and State under-17 teammate already at Mount Lawley, provided the connection that moved him across the line from outsider to insider: "having Kevin Bryant there gave me the opportunity to to go to Mt Lawley and be part of that club where, you know, a Nyoongar had never played".

By the time that John eventually moved from Mount Lawley his profile and reputation or worth as a cricketer were well established, sufficiently so that he no longer needed a contact on the inside or an existing network into the team. He was now able to transcend the scrutiny and assessment that attaches to new players; his reputation had already preceded him as a residual and enduring story within the field. He describes his start at the Leeming Spartans:

I thought I'd just pop in and take a look and ... one of the guys came up, and he turned out to be the President of the club,
and I said 'who's playing here',
and he said 'Leeming Spartans, that's us, we're batting at the moment' ...
I said, 'is this your home ground?'
He said, 'yeah',
and I said, 'any chance of getting a game',
he said, 'you're John McGuire, aren't you',
I said, 'yeah',
he said, 'absolutely mate',
he said, 'we could always do with a few players where do you want to what grade play?'
I said, 'oh look this grade would be terrific just for a bit of fun and I reckon I could get a few runs in this competition, enjoy it',
he said, 'absolutely, no problems' ...
[John McGuire]

Troy joined a cricket club with the encouragement of his uncle, “he just told me to come down and have a crack and I did”, though it helped that his uncle (Clint Dann) was already an established A-grade player. The presence of other Nyoongar teammates was also important and he gravitated to teams with Nyoongar players, and when he did move clubs he tended to do so in company with his uncle. Moving as a pair meant that Troy was not isolated in each new environment but in acknowledging the familial connection Troy was also required to differentiate himself when Clint began having difficulties on and off the field:

when you've got an interesting character like uncle Clinton there, you know what I mean, he's got a great technique and he's an A-grade batter butsome people don't like people that are very confident, you know what I mean, and cause he was confident he had his enemies whereas me being a bowler, there was a lot of bowlers, and there was only two Aboriginal boys, me and him, so I had to earn my own respect and a lot of its done at training in the nets ...

[Clint Dann]

The risk for Troy in his close association with Clint was being overshadowed by the older, more experienced man and he needed to establish and negotiate his own identity in the team: “they knew we were related but I know that we were different characters too, so, look there was undercurrents ... they had to deal with it and I was just diplomatic about it. You know I'd become very diplomatic”. This diplomacy was maintained during the interview and there was no further elaboration or detail about specific situations involving Clint.

It is possible to draw from Troy's comments that he was able to negotiate a sense of separate identity because of the role that he performed within the team, based on his identification as a bowler. He used this role to separate himself from the batter, Clint, and by allowing himself to be “used me like a machine, really just a lot of bowling ...” he was able to maintain a clear sense of himself and project that to other teammates, or as he suggests above “earn my own respect”. In the end he fulfilled his own expectations – “I wanted to play A-grade and I did that, you know what I mean, and I wanted to bowl against household names and I did that and I got household names out” – and embraced and met other expectations of the club more successfully than Clint articulated: “you got to be committed if you want to be friends

with everybody and ... you know, otherwise your heads on the chopping block if you're being a mediocre player cause you're not one of the boys”.

For the participants in this project their place in the field is a result of their capacity to use their habitus to establish a claim for belonging. In developing the habitus and dispositions needed to navigate the field they accumulate the knowledge and relationships that allow them to move across the liminal space between fields and then between the layers in the field. In doing so they are playing the game of the field, aligning themselves to the field's code and negotiating an identity that is cloaked in the behaviours and practices of the field. Like a batting innings, once in it's a question of making the right shots, anticipating the action and working the field to ensure a successful performance.

Playing the game

One of the themes that binds all of the narratives is the manner in which the game was played. Cricket, despite its often violent beginnings (Malcolm 2002b) is considered to be an embodiment of the British values of “fair play, restraint, perseverance, responsibility” (Manning 1981:p.617) and moral character (Tadié 2010). It is rooted in “Englishness” in its “privileging of a certain use of language, literature, ideology, and history of one group over populations that it subordinates to itself” (Diawara 1990:p.830). In this sense of the word it also supports perceptions of whiteness so that it becomes a lived experience that reproduces whiteness. This struggle to maintain an Aboriginal identity and strategically inculcate the ways of the game lies at the heart of each participants narrative.

A journey through the game is influenced by a combination of factors from the nature of the field experience, a sense of play, and the strategic engagement with the spirit and ethos of the game. However, it is also shaped by the constant process of negotiation between subjective choice and the limitations of the objective field and context of lived experience. Therefore, the manner in which the participants approach the game illuminates this contrary position whereby their dominant

identity as Aboriginal men is located within a domain that is embedded in other cultural values and practices. What emerges from the narratives is the notion of an Aboriginal cricket habitus that plays at the edges of this idea of a game of 'fair play' and 'restraint', and as a way of asserting their claims for a position in the field:

... we were hard at it, we were very professional in what we did and how we did it, after the game it was all over as far as we were concerned that was it so there was never any comeback ...

[Jeff Kickett]

... we played hard cricket and you didn't take a backwards step, we played against a lot of other cricketers that used the same tactic as well ...

[Harley Coyne]

Cricket does not demand the same level of strength, aerobic capacity or physical body on body contact as sports like boxing or football. For each of the participants there is something within their stories about playing cricket (as opposed to being part of the broader social life of a club or team) to suggest that cricket creates interactions and perceptions that are different to the football codes or to boxing or to contests where there is a more physically intense confrontation between players.

The focus of the cricket contest is largely between two individuals separated by the length of the pitch and where any aggressive confrontation is channelled or abstracted into a bowled delivery or into a swing of the bat: the ball rather than the bowler becomes the focus for any implied violence¹⁰³. For the time it takes to deliver the ball all of the other members of the fielding team, along with the umpires become spectators outside of this moment of action.

¹⁰³ Of course, where this breaks down is when, as was shown during the 2012-2013 Big Bash 20/20 league, two players take the contest between bat and ball to another level and engage in direct confrontation. In this scenario the bat and ball become weapons to be used against the individual rather than as objects within their original context. In this particular case the confrontation was between a high profile former-Australian player, Shane Warne, and a current West Indian cricketer, Marlon Samuels. Exception was taken by Warne to an incident where Samuels impeded an opposition player by pulling on his shirt when he was taking a run. Later in the game when Warne was bowling to Samuels, Warne confronted Samuels

For the short period of time that it takes to play a shot all eyes are on this contest involving only two players; this is where much of the tension for players and spectators develops. It is a short period of time full of pregnant expectation where the outcome of the delivery contains a range of potentialities, dependent on a range of factors that are not always under the control of the players. It is largely a moment that passes with no speech other than the sound of the bowler's footsteps making contact with the ground and the release of air in the form of a grunt of exertion as they deliver the ball. This is the contest of cricket in its most essential, characterising form, i.e. ball against bat. And it is this contest that creates the value and meaning that motivates their participation:

... I valued my wicket enormously but the challenge of being out there in the middle and having all these comments, and bowlers were particularly mad in those days, well most bowlers are (laughs) but having bowlers and fielders get stuck into and telling you, you can't play, you know, the odd racist comment and that sort of stuff just created ... the challenges of playing the game, first bat against ball and ... then the other elements that came into play being out in the middle
[John McGuire]

