

Cultivating Landscape Spirits to Create an Identity

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Abstract: Although the Australian landscape is rich with the ancient dreaming stories of Indigenous Australians it now also holds modern spirits that are fulfilling the role of uniting a new nation. Several landscapes imbued with spirits by Australians of European descent, are introduced and then discussed to understand the nature and origin of their spiritual meaning. These places tell different stories such as how a symbolic spirit of 'freedom' imposed on a mountain inspired a community of refugees.

Spiritual values are fulfilling the incorporeal needs of people and becoming a major focus of national identity in Australia's pluralist society. Ways of resolving conflicting cultural issues and sustaining spiritual values are considered along with how their integrity, authenticity and strength can be determined.

Introduction

Only a few European settlers came to Australia and explored the wonders of new landscapes and its extraordinary flora and fauna. For the thousands of immigrants in the early nineteenth century Australia was a place of punishment or a place to make a fortune from its gold fields, and for the many migrants that came after World War II Australia was a place that offered refuge from persecution and the devastations of war.

Except for coastal areas, new settlers found in Australia a harsh dry country of unimaginable landscape colours, dramatic rugged topography, and strange plants, birds and animals unlike anything else in the world. Some of the early new comers explored and were inspired by the landscape, painted views of its scenery and commemorated it in writings but few appreciated the splendid richly spiritual culture that had lived in the country for more than 40,000 years.

Aboriginal spiritual associations with landscapes are intense throughout the continent and involve not just mountains but waterholes, rivers, specific animal and plant habitats and other landscape features. Such associations are the roots of Aboriginal society and the basis of the laws that bind the responsibilities of people to their country. Sadly, many of the settler Australians of the early nineteenth century exploited Aboriginal knowledge for their own betterment and regarded Indigenous people as an impediment to their settlement. That the Indigenous people were at one with the landscape in a living, caring and spiritual way that they call their 'dreaming' was not understood.

In a general sense the new settlers tried to conquer the land with mostly inappropriate farming, damaging mining practices and colonial governments. They brought their social and settlement traditions and sought spiritual inspiration within constructed places of worship—Christian churches, mosques, synagogues and temples. Such spiritual concepts that did not include the landscape or country were meaningless to Aboriginal people. 'White man got no dreaming' was phrase from a Murinbata man and has been used as a book title (Cameron 2003: 4). The spiritual meaning of landscapes is so much a part of Aboriginal life that non-Aboriginal people often feel intimidated by not having such associations while also feeling inhibited in allowing their own spiritual meanings to develop.

Loving the landscape for its inherent beauty and imbuing it with spiritual meaning did not come quickly to most of the new settlers. Now, the Australian landscape pervades our cultural expressions of art, poetry, literature, films and songs, despite the fact that 66 percent of

Australians live in the capital cities. As coastal cities swell and rural towns disappear, the love of Australian landscapes is not diminishing. Many city dwellers hold strong personal attachments to landscapes such as beaches or bushlands where their best holidays took place.

Unlike the histories of Europe, Asia and even North America that have been shaped by traumatic wars and natural disasters, Australia has had few such experiences. We do not have landscapes ringing with the spirits of countless dead, although we do have places of conflict that were deeply tragic to those involved.

This paper is not about places that provide a personal 'sense of place', nor those places that provide nostalgia for the past. It is about landscape places that have acquired a spiritual value recognised well beyond their locale. The comparatively short history of the settler Australians allows us to analyse a few fledgling landscape spirits, and consider how the 'spiritual loci' of landscape places is established and woven into the incorporeal needs of the cosmopolitan Australian nation, contemporary heritage, and for better or worse, the tourism economy. Several examples of landscapes with well-known intangible associations are presented and discussed and although different in their origins, the examples convey a set of milestones in the narrative of the evolving national character.

Port Arthur

Commencing 1832 as a small forestry camp, Port Arthur became one of the largest Imperial convict institutions in Australia. The Port Arthur landscape is a paradox. It is immensely picturesque, located beside a small bay that is approached through capes with huge cliffs that are pounded by rough seas. The landscape amphitheatre of Port Arthur by contrast, is tranquil facing a small central island and backed by forested hills. For convicts, however, the experience of Port Arthur was traumatic – being forced to leave the land of their birth and their families to endure confinement and punishment in a strange country on the other side of the world. Port Arthur was known as a place of misery and also, but unjustifiably, as the most infamous convict prison in Australia. Its relic features are sufficiently substantial to convey the scale of the place and nature of the prison, particularly the separate prison and solitary cells where prisoners were punished by solitary confinement, while the centrally located church symbolises the role of the church as a goal for reform. Near the main bay is the Point Puer boys prison where boys as young as seven were imprisoned (AHDB 2005).

Australia's convict past, epitomised by Port Arthur has been considered by many as a blight on the collective character of modern confident Australians. Coming to terms with the ghosts of the convict days was being achieved when in 1996 a gunman chose Port Arthur to make his mark. The gunman took the lives of 32 people and wounded 19 others. A memorial to that event is now another poignant feature of the place. Despite its landscape beauty, Port Arthur is an intensely evocative place where visitors cannot help but be moved by a spiritual aura of melancholia and tragedy that personifies a foundation stone of Australia's national identity.

Kelly Country

Many convicts that were sent to Australia were from Ireland. Some were political prisoners and some were forced into theft by poverty and an oppressive government. The family of the former Irish convict Red Kelly (who served a term at Port Arthur and was later imprisoned in Victoria) lived in North East Victoria maintaining a modest rural lifestyle on a small selection taken up by Kelly's wife in 1867 close to the rugged foothills of the Australian Alps. The Kellys were a large family with 12 children and their father Red Kelly, died when his son Ned was 12 years old. They were poor Irish Catholics – a class of people specifically excluded from holding public office or government positions until after 1900. The Irish had, not without reason, a dislike of the British authority.

Ned, while a youth rescued a boy from drowning and was awarded for his bravery but later ran foul of the law and with his small gang of fellow outlaws, including his brother Dan –hid out in the bush (Jerilderie Historical Society, 2000). Kelly passionately hated the police who victimised his family and in an incident in 1873, he killed three policemen but believed he was justified. In 1879, in the town of Jerilderie, he produced an anguished fifty-six page letter and demanded that the letter be published, a demand that was not fulfilled in his lifetime. In the letter he decried the treatment of his family and himself by the Victorian police whom he described rather unflatteringly.

'I have been wronged and my mother and four or five men lagged innocent and is my brothers and sisters and my mother not to be pitied also who has no alternative only to put up with the brutal and cowardly conduct of a parcel of big ugly fat-necked wombat headed big bellied magpie legged narrow hipped splaw-footed sons of Irish Bailiffs or english landlords which is better known as Officers of Justice or Victorian Police (Kelly 1879, 43)

Kelly and his gang had many sympathisers in the region during their time of active bushranging (living as a bandit) and a network of friends provided the gang with food. To some he was regarded as a 'Robyn Hood' and his Jerilderie letter noted his desire to support widows and orphans. His final dramatic stand was in 1880 at the town of Glenrowan where members of his gang were killed while Ned was wounded and captured wearing homemade iron armour. Five months later he was hung in Melbourne.

The legend of Ned Kelly now flourishes in the region with Glenrowan at the epicentre. Throughout the landscape are features such as his lookout site, the Beechworth Prison where he and family members were imprisoned, hut ruins and tracks that form the tangible evidence of the legend. Bolstering the legend are films, with Ned being played by stars such as Mike Jagger and more recently by Heath Ledger. There are numerous paintings including a series of Ned Kelly in his armour by Sidney Nolan and numerous books such as the *True History of the Kelly Gang* by Peter Carey all of which capture the heroics and the pathos of this unhappy life. In 2000, Ned Kelly in armour was featured as an Australian icon at the Olympic Games. The spirit of the Kelly Country is the legend of the escapades of the defiant Ned Kelly.

The Dig Tree

By the mid-nineteenth century, new settlers wanted to establish pastoral properties in the inland areas, and in 1860, encouraged by a large crowd of well-wishers, an exploration expedition led by Robert O'Hara Burke left Melbourne to cross Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria with the objective of gathering information about grazing lands and other resources in unclaimed territory