School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry

# Uncertain Place: a Spectral Ethnography of Haunted Experience in Perth, Western Australia

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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 acknowledgement has been made.

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

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 # 4622

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# Abstract

Unlike the disruptive, cataclysmic terms in which populist understandings of haunting is discussed, this research examines how spectral experience is more typically characterised by its quiet omnipresence as an inherent aspect of everyday social life. Existing as the kinds of involuntary impressions, uncanny atmospheres and peculiar sensations that do not easily lend themselves to sense and reason-making, haunted experience is emplaced in a "where." This research redresses the over-determinism of temporality in the literature on haunting by paying critical and creative attention to the ghost's spatial dimensions. Using the city of Perth as a field site, I examine what the place of Perth, including the case study of Brookfield Place, contributes to knowledge on the spatiality of the ghost. I do this by employing the traditional ethnographic research methods of in-depth interviews, participant observation, unstructured ethnographic discussion, as well as archival research, document analysis and the psychogeographic method of drifting (Coverley 2006). However, as the uncertainty of the ghost asks for uncertain research approaches (Holloway and Kneale 2008), the practice of these research methods is informed with what I call a haunted methodological approach. This has meant developing haunted research techniques in the interpretation and textual representation of the material collected, resulting in the use of ethnographic fragments as a textual form that can most closely articulate the plural open-endedness of a haunted social reality. What comes out of this research is that the spatiality of haunting reveals place to be more radically indeterminate than previously theorised in the literature on haunting, and that places (and our lives within them) are better served by accepting their unfinished, in-process and relational qualities. This means understanding people as haunted in place, and asks them to take on the kinds of relational practices that sustain the interrelatedness of people and place.

# Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Whadjuk Noongar cultural custodians whose lands on which I live and on which this research was undertaken. I convey my deepest respect to their ancestors and members of their communities, past, present and emerging, and to the knowledges, stories and living traditions that they hold.

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*Figure 1. The Site of Brookfield Place as a Vacant Lot, 2003. Photographed by Allan Myles, reproduced with permission from Matej Andraž Vogrinčič.*

# Introduction

As a child, no place provided as much of a sense of adventure as the vacant lot near my childhood home in Kimberley Street, Leederville, that could only be reached by covertly clambering over a neighbour's fence, helpfully covered in Morning Glory to provide purchase for little feet. Landing on the other side, the liberatory expansiveness of this secret place, fenced off from the street and neighbouring gardens, was unparalleled by a trip to any of the local playgrounds. Weeds that had grown to my height provided what felt like a forest in which to explore and find the debris of what was before – old taps half-buried in the earth; piles of large cement pavers perfect for climbing and odd ends of piping that begged to be picked up and banged together, releasing puffs of building detritus and sand. It was a place of imaginative potential that felt free of much of the strictures present everywhere else. It is these memories, perhaps, that have informed a life-long interest in ambiguous space. Vacant lots, odd off-cuts between buildings where rubbish gathers and weeds grow, derelict houses that have been left to their own devices before being razed to make way for redevelopment opportunities – these in-between spaces have drawn my eye (as well as my feet) for the liminality they present. Existing outside of the regulatory systems that order much of the rest of the city, their betwixt and between status offer a respite from what Gandy (2013, 11) calls the organisational logic of modernity, inviting alternative imaginings, uses and affordances. It is what Mariani and Barron (2013, xi) theorise as the alterative potentials of interstitial space that has prompted this research project, guiding an investigation into the liminal experience of space and how it might be apprehended. What began as an investigation of "terrain vague" (de Solà-Morales 1995) sites in the city of Perth, Western Australia, evolved into an exploration of how space more generally is characterised by processes of uncertainty and ambiguity. The more time I spent examining spatial indeterminacy in the place of Perth, the less determined and fixed the city appeared to be.

This research examines the uncertainty of place in the site of Perth through academic inquiry that is defined by practices of certainty and foreclosure. This might sound ironic, but such oppositional qualities provide for the productive tension from which to generate a thesis. In what ways might the materiality of ground and place, seemingly so solid and stable, be in actuality characterised by indeterminacy and ambiguity? How does

one examine uncertainty when dominant modes of scholarly inquiry are not only predicated upon, but also highly value, closure? Within these contexts, what might the merits of uncertainty be? I have anchored my examination of these questions within the scholarly concept of haunting. Theorised as a, "shadowy and excessive affair, never fixable, always caught between explanatory criteria" (Kneale and Holloway 2008, 303), haunting and its helpful metaphor of the ghost sign-post that which cannot be closed. Burgeoning interest in haunting has seen a "spectral turn" (Weinstock 2004; Luckhurst 2002; del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 2013) in the humanities, yielding a wide literature base from which to examine the uncertainty of place.

In Chapter 1 I explore this scholarship on haunting to provide an overview of how it has been theorised and deployed as a scholarly concept. Beginning with Jacques Derrida's (1994) treatment of the ghost's disruptive effects on western conceptualisations of time (in relation to Marxist ideologies), I examine how the figure of the ghost and its ability to move between the realms of past, present and future has been theorised to stand for a more troublesome sense of time than the security of temporal linearity. Much has since been made of the figure of the ghost as one of radical indeterminacy, rendering haunting a widely applicable concept. Haunting's destabilising effects on universalising totalities and notions of closure has seen it used in relation to issues of postcolonialism (O'Riley 2007; Mukherjee 2019; Wisker 2016), memory and trauma (Jonker and Till 2009; Caruth 1995; Baer 2002), as well as critiques of positivistic frames of knowing (Holloway and Kneale 2008; Edensor 2005; Gordon 1997). While the concept of Haunting has been well-theorised, much like the west's cultural imaginary more generally, it is characterised by an emphasis on temporality at the expense of understanding haunting in relation to spatiality (del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 2013, 20; Lee 2017, 4). Even less examined is the intersection of place, haunting and the experience of subjectivity.

From this context arises the two overarching lines of inquiry that guide the aims of this research. The first is an exploration of how redirecting attention to the spatial dimensions of the ghost can critically yield new knowledges of place and identity. Using my home-city of Perth, Western Australia, as a field site, I examine what the place of Perth, including the case-study of Brookfield Place, contributes to knowledge on the spatiality of haunting. The second overarching line of inquiry concerns the way in which haunting can be understood as an inherent and ubiquitous experience of social life itself (Gordon 1997, 7).

Existing as the kinds of involuntary impressions, uncanny atmospheres and peculiar sensations that do not lend themselves to sense and reason-making, I argue that normative modes of scholarly inquiry are ill-equipped to fathom haunting. Engaging with a haunted social reality means engaging with alterative forms of research approaches (Gordon 1997, 7). Thus, I examine what types of theoretical and methodological attention are necessary to apprehend haunted experience in place, and explore what they can offer more traditional modes of research practice.

In Chapter 2 I enact this by turning to non-representational theory and affect theory as forms of social inquiry that can engage with the indeterminacy of a haunted social life. Attuned to the way that social life is much less stable, fixed and cognate than traditionally theorised, non-representational theory and affect theory understand the world in unfinished and plural terms. While these two movements have been critiqued for their tendencies to theoretical and conceptual solipsism (Vannini 2015b, 12), in Chapter 2 I contextualise how I ground my practice in them with the empirical ethnographic research methods of in-depth interviews, participant observation, unstructured ethnographic discussion, as well as the more traditional research methods of archival research and document analysis. However, as the uncertainty of the ghost asks for uncertain research approaches (Holloway and Kneale 2008), I have informed my practice of these research methods with what I call a haunted methodological approach. This has meant developing haunted research techniques in the interpretation and textual representation of the material collected by these research methods, and has resulted in the production of ethnographic fragments as a textual form that can most closely articulate the heterogenous multiplicity of a haunted social life.

Written as a series of creative non-fiction vignettes, these ethnographic fragments form the centrepiece of the empirical component of this thesis, in Chapters 3 and 4. Both chapters engage with the case-study site of Brookfield Place (Chapter 3), and the wider field site of Perth (Chapter 4) to examine what these places contribute to knowledge on the spatiality of the ghost. I have selected Brookfield Place as a case-study for the multiple ways in which it talks to the spectral interests of this research. It is a site that I have a long history with, providing a rich example from which to examine the intersection of haunting, place and subjectivity, as well as offering a plethora of ways in which to critically explore how it is haunted by its past. The site of Brookfield Place currently exists as a high-end corporate

workplace and entertainment precinct, comprised of two skyscrapers, one of which homes anchor tenant BHP, and a number of heritage-listed buildings which house its restaurant and bar scene. The reflective glass panes, chrome railings and slate tiling of its walkways are accented with granite benches, wooden staircases and the brass and pewter highlights of its heritage-listed interiors. Situated along Perth's central artery of commerce, St George's Terrace, it is a major centre of capital in the heart of the city's financial district. However, when I first came across the site, decades before it was redeveloped into Brookfield Place, it could best be described as an ultimate example of the type of ambiguous and interstitial space that I reference in the opening of this Introduction. Due to a complex set of legal and financial circumstances (discussed in Chapter 3), a prior development was halted at its excavation phase, leaving a craterous hole in the ground that was left to its own devices for almost two decades (figure 1). Groundwater rose up, plants took over, and wildlife moved in. I examine Brookfield Place in its contemporary form as a highly regulated site that is not just haunted by its past as a financially ruinous hole in the ground, but also as a place in which the radical indeterminacy of the ghost refuses to be fixed. I do this with the haunted research methods of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost, as well as the more traditional practice of critical analysis, exampling my commitment to imbue some of the ghost's indeterminacy into the habits of certainty and foreclosure that characterise social science research.

Chapter 4 focuses on the wider field site of Perth. As a city haunted by the trauma of its colonial legacy, Perth presents a fecund context in which to examine the spatial dimensions of the ghost. Further, and of particular relevance to the interests of this research, the place of Perth also carries its own Indigenous and Noongar[1] conceptualisations of place that are radically alterative to western geographical imaginaries. I examine the Noongar and Indigenous concepts of "home-place" (Poelina et al., 2020) and "becoming family with place" (Wooltorton et al., 2020; Poelina et al. 2020) as frameworks which not only understand the relationship between people and place as deeply relational, but which also conceptualise people in place as indelibly haunted. Using my ethnographic fragments to contextualise and argue for the significance of Poelina et al.'s (2020, 13) and Wooltorton et al.'s (2020) call for people, including from non-Indigenous subjectivities, living on Indigenous

[1] I have used Indigenous *and* Noongar here (and throughout the thesis) to distinguish between a broader Indigenous conceptualisation of place and a culturally Nooongar understanding of place.

Country to learn and practice "becoming family with place" to redress colonial paradigms in this vital time of ecological crisis, I forward that enacting the relational practice of such concepts is to better understand oneself as haunted in place. The ethnographic fragments in Chapter 4 also provide the material to further develop the methodological contribution of the research. Taking inspiration from Kathleen Stewart's ethnographical work (2007; 2011; 2012), I explicate my ethnographic fragments as the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of ghost, and discuss how textually bringing to life the experience of a haunted social reality in the place of Perth can be understood as a more effective means of engaging with sociological issues than traditional forms of social critique. I do this by examining how leaving affective labour for the reader to do, rather than didactically setting out how to understand the material put forth, elicits identification and empathy for political effect.

The original contributions to knowledge of this research are both theoretical and methodological in nature. In pursuing what an emphasis on the ghost's spatiality can critically yield in distinction to its temporality, my examination of Brookfield Place reveals that spectral space is more radically indeterminate than previously theorised in the literature. Further, the wider site of Perth contributes knowledge to the intersection of subjectivity, place and haunting. The invitation to participate in the Indigenous knowledge framework of "becoming family with place" (Wooltorton et al., 2020; Poelina et al. 2020) offers relational practices to better recognise the places in which we live, and our lives within them, as profoundly haunted. To do so is to participate in what Poelina et al. (2020) and Wooltorton et al. (2020) position as practicing the kind of care and responsibility for place so urgently needed in this time of ecological crisis. Methodologically, this research contributes new research techniques to apprehend a haunted social reality, and injects some of the ghost's indeterminacy into traditional research practice to open up its proclivity for certainty and foreclosure. Together, these techniques form a haunted methodological approach to more effectively (and affectively) engage with the sociological issues which, in sociologist Avery Gordon's edict that "it is our responsibility to address" (1997, 21).

# Chapter 1

## Haunting, the Concept

I would like to begin my engagement with haunting as a concept with where this thesis starts, which is with a childhood lived in two places. Arriving in Australia at the age of four, most of my memories are of a childhood spent in Perth; the dry, baking heat of summer, the very specific scent of wet eucalyptus after rain, the ancient shapes and silhouettes of the south west Australian bush. And yet, they are punctuated with vague recollections of another landscape, a brisk and bracing climate, and a language that I have now largely forgotten. Snatches of memory from these earliest years come back; my mother pouring warm water over my tongue to dislodge it from a gutter icicle, the particular scent of pinewood flooring that permeates most homes in the south west of Sweden, the painful sting of brushing past a nettle plant. I recall a grandparent's comment on my inside-out clothing, and a reproach for clambering over the family dog. The time and location places these exchanges in the language of Swedish, and yet in my adult consciousness the words exist in my current vernacular of Australian English. These fragments of memory punctuate later years spent in the place of Perth, where as childhood progresses into adolescence the quantity and consistency of my memory solidifies. Listless teenage afternoons spent wandering the backwaters of Perth, drawn to its disordered offerings of industrial ruins, vacant lots and abandoned houses; passive hours spent staring out the windows of public transport in an age before smartphones, absorbing the various textures and collages of the city's streetscapes; a handful of thrilling night expeditions shadowing a friend as they pasted up street art on select inner city walls. In these later years, underlying it all, was the growing sense of how ancient Perth actually is, how long it has been inhabited by those whose home it has always been.

The sensorial imprints of the places of my childhood and adolescence continue to live on, returning to my adult self in sudden sensations of déjà vu, inchoate impressions and uncontrollable memories. While they have very little to do with the rigours of active thought or conscious rumination they are strongly tethered to the locations in which they were lived; the climate, the landscape and the textures of place. There are several issues that I would like to draw out from these observations. To grow up in a place involves time (the

passing of a childhood, an adolescence and a young adulthood), and place (the location in which the length and breadth of those years are lived). Both time and place are synthesised through a subject, taking on the intimate forms of memories, affects and impressions like those that I describe in the opening paragraph above. The intersection of these three elements – time, place and subjectivity – cover much of the spine of the concept of haunting, and provide a roadmap of sorts for the substantive themes of the chapter and this thesis at large. I have divided this chapter into two sections; the first discusses the juncture of time and place in the scholarly literature of haunting and lays the groundwork for the particular emphasis on place in this thesis. I contextualise how much like the west's cultural imaginary more generally, the literature on haunting is marked by an overemphasis on temporality at the expense of the ghost's spatial dimensions (del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 2013, 20; Lee 2017, 4). Turning to Massey's (2005) conceptualisations of space and place as relational, I argue that understanding place as ongoing and in-process is particularly favourable for theorising the ghost (de Certeau 2014; Edensor 2005, Jonker and Till 2009). The second section is to do with the types of sensorial affects that open this chapter and index a spectral social reality; I engage with authors (Gordon 1997; Edensor 2005; Holloway and Kneale 2008) who have written to the quality of the experience of haunting to examine how social life can be understood as indelibly haunted. This position lays the foundation for what I term haunted research techniques, that in subsequent chapters I aver are necessary to apprehend and address the essentially haunted nature of social life.

## Spectrality, Time and Space of Place

### *The Ghost and Temporality*

While in modern western consciousness time is conceptualised in linear terms – past, present and future (Berger 1979) – the figure of the ghost presents precisely the rupture of these seemingly impermeable temporal boundaries. The ghost and its mechanism of haunting stand for a far more troublesome and complex sense of time than the comfort and security of temporal linearity. The muddled temporal quality of the ghost has been put to work by many scholars in the field of spectrality[2], but it is worth

[2] For examples that move beyond spectrality scholarship's usual temporal focus on the past in the present, see authors like Mark Fisher who propose that the present is also haunted by a pining for the lost future promised by modernity (cited in Collier 2017, 165), or Kevin Hetherington and Monica Degen (2001) who propose that

acknowledging where the temporal aspect of haunting owes its debt; to Derrida's seminal *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (1993). While no concept has its genesis residing with a single author, *Specters of Marx* is widely acknowledged as the first sustained volume on haunting as a concept, playing the central role in establishing spectrality studies as a field (del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 2013, 2). Written in the 1990s when the end of Eastern European socialist regimes appeared to signal a new world order, the book reflects on the legacy of Marxist ideologies to forward that the spectre of Marxism, contrary to claims that communism would disappear with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, would continue to haunt Europe in various socio-political and cultural guises. Singling out Hamlet's oft-quoted line, "the time is out of joint" (1993, 7) as an injunction for the indeterminacy of the ghost, Derrida puts Shakespeare's Hamlet to work to interlocute the intersection of temporality and justice. Hamlet is haunted by the spectre of his father who reveals to him that he was murdered by Claudius, Hamlet's uncle. Hamlet is left with the prospect of attempting to correct this past injustice and seek vengeance. The figure of the ghost represents the rupture of traditional notions of the continuum of time. Derrida employs Hamlet's line as the book's epigraph to mark up the ghost's disruptive effects on temporal linearity by way of the haunting of Hamlet by his murdered father, and further to point to the ghost's destabilising effects on universalising totalities more generally. If such foundations of the western cultural imaginary as time can be problematised, the very notion of stability and certainty are by corollary up for questioning.

Much has since been made of the figure of the ghost as one of radical indeterminacy, disrupting attempts to compartmentalise and control issues and concepts such as that of time (del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 2013, 13). Of particular interest to my research are scholars writing in spectrality studies who have focused on the temporal aspect of the presence of the past in cities, often through the lens of national heritage (Edensor 2005; de Certeau 2014; Jonker and Till 2009). While I engage with Brookfield Place as a haunted site of national heritage in this thesis, to lay the groundwork here I draw attention to some of the relevant issues addressed in spectrality literature on the theme of how the state attempts to shape and control the presence of the past in cities. While authors like Tim Edensor (2005), Julian Jonker and Karen E. Till (2009) have written to the disruptive effects

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building sites and new developments exemplify not only Fisher's present haunted by the future, but also a future haunted by the present.

to state responses by arrivants from the past in urban landscapes, it is perhaps Michel de Certeau (2014) who is best known for his work in this area. De Certeau ascribes a mythical and mysterious quality to the presence of the past in the city, philosophising that the traces of times gone by insert the strangeness of an imaginary world into the physical reality of his contemporary Paris, adding depth to the urban present and ultimately rendering the city inhabitable. He explicates that remnants of the past,

> trace out memories that no longer have a place – childhoods, genealogical traditions, timeless events. Such is the "work" of urban narratives as well. They insinuate different spaces into cafes, offices, and buildings. To the visible city they add those "invisible cities" about which Calvino wrote. With the vocabulary of objects and well-known words, they create another dimension, in turn fantastical and delinquent, fearful and legitimating. For this reason, they render the city "believable," affect it with unknown depth to be inventoried, and open it up to journeys. They are the keys to the city, they give access to what it is: mythical. (142)

For de Certeau, it is this presence of an imaginary city, of another time, that adds a vital element of mystery to the urban present and makes cities the enigmatic and dynamic places that they are. As he claims elsewhere, "haunted places are the only ones people can live in" (1984, 108). What is key to his understanding of the presence of the past in the city is its strangeness and unknowability. Thus, state attempts to consciously accentuate and concertedly contain these histories in the name of national heritage are destined to be haunted. He expounds that traces of the past,

> extend beyond the dogmatic borders of a supposed "national heritage"; they possess places even though we believe to have shut them in, stuffed, stamped, and set them under glass in the hospitals for popular arts and traditions. Some of them undoubtedly died in these museumesque zoos. But after all, they represent only a minuscule proportion amongst the population of ghosts that teem within the city and that make up the strange and immense silent vitality of an urban symbolics. (137)

Here, it is de Certeau's privileging of the past's ability to return to the present in unbounded and surprising ways that is of relevance. In his Paris, even when the strangeness of the past is consciously accentuated and concertedly contained, it escapes, it returns, it spills out at

unexpected places and in unanticipated ways. For de Certeau, the muddled temporality of the past in the present manifests as a positive and emancipatory force[3], vitalising urban landscapes and marking up haunting's indeterminate effects on such supposed certainties as the continuum of time.

*The Ghost and Spatiality*

While the temporality of the ghost, and its ability to wander through and muddle the usually discrete realms of past, present and future has occupied much of the scholarly literature on haunting and spectrality, Esther Pereen and Maria del Pilar Blanco (2013) note that haunting is also "classically conceived of as attached to a *where*" (395). The haunted house, the memorial site, the new duplex built upon a former childhood home; while haunting inevitably invokes confused temporalities of a "what was" existing alongside of "what is," the spectral is also intimately tied up with location. For a past to be perceived, there is a corresponding *where* in which it is emplaced. Take, for instance, a walk down an old childhood street. When as an adult I revisited the house in which I spent my earlier childhood years in Perth, a stroll up to the corner intersection summoned the memory of the elderly lady who grew roses at the top of the road, always in a white hat clipping, pruning and tending to her front garden. Looking upon the yard now, landscaped into a sleek gravel and grass affair, the place still rings with an impish childhood moment of hurriedly plucking handfuls of fragrant rose petals, fleeing down the street and sifting through their velvety scallops in the safety of my house. Across the road was the lady who owned a sausage dog, the conversation about whether dachshunds actually supplied the substance of sausages tempered with a now-adult appreciation of the naiveté of this exchange. The old street of my childhood shimmers in the materiality of its present landscape; those childhood places and those childhood moments are still there (for me). The "where-ness" of the ghost, whilst overshadowed by a scholarly emphasis on time, presents an important focus point for theoretical and methodological attention. As Christina Lee (2017) notes in the introduction to her edited volume,

[3] While de Certeau frames the presence of the past as a positive and vitalising force, I would like to acknowledge the ethical and political imperative of the re-emergence of past trauma that much of spectrality literature focuses upon; see Jonker and Till (2009) later in this chapter.