I used to love, I guess, the contest especially when you batting to a good bowler. It's just you and him, yeah, obviously he's got fielders there that can catch you and get in your ear and that's all part and parcel of the game but really at the end of the day, it's him versus you, you know, and I really got excited about the challenge of taking a bowler on, especially a good bowler, whether it be a quick bowler or a good spinner, you know it's just the challenge of you versus that person
[Clint Dann]

This brief moment in time is joined to other events and actions, both before and after the delivery, that contribute to the impact of each ball. It is in these other events where the potential for racist or vilifying comments is most likely, and often it is a series of connected events over the course of an over, bowlers spell or a batter's innings where the use of comments about and to an opponent will be manifested. The more spontaneous comments and abuse are more likely to occur immediately after a delivery where the pent up tension reaches its climax and is escalated (by creating an event that shifts the balance one direction or the other such as a batter playing and narrowly missing a delivery) as opposed to dissipating (through lack of a catalyst to sustain the tension so that the balance between batter and bowler is maintained). However, as Troy reflects in a response about his preferred mode of

dismissal, these moments become absorbed into the contest, neutralised as part of the theatre of the game:

TC: ... it depends on how technical they were cause you know batsmen, technically good batsmen ... he leaves a lot of balls ... and if you set a field which is attacking, you know, you've got covers wide open for him and you want him to play a shot and he's leaving, leaving, it really depends on that you build up that moment

rrc: yeah, so it's a case by case then isn't it?

tc: a bit of, a bit of theatre, I loved it and I'd walk up to him "whorr, that's a good outie boy". Because I would be older than a lot of the boys, and if the bloke was older than me and had played a lot of A-grade cricket I'd walk up and give him a stare, stir him a bit. He'd tell me to "fuck off" and I'd say, "well, where the next one's going to be, eh, mate like this here, pitch it up, pitch it up..."

rrc: did you get any niggles back as well did they ...

tc: yeah, "four runs, go and get it", "you know what it looks like" but I used to give some good celebrations...I used to get stuck right into them and the funny thing was when I come out to bat I used to cop it more than anybody else

rrc: you knew it was coming

tc: yeah but, I loved it but, I loved it

rrc: but there wasn't a race, racial element to it or...

tc: no, because I had a smile on my face. I think, when you're talking about 2000, on turf it [racist behaviour] had to have gone, you know what I mean I didn't find it anyway...

[Troy Collard]

Jeff Kickett displays a similar passion for the contest: "... certain players you, you'd sort of zero in on ... normally the ones that you know are going to bite back". This is where the contest is laid bare and where character is most keenly tested and where cultural identity on the field is grist for the mill. Identity becomes one of the 'tools' by which to target opposition players in an effort to put them off their game. For Troy, there was no reference to racialised behaviours as there had been for John McGuire some two decades earlier. The absence is notable, and unusual.

It suggests that these episodic contests are where a cricket identity, constructed from an ability to play and a capacity to honour the values and behaviours of the game such as acknowledging the efforts of a worthy opponent, smooths over social difference for the period spent on the field. Where this breaks down, and where reactions are said to reflect wider community attitudes, is in interactions outside of the on-field contests as suggested by Troy above, in situations involving a different set of cultural obligations and social expectations.

Issues of identity are woven through each of the recorded narratives. While they represent only one facet of an individual's broader life story it is still tied to their unique situation and identity. Each player built their game on a mixture of upbringing, coaching, observation, training and playing and each man took their own sense of enjoyment and meaning from the game:

you make good friends ... and during that time you get to know a bit of them personally and they go through their trials and tribulations... For most, the cricket is a constant. It's something they come down to and they treat it well, respect it support it. People at the cricket club are of a similar mindset - they just love cricket. They do it because they enjoy it. They like the camaraderie.
[John Mallard]

Playing the game meant competing one on one, testing ability and countering discriminatory or marginalising behaviours to define a place in the field and then actively maintaining this position through interactions on and off the ground. In the end, playing cricket is a social process that exists as part of a field, creating a network of relationships that locates individuals within a domain of social practice and makes meaning in their lives. As an embodied practice, through the actions of batting, bowling and fielding, it gives each player the freedom to express his identity as a cricketer with Aboriginal ancestry. How each participant chooses to do so is intimately connected to their habitus and dispositions and to the influence of the field in creating the objective structures that shape and define individual and collective experiences. While each narrative is separate in its account of an individual Aboriginal experience they are all connected in their anticipation of the contest. As if, in meeting the challenge between bat and ball, they are also expressing the wider challenge of their recognition and place in the field – as Aboriginal cricketers.

Letting it through to the keeper: the issue of racism

Racism - was a bit of that but wasn't as... notable...and it wasn't as evident

[Harley Coyne]

The issue of racism in sport has received increased attention over the past two decades as part of a wider discourse about sport, identity and power relations and it was theme that I expected to be revealed during the interviews. In Australia, writers such as Tatz (2009), Hallinan and Judd (2009; 2012c), Broome (1996), Gorman (2011b; 2012) and others have explored what it is for an Indigenous sports person to be engaged in (predominantly) mainstream sports such as Australian Rules football and rugby league, though boxing has also been an arena that has attracted a higher proportion of Aboriginal people. However, as the interest in the experience of Aboriginal people in sport increases so too does the range of sports that are being examined more critically. Cricket's relative invisibility in this body of literature mirrors the lack of representation by Aboriginal people in its elite levels, though the gaps in this experience have been noted (Ryan 2003). Those authors who have turned their attention to and Aboriginal presence within the game have tended to do so through the lens of the 1868 Aboriginal tour of England¹⁰⁴ (Mallett 2002; Marshall 2012; Mulvaney 1967), though there has also been a number of publications on other teams (Whimpress 1999; Reece 2014) and other players (Brabazon 2006; Colman & Edwards 2002). More recently, Fogarty et al (2015) have reported on the contemporary Aboriginal engagement with the game finding that exclusionary policies in the early twentieth century impacted on a broad engagement with the game. Their recommendations for overcoming the under representation of participation in the game cover a number of suggestions including an increasing in the financial and

¹⁰⁴ In England there is a much greater emphasis on exploring more contemporary experiences within the game. Unlike Australia, English cricket has been more embracing of ethnic and cultural diversity within its cricket system and this can be seen in the number of overseas born player that have been selected for England. This literature also examines a greater range of experiences of players with Asian and West Indian ancestry and the kinds of responses that they have made in claiming their position within the game.

human resources applied to the promotion and development of programs to increase numbers in the system.

A large part of this emergent gaze has been due to the efforts of the two dominant football codes to operate as agents of social change through their promotion of plans to increase the number of Indigenous sportspeople in their games¹⁰⁵. A number of authors (Hallinan and Judd, Gorman – noted above) have examined issues around notions of vilification and racial intolerance or discrimination in Australian sport and reinforce the view that to be an Aboriginal person in the Australian sports system is to be exposed to a level or regime of racial discrimination. They outline a range of experiences that illustrate the extent and pervasiveness of racialised behaviour still prevalent in Australian sport.

