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COVER PAGE

Monster Mines, Dugouts and Abandoned Villages: A Composite Narrative of Burra's Heritage

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Monster mines, dugouts and abandoned villages: A composite narrative of Burra's heritage

In a bid to join recent efforts to develop innovative approaches to heritage, this article argues that adopting a collaborative mode of inquiry is a useful way of coming to terms with the plurality of ways heritage landscapes are enlivened by their visitors. It also points to some of the advantages of incorporating researchers' personal experiences into academic research. With a focus on the Burra Heritage Trail in South Australia (geared around the Burra Heritage Passport), the article brings together four sets of research experiences, each informed by different (though cognisant) disciplinary backgrounds: art history, anthropology, heritage studies and tourism planning. The result is a form of experimental autoethnographic writing in which four voices reflect upon their embodied, sensuous and mobile experiences as 'tourist' moving through the same places, thereby offering multiple ways of knowing and *telling* about a single setting.

Keywords: Burra; heritage landscapes; autoethnography; heritage; narrative; the Burra Heritage Passport.

As a practice, 'heritage tourism' engages with an intricate constellation of concepts: mobility and place, history and the present, power, memory, culture, community and identity. Each rubs up against the others to produce spatially and temporally diverse landscapes, punctuated with an array of social cues, characters, histories and contexts. It is in this flow of meaning making that heritage narratives are encountered, including those that lay beyond official or commercial manifestations. When we focus on such narratives, heritage landscapes quickly come alive with the ghosts of stories, to borrow from Taussig (2012); stories that are glimpsed in brief snatches before they are folded back into the 'composite of lives' that have already passed before. Our interest in this paper lies with such ghosts and their meaning, and, in particular, with the way they are encountered, felt, sensed and intuited in the township of Burra, which is approximately 160 kilometres north of Adelaide. Burra is known today primarily for its mining past, narrated via a heritage trail (called The Burra Heritage Trail) that has transformed the way the town is experienced, not only by its visitors but also by those who live there. Marketing processes have come to support this distinctive product-experience, and thus a former township from a time long ago has quite recently assumed a new

significance, one that supports a more-or-less singular version of its past: copper mining in the mid-1800s. In turning to such marketing narratives, we ask: has the town been depleted of its other meanings and stories? Does it remain a place of embodied encounters, animated by the making, knowing and doing of heritage? And how does the visitor impact upon the affective resonances and emotional registers Burra's heritage landscapes afford?

To answer these questions, we turned to the methodological practice of collaborative autoethnography as a means to research the social world in concert with others (Bochner, 2012. Importantly, we were also keen to test this approach for its applicability to the field of heritage studies). As a method, collaborative autoethnography relies on a narrative style of writing through which different authorial voices bring an array of assumptions, intellectual itineraries and backgrounds to bear on a research topic. In this paper, we attempt to magnify just four voices and experiment with creative, literary forms of reporting on our research. The four voices included belong to that of a retired male art historian, a young female anthropologist in the early stages of an academic career, a female mid-career heritage scholar and a female tourism planner transitioning to retirement. All four are Australian or British Australian whose ancestry originates from Europe. This mode of reporting has already been commenced by scholars in cognate fields of cultural studies and cultural geography (see DeSilvey, 2012; Hill, 2013; Hoskins, 2015; Knudsen and Stage, 2015), but is seldom used in heritage studies (see the work of Byrne, 2013, however). In following their lead, we have tried to create a sort of composite autoethnography in the form of four vignettes. Crucially, our vignettes do not comprise unitary or 'real' representations of each author; we are not certain that kind of reliability in self-representation is possible. Rather, we offer fragmented, fluid and partial accounts − invariably context-laden − that describe our modes of participation in the 'heritagescape' of Burra (after Garden 2006), with particular emphasis on the often overlooked emotional registers of engagement.

Burra: A Brief Introduction

Burra is a small town located in the near periphery of Adelaide, nestled on the eastern extent of one of Australia's oldest wine regions, the Clare Valley, and on the edges of 'the outback' (see Figure 1). In various marketing materials developed to support the town's tourism enterprise, primarily by the local council and National Trust, it is described as being 'rich with mining heritage' – the 'real history' of Burra − with 'most of its 1840s legacy … intact' (South Australia, 2018: n.p.). The *Visit Burra* website goes on to argue that '[t]he surest way to get the *whole picture* is to buy a Burra Heritage Passport, which gives you instant access to see, hear and touch the past' (Visit Burra, 2018: n.p., emphasis added). The story of Burra on offer commences, in chronological terms, with the establishment of the town in 1845, marking Burra out as one of the earliest mining towns in Australia, founded with luck and the discovery of rich copper deposits close to Burra Burra Creek by a shepherd named William Streair (Johns, 2006). In September of the same year, with the copper lode confirmed, mining operations commenced under the names of the *Burra Burra Mine* and the *Princess Royal Mine*, triggering a 'boom' and the subsequent emergence of the area as a strong lure for miners, particularly the Cornish and the German (Johns, 2006).