> As the title indicates, *Spectral Spaces and Hauntings* emphasises the spatial dimension and politics of haunting. This is not to say that it is the only aspect of haunting worth discussing, but it does identify the over-determination of temporality in studies of spectrality. (4)

Here Lee marks up not only the importance of paying the same quality of attention to the ghost's spatiality that in spectrality literature has traditionally been reserved for its temporal dimensions, but in indexing haunting's spatial politics she also highlights what an emphasis on the ghost's spatiality might uniquely and critically yield. Similarly, Pereen and del Pilar Blanco (2013) note that the spatiality of haunting has "threatened to become overshadowed by the focus on temporality within Derrida's work as well as within memory and trauma studies" (20), and thereby dedicate an entire section of their spectralities reader to the spatiality of haunting.

To comprehend why there is a general dearth of literature on the spatiality of the ghost, however, it is worth first attending to why there has been such a historical and philosophical emphasis on time over space more generally in the west's cultural imaginary. In *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989), geographer Edward Soja helpfully elucidates that,

> For at least the past century, time and history have occupied a privileged position in the practical and theoretical consciousness of Western Marxism and critical social science. Understanding how history is made has been the primary source of emancipatory insight and practical political consciousness, the great variable container for a critical interpretation of social life and practice. (1)

Soja identifies the dominance of a temporal epistemology through which modern social theory comprehends the world, the implication being that historical imagination and time define, "the very nature of critical insight and interpretation" (10). In other words, if contemporary western consciousness is characterised by history and time as its dominant mode of understanding the world, then unpacking the "making of history" (1) and time becomes social theory's most incisive source of critical analysis. As Soja and others, like geographer Doreen Massey (2005) and philosopher Michel Foucault (1980), argue, however, such an emphasis on temporality comes at the expense of alternative dimensions of epistemology through which to comprehend (and critically engage with) the world, like

space; “Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic” (Foucault 1980, 70). These authors ask what an emphasis on an epistemology of spatiality rather than temporality might critically yield, and in the instance of Soja propose that “it may be space more than time that hides consequences from us, the ‘making of geography’ more than the ‘making of history’ that provides the most revealing and tactical theoretical world” (1).

*The Ghost and the Space of Place*

To contextualise the spatiality of haunting requires an understanding of the sense(s) of space and place that inform this thesis. As with any other concept that has long been the focus of scholarly attention, the definitions of, differences between, and qualities which constitute space and place have undergone the vicissitudes of academic movements and shifts over time. Whilst a comprehensive history of the understandings of space and place are beyond the scope and focus of this thesis, in this section I outline selected theorisations which inform how this research project conceptualises the spatiality of haunting. Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience* (1979) presents a helpful starting point. For Tuan, at its most broad and essentialist definition, the distinction between space and place is that space is abstract and place is personal,

> “Space” is more abstract than “place.” What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. Architects talk about the spatial qualities of place; they can equally well speak of the locational (place) qualities of space. The ideas “space” and “place” require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. (6)

In Tuan’s conceptualisation, a distinction is drawn between the wide-ranging, “out there-ness” of space and the personal, experiential familiarity of place, or in the terms of the anecdote which opened this discussion of space, between my childhood understanding of what was beyond the locations with which I was familiar, versus the densities of memories and experiences that clustered around my home and street. From Tuan’s point of view, it is people’s affective understandings of space, how they “endow it with value” (6), that renders it place – the furtive act of decimating a neighbour’s carefully tended rose bushes or a

childhood conversation about the connection between daschunds and sausages are precisely the quality of experience that exchanges the space of an unfamiliar street for the place of home.

While Tuan's understanding of space is premised upon counterposing its abstractness with the concrete familiarity of place, other scholars (Amin 2004; Thrift 2006) take issue with what can be understood as this binary's unnecessary divorcement of space from place (Massey 2005, 362) and the rendering of space as a surface. Proponents like geographer Massey (2005, 361-362) aver that both space and place are profoundly relational and take umbrage with Tuan and others' conflation of place with concreteness and space with ethereal immateriality, or as Massey phrases in *For Space* (2005), place as "earthy and meaningful, standing in opposition to a presumed abstraction of global space" (362). For Massey, both space and place are constituted by continuously ongoing relations, or what she calls trajectories in the "event of place" (296). She elucidates,

> One way of seeing "places" is as on the surface of maps: Samarkand is there, the United States of America (finger outlining a boundary) is here. But to escape from an imagination of space as a surface is to abandon also that view of place. If space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space. Their character will be a product of these intersections within that wider setting, and of what is made of them. And, too, of the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place… This is an understanding of place – as open ("a global sense of place"), as woven together out of ongoing stories, as a moment within power-geometries, as a particular constellation within the wider topographies of space, and as in process, as unfinished business… (265-266)

According to Massey, both space and place are as concrete and as abstract as each other, in that they are both made up of continuously on-going trajectories/stories-so-far. The distinction between them is to do with one's own personal connection to the trajectories taking place, or as Massey puts it, "To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself in the ones to which you relate" (265). From this perspective, the continual on-going-ness of the trajectories, the fact of their constant

change and motion, renders space and place as far less fixed and stable than previously theorised. For Massey, even places constituted of rock and earth are still in motion, pointing to evidence like the fact that there are tides in the solid earth as well as in the ocean, and that the interior of the North American continent rises and falls by about 20 centimetres each day (280). The continual motion of place renders it "open and as internally multiple. Not capturable as a slice through time in the sense of an essential section. Not intrinsically coherent" (283). This conceptualisation of place marks it as dynamic and continuously on-the-move. Importantly, Massey makes every effort to pay space and place the depth of theoretical attention that has traditionally been reserved for time. Just as the ghost has been theorised to muddle the linear continuum of past-present-future, Massey works at muddling the understanding of space as fixed, stable and one-dimensional, instead advocating for an understanding of both space and place as quintessentially processual and mobile.

Conceptualising space and place as unfixed and multiple is particularly favourable for theorising the ghost, as can be seen in the work of spectrality-interested scholars who write to the theme of memory and space. Edensor (2005) examines how the ghostliness of disordered space (industrial ruins, vacant lots, derelict houses etc.) can contest and challenge the normative ways in which memory is spatialised in the city. Edensor critiques civic memorial practices for shutting down the multiplicity of urban space by attempting to fix single "official" versions of history to specific sites. Edensor points to how disordered space presents the kind of ambiguous and open-ended locale which allows the polysemy of the spectral to thrive, and embodies, "a far more multiple, nebulous, and imaginative sense of memory… critiquing the discursive closure upon the mnemonic meaning of other sites" (834). While Jonker and Till (2009) place a similar emphasis on the complex and unbounded nature of memory in space, in contradistinction they ascribe more agency to spectral space's ability to overtly disrupt urban regimes of spatial control. Focusing on the case study of Prestwich Place in Cape Town, South Africa, Jonker and Till examine the events surrounding the accidental discovery of an informal slave burial ground by construction workers. The original blueprint for the site was an upscale apartment and office complex when discovery of the bones halted development. While Cape Town's authorities planned to exhume the remains, protestors, many claiming descendancy from the remains, demanded the development be abandoned and a memorial to house and honour the bones

and respect the resonances of the place be erected instead (320). Activists organised reminiscent site walks, recorded oral histories of the precinct, held candlelit vigils, marches and other protest actions, eventually resulting in the planned development folding in favour of a memorial complex. Jonker and Till's case study proposes that the multiplicity of the spectral resonances of space and place not only thrive in Edensor's disordered space, or what Larry Ford (2000) calls the "spaces between buildings" – refuges where the ghosts exorcised from the ordered and planned city can safely haunt – but also in highly regulated and ordered centres of the city. The ability of the spectral to disrupt, problematise and confuse authoritarian attempts to fix and control understandings of space is similarly explored by authors such as Jane M(Benjamin 1973). Jacobs (1996), with Kenneth Gelder (1998) and Michael O'Riley (2007), who, like Jonker and Till, work at the intersection of the spectral and postcolonial spatiality.

While the works of these authors could also be examined through the lens of temporality rather than space, that is precisely the point which Massey works above; that time and space are coterminous and cannot be separated from one another. When conceptualising haunting, a focus on time organically implicates place and vice versa. However, as I indicate in the opening to this chapter, place forms an important cornerstone of this thesis; in a sense, it is where this research begins. This prompt has led to place taking a central role in the architecture of the thesis. Thus, I have worked to the same modus as authors like Massey (2005) and Lee (2017) to provide the depth of theoretical and methodological attention to place and space that has typically been reserved for time. One of the key themes that arises out of my examination of the juncture of time and place in the literature of spectrality is that of indeterminacy and polysemy; whether it is de Certeau's expansive celebration of the riotous propensity of the past to escape attempts to shape it through narratives of national heritage, or Jonker and Till's more sombre examination of haunting's political motive to overtly disrupt the fixed, sanctioned memories of place via the reappearance of spectral others.

**Alter(n)ative Knowledges**

While time and to a much lesser degree space has been the focus of much of the literature on haunting, I equally would like to draw attention to the quality of haunting's

experience and the forms of scholarship required to engage with it. In the opening of this chapter I describe the sensorial affects of the places of my childhood and adolescence, and in this section I would like to expand upon the type of knowing that they index. Unlike the rigours of rational thought, the fragmented and impressionistic nature of such memories and haunted experience at large point to a type of knowledge which cannot be explained by critical analysis, logic and reason; that escapes analytical control, slides over attempts toward resolution and leaks out of explanations. It is a type of knowing that glances askance at knowledge presented as coherent and complete closure, instead marking up omissions, angles and extenuations. Haunting, I argue, can be understood as a type of alternative knowledge(s), and requires alterative modes of theoretical and methodological apprehension to address it.

Conceptually, haunting can be understood to refer to the ways in which things are always more than they seem, that while a place or a theory or an argument might appear as a continuous and discrete whole, there are pasts that linger on, issues that are not addressed, rigging which makes itself known. Nothing exists as an intact and replete whole; the very act of attempting to create so is equally an act of leaving out, ignoring and repressing (Gordon 1997, 21). While this has proven a very productive vein to mine for scholars working in the field of spectrality studies, it is worth examining one of the earliest intuits of this to explicate how haunting is marked by residues, interstices and traces, as evidenced in psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's determination, and failure, to provide a definition of haunting's close sibling kin, the uncanny. Royle's (2003) structured analysis of Freud's seminal 1919 essay "The 'Uncanny'," and his inability to unequivocally write his understanding of the uncanny to a resolution points to the ambiguity, disordered knowledge and complexity which the terms haunting and the uncanny mark up. Freud attempts to provide a thorough and exhaustive inventory of what constitutes the uncanny, addressing the themes he understands to comprise it. Two thirds through the essay Freud notes, "We have now only a few more remarks to add, for animism, magic and witchcraft, the omnipotence of thoughts, man's attitude to death, involuntary repetition and the castration-complex comprise practically all the factors which turn something fearful into an uncanny thing" (14), and yet rather than wrapping up his treatment of the uncanny within the promised few remarks, Freud continues on for a further ten pages. With every subsequent pause to collect together the inventory of the uncanny explicated thus far,

further modifications and additions are added to the list, until finally Freud confesses, “It is evident that we must be prepared to admit that there are other elements besides those set down here determining the production of uncanny feelings” (16). While he later attempts to do away with this admission by arguing that, “nearly all the instances which contradict our hypothesis are taken from the realm of fiction and literary productions” (16), as theorist of the uncanny Nicholas Royle (2003) notes, Freud’s attempted resolution of the mystery of the uncanny is caught up in the maddening logic of the supplement (16). In other words, Freud’s account is riddled with the very uncanny processes he labours to unravel[4], causing Royle to state that, “to write about the uncanny, as Freud’s essay makes admirably clear, is to lose one’s bearings... to engage with a Hydra” (8).

As Freud’s essay inadvertently demonstrates, the uncanny is by nature irresolvable, standing alongside haunting for a quality of knowledge that is ambiguous, inchoate and incomplete, yet these qualities of haunting can be understood to exist not simply as a category of knowledge but as an inherent experience of social life itself. In *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon (1997) advocates for alternative forms of scholarship that are better equipped to engage with what she understands as the haunted nature of social life, waging that, “Haunting is a constituent element of modern social life. It is neither premodern superstition nor individual psychosis; it is a generalizable social phenomenon of great import” (7). In her various case studies, which include the desaparacido (“the disappeared”) of Argentina and the lingering legacy of racial slavery in North America, Gordon demonstrates that the historically marginalised, the ignored, hidden and repressed haunt the social present in ways that render social life inherently spectral. This is explicated through Gordon’s examination of the case of Sabina Spielrein, a woman whose work likely influenced the early development of psychoanalysis, but who is missing from the discipline’s records and canons. Entangled in the relationship between Carl Jung and Freud, Spielrein’s work was rejected by Freud as lacking in substantiation, and yet years later her ideas were reiterated by Freud without acknowledgement or credit to Spielrein[5]. Prompted by Spielrein’s absence from a photograph taken at the Weimar Congress in 1911,

[4] See Sarah Kofman (1991), del Pilar Blanco & Pereen (2013) and Helene Cixous (1976) for insightful analyses of the uncanny qualities of Freud’s essay.

[5] Freud expressed his doubt on the validity of Spielrein’s original work on the death drive in letter communication with Carl Jung before publishing his own seminal theory on this theme a decade later (Gordon 1997, 40).

a psychoanalytic conference attended by Freud, Jung and others at which Spielrein was slated to present her findings, Gordon is haunted by her missing image, by the tantalising traces of Spielrein's work and its influence on both Jung and Freud's ideas, by her presence and mention in letter communication between the two men, and her erasure from the history of pyschoanalysis as a discipline and practice. For Gordon, Spielrein is but one amongst a plethora of spectres that haunt the social present, moving Gordon to claim that "haunting is the most general instance of the clamouring return of the reduced to a delicate social experience struggling, even unaware, with its shadowy but exigent presence. Haunting is the sociality of living with ghosts" (201). Here, Gordon underscores the understanding of haunting as a profoundly social experience, and in contradistinction to the supernatural and extraordinary circumstances in which populist understandings of ghosts are framed, the spectrality of the social is taken as a given; as something that is commonplace and an everyday occurrence.

If haunting is understood to be a given aspect of social life, spectrality-interested authors assert that dominant modes of scholarly sense-making practices are ill-equipped to apprehend it (Gordon 1997; Holloway and Kneale 2008; Jonker and Till 2009). Ambiguous, embodied and affective rather than logical, rational and sequential, arguments by authors like Edensor (2005) in his aforementioned examination of haunting and disordered space underscore the point that unlike the critical distinctions and conclusions of conscious knowledge,

> Being haunted draws us, "always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as transformative recognition" (Benjamin, 1973, page 8)... what emerges is not empiricist, didactic, or intellectual knowledge but an empathetic and sensual apprehension understood at an intuitive and affective level. (846-847)

The sensual and affective modes of experience explicated by Edensor are inarticulate in representational practices that value reason and coherence, rendering normative modes of scholarly inquiry ill-equipped to engage with haunting's inchoate and open-ended plurality. Gordon argues for an overhaul of the forms of inquiry wielded by the social sciences to better engage with the essentially haunted nature of social life, arguing that, "to study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it. This confrontation requires (or produces) a

fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge, in our mode of production" (7). Frustrated with the social sciences' rhetoric of abstraction, Gordon advocates for innovative methods to write against the reifying generalisations of social analysis because "in the world and between us as analysts and the worlds we encounter to translate into world-making words are hauntings, ghosts and gaps, seething absences, and muted presences" (21). The traditional modes of social science inquiry in and of their very inability to recognise, access and engage with the haunted nature of social life sustains and generates the ghosts, gaps and seething absences, prompting Gordon to agitate for the social sciences to imaginatively engage the apparitions that tie the social present to past histories (ix). As social scholars whose modus it is to address social life, to neglect attending to its essentially haunted nature is to neglect the way things are.

Rather than being seen as a deficit, haunting's inarticulacy with normative modes of social inquiry are an opportunity for novel forms of apprehension and engagement that work with its inarticulacy rather than against it. For many, such as the aforementioned Edensor (2005), this looks like writing to the fragmentary nature of haunting,

> Disparate fragments, juxtapositions, traces, involuntary memories, uncanny impressions, and peculiar atmospheres cannot be woven into an eloquent narrative. Stories can only be contingently assembled out of a jumble of disconnected things, occurrences, and sensations. Bits of stories suggest themselves through halting speech, which trails away into silence. Even though intimations about previous denizens and their activities are multiple they are obscure, ghostly, enigmatic traces that invite us to fill in the blanks… only fragments of stories remain, and the task is not to "piece the fragments of space and time back together," impossible in any case, but to "trace out the threads and follow their convolutions." (846)

Here Edensor advocates abandoning the task of attempting to explain the enigma of haunted experience, with the implication that besides being an "impossible" task, it is more pointedly a fruitless one. If the haunted experience of social life is one which "cannot be woven into an eloquent narrative" (846), and which exists instead as the disparate fragments and involuntary impressions that Edensor gestures to, then attempting to unconditionally explicate it is to do nothing to gain further knowledge about it. If all that is

left to work with are Edensor's disparate juxtapositions and uncanny atmospheres, then what can scholars know about haunting?

When I walked down my childhood street, the memories that came upon me – stealing rose flowers and the connection between sausages and daschunds – returned in a concoction of clear, precise instances (the mixture of thrill and shame after the act of stealing the rose petals, lightly rubbing little fingers over their velvety texture, the way that their deep fragrance and delicate colours made them seem precious as jewels), and hazy, ungraspable half-remembered events and atmospheres that, similar to trying to recollect dreams, recede further into an ether the more they are pursued. Did the elderly lady explicitly tell me not to touch her flowers? Perhaps; all I can recall is a fear of her and a sense of deep prohibition attached to her garden and the rose bushes (only making them all the more alluring). Whilst stitching these fragments together to create a clear and concise account which can be parsed through the rigours of critical analysis would prove to be Edensor's "impossible task" (as so aptly demonstrated by Freud's inability to solve the riddle of the uncanny), I instead propose inquiring into the quality of experience that haunting's fragmented forms present. What ways of knowing and forms of knowledge might sit in their heterogeneous and piecemeal nature? If haunted experience cannot be unravelled, the question becomes one of refashioning engagement to know more about its forms.

My approach in this thesis is one of working to and from the disparate fragments, juxtapositions, traces and involuntary memories of haunted experience that Edensor gestures to, rather than attempting to solve their enigma. Methodologically, this looks like utilising the form of ethnographic fragments along with what I term the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost to perform the palimpsest-like, inchoate and open-ended relationality of haunted social life in the place of Perth. Further, and as I will discuss in more depth in Chapter 3, it has also meant imbuing some of the ghost into the practice of traditional social science research methods. Writing to a haunted social life does not need to mean foregoing all of the methodological skills that the social sciences has so painstakingly accumulated over the centuries (Latham 2003, 2000). Rather, for the purposes of this thesis, it has meant adopting some of the ghost's indeterminacy into the practice and interpretation of traditional research methods to open up their proclivity to certainty and foreclosure. The methodological and theoretical

implications of this mixed-use of haunted research techniques and traditional social science research methods are examined in further depth in the next chapter, Theory-Methodology.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have written to show that unlike the disruptive, cataclysmic terms in which populist understandings of haunting is discussed, spectral experience is in fact an incredibly mundane layer of daily life. Unexpected encounters with childhood memories, flashes of déjà vu that arise within the textures of daily living, affective atmospheres that shimmer in the materiality of streetscapes; I propose that while haunted experience may include the ghoulish spirits and ghosts to which it popularly alludes, it is more typically characterised by its quiet omnipresence as an inherent aspect of everyday social life. This pedestrian understanding of haunting is intended to not only mark up its ubiquity, but also the pervasiveness of its status as that which problematises stable understandings and universalising totalities. The historical division of time and space as separate and stable entities, the academic practice of evidencing findings to show them as closed and watertight knowledge – in this chapter I have worked to show that a haunted perspective destabilises the fixity of such positions and demonstrates the impossibility of closure. If haunting can be understood as a signpost of indeterminacy, at its most essentialised objective, this research engages with what can be described as the merits of uncertainty.

This objective unfolds in this thesis in two ways. The first is to do with what I have discussed in the body of this chapter as spectrality literature's over-emphasis on the temporality of haunting at the expense of space. While I acknowledge the coterminous nature of time and space – their dimensions as inseparably implicated – I have argued for the same depth of theoretical and methodological attention to be paid to the ghost's spatiality as has been traditionally reserved for its temporal dimensions. In the chapters to come I examine what an emphasis on the ghost's spatiality critically yields in the places of Brookfield Place and the wider site of Perth. The second focus is to do with what I have discussed as the alterative forms of engagement necessary to apprehend a haunted social reality. In an academic context characterised by practices of certainty and foreclosure, traditional forms of social inquiry are ill-equipped to engage with what I have argued is the inchoate and indeterminate nature of haunted experience. Thus, I have worked to show

that apprehending the ghost means practicing forms of theoretical and methodological engagement that can engage and work with its contingency, indeterminacy and relationality rather than against it. I examine the tensions, context and implications of this in the following chapter.

# Chapter 2

# Theory and Methodology

> I can't help but dream of the kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgements but signs of existence; it would summon them, drag them from their sleep. Perhaps it would invent them sometimes – all the better. All the better. [...] It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms (Michel Foucault 1997a, 323).