What is particularly interesting in the context of this project is the manner in which this racialised behaviour is understood by players and the way in which comments and behaviours can be dismissed as normalised in the fabric of the game (Oliver 2012; 2014). This acceptance of racialised taunts and challenges is accepted by many as merely part of the game and is usually employed in an effort to unsettle or distract concentration (Ryan 2003). Recall John McGuire's story from his junior football days about the treatment that he received from his opponent that caused him to react. John frames it as a story of innocence, of not understanding why he was being treated

¹⁰⁵ Hallinan and Judd (2009) describe the Australian Football League's efforts to develop a culture within Australian Rules Football that supports and inculcates the presence of Indigenous players. The creation of a number of special events within and before the season is cited as the AFL's push to encourage its large supporter base to understand and embrace aspects of Australian Indigenous culture. The annual 'Dreamtime at the G' match between Essendon and Richmond, is previewed with cultural performances and a welcome to country, and every second year an Indigenous All-Stars game is played. This embrace of indigeneity is fed by approved football writers who provide copy on the Indigenous players to watch during the game. But this copy, outwardly positive and promotional of the good things about Indigenous involvement in the Australian game, continues to perpetuate many of the naturalistic and genetic references about the inherent ability of Indigenous footballers; a form of what Hallinan and Judd, drawing on the work of Jhally and Lewis (1992), refer to as enlightened racism. That is, in praising individuals on their ability to perform and to excel in a predominantly white environment it constructs an ideal view of that individual and one that is acceptable and palatable to the wider (white) supporter base, whilst ignoring the underlying structural inequalities within the game, i.e. players do not go on to take up coaching or administrative roles in the AFL system.

in this was, and his father's explanation and rationalisation reinforced the notion that playing sport is more than merely performing on the ground – there are a whole series of other interactions that take place, before, during and after the game that represent what it means to play. And in the lack of a regime to guard against or administer this aspect of the game players are restricted to putting up with the behaviour or leaving, joining another team or competition where this is less likely to occur or to leave the game altogether (Williams 2001). Ultimately, the perception of the game as one that supports racialised behaviours filters through communities, and particularly those minority groups such as Aboriginal people or recent migrant groups, to the point where there is a reluctance to even play. As Ryan observes about the lack of non-white players in Australian cricket: “Asians study medicine, Aborigines (sic) play football and cricket is a white man's game” (Ryan 2003:p.27).

The perception of racism is sometimes a subtle one (Fogarty et al. 2015) that shifts according to the story, audience and context. As Hallinan and Judd (2009) suggest there are varieties of racism each applied and controlled by those in charge or by those in control of reporting on the game. Clint Dann is much clearer on how he was treated stating that it was the stereotypical attitudes of senior officials towards Aboriginal people as a group that marked his individual experience: “he'd target me and single me out um and I just feel that that was racism, straight out racism ...”. John McGuire asserts that he was never subjected to racist behaviour on the field but then frames a later experience involving his non-selection for the State team as a form of structural racism designed to exclude him from the team¹⁰⁶. Later still he acknowledges its presence within the context of performance – “...having bowlers and fielders get stuck into and telling you can't play, you know, the odd racist comment and that sort of stuff ... and I thrived on the challenges of playing the game” – so that it becomes normalised and accepted. Similarly, the other six participants made comments on the presence of racism in sport, and the corrosive impact that it

¹⁰⁶ An article published on *the Guardian* website on 26 May 2017 (Gray 2017) under the heading “John McGuire: the Indigenous cricketer who lost out on playing for Australia focuses on the same experience and takes the exclusion one step further in tying it to a potential Australian selection, rather than to just a Western Australian issue.

has on wider participation and representation but none focused on it as an element of the game that had impacted on them. It was clearly there in the background, as Harley intimated in his story about trying out for the Railways 1sts, but it is not something that was used to preface or frame experience.

Underlying all of the narratives is recognition that these cricket stories are experiences from one part of each participants life. The focus has been disentangled from other experiences in their live and re-cast as stand-alone accounts, largely divorced from other parts and presented as one representation of their identity. What the stories largely fail to provide is a wider context for the lives of each individual and some of this is reconstructed through my knowledge of the field and relationships to other Aboriginal communities and individuals formed through work.

As Aboriginal men living in Western Australia at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first I had expected to hear accounts different to those lived by their parents or grand-parents but I thought that wider reflective comment on racism in sport or other parts of their lives may have been more prominent. Questions about racism emerged through the stories and anecdotes told by nearly all of the participants though each participant addressed the issues differently. Some required prompting for further comment on passing comments or statements. There was occasionally a reluctance to label what they believed to be racism, not because they were unsure about their identification of it or the individual involved but because in naming that individual they were potentially exposing themselves to symbolic or actual retaliation that has been an endemic and enduring colonial response of the dominant white hegemony.

There was generally a lack of detail about racist attitudes or behaviours in the interviews and I wondered whether the presence of racism had been so omnipresent during their lives and in the memories of their parents, uncles, aunties and grandparents that it was only the most exceptional acts of discrimination that were the ones to register. That is, that there was an acceptance or implicit

acknowledgement that living as an Aboriginal person in a post-colonial society, where Aboriginal social and economic disadvantage continued to be perpetuated as the “Aboriginal problem”, had de-sensitised them to the self-perpetuating attitudes of the wider community. Jeff’s supports this impression:

JK: ...there was no such thing as race ...

rrc: didn’t get verballed?

JK: nah, I might have [been] called it after the game, you know, when my back was turned but I didn’t hear it, so it didn't bother me. I grew up in the sixties and that sort of shit I used to cop all the time so name calling - last thing that bothers me.

[Jeff Kickett]

Nelson’s work with young urban Indigenous sport found that they move between multiple identities in their engagement with sport, shifting between different subjective modes that included “sameness” and “difference” (Nelson 2009). This capacity to take on multiple identities to fit the context or locality of the field, suggests that participants access a range of strategies that resisted or subverted the prevailing attitudes.

Racist behaviours and attitudes are far from absent in cricket and range from the obvious and personal to more subtle strategies of exclusion (Gray 2017). The issue for some was a structural one because of the uncertainty that comes with calling attention to the problem. Matt Abrahamson voices this uncertainty from his experience in district cricket: “if you walk up to an umpire and say ‘I am taking offence at this’ you don’t know how the system is going to respond” (Gorman 2011a:p.135). Racial abuse of players can occur around the ground between spectators, between spectators and players, between players and by individual players expressing their attitudes to anyone who might be listening (Ryan 2003; Williams 2001). For all of the players it has been a part of the game and, as much as the impact of the abuse is keenly felt, each has developed strategies that become coping mechanisms allowing them to remain in the game. For players like Jeff Kickett, who were never destined for higher representation there is a line drawn between what happens on the field, in the heat of the contest, and what happens in those contexts that are disassociated with the contest.

... after the game it was all over as far as we were concerned, that was it. So, there was never any comeback; there was never any pointing and having a go, it was ... how it should be played, hard and at it in the field but once you've finished leave it out there and that's how we were ...