INSERT FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE

Figure 1. The township of Burra, viewed from the Historic Burra Mine Site (Source: Emma Waterton)

Of particular significance to the town's tourism narrative is the establishment of *Burra Burra* as Australia's first great mine – or the Monster Mine –, as well as one of the world's richest.

By the late 1840s, the number of those seeking to make a living from the mines had reached around 5000, far exceeding planned accommodation in the township. By way of remedy, incoming miners and their families were housed in small excavated caves burrowed deep into the alluvial banks of Burra Creek, the remains of which are included on the heritage trail, where they are referred to as the Burra Dugouts (Auhl, 1986; Bell, 1998). The surrounding landscape, already bearing scars from the mines themselves, was further altered with the establishment of smelters nearby, which almost entirely denuded the area of trees. Likewise rendered invisible – both within the landscape itself and its supporting tourism narrative, are the local traditional owners, the Ngadjuri, who remain entirely absent from the trail's interpretation (Birt, 2004). From 1849, the area strengthened its footholds with the establishment of a number of small towns, commencing with Redruth (associated with the Cornish), then Llwchwr (associated with the Welsh), Aberdeen (associated with the Scottish) and Hampton (associated with the English), as well as Kooringa, an Aboriginal word that is perhaps the only legible reference to the Ngadjuri and their presence in the area (Bell, 1998). All were initially owned by the South Australian Mining Association, until the five townships formed into the modern town of Burra, or 'The Burra', in 1872 (Johns, 2006). Despite a prosperous beginning, the mining industry was short-lived: the cessation of operations in November 1877 occurred just over twenty years after mining commenced (Prideaux, 2002). From that point onwards, the town turned its attentions to pastoralism before returning briefly to mining in the 1960s, at which time the Burra mine was worked as an open cut (Grguric et al., 1995).

Today, the town survives on a combination of pastoralism, merino sheep breeding and heavy investment in a tourism industry that revolves around its mining heritage (Grguric et al., 1995). There remain a great number of extant individual buildings and visible markers in the landscape associated with copper mining, enabling the town to become, in many ways,

something of an open-air museum. The first buildings registered as reminiscent of that mining 'heritage' were included on the *Register of the National Estate* in the 1970s. This was followed in 1993 by the blanket listing of the whole town on the *State Heritage Register* for South Australia, where it is referred to as the 'Burra State Heritage Area'. In addition to the Heritage Area, a further 76 heritage places have been named on the South Australian register, many of which are encountered along The Burra Heritage Trail, such as the Burra Mines Historic Site, the Burra Dugouts, Redruth Courthouse and Gaol, the Burra Smelts Historic Site, the Burra War Memorial, Peacock's Chimney (with the mythical Johnny Green mascot on top) and Hampton Township Precinct, to name a few (see Figure 2).

INSERT FIGURE 2 NEAR HERE

Figure 2. Heritage Places in Burra (Peacock's Chimney, The Charge Yard and Redruth Gaol) (Source: Emma Waterton)

Established in the 1980s, the Burra Heritage Trail consists of an 11-kilometre circuitous self-drive/walking tour through and around the town, and includes fifty heritage 'stops' associated with the its mining past. Those interested in exploring the trail are invited to visit the Burra Visitor Centre to purchase a Burra Heritage Passport (a scheme introduced in 1988 and shared between the council and National Trust). This consists of a guide book, free entry into three of Burra's museums – Morphett's Enginehouse Museum, Bon Accord Mining Museum and Complex, and Market Square Museum – and a key to access a further nine[1] locked sites along the trail. A more recent addition is an audio-guide accessible via phone or

[1] The locked sites consist of: (1)The Burra Mines Historic Site; (2) Hampton Village; (3) the Miners' Dugouts; (4) the Police Lockup and Stables; (5) the Powder Magazine; (6) Redruth Gaol; (7) Smelts Paddock; (8) the Unicorn Brewery Cellars; and (9) Malowen Lowarth Cottage.

tablet, though this was not available during our fieldwork. Since 2001, the Burra Heritage Passport has sold relatively steadily to visitors though it struggles against the broader touristic pull of the wider region, the Clare Valley, known for its wines and food, which is able to generate approximately 164,000 visitors annually (South Australian Tourism Commission, 2014).