In this chapter I show that working from a haunted perspective requires alternative approaches to social research, and a shift in the way that the relationship between theory and methodology has traditionally been understood in the social sciences. I discuss why reading and writing the world from a haunted perspective requires a more unstable, complex and incomplete understanding of social life than the grand narratives of traditional social science would have, and propose non-representational theory and affect theory as forms of social inquiry that can apprehend the unfinished, inchoate and palimpsest-like experience of a haunted social life. However, I critique non-representational theory and affect theory for their reluctant relationship and engagement with the empirical, and return to Gordon's (1997) haunted methodological approaches as a means of "salvaging" the empirical whilst practicing in a non-representational and affect theory space. I draw on the ethnographies of anthropologists João Biehl (2013), Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) and Kathleen Stewart (2007; 2017) as works which enact the research methods of conjuring and what I term respecting the enigma of the ghost to contextualise my own research methods and methodological approach in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

In the previous chapter, "Haunting, the Concept," I discuss how reading and writing to a haunted social life requires alterative forms of scholarship that can engage with the ambiguous and indeterminate experience of a haunted reality. Whilst there are a number of theories and movements that engage with the type of indeterminate and ambiguous

experience I mention above, I propose haunting as a wider term that canvasses the issues these movements write to. To contextualise this position, I engage with the main movements in social science scholarship that have grappled with these issues to draw out the connections to haunting. To this end, I review the movements of non-representational theory and affect theory below.

**Non-Representational Theory and Affect Theory: What Are They, Where Have They Come From and What Do They Write Against?**

Non-representational theory and affect theory have risen out of a dissatisfaction with forms of social theory premised on an understanding of social life as stable, conscious and fixed (Anderson and Harrison 2016; Thrift 2007; Lorimer 2005; Vannini 2015b). They argue against the cognitive deconstruction of cultural codes employed by social science approaches, such as social constructivism, and instead propose that social life resides within such unconscious and inchoate realms as the body, inarticulate experience, everyday practices and so on (Anderson and Harrison 2016). While non-representational theory and affect theory are broadly united in what they write against, they speak to slightly differing foci in their approaches.

Non-representational theory was born out of a desire to make a break with representational modes of inquiry. When the representational crisis of the 1980s entrenched the practice of representational modes of analysis in the social sciences, "the world," rather than being a tangible, material affair to be encountered with sensorial apparatus, was treated as symbolic, a series of texts which produced and sustained social meaning (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987, 96). One of the consequences of this was that the materiality of the world, the way in which it feels "really real" (Anderson and Harrison 2016, 6), was secondary to its importance to be understood and consequently deconstructed as a series of texts that upheld and reproduced what in representational terms is called the collective symbolic order (Anderson and Harrison 2016, 4). Non-representational theory has its genesis in the mid-1990s as, initially, a series of provocations by main proponent Nigel Thrift (1997), along with Dewsbury et al. (2002) and Hayden Lorimer (2005) (amongst many others) railing against representation's immateriality and treatment of subjecthood as stable, hermeneutic and cognate. Thrift and his proponents argued that rather than

representation's neat divide between conscious subject and world, the relationship was far more porous and relational; non-representational bodies were in constant communication and modification with their environment, foregoing a stable sense of individual "wholeness" for an understanding of subjecthood as constantly in formation – an endless feedback loop that is contingently shaped in the moment of relating with the world (Anderson and Harrison 2016, 7). Furthermore, non-representational theory viewed representation's understanding of "the world" as far too inert and lacking in agency; in its understanding of the relational mutuality of subject and world, inside and outside, the world could not stand up as removed, passive and inert (Vannini 2015b, 4-5). Rather, if these ontological separations are understood as far too simplistically divisive, the world acts upon people and upon itself just as people act upon the world. In this sense, the world has agency, influence and life in and of itself, rendering humans as one small part of the relational milieu that non-representational theory understands to always be taking place across and between such ontological divides as subject and world, interiority and the exterior (Anderson and Harrison 2016, 7-8). It is in this sense that non-representational theory has an all-encompassing ecological understanding of what is captured in the proverb, "life, the universe and everything" – serious divisions between subject and object, human and animal, person and world are seen as somewhat arbitrary when everything is understood to always be circulating, moving and reshaping in relation to one another. The social has a wide-ranging sense of being not just about humans and their sociality, but of everything else that makes up the world too, in that if everything is always affecting each other and everything has agency, the social cannot be limited to that which is human (Vannini 2015b, 5).

These initial provocations set forth by the proponents of non-representational theory have been significantly expanded upon, resulting in a profusion of innovations and critiques of the movement's original propositions. Most notably, this can be seen in the development of the term "more-than-representational theory". Initially coined by Lorimer (2005), "more-than-representational theory" has been widely taken up to index a gentler position to representation than the prefix of "non" originally proposed by Thrift. Rather than negating the validity of representation as a means by which to understand the reproduction of culture (and by corollary social science's existing approaches to knowledge production), "more-than" demarcates that both representation and other than representational are recognised as valid ways of understanding sociality and being-in-the-

world. As Simpson (2015) pithily summarises, the alternative moniker "more-than-representational" suggests, "that the ideas proposed by non-representational theories can act as an animating supplement to existing approaches to geographic knowledge production". This wider, more encompassing stance has expanded the original methodological considerations of non-representational theory, some of which I outline further below.

In understanding sociality to be wide ranging and radically material, moving across and between all things human and non-human, non-representational theory posits affect as a significant means by which this moving and affecting happens (McCormack 2006). Affect, whilst contested in its definition, is most broadly understood in non-representational theory as a capacity; a body's innate capacity to be moved and affected, as well as to move and affect other bodies (human and non-human) (Vannini 2015b, 9). Within this definition are several characteristics: that affect sits within and between bodies and is not limited or localised to personal experience (Thrift 2007, 18), and in this sense is transpersonal; that, aligned with non-representational theory's interest in the non-cognate realms of experience, it is precognitive and unconscious (Massumi 2015). While described by affect theory scholars like Brian Massumi as the "feeling of having a feeling" (2015, 10), it is not an emotion which in affect theory debates are generally (though not unanimously) understood as linguistically coded understandings fixed in place – anger, sadness, nostalgia, excitement, and so on (Vannini 2015b, 9). Lastly, affect is understood as a dynamic process – it is something that happens in the interaction between bodies, and in this sense is on the move, in flux and changing, in opposition to being stable and static. Affect theory has developed in many different directions of inquiry and debate from these underlying principles/premises to exist as its own distinct body of philosophical thought[6].

At the heart of both non-representational theory and affect theory traditions is a dissatisfaction with the discrepancies between the fluid, conflictual and relational nature of social reality and the conscious, stable and fixed terms in which traditional social theory describes it. The discrepancy between the experience of the world and the way that it is

[6] Given the closely interlinked concerns of non-representational theory and affect theory, discussion of non-representational theory necessitates touching on affect. While I have approached affect theory through the issues of non-representational theory (the latter being much more central to the research's interests), I acknowledge that affect theory exists as its own distinct and influential field of scholarship, the full scope of which is beyond the constraints and concerns of the research.

explained in dominant modes of social research practice has been the motivating force behind them. The work to be done has been to find ways of moving out of this impasse, of what affect sociologist Ashley Barnwell (2016) calls the positioning of, "the critical, structural forms of attention assigned to the critic on one side and the affective, dynamic attentions that animate everyday life on the other" (10). While the discussion of this has constituted much of the field of non-representational and more-than-representational theory, it has also taken place outside of geographical debates. Various authors have approached this binary of "the world"/social theory in innovative ways, and here I discuss a few to contextualise the argument I make below; that efforts of moving beyond this impasse are focused on theoretical/conceptual innovations at the expense of an authentic empirical engagement with the world. Barnwell approaches this predicament by repositioning critical forms of social theorising outside of the closed terms in which non-representational theory and affect theory frame it. Barnwell argues that social theory critique can, when practised in particular forms, be just as creative and inventive as some of the other more unorthodox forms of research practice that non-representational and affect theory propose. Further, the suspicious ideologies that underpin critique might be the most appropriate and accurate response to reflect a current modernity that is characterised by precarity, injustice and paranoia. For Barnwell, opening up social theory critique as a more creative form of research practice is the way forward in addressing the above-mentioned gridlock of the fixtures of existing social theory and the conflictual vitality of the experience of everyday life.

Others (Sedgwick 1997; Latour 2010; Edensor 2010) have focused their attention on innovative research methods/strategies, like Stephen Muecke (2010), who advocates what he terms fictocriticism, a method that combines both critical and fictive elements that he argues "is organised around flows and coagulations of thoughts and feelings," in contrast to "traditional sociological texts" (2010, 1). Affect theorist Anderson argues for, "a specific practice of critique [that] can sit alongside and complement speculation and description as ways of relating to affective life" (2016, 19). However, nowhere has seen more discussion and debate on the methodological manoeuvres required to address a relational and fluid reality than within the fields of non-representational and more-than-representational theory. As noted by Dowling et al. (2018, 780), since Lorimer's (2005) treatise for the utility of the term "more-than-representational theory", widespread intersections of qualitative

research and non-representational thinking have proliferated. Broadly united by an emphasis on what Dowling et al. (2018) refer to as the non-visible, the non-verbal and the non-obvious, these methodological intersections have focused upon experimentations with the boundaries of research, representation and knowledge making (Last 2012). This has seen methodological interest in visual realms such as video (Laurier 2016), photography (Gorman-Murray 2020) and drawing (Brice 2017), in innovative textual techniques such as that of fictional vignettes (Rabbiosi and Vanolo 2017) and in multi-sensory research methods (Henshaw 2013; Law 2013) to name but a few. As Vannini (2015b) comments, however, within non-representational and affect theory practice, approaches to moving beyond the impasse of an indeterminate and relational social life and the strictures of theory – be they reconceptualising critique as Barnwell (2016) explicates above, or inventing new forms of research methods better attuned to an affective and non-representational reality – are geared toward conceptual elaborations and theoretical interventions at the expense of empiricism and "data" (12). In other words, much of the work of non-representational and affect theories lack a grounding in, and authentic engagement with, the very world that they claim to be uniquely attuned to. As Vannini notes of non-representational research contributions: "too few are non-representational research studies in relative comparison to the sheer number of conceptual elaborations and theoretical interventions" (2015b, 12)[7].

## Haunted Research Techniques: Conjuring Social Life and Respecting the Enigma of the Ghost

If non-representational theory and affect theory have a problematic relationship with empiricism and "the world," then the question becomes one of how can the world be written to without either resorting to the representational modes which these movements rail against, or lapsing into the theoretical and conceptual solipsism that Vannini notes above? How can the world be "salvaged" when doing research in a non-representational and affect theory mode? What kinds of evidence can be collected and made without breaking non-representational theoretical frame? In this section I suggest haunted

[7] That said, Vannini's (2015) *Non-Representational Methodologies: Re-envisioning Research*, along with his literature review (2015) of non-representationally informed ethnographies do provide some insight into existing efforts at engaging with empiricism in a non-representational frame.

methodologies and research methods as an approach that can write from the empirical vitality and affective relationality of the world without breaking non-representational and affect modes of theoretical frame.

To contextualise, I would like to begin by telling an illustrative story of my research experience; perhaps you could call it a methodological ghost story. When I began this research, I wanted to write about the haunted and uncanny sensation that the city of Perth has always given rise to for me. Growing up in Perth, wandering its haunts, experiencing its backwaters and eddies in only the way a listless adolescent can in an age before smartphones and social media. I wanted to address the strangeness of the city, the spaces that had run to ruin where traces of the past gave depth to fresh paste-ups from Perth's street artists, the bristling uncanniness of new suburbs and entertainment complexes emerging seemingly overnight and most urgently, as a recent inhabitant of this place, the always present undercurrent of the history of this land and those whose home it has always been. I wanted to write to the experiential milieu that the place of Perth in all of its particularity gives rise to.

I reached for the methods that had been the cornerstone of my undergraduate and Honours research projects; participant observation, unstructured discussion, in-depth interviews, photographic techniques and document analysis. I dove into all of the documents surrounding Brookfield Place, the case study space I had chosen for my research. I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with strategic individuals connected to it, and spent many afternoons occupying its walkways, moving in and out of its multiple entries and exits, sitting in its cafes, striking up conversations with strangers, uncharacteristically visiting its gym to experience aspects of it that I would not otherwise, taking photos of its nooks and crannies; essentially, occupying and inhabiting its movements and textures. I supplemented these with the psychogeographical practice of drifting (Coverley 2006), a research method characterised by the practice of moving through urban landscapes in a way that is attuned to its textured ambience. Rather than following a clear underpinning rationale or directive, the person drifting is drawn by the affective experience of the terrain (Baker 2012). My practice of drifting drew the research out of Brookfield Place and into the wider site of Perth. Drawn to current developments in the inner city like Yagan Square and

Kings Square[8], I participated in art interventions that related to repressed histories and identities of the city, attended seminars and performances in the same vein, and eventually, came to engage with my own history in and experience of Perth as a haunted place as research material. However, when I attempted to write the material amassed from my research methods into an ethnography from which I could contribute analytically to conceptual understandings of Perth and its social experience, I underwent a methodological dilemma. I wanted to articulate the quality of the palimpsest-like and affective encounters of my fieldwork and personal lived experience in Perth, and yet when I attempted to claim a larger significance than the particulars I was working with, the result was a flat ethnography which had the nuanced vitality and relational milieu of the field written out of it. I was methodologically caught between the oppositional drives of attempting to textually show something of the messy and contradictory dynamism of the field on the one (empirical) hand, and contribute analytically to hermeneutic conceptual understandings of "the world" on the other (theoretical) one. I re-oriented my textual ethnographic focus; rather than trying to abstract the particulars of the field and my lived experience into reifying generalisations, I instead began to write to their affective specificity. I edited out the segues that lead to analysis, I cut down the context, and I moved away from any attempt to critically discuss the specifics which I was writing[9]. I stripped back the prose to its briefest, most affective articulation of the material gathered by my research methods, and in doing so produced vignettes, or what I refer to in the thesis as ethnographic fragments.

At this point I want to canvass some of the issues that are enfolded in my methodological ghost story to contextualise the approach and research methods I discuss below. I wanted to work with the grubbiness of the field and of "the world," the way that Anderson and Harrison (2016, 6) discuss as a pushback to representation's argument that if the world is a text, then how come it feels "really real." I wanted to textually capture the "how" rather than fixate on the "what" of my fieldwork in Perth – the layering of instantaneous moments of experience that were ongoing and unfinished, that were as often precognitive as they were conscious, that were contradictory and inchoate in nature; a palimpsest that shifted and re-layered in response to the specifics of given provocation and

[8] These redevelopments feature public art and namesake references to Perth's historical Indigenous figures and culture.

[9] I do, however, discuss the specifics of the ethnographic fragments in the latter half of the empirical chapters. The final section of this chapter provides an in-depth explication of the methodology behind this manoeuvre.

stimuli. While non-representational and affect theory offered conceptual frames by which to theoretically engage with this quality of experience, the research methods proffered by these fields seemed characterised by Vannini's (2015) aforementioned observation of conceptual solipsism rather than an authentic grounding and empirical engagement with the world. And yet, adhering to the traditional ethnographic practice of abstracting the particulars of the field to contribute to social theory – geared as it is toward understanding the world in fixed, stable and universal terms – bypassed the nuanced open-endedness and vitality of the field. Gordon (1997) notes that, "knowing ghosts often shows up not as professional success, but as failure: the one whose writing/not writing only came together as she came together with the object, with the realities of fictions and the unreality of the facts" (22). In my case, as I will explicate in greater depth further along in the chapter, accepting the failure of my ethnographic approach to convincingly articulate the indeterminacy of an open-ended and ambiguous experience of the world meant coming together with a methodology and research strategy which valued uncertainty. As geographers Julian Holloway and James Kneale (2008) state, "if haunting is associated with uncertainty, hesitancy and the uncanny, then it also represents an opportunity to understand and come to terms with mystery" (300). I argue that due to haunting's attunement to spectral indeterminacy and inarticulacy as "a constituent element of modern life" (Gordon 1997, 7), research methodologies and techniques in the spectrality studies space are uniquely positioned to write from the empiricism of a plural and open-ended reality. To this end, below I contextualise my use of a haunted research methodology for the empirical chapters of this thesis by discussing Gordon's (1997) haunted research technique of "conjuring," before moving on to works by Biehl (2013), Abu-Lughod (1991) and Stewart (2007) as authors who I argue enact the haunted research strategies proposed by Gordon in their ethnographies.

I begin with Gordon (1997) and her notion of "conjuring" as a useful methodological tool for addressing the tension between empiricism and social theory. Gordon is innately dissatisfied with the forms of inquiry wielded by the social sciences to apprehend what she understands as the inchoate, conflictual and fluid nature of a haunted social life. Gordon explicates,

> Bloodless categories, narrow notions of the visible and the empirical, professional standards of indifference, institutional rules of distance and

> control, barely speakable fears of losing the footing that enables us to speak authoritatively and with greater value than anyone else who might... Our methods have thus far been less than satisfactory for addressing the very nature of the things and the problems it is our responsibility to address... Sociology, in particular, has an extraordinary mandate as far as academic disciplines go: to conjure up social life. Conjuring is a particular form of calling up and calling out the forces that make things what they are in order to fix and transform a troubling situation. As a mode of apprehension and reformation, conjuring merges the analytical, the procedural, the imaginative, and the effervescent. But we have more to learn about how to conjure in an evocative and compelling way. If haunting is a constitutive feature of social life, then we will need to be able to describe, analyze, and bring to life that aspect of social life, to be less fearful of animation...we do not usually experience things, nor are affects produced, in the rational and objective ways our terms tend to portray them. The counterpart to reification, the conjuring trick, might be better captured by Walter Benjamin's profane illumination or Marx's sensuous knowledge. Of course, the tricky thing is that scholars too are subject to these same dynamics of haunting: ghosts get in our matters just as well. This means that we will have to learn to talk to and listen to ghosts, rather than banish them, as the precondition for establishing our scientific or humanistic knowledge. (21-23)

Here, Gordon addresses the problematic relationship between what she sees as how the world actually is (haunted), and the inability of social science's rhetoric of abstraction and reifying generalisations to apprehend it; specifically, the affective experience of it. From Gordon's perspective, being able to apprehend and communicate the experience of a haunted social life would make for a far more effective means to address sociological issues than what she describes as the "bloodless categories" of analytical critique. If the work to be done is to move away from explaining social life and instead towards animating its affective experience, then Gordon's notion of conjuring is the methodological means by which she proposes this might be accomplished. As a "counterpart to reification," conjuring social life is about better animating how "the pieces of a world… littered all over a sociological

landscape (D. Smith 1987: 99) affect people," which is not in the, "rational and objective ways our terms tend to portray them" (23). If reason and objectivity are not the means by which to best conjure social life, the question arises of: then what is?

I now turn to the ethnographies and ethnographic analysis of anthropologists Biehl (2013), Stewart (2007) and Abu-Lughod (1991) as methodological means by which to better enact Gordon's conjuring trick of animating the experience of haunted life. Historically entangled in the social science's, and particularly in anthropology's, practice of fieldwork, ethnography and its research methods of participant observation, interviews and unstructured discussion (to name just a few) are inherently empirical by nature. Beginning from the field, the practice of ethnography is emic (Vannini 2015a, 22), in that it arises from the world, before the material to be found there is (in traditional forms of ethnography) synthesised to form foundational explanations behind the apparent surface of social phenomena (Archetti 1994). In its rootedness in the field and the evidence to be found there, I aver ethnography is well positioned to operate as a methodological means by which to tether the conceptual and theoretical tendencies of non-representational theory and affect theory to "the world" and the empirical whilst enacting Gordon's conjuring trick of animating the experience of a haunted social life. To contextualise, a brief critical explanation of the field of ethnography is required. Whilst traditional ethnography adheres to Archetti's (1994) definition of forming foundational explanations behind the surface of social phenomena, in this chapter I have consciously engaged with ethnographic authors and critics who work in a non-representational and affect theory mode. This means that rather than feeding the open-ended and plural material of the field into the stable categories of universalising theory (Biehl 2013), the emphasis is on writing to the open-endedness and plurality of the field. This theme, with its tension of an inchoate and conflictual empirical versus the stable hermeneutics of traditional social theory, informs the ethnographic works with which I engage. I will begin with the provocations of Biehl (2013), who posits ethnography as uniquely able to enact Gordon's (1997) conjuring trick of animating a relational and conflictual social reality, before moving to the works of Abu-Lughod (1991) and Stewart (2007) who I regard as refining Biehl's arguments to form specific textual research methods that better conjure the haunted experience of social life.

Biehl (2013) sees ethnography as uniquely positioned to enact the conjuring trick Gordon explicates above. For Biehl, the relationship between ethnography and theory is a

problematic one, resting as it does on the oppositional drives of ethnographically showing something of the messy, contradictory and nuanced vitality of the field, whilst also contributing analytically to conceptual understandings of the world. In his *Ethnography in the Way of Theory* (2013), Biehl conceptualises ethnography as occupying a unique position to speak to the unresolved, on-going plurality of the world, a "way of staying connected to open-ended, even mysterious, social processes and uncertainties – a way of counter-balancing the generation of certainties and foreclosures by other disciplines" (590). In understanding ethnography as particularly able to speak to the unbounded heterogeneities of the world and the open-ended, unfinished aspects of participant's lives, Biehl frames ethnography as specially positioned to talk back to the overdetermined and abstractionist tendencies of social science theory. Pushing back at the notion of ethnography as serving up the "data" to form theory, Biehl instead formulates ethnography as "in the way of (instead of to) theory," whereby ethnography,

> aims at keeping interrelatedness, precariousness, uncertainty, and curiosity in focus. In resisting synthetic ends and making openings rather than absolute truths, ethnographic practice allows for an emancipatory reflexivity and for a more empowering critique of the rationalities, interventions, and moral issues of our times. (575).