[Jeff Kickett]

Players like John McGuire, who strived for more in their cricket, developed a habitus, based on and as a product of the values and traditions of the game, as a way of belonging in the field.

if I'd, you know, was out for a duck and they never picked me again then that's my own fault and I would wear that but, not to get an opportunity, not an opportunity to walk out on the WACA or on the MCG or wherever, to represent my State has just left a pretty bitter taste in my mouth

[John McGuire]

Racial slurs were left alone; never engaged. To do so would provide the selectors clear justification for not picking him to play for his State. In the end, though he played his part and became the district cricketer par excellence, he was still denied the selection he had worked at and earned (Gray 2017).

Conclusion: Understanding the game

To conclude this section, it is worth looking at the way in which the participants view the game, because it positions the players within the game and in doing so reveals some of the tensions that exist between an identity as a cricketer within different areas of the field and a more general understanding of identity based on other markers such as ethnicity.

Cricket began as a game of the English and as an English game. It developed in the south downs of England and as it spread throughout the towns and villages it established itself as part of the national identity, of what it meant to be English and its spread throughout the world was mostly in company with English empirical interests. As such, and in spite of the recent shift in its administration and political influence away from England to the Middle East and India respectively (Haigh 2011), it is still referred to by many as the English game or at the very least, a white man's game. And yet wherever it established itself there is an entanglement of local influence and imported sensibility that inflects the game in each place with

identifiable characteristics that give international contests texture and colour (both literally and metaphorically). Swirling in and around this local identity are the histories and stories of each nation so that the game is inextricably linked to its social setting and is influenced, and in turn contributes to shaping, to the way in which nationhood is created and consumed. But, as Appadurai suggests, cricket also represents a hard cultural form that “changes those who are socialized into it more than it is itself changed” (1996:p.89) and yet can be “indigenized” as a “product of collection and spectacular experiments with modernity” (1996:p.90). He goes on to observe that the nature of cricket in India as a hard cultural form has created a value system that has enshrined attitudes and behaviours that are no longer part of the game as played in other parts of the world.

In Australia, the game has overwhelmingly been a white game, though there have been instances of Aboriginal involvement that assert a place in our understanding of cricket, as much for what it says about the lack of Aboriginal representation than as a claim for recognition as part of the wider public cricket consciousness. There is a distinct lack of Aboriginal role models within Australian cricket so that whilst there is recognition of an Australian way of playing, in reality this could more accurately be said to be a *white* Australian style of cricket. In reflecting on the nature of the game each of the interviewees made reference to the otherness of the game, recognising its origins in England but largely separating the English ethos and values of the game from the mechanics and skills of the game.

Where white cricketers are acknowledged it is more for their approach to the game rather than for any role that they might have in perpetuating what is seen to be the Englishness in the game. One of Harley’s favourite players was Dennis Lillee, but he drew more from the way that the West Indians played, styling elements of his game on the successful West Indians team of the 1970s and 1980s, and blending it with a more aggressive, quick form of game that he believed “is conducive for our culture”.

Jeff Kickett's outwardly combative approach was often at odds with an accepted perception of what is referred to as the spirit of the game as one that embraced fair play and gentlemanly combat. In his view the [English] traditions of the game were irrelevant to his experience and understanding and the game represented a contest between two combatants. He pushed the limits of acceptable behaviour on the ground by engaging in some behaviours that were outside the spirit of the game: "as he stopped and turned around I kicked him in the ankle [laughs] so he only made one didn't make two ... and the umpire's woah, woah you can't do that and I said well, what are you gonna do, already done it, so the ball went back and was bowled again and that was it, you know as far as I was concerned that was it, but as you say, the spirit of the game ... it wasn't".

The way in which the game is understood also relates to the distance from the elite levels of the game. For players like John McGuire, and to a certain degree, Clint Dann, the higher up the competition ladder they progressed the more they became embedded in upholding the values and ethos of the game. But in moving closer to these higher grades there is generally greater scrutiny and a greater expectation of honouring the spirit of the game. Sporting organisations are bureaucracies (Bourdieu 1977), operating according to a set of rules and understandings, and the machinations of State and national cricket administrations are no different. Whimpress (2012) notes the influence of bias, prejudice and politics that has marked Australian team selections since 1877 and Stoddart (2006) draws attention to the role that sport played in establishing and strengthening social structures with cricket and its subsequent identification with the conservative elite of Perth society. John McGuire draws on this understanding in reflecting on the difference between the way in which local football clubs acknowledged the "value and worth" of Aboriginal footballers and the way that cricket operated: "well basically it stems back historically I mean, cricket, out of England, the aristocracy played the game and so there was this class ... this class of person that played the game and to a lesser degree that's been adopted in the you know ... countries like Australia and other areas of ... other countries that played the game with a predominantly white population ...".

In considering the place of the interviewees in the game it is possible to trace the ways in which they negotiate an understanding of the game and adapt themselves and their behaviour to fit a particular role. However, the negotiation is made with reference to their wider identity as Aboriginal people so that in actively working to maintain a place within the structure they have had to engage in different strategies that enables them to retain their position, such as in the case of Harley and the establishment of a Nyoongar cricket club, or John Mallard in his embrace of the Curtin/Victoria Park club's ethos of cultural diversity. These strategies work to create individual expectations that resonate at a local level to elicit change but do not impact materially on the macro-organisation of the game other than more or less altering our perception of it by offering new potentialities and new expressions to something familiar. Ultimately, this is what I have attempted to show in this section and through the earlier narratives: the participation of the interviewees in the game has not changed what we understand cricket to be. Rather it has altered what we know of the game, and what we know of Aboriginal views to the game, by revealing experiences and behaviours that have largely been invisible in the game or somehow considered not compatible. That is, it has allowed us to examine the social space and its mix of spatial and the production of meaning as it derives from within the context of particular localities

Chapter 10

Conclusion

The stories captured for this project contribute to a construction of Aboriginal identity within the wider story of Western Australian cricket, acknowledging their place in the social space that is cricket, recognising the manner in which their cricket journey has been shaped by the formal structures within the field and considering how these narratives contribute to the anthropology of sport and our understanding of the game. The stories were collected during interviews, conversations and constructed from archival sources to present evidence that considers the significance and meaning of these experiences.

This project has presented accounts of sociality captured as ethnographic narratives considered from within a concept of a social field. Field presents a view onto the social world (Swartz 2013) and enable us to examine the way in which people position and negotiate their place within “heterogeneous domains of social practice and action” (Postill 2015:p.49). I have taken sport as a broad social field and looked at a specific iteration of one of its domains, cricket, moving further into it to examine the lives of a select number of individuals from spatially oriented positions from within this identified social space (Reed-Danahay 2015).

My intent in focusing the gaze was to capture a range of narratives to explore stories belonging to members of a group not commonly associated or perceived in connection to the field. The significance of these narratives lies in their expression of everyday lives that is lacking from our understanding of an engagement with the field in Western Australia. They contribute to what we know about the game as lived by a non-dominant cultural group. They recognise their presence in the game, in a the manner that gives sense and meaning to their lives, and examines these encounters against the values and understandings of a social field that is tied to different cultural

and symbolic traditions. The accounts express various desires to engage with their identity within the game, rather than to resist or oppose, and they do so in their articulation of individual and group habitus as Aboriginal men and as cricketers.