Creating a Composite Autoethnography of Burra

Before turning to our four vignettes, a more fulsome introduction to collaborative autoethnography is required. Conceptually, we see this approach as emerging from two distinct ideas: that of the 'participant-researcher' (Wylie, 2005) and an 'autoethnographic sensibility' (Butz and Besio, 2009). Both are brought into relation through practices of collaborative writing. Our intention in adopting such a style is, to borrow from Sturm (2015), to 'show' rather than 'tell', or to rely on the detail of an encounter to draw in a reader and provoke a response. As such, we have taken up an approach called 'collaborative autoethnography', which Denzin (2014, p. 23) defines as 'the co-production of an autoethnographic … text by two or more writers, often separated by time and distance'. Autoethnography can be organized into five categories: personal experience narrative; reflexive or narrative ethnography; subaltern autoethnography; Indigenous ethnography; and insider or complete member research (after Butz and Besio, 2009). Our approach aligns most closely with the first category, which is described as a practice in which 'social scientists take on the dual identities of academic and personal selves to tell autobiographical stories about some aspect of their experience in daily life' (Ellis and Bochner 2000, p. 740). Such accounts are inevitably written in first-person and detail a set of emotional, political and dialogic truths, rather than 'literal truths' (Bochner 2012, p. 161). In other words, they seek to access emotional and reflexive embodied performances *without recourse to claims to objectivity or*

neutrality. This distinction is important, as it was in the wake of the 'crisis of representation', occurring in the 1970s and 1980s, that autoethnographic approaches first took root (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). The result, as Butz (2009, p. 140) has observed, was a newly emerging sensitivity to what we might 'learn from research participants as well as our own situatedness in relation to the people and worlds we are studying'.

More recently, *collaborative* autoethnographic projects have started to appear in the critical methods literature. While these projects continue with a focus on self-interrogation, autobiography and ethnography, they do so in far more cooperative and collaborative ways. Indeed, as Chang et al. (2015) argue, while collaborative autoethnography remains context-conscious and researcher-visible, an important distinction is that this approach is *critically dialogic*. To our knowledge, a collaborative autoethnographic approach has seldom been adopted within heritage research though some engagements have emerged within tourism studies (see Saldanha and Klopfer 2014). The purpose of this paper is to explore collaborative autoethnography as a method, and to reflect on its utility for presenting heritage narratives that extend beyond those found in dominant marketing accounts.

Our methodological process began with a week-long visit to Burra in May 2014, in the early beginnings of winter. It was part of a coordinated fieldwork trip to study and observe the same social setting at the same time, from which we aimed to produce a set of jointly written reflections. In our case, a part-drive/part-walking autoethnography was adopted, to which each of us contributed our own observations and knowledges of heritage, the township, the countryside, home, landscape, tourism, and so forth. During our visit, we faithfully followed the itinerary provided by The Burra Heritage Trail, with each site along the trail becoming a focus for discussion, introspection, reflection, observation and speculation. Each of us walked the sites with an audio-recorder, a notebook, and a camera, sometimes alone, sometimes in pairs and sometimes in a group. We spent six days exploring the trail, and returned each

evening to our shared rental cottage on the eastern outskirts of Burra to write up accompanying field notes. The transcriptions of our individual audio-recordings were then shared and discussed once the fieldwork component was complete. Data collection was thus an iterative process, revolving around self-reflection, individual writing, group sharing, meaning-making and group writing. We use the following snapshot vignettes, commencing with 'the art historian', to document and present our multiple accounts of Burra.

The Art Historian

The first time I visited Burra was with a group of high school teachers. Desperate for a weekend 'escape', we ventured into the Clare Valley for wine tasting and other culinary delights. On our way home, we went to Burra and stayed the night in one of the first miner's cottages to be refurbished for visitors in Paxton Square. It was rough and I recall a night sitting by an open fire chatting and, the next day, cold showers on a very brisk morning. I have no photographs of this event, just strong, visceral memories. My second encounter was years later while doing my PhD. I was sorting through the colonial watercolour collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia and discovered that one of my subjects, the artist S.T. Gill, had painted some very well-known scenes of Burra and its surroundings (Appleyard et al., 1986). They did not make it into my thesis but they left an indelible impression of the landscape and the themes that Gill liked: colonial progress, the labouring classes and the treatment of the Indigenous owners of the land. Visiting locations that artists had depicted provided a geographical and emotional hinge to my academic explorations, and so arose the advent of my second visit. My notes from that time survive only because, in all my moves across a working life in academia, I have never quite been brave enough to jettison them.