Biehl proposes ethnography as a way of writing away from the absolute truths and foreclosures of traditional social theory that is more able to show how a haunted social life is beset with uncertainty, interrelatedness and contradictions. Gordon and Biehl concur that to do so is to enact a more powerful engagement with the types of issues from which the social sciences arise, or in Gordon's words, "the problems it is our responsibility to address" (21).

If ethnography is specially positioned to conjure social life by animating its open-ended plurality, the question arises of textually how. While Biehl focuses on ethnography's propensity to talk to the unbounded experience of social life and push back at abstractionist theory, Abu-Lughod (1991) gets specific with the ethnographic textual strategies by which to animate Gordon's above mentioned provocation. In her seminal "Writing Against Culture" (1991), published in the wake of James Clifford and George E. Marcus' *Writing Culture* (1986), Abu-Lughod picks up on the tension between the complexity of the reality of social life and the simplistic stability of social theory by taking umbridge with what she sees as the

politics of the very notion of culture. Abu-Lughod argues that the idea of a people's thoughts, beliefs and practices guided by a shared and homogenous worldview smooths over differences of opinion, conflicting beliefs and changing motivations and circumstances, working to freeze people in time and place and representing their communities as static and discrete (56).

In its place, Abu-Lughod argues for a textual strategy she terms ethnographies of the particular, whereby telling stories about particular individuals in time and place shows how, "individuals are confronted with choices, struggle with others, make conflicting statements, argue about points of view on the same events, undergo ups and downs in various relationships and changes in their circumstances and desires, face new pressures, and fail to predict what will happen to them or those around them" (57). For Abu-Lughod, writing to the particularity of people's experience, in its conflictual, contradictory and unfixed plurality, "would explain how social life proceeds," rather than "generalisations... to support the essentialised notion of cultures different from ours" (59). There are two elements of this statement that I would like to draw out. The first is that by focusing on the specifics of people's lives, Abu-Lughod positions "how social life proceeds" as the locus of theorisation rather than the analytical explication of those particulars. By shifting her theoretical emphasis to the conjuring of social life, Abu-Lughod dissipates the tension of engaging with a nuanced and conflictual social reality whilst finding something larger to (theoretically) say about how the world works. If Biehl positions ethnography as in the way of social theory, Abu-Lughod proposes a form of theorising that is in the direction of ethnography. The second point is that Abu-Lughod introduces an ethical element in writing away from generalisations; by fixing and stabilising social life in order to make abstractions from it, to treat it as coherent and rational, is to deny people the same complexity researchers experience in their own arts of living. This is reinforced by Gordon who states that writing over the ways in which "people (albeit in specific forms whose specificity is sometimes everything) remember and forget, are beset by contradiction, and recognise and misrecognise themselves and others" (4) is to deny them "complex personhood" (5). As she explicates,

> even those who live in the most dire circumstances possess a complex and oftentimes contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing them as victims or, on the other hand, as

> superhuman agents. It has always baffled me why those most interested in understanding and changing the barbaric domination that characterises our modernity often – not always – withhold from the people they are the most concerned with the right to complex personhood. (4)

While Abu-Lughod is wary of the pitfalls of this position, of masking, "the persistence of systematic social difference" and refusing to "understand how we as subjects are constructed in discourses attached to power" (57), she argues that what is shared is that life is lived in the particular, which is "not to say that for any of us the particulars are the same" (57). From this perspective, if ethnography can conjure social life, then the most ethical and accurate way of doing so is to animate how it is experienced in the particular.

In her volume *Ordinary Affects* (2007), Stewart picks up on Abu-Lughod's (1991, 57) ethnographies of the particular to take a textually innovative approach to the conundrum of writing from (and to) the empirical vitality and affective relationality of the world without breaking non-representational and affect theoretical frame. Stewart takes Abu-Lughod's textual strategy of particularity as a site of theorising "how social life proceeds," or in Gordon's (1997) lexicon, the conjuring of social life, and refines the form of how this might textually look on the page. Comprised of two parts, *Ordinary Affects* lays the groundwork of its scholarly register in a brief critical introduction before diving into the guts of the volume, a mosaic of 115 ethnographic fragments ranging from four lines to several pages in length. Full of specific short scenes and event descriptions that cleave to Stewart's promise to attend to the "concrete," the fragments flesh out memoir-like anecdotes from the banal stuff of everyday life – a trip to the grocery store, overheard conversations in a roadhouse, neighbours observed while walking the dog. The fragments are specific, pared of context and cut straight to the affective heart of a scene. While many are redolent with material that index the type of political abstractions that are the bread and butter of social science theory (such as the neo-liberal, gendered, racially politicised place and time in which *Ordinary Affects* is set), Stewart does not make the leap to generalise the specifics of the scenes she writes.

With the exception of a brief seven-page Introduction, *Ordinary Affects* is solely comprised of the ethnographic fragments that characterise its pages. With no discrete sections to explicate the larger themes of her ethnography or spell out the research methods employed, Stewart's mosaic of ethnographic fragments are intended to speak of,

and for themselves. Here Stewart's fragments, their affective performance of how it is to be in the world, of specific, inabstractable everyday events, become a type of theorising. They inhabit the open-ended relationality of experience in a North American present, theorising how it is that people undergo the contingent and continuous process of forming themselves in this particular time and place; (conjuring) how social life proceeds. In this sense, Stewart's ethnography functions as both evidence or "data" and theory at the same time. Without ever abstracting the specifics of the affective experiences she writes to Gordon's (1997, 21) "bloodless categories" of grand social theory. If Stewart militantly adheres to the specifics of her more autobiographical and event-focused fragments, she does generalise on the nature of how affective experience might operate. This can be seen in the different types of fragments that populate Stewart's volume; while a large proportion exemplify the aforementioned specific, autobiographical events, others are shot through with meditations on the operative quality of affects,

> The potential stored in ordinary things is a network of transfers and relays. Fleeting and amorphous, it lives as a residue or resonance in an emergent assemblage of disparate forms and realms of life.
>
> Yet it can be as palpable as a physical trace.
>
> Potentiality is a thing immanent to fragments of sensory experience and dreams of presence. A layer, or layering to the ordinary, it engenders attachments or systems of investment in the unfolding of things. (21)

Here, Stewart generalises on the behaviour of affects; they are a "network of transfers and relays," and "fleeting and amorphous" while also engendering "systems of investment in the unfolding of things" (21). In her generalising on the behaviour of affective experience, Stewart further positions her ethnographic fragments as a form of social theorising, both performing the particularity of a haunted social life and generalising not on those specifics, but on the modes and forms through which they occur. I argue that this is a fine-tuning of Abu-Lughod's (1991, 57) textual strategy of ethnographies of the particular to not only enact the conjuring of how social life proceeds through her specific autobiographic and event-focused fragments, but also by making broader comment on the forms by which they happen. By placing her theoretical emphasis not on explaining social life, but on the "how" of how it is experienced, Stewart sidesteps the inherent tension of how to write to the

messy complexity of a haunted sociality without running over its nuanced vitality with the rhetoric of abstraction that underpins traditional social theory.

Whilst Abu-Lughod (1991) and Gordon (1997) self-consciously discuss their methodological techniques of ethnographies of the particular and conjuring, Stewart refrains from explicating her ethnography as research method. However, the odd dropped phrase throughout *Ordinary Affects* and her oeuvre at large gives insight into how Stewart conceptualises her fragmentary prose as research method, a tool with which to "open the conventions of academic argument to the generativity and volatility of life as such, to its capacity to actively shift or harden into forms of peace or violence, pleasure and pain, collectivities or chaos" (2017, 196). In the volume's introduction, Stewart posits that, "My effort here is not to finally 'know' them [affects]– to collect them into a good enough story of what's going on – but to fashion some form of address that is adequate to their form; to find something to say about ordinary affects by performing some of the intensity and texture that makes them habitable and animate" (4). The concrete, detailed and experiential craftsmanship of Stewart's prose, her ability to create scenes which perform the texture of everyday affective experience rather than explain it, are strategic in generating a form of ethnography that can access the ways and means through which Stewart proposes people experience an inchoate and open-ended sociality. In this sense, decisions around the practical details of writing such as which tense, point of view and perspective to use become scholarly. Similarly, decisions such as utilising the fragmentary form, as an always incomplete and irresolvable structure (Barnwell 2016), for the volume's ethnography align with Stewart's drive to create a form of scholarship that redresses her understanding of the flattening effects of social theory critique, "bottom-line arguments about 'bigger' structures and underlying causes that obscure the ways in which a reeling present is composed out of heterogeneous and noncoherent singularities" (4). This drive to flesh out and animate the embodied experience of the "volatility of life as such" (2017, 193), in contrast to "models of thinking that slide over the live surface of difference at work in the ordinary" (4), employs Abu-Lughod's (1991, 57) ethnographies of the particular to enact Gordon's conjuring of social life. By "find[ing] something to say about ordinary affects by performing some of their intensity and texture... as heterogenous and noncoherent singularities" (2007, 3), Stewart is animating the form of how she believes social life is experienced.

At this point I want to return to some of the questions with which I opened this section; if a haunted social life, in its uncertain, ambiguous and heterogenous bloom, is a given, then what would research methods aligned with this reality look like? How can social researchers gather evidence without breaking hauntological frame? While there are many avenues these prompts can be taken down, I want to focus on what I frame as Stewart's research method of indeterminacy/ inexplicability. In the quote which opens this section, Gordon (1997) advocates learning to talk and listen to ghosts (23) as a methodological approach by which to better write to a haunted social life. As Holloway and Kneale (2008) note, however, "making sense of haunting denies it the enchanting charge that probably provoked our interest in it in the first place. So we want to suggest that in our investigations into haunting… we should also stop short of making ghosts make sense" (300). I contend that listening to ghosts is not just about getting them to talk; it is also about respecting their silence and enigma. Stewart enacts this methodological approach of the enigmatic in several ways. Whilst she generalises on the operative nature of affects, she pulls back from definitively outlining what they are,

> The ordinary is a circuit that's always tuned in to some little something somewhere. A mode of attending to the possible and the threatening, it amasses the resonance in things. It flows through clichés of the self, agency, home, a life. It pops up as a dream. Or it shows up in the middle of a derailing. Or in a simple pause. It can take off in flights of fancy or go limp, tired, done for now. It can pool up in little worlds of identity and desire. It can draw danger. Or it can dissipate, leaving you standing. (2007, 12)

Stewart slips around inside-out defining what her sense of affect is; it is referred to as a "something," or conveyed in long lists of how it might manifest in everyday experience. It is left amorphous, inarticulatable and indeterminate, something that can be gestured at but never caught, pinned down, and known. Stewart's sideways-glancing prose, her refusal to flat-out explain her business is typical of her refusal to undertake any type of meta-discussion of her process, or discuss her approach to the tension inherent in making alternative forms of scholarship within a scholarly context. Rather, her readership are positioned to fill in Stewart's blanks, to account for her decisions and imagine her rationale, and in doing so induce the realisation that they are enacting precisely the kind of critique and evaluative control that *Ordinary Affects* pushes against. Similarly, Stewart pulls back

from textually fleshing out the context and implications of the more memoir-like fragments that she writes. As anthropologist Michael Jackson notes in his review (2008) of *Ordinary Affects* (2007),

> Stewart's "postcards from the edge" deliberately go nowhere, even though they all convey a sense of occurring somewhere, to someone, and somehow changing the way things are... This inconclusiveness may irk some readers – her "lucid indifference" as Camus said, speaking of his own "objective" style. Many of her reflections and anecdotes end carelessly, casually, ambivalently. (573)

What Jackson is referring to is Stewart's predilection to describe a politically fraught encounter, and at the moment of tension, rather than examine its on-flow in the way a scholar or novelist might, instead cut to the next ethnographic fragment. While Jackson notes that this inconclusiveness could be read as careless or ambivalent, I argue that in working to conjure social life, Stewart respects the enigma of the ghost by animating the way that haunted experience unfolds in cryptic, mysterious affects that do not arrive with pre-packaged meta-awareness (Holloway and Kneale 2008). In performing social life's affective inexplicability, Stewart confers respect to the ghost's enigma, rather than asking it to explain itself.

**A Haunted Methodological Approach**

In approaching my empirical chapters I have attempted to conjure the haunted experiences of Perth, and I have also abstracted the particulars to say larger things about both haunting as a concept, and Perth as a place. While this last point may appear to run against this chapter's emphasis on non-representational and affect theory frames of knowing, I aver that in working with haunting as the underlying conceptual foundation of this thesis, hard and fast lines such as a binary of mainstream social science research approaches versus non-representational and affect theory methodologies become arbitrary.

To open up the significance of this position to the empirical chapters of this thesis, I turn to geographer Alan Latham's (2003) provocation on the state of "doing" non-representational and affect theory informed research,

> I want to suggest that, rather than ditching the methodological skills that human geography has so painfully accumulated, we should work through how we can imbue traditional research methodologies with a sense of the creative, the practical, and being with practice-ness that Thrift is seeking. Pushed in the appropriate direction there is no reason why these methods cannot be made to dance a little. (200)

Unlike the original calls of non-representational theory's proponents to radically reconfigure research methods and methodologies (see Thrift 2007; 2000a; 2000b), for the empirical chapters of this thesis (Chapters 3 and 4) I have taken on Latham's call to make traditional research methodologies "dance a little." Returning to my methodological ghost story I told earlier in this chapter, I began my research project with the traditional research methods of my discipline of anthropology before moving on to more creative and unorthodox methodologies informed by the underpinning premises of non-representational and affect theories. While this progression could be read to mean I practiced Latham's "ditching" of traditional research methods, the methodological stance I have taken in this thesis is that positioning traditional forms of social science research methods on one side and inventive and creative non-representational methodologies on the other runs against haunting's essential nub; the impossibility of replete closure (Holloway and Kneale 2008). Binaries, separations, boundaries; the ghost stands for the permeability of these seemingly watertight divisions. In the practice of this research, a significant amount of the research "data" was gathered using traditional forms of qualitative research methods outlined further along below. At the same time, I also undertook the more unorthodox and creative research methods informed by non-representational and affect theory methodologies, such as drifting (Coverley 2006). Fundamental to the argument of this section, however, is the point that I practiced what I call haunted research strategies in the undertaking and data interpretation of the traditional social science research methods that I used. In other words, for the purposes of this research project, making traditional research methods "dance a little" meant not just practicing new and innovative research methodologies, but imbuing the ghost into the practice of traditional research methods, and the interpretation of the data they gathered. To this end, I have formed the research project's empirical chapters to this position; to both write to the haunted indeterminacy of the world, and to inject some of

that indeterminacy into what I see as the validity of mainstream social science research techniques.

What does this look like on the page? How would I name and discuss these as research methods? The empirical components of this thesis are divided into two chapters that speak to and emphasise the spatiality of haunting: one is focused on a case study space, Brookfield Place (Chapter 3), and the other on the wider site of Perth (Chapter 4). The dominant research methodology I have used in forming these chapters is ethnography, along with its suite of traditional qualitative research methods, but I have imbued them with what I term the haunted research strategies of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost.

Before I discuss my practice of these haunted research strategies, I would like to give scope to the traditional research methods used in gathering the "data" which I apply these haunted research strategies to. In line with the traditional ethnographic practice of participant observation, I spent large swathes of time inhabiting my case study space, Brookfield Place, as a consumer, drifter, photographer and citizen of the city to gain a depth of insight into its sense of place. To draw out the dimensions of the case study space that spoke to it as a haunted place, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with three strategic individuals attached to the lifespan of the case study space from my initial interest in it as a vacant lot to its redevelopment as Brookfield Place. The first interviewee, Matej Andraž Vogrinčič, is an artist who was contracted by the Perth Awesome Festival to create a work for the festival's 2003 programming. Drawn by the space in its time as a vacant lot, he selected it as a venue to create a site-specific installation for the festival. The second interviewee is urban photographer and blogger James Nichols, who has kept a visual diary of the space over its lifespan from a vacant lot to its redevelopment into Brookfield Place. The third interviewee, Carolyn Karnovsky, is a curator from arts and cultural organisation FORM, and was responsible for overseeing the development and curatorship of Brookfield Place's public art pieces and place-making program. To help texture my understanding of Matej's experience of what in Chapter 3 I discuss as the haunted indeterminacy of the site, I also undertook unstructured discussions and email communication with an Awesome Festival staff member and two volunteers who worked on Matej's art installation.

The case study space generated a large amount of secondary data from its time as a vacant lot to its redevelopment as Brookfield Place, which I examined using the research

method of document analysis for relevance to the various ways in which the site of Brookfield Place has been characterised by the indeterminate nature of haunted space. The documents include media representations from its time as a vacant lot, promotional text and images as part of its marketing campaign in its transition into Brookfield Place, heritage reports of the site prior to its redevelopment, plus interviews, reviews, written audience responses and program catalogue documentation as part of the site-specific art installation by Matej. To gain insight into the histories of Brookfield Place that haunt its branding as a site of heritage, I liaised with an archivist (who remains anonymous) from Western Australia's State Archives Collection for historical material relating to the site. For further information on the spectral pasts beyond the potted history presented by Brookfield Place's marketing, I worked through the back issues of one of Perth colony's earliest and most popular newspapers, *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, established in 1833, for historical mention of the site and city surrounds[10]. I also accessed the Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System for culturally approved, publicly available Whadjuk knowledge of the site and its surrounds. These traditional research methods were supplemented by the more creative and unorthodox research method of psychogeographical drifting (Coverley 2006), as well as accessing my personal autobiographical lived experience of growing up and residing in the place of Perth.

In my practice of interpreting and textually representing the material gathered through the above-mentioned traditional research methods, I practiced the haunted research strategies of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost. My practice of "conjuring" is informed by the earlier discussion of Gordon (1997), Biehl (2013), Abu-Lughod (1991) and Stewart's (2007; 2017) drive to better animate the how of how social life is experienced as an alternative and more effective means of engaging with sociological issues than the flattening critical practices of grand social theory. To conjure the haunted experience of social reality in Perth, I have used textual strategies to bring to life the way that personhood in the place of Perth is experienced in the particular, in unfinished and paradoxical terms, and in a layering of instantaneous moments that are contingent and relational.

[10] For instance, the March 1883 issue of this publication details a ceremony held in the city centre by Perth's Whadjuk community and visitors from the Minang people in Albany. Attended by, "an overflowing audience," where, "Yagan was the master of the ceremonies, and acquitted himself with infinite dignity and grace," the article indexes a vital past of Perth's legacy of empire.

Like Kathleen Stewart (2007; 2011; 2012), I have produced ethnographic fragments as a textual form that best speaks to the heterogenous and palimpsest-like experience of social life. These play an important role in the form and structure of the empirical chapters that follow, which I discuss in more detail at the end of this section. With five ethnographic fragments in Chapter 3 and nine in Chapter 4, the process of selecting which of the many fragments written to include and which to omit was informed by how they spoke to the salient themes of the research: the quality of haunted experience and its imprint on subjecthood in the particular place of Perth; the legacy of Perth's colonial context in its overt and diffused forms; and the radical indeterminacy of haunted space. Cutting between scenes from the fieldwork of my research, moments from my childhood and adolescence growing up in Perth and encounters on the streets of Perth city, the form of ethnographic fragment is intended to perform how the experience of the place of Perth is a shifting and layered affair that does not lend itself to coherence, stability or logic, and is, above all, relational. In the writing of the fragments, performing the particularity and texture of the events, encounters and happenings that they describe become crucial in conveying their affective experience. For this reason, the style and tone of prose I use in the fragments is consciously intimate and colloquial in contrast to the more academic style of writing throughout the rest of the thesis. I use the first-person point of view to animate the immediacy of the experience, and in crafting the sentences of the ethnographic fragments, I follow the often truncated and grammatically incorrect rhythms of thought and speech rather than working to form correct syntax.

Further, in writing the experiences that form the ethnographic fragments, I practice the haunted research technique of respecting the enigma of the ghost. Haunted experiences do not come with self-conscious awareness and ready-made analysis of their meaning; rather, they are enigmatic, cryptic and mysterious (Edensor 2005, Holloway and Kneale 2008). If conjuring the experience of a haunted social life means more accurately animating how it unfolds, then following Holloway and Kneale's (2008) provocation that we should, "stop short of making ghosts make sense" (300, 1), I do not attempt to critically unpack or analyse within the ethnographic fragments. Pared of context, stripped back of analysis, and edited down to their briefest and most affective articulation, they are intended to perform the "how" of the experience of personhood, not explain it. This means that they might appear unfinished, or characterised by what Jackson (2008) refers to of Stewart's 2007

ethnography as “aggressive understatement” (573), yet if the point is to better conjure the experience of social life then that includes conveying its enigmatic and inexplicable quality rather attempting to explicate it.