Cricket is a social activity that is widespread, culturally constructed and framed by a constant process of negotiation and engagement. As an activity with a long history its broader meaning and consumption is described through a rich canon of literature that covers all facets of the game and supported by a visual and oral record. Much of this historiography has become a meta-narrative of the game, documenting and memorialising past achievements and feats of individuals, states and nations, and constructing a view to the game that provides it with a temporal and social dimension and, typically, homogenising this view in creating pan-regional or broadly national identities. Often this view to the game is about the superficial observation and record of 'doing' more than the embedded significance of what this doing means. The presentation of the narrative accounts in this project, therefore, offer a deeper view to an Aboriginal experience of the game through an examination of the context in which these experiences were created and shaped. The narratives engage with each other through their individual engagements with the field thereby illuminating its character and the embedded social practices that develop from the constant positioning and negotiation demanded by the tension between the field's objective structures and the agent's subjective efforts to establish and maintain a field position.

The narratives here are drawn from an engagement with the participants over a three-year period and with the field over a longer period of time. Using evidence gathered through interviews, fieldnotes and archival sources it has been possible to interrogate and frame particular understandings of the lived experience of a group of Western Australian Aboriginal men. They are a record of individual experience but are joined to those of other individuals, the large majority that remain unnamed and invisible, that are associated with the creation of the actions and events recounted. In their negotiation and construction, it is possible to reveal how these experiences form part of a complex network of relationships through which it is possible to

examine the field. These connections bind each narrative to particular locations within the structure of the social activity that was the vehicle for their production and they provide some of the context that enables us to make meaning from them. In doing so their ethnographic expression as contained in this thesis contributes to the anthropology of sport by broadening our understanding of the way that sport shapes and influences identity and social practice.

The activities that generated these experiences form part of deeper social interactions within a field, which operates to produce, reproduce and transform rules and behaviours that support individual and wider group identity and works to sustain social practices over time. The identification of a particular group of individuals based on their Aboriginality creates the parameters that constrain what it is that is being examined and allows us to consider the evidence with reference to other understandings that attach themselves to this identification. That is, it establishes pre-defined perceptions that serve to frame what it is that is presented in the evidence, though this frame represents only one set of experiences that contribute to wider identity. The broader field exists as a vehicle that allows individuals to make meaning from their experiences but it also creates structures that create networks and relationships that allow us to examine the evidence to reveal identity, actions and associated meanings.

In capturing and articulating individual stories and then placing them within particular clusters, based on a position within the social space, I have attempted to tease out what it means to occupy particular positions within a wider organisation. I have described a socially constructed activity that exists in a bureaucratic structure with definable layers and bundles of relationships (Bourdieu 1977; 1984; Postill 2015), governed by formalised rules and instructions but also created through wider social interactions and the reproduction of cultural values and understandings. As the frame in which this project is set it represents the social context that enables us to take everyday lived accounts and their location of production and interrogate what they say about an individual's thoughts and stories, their agency and social

construction of identity, and examine it within its context, and with reference to the wider field of sport. The articulation of everyday experiences to re-imagine the known connects the project to the wider sense of anthropology as a discipline that talks to the human condition.

Cricket is a game that has spread around the world following its emergence as a game in the south of England during the 16th and 17th century (Birley 2003; Major 2007). As the British Empire expanded it was transported around the world as part of the colonisers' cultural baggage and establishing itself as the national game in this place where the English maintained an ongoing presence. It became a tool of the colonisers and was used to inculcate English values and attitudes amongst the indigenous communities. However, it was also transformed in many places from a game of the colonisers to one that was adopted and absorbed into the fabric of national identity, developing a complex narrative that reflected local values and attitudes while, at the same time, retaining and intensifying the traditions and symbols that stemmed from its development as a game of Empire (Guha 1998; James 1993; Malcolm 2001; 2013; Sandiford 1983; Weiner 1978).

In Australia, the game retained its predominant English-ness and it has been this broader perception of the game as a white person's pursuit that created barriers for greater participation to minority ethnic groups or largely obscured their involvement, with a few notable exceptions. It was a game that expressed perceptions of 'whiteness' and reproduced this idea as lived experience, marginalising those that do not fit this construct (Robidoux pers. comm.).

In Western Australia, there was a nineteenth century fluorescence of an Aboriginal identity within the game – echoing experiences from other colonies – though this largely disappeared as government legislation, the continuing effects of colonisation and enduring discriminatory practices served to remove Aboriginal cricketers from the public consciousness. This perceptual void was filled with other sports (Australian Rules Football, boxing) that soon became preferred arenas of sporting prowess.

In other parts of the country individual performances at the elite level (e.g. Eddie Gilbert, Faith Thomas) maintained the idea of an Aboriginal presence in the game, whilst also highlighting the barriers that Aboriginal people were required to overcome to succeed in the game. Similar issues presented again in the 1970s and 1980s as John McGuire pushed his claims for recognition, and then again in the 1990s when Clint Dann was attempting to establish his credentials. It has only been in recent years that Cricket Australia has sought to address the participation of Aboriginal people in cricket (Fogarty et al. 2015), though it remains to be seen whether the entrenched perceptions of the game as an 'English' (white) game will be successful in fostering a new generation of Aboriginal cricketer at the elite level.

This project connects to an existing body of work that examines sociological and anthropological themes focusing on what might be described as Aboriginal sport or the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in the wider sporting field (Tatz 1995; Gorman 2005; 2011b; 2012; Hayward 2006). It also centres on notions of narrative identity and the manner in which individuals construct their lives through storied accounts of embodied social practice as part of a process of meaning making between researcher/biographer and subject (MacAloon 1981; Cashmore 2004) or the self-objectifying focus of the auto-ethnography (Heywood 1998). From this intersection between the two has emerged a literature on sport and life in sport that follows the biographical turn in anthropology & sociology (Chamberlayne et al. 2000; Christensen 2004) and produced a wide ranging examination of the role that sport plays in people's lives (Bale et al. 2004).

As an ethnographic account that contributes to our understanding of the nature of social fields and as an ontological project that applies concepts such as habitus and disposition to examine the nature of social practice I will conclude by suggesting four ideas that have emerged from the evidence and the narratives presented in the previous chapters. The first is that life narratives, considered ethnographically, are effective for tracing social trajectories and potentialities; secondly, ethnographic

encounters create the conditions for the emergence of a soft field form as a means of exploring the lived accounts of their hard field origins; thirdly, that dispositions, developed through the construction of habitus are important animators of social behaviour and as energisers of action that move individuals through field localities, creating the trajectory that frames their identity; and lastly I will close by commenting on the manner in which fields create localities of context as markers of symbolic capital, relative field position and field identity, as a means of ordering individual and collective field experience.

Revealing social trajectory through narratives

My first point acknowledges the efficacy of narratives as tools for capturing and revealing individual social trajectories and the patterns of interaction with the field. As devices of enquiry applied within an ethnographic process they offer the capacity to pursue evidence around social issues where the opportunity to capture this evidence through participant observation is not possible or in situations where the participants are hidden within the dominant discourse. It privileges their voice, allows us to see deeper into the social domain to view the power relations that often serve to obscure or diminish their presence and offers a view to the groupings and distance between players within the social space (Reed-Danahay 2015).

