

# 9

## Thinking–Feminism–Place: Situating the 1980s Australian Women’s Peace Camps

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This chapter connects thinking, feminism, and place, to suggest a link between ecology and epistemology, between the environment in which we live our lives and the production of knowledge. Living in Australia has a particular impact on thinking, I suggest, while also locating thinkers in particular ways to what has become known as the ‘Global North’. In order to think about time, place, and thinking as an ecological environment, I focus this chapter on the 1980s as particularly generative in the field of feminist thinking and activism.

The reflexive concepts of situated knowledge and partial perspective are legacies of 1980s feminist thinking, and a direct response to Cold War politics and ensuing feminist peace activism. Connected to those ideas are the actions of the 1980s women’s peace camps which were notable not only for their local actions as part of global concerns about nuclear proliferation and the potential devastation of nuclear war, but also for their critique of the connections between militarism, masculinity, and violence.

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My research interest in the 1980s women's peace camps in Australia was prompted partially due to their absence in texts but has been driven by their continuing significance for thinking through the connections between feminism, ecology, epistemology, and the military industrial complex. At a time when both feminism and environmental studies were being recognized and formalized in universities as legitimated forms of knowledge, the 1980s can be considered foundational in laying down key concepts and texts for the generations of scholars since.

In an effort to highlight the place of thinking, the chapter is structured around particular sites of ecofeminist activism. The sites involve bodies of thought, as well as thinking bodies; they are singular occasions, longitudinal actions, and intellectual moments. The chapter therefore moves between places in the United States, Britain, Europe, and Australia to demonstrate a collective body of feminist thinking and their connections with each other and the times in which they are produced. There are two apparently contradictory forces happening in this proposal: that knowledge is generated in particular times and places through embodied experience and that ideas and analysis travel between bodies, times, and places. The result is, I suggest here, what I am calling an epistecology.

## Thinking in Place

In arguing for the ways in which embodiment, ecologies, and epistemology are entangled, I firstly reflect on the conditions of producing my own research in Australia and then situate them in relation to the models of knowledge production inherited from elsewhere. This reflexive beginning sets the scene for tracking a movement of ideas while establishing their connections and commonalities. Situating the production of knowledge by specific bodies in particular places has been a fundamental tenet of feminist research methodology, challenging a priori assumptions that knowledge is produced by objective minds and is of universal application and importance. The assumptions implicit in the idea of objectivity were critiqued by feminists in the 1980s, with Donna Haraway summarizing the 'science question' thus:

All Western cultural narratives about objectivity are allegories of the ideologies governing the relations of what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility. Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. (1988: 583)

Situated knowledge and partial perspective became key legacies of these debates that obligate feminists to position themselves in relation to their work, rather than assuming universal vision.

The Australian focus of this book on feminist ecologies prompts me to ask what difference it makes to be thinking in Australia, and how the conditions of knowledge production might differ from elsewhere. Since undertaking my doctoral research while living in the tropics of far north Queensland, I have been attendant to the relation between thinking rhythms and the weather. My research into continental feminist philosophies occasionally found me trying to literally inhabit such a world of thinking: I would seek Hélène Cixous by making my world into a faux French salon and emulate an imagined Luce Irigaray, eating croissants and chocolates, playing Grace Jones, reading high theory. There was a perverse pleasure in playing the Francophile in the heat and sweat of slippery bodies and lives lived in the tropics, which seemed contrarily un-European and not inductive to French feminist philosophical thought. The tropics, as Paul Sutter notes, is itself a European discourse that registers its unsuitability for those (white people) from the temperate (European) zones (2014: 178). However unsuitable, these conditions trained me for research, so now, when the mercury rises, I register in my body that it is my optimal time to think and write. Heat, for me, signals thinking time.

Turning attention from heat to light, the Australian landscape artist Barbara Bolt notes a similar shift in the meanings of light, which affect the conditions of her production of artwork in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia (2000). Since the Enlightenment, European light has been associated with knowledge, illumination, vision, and clarity, Bolt argues (2000: 204). In Australia however the sun's glare transforms light into something blinding, that can become fuzzy through heat haze, that makes us squint, and causes pterygiums and cataracts in our eyes that obscure

our vision (Bolt 2000: 206). If we cannot use the light as a metaphor for knowledge, what happens when work is produced in such conditions? Is the work not enlightened, or does it exceed those legacies? These examples of heat and light suggest ways in which the material conditions of knowledge production might be made apparent, throwing into disarray those models we inherit from elsewhere. Through examples like these we can begin to interrogate the ways in which we occupy and think in localized spaces about how particular places and their effects on the body impact upon thought.

Another aspect that impacts the conditions of knowledge production is the lived politics of the moment. This summer while I write, I have been distracted from my usual research by involvement in a community movement protecting the destruction of 97 hectares of ecologically rare and endangered wetlands and ancient banksia woodlands in my suburb in outer Perth, Western Australia. It is currently being cleared for a highway for trucks known as Roe 8, a controversial extension of the Roe Highway that was drawn up 50 years ago when this area was not even a part of urban Perth, when bushland and wetlands were routinely cleared on the Perth coastal plain for urban development. It was before climate change was commonly discussed by everyday folk, and before we knew better. Living so close to the site, I am distracted by the dust being blown through my house by the bulldozing nearby, the physical dirtiness of my writing space no matter how much I clean, the dryness of dust in my mouth. I am distracted by this local protest movement, which reflects the legacy of what I am researching in another place and time and yet remains connected in striking ways.

These examples illustrate the collapsing together of epistemology and ecology into the same term, epistecology, which foregrounds the environment in which knowledge is produced. It might be reminiscent of Lorraine Code's suggestion that communities produce knowledge: that 'knowing subjects and their engagements in informal and formal practices of knowing are mutually constitutive' (2008: 188). Communities of reflexive feminist thinking reveal the possibilities of epistecology.

## Baltimore, United States, 1984

Adrienne Rich was conscious of the place of writing when she was preparing for the conference ‘Women, Feminist Identity and Society in the 1980s’ held in Utrecht, Holland, in 1984. It was here that she presented her keynote address, ‘Notes Toward a Politics of Location’. Troubled by the grand narratives of women’s oppression, Rich wanted to discuss specificity. As a collective pronoun ‘woman’ can no longer seem to contain the differences between women and their dispersal in space, in conditions, histories, and politics. While writing her paper in the United States, she recalls a childhood game of addressing correspondence and thereby begins to situate herself:

Adrienne Rich  
 14 Edgevale Road  
 Baltimore, Maryland  
 The United States of America  
 The Continent of North America  
 The Western Hemisphere  
 The Earth  
 The Solar System  
 The Universe (Rich 1985: 8)

This form of address positions Rich within the universe, rendering her insignificant by virtue of its scale. It is both specific and universal, and suggestive of the micro- and macropolitics of location. Rich’s paper discusses the conditions of American society in the early 1980s. She speaks of McCarthyism, the Iron Curtain, the threat of nuclear annihilation, militarism, and women’s activism around the world and across the century. She also speaks of her domestic dwelling, the conditions of her writing, the bumblebee that gets caught inside the house, the honey jar on the bench, the books on her table. She talks of her white woman’s body which locates her planes of privilege and oppression. This continually shifting scale connects the domestic and the worldly through politics and poetics, moving from: a body; a house; a conference; pharmaceutical

corporations; poisoned rivers; atomic testing in deserts; urban hospitals closing; the first female astronaut; grape hyacinths wildly spreading in the garden; and cruise missiles being stockpiled in Greenham Common in Britain, Italy, Belgium, West Germany, and the Netherlands. This might seem like a random list, but it poetically demonstrates the connectedness of the intimate and global, the domestic and the political. Rich notes 'the valorization of manliness and masculinity. The armed forces as the extreme embodiment of the patriarchal family' (1985: 17), and '[t]he growing urgency that an anti-nuclear, anti-militarist movement must be a feminist movement, must be a socialist movement, must be an anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement' (17). It needs to be global.

The idea of epistecology used here might also remind us of Mieke Bal's travelling concepts: that 'while concepts are products of philosophy and tools of analysis, they are also embodiments of the cultural practices we seek to understand through them' (2002: 21). Concepts are anchored in the local at the level of embodiment even while referencing the global and travelling between other times and places.

## **Greenham Common, United Kingdom, 1981**

By June 1984, as Rich reminds her audience, the US Government had already stationed nuclear missiles around Europe, including at Greenham Common in Berkshire, just 50 miles from London. The missiles are stationed at US Air Force bases which are part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreement after World War II in an effort to prevent any future nuclear world war. The immediate threat to the West was perceived to be Communist, specifically the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This legacy is apparent in the popularity of espionage film and fiction since that time (Shaw 2007). It was widely narrated in public discourse, as Shaw demonstrates in film and fiction, as an arms race with the West pitted against the USSR to develop more sophisticated nuclear technology. The development, testing, and then stationing of the newly tested Pershing and Cruise missiles in the 1980s by the United States marked a shift from preventative strategies to a more menacing potential for active nuclear strikes on the USSR. It also made

American missile locations around Europe potential targets for strikes from the USSR, which sparked growing public concern and activism from around 1980 (Roseneil 2000: 42).

In 1981 a group called Women for Life on Earth decided to walk the 110 miles from Cardiff in Wales to the US Air Force base at Greenham Common. Their walk aimed to generate media and public attention about the imminent installation of missiles there. They wanted a public debate about the decision which was made between Prime Minister Thatcher and American President Reagan. When they reached the base on 5 September 1981, some women chained themselves to the mesh fence. The base superintendent was informed of their concerns for the future of humanity, but he was unperturbed and told them to stay chained as long as they liked (Laware 2004: 20). So they stayed. They borrowed camping equipment and set up camps. They remained protesting until the missiles were delivered two years later, in 1983, and then until the missiles were removed in 1991 following the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty signed by American President Reagan and Russian President Gorbachev in 1987.

At the camp, numbers swelled at weekends, and when campaigns were organized to coincide with military activity (Laware 2004: 22). In December 1982, for example, 30,000 women converged to Embrace the Base, holding hands around the nine mile perimeter (Laware 2004: 21). In December 1983, after the first missiles were delivered, 50,000 women protested at the base. Hundreds camped at the various base camps around the perimeter (Roseneil 2000: 69). Tens of thousands of women visited the peace camp, which transformed lives and politics (Roseneil 2000: 69). In winter when the dogged English rain turned the common land to mud and then ice, they still stay. In 'the heart of the English countryside' the Greenham women contest the use of the Common as a military complex and transform it into a site of social protest (Cresswell 1996: 131). Greenham Common becomes forever associated with the women's peace camp. It becomes what Alain Badiou calls an 'evental site' (2005: 179), a site forever associated with a singular event that upsets the established order (Bartlett 2016: 7). It is iconized in exhibitions, books, memoirs, memorials and online exhibitions, local history walks, and national history. This is the anti-nuclear, anti-military feminist movement that Rich speaks about in 1984.

## Situating Knowledge

In 1986, philosopher Elizabeth Grosz is thinking through a similar quandary to Rich. She wants to ‘explain both the commonness women share cross-culturally, and their cultural and individual specificities’ (1987: 2). The similarity is mirrored in the title of her article, ‘Notes Towards a Corporeal Feminism’, published in the new flagship journal, *Australian Feminist Studies* in 1987. The tentative title ‘Notes Towards’ belies the shift in thinking but suggests a fledgling disciplinary body of knowledge. For Grosz, the solution to situating knowledge is located in the body:

Women’s carnal existence, their corporeal commonness, may provide a universal ‘raw material’, which is nevertheless pliable enough to account for cultural, historical, class and racial specificities distinguishing concrete women from each other. (1987: 2)

The body is able to contain contradictions and difference but also account for privilege and oppression, and Grosz folds it into a psychoanalytic model of subjectivity. She later argues that ‘[t]he body functions as the repressed or disavowed condition of all knowledges’ (1994: 20). The body becomes an epistemological site as well as the condition of the production of knowledge.

Grosz is thinking about how to uncouple the body from its Cartesian legacy, which neglects the body in favour of the mind in a series of binary oppositions. Women and men, nature and culture, private and public, emotion and rationality, passive and active, carnal and intellectual: all of these oppositions are hierarchized to privilege and align men with culture, the public sphere, rationality, activity, intellectual thought. These Enlightenment values are embedded in the beginnings of democracy, citizenship, civic identity, and scientific knowledge production. Rethinking the body, she argues, means rethinking subjectivity, and everything that rests on it, thus transforming those oppressive hierarchies. And so she goes on to outline possible directions for reimagining space, time, power, representational systems, and sexuality.



## Kakadu National Park, Australia, February 1985

In late February 1985, at the start of the monsoon season, a white woman is kayaking alone in Kakadu National Park (Plumwood 2012: 10). The land of the Bininj/Mungguy people, this is a monumental landscape of sheer chasms and wide rivers, estuarine tributaries, and ancient vegetation in what is known as the stone country of Arnhem Land in the tropics of northern Australia. This woman often kayaks alone and is highly experienced, travelling to adventurous and thrilling places as she has this time to the remote National Park, where the film *Crocodile Dundee* is due to be shot a few months later. Out of the brackish river on the first day of the monsoon season, a crocodile's eyes emerge to gaze at the kayaker, then the animal leaps up to grab her by the legs and drag her under water in a death roll, and then another, and then another. Miraculously, she is released and drags herself up the banks to crawl in search of help. Her journey takes hours, slowed as she is by the sustained injuries. Not many people escape a saltwater crocodile's death roll, let alone three, but this experience of environmental philosopher Val Plumwood proved to be defining in her thinking. While Plumwood's articulation of the human/nature divide as a form of human chauvinism links those Cartesian dualities to systemic male-centred systems of thought, encountering the crocodile as predator redirected her to thinking about human beings as prey, as food for others. 'We are food', she writes, 'juicy, nourishing bodies. Yet, as I looked into the eye of the crocodile, I realized that my planning for this journey upriver had given insufficient attention to this important aspect of human life, to my own vulnerability as an edible, animal being' (2012: 10). Not only food, but meat: 'that my body, like theirs, was made of meat' (10). This fundamental reduction of embodiment as prey to others seeking food—'we are the feast' (15)—inverted Plumwood's understanding of human relations to the world and informed her thinking about ecological animism in which humans are just one part of the complex ecology of an agentic world.

Plumwood's encounter with a crocodile was transformational in her life and thinking, and symptomatic of the intimacy between the corporeal

and the conceptual in feminist thinking. It can be understood in terms of Grosz's contemporaneous project: that the body is the 'disavowed condition of all knowledges' (1994: 20), except that for Plumwood it is not disavowed but in full sight and acknowledged.

## Pine Gap, Australia, November 1983

On 15 November 1983 when the first Pershing and Cruise missiles were being delivered for storage at Greenham air base, one of the many supportive actions around the world was taking place in the middle of Australia at the US military base at Pine Gap, 20 kilometres from Alice Springs in central Australia, where it remains today. Women For Survival—an umbrella organization that aimed to bring together women's, peace, and anti-nuclear groups from around the country—organized a peace camp in the middle of the desert. Camping on the side of the bitumen road leading to the Base, around 800 women spent over two weeks there enduring blistering temperatures of 40 degrees on several days. At night the temperatures plummeted. They organized into 'affinity' groups, ran non-violent direct action training, shared skills for media and police liaison, and decorated the fence with banners made by those who could not be there. They mounted daily events for the media in order to bring attention to this little-known piece of Cold War architecture in the heart of Australia (Bartlett 2013: 917).

For some of the women from the city, it is their first contact with Aboriginal women from traditional homelands (Somerville 1999: 24). For some Aboriginal women it is their first contact with lesbians (Kelham 2013: 87). The Aboriginal women do not stay long, keen to avoid police provocation (Kelham 2013: 84). But one night there is traditional dancing by the Arrernte and Pitjantjatjara women with the white women joining in (Somerville 1999: 23). Telegrams of support arrive from Greenham Common, from unions, and from politicians. The camp makes the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper.

The Australian desert has an implicit appeal to the nation's metaphorical heartland, as its centre, the heart of Australia (Bartlett 2013: 918). Camping in this terrain is a measure of dedication for the largely urban

protestors, but it is also a convergence of multiple meanings of place. Reflecting on her experience at the camp, Margaret Somerville articulates three layers of meanings:

It is clear now that Aboriginal women did, in fact, present the first tissue paper layer of a different level of mapping the land with songs and song-lines; that the disruption of straight lines and roads by circles of [women protestors'] hats and parasols opened up possibilities for new meanings to emerge and that those possibilities are still open. And my embodied three-dimensional mapping of hills and rivers, valleys and caves, is a sand map written on the body. (1999: 43)

Aboriginal song mapping, the collective action of protestors, and the embodied individual thus transform the meanings of place. Grosz considers the relations between bodies and place, or bodies in space, as active, agentic, and dialogic:

The subject's relation to space and time is not passive: space is not simply an empty receptacle, independent of its contents; rather, the ways in which space is perceived and represented depend on the kinds of objects positioned 'within' it, and more particularly, the kinds of relation the subject has to those objects. Space makes possible different kinds of relations but in turn is transformed according to the subject's affective and instrumental relations with it. (1995: 92)

The women's peace camp is emblematic of such transformations of space and bodies through a movement, through being activated/activist.

## Ecologies of Thinking

The Western anti-nuclear peace camps of the 1980s were organized around theories of collective process, consensus decision-making, non-violent direct action, as they also contributed to questioning and thinking more broadly about ways of coming together to live. Issues like food sources, waste, creativity, forms of resistance, and governance all became implicated as part of an ethics or politics of living. Plumwood's experience

also made this link explicit, demonstrating the dialogic relation between bodies, thinking, and place that can be violently transformative. The complexities of thinking through such politics can also be violent, and transformation is not always for the better, but the legacies of such events are surprisingly enduring in public debates and events.

One example of living the politics/politicizing living is the decision to make the camps women-only. As at Greenham, this was an ideological position that critiqued patriarchy. Loreto nun Sister Margaret Hill from Melbourne wrote at the time:

Women can offer an alternative to the patriarchal system which dominates and characterizes society and has provided the world with its current balance of terror that offers not a future but the possibility of extinction. An all-women's peace protest aims to highlight this. (Hill 1983)

This rhetoric often became entrenched into a universalizing maternalism, associating women with nature and as nature's caretakers akin to a maternal capacity (Roseneil 2000: 45; Murray 2006: 87; Bartlett 2011: 33). The following song lyrics from the camp's song sheet implicitly position women as intrinsically caring for the earth: 'We are women/we are crying/we are singing/for the earth' (Songsheet 1983). This was the very problem that Rich and Grosz were grappling with their challenges to essentialism. Women's Studies academic Bev Thiele was compelled to write to the Women for Survival newsletter in 1984 to critique this caring position as essentialist:

The idea that women have a unique contribution to make peace because our reproductive capacity somehow naturally makes us peaceful, protective, nurturant, caring and loving ... misrepresents women—and it's not just the press, we also misrepresent ourselves if we think that women are naturally nurturant. If nothing else we assume that all women deep down inside support peace and that no woman is involved in the nuclear system. (1984: 14)

Attending to the specificities of women, but also to exemplify the widespread concern of Cold War politics amongst all kinds of women, both

Greenham and Pine Gap were keen to emphasize the social diversity of the women who were present. Megg Kelham, for example, lists the participants at Pine Gap as:

Hippies, academics, housewives, ‘dole bludgers’; Hindu and Christian nuns, new world spiritualists, Quakers and at least one witch; Liberal, Labor, Democrat, Communist Party voters; dispossessed urban Kooris and Indigenous language-speaking occupiers of traditional lands; greenies, feminists, pacifists, anti-nuclear campaigners, seasoned political activists, public purse politicians and ‘protest virgins’. (2013: 76–77)

Commentators agree, however, that the media attention hinged on this rhetoric. The scandal of women protesting, in the desert, without their (presumed) husbands and children—or with their children—was taken up by the press as the key story. Making a public place into a homely camp and a woman’s place outside was seen to be a scandalous inversion of social protocol.

This turning inside out of usual gender and labour relations also applied to sexual relations. Living closely alongside other women and lesbians, protesters learnt about intimacy between women and formed relationships in a space where loving women was accepted. Greenham’s most prolific scholar, sociologist Sasha Roseneil writes of the queer feminisms of Greenham, to account for its overturning of conventional ways and wisdoms at this collective community. She describes the impact of living ‘right up against the fences of patriarchal militarism’:

At Greenham, personal life was radically de-privatized—and eating, sleeping, and even toileting were politicized. Food was collectively provisioned, and the politics and ethics of what was eaten were fiercely debated. Conventional family life, and the heterosexuality and monogamy on which it is built, were named and critiqued as women found themselves developing close, sometimes sexual relationships of love and friendship with the other women with whom they were living and protesting. Bodies that sat together around the fire often lay down to sleep together in large communal benders, or just under the stars. Daily ablutions were carried out outside, showers fabricated and strung up in trees, water heated on the fire. Shitpits were dug and moved around, so as to live lightly on the land. (2013: 199)

Roseneil calls this a 'liminal space', a 'women's community', a 'community of protest' (2013: 199) which reshapes the 'architectures of life' (120). It might also be considered a feminist ecology in that everyday life is lived in conscious response to feminist politics, which are sustainable, ethical, and ecologically sensitive, while protesting patriarchal militarism and nuclear war as part of a continuum of violence. Margaret Laware insists that the protest be located 'in a larger context of peace and anti-militarism and connections to life including kindness to animals, veganism, and antiracism' (2004: 35). These kinds of critiques of patriarchal culture, and the production of a women's culture, become possible as a result of embodied activism—particular bodies living intimately in particular protest spaces.

Ideas have the capacity to move us, to create movements like feminism, and to move across time and space to be recomposed as legacies and languages, seeds, and strategies. Epistecology anticipates the potency of particular places, bodies, and ideas as mutually constitutive and transformational: as feminist epistecology.

## Kindred Times 2016

In this chapter I have been arguing for the continuing significance of 1980s thinking and the women's peace camps, which lay the groundwork for the reanimated feminist ecologies of the present. Rereading these texts and remembering events remind us of the layers of ideas that have come before. Turning her attention to feminism, activism, and time, Grosz writes that the future is never predictable, but can be understood as 'an unexpected shift [...] which reorients the past and whose reorientation or reanimation reorganizes its present effects' (1995: 258). Those resonances can arise in unexpected ways that continue to form kindred associations and rekindle foundational thinking.

The summer of 2016, when I was writing and protesting at the Roe 8 site, felt like a reanimation of my research from a different time and place. The Roe 8 movement was led by women who organized into affinity groups, ran non-violent direct action training, shared skills for media and police liaison, and brought materials to decorate the mesh fence that

was erected to keep us out. We created family-friendly spaces for kids, collected seeds, sang songs, distributed fragments of fabric coded blue, created rosters and networks through encrypted smartphone apps ironically called Telegram. We mounted events for media consumption to bring attention to the wilful destruction of urban bushland and critical wetland systems. Mothers and daughters locked themselves onto the gates where the bulldozers were parked overnight. Neighbours were arrested. A group of professors joined forces to write articles (The Beelir Group 2017). We learnt new languages of road building, animal trapping, environmental compliance policy, and policing strategies. The dust in my mouth was accompanied by mouthing new words in old languages as we learnt multiple terms for local animals and plants in their common, Latin, and local Noongar names.

Southern bandicoot, *Isodon obesulus*, quenda.

Grass tree, *Xanthorrhoea preissii*, balga.

Christmas tree, *Nuytsia floribunda*, mudja.

On the radio I heard a programme about environmental grief and the new terms that are being used to express this collective feeling of mourning: solastalgia. Biophobia. Ecoanxiety. Global dread. Ecoparalysis (Earshot 2016). New languages are being invented for new forms of embodied violence, and perhaps new thinking about urban ecologies can be generated as a result.

In trying to make sense of the emotional impact of the summer, of why it is so harrowing to hear giant marri trees fall under a bulldozer, or to witness ancient balgas mulched into a pile of woodchips, I came across Donna Haraway's response to the concept of the Anthropocene (2015). Haraway's famous *A Cyborg Manifesto*, which controversially ended with the slogan 'I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess' (1985: 101), was written in 1983 and published in 1985 in *Socialist Review*, around the same time that Adrienne Rich was making her 'Notes Toward a Politics of Location'. Like Rich, Haraway's thinking about the connections between cybernetics and organisms began with the military industrial complex, and a kinship with the women of Greenham common (Feigenbaum 2015: 270). In her recent thinking, Haraway challenges the Anthropocene and

other namings of epochs in which unprecedented change is being marked geologically in the layers of the earth. She suggests that we live in an age of the Chthulucene which ‘entangles myriad temporalities and spatialities and myriad intra-active entities-in-assemblages—including the more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman, and human-as-humus’ (2015: 160). The Anthropocene is a human-centric theory, she argues, that does not give enough credence to the other creatures or unseen worlds with whom we live and depend. We are now a different kind of human to that of the 1980s, one whose body has been found to have only 10 per cent of uniquely human genomes, with the other 90 per cent shared with companion species: bacteria and fungi and other a/biota with whom we coexist, on whom we depend to exist, so that ‘To be one is to *become with many*’ (Haraway 2008: 4).

In this sense, Haraway’s thinking might have something in common with the concerns of Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2013) when she outlines an Australian Indigenous women’s standpoint theory. Moreton-Robinson uses Haraway’s ‘situated knowledges’ to critique the way that some ecofeminists subscribe to a ‘body/earth split’, which discursively constructs ‘the “earth” as a single metaphysical concept that is not embodied’ (2013: 335). This is further predicated on a plane of privilege that include ‘her relations to land as private property and the nation’s sovereignty’ (335). In contrast, Moreton-Robinson claims that an Indigenous women’s standpoint theory is ‘not predicated on the separation of ourselves from our countries, human ancestors, creator beings and all living things’ (344) but sustained through a ‘bloodline to that country through creator and ancestral birth’ (335). One basis for this epistemology is an understanding of self. Moreton-Robinson claims that the Western definition of the self as multiple, and in a process of becoming, is essentialist:

This conception of self, whose humanness is disconnected from the earth, values itself above every other living thing, is a form of strategic essentialism that can silence and dismiss non-Western constructions which do not define the self in the same way. Such silencing is enabled by the power of patriarchal knowledge and its ability to be the definitive measure of what it means to be human and what does and what does not constitute knowledge. (343)



Moreton-Robinson's proposal speaks to the premise of epistemological ecologies, in that place features as a factor in the production of knowledge. Working towards this position as a non-Indigenous theorist has meant Haraway stretches language (and therefore concepts) to expand what is imaginable. Her new mantra to 'make kin, not babies' recognizes our 'biotic and abiotic sym-poietic collaborators, and co-laborers' (2015: 161) with which we cohabit a complex ecology. Her poetics call for feminists of imagination, theory, and action to lead us in the Chthulucene. Moreton-Robinson calls for feminists to acknowledge our location in relation to land and privilege. They both demonstrate Grosz's claim that '[k]nowledges are not purely conceptual nor merely intellectual ... knowledge is an activity; it is a *practice* and not a contemplative reflection. It *does things*' (1995: 37). In this chapter, the activism of the women's anti-nuclear peace camps in the United Kingdom and Australia demonstrates theory in action and active theory which *does things* in places and times. Furthermore these legacies continue in our thinking and our actions, as I found at the Roe 8 protests, as we continue to think through our relations to land and privilege that might just connect us to country, as kin, through epistecologies of feminist thinking.

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