

When the studio left the room:

**What do Wallace's paintings and stories of the Eastern Arrernte
homelands reveal?**

Judith Lovell

B. Vis. Art. Monash University; Gr. Cert. TTL. RMIT University;

MA. CAT. RMIT University.

June 2014.

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

Abstract

The work of this thesis is to construct an intercultural interface in which a sample of eighteen paintings and stories are considered by researcher and artist as a body of knowledge. The sample is drawn from the contemporary painting and storytelling that Eastern Arrernte artist Kathleen Kemarre Wallace produced between 2003 and 2010 and which represents many public attributes of her homelands. A theory of practice emerges that encompasses the multimodal nature of cultural literacies as deep and cultural knowledge praxis. Wallace's art objects, one result of cultural literacy praxis, are available to audience who are (a), culturally connected to the homelands source and (b), those engaged through the cosmopolitan Aboriginal arts market or (c), other everyday events.

The art objects encompass visual, aural and oral, forms of data and a rubric for interpretation draws on hermeneutic circles of conversational dialogue and visual elicitation as well as holistic, thematic and theoretic coding and recoding of the sample from individual paintings and stories. The researcher approaches the methodological challenges of this multimodal data set as a bricoleuse working with the available methods (tools) to construct a suitable methodological bricolage.

The artist and the researcher engage in a process of interpretation that determines growing insight of a public homelands habitus, constructed against Wallace's inheritance of knowledge and her Indigenous Standpoint, and influences of western knowledge the researcher brings. Findings from the data reveal dispositions and attributes in the artist's work draw from the opportunity to combine contemporary and ancient praxis in the mediation and transmission of knowledge. Among the findings are human and more-than-human ecology of the homelands, the

impact and mediation of change within the homelands habitus, and the form relational nature of cultural literacy praxis.

The fluid, ancient anytime and everyday temporality represented in Wallace's paintings and storytelling of the homelands is a characteristic of this contemporary-ancient praxis continuum.

The organisational structure of the kin and skin relationship system, and the intergenerational transmission and maintenance of knowledge are extant in the paintings as systems of organisation evident in the body of knowledge Wallace's work represents. Dispositions and delimits of this intercultural interface reveal Wallace constructs against these extant cultural social and organisational structures, revealing insight layered into the paintings through her artistry, drawing on stories inherited from elders, ancestors and the beings active at the beginning of consciousness.

A Theory of Cultural Literacy Praxis emerges from this thesis as agency of the arts-based and collaborative research.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge Kathleen Kemarre Wallace as the Eastern Arrernte artist and story-teller whose paintings and stories inspired the questions and considerations at the heart of this work. I extend my heart-felt thanks to Wallace and her family for enduring friendship. My thanks and respect extend to others for their generous support and humour through friendships and work partnerships. With Wallace, I also acknowledge Veronica Perrurle Dobson (OAM), Agnes Perrurle Abbott, Margaret Kemarre Turner (OAM) and Teresa Penangke Alice in particular for their wisdom and knowledge revealed through time spent together on homelands, when the studio left the room. I also thank the artists of Keringke Arts past and present, particularly June Smith, Rosina Ryder, Patricia Ellis, Serena Hayes, Camilla Hayes, Belinda Hayes, Josette Young, Evelyn Young, Lucille Young, Justin Hayes, Cedric Ross, Stanley Wallace, Chris Wallace, Deanna Williams, Muriel Williams, Jilary Lynch, Stacy Davis, Camilla Young, Leonie Young and Marie Young for many prolific and inspiring days in the studio.

I thank my main supervisor, Peter Radoll, who gave me the strategic advice and gentle criticism essential to honing a fledgling researcher. I thank Carole Kayrooz and Barbara Pamphilon for strong foundational support in the early phases of thesis crafting. I thank my advisors. Jaky Troy recognised a puzzle and responded with inspiration and generosity; Virginia Kaufman-Hall expressed belief in this research and gave recognition and practical encouragement; and John Guenther bestowed a pragmatism towards the task at hand that confirmed the deep insight of an experienced adult educator. I acknowledge generous reflection from Samantha Disbray and Michael Walsh at a time critical to forging a theoretic path.