This notion of field draws on Bourdieu's sense of a field as a topographical space, with its horizontal and vertical planes, but where there is a constantly shifting arrangement of relationships and networks that create opportunities for up and down and side to side movement as a progression along a social trajectory. However, in mapping movement and identity construction in this way we need to recognise that the trajectory is not necessarily linear but becomes a trace that maps a line within and through the field, moving from point to point so that if plotted in three-dimensional space it reveals the twists and turns, the revisiting of similar spaces and the negotiation of tensions that exist in establishing a position, maintaining that locality and moving to the next site of interaction.

The central point here is that by not focusing on the most visible of the actors within a field we are able to reveal the competing positions that actors occupy and identify the different power resources, hierarchy and domination that exist within this field. The accounts captured here belong to a group that has historically been invisible in our gaze to the field (Gorman 2011a). In privileging them we can bring previously obscured accounts to light and place them in proximity to other experiences, effectively filling a gap in our understanding and informing a more nuanced view of social practice. In using this idea of revelation by examining the field form, and its lived experience and accompanying social practices we can see how fields operate to frame and construct identity as a process of constant negotiation of the underlying power relations between agents and in relation to the objective structures that the field brings to bear on group and individual experience.

Social trajectories, then, considered as a web of interactions joined by threads of narrative, can also be considered to possess potential outcomes that develop over a period of time and as a compilation of experiences. At any point along this trajectory there is the possibility that any one of the potential outcomes might become available as a choice enabling a shift in the trajectory's path and towards a different set of understandings. Initially, at least, all who begin to make their way in the field share these potential outcomes or, at least, recognise their existence. Clint Dann's youthful claim that he will play for Australia is such a potential possibility, although it remained unfulfilled. These points of potential begin to reduce in number and probability as the narrative develops as is recalled in John McGuire's State trial story or Harley Coyne's hopes of playing in the local Albany A side for Railways. We are not always aware of what the possible outcomes might be but through the actions, abilities, capacities and decisions of individual actors and as an impact of the structuring of the field, these possibilities strengthen as viable options or disappear from view through a combination of tensions that both work to manoeuvre, progress and maintain momentum of the trajectory.

Social and trajectory and potentiality is contained in all of the recorded narratives. From the manner in which each narrative is revealed with its accompanying potentialities, it is possible to trace the impact of habitus, disposition and capital in progressively shaping the context of meaning making and this is, in turn, reflected in the kinds of stories that are recalled. Harley Coyne, Jeff Kickett and John Mallard develop shared understandings about life in the field where the limits of their opportunities reduce the number of potential outcomes and, instead, require an ongoing negotiation of expectation and aspiration to accommodate reduced scenarios, contained within the context of a narrower social space. What presents as a set of multiple possibilities upon first entering the field begins to be filtered as a result of the engagement between objective expectations of what is possible and subjective self-awareness of what is desired and achievable and it is in this process that identity is created, habitus grown and dispositions brought to bear. What we have seen in the manner in which this operates in the construction of the narratives is that the agents' ongoing negotiation of position is animated through the influence of habitus and disposition guiding and shaping their immediate field context. The narratives allow for a reflective rendering of experience as a means of establishing context and giving sense of the social tools that enable each agent to navigate, dissolve or resolve problems and barriers where they form. And in doing so it makes visible the energy and resources required to establish and maintain a social space, control their field position and sustain the manner of this engagement over a longer period of time, whilst identifying and acknowledging the narratives as staged performances where the agents frame (Goffman 1974; Lim 2014) their intuition of position within the field (Bourdieu 1985).

There is perhaps another way of engaging with this idea of trajectory and pattern that emerges from a consideration of the key stories contained in each of the narratives. In the introduction, I referred to the notion of fields as a constellation of points of light where the points vary in intensity, representing the experiences of an individual spread across space, so that by drawing connections between these points it is possible to observe the patterns that emerge revealing a view to a unique identity

within a system of patterns. In this conception, we can make out the pattern of John McGuire's experience and the way that its disparate points become something recognisable. As an entity that occupies particular locations within the field and we can see that, overall, these points are located, and possess differences of intensity, in different parts of the field corresponding to the accumulation and representation of his lived experience. We can observe, too, that this cluster is different to those of Harley Coyne's, Jamal Principe's and the others, though they also share points that cluster in close proximity to each other but some that are also disparate and separated. And this clustering, and, indeed, their general arrangement and our perception of them is influenced by our understanding of the social 'universe', acknowledging that this large social space (field) is not bounded and remains permeable to other social spaces, where it is also possible to observe common points. We can surmise that some arrangements will be more complex than others and some will appear nearer or more distant from the point of observation (as, for instance, from the point that I occupy in observing and presenting them) and that observed from a different locality these same points of light make take on a different appearance and suggest other understandings and meanings.

A trajectory implies a path through a field where each point of progression is subject to a series of objective influences and subjective decisions. In drawing a number of these together it is possible to posit a set of potential hurdles that might be encountered by agents as they make their way in the field. While this is not an argument for any predicative (deterministic) potential for the narratives in this account there is a tantalising prospect that in mapping the lives of a group who share some kind of common trait and charting their trajectory within space and time we can see how notions such as habitus influences social patterns and why agents occupy and negotiate the field in different ways.

The notion of a celestial map that describes a life is less about potentiality within the field and more about understanding how fields work to position and locate individuals within particular domains of social activity and the degree to which they

are rendered visible within and from outside of the field. In this case we can sense that as prominent as the constellation McGuire would be, the view to that of Mallard, Kickett, Coyne, and to a lesser degree Collard, would be more distant or obscured or diminished by others within the same sector. Conversely, the difference in observation would depend on the gaze and focus of our observation so that, as has been recorded in this project, it is possible to boost the intensity of 'weaker' signals to enable them to be seen more clearly. Of course, in presenting the narratives in an account such as the one offered by this project it is possible to illuminate the presence of a set of largely unseen patterns. That is, this view to the field is the result of a negotiation between researcher and subject.

Off the field: narratives as soft form play

My second point develops from the idea that fields exist in varying degrees of solidity depending on the agent's social setting and context at any particular point in time. Acknowledging that these narratives were captured outside of what might be considered the contextualised field¹⁰⁷ they risk the perception that they exist as some lesser rendering of the experiences that they describe. That is, because we are unable to observe the embodied practices that created the events their capacity to make meaning is diminished¹⁰⁸. However, by drawing on knowledge of the field and

¹⁰⁷ The contextualised field in this case is what we understand to be a set of embodied behaviours and actions that are performed in pursuit of the activities that carry the field's identity – in what I have described as a hard form of the field. For our purposes this includes playing, training, spectating and tasks such as committee meetings and other activities that support the administrative process.

¹⁰⁸ In a recent article on the website Cricinfo, Christian Ryan (2015) highlighted the dangers of interpretation through observation without the necessary reflexive thinking or double-objectification that Bourdieu (1977) suggests is critical to the ethnographic process:

Over in the commentary box, here's [former Australian cricketer] Shane Warne, three interpretations of events within 15 minutes, worth quoting verbatim in all their awesomely well-meaning condescension.

WARNE (28.4 overs): "Plenty of good signs for Australia. I tell you what, though, I've been impressed by Afghanistan too, BJ. It's great to see them smiling."

WARNE (30.2 overs - a 98-metre on-drive by Najibullah): "Whoa. Straight out of the screws. He likes it too. Look." (So I looked - and Najibullah looked steadfastly impassive.)