In moving beyond an impasse of traditional research methods on one side and inventive and creative non-representational methodologies on the other, in the empirical chapters of this thesis I have not “ditched” (Latham 2003, 200) the social science research practice of abstracting the particulars of the field to say larger things about how “the world” works. While within the ethnographic fragments the modus is to conjure the experience of a haunted social life in the place of Perth, and thus I do not enact any form of analysis within them. In the latter half of the empirical chapters I explicate the content referenced in the fragments to make larger claims about the spatiality of haunting and the place of Perth. Thus the structure of the empirical chapters begins with contextualising the “placeness” of Brookfield Place and Perth, before moving on to their ethnographic fragments, and finishing with discussion which draws from the content of the fragments. Returning to this chapter’s critique of non-representational and affect theory’s reluctant relationship with empiricism and “the world,” by using haunted research strategies to engage with an understanding of social life as relational and in-flux as well as employing traditional research methods geared toward grappling with the empirical, Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis are intended as an example of research that operates in a non-representational and affect theory frame that is empirically based. In this way, these chapters respond to Vannini’s (2015b, 12) critique of the dearth of empirical non-representational research. While the fact that I do work from my fragments to make larger claims about the spatiality of haunting and the place of Perth could be seen as “breaking frame,” I argue that in employing haunting as this thesis’ conceptual touchstone, closed and determined statements about the invalidity of traditional research practices lose their ground. If, as theorisations of haunting insist, nothing can exist as an intact and replete closure, then shunning mainstream forms of social science research practice in favour of completely new and different methodologies is beside the point. Rather, the question should be one of examining how the ghost can be co-opted into traditional social science practice to open up its predilection to certainty and foreclosure to the ongoing plurality of the world. This is the position that informs the following two chapters that examine the spatiality of haunting in Brookfield Place and wider Perth.

# Chapter 3

# Brookfield Place

I would like to open this chapter with the thought that haunting is always unfinished, in-process and relational. Perhaps the best way to introduce the relevance of this statement is with Jorge Luis Borges' short story, "On Exactitude in Science" (1998). It tells the tale of a guild of cartographers who are unhappy with the precision of the maps of their empire (325). They decide to draft a new map, one which matches the exact scale of the empire from end to end. After many years, the cartographers' successors eventually abandon the impractical project, where its only use is as a tattered shelter for "beasts and beggards" in the western deserts (325). Borges' empire-scale map speaks of a desire to organise the world into a coherent model, to iron out the messy complexity of a reality fraught with contradictions and conundrums. The more Borges' cartographers attempt to resolve their project's lapses and anomalies, the larger and more unmanageable the model grows; all attempts at seamlessness inevitably generate more gaps, sutures and omissions. These same omissions, however, provide several openings and opportunities. One is that they can be read to say something about the systems that create them. Of most interest to this chapter are the unique opportunities afforded by their indeterminate and in-between nature: existing outside of the regulatory systems that generate them, they provide home and shelter for other aspects that similarly exist as out-of-place. In Borges' "empire," his beasts and beggards are in-between bodies inhabiting an in-between space, taking shelter with the very relics of the cartographers' impossible dream of total order.

This chapter examines these ideas in the "empire" of Perth city. Specifically, the case-study of Brookfield Place in the city centre of Perth. In important ways, the site of Brookfield Place exemplifies the "lapse" in empire I discuss in Borges' story; for over twenty years it existed as a very large derelict vacant lot in the heart of Perth's central business district, an anomaly in the regulated and organised landscape of inner-city Perth. Although the site attracted the ire of local media, who frequently referred to it in such terms as a "blight on the city" (Thomas 2011), it also appealed to artists, street photographers and urban drifters like myself. Now in-filled with a high-end corporate development, in this chapter I examine how Brookfield Place is haunted by not just its time as a ruinous hole-in-

the-ground, but equally by artistic attempts to embrace the indeterminacy and ambiguity of its status as an "in-between" space.

In this chapter I employ the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost in the form of ethnographic fragments, along with the more traditional practice of critical analysis, to address this research project's aim of uncovering what an emphasis on the spatial dimensions of haunting can yield. My investigation of the site of Brookfield Place reveals that the radical indeterminacy of the spectral renders place as far more in-flux, unstable and in-process than previously theorised in the literature on haunting. I examine how the ghost's insistence on the indeterminacy of place plays out in the site now occupied by Brookfield Place in two ways. The first is to do with the established vein of spectrality literature that examines the ghost's ability to disrupt authoritarian attempts to shape the spatialisation of the past in cities, most prominently discussed in the literature by de Certeau (2014, Jonker and Till (2009) and Edensor (2005). The second is to do with the converse: how artistic attempts at embracing the multitudinous and indeterminate nature of spectral space are still marked by the (albeit different) gaps, omissions and sutures that haunt the aforementioned efforts to control spectral space. Though these two lines of inquiry appear oppositional (the first to do with controlling the spectral and the latter with embracing it), they arrive at the same conceptual endpoint: the endlessly irresolvable nature of haunting, forever marked by multiplicity and open-endedness. This has several important implications for scholarship on spectral geographies, which I discuss in more length in Chapter 4. To get there first necessitates a working through of how the space that Brookfield Place now occupies is characterised by the radical indeterminacy of the ghost.

Before delving into the case study of Brookfield Place, I would like to first make a note on the unorthodox layout of this chapter. In Chapter 2 I argue that novel forms of scholarship are required to apprehend the type of ambiguous and indeterminate experience that constitutes a haunted sociality. I also argue for the validity of traditional social science practices, including research methods grounded in empiricism. In this chapter I bring these two positions together by firstly enacting the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost in the form of ethnographic fragments, which draw from the amassed material evidence of my ethnographic research, as well as the psychogeographic research method of drifting and my own personal experience of having

lived the majority of my childhood, adolescence and adult years in the place of Perth. Within the fragments the intention is to conjure the haunted dimensions of the site of Brookfield Place, and in the subsequent section I employ the more traditional social science practice of analysis and explicate the content of the fragments to make the point that the spectral dimensions of space render the site of Brookfield Place, and place more generally, as far more radically indeterminate than previously theorised. Together, these two research approaches (haunted and traditional) address the methodological aim of investigating not just what novel research techniques are required to apprehend a haunted sociality of place, but also how the indeterminacy of the ghost can helpfully reframe traditional research epistemologies to better perceive the indeterminacy of the ghost. To arrive at that destination, the layout of this chapter begins with the fieldwork "container" in which I investigate these aims, the site of Brookfield Place. I set the scene by contextualising Brookfield Place as a marketed historical precinct haunted by its legacy of failed capitalism, before enacting the research strategy of ethnographic fragments to engage with the site's haunted atmospherics, and finish with examining how Brookfield Place is characterised by haunting's endless multiplicity and open-endedness discussed above.

**Contextualising Brookfield Place**

*Figure 2. Drifting Through Brookfield Place. Clea Tibbs Johansson.*

I'm standing outside one of the least obvious entries to Brookfield Place, up some stairs from the very bottom end of William Street. For the newcomer to this corner of Perth, you might even wonder if there's anything to be found by following it through to the other side. Its dog-leg shape blocks any views through, and there are no signs or shops. The only hint that there's something of interest is the unusual architecture, drawing the urban drifter's sense of curiosity. To my left is a chain cafe that almost always has a high-noon feel. Grated cheddar cheese and chicken wraps, a drink fridge that sells cheap cartons of iced coffee and big name soft drinks, and a sponsored umbrella – Streets Ice Cream – that shades a few empty aluminium chairs and tables. It's another type of food outlet altogether from the options that walking through this entry opens up to. Yet, it fills a niche. People rarely sit at the table and chairs, but I sometimes buy snacks from here, and others seem to purchase small things, too – chewing gum, a muffin, cold drinks. I imagine they frequent it for much

the same reasons as myself. It's much cheaper than the high-end alternatives that following this entry opens up to.

I take the entry, round the dog-leg and come through to Brookfield Place. The scale and comparative luxury of it all is a surprise after the shabby sidewalks of lower William Street. Contemporary architecture that challenges traditional building aesthetics meets the eye, blended with a number of historical buildings, much of their heritage brick and art-deco design still intact. Criss-crossing between them is a warren of bi-level walkways, giving various entry options to the gourmet eateries, high-end retail choices and art gallery on offer inside the buildings. I amble past the heritage-listed WA Trustee building and Royal Insurance buildings to the right, filled at this time of day with the city's nine to five citizens making their way through a work lunch. The tables are set with silverware and white cloth napkins; the waiters hovering are smartly dressed in crisp white shirts and waistcoats. Meandering past the WA Trustee Building to the right, Brookfield Place's centrepiece heritage building – Newspaper House – sits to the left. Opened in 1933 as the business and printing home of *The West Australian* newspaper, the printing history of this building bleeds into the design choices of the walkways. I take a seat on one of the white concrete block benches that are placed around the building. I can feel ridges through my clothes; glancing down, I notice some quotes embossed into the concrete I'm sitting on (see Figure 4). They are lifted from the very first edition of the *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal,* one of Perth's earliest printed newspapers,

> Strayed Stock. Brought in from the run of the undersigned on the 20'th interval. 1 bay yearling colt, branded off side under saddle (something like S &): with white star in forehead; black points about 14 hands 2 inches high
>
> Notice. For Sale 500 young sheep with an able back run. For particulars apply to the owner William W. Northam, April 18th, 1877.

Still others list the days of the week mail could be expected to be shipped into Geraldton, Perth and Albany. The text invites me to contemplate a time in history where the identifying marks of a yearling bay colt were a routine concern and steam communication along the Western Australian coastline was essential for postal mail.


*Figure 3. Evoking Heritage in Brookfield Place. Clea Tibbs Johansson.*

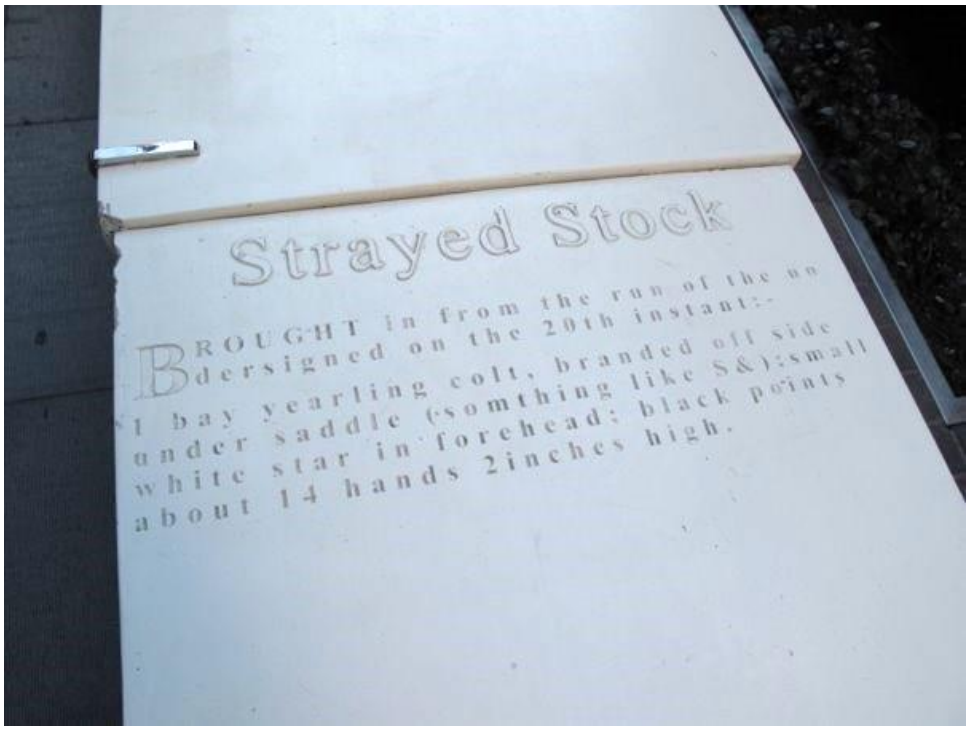


*Figure 4. Embossed Quote from the Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal. Clea Tibbs Johansson.*

Wandering in to Newspaper House itself, there are a number of bar, restaurant and café options that occupy the former printing press hall and annex rooms of the building, named with the building's history in mind; Small Print, Print Hall, The Apple Daily (a popular daily newspaper in Hong Kong). Taking the staircase that connects the building's four levels, I notice that the stairwell is wallpapered with old editions of *The West Australian* newspaper (Figure 5). I pause to look at the dates; the sheets selected are taken from three days within the America's Cup race in Fremantle in 1987. I recall how this was touted as Perth's big moment, the world's attention putting "Perth on the map." As I walk up, the newspaper sheets repeat, echoing Perth's big moment. I pause to consider the advertisements for now-obsolete technology, the absurdly cheap rental prices for river front property, and articles on former Prime Minister Bob Hawke's public appearances and statements.


*Figure 5. Vintage Newspaper Wallpaper in Brookfield Place. Clea Tibbs Johansson.*

As I wander up the staircase and reach the third level of the building, I look down into what used to be called the Machine Room, a cavernous rectangle designed to house the six-unit high speed press and folders that printed the *West Australian* newspaper. Where I'm standing, there was once a mezzanine viewing gallery for the public to see the printing machines at work. I recall the words from one of my participants, Janet, about this hall; "My father took me here as a child so that I could see the press in action. All I can

remember is the noise; you cannot imagine how loud that machine was!" This building and this machine, in particular, has filtered through to literature written on Perth. In his book *Shadow Lines* (2003), author Stephen Kinnane writes about how his grandfather used to work the printing press here. He was a mechanic, and Kinnane noted that even in his grandfather's older years, on pension days, he would rise early, get "dressed in his suit," and "make his way to the Terrace to Newspaper House and descend into the bowels of the printing rooms. He was always warmly welcomed back. They all knew him at the *West* and would take time out... for the old gentleman who seemed never to be able to leave" (374). Now, the hall has been refurbished into an upmarket bar, and its annex room into one of the city's most lauded fine dining options. Where I'm standing, in the former mezzanine gallery, is now a fusion restaurant, "fun Modern-Asian street culture in a bistro setting" is how it's billed. Nested into the gallery walls around me are red-teak look booths, divided by Japanese-style rice-paper blinds. The walls are lined with broadsheets of vintage Chinese newspaper, and neon-lit red hanzi script washes the restaurant's main wall in red light. Wafts of pungent south-east Asian flavours escape the kitchen; the back of my throat threatens the hacking cough often induced by frying hot chillies. The mishmash of vintage Chinese and Japanese décor and the Thai and Vietnamese flavours that dominate the menu give the sense of a pan-Asian setting, borrowing from various geographies and histories across the continent of Asia.

Leaning on the restaurant's banister, gazing down into the buzzing bar that now occupies the ground level of the cavernous former Machine Hall, I think about how the use of history throughout Brookfield Place can be understood as rhetorical. The mid-1800s colony references, the nod to the America's Cup, the retro pan-Asian atmosphere of the restaurant I am currently standing in; while there are a lot of specific pasts attached to this particular corner of Perth, the narratives of history roused in Brookfield Place reach far and wide, borrowing from an eclectic range of heritages. Together, they gesture to a dispersed sense of history that exists more as a vague feeling of "the past" than an acute understanding of this site's particular histories.

While there are a lot of pasts that are omitted in the branding of Brookfield Place as a high-end entertainment heritage precinct, it is its history when I first came across the site, decades before it was redeveloped into Brookfield Place, that I am most interested in here. The best way to describe how the site existed was as a ginormous hole in the ground. I

chanced across it in high school, passing the time between buses to get home with a high school friend. It was set off the side of an elevated walkway that connected the city's central artery of commerce and trade, St George's Terrace, to one of Perth's main public transport hubs, the Esplanade Busport. One side was boarded up, the other open to the elements, except for some cyclone fencing. Fingers hooked through the cyclone mesh, my high school companion and I would gaze down into its immense, cement-walled rectangle that dropped deep into the ground. Industrial scale pipelines, lopped on the cross-section, leached rust coloured wet down the walls. Water pooled at the bottom, and the reeds that grew up around it were capped with tall spears of cottony-ended growth, like I'd see around the wetland sections of the Swan River. Small trees and the type of fig that often seems to thrive in vacant lots had established themselves in the sandier corners. A few times, my friend and I saw a flock of birds wheel around the space's circumference before settling on metal pylons left to rust in the middle. The sheer scale of open space allowed gusts of wind to gather up, blasting our faces with damp air and whipping our hair around our ears.

*Figure 6. Brookfield Place as a Vacant Lot. Photographed by Allan Myles, reproduced with permission from Matej Andraž Vogrinčič.*

*Figure 7. View from Walkway Flanking Western Perimeter. Reproduced with permission from James Nicholls.*

*Figure 8. Foliage in the Site of Brookfield Place as a Vacant Lot. Photographed by Allan Myles, reproduced with permission from Matej Andraž Vogrinčič.*

It was a space that enthralled and mesmerised my adolescent self, and I would often while away the time between buses to get home staring down into it. What I didn't know at the time were the rounds of failed "big business" deals mired in political scandal that allowed the space to flourish. David Whish-Wilson's commentary on the city in his book *Perth* (2013) explains the context behind the "cowboy capitalism" that led to what colloquially became known in Western Australia as WA Inc, a period in the city's governance in the 1980s defined by big business deals between the state government and several prominent businessmen at the time[11] (5). Whish-Wilson notes of this period,

> Like every city, Perth has its fair share of boosters and racketeers, although rapidly earned wealth combined with a provincial naiveté have perhaps attracted a larger number of hustlers in business suits than elsewhere. In any discussion of the policing, business and political culture of the 1970s and 1980s, there's a sense that it's precisely the city's noirish contrast between light and dark, plain sight and shadow, that reflects the way shady business was done and power exercised – or to use an old crime fiction cliché, the brighter the light, the deeper the shadow... Perth's aura of manufactured innocence, one that presents itself as "naive, self-congratulatory and deeply conservative," was in fact the "perfect field for corruption." By the late 1980s, and the dealings that became known as WA Inc, the cronyism was very much out in the open. Bond and Connell were eventually imprisoned, and two consecutively serving premiers from both major parties, Ray O'Connor and Brian Burke, were jailed. (166)

When the questionable business practices of these high-profile actors resulted in the insolvency of many of the large corporations involved, a number of which were largely financially supported by the state government, $877 million in public money was conservatively estimated to have been lost (O'Brien & Webb 1991, 4). One of the big projects involved in this loss was a co-ownership property purchase between businessmen Alan Bond, Laurie Connell and the Government Employees Superannuation Board as well as the State Government Insurance Commission, taking in the site which Brookfield Place now

[11] Patrick O'Brien's *The Burke Ambush: Corporatism and Society in Western Australia* (1986) provides an in-depth analysis of the connections between Western Australian premier of the time, Brian Burke, and businessmen Alan Bond and Laurie Connell.

occupies (Marchant 1991). When the site was sold two years later to Australian media proprietor Kerry Packer and Western Australian businessman Warren Anderson in 1988 (Bevan 1994), its planned redevelopment became entangled in state politics and later came under the scrutiny of a royal commission into the government's commercial connections, the *Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters* (1992). Throughout that time, the excavation phase of redevelopment began, creating the cavernous hole that would characterise the space for the next two decades throughout the 90s and early 2000s. While Packer and Anderson successfully completed one office tower the rest of the redevelopment planned for the excavated hole halted at the excavation phase as successive attempts to secure tenant pre-commitments for the planned major office development on the site failed (Drummond 2003). While these successive rounds of business property deals collapsed, the site was left to its own devices. Water from surrounding buildings emptied into it. Ground water from the deep excavation made its way up. Reeds, rushes and other plant-life that thrives around the swamps and wetlands of Perth sprung up, attracting birdlife. It became a verdant pocket of wild green in the heart of the city, colloquially known as the Terrace's "duck pond" (Hawthorne 2008).

I was not the only one whose imagination was caught by this "wild" space. It attracted the attention of artists, urban photographers and street bloggers who were similarly drawn to this green anomaly in the heart of Perth's central business district. These included international community artist Matej Andraž Vogrinčič who used it as a venue for a site-specific art installation for the Awesome Festival in 2003, urban photographer James Nicholls who kept a visual diary of the space over its lifespan from a hole-in-the-ground to Brookfield Place, and an array of participants who feature in the following ethnographic fragments.

While in this section I have contextualised Brookfield Place as a high-end marketed heritage precinct with its genesis as a site of failed capitalism, as I state in Chapter 2, one of this research project's contributions is the development of haunted research techniques that can better apprehend a haunted sociality. Having laid out the circumstances that underwrite Brookfield Place's histories, in the next section I turn to the haunted research strategies of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost to evoke the way that these factual circumstances can transmute into the affective experience of place.

**Ethnographic Fragments**

*The Terrace*

She looks like she has time. She gives attention to the architecture of the ceiling, the plant beds, the signs that prohibit the use of skateboards and bicycles. She stops to pick at a table of specials outside the Priceline Pharmacy, turns a few items over. I'm keen to talk to someone in Brookfield Place today; she seems like a good candidate. Before I have a chance to compose an approach, she fixes eye contact and walks over, asks if I know how to get to "the Terrace." I motion for her to stand beside me, orienting her to where she needs to go, off to the left and through the plaza.

"That corridor isn't here any longer?" she asks. I shake my head. "It's changed a lot. I used to work here, in the Westralia building. Fourteen years ago." She motions to the skyscraper behind us. "Back then all of this was a big," and here she stops to gesture a scooped, hollowed-out shape with her hands.

"Hole in the ground?" I offer.

She nods. "A man jumped off into it once." She looks up to take in the new BHP building.

*Surveillance*

This evening, I'm here on a Sunday, it's about 6.30 pm, the tail end of dusk – not quite dark, but almost there. I walk through Brookfield Place, stopping to take the occasional photo, noting the small changes that night brings to the space – the underlit light of some of the bench seats, glowing neon pink, no one to notice them on this Sunday evening. It's windy, the buildings channelling and accelerating gusts. I'm outside the BHP building when I see some movement inside. Someone comes through the sliding doors. He's dressed in a sharp suit, and I wonder if he's something to do with a function being held, BHP business maybe. He heads in my direction and I sling my camera around to sit on my back. I soon realise that he's come out of the building to talk to me.

"Just to let you know, if you want to photograph the building with a professional camera, you need to apply to management for permission." I've only been here for a few minutes. I experience an immediate and overwhelming urge to challenge his directive.

"What about a point and shoot camera, can I use that to take photographs instead?" I ask.