Then came another leap across decades to my third visit, this time to 'do' The Burra Heritage Trail. It was impossible to 'turn off' the previous experiences of Burra when, once

again, I wandered the streets, along the creek that runs through town and meandered amongst the skeletal remnants of its mining history. They fused into the present: memories, paintings and the return, mingling with unconscious ease. Chronological time collapsed into the lived present and the spatial experience asserted itself as the dominant way of perceiving our movements through the landscape. This was not a naïve visit. We were there with tasks at hand and so my experience was attuned to a sort of hyper-reflexive sensory exploration where the embodied was constantly monitored by the intellect; the sensation of being *in* Burra was mindfully being translated into words (as it turned out, a flood of words into my audio-recorder). I was often reminded of the musings of David Crouch when he wrote of 'embodied encounters', where the visitor's body is both mediation and mediator, where being *there* is a dynamic interplay between sensory feelings, imagination, sensuality, desire, expressiveness and meaning-making (Crouch, 2002; Staiff, 2014).

My audio recordings were long and my photographic record extensive, so how to capture those fleeting impressions/feelings/sensations in a short piece of writing? How can writing/representation begin to communicate the 'dynamic interplay' Crouch speaks of? These are not easily answered questions and the relationship between representation and reality has a long history in the West stretching back, at least, to the writings of Plato. So, from my two hours of audio musings I describe just one aspect of my responses, at just one of the many sites we visited: associationism and Morphett's Winding House, built in 1861 (see Figure 3).

INSERT FIGURE 3 NEAR HERE

Figure 3. Morphett's Enginehouse Museum (Source: Emma Waterton)

A constant in my reflections was the making of associations: linking the spatial experience, in a reflective mode, to a host of things that sprung to mind quite spontaneously. As I stood surveying the landscape (and I use the term surveying quite consciously) within which the Morphett building sits, these are some of the connections that cascaded through my thoughts. Firstly, my fascination with the survival of a discrete building sitting isolated in the landscape, where other parts of the working mine have almost disappeared and are skeletal compared to the restored Winding House. I was instantly reminded of 'ruins in the landscape', a trope that has a long history in Western painting and more recently in cinema and the powerful way it continues to produce strong resonances as a marker of time past, of half-forgotten epochs in human history, of the inevitability of death and decay. This response led quickly to work I had done with a graduate student in Sukhothai, a World Heritage site in northern Thailand, and the location of the first Thai-speaking kingdom. Interviews with Western visitors revealed that a very common response to the archaeological remains, *sans* any deep understanding of Thai history or culture, was 'ruins in a beautiful and peaceful landscape', the familiar eclipsing the unfamiliar (see Saipradist and Staiff 2007). I then pondered on the origins of this interest in ruins in my own background prior to my study of European landscape art. I recalled growing up on a small rural property in South Australia and a childhood imagination nourished by stories of medieval Britain. I had devoured the King Arthur and Robin Hood stories as a child, and in turn, the castles of medieval England became the places of mystery and adventure in the hands of Enid Blyton. I thought about how 'ruins' were a type of escape for me: they were part of a world that was far beyond my 'small' rural life. And yet how powerful was that 'escape' in my love of history and geography as an adolescent and then on to the study of history at university.

The Anthropologist

Earlier this week I made a cauliflower risotto for dinner. As usual, I gave myself a generous serve of freshly cracked pepper, from my old white pepper mill. As the pinkish-black flecks fell onto my food, I was, once again, reminded of Burra. In Burra, the Pepper Tree (the *schinus molle,* which is not technically pepper but sold as 'pink peppercorn' and generally known and used as pepper) lines many of the wide streets, often framed by cobblestone guttering (see Figure 4). It is an exotic species, planted in the wake of native vegetation that was cleared to service the mines, therefore hinting at stories that speak of those included and wilfully excluded. While we were there, I picked branches of these peppercorns daily, with a nightly ritual of sitting at the coffee table and carefully shelling each pink jewel, fingers tacky from the coloured sap. My companions helped in this endeavour, reaching branches I could not, and carrying bundles home to our cottage of an afternoon. I kept the shelled corns in plastic containers, and took them home with me where I gently roasted them to dry them out, and stored them in airtight jars, where some remain.