WARNE (32.2 overs): "Just to finish the point on Afghanistan and the Associate nations, BJ. I think it's been fantastic... Just because they don't perform that well, they can hold their heads up high from the way they've gone about it. They've been smiling."

applying an understanding of the conditions required to produce an embodied action it is possible to decipher and interpret recalled experiences in ways that make it possible to consider how individuals accumulated and manipulated capital and habitus. In these moments, where the experience of the contextualised field is recalled in situations that lie outside of its context of production, the field is invoked in a soft form, as an ephemeral, episodic space where context and action can be both suppressed and privileged. These spaces are given legitimacy through negotiation and mutual arrangement between the researcher and the subject and rendered sound by double objectification (Bourdieu 1977). They offer the potential for the establishment or strengthening of existing networks by operating in a negotiated space where power imbalances are potentially neutralised. However, these ephemeral episodes exist as part of everyday life and form part of the regular encounters between agents as a way of making connections and drawing meaning from disparate fields. They insert themselves into thought, conversation, and movement as residual effects of an engagement with the field. As a set of interactions they intrude into other fields, though perhaps it is more plausible to consider them as operating between fields, in the spaces in between, where “things can be done and combinations and conversions can be established that are not possible to do within fields” (Eyal 2013:p.177)¹⁰⁹. In this way, it is possible to consider these situations as residual, translucent strands of a field that exist along with myriad other strands as part of habitus and brought into focus and detail by mutual negotiation and engagement.

Narratives can be embodied encounters (e.g. John McGuire’s demonstration of technique; Troy Collard’s explanation of an ‘effort’ ball) that rely on a theatre of performance and an attending audience (Goffman 1984) to give the experiences legitimacy and durable validity. As such, the context of the narrative negotiation and

As Russell Jackson, live-blogging the game, pointed out, "What's been notable... is the way they *haven't* smiled. They're genuine competitors. Najibullah and Zazai know they have no hope here and it looks like they're annoyed by that, not resigned to it." (Ryan 2015, accessed 9 March 2015)

¹⁰⁹ See Eyal (2013) for a further discussion on how these the spaces between fields can become rich sites of analysis within the broader consideration of Bourdieu’s field theory.

production (initial invitation, physical setting, interview process) creates an environment for these strands as soft form of experience, distanced in time and space from the subject and open to the pull and pressure of other fields, attached to the narrative as thread like connections of differing strength, tethering one field to other aspects of individual life. All participants made time to sit and talk about the game. Clinton Dann was avoiding the office in his choice of venue; Harley Coyne visited me in a non-work space and John McGuire, too, kept work and interview separate. Underpinning all accounts is their separation from the contextualised field and, as such, we were drawing on biographical expression to render parts of the field visible; as we conversed we constructed a connection to it, though we were not in it other than in this soft form. These accounts, then, offer something more – a constructed and negotiated view of the field that allows us to trace social trajectory, reflect on capital and power, map habitus and observe how individuals work to frame their narrative in order to establish and legitimise their presence in the field.

Dispositions as animators of social identity

As a project that utilises field theory to position and organise the evidence I have drawn on Bourdieu's notion of habitus and disposition to frame each of the participant's accounts. While it is possible to see the manner in which habitus develops and shapes individual experience I have also attempted to reveal the role that dispositions play in maintaining movement along a social trajectory, as an animator of choice and as a catalyst for moments of social tension, which, in turn, reveal the influence of habitus on the products of value and effort and on the negotiation and construction of identity.

Biographical narratives, as vehicles for conveying social practice, can contribute to how we make social fields by considering the manner in which agents negotiate and position themselves in the field, drawing on resources such as capital, habitus and dispositions, in order for them to create an identity that gives basis to their claim to a space within the field. Further to this we can then take these selective renderings of overall experience, because it cannot be expected that each and every experience

will be provided, and cluster them to create patterns of meaning and reveal networks of negotiated relations that, in turn, trace particular individual and group social trajectories.

Each of the interviews allows us to develop a sense of each of the participants and begin to map their presence within the field, though recognising that this emerges from recalled and not observed encounters. It is possible to frame each participant's identity as a distillation of their narrative accounts to reveal something of the field's power relations and their strategies to negotiate and position their narrative in relation to the field. Overarching all is their Aboriginality, which is the primary frame that provides durable resources and capital, anchors habitus and generates dispositions that connect to all of their social fields. However, within the field itself it is possible to consider each individual according to a set of characteristics that emerges from their engagement:

John McGuire – ability; privilege; public figure; pioneer

Matt Abrahamson – system player; coach/administrator/mentor – fosters group identity on and off the field

Harley Coyne – veteran; leader; inclusive; team player

Troy Collard – self; success through application; earned respect through effort

Jeff Kickett – raw; instinctive; narrow focus; local

John Mallard – steady; consistent; identity fed by long term membership

Clinton Dann – ability; pedigree; instability; striving for recognition

Jamal Principe – ambition; orthodoxy; alternative path through field

As summary descriptions, they capture identity and suggest something more about each participant and the kinds of dispositions that inform their movement within and through the field. It is possible to discern a differentiation in an application of habitus and disposition to their engagement that contains combinations of influencing factors from a range of sources. John McGuire's story is prominent and sits above the others in describing both a style of narrative that is efficacious, practised and comfortable; Matt Abrahamson's is considered and self-effacing, with a nuanced

awareness of the wider context of an Aboriginal position within the game; Jamal's is earnest and focused and framed by a rupture in social trajectory requiring a subjective choice to remain in the field; and John Mallard's talks to a sense of extended enjoyment in the game that stems from a long connection to the same club and is therefore informed by notions of stability and sameness.

In each case the characteristics described can be attributed to or contain a disposition that each individual applies, or has applied during the course of their experience. Some of these can be considered as foundational – family, ethnicity, honour, respect – whilst others can be more strategic according to circumstance and to the position or state of the field at any given time.

Localities of context for understanding field position

My final point develops a further understanding of the context of social practice to the one described above. In proposing the existence of a contextualised field (a hard form of the field – Bourdieu's permanent disposition of bodily hexis (1977) - as opposed to the soft that is invoked through casual conversation and encounter) it is possible to look more closely at the sites within that produce social action and behaviours and that, in turn, become the localities for the production of meaning.

In presenting the results of this project the narratives are organised to give this account a structure. This structure is largely hierarchical calling on a generalised view of the field arranged according to a set of subjective values that establishes a continuum from high to low or from elite to popular. But it is more than a simple sliding scale because its form is based on networks of relationships, power and associations that run through the field and creates a myriad of constantly shifting positions that locate agents within differential sites of context. These sites can create adjacencies so that identity is largely unaffected or subject to new opportunities for identity construction. An agent may be a poor practitioner of one element in the field but excel, find a niche or develop a more prominent identity or proficiency in another

part. It is these localities of sociality that provide the context from which experience and story recounted in the form of narrative are drawn.

Each of the narratives is presented as a construction of experience as provided during the interviews and other field encounters. The interviews themselves form the core of the evidence that are used to create a wider narrative about the Aboriginal experience of cricket. It should be noted that the focus for the interviews was on the individual experience and sought to capture this experience in the way that the participant presented it; this was not a project that had a pre-defined set of expectations. It was not the intention to capture particular reflections on race or politics or other power relations, though, of course, these things are present and are contained in the specific accounts of events and behaviours that form part of the interviews.