Varied and multimodal inspiration also came from researchers and practitioners of great experience. I thank them. I also thank Jennifer Green and Myfany Turpin for their unassuming inclusive practice; Gerry Katz for unashamedly carving a space for arts-based inquiry with us through the program at RMIT University, where the kernel of this work resided; Kerrie Bedson for reminding me that absence from the studio is a transitory choice, not a life sentence.

The University of Canberra (UC) provided a research training place enabling me to undertake this thesis part-time and at a geographic distance. I would like to acknowledge the wonderful service of the UC library and research office staff in supporting my academic and administrative engagement with the University over that distance. The Oral History Association of South Australia (NT branch) provided support to Wallace and me for data collection through an Oral History Archive Grant from the Northern Territory Government. Francis Goode and Adam MacFie provided oral history and audio recording technology tips. My employer, Ninti One, provided me with leave to complete the-write up of the thesis, and I acknowledge the assistance of my Ninti One colleagues Mark Ashley, Ange Vincent, Lyn Allen, Jan Ferguson and Steve Blake in approving and supporting the task. Thank you to Rolf Gerritsen at Charles Darwin University campus in Alice Springs for making access to CDU available; and to other occupants of the corrals for their insights: Don Zoellener, Fleur Stelling, Sam Osborne and Delyna Baxter. I thank Ruth Davies who provided professional editorial comment in line with the University of Canberra and the Institute of Professional Editors; and the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation for providing the opportunity to work with Ruth.

I am especially grateful for the love, consideration and support of my family: my husband Al, whose belief in me inspired this work and who accommodated my need to be absently pre-occupied or away in the field over these years; Jess and Noah, my gracious sons growing up to the refrain: 'Mum's home but she's in the study'; my sisters Carrie and Buff, who've always helped and believed.

Table of Contents

When the studio left the room:.....	i
What do Wallace’s paintings and stories of the Eastern Arrernte homelands reveal?	i
Certificate of Authorship of Thesis.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xxv
List of Tables	xxix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.0. Outline of Chapter One.....	1
1.1. General overview and aims.....	1
1.2. Orientations to knowledge	10
1.3. Protocols and values	11
1.4. Engaging literature waves.....	13
1.5. Purpose and relevance.....	18
1.6. Key terms used in this research.	20
1.7. Overview of construction.....	28

1.8. Rationale and significance	29
1.9. Assumptions.....	31
1.10. Limitations	33
1.11. Significant events of a complex contemporary context.....	35
1.12. Overviews of chapters.....	37
Chapter Two: Engagement with literature	41
2.0. Literature waves.....	41
2.0.1. Rhythm of waves	42
2.1. The questions framing engagement with literature.....	45
2.1.2. Engaging literature.....	45
2.1.3. Overview of key search returns	48
2.1.4. Ethics and interpretation – valuing and believing.....	51
2.1.5. Summary.....	55
2.2. Engagement with literature in initial construction of the bricolage – valuing and doing..	55
2.2.1. Praxis.....	56
2.2.2. Indigenous Knowledge	57
2.2.3. Points of convergence with Indigenous Knowledge literature	58

2.2.4. Insight of everyday Eastern Arrernte praxis	60
2.2.5. Indigenous Standpoint Theory	61
2.2.6. Art, form and relationality	63
2.2.7. Summary	65
2.3. Theoretic and philosophic underpinnings – knowing and being	66
2.3.1. Everyday agency	66
2.3.2. Perception and experience	70
2.3.3. Bourdieu’s habitus and theory	73
2.3.4. Bourdieu’s criteria for a Theory of Practice	75
2.3.5. Summary	76
2.4. Multimodal contemporary Aboriginal arts and cultural heritage – knowing, valuing, believing, being and doing	78
2.4.1. Cosmopolitan Aboriginal art industry	78
2.4.2. Ethnographic record of innovative painting	81
2.4.3. Links with ephemeral and intangible modalities	82
2.4.4. Links with tangible expression	85
2.4.5. Contemporary art as public statement	86
2.4.6. Land claims and cultural identity	87