Figure 4. Burra's pink peppercorns (Source: Emma Waterton)

Grinding my pepper mill now and thinking of Burra, I instantly visualise the Miners' Dugouts. Fenced off from the public, we followed the small track to a series of holes tunnelled into the hillside. Though the information was scant, I tried to appreciate the gravity of 1800 men, women and children living there, partially underground. The words swam around as I tentatively picked my way along the path leading to one of the dugouts. As we entered, there was a cleared space and, like fingers from a palm, there were entryways into darker, deeper cave-like holes in the earth. Most had a security grate at the mouth and as I stood there, looking into the darkness, I saw the exhausted shape of a woman in the corner, giving birth, bleeding in the darkness; the evidence long gone. Women and children are

seldom mentioned on the trail, but my own research has predominantly been on experiences of childbirth in Australia. That I should therefore look into the darkness and past their silencing with a peripheral intellectual awareness of women and children living in these dugouts, and visualise childbirth, comes with little surprise. Our subjectivities come to the fore with sensorial anthropology, and require the researcher 'to reflect on her or his own role in the production of ethnographic knowledge' (Pink, 2009, p. 53). Such calls for reflexivity are well known, however Sarah Pink writes that this reflexivity should also attend to recognition that 'people may shift between different subject positions, depending on the context in which they find themselves' (Pink, 2009, p. 53).

While in the dugouts, my engagement with space was visual though imaginative via my own research interests. At the manager's residence, however, it was the smell, so easily recognisable and readily conjured, even while writing now: the smell of age. We opened the door to the residence and entered into a hallway where an already small home became a tunnel of timber floors and wall panels. As we walked inside, I saw objects both strange and familiar in their composition. Again, I found myself looking for the women and children, but found instead my grandmother's back room, used as a storage space after my father and aunts moved out in their twenties. It was the smell of Sunday afternoons. .

As I write this, I am reminded by Howes (1987) that most odours are not only subjectively evocative in their recollections, but also untranslatable. This notion of untranslatability is particularly salient for my experience in Burra. In my transcript, there is angst as I sought to articulate my responses, an angst illustrated by the word/s 'feel/feeling' appearing one hundred and fifteen times in the transcript. In writing this piece, I have made choices about what to include and exclude, and have thus privileged the ocularcentric five senses and, for brevity, have privileged only taste, olfaction and (imaginative) sight. In doing so, I regretfully contribute to the absence of Indigeneity that is felt on the Burra Heritage Trail

itself, where no mention is made of the impact of European expansion. By the 1990s, for instance, with the mining boom and continuing expansion of pastoralism, the Ngadjuri were almost entirely displaced, moved from their country to missions, other townships or into unpaid work. '[E]very culture constructs its own sensory model whereby it assigns different values and emphases to different sensory perceptions', wrote Classen & Howes (1996, p. 87). Developed primarily in the 1990s by Howes (1991) and Classen (1993), an anthropology tuned to the senses has sought to challenge the visual as the central sense by which anthropologists engage with participants, culture and reflexivity. Joy Sather-Wagstaff (2017) has discussed this development as culminating to what she has termed 'polysense': a '…more fluid and dynamic consideration of the slippage between and complexity within bodily stimuli and responses…' (Sather-Wagstaff, 2017, p. 17). This kind of dynamism is necessary for an autoethnography that pays tribute to the untranslatable feelings and experiences that are prompted in the field, and offers anthropologists a way to engage sensuously with their surroundings that both acknowledges the cultural systems that produce them as well as the silences left behind.

The Heritage Scholar

An academic paper that revolves around 'Burra' would seem unremarkable to many heritage scholars. Indeed, 'Burra' is a word that has become virtually synonymous with a particular framing of heritage, one that has played a formative role in policy and management since the 1970s – both nationally and internationally. That framing has to do with the promotion of community involvement, social value and understanding cultural significance in heritage conservation, all sentiments that are central to *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (1979, revised 1999 and 2013), which was adopted in Burra in 1979 – presumably in the town hall – during a meeting of Australia

ICOMOS. Though originally conceived for use in the Australian context, the Charter quickly slipped past the confines of the nation and became a key international benchmark for heritage 'best practice' (Truscott and Young, 2000; Waterton et al., 2006). I first learnt about the charter as a postgraduate in the mid-2000s, and have watched with interest as its privilege has been reasserted over and again in the field of heritage. Given its prominence, I expected to find the sheer weight of the Charter, as I understood it, etched into the fabric of the town; at the very least, I anticipated a plaque or a dedicated pamphlet, or any sort of sign that its policy intensities had also lodged themselves into the lived experience of Burra. In reality, the Charter was nowhere to be seen, felt or heard. To my surprise, it was not a recurring refrain in touristic paraphernalia, it had not been sutured into the buildings and it had not merged into the memories of those who live there. How curious, I mused: how does a charter explode so loudly and spectacularly onto the international stage, yet remain so thoroughly unnoticed in the town from which it was launched?