"Really, it's best to apply for permission."

I sweep an arm to take in the wider surrounds of Brookfield Place. "What about photos of the rest of this area, other than BHP?"

He pauses, considers. "It's best really just to notify and apply for permission."

I nod, interested in how he seems aware that the reasons he gives – professional cameras, the building – don't hold as I present further scenarios, that there is such a sense of legitimacy and authority in informing the casual photographer that they need to apply for permission that the rationale does not need to stick. And does not need to be done in a manner that is overtly intimidating – his whole demeanour is gentle, so that despite feeling put out by his words, I like him.

*James*

"Most of the sites I'll just go in and take the photos, and ok great, I've documented it and not worry about it anymore, y'know?"

I do kind of know; I remember a panicked afternoon taking photos of the row of shonky old houses and back alleys on East Parade, just as the suburb of Mount Lawley yields to East Perth. The diggers had already rolled over a third of it.

We're in a busy lunch shop, just across from James' work. An IT guy by trade, he's agreed to meet me on his lunchbreak. I'm interviewing him because of the photographs he takes around Perth, of the kinds of places that catch my eye, too – industrial ruins, abandoned buildings, odd urban tableaus. Unlike me, James is organised in this interest, collating his photographs into categories of where they were taken and when before publishing them online, either on his website or Flikr.

"My primary focus is documenting what's there, and I guess in a way preserving it because a whole lot of the sites I used to check out are gone now. And a lot of them, people wouldn't consider being of worth. Maybe developers or the State Government send someone in to document these places, maybe as part of industrial archaeology, but, if they didn't and that's gone, then…" James shrugs.

"I'm not very brave, I won't climb into or onto things to get a better perspective or what-have-you. I don't like the idea of getting caught. But if I see something I really like I

might try and line up the camera and get a good angle, do something a bit arty. But really, my primary focus is documenting what's there."

An aspect of his photography starts to make a sort of sense. Washed out and quickly framed on a point and shoot, his images are not the beautiful, anxiously curated photographs of place that typically populate Flikr. Repetitive, each taken from just a slightly different angle from the last, they are often shot through a cyclone fence or perspex construction window. They are also abundant to the point of saturation; folder after cascading folder of images neatly organised by location, then date.

"One of the aspects is to make sure these places are documented and remembered. If there's someone like me who's into these places, there's something for them to find. If it's a site that I find really interesting or I feel it's significant to me personally, and things around it are changing, I'll probably pop over to have a look. When they did the whole East Perth redevelopment I was down there at the power station several times making sure they weren't doing things I don't approve of to it." James laughs at this last statement, a little self-conscious about it.

*Matej*

It took a while to set up the interview. Matej is an artist based in Slovenia, and in trying to organise a mutually agreeable time to speak, we had to work around an upcoming trip to Croatia, his country house with connectivity limited to the top of a nearby hill, and, as he explained in one of our many email exchanges, "I also work on a project in a glass factory at the moment and the factory runs 24/7 so I am bit dependent also on when do they have time for me to squeeze what I want in between their production process."

I was nervous that with all of the email back-and-forward momentum and interest would slump, and further, that conducting our interview through Skype would make for a flat dynamic, undermining the runs of self-directed responses that I imagined a face-to-face interview would better facilitate. As it turned out, Matej was interested enough to keep persisting until we found a time that worked, and from appearances was far more comfortable with Skype as a medium of communication than I. As we started our interview, my initial attempts at light conversation were thwarted by sketchy reception, and after hanging up and calling back, the lag-time still made this difficult – it didn't take long to work out that Skype meant we'd each have to significantly change our interview style (as a

successful community artist with quite a few international festival projects under his belt, Matej is no doubt quite used to being interviewed for media purposes, etc). I seemed a lot more frustrated with this than he, and despite a number of consecutive stop and start sentences where we spoke over each other and at the same time, he still looked relaxed and open.

Throughout the interview, I watched him move in and out of his memory, mostly serious in answering questions which still related to his art practice now, and as we moved on to a topic which prompted a story, a forgotten-but-now-triggered moment from his time in Perth working on the festival project, Matej sat back, relaxed, retreated in to the telling of it, eyes lifting up, away from the laptop as he spoke. At least here, I think, the technology helped, Skype making my presence less "present" than a physical body in the room, easing a shift inwards. I can't remember exactly when, perhaps it was as he started to talk about the grass – the reeds – that were so sharp they pierced and deflated the beach balls that were a large part of the project, so that he and the volunteers spent most of their days continually reinflating them, that he began to remember all the things that were difficult about working in the space, that had to be accommodated, worked around. As he started to talk about them, each obstacle prompted a memory of another, and he looked increasingly amused as his words built a comedy of errors of everything that went wrong about holding the project within the space.

To help stop the reeds piercing the beach balls, someone came in to "mow" a section of them, but that part of the city was so effective at funnelling wind that the balls would be blown about anyway, beyond where they were placed in the space. Water needed to be continually pumped out, as the site sat on reclaimed land, and as they began the project, they received a call – and here I wasn't sure if Matej was talking about an enthusiast, or someone in a more official capacity – asking whether they were aware that a rare type of bird was currently nesting in the reeds, and advising that it shouldn't be disturbed. Matej explained that each morning required careful consideration of which way the wind was going to move the balls, and advice on how the activities might affect the nesting birds, and he laughed at how his project hung upon the whim of a bird's reaction.

One phrase from the interview stuck with me in relation to what I regarded as my "key" question, the one which my interest in doing an interview with Matej really rested on. I asked what made him decide to work with the space that he did, what appealed to him

about it. He began with the pragmatic logistics – it had a great viewing platform with a high vantage point, along which many people walked throughout the day as it led to one of the main bus stations of the city (which I assumed meant the project would get better exposure). He took a few pauses in his answer, and then he said that he liked it as well because of all the green (grass, reeds) coming up in the middle of the city, in prime real estate, and that looking at it he knew pretty quickly it was the space that he wanted to work with. He paused again, before resuming with, "and for me personally," explaining that the space reminded him of a scene from one of his favourite novels, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger 1951), with the green of the reeds recalling the rye fields from one of the book's pivotal moments.

*Decay*

I remember what an acquaintance once said to me about looking up in the city - *I can't believe I don't usually see all of that stuff*. So I look *up*, and notice the red, chalky bricks of the former Royal Insurance Building against the reflectiveness of the BHP tower, the dried dust on glass surfaces pushed into watery echoes from evaporated rain, and the geometric slices of sky cut out between the buildings that pitch into the horizon. As my eye continues to track up, I notice a shape stretched out on the glass shelter above me, lumpy and irregular against the polished lines that cut across Brookfield Place. In a rush of recognition, an outstretched arch flapping weakly in the wind comes together as a wing. Face down, hooked beak turned sideways against the glass, the bird's yellow and iridescent green give it away as a Twenty Eight[12]. I am struck by how its soft body will slowly decay on this impermeable surface; fluid, tendon and muscle tissue disintegrating not into earth, but outlined on glass, visible to those who look up from the walkway below.

I'm intrigued with the idea that it is Brookfield Place's aesthetic of hard reflective surfaces that has resulted in the forced witnessing of this most organic of processes; bodily decay. Disoriented by refractive and angled panes, it seems as though the Twenty Eight became trapped while attempting to escape a prism of mirrored surfaces. The decomposing of its body will happen as if in a museum display – witnessed from behind glass, bereft of

[12] The Twenty Eight is a type of parrot bird native to Western Australia's south west region (Noongar Country).

bad odour and airborne bacteria, pared of the mystery surrounding this usually private process...

I take some photos, but the UV tinting on the glass and the angle from underneath don't show up much. As I give up, I register a woman looking at me with an expression that I can't quite fathom… amusement? Indulgence? What *is* visible in her face is recognition – she understands why I would find this intriguing, recognises the tension in the relationship between order, nature and space at play here.

**Haunted Heritage**

I begin with examining "in-place" the first point that I make in relation to Brookfield Place in the opening to this chapter; that any authoritarian attempt to shape the presence of the past in cities is inevitably haunted by revenants, spectres and ghosts. While most saliently addressed in the literature to the interests of this chapter by the earlier mentioned Edensor (2005) and Jonker and Till (2009), it is de Certeau's (2014) work on the ghost's ability to disrupt the self-conscious spatialisation of the past that resonates most strongly. In "Ghosts in the City," he examines the practice of renovation and restoration in Paris, expounding that state attempts to consciously accentuate and concertedly contain the past in the name of national heritage are destined to fail. He proposes that even when the "spirits of the place" (135) are self-consciously celebrated and safeguarded by the city's heritage authorities, they capture but a "miniscule proportion amongst the population of ghosts that teem within the city and that make up the strange and immense silent vitality of an urban symbolics" (137). For de Certeau, the ghost manifests as an emancipatory force that vitalises the city through its uncontainability and refusal to be fixed in place. In this framing of the ghost, it is cast as oppositional to authoritarian attempts to capture the spectral through deadening narratives of national heritage.

This binary – spectre versus authoritarian remembrance of place – is one that has been picked up by a number of scholars who write to the spatiality of haunting, most relevantly to the interests of this chapter by Edensor (2005) in his exploration of how the ghostliness of disordered space can contest and challenge the normative ways in which memory is spatialised in the city. Edensor critiques civic memorial practices for shutting down the multiplicity of urban space by attempting to fix "official" versions of history to

specific sites, noting that despite often being typified by practices of "pervasive spatial regulation" and "modes of surveillance (to) curb 'inappropriate behaviour'" (832),

> ghosts haunt the regulated city and the impossible dreams of totalisation. Sites of reified memory, like other overcoded spaces, are haunted by ambiguity and multiplicity. The ghost is a disembodied entity which can provoke memories that are strangely familiar, conjuring up a half-recognisable world through the empathetic contact it makes; but it can also provoke a sense of the ineffable and mysterious which is unavailable to representational fixing. (835)

In the ethnographic fragment *Surveillance*, I enter Brookfield Place on a blustery and uninviting Sunday evening. Emptied of its weekday workers and its Friday and Saturday night diners, it's an unorthodox time to be in the site. Within minutes of unzipping my DSLR camera from its case to photograph Brookfield Place's evening scenes, I am apprehended by a security guard and admonished for taking photos of the site. While Brookfield Place's intensive surveillance speaks to Edensor's point that, "sites of memory rely on pervasive spatial regulation for their power" to prescribe comportment and limit interpretation, I argue that what he describes as the ghost's "ineffable and mysterious" quality, how it is "unavailable to representational fixing," talks back to and destabilises practices of overt and self-conscious reification of memory. Brookfield Place the heritage precinct, carefully curated in its branding and design to project an image of historical commercial success, is haunted by its omitted history as a ruinous hole in the ground, the result of a particularly financially unsuccessful (and controversial) period of economic practice in Perth's history. And yet, the way it is haunted is not didactic or even particularly conscious. Rather, I suggest it is haunted in the way that I substantiate in the ethnographic fragments *The Terrace* and *Decay* that comprise this chapter. When I walk along St George's Terrace, where Brookfield Place cleaves off from, I am revisited by the visceral sensation of my hair whipping in the wind, the cold metal of wire mesh on my fingers and the indecipherable transgressive expansiveness of finding the disordered "wilderness" of the former hole in the ground in the heart of Perth city. It is the same bodily affectiveness that I characterise in the ethnographic fragment where I give directions to the lady looking for "the Terrace." She is caught in attempting to reconcile what she used to know of this corner of the city where she worked, with what occupies it now. Disoriented by the spatial discrepancies, she has lost her

bearings in this place that used to be so familiar. Attempting to articulate her confusion, she trails off when it comes to describing what the site was before,

> "Back then all of this was a big," and here she stops to gesture a scooped, hollowed-out shape with her hands.
>
> "Hole in the ground?" I offer.

Embodied and affective, gestures are best able to communicate the disjunction she is experiencing at the defamiliarising of this known place, not the codified consciousness of language. Her and my experience of how Brookfield Place is haunted by its time as a former hole in the ground does not exist as a rumination of the economic irony of how this high-end heritage site used to exist as the material debris of a period of severe financial strife in Perth's history. Rather, it exists as what Edensor refers to as "an empathetic and sensual apprehension, understood at an intuitive and affective level" (847). As he argues,

> the ghosts of ruins evoke empathy from those they haunt, and, although powerful, are largely indeterminate absent presences who disrupt sensibilities and cajole conjecture. Through this insubstantiality, the ghostly resists interpretation and thus retains its power. This is that other dimension of the uncanny: not its scary familiarity but "its very inexplicability" (Vidler, 1999, page 23). These vague memories cannot be described or represented, for this dimension of the uncanny lurks in the "unstable links between signifier and signified" (page 10). The sensations and objects that haunt are signs denoting nothing that can be pinned down. In addition, the sudden force of the remembered but inexplicable impression or atmosphere rockets the past into the present, or conjures up an unidentifiable or even imaginary past. The uncanny here is also, then, "the mental space where temporality and spatiality collapse" (page 39), where the arrested decay and potted, linear accounts of regulated sites of memory are confounded by ghostly intimations of an unfathomable past. (836)

It is precisely the indeterminate and unbidden quality of how this former hole-in-the-ground still occupies the lady and my own in-situ experience of Brookfield Place that talks back to the over-determined and conscious "put-togetherness" of the history with which Brookfield Place brands itself. Further, I argue that it is not just omitted histories that haunt, but also

Edensor's "unidentifiable or even imaginary pasts." The ethnographic fragment *Decay* indexes what I refer to within it as, "the tension in the relationship between order, nature and space." Glimpsing a dead Twenty Eight parrot caught on top of the glass covering of one of Brookfield Place's walkways, I enact what Edensor describes as the way in which the ghost cajoles conjecture, noting that, "I'm intrigued with the idea that it is Brookfield Place's aesthetic of hard reflective surfaces that has resulted in the forced witnessing of this most organic of processes; bodily decay."

However, as I aver in the opening sentence of this chapter, haunting is a process that never ends. While it is seductive to stop at critiquing Brookfield Place as an example of Edensor's "potted, linear accounts of regulated sites of memory" haunted by its omitted history as a financially ruinous hole-in-the ground, I argue that the ghost is more complex than this. While scholars such as the aforementioned de Certeau and Edensor have examined the ghost's ability to obviate state-controlled attempts to fix it in place, I would like to show that the very indeterminacy and uncertainty which defy authoritarian attempts to pin it down through narratives of national heritage equally worry attempts to embrace its open-ended and multitudinous nature. Edensor, Tonnelat (2008) and other scholars equally interested in the disordered space characterised by industrial ruins, vacant lots and abandoned buildings point to the creative potential afforded by these spaces. As geographer Nate Millington (2015) notes via Mariani and Barron (2013),

> The contemporary body of scholarship focused on the *terrain vague* sees urban waste spaces as imaginative sites that disorder modernist urban imaginations through their implicit challenge to a fixed approach to landscape design. Defined by Mariani and Barron as a, "collective term for a multitude of subtypes of marginal, leftover land, from 'derelict land' and 'brownfield' to 'void' and 'dead zone'" – the idea of terrain vague calls attention to the creative political possibilities offered by (urban) abandonment (Mariani and Barron, 2013: xi). (2326)

Millington's notion of the liberatory expansiveness provided by in-between space aligns with artist Matej Andraž Vogrinčič professed interest and engagement with Brookfield Place's former hole-in-the-ground. As he expresses in the ethnographic fragment where I interview him, the space reminds him of the scene in J.D. Salinger's seminal novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) where the adolescent protagonist, Holden Caulfield, keeps watch over children who play a game in a field of rye, ready to catch them in case they go over a

nearby cliff. This scene is widely regarded as symbolic of Holden's reluctance to transition from the freedom and innocence of childhood into the socially normative strictures of adulthood. In the program catalogue for the 2003 Awesome Festival which commissioned his art project (named *Catch* after its namesake novel), Matej is quoted as saying,

> I was about 16 when I first read "The Catcher in the Rye." I was hooked by the desire to protect the innocence of childhood by finding a perfect place for children to play. I wanted to stand guard, like Salinger's character, ready to catch the unwary as they plummeted into adulthood. But I never found the right field, the right space, till now.
>
> I always see things a little bit differently, so I guess that's why this big hole in the City of Perth reminds me of that field of rye in Salinger's novel. I hope by filling this space with thousands of colourful beach balls it evokes memories of an incredible game. It's like Catcher in the Rye in reverse. I know it's crazy, but this playground can allow you to fall back into childhood. (Awesome Arts 2003)

Here the indeterminacy and unfixedness of the hole-in-the-ground makes a perfect container for what Matej sees as the playful and liberatory experience of childhood, versus the surrounding central business district of Perth city which by corollary is framed as the over-determinism of adulthood. Matej's hope is that the audience of his project will "fall out" of the regulated city into the freedom of childhood that this space denotes (to him).

While Matej's interest in the space is characterised by what he sees as its liberatory freedom, engaging with its betwixt and between status proved to be far more troublesome than he anticipated. In the ethnographic fragment *Matej*, almost as an aside, he mentions the difficulties of holding the project in the space. The reeds that attracted him to the site and reminded him of the aforementioned pivotal scene in *The Catcher in the Rye* became a source of frustration as they complicated attempts to hold the project in the space. Razor sharp, they punctured the beach balls that were intended to recall the children's game in the rye. While "mowing" the section of reeds where the balls were placed seemed a simple solution, the site's cavernous space channelled blasts of wind which blew the balls beyond their intended location, so that Matej and the project volunteers spent their days reinflating beach balls. Further, as the project commenced, the festival received a call advising that a rare type of bird was nesting in the reeds and shouldn't be disturbed so that, "each morning

required careful consideration of which way the wind was going to move the balls, and advice on how the activities might affect the nesting birds." In recalling the difficulties of working in the space, each obstacle prompted memory of another, so that recounting the project became a comedy of errors, causing Matej to be ruefully amused at how challenging the site was to work with. Further, while the project received much praise, it was also subject to criticism. At the conclusion of the project, despite best efforts, the sheer number of beach balls meant that only a small amount could be forwarded to organisations and individuals for further use. The rest were slashed for quick deflation and taken to the tip for disposal. Awesome Festival staff member Sam Lombrado recalls,

> the Director of AWESOME – Gary Chard – unplugged the phone because we got so many complaints about the waste (e.g. balls being destroyed in front of thousands of office workers who looked down on the site).
>
> I was pretty upset by the wrap up, it was a huge waste. (S. Lombrado, personal communication, April 28, 2021)

The relentless difficulties Matej experienced in undertaking the project in the site reveal spectral space to be even more indeterminate and open-ended than previously theorised. While his initial interest in the space fulfills the way that scholars like de Certeau (2014), Edensor (2005) and Tonnelat (2008) frame disordered space as sites of imaginative potential free of the organisational logic of modernity (Gandy 2013, 11) where the ghost can thrive, the substantial difficulties Matej experienced in executing his vision reveal that attempting to embrace the multitudinous quality of spectral space is as shot-through with indeterminacy as attempts to contain it. While much has been made in the literature on how the spectral qualities of disordered space render it ambiguous and indeterminate, I argue that in revealing the indeterminate qualities of disordered space to be resistant to and haunt artistic attempts at celebration, spectral space is shown to be even more in-flux, unstable and in-process than previously theorised in the scholarship on haunting.

What emerges from this chapter is two-fold: the radical indeterminacy of spectral space, and the methodological exampling of bringing together the haunted research techniques encompassed in the ethnographic fragments with the more traditional social science practice of critical analysis. By employing these two approaches to examine the site of Brookfield Place as a spectral space, I demonstrate how haunting's alterity provokes not

just new research techniques (like that of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost), but also helpful reframings of traditional research epistemologies. Imbuing some of the ghost's indeterminacy into normative research methods and the interpretation of the material they gather better enables researchers to perceive and come to terms with a haunted sociality. The implications and consequences of this are examined in the following chapter, which contextualises how textually performing a haunted sociality of Perth can be understood as a more powerful means of engaging with sociological issues as well as examining what the wider site of Perth contributes to the spatiality of haunting.

# Chapter 4

# Perth

In this chapter I enact the haunted research strategies of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost to make two contributions to knowledge on haunting. The first builds upon a key objective to redress the overemphasis on the temporality of haunting at the expense of the ghost's spatial dimensions. As a city which is not only haunted by the trauma of its colonial past, but which also carries its own Indigenous and Noongar traditions of conceptualising place that are radically alterative to western cultural geographical imaginaries, Perth presents a particularly fecund site in which to investigate the located-ness of the ghost. I engage with the place of Perth to draw out what an emphasis on the city's haunted experience uniquely and critically yields. Working from my ethnographic fragments, I examine the Indigenous and Noongar concepts of "home-place" (Poelina, Wooltorton, Harben, Collard, Horwitz and Palmer 2020) and "becoming family with place" (Wooltorton, Collard, Horwitz, Poelina and Palmer 2020[13]; Poelina et al. 2020) as frameworks which not only conceptualise the relationship between people and place as deeply relational, but which also understand people in place as indelibly haunted. The second contribution this chapter makes is methodological. One of the central aims of this research is to investigate what forms of scholarly attention are required to apprehend the indeterminate and ambiguous nature of haunted experience. In this chapter I develop this position further to aver that in writing to the unfinished plurality of haunted experience rather than attempting to explicate it, the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost can be understood as a more powerful means of engaging with the ethics and politics of sociological issues than traditional forms of social science critique.