This account describes an anthropological endeavour that uses ethnographic interviews to capture narrative identities that explore notions of a social field. In this case the field that is described by these narratives is cricket, that, whilst embedded within a wider network of social relations, can for our purposes be held separate and examined as something that operates within its own space, linked to the other social fields and sustaining its own set of understandings, power relations and internal organisation. It is called into being through the actions of individual agents and in the institutions that give it a structure and in turn shaped and influenced by the interactions and negotiations that bind the field as a network of complex relationships (Martin 2003; Postill 2015). This conception of field has been applied heuristically to a specific group of individuals in order to examine the nature of their engagement and experience as part of a wider understanding that contributes to the construction of an Aboriginal identity within Western Australian cricket. What this project offers is a look at a particular group of identified individuals belonging to a group within Australian society that are subject to ongoing prejudices, socio-economic disadvantage and marginalisation from the mainstream and yet are

elevated and celebrated in certain activities for their creative and sporting achievements (Tatz 2011).

In this way, the statement “I am an Aboriginal person, and I play cricket” will mean different things to someone who says, “I am Aboriginal and I play Australian Rules football” or “I am a white Australian and I sail yachts (or ride a bike or play cricket)”. But there are differences also within the same statement so that individuals sharing the similar experiences may do so with different understandings and meanings. The narratives demonstrate this by presenting a matrix of lived experiences dependent on a range of factors that individuals carry with them into and within the broader framework of the field, and that are both meaning making and identity creating. The exposure to role models, the development of the interest and skills required to pursue the game, the application to training, the capacity to learn the technical elements, the ability to negotiate the social structures will also contribute to this matrix so that links between certain characteristics or themes can be clustered and mapped within a large space where the distance between these clusters points to a range of potentialities offered by the activity. A player can be privileged enough to learn the game in an environment that offers the training, facilities and support so that their skills and behaviours are given the maximum potential to develop. Another player offered the same or similar opportunities may struggle to fulfil their potential and fall away from the game or never establish the basis for the development of the same kind of capital that comes with success. And then, other players may simply fall into the game and find a place within it, repeating the cycle year in, year out and accruing a level of knowledge and skill sufficient to satisfy their expectations and need for belonging.

Ultimately these are what the narratives represent: a disparate collection of experiences bound together by an identity that whilst real and recognisable is one that is also manufactured. It suggests the possibility of examining other stories - the experiences of cricketers within the WACA grade competition or those of a 10th grade team in a local suburban competition – to reveal whether similar or different kinds of

stories and issues would emerge. Within this environment this project seeks to create a body of knowledge that contributes to our understanding of what it is to negotiate this contradiction: what it is to be an Aboriginal person playing a mainstream game, a game that itself is contradictory and complex.

Sport, and in this case, cricket, offers a site of social analysis that allows us to tease out wider social structures and patterns of identity and social action. The contemporary experience of Aboriginal people playing cricket, as a little examined area, lends itself to new ways of understanding what it means to be Aboriginal when cricket is not considered to be 'their' game, and what it means to play cricket in Australia where there is an almost invisible presence of Aboriginal people within the game at all levels and, to date, only ever rarely at the elite level.

Appendix A - Invitation to Participate



**Curtin University of Technology
School of Humanities**

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Ross Chadwick. I am currently completing a piece of research for my Master of Philosophy – Social Sciences and Asian Language at Curtin University of Technology.

Purpose of Research

My research will gather experiences and stories of Aboriginal people in Western Australian cricket.

Your Role

I plan to use archival sources and informal discussions with former and current players to collect stories and recollections of playing the game. I am hoping that you will consent to participate in one or more one hour interviews. Each interview will be recorded and typed out.

The interviews will take the form of an informal discussion. I will ask some questions but what I want to record is your story, in your words and in the way that you recount it. If during the discussions issues or events are raised that cause you distress the discussion will be stopped. If you feel that you wish to talk about these issues or events with a professional counsellor I can put you in touch with a service on the Curtin University campus. I will bring contact details for the service to our first meeting.

Consent to Participate

Your involvement in the research is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any stage without it affecting your rights or my responsibilities. Your involvement in the project will be recorded prior to the interviews. This can be given verbally or by signing the attached consent form. You can withdraw from the project at any time. No explanation is needed and I will return to you all copies of the interview and transcripts.

Confidentiality

In presenting your story I would like to identify you as the storyteller. However, I will respect and understand your request to remain anonymous. Copies of the interview/s will be kept in a secure cabinet in my office. The interview tapes and printed copies will be kept in a locked cabinet for five years. They will then be destroyed unless you request copies be retained.

Further Information

For any issues or concerns about the manner in which the project is conducted please contact University's independent Human Research Ethics Committee on 9266 9223 or at hrec@curtin.edu.au.

For any other questions please let me know on 9212 3721 or at rc@iinet.net.au. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor Associate Professor Philip Moore on 9266 7483 or P.Moore@curtin.edu.au.

Thankyou very much for your involvement in this research, your participation is greatly appreciated

Appendix B - HREC Approval



Office of Research and Development

Human Research Ethics Committee

TELEPHONE 9266 2784

FACSIMILE 9266 3793

EMAIL hrec@curtin.edu.au

memorandum

To	Dr Philip Moore, Humanities
From	A/Professor Stephan Millett, Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
Subject	Protocol Approval HR 52/2010
Date	03 June 2010
Copy	Ross Chadwick, 124 Chelmsford Road, North Perth WA 6006 Graduate Studies Officer, Faculty of Humanities

Thank you for your application submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for the project titled "*Playing Down The Line: Aboriginal People And Cricket In Western Australia*". Your application has been reviewed by the HREC and is **approved**.

- You have ethics clearance to undertake the research as stated in your proposal.
- The approval number for your project is **HR 52/2010**. Please quote this number in any future correspondence.
- Approval of this project is for a period of twelve months **01-06-2010** to **01-06-2011**. To renew this approval a completed Form B (attached) must be submitted before the expiry date **01-06-2011**.
- If you are a Higher Degree by Research student, data collection must not begin before your Application for Candidacy is approved by your Faculty Graduate Studies Committee.
- The following standard statement **must be** included in the information sheet to participants:
This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 52/2010). The Committee is comprised of members of the public, academics, lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers. Its main role is to protect participants. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Applicants should note the following:

It is the policy of the HREC to conduct random audits on a percentage of approved projects. These audits may be conducted at any time after the project starts. In cases where the HREC considers that there may be a risk of adverse events, or where participants may be especially vulnerable, the HREC may request the chief investigator to provide an outcomes report, including information on follow-up of participants.

The attached **FORM B** should be completed and returned to the Secretary, HREC, C/- Office of Research & Development:

When the project has finished, or

- If at any time during the twelve months changes/amendments occur, or
- If a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs, or
- 14 days prior to the expiry date if renewal is required.
- An application for renewal may be made with a Form B three years running, after which a new application form (Form A), providing comprehensive details, must be submitted.

Regards,

A/Professor Stephan Millett
Chair Human Research Ethics Committee

R

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