In truth, I spent very little time searching for traces of the charter in Burra. Its absence was more interesting, pointing instead to a history with lines of force that must have been far more compelling to those tasked with interpreting the area: that of mining, miners and families of miners. There are physical intrusions of the mining past everywhere in Burra. The landscape is punctured by chimneys, fractured pits, engine-mountings, extant engine-houses and ruins, as well as a sense of emptiness, of a landscape already hollowed from the inside out. Many of the attractions dotted along the trail deal directly and explicitly with this mining past, and do so by emphasising engineering feats, the machinery and its physical movement. In this regard, we could have been anywhere: the Rhondda Valley in Wales, Linares in Spain, Cape Breton Island in Canada and so on and so forth. Dulled by comparison (for the most part, at least) were references to the toughened textures of everyday mining life, though they resonated with crystal clarity in the dugouts, where nearly two thousand people once

crammed their homes and bodies into the creek bed and tried to *live*. Yes, we could have been anywhere, such is the tendency to underplay and underrepresent the people and communities of working class heritage (Smith et al., 2011). The exception, as Hoskins (2015, p. 24) points out, is 'the remote Victorian engineer, or the gangs of nameless workers whose dignity in service appears heightened by anonymity'. Another curiosity, I thought: in most parts of town the absence of the charter's insistence on giving weight to 'people's lives' and 'lived experience' was exceedingly acute (Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

Given the overriding preoccupation with machinery and processes of extraction, I might have felt thoroughly excluded from much that was on offer: it was so masculine and starved of a human touch. Yet, I have always felt something of an affinity with mining pasts – for reasons I can't quite fathom – so it was with a feeling of being 'pulled into a place' that I found myself walking into the landscape at Morphett's Enginehouse, searching for ghosts in the undergrowth (after Stewart, 2007). It was not the architecture that interested me, however regularly it was used to confirm the official narrative of the area; rather, my attention was roused by the faint tugging of family histories, muffled stories and the whisper of suffering. There were absences everywhere, though none more piercing that the omission of any mention of the Ngadjuri peoples. The various material intrusions I could see – spatial abstractions, to borrow from Gastón Gordillo (2014) – spoke only of a commodity, copper, but the spaces in between hinted at a more vibrant and troubling human labour. Typically, those attractions that sit at the heart of the heritage industry are wiped clean of their fleshy humans; or, if they are included, they are marked out as objects: the mine, the engine, the winding house, the miner. That these miners, these people, might do other things and have other lives is often beyond the purview of the conventional heritage site. That these landscapes might do and mean other things is often lost, too. But sites like Morphett's Enginehouse and the landscape that it sits within reflect Lefebvre's (1991, p. 164) claim that

‘no space vanishes utterly, leaving no trace’. Rather, such landscapes are haunted by absence, by the dead or the removed, and their memories gather there. That haunting has the capacity to turn an absence into ‘a pressure on the body….a physical presence that is felt and thereby affects’ (Gordillo, 2014, p. 31), like the growing realization that a new town, its agricultural fencing and concomitant European control most certainly must have had an irreversible impact on the Ngadjuri peoples who lived there first (Birt and Copley 2005).

Figure 5. A view from the Open Cut Lookout (Source: Emma Waterton)

And so it was the landscape’s affectual valency (Byrne, 2013) that did its work on me, triggering a sense of being transported beyond or behind the timeframe of ‘now’, and certainly beyond the site’s physical preservation. This happened at various points as I walked towards the Open-Cut Lookout (see Figure 5), during which the landscape seemed to magnetize and assemble other places: the Potteries in Staffordshire, Pompeii, the Yorkshire moors, remote valleys in Nepal. But it is the peculiar vibrancy of the surface mining’s stepped open-cut that lingers with me now; on our visit, it was filled with emerald green groundwater and sat uselessly behind a barbed wire fence, gaping and stunned, as if things kept getting worse.

The Tourism Planner

The fieldwork took place, unusually for me, somewhere I had not previously been: Burra. There, I found a town where the interface between tourism, heritage and community was extraordinarily pronounced. Curiously, the tourism professionals working there seemed somewhat unaware of the opportunities that interface afforded them. My reflexive position as a tourism planner is that the Burra Heritage Passport and associated heritage trail are great

concepts and good products, well-conceived as visitor management tools and productive ways to capture income. As we discovered, the Burra Heritage Passport, once purchased, provides access to locked sites, as well as free entry to Burra's museums. While it comes with a guidebook detailing an impressive collection of historic sites, the experience is underwhelming with regard to the potential of many connections and possibilities. Or, perhaps more fairly, it is simply limiting. Its success has therefore become its failure, in that the 'product' now dictates the way the majority of visitors experience the stories of Burra. It predetermines which (or whose) histories are to command the visitors' attention. Not unlike a theme park, the Trail and Passport conspire to lay out the town with purpose, according to a very particular narrative. If time is limited, as is the case for a majority of visitors, the Trail provides the most efficient way of seeing and coming to know 'the best' of Burra.

I left Burra with the feeling that I had missed out on exploring, discovering and bumping into 'everyday' Burra. And our stay was much longer than most. Compelled to follow the Trail, my fascination was not with the engineering inventiveness or remaining architecture of pioneering families, but with their social lives and stories. Why had certain spatial arrangements of settlements of the Scots, Cornish, Welsh and English emerged and evolved? And, more importantly for me, what had become of the many displaced Indigenous people on whose country this enterprise took place? We came to understand something of the British, but what about the Chinese and Indian communities? And why did some prosper while others failed? The township of Hampton is a provocative case in point: founded in 1857, with 30 families living as a close-knit community and home to the quarry that provided the beautiful stone for most of Burra's lovely buildings, it was abandoned in the 1920s. Why? And, equally intriguing, why did the last inhabitant stay on another 40 years in an otherwise dilapidated relic?

In addition to the multiple reminders, sights and signs of its copper mining past, Burra is also punctuated by institutions of hardship: police lock-ups, a courthouse, gaols and the Redruth Girls' Reformatory. These sit alongside the many breweries and hotels, suggestive of the many difficulties of *life* in the Dugouts. Burra thus presents a place that circulates with the authority and dominance of the settler, the colonialist, the industrialist and the man. It is a place of paradox: a model of settler success yet a place that has struggled; a place of intimacy and a haunting emptiness, all laced into a rich tapestry. Where, I wondered, were the women, the children, and the Indigenous in the story of Burra? Where, indeed, were the young people today, and what does tourism offer them? As we discovered, Burra shares a fairly unproductive relationship with the Clare Valley, the key tourism destination of the region from the perspective of the South Australian Tourism Commission. Burra barely rates a mention in the marketing materials they produce, and there is poor data kept on visitation to Burra or the split between day and overnight visitors. Yet some 35,000 visit the town each year (VIC, 2014). Of these, most either have a genealogical connection or have serendipitously stopped for coffee on their way to Broken Hill or the Flinders Ranges.

Laissez faire is the approach to tourism in Burra: it remains well-known to truckies and yet to be embraced by the many coaches travelling the Barrier Highway A lack of imagination has prompted the telling of only a few partial elements of the town's 'story'. Focused on Cornish engineers, they render invisible so many layers, so many voices and so many places – all of which are left off the trail. For example, the subject of Ken Duncan's iconic photograph, cover-art for the album *Diesel & Dust* and cited as the most photographed homestead in Australia, sits just a few kilometres north of Burra (see Figure 6). That alone should have most tourism planners excited by the prospects of mobilising a popular imaginary.

INSERT FIGURE 6 NEAR HERE

Figure 6. Ken Duncan's Burra Homestead (Source: Emma Waterton)

The image was once part of an iconic Qantas advertisement, and the 'Diesel & Dust House', as it has since become known, is 'internationally geotagged, shared and "performed" by real and virtual visitors who make a connection between the album cover and the real physical location' (Bagust, 2014, p. 13). The 'Visit Burra' website prominently features the homestead, yet the connection to Burra remains potently poised, still to be made explicit, with its representational geography yet to be linked in a meaningful way to its heritage. A place between 'here' and 'there', Burra is almost forgotten. Yet it is a remarkable place and could be again. At present, a small smattering of local heritage buffs keep it stitched together − the Historic Society, the National Trust, the ladies in the lolly shop – all working to keep the tourism enterprise going despite a number of odds. The ebb and flow of the town's fortune and misfortune continues, with the ghosts of Burra waiting patiently to take their place at the heritage-tourism interface.

Performing collaborative autoethnography: Some concluding thoughts

In the above analysis, we reflected upon a team fieldwork trip to the small town of Burra, during which we tested the potential contribution of collaborative autoethnography to heritage research. Our interest in exploring new modes of engagement arose from an enduring dissatisfaction with the reified forms of presenting research that dominate the literature. Such approaches place only muted focus, if any at all, on the ways we, as researchers, 'make a difference' to the heritage we construct, in terms of our own disciplinary backgrounds and the emotional and affective energies we bring to our fieldwork as people (Bailey et al. 2009, p.

255). We are joined in this quest by a rich seam of recent publications that lament the tendency to focus on the critical analysis of heritage at the expense of experiential practices. Such critics have called for methodologies that facilitate approaches to heritage that go 'beyond the conventional and the *conventionally critical* approaches that have become established in heritage thinking since the 1980s' (Waterton and Watson 2015, p. 29; emphasis in original; see also Tolia-Kelly et al., 2017). In this paper, we explored the potential of collaborative ethnography as a response to this call. A key point of reference influencing our turn to this sort of thinking is the work of Kathleen Stewart (2007, p. 4), who has called for researchers to 'find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate *because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us*' (our emphasis). Following this advice, we turned to the practice of collaborative autoethnography as a method of inquiry and a means by which we might uncover more of the 'ghosts of stories' encountered within the heritage landscapes of Burra. We also embraced what Butz and Besio (2009, p. 1671; see also 2004) term the 'autoethnographic sensibility', in which researchers perceive themselves 'as part of what they are researching and signifying'.

As authors, we are necessarily dispersed in terms of our geographical spaces of writing, as well as being separated by age, gender, life stage and employment status. This separation has, unsurprisingly, affected our writing. Yet immediately apparent from each of our summations of Burra is the spatiality of our memories and reactions. Our bodies became spaces of 'visceral processing' (Papoulias and Callard 2010, p. 34), and the heritage sites we visited along the trail, to borrow from Thrift (2004, p. 57), accumulated and were shaped by the 'rolling maelstroms of affect'. Our individual autoethnographic participation illuminated many contrasts to the way Burra is officially marketed: there were moments that plucked at each of us as alone, eliciting memories of home, of our past and intimate understandings of self, for example. Yet many of our individual experiences still worked to produce a

convergence of ideas, feelings and intellectual responses that were both cumulative and surprising, particularly given the diversity of our backgrounds. For all of us, the technology of the mine was muted in favour of the people and their stories – those mentioned but particularly those that are ignored such as the women, children, and those not affiliated with the mine.

In discussing our reflections, we were especially drawn to the utter invisibility of the Aboriginal peoples connected with the area; their absence in our reflections offer a kind of testament to their dispossession, but at the same time renders us party to a kind of double dispossession in our retelling. Indeed, this has prompted us to acknowledge that while listening to our own social memories no doubt worked to broaden the heritage landscapes of Burra, there remain some limitations in our approach; some gaps were simply too big to fill and our engagements with some 'ghosts' too brief. This is the case for the traditional owners of country in the mid-north region of South Australia, the Ngadjuri. We know from historical and archaeological sources that the Ngadjuri suffered greatly in the aftermath of European settlement, enduring epidemics from various introduced diseases, massacres and their eventual displacement to the missions. But there is little to no mention of their stories in the town itself, instigating an unjust silence produced by the assumption that the Ngadjui peoples 'died out' (Smith et al. 2018). As Smith et al. (2018) observe, however, for the past 20 years the Ngadjuri have worked hard to revive their connections with country, as well as the knowledge and stories that they have lost. In time, we hope their stories will be genuinely added to those that are told in Burra.

Aside from the above shortcoming, in reflecting on our narratives, we were most struck by the vividness that this approach provoked, and the plentiful range of sensory experiences that it brought into focus. The resultant rich and thick descriptions in our fieldnotes (be they textual, audio or visual) were almost Geertzian (1973), offering a real

depth to each that, when read in concert with the others, offered so much as an analytic. How many doors might be opened up by this sort of approach? The four vignettes provided give admission to so many possibilities; indeed, for an even denser collaborative effort. In recent writings in the field of heritage, numerous scholars have reflected upon the way visitors encounter historical and archaeological sites (Staiff, 2014; Waterton and Watson 2014). Associations, in addition to social memories, seem to be vital dynamics in the heritage-visitor interaction, and they raise interesting issues precisely because they are not linear, they are open-ended and unbounded, they can be multiple and unconnected and they are often unsolicited. Associations, like memories, are rooted in the viewing subject's past but they seem to have a knowledge dimension as well as an experiential one. Crucially, then, this autoethnographic approach has allowed us to present a stark contrast between our own writings and that which is offered under the banners of both 'heritage' and 'tourism' in Burra. Our reflections go further and well beyond the way Burra is currently presented and represented, by the Burra Heritage Trail, by the Burra Heritage Passport and by the South Australian Tourism Commission. Our autoethnographic exercise, prompted by a curiosity about the ways in which we, as researchers, produce, enact and write about our work, turned out to be a richly rewarding experience; we therefore see utility in replicating such an approach in other heritage landscapes.

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