To begin my inquiry into what the place of Perth uniquely contributes to knowledge on the spatiality of the ghost, and how it can be apprehended, requires an examination of the scholarship which has written to haunted experience in Perth city. As much of the

[13] I would like to acknowledge that this and the previous reference contains Indigenous authors from various Countries which informs the theorisation of their concepts in their work and in the following pages. Thus, in the first use of these references I have included all authors names, while in the rest of the chapter they appear as Poelina et al. 2020 and Wooltorton et al. 2020.

literature notes, omissions, silences and absences have historically been key practices in suppressing the city's under-represented histories. Salient themes that emerge are the obscuring of Noongar cultural inscriptions of the place of Perth and Noongar Country at large (Marsh and Kinnane 2003; Haebich 2005; Taylor 2000) the lived experience of Noongar and other Indigenous peoples under Perth's colonial administration (Van den Berg and Corbett 1994; Van den Berg 2002; 2010; Kinnane 1996; 2003; Scott 1999), and the exclusion of the convict history and lacerated backs that underlie the city's built environment (Stannage 1979; Seddon 1995). While many popular narratives of Perth's past have practiced a selective remembering, other projects have self-consciously engaged with the silences and absences of what geographer Affrica Taylor refers to as the narrative of "sunny Perth" (2000, 27). As a city that carries the ongoing trauma of its colonial context, the place of Perth holds infinite possibilities by which to examine the spatiality of the ghost. This is reflected in the wide scope of literature that indexes both the overt and concealed consequences of Perth's legacy of colonial regime: Kim Scott's (1999) and Stephen Kinnane's (2003) lyrical examinations of the intergenerational effects of Australia's Stolen Generation, Doolan Leisha Eatts' book *Our Country: My Nyungah Home* (2014) on the oral history of a massacre at Kings Park and her ancestors' escape to Galup (Lake Monger), and Len Collard (Collard, Bracknell and Palmer 2017; Collard and Palmer 2015) and Noel Nannup's revival work on Noongar knowledge frameworks span just a few of the many thematic directions taken in the scholarship on Perth's colonial legacy.

Some of the most significant literature to the interests of this research, however, are Indigenous and Noongar conceptualisations of place. This is apparent in the Indigenous and Noongar knowledge frameworks "home place" (Poelina et al. 2020) and "becoming family with place" (Wooltorton et al. 2020; Poelina et al. 2020). As I will contextualise in the discussion section of this chapter, I aver that the type of deep relationality encompassed by these concepts is one that understands place as profoundly haunted. Wooltorton, Collard and Howitz (2017) provide a helpful explanation of "home-place" which they conceptualise within a Noongar perspective,

> a cultural Noongar sense of home has meaning and validity from the point of view of a Noongar *katitjiny* rationality or *kundaam*, a knowledge system underpinned by the meta-narrative trilogy of interconnection between *Boodjar* (Country), *moort* (relatives or relations) and *katitjiny* (knowledge,

> or learning). In this system *moort*, in the sense of a person's relations, can be animals or plants in a particular place. An example of this is the statement: "*Yongka* [kangaroo] is my uncle" and "*jarrah*" [a species of tree] is my brother," which makes sense through a kinship structure which includes human and more-than-human kindred. This way people are tied to place in a manner that guarantees meaning and familiarity, a connection called: *gurduboodjar* – which translates as love of place. This is 'home', in the sense of the English adage 'home is where the heart is'. In Noongar language, it is the place with whom one is related and where one's more-than human relations are established, as they have been since time immemorial. So home-place is also Noongar family which involves the implied familial obligation to care for all these many-species relations including the ground. There does not seem to be an easy English translation for this concept. (58)

In this explanation, a Noongar cultural understanding of place is conceptualised as animate, as agency and as relational (Poelina et al. 2020, 8), along with the obligation, as a co-member in the ecology of place, to respond in turn as such to it. The relationship between person and place is indelibly interrelated. Conversely, the English language is understood as impeding English speakers from fully grasping the relationality and interconnectedness of a Noongar sense of "home-place." Poelina et al. (2020) similarly positions the English language with what they understand as its ontological division between human and place (combined with colonial privilege) as preventing English speakers from properly comprehending Indigenous concepts and frameworks (13). Poelina et al. (2020) and Wooltorton et al. (2020) propose the place-based concept of "becoming family with place" to better learn the relational practices embedded in such concepts as "home-place." As Poelina et al. (2020) explain,

> the English language underpins the Australian colonial project, and has been used to separate, ignore and take from Country, her peoples and their knowledges. Country responds to people, however, for example when there is empathic, creative communication and engagement with landscapes, and when *liyan* and *wirrin* is the basis for human and ecological wellbeing. We propose a practice for people new to this

> participation; of "becoming family with place." It integrates four ways of knowing, to celebrate an ontopoetic for Country that is experiential, creative, propositional and participative – a post-conceptual knowing for human flourishing. It is for coming home to Country, and is for learning and educational purposes. (1)

I foreground these concepts and this literature here to later develop a connection between relationality and haunting in the discussion section of this chapter.

Methodologically, the most pertinent literature are works which speak to what I theorise as innovative haunted research techniques simultaneously grounded in more traditional methods of empirical research. Kinnane's *Shadow Lines* (2003) works at the intersection of performing the quality of haunted experience whilst also being deeply steeped in empirical research. To draw out the methodological implications of this position, I would like to start with the following excerpt on the significance that Perth's Hyde Park[14] has to Kinnane and his family,

> The overhead tree branches shield the lakes, flowerbeds and walkways from the harsh Western Australian light, and bear witness to all that happens beneath them. Each year the leaves become filled with stories that they hear winding their way around the tracks that circle the park. They grow until they can no longer carry the weight, wither and fall to the earth to rot, filling the gardens below and joining the silt of the lake beds. Each year the captured stories become layered into the park's being. You can feel them in the fleshy smell that the park never loses, summer and winter. Each story, captured in the branches and collected in the leaves, creates another ring of history around the trunk of the tree's skin and becomes another earthy layer in the park's foundations. These stories amass and rupture the tarred surfaces of the pathways ringing the lakes as the tree roots break through the surface of any substance that the city attempts to lay over them. (228)

A former wetland that was a traditional meeting place and camp site for Noongar people, Hyde Park was cleared, drained and replanted to become the central city park in the European tradition as it now exists (Kinnane 2003, 228). Moreton Bay fig trees stretch long

[14] This is a popular park in the inner city suburb of Highgate, a short walk north of Perth's central business district.

arms over its twin lakes, and the cool, damp air and deep depression of the park in its surrounding suburban landscape remain as physical remnants of its wetland past (Kinnane 2003, 228). Kinnane's grandmother, a Mirriwong woman, from the East Kimberley region, who was forcibly removed from her family at the age of five, and his grandfather, an English migrant who left London as a young man, lived on the northern street flanking the park, and much of the family stories that were told to Kinnane throughout his childhood centre around this home and this park. As a "mixed-race" couple in 1940s Perth, his grandparents weathered unrelenting surveillance and harassment from authorities, and yet their family home endured as a hub of Indigenous cultural life in Perth city (Kinnane 2003). Hyde Park, with its connections to his family legacy, serves as a place of connection for Kinnane, a place where, "I can hear my own family history singing its way through the branches of the trees" (228).

I focus on the above excerpt because it is an example of the type of engagement which I argue is necessary to apprehend a haunted sociality. As a literary response to the trauma and ongoing implications of colonisation across Australia's West, *Shadow Lines* indexes the hallmarks of a haunting. The book draws meticulously from archival documentation, delving into the State's surveillance files kept on his grandmother and her peers, communication between the various authorities that had influence and control over her life as well as numerous other historical records, interviews and informal ethnographic research material. However, more than the book's faithfulness to the material evidence of Kinnane's empirical research is the way the author writes to the interstices left between the files, letters and policies that so forcibly shaped his grandparents' lives. Passages like the above transpose the empirical material of Kinnane's research into prose which evokes the affective quality of haunting. In Kinnane's Hyde Park, "the leaves become filled with stories that they hear" (210), before withering and falling to the earth to form another layer of the park's foundations, only to amass and, "rupture the tarred surfaces of the pathways ringing the lakes as the tree roots break through the surface of any substance that the city attempts to lay over them" (210). Rather than draw out conclusions from the amassed evidence of his research, Kinnane plumbs this material to craft a lyrical response to what Gordon (1997) describes as the way that haunting exists as, "the most general instance of the clamouring return of the reduced to a delicate social experience struggling, even unaware, with its

shadowy but exigent presence" (201). Kinnane's passage embodies an allegorical and visceral sense of how places still ring with Gordon's, "shadowy but exigent presence" (201).

Like Kinnane, I have undertaken empirical research and write from that empiricism to evoke the experience of haunting in Perth. This is illustrated in the ethnographic fragments following this section. However, as one of the core aims of this research is to find forms of scholarly address that can apprehend spectral experience, I have placed even further emphasis on evoking the experience of haunting. As Stewart (2007) explains in regards to her own ethnographic fragments which she crafts to perform the experience of what she describes as ordinary affects,

> My effort here is not to finally "know" them – to collect them into a good enough story of what's going on – but to fashion some form of address that is adequate to their form; to find something to say about ordinary affects by performing some of the intensity and texture that makes them habitable and animate. (4)

Like Stewart, I enact the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost in the form of ethnographic fragments to textually perform, as much as is possible, the affective unfolding of haunted experience in the place of Perth. While *Shadow Lines*, as a non-fiction novel, provides context and background for its audience, I layer moments of haunted experience one after another without exegetical or explanatory writing as a textual performance that can best evoke the palimpsest-like, affective and open-ended relationality of a haunted social life in the place of Perth. These ethnographic moments provide the material from which to investigate this research project's aims of firstly what the place of Perth can contribute to knowledge on the spatiality of haunting, and secondly how haunted research techniques can be understood as a more powerful means of engagement than traditional forms of social critique.

**Ethnographic Fragments**

*Swamp Clubb 1*

It's early and I'm cursing. I hate this time of day. Or rather, the way I feel at this time of day. I keep trying to fill the ache-y hole in my stomach with food but it only seems to make it worse. I woke up twenty minutes ago, and I'm now drinking my breakfast tea in the

car as I hustle traffic to make it into the city by 7.30 am. Take the corners easy, don't want to spill my tea.

Pulling into the Wilson car park under the Art Gallery of Western Australia, I sprint up the stairs and emerge in the Urban Orchard, wintery early morning sun in my eyes. Squinting, I see them pretty quick – a large group of people, maybe thirty or so, milling around a fold-out table on the grass. Must be them. I recognise some faces from around town, from gigs, exhibitions and the like. I try to find somewhere to "sign in." There's a wispy woman with a clipboard, but turns out it's to secure tea towels printed with Perth's lost wetlands for a gold coin donation.

"You here for Swamp Clubb?" asks someone behind me. She has short brown hair and looks how I don't feel this morning; spry and energetic. Later I will learn this is Mei, co-organiser of this event and a lot of art projects around the theme of Perth water. For now, she's a friendly face who seems to know what's going on.

"You here for Swamp Clubb?" she asks.

"Yeah," I smile.

"You want some breakfast?"

"Yeah!" She gestures to the fold-out table and invites me to a plate piled high with crepes, as well as a box full of bagels. There's a sandwich press to heat these up, and jam, lemon, sugar and cream cheese, as well as tea and coffee and paper cups. The crepes look endearingly irregular. I imagine one of the organisers here frying them up at home last night four at a go.

I'm at Swamp Clubb, which you could call an art event, or a performance. Or something like that. The organisers call it an immersive eco ghost tour of Perth's wetlands. It's held over four weeks early on a Friday morning to try and entice an audience before work starts for the day. The program is pretty loose, involving an interactive walking tour of what used to be Lake Kingsford in Perth's CBD, followed by a guest speaker connecting to the theme of Perth wetlands.

This week the guest speaker is Noel Nannup. He's talking to one of the organisers, and with him is a young guy wearing a kangaroo skin. I take a bite of crepe. Not enough lemon, not enough sugar. Tea's good and strong though.

"Clea!" It's Mark, my sister Isabelle's friend. He's probably turned up especially to see Noel speak – I know he's been wanting to get a hold of him for a while now. Mark does

art projects, often in collaboration with Indigenous artists and communities. I sit next to him and we catch up for a few minutes. He's smoking a rollie, no tea, coffee or food in hand. His face doesn't look quite right. I don't think it's his time of day, either.

Everyone is called over to listen to Noel's Welcome to Country. When he's finished, the young guy in the Kangaroo skin introduces a song he's about to sing. His speaking voice is soft and gentle, which is why I jump when he abruptly starts in such a loud and reverberating voice that passers-by turn to see what's going on. He passes his hand to and fro in front of him as he sings, waist high and parallel with the ground. I can't understand his words, but with his palm passing over the earth, I can't help but imagine a connection in language with the water that's still deep beneath the concrete.

*Swamp Clubb 2*

We follow Swamp Clubb organisers Matt and Mei across the Urban Orchard walkway to the Horseshoe Bridge which crosses over the city's central train station. There's something about Matt's getup that has the look of an outback explorer to it – long sleeve t-shirt printed with the Swamp Clubb logo, khaki vest with enough pockets to make a flyfisher's morning, and a bushman's broad-brimmed hat with a looped drop chord. As the morning progresses, I get the feeling this impression isn't accidental.

As we gather at the bridge's apex, we are invited to peer down and beyond the Fremantle Line platform that lies beneath us, below the twin metal tracks sporting ice-cream wrappers and tortured plastic bottle shapes, into what used to be the deepest point of Lake Kingsford. I mentally replay some of the things that stuck from this morning; the pumps under the Myer building to manage the water that occasionally floods its basement level, the common engineer knowledge that construction work in Perth's CBD has a high likelihood of groundwater saturation. From here the cranes working on the Perth City Link pitch and yaw across the skyline, and big machinery hidden behind cladding under-lays the morning traffic with a bass rumble and the occasional judder-y outburst. I imagine construction workers arriving on Monday morning to find that yet again the pit intended for the new Yagan Square needs to be pumped.

We walk down the escape stairs to Roe Street, following Matt in his explorer get-up right into the sidewalk easement close up against the train station. He urges everyone to crouch low-down amongst the native grass shrubs, to talk quieter, quieter still, lest we

attract the attention of a highly vigilant animal in vibrant orange endemic to this part of town. One can be seen right now, he quietly points out, pacing the Midland Line platform on the other side of the cyclone fence. There must be a train due any minute; the platform is full of waiting passengers. A woman clocks the group and pushes her sunglasses up her face and into her hair, neck craning for a better look. A few of us twitter, releasing some of the tension generated from what feels, surprisingly, like quite a subversive act.

*Swamp Clubb 3*

We're all waiting for Karen Anne to play the turtle's calls. Or maybe I'm reading the room wrong. We're in an alcove of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and we're packed in tight. Most of the faces here are a few years younger than mine, though some grey heads salt the room too. Finally, Karen Anne plays one of the long-necked turtle recordings she captured. It follows the up and down of a bush cooee, but high-pitched and with a distinct squeak in the middle. It's stupendously cute. The room makes a sound like it's just witnessed a newborn mammal gain its legs for the first time. Karen Anne plays a few more; a guttural, percussive drumming and a drawn out whale-like call. People are taking their phones out to record the sounds.

*Kayaking*

I'm walking down to the water, toes breaking the sand's crust from the morning's dew. Underneath, the sand is dry and cool. Dig my toes in, look out over the river. The air's wet this early morning, thick to look through. Fog hangs over where Belmont Racecourse runs to the swamp on the opposite bank. I almost can't see it, but it's there misting on my skin; fine rain arriving in short bursts.

A few students are already out on the river, kayaks zigzagging all over the show. Some metres over, Moira grunts as she shoves hers across the sand. I push in too, wincing when the water hits my shorts. It's like ice.

It's the first time I'm out in a small vessel like this. The river's hard up in my senses, briny and eerie. Each paddle stroke laps loud. Trying to remember Mr Baker's instructions… keep the paddle in close, turn the blade for less drag. He's pointing to the bank on the other side of the river. Most of us comply just enough to evade attention. Channels cut through the reeds here, snake-y paths that close you in tight and redirect sound.

*Swamp Clubb 4*

"Are there any tips, if someone wanted to get close to a turtle… not take it, obviously, but… just for getting close?"

"Like, emotionally?" someone quips. The room laughs. It's question time after Karen Anne's presentation. We've just heard how, in her Honours year, after a day of tagging turtles, one lone fellow in the bottom of Karen Anne's dinghy roared like a dinosaur. It was enough to push her through resistance from her department and supervisors that she was wasting her time on a reptile that was mute; she swung her PhD on a bet that the long-necked turtle was, in fact, vocal.

A young guy gently probes Karen Anne on how to find one at a wetland.

"Well, they're meat eaters so I use an attractant, and a specially modified trap..."

"What do you put… what bait do you use?" He sounds the opposite of breezy.

"Something that bleeds a lot, they have a very good sense of chemoreception." Karen Anne fixes him with a look, before remarking, "But you need a license to do all of those things, y'know."

A young woman prefaces her question with a story of how her father would accidentally net long-necked turtles while trapping marron in the creek at the back of their property. "What about putting, say if you're at the shore of the lake, putting meat out and shining a torch so you could just see them at night? Would that be ok do you think?"

The hunger for a personal encounter is palpable.

*Long-Necked Turtle*

We watched as she pushed the earth back in, hind legs working hard at the sand. We had some sort of banter over what we'd do, but that part's hazy. What's vivid is digging up the eggs after she'd left, shells translucent pink and soft to squeeze. A vague feeling that what we're doing is transgressive, or something. The more we dig the more we find; they seem never-ending. We hold them in our hands, put them aside in careful piles, dig for more. Some of them look like they are lit from the inside, shells dimly glowing. To my six-year-old self, finding them buried here feels mythological.

A couple walking the lake happen upon us. The idea that these eggs won't benefit from our play is an uncomfortable knot in my stomach, and yet I want to take one home so badly. We put them back, fill in the sand.

*The Doorman*

"Yep, I'm still going to need some ID." He sounds staunch. I look from the doorman to the couple slouching between us. Forties maybe, rough years in their bodies; missing teeth, rusty voices, brown skin visible through a ripped singlet. The man is rummaging in a backpack, patting down his jeans pockets. She's hard mouth, head turned away, arms folded; not happy with what's going down.

The man gives a last pat of his front pockets. "We just wanna look inside," he remonstrates with a shrug. The doorman shakes his head, turns to me, flicks his fingers for my ID.

"This is not for us, Keith," she snaps. "Carn, let's go." Underneath the anger she sounds weary. She turns abruptly and leaves.

"Aah *fuck* yas then!" the man throws vehemently backwards at the doorman as he follows her. They take the stairs from the Fringe Festival gardens to the PICA carpark.

The doorman takes my ID, watches them turn the corner, then hands it back. He hasn't taken so much as a glance at it. His whole demeanour softens, he gives me a warm smile and suddenly he's lost the gruffness. "I had to find something so they wouldn't get in," he says, almost apologetically gesturing at my wallet. He tips his head for me to walk past him through the gate.

Later I go back to find the doorman, to say something, to try and redress in some way what happened. I wanted it to be of use; instead it comes out inept, awkward, the exchange confusing for us both.

*Pregnancy*

Years later, highly pregnant, waddling down Museum Street to meet a friend at the Perth International Arts Festival gardens. It's dark, late, no-one around except for a group of figures further up on the other side, leaning against a shadowy recess in the Central TAFE building. They loll about for a bit, swearing, then make their way down the sidewalk. They cross to my side of the street, roaring at each other. They sound tough. Then, "Whoa, big belly!" from one of the men. He sounds highly amused; the tension breaks. The rest of the crew come under the streetlight, a few guys and one woman, a little older. She eyes my bump, cackles.

"Ooh sister, you gonna *teeaar*! How far?"

"Eight months, almost."

"Aah, there's nothing like it, but be ready, it's gonna hurt. Got any more?"

"Nope, first one," I smile.

"There's just nothing like it." One of the men *mmm*s in agreement, nods gravely. She pats me on the arm and the group roll off down the street. "Oooh, you're gonna tear!" she laughingly warns one more time.

*Pre-Adolescence*

Sky pink to blue. We lie in the centre of the road, child bodies. Not for too much longer though. A car might come at any moment, but doesn't. The day's sun breathes from the bitumen into our backs, and above the night rolls in. Cool air follows in its slipstream. Heads close, gangly limbs spread starfish, all that's in front spread up there like the night sky we're looking to.

**Nourishing Ghosts**

In this section I employ my ethnographic fragments to respond to the question: why Perth? What does the specific place of Perth contribute to knowledge on the spatial dimensions of haunting? In order to answer these provocations, I will briefly return to what in Chapter 1 I refer to as the way that haunting is positioned at the intersection of spatiality, temporality and subjectivity. Given the particular emphasis on the spatiality of haunting in my thesis, in this section I further refine my focus to explicate what the place of Perth can contribute to knowledge on the spectral intersection of spatiality and subjectivity. I draw on the Indigenous and Noongar concepts of "home-place" (Poelina et al. 2020) and "becoming family with place" (Wooltorton et al. 2020; Poelina et al. 2020) as frameworks which understand the relationship between people and place as radically relational. Using my ethnographic fragments to contextualise and argue for the significance of Poelina et al.'s (2020) call for the need of all people, including from non-Indigenous subjectivities, living on Indigenous Country to practice "becoming family with place," I forward that to learn and enact the relational practices of this concept is to better understand oneself as haunted in place.

I begin by drawing a connection between the experience of being haunted in place and the experience of practicing relationality with place. The fields of eco-feminism and environmental humanism are helpful for explicating this claim, as illustrated in leading environmental humanist proponent Deborah Bird Rose's (2017) conceptualisation of the way that that humans (inclusive of their subjectivities) are inherently implicated in the ecology of place,

> The most profound insight from ecology is that humans are not hyper-separated. We are part of the biosphere. The illusion of mastery and control is exactly that: an illusion. In the words of the ecologist Frank Egler, "ecosystems are not only more complex than we think, they are more complex than we can think." Knowledge in ecological systems is never complete; it is always changing, emerging, and fraught with uncertainty (far from equilibrium). The whole is greater than the sum of the parts; we humans are simply a part. We are inside the biosphere, and we are participants, for better and (increasingly) for worse. Ecological thinking takes us away from certainty and into probability. Connectivity entails interdependence and brings us into domains of responsibility, accountability, proximity, ethics, and community. These are domains in which many Indigenous people have been living for millennia. There is much to learn, much to be shared. (494)

There are several issues I would like to draw out from Bird Rose's argument for the interrelatedness of relationality and haunting. The first is her point that knowledge of ecological systems (inclusive of humans) is never complete; "it is always changing, emerging, and fraught with uncertainty," taking "us away from certainty and into probability" (494). To understand place as an interconnected ecological system is to understand place as uncertain, emerging and always changing. This has important synergies with how I have theorised spectral space in Chapter 3. The case study of Brookfield Place reveals the inherent spectrality of place as radically indeterminate and irresolvable, immune to human efforts to fix it in place. Bird Rose's arguments build upon this position to propose that if (spectral) place is understood as an interconnected ecology which is always uncertain and changing, then relational ontologies recognise, and are enmeshed within, the uncertainty and indeterminacy of place. This framing locates the practice of relational ontologies, in their acceptance of the porous and reciprocal relationship between human and place, as embodying the ghost's insistence that nothing can be fully compartmentalised including a

separation between person and land. To understand humans as relational in place is to understand people as haunted in place.

However, across the fields of eco-feminism (Plumwood 1993; Sandilands 1999; Salleh 2017), environmental humanism (Bird Rose 2017; Head 2016; Houston 2013) and salient threads of Indigenous literature (Bawaka Country et al. 2015; Bawaka Country et al. 2016), modern western thought is conceptualised as characterised by a separation between that of humans and that of place. This is neatly captured in Val Plumwood's (1993) seminal treatise on how dualisms and binaries underpin the western cultural imaginary,

> The set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing dualisms which permeate western culture forms a fault-line which runs through its entire conceptual system. While the human/nature contrast is one of the more recent of these dualisms, like the others, it can be fully understood only as part of the interrelated set. (43)

Bird Rose (2017) builds upon Plumwood's argument to propose that western thought's predilection for division results in a nature-culture dualism that not only separates people from non-human nature, but is also interlinked with the current experience of ecological crisis. She avers that, "Separation, opposition, hierarchy, and the necessity of domination prevail. The nature–culture dualism is integral to the ecological crises we now face: humans and nature are held to be radically, oppositionally, different" (494). Within an Australian settler colonial context, the notion of a western nature-culture dualism takes on particular significance, with Indigenous scholarships arguing that an English-speaking ontology inhibits the capacity to comprehend the types of relational practices that are inherently embedded in Australian Indigenous conceptualisations of place (Poelina et al. 2020; Wooltorton et al. 2020; Bawaka Country et al. 2016). As Poelina et al. (2020) assert, "English is not yet conducive of meaningful engagement with place. It is still a narrow, linear, disengaged language, full of dualities and exclusions" (9).

While scholarships in environmental humanism, eco-feminism and certain threads of Indigenous literatures understand the dualistic framing underpinning western ontologies to prevent a relational engagement with place, I argue that it is the capacity of Perth's citizens from western non-Indigenous subjectivities like myself to understand themselves *beyond* a human/nature binary that results in a partially haunted experience of the place of Perth. To contextualise this position I examine my ethnographic fragment *Kayaking*. Along with a

cohort of Year 11 high school students I am learning how to operate a kayak on the Swan River as part of the curriculum of a high school class called “outdoor education.” The point of the class is to learn how to be in the outdoors, with lessons focused on survival skills like how to procure water and make a fire, as well as outdoor sports like wind-surfing, abseiling and snorkelling. In this particular fragment our class is out on the water in the suburb of Maylands, early in the morning before the rest of the school day commences. I detail how I am drawn by the sensuous affects of the river and the wetlands that make up its banks – the dew-crusted texture of the sand, the wetness of the early morning air and the briny soup of the river. When our high school teacher calls for students to move out from the river’s marshy banks so that he can instruct us on paddle techniques, I note how the majority of the class seem to be in the same state as myself; wanting nothing more than to be pulled by the eerie atmospherics of the swampland to explore the hidden channels of water that snake between the riverbank’s reeds. My human sensory apparatus cannot help but respond to the place of the Swan River, implicating my subjectivity in the place of Perth. This experience is exemplary of what in geography literature is understood as a “more-than-human” type of framing. Described by Jamie Lorimer (2009, 344) as, “an approach to geography and social sciences more generally that is open to the agency of nonhumans and recognizes the material and affective interlinkages that cross between humans and nonhumans”, more-than-human literature argues that the relationship between human and nonhuman agents (plants, animals, landscapes etc.) is mutually co-creative. From this perspective, a nature/culture divide is dissolved by understanding humans and non-humans as “always already” entangled and enmeshed (Braun, 2005; Hinchliffe and Whatmore, 2006). Further, more-than-human scholarships place a strong emphasis on the human body as a sensemaking vessel through which a more-than-human reality is known (Choi 2016, 620). Embodied, sensorial and affective dimensions are seen as important modalities through which to understand the world (Choi, 618), bridging a nature/culture divide through a relationality of the senses.

It is this sensorial relationality that I invoke in the ethnographic fragments *Long-Necked Turtle* and *Pre-adolescence*, the latter in which myself and a friend lie with our backs on a Perth suburban road looking to the night sky. In the fragment I show that this memory of sensing the cusp of adolescence is wrapped up in the sensuous details of the summer evening. I make note of the way that the early evening air gives way to the cool relief of the

night, how our backs are warmed by the bitumen which still radiates the heat of the day, while allegorically referring to how the budding potential of our lives – the majority still to be lived – feels embodied by the night sky and its unknown expanse. The fragment is included to example how the specific affects of the place of Perth – in this instance, a warm summer evening – are inseparable from the experience of subjectivity (our pre-adolescence sense of self). These fragments are intended to illustrate how a Euro-Australian subjectivity (like my own) can carry the kinds of linguistic and ontological divisions discussed in the literatures above, and yet simultaneously be responsive to the rich ecology of place. I position this as a partially haunted existence in the place of Perth, and as characterised within the *Swamp Clubb 1*, *2* and *3* ethnographic fragments, one that is marked by a deep desire for a more meaningful engagement with place.

Conversely, I propose that the type of deep relationality described by the Indigenous and Noongar concept of "home-place" is one that understands place as profoundly haunted. While non-Indigenous subjectivities cannot claim an Indigenous sense of "home-place," I contend that what the place of Perth can offer the spatiality of haunting are relational practices that better understand people as haunted in place. This is embodied in Poelina et al. (2020) and Wooltorton et al.'s (2020) call for all people, including those from non-Indigenous subjectivities, to respectfully and ethically learn and enact the relational practices of the Indigenous concept of "becoming family with place." As Poelina et al. (2020) expand,

> We offer the notion of "becoming family with place" as an ontopoetically integrated practice of engagement, to facilitate place-based kinship and renewed participation. Country needs the discourse of love, care and relationship, in the languages it understands – one of which is kinaesthetic and empathic. It needs humans who feel and hear Country, and respond. It needs dance, singing and loving attention to awaken its energies, animate its spirits and entities, and activate its fertilities for regeneration. All around the world there are climate catastrophes and ecological tragedies. As well, there are regenerative ways of engaging Indigenous knowledge systems, and these are essential right now. Teachers and educators of all institutions and communities are called to this work. (13)

The invitation for non-Indigenous subjectivities to learn and practice the relational ontologies encompassed in "becoming family with place" holds great potential for better understanding people as haunted in place. However, as Wooltorton et al. (2020) emphasise, engaging with Indigenous knowledges requires decolonising methodologies that do not simply incorporate Indigenous ways-of-knowing-in-being (Higgins and Kim 2018, 21), but which also, "attend to the complex and ongoing inter- and intra-cultural forces and flows within and between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems (Higgins and Kim 2018, 124). Thus, I centre Wooltorton et al.'s (2020) position that learning about and participating in "becoming family with place" is Indigenous-led through mentoring, and is underpinned by an Indigenous critique of settler colonialism and its power (1). Further, Wooltorton et al. (2020) caution that,

> whilst the temptation might be to make haste with the establishment of Indigenous partnerships for a learning journey of transformation and "becoming family," as explained by Buchanan et al. (2019), it is important that the partnerships proceed slowly, carefully and gently. The learning journey is a life-long process. The learning journey metaphor enables a progressively deeper understanding of the interconnected concepts of family, kinship and place through cycles of experience, creativity and imagination, conceptual development and practical knowledge. (21)

As a deep, life-long process, Poelina et al.'s (2020) and Wooltorton et al.'s (2020) early refinement of "becoming family with place" as a practice that can be learned and enacted by non-Indigenous people is still within its first stages. I suggest its promise for making more of every Australian's potential to understand places, and their lives within them, as indelibly haunted.

**Apprehending the Ghost**

In the opening to this chapter I emphasise what the place of Perth contributes to the spatiality of haunting (discussed above), and secondly, what the type of scholarship necessary to apprehend and engage with this haunting looks like. In this section, I turn to this second emphasis and explicate my ethnographic fragments as the haunted research techniques I introduced in Chapter 1: conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost. I discuss how I enact these techniques to bring to life the experience of a haunted social

reality in Perth, and the way in which they ask the reader to affectively identify with the material put forth for political effect. I aver that textually performing the affective dimensions of a haunted social life and leaving some sense-making labour for the reader to do can be a more powerful means of engaging with sociological issues than traditional forms of social critique.

To contextualise this position, I return to Gordon's (1997) provocation that attending to the hauntedness of social life requires better methodological means of engaging with its affective dimensions,

> If haunting is a constitutive feature of social life, then we will need to be able to describe, analyze, and bring to life that aspect of social life, to be less fearful of animation. We ought to do this not only because it is more exact, but also because to the extent that we want our writing to change minds, to convince others that what we know is important and ought to matter, we need to be more in touch with the nature of how "the pieces of a world . . . littered all over a sociological landscape" (D. Smith 1987: 99) affect people. (22)

Here Gordon argues that bringing to life the essentially haunted nature of social reality is important for more urgent reasons than simply being "more exact." In proposing that to "change minds, to convince others," researchers and social scientists need to be more in touch with the affective dimensions of the social issues it is their responsibility to address, Gordon avers that conjuring the affects of a haunted social life is a more effective means of enacting social change. The notion of affectively embodying the politics of sociological issues as a more powerful engagement than explicating them in the social science disciplines is one that has been expressly examined by the likes of Rich Heyman (2000), Joao Biehl (2013) and Daniel Miller (2001), but it is perhaps Ian Cook et al. (2006; 2007) who best describes the reasons behind such a manoeuvre in his work on the politics of food geographies,

> If we want to make a difference, these radical postdisciplinary food studies need to be less disciplined and less finished in order, as Rich Heyman (2000: 299) puts it, to "Keep… open the problematics of knowing beyond the end of writing" ... We could make our writing much more widely accessible, leave things open to interpretation, give our readers (and other audiences) some

> sense-making to do, so they can get more involved, put more of themselves into the picture, draw upon their existing knowledges, ethical frameworks, and so on. (2006, 662)

The first part of this quote I would like to address is Cook's working of Heyman's call to, "keep... open the problematics of knowing beyond the end of writing" (662). For Cook, in opposition to traditional forms of social critique, refraining from closing a problematic is a more effective means of engaging with it. This has important synchronicities with how I have theorised haunting as that which cannot be closed. If, as I argue in Chapter 1, haunting can be understood as a signpost of indeterminacy, keeping open a problematic beyond the end of writing is a haunted way of enacting research. This is the modus I have written to in the ethnographic fragments *The Doorman* and *Pregnancy*. These fragments index the racialised politics of Perth's colonial legacy, yet within the fragments I do not use these terms, or provide context or explanation of the events transpiring. Instead, I have worked to conjure the way these encounters affectively unfolded in the moment, without telling the reader what to politically or analytically make of it. In *The Doorman*, I conjure the scene of an Indigenous couple who are refused entry to a free, evening outdoor event in Northbridge (Perth's inner city entertainment precinct), while as a non-Indigenous white person queuing behind them I am conversely granted immediate access. This encounter is weighted with the racialised politics of the city's colonial legacy: in the excuse the doorman finds to deny the couple entry, in the way he "softens and loses the gruffness" when he turns to me, and in the way that the woman in the couple incisively observes to her partner that, "this is not for us." While *The Doorman* provides productive material for an explicit analysis of Perth's racial politics, instead I have crafted the ethnographic fragment to implicitly convey the way these sociological issues charge this encounter with affective tension and heft. My emphasis is squarely upon evoking the quality of the encounter (tense, enigmatic, irresolvable) rather than analytically explicating it. In doing so, I have used haunted research techniques to conjure the affective quality of the encounter, and to respect the way that it is experienced in enigmatic and irresolvable terms by refraining from explaining it. In refusing to didactically set out what the reader should analytically make of the material, I deliberately keep its interpretation open to not only more accurately write to the way that a haunted social life is experienced, but to better "make (the) difference" that Cook et al. (2006, 662) implores of social science researchers.

To further explicate this I would like to turn to the second half of Cook et al.'s quote above, where he agitates for the social sciences to, "leave things open to interpretation, give our readers (and other audiences) some sense-making to do, so they can get more involved, put more of themselves into the picture, draw upon their existing knowledges, ethical frameworks, and so on" (2006, 662). Here Cook et al. propose that by refraining from explicitly explaining what should be made of research evidence and material, readers are moved to, "put themselves in the picture, in the process" (2007, 1118). Leaving the reader to do some of the sense-making asks them to draw on their own experiential knowledge, to think and feel with the material, a process which moves them to identify their own lives in what is being put forth (2006, 662). In the ethnographic fragment *Pregnancy*, I recount an exchange I have on the streets of Perth with a small group of Indigenous men and one woman. After dark, and in the city's entertainment precinct walking alone, I feel vulnerable in my highly pregnant state. When I hear some figures further up the street swearing, and then see them making their way toward me, I worry. My concern, it turns out, is unfounded, and we have a humorous exchange connecting over the shared act of birth and having children. Within the fragment itself, however, I do not provide this affective summary. Instead, in cleaving to the specifics of the encounter, I leave affective labour for the reader to do. My intention is that the reader arrives at the summary I have just given above, with the modus that in getting there themselves, in undertaking the work of empathically identifying (or not) with the encounter to affectively make sense of it, they gain a more personally relevant understanding of the way that (in this particular fragment) Perth as a city haunted by its colonial context is not just experienced in the traumatic terms it is often portrayed, but also in instances of humour and levity. In writing to the way that the city's haunted inheritance is characterised by not just instances of overt marginalisation (*The Doorman*), but also by moments of light-heartedness (*Pregnancy*), I work to more subtly texture the way in which Perth's racial politics have been characterised in social science research. In asking the reader to recognise their own arts of living in these encounters, I have crafted my ethnographic fragments to answer Cook et al.'s (2006) provocation of eliciting identification and empathy from the reader for political effect.

The emphases of this chapter have been to examine what the place of Perth yields to spatial understandings of the ghost, and to investigate what haunted research techniques can offer the practice of sociological inquiry. I have argued that conjuring and respecting the

enigma of the ghost, as encompassed in the ethnographic fragments, are better equipped to engage with spectral experience in the place of Perth than traditional forms of social science critique. In better apprehending the ghost, I position them as addressing Gordon's provocation for the social sciences to be less fearful of animation in order to "change minds" (1997, 662). The ethnographic fragments also provide the substance from which to draw to argue for the significance of Poelina et al.'s (2020) and Wooltorton et al.'s (2020) call for all people living on Indigenous Country, including non-Indigenous subjectivities, to ethically learn the relational practices of "becoming family with place" (Poelina et al. 2020). These Indigenous and Noongar relational ontologies understand people as unequivocally interrelated with place, and I position learning and practicing them in an ethically and culturally secure paradigm as contextualised by Wooltorton et al. (2020, 918-919) is to better understand places, and our lives with them, as profoundly haunted.

# Conclusion

In its most essentialised form, this research has been a careful examination of the merits of uncertainty. Using the conceptual metaphor of the ghost and its mechanism of haunting, it has unfolded within the field site of Perth, and through social science disciplines that typically value certainty and foreclosure. From this context arises the two central aims of the research: to examine what the place of Perth can contribute to knowledge on the spatiality of the ghost, and what forms of critical and creative inquiry are necessary to apprehend a haunted sociality of place.

In chapter 1 I contextualise how the spatial dimensions of haunting have been overshadowed by a scholarly emphasis on the ghost's temporality (del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 2013, 20; Lee 2017, 4). Showing how the ghost has been theorised to trouble a western sense of time as linear, I employ the arguments of Massey (2005) to aver that the ghost can equally be understood to problematise the understanding of place as fixed, stable and one-dimensional. Through the works of de Certeau (2014), Edensor (2005) and Jonker and Till (2009), I aver that the ghost renders place as unfinished, in-process and above all, relational. These qualities can be understood to exist not simply as part of spectral place, but also as an inherent experience of social life itself (Gordon 1997, 7). Ambiguous, affective and embodied rather than rational, conscious and logical, spectrality-interested scholars like Holloway and Kneale (2008) and Edensor (2005) argue that haunted experience is inarticulate in scholarly practices that value reason and coherence. To fathom a haunted sociality of place is to do research in a particular way. The indeterminacy of the ghost is not easily visible to the practices of certainty and foreclosure that characterise dominant modes of social science inquiry. Rather than being understood as a shortcoming, this research project reveals haunting's inarticulacy with normative research practices as an opportunity to develop spectrally-informed research techniques and approaches. Like Stewart (2007; 2012; 2013), this has resulted in the production of ethnographic fragments as a textual form that best articulates the heterogenous and palimpsest-like experience of a haunted social life.

What this research's examination of the case study of Brookfield Place and the wider field site of Perth shows is that the spatiality of haunting reveals place to be radically

indeterminate. In Chapter 3 this can be seen in not just the way that the high-end corporate site of Brookfield Place is haunted by its omitted history as a financially ruinous hole in the ground, but also in how Matej's artistic attempts to embrace the multitudinous nature of spectral space is as shot-through by indeterminacy as attempts to control it. If Chapter 3 affirms that attempting to manage and control the ghost is inevitably beset by hauntings, then Chapter 4 demonstrates that rather than trying to manage spectres and fix the indeterminacy of space, places, and our lives within them, are better served by accepting their unfinished, in-process and relational qualities. This means understanding people as haunted in place, and asks them to take on the kinds of relational practices that recognise and sustain the interrelatedness of humans and place.

A significant contribution of this thesis to social science research is its critical investigation of the *hauntedness* of the concept of haunting itself. In order to talk about research concepts, to employ them to do work, connections must be made and a coherence relied upon. The very act of making connections, however, is equally an act of leaving out, of making omissions, and to work with haunting as a coherent concept would be to work against its nub; that nothing exists as an intact and replete closure (Holloway and Kneale 2008). As so aptly illustrated in the story of Borges' (1998) map which opens Chapter 3, attempting seamlessness inevitably generates sutures, gaps and omissions. Hence, while in this thesis I have discussed haunting as a concept, it would be remiss not to acknowledge its seams and sutures. The task for me has been to find ways of theoretically and methodologically working to these seams and sutures (the "hauntedness" of haunting). To write a thesis is to pull together theory, methodology and fieldwork, to say something about the world, to put forward a suggestion of how something works. In many cases, the aim is to create seamlessness, to present a logic and a rationale that is impermeable and impervious to leaks. In the case of this research, such an attempt would undermine the integrity of the ideas and positions with which I work. Thus, as much as is possible within the requirements of a thesis, I have taken on approaches that are informed by the ghost's open-endedness, like that of non-representational theory, affect theory and a haunted methodological approach. However, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, no matter how much one tries there is no way of bypassing the indeterminacy of the ghost, and it would be remiss not to acknowledge the tension of employing the very practices that spectrality haunts to expand new knowledges on the ghost.

And yet, something must still be made of the ghost. This research project offers the haunted research techniques of conjuring and respecting the enigma of the ghost (demonstrated in Chapter 3 and 4's ethnographic fragments), as well as spectral reframings of traditional research epistemologies to better enable researchers to perceive and come to terms with a haunted sociality of place. To do so is to more effectively engage with the sociological issues from which the social sciences arise. In a haunted manner, following a line of research inquiry rarely leads to closure. More commonly, it begets new tangents and off-shoots that do not fit within the scope of the original project. Such is the case in my examination of what the wider field site of Perth contributes to knowledge on the hauntedness of place. While the participation of non-Indigenous subjectivities in Indigenous concepts like "becoming family with place" (Wooltorton et al., 2020; Poelina et al. 2020) present innovative and exciting possibilities for understanding people as haunted in place, further attention to the pragmatics of how it can be practiced is required to fulfill its tremendous potential. In the years since I began this research project, the ethics surrounding the representation of Indigenous people, knowledge and places has progressed considerably. In engaging with Indigenous and Noongar concepts like I have in Chapter 4, I am aware of the risk of perpetuating the appropriation of Indigenous knowledge by non-Indigenous people. However, if, as Poelina et al. (2020) and Wooltorton et al. (2020) propose, the implications of learning and participating in such concepts is to redress some of the colonial paradigms that exacerbate cultural and ecological harm, then further knowledge of how to ethically and respectfully engage the relational practices of "becoming family with place" is of great significance. Who can undertake that research, and the ethics of participating in Indigenous concepts for non-Indigenous subjectivities are some of the lines of inquiry entailed in further developing the exciting possibilities of this (haunted) work.

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