2.4.7. Summary	89
2.5. Methods, tools and process – doing and knowing	89
2.5.1. Convergence and divergence	90
2.5.2. Arts-based praxis	91
2.5.3. Orality and interpretation	92
2.5.4. Orality and literature	93
2.5.5. Summary	95
2.6. Gaps in literature	95
2.6.1. A contemporary aboriginal artist’s work as a body of knowledge.	95
2.6.2. Contemporary art as mediator of change impact	96
2.6.3. The impact of multimodal experiential communication on learning.....	96
Chapter Three: Methodological construction	99
3.0. Methodological considerations	99
3.0.1. Methodological premise.....	100
3.0.2. Methodological paradigm	102
3.0.3. Philosophical assumptions	103
3.0.4. Relationship of bricoleuse, Wallace and the data	105

3.1	Theoretical and philosophical literature informing methodology.....	108
3.1.1.	Interpretive bricoleuse	109
3.1.2.	Interpretive bricolage	110
3.1.3.	Multidisciplinary flexibility	111
3.1.4.	Hermeneutics	113
3.1.5.	Grounded Theory	115
3.1.6.	Visual research.....	118
3.1.7.	Tools of this interpretive bricolage.....	119
3.2.	Data collection and management.....	122
3.2.1.	Database catalogue, attribute coding	123
3.2.2.	Field work matrix, holistic coding	125
3.2.3.	Qualitative rubric, thematic and theoretic coding.....	126
3.3.	Methodological rigour	129
3.3.1.	Saturation	129
3.3.2.	Coding.....	132
3.4.	Research questions.....	133
3.4.1.	Theoretical questions	134

3.4.2. Method questions	140
3.4.3. Analysis questions	145
3.4.4. Values questions	147
3.5. Methodological framework.....	151
3.5.1. The field data	153
3.5.2. The oral data	154
3.5.3. The visual data	157
3.6. Methodological limitations	158
3.7. Ethics.....	159
Chapter Four: Data management and framework.....	161
4.0. Holistic data management and framework	161
4.1. Holistic data management.....	162
4.1.1. Gathering data.....	163
4.1.2. Considering the data sample	164
4.1.3. Context.....	165
4.2. Holistic data framework.....	165
4.2.1. Results of attribute coding	167

4.2.2. Results of data sorting.....	170
4.2.3. Sampling matrix.....	173
4.3. Treatment of sample	173
4.3.1. Coding overview.....	174
4.3.2. Paintings and stories	176
Chapter Five: Descriptive findings	177
5.0. Descriptive thematic findings and summaries from sample	177
5.1. Category of voice: biographic, anecdotal and educational themes.....	178
5.1.1. Descriptive findings from the biographic sample.....	178
5.1.2. Summary of voice: biography findings.....	182
5.1.3. Descriptive findings from the anecdotal sample.....	184
5.1.4. Summary of voice: anecdotal findings	189
5.1.5. Descriptive findings from the educational sample.....	191
5.1.6. Summary of voice: educational findings	194
5.2. Category content and themes relationship, ancestors and spirit world.....	197
5.2.1. Descriptive findings from the relationship sample	197
5.2.2. Summary of content: relationship findings.....	202

5.2.3. Descriptive findings from the ancestor sample.....	204
5.2.4 Summary of content: ancestor findings	210
5.2.5. Descriptive findings from spirit world sample	212
5.2.6. Summary of content: spirit world	216
Chapter Six: Theoretical findings	219
6.0. Theoretical findings from recoded transcripts	219
6.1. Theoretical domain: Identity	220
6.1.1. Anperirrentye findings in relation to identity	221
6.1.2. Homelands and country: Findings in relation to Identity	222
6.1.3. Cosmology: Findings in relation to Identity	223
6.1.4. Language: Findings in relation to Identity	225
6.1.5. Audience: Findings in relation to Identity	226
6.1.6. Praxis: Findings in relation to Identity.....	227
6.2. Theoretical domain: Country	229
6.2.1. Human and more-than-human ecology: Findings in relation to Country	230
6.2.2. Cosmology: Findings in relation to Country	231
6.2.3. Homelands, Sites: Findings in relation to Country.....	232

6.2.4. Resources: Findings in relation to Country	234
6.2.5. Movement, connections: Findings in relation to Country	235
6.2.6. Identity, knowledge: Findings in relation to Country	237
6.3. Theoretical domain: Knowledge.....	238
6.3.1. Multimodality: Findings in relation to Knowledge	239
6.3.2. Praxis: Findings in relation to Knowledge.....	241
6.3.3. Agency and opportunity structure: Findings in relation to Knowledge.....	242
6.3.4. Identity and country: Findings in relation to Knowledge	243
6.3.5. Cosmology and human ecology: Findings in relation to Knowledge.....	244
6.4. Theoretical domains: Resources	245
6.4.1. Agency and opportunity structures: Findings in relation to Resources	246
6.4.2. Environment: Findings in relation to Resources.....	248
6.4.3. Anpernirrentye: Findings in relation to Resources	248
6.4.4. Skills, technology: Findings in relation to Resources.....	249
6.4.5. Knowledge: Findings in relation to Resources	250
6.5. Theoretical domain: Time.....	251
6.5.1. Cosmological and cyclic: Findings in relation to Time	252

6.5.2. Voice: Findings in relation to Time	253
6.5.3. Context: Findings in relation to Time.....	254
6.5.4. Generation: Findings in relation to Time.....	255
6.5.5. Content: Findings in relation to Time.....	257
Chapter Seven: Synthesis.....	259
7.0. Synthesised findings	259
7.1. Biography (ayengerle akaltyirreke)	260
7.2. Anecdote (alakenhe angkeme).....	261
7.3. Education, learning, knowing (akaltye).....	263
7.4. Kin and skin relationship system (anpernrrentye)	265
7.5. Ancestors (arrekwerle-arenye).....	267
7.6. Ancestral beings, spirit world (altyerre)	269
7.7. Identity (arrekantherre)	271
7.8. Country (apmere).....	273
7.9. Knowledge (alhengkweltye)	276
7.10. Resources (mpwelekake)	278
7.11. Time (arrurle).....	281

Chapter Eight: Analysis and Interpretation.....	283
8.0. Analysis and interpretation	283
8.0.1. A review of premise and process as praxis.....	283
8.0.2. A final montage.....	286
8.0.3. A contribution to community and academy.....	287
8.0.4. Analysis and interpretation of a cultural literacy praxis	289
8.0.5. Construction of an original theory	290
8.1. What insight of practical activity derives from this constructed interface?.....	291
8.1.1. Praxis.....	291
8.1.2. A body of knowledge.....	294
8.1.3. Domains, themes and attributes as findings.....	296
8.1.4. Insight	299
8.1.5. Interface	300
8.1.6. Relational knowledge transmission	302
8.1.7. Intergenerational knowledge transmission	305
8.2. What influences of Eastern Arrernte habitus are apparent through interpreting Wallace’s paintings and stories as a body of knowledge?.....	308
8.2.1. Locus and source.....	308

8.2.2. Temporal considerations	311
8.2.3. Impetus and praxis	313
8.2.4. Art, artistry and representation	314
8.2.5. Standpoints.....	318
8.3. What did the bricolage of findings reveal?	321
8.3.1. Cultural Interface	321
8.3.2. Intercultural interface.....	323
8.3.3. Convergence and cultural interface	325
8.3.4. Transmission, maintenance and cultural interface.....	329
8.3.5. Habitus and cultural interface	330
8.4. What new insights can be drawn?.....	332
8.4.1. Change impact and the mediation of cultural literacy	333
8.4.2. The dispositions and habitus of human and more-than-human ecology in Wallace's praxis.....	337
8.4.3. The Theory of Cultural Literacy Praxis	339
Chapter Nine: Discussion	345
9.0. Questions framing the discussion	345
9.1. How did the hermeneutic of temporality play out in the artist's work?	345

9.2. How are new insights interpreted by the bricoleuse?	347
9.3. How would cultural literacy praxis sustain and inform ensuing generations or those occupying an intercultural interface?.....	350
9.4. Questions arising from this research.....	351
Chapter Ten: Conclusion	353
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms	365
Appendix B: An example of the methodological rubric	373
Spirit world: Major painting Five Ngangkere Looking for Sick Spirit (93-05)	373
Audiencing – Where Did It Happen?.....	373
Audiencing – What’s the Story?.....	374
Audiencing – Who Was It Told Too?.....	375
Elicitation – What Do You See?.....	377
Elicitation with Wallace – What does the artist see?.....	378
Summary.....	382
References.....	385

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Bricolage informed by Wallace’s paintings and storytelling and the bicoleuse’s experience of art and artistry, constructed as text in a culturally safe interface.	44
Figure 2.2: Central tenets developed and agreed from the outset of the bricolage between Wallace and the bricoleuse, and underpinning its construction.....	51
Figure 3.1: The three primary data management tools.	123
Figure 3.4: Sample identified through holistic and attribute coding to which the methodological rubric was applied.....	125
Figure 3.2: Data management using attribute and holistic coding of paintings and stories.	126
Figure 3.3: Domains identified through coding phases applied to the text from the methodological rubric	133
Figure 4.1: Total units of Wallace’s works catalogued 2003–2010 by year at Keringke Arts...	167
Figure 4.2: 100% of Wallace’s work sold between 2003–2010. The graph shows the total sale value by year 2003–2010. The graph is not in \$ to protect Wallace’s privacy.....	168
Figure 4.3: Quantity of catalogued work Wallace produced by year 2003–2010, canvas/linen or ceramic/other.....	169
Figure 4.4: The two categories of voice and content and the six themes identified in holistic sorting and descriptive coding.	170
Figure 4.5: Percentage of paintings by themes 2003-2010.....	171
Figure 4.6: Percentage of stories and paintings by categories of voice and content.	172
Figure 4.7: The percentage of paintings in categories Major Painting, Minor Painting, Major Story and Frament.....	172
Figure 4.8: Matrix of paintings selected as a representative sample for methodological rubric	179

Figure 5.1: Wallace’s tyepetye describing <i>ilthe</i> (KK. Wallace 2009, pers. comm., 19 November)	200
Figure 6.1: Coding frequency for domain IDENTITY sorted by media into Major painting, Minor painting and Major story against holistic themes.	220
Figure 6.2: Domain of identity with attributes.	221
Figure 6.3: Coding frequency for domain COUNTRY sorted by media into Major painting, Minor painting and Major story against holistic themes.	229
Figure 6.4: Domain of Country with attributes.	230
Figure 6.5: Coding frequency for domain KNOWLEDGE sorted by media into Major painting, Minor painting and Major story against holistic themes.	238
Figure 6.6: Domain of Knowledge with attributes.	239
Figure 6.7: Coding frequency for domain RESOURCES sorted by media into Major painting, Minor painting and Major story against holistic themes.	245
Figure 6.8: Domain of resources with attributes.	246
Figure 6.9: Coding frequency for domain TIME sorted by media into Major painting, Minor painting and Major story against holistic themes.	251
Figure 6.10: Attributes of the domain of time.	252
Figure 7.1: Domains of biography, ayengerle akaltyirreke	260
Figure 7.2: Domains of anecdote, alakenhe angkeme	261
Figure 7.3: Domains of education, learning, knowing, akaltye	263
Figure 7.4: Domains of kin and skin relationship system, anpernrrentye	265
Figure 7.5: Domains of ancestors, arrekwerle-arenye	267
Figure 7.6: Domains of ancestral beings, spirt world (altyerre)	269

Figure 7.7 Domains of identity, arrekatherre.....	271
Figure 7.8: Domains of country, apmere	273
Figure 7.9: Domains of knowledge, alhengkweltye	276
Figure 7.10: Domains of resources, mpwelekake.....	278
Figure 7.11: Domains of time, arrurle	281
Figure 8.1: Dispositions emerging as findings from coding Wallace’s interpretation of her work, achieved through transcribed conversational dialogue, elicitation and iteration (Eastern Arreente terms).....	296
Figure 8.2: Dispositions emerging as findings from coding Wallace’s interpretation of her work, achieved through transcribed conversational dialogue, elicitation and iteration (English terms).	297
Figure 8.3: Following Ray’s (2013) conceptual diagram, the point of convergence of interpretive bricolage constructed as cultural interface.....	327

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Considerations and influences of the rubric for visual and oral data	127
Table 3.2: Qualitative methodological rubric and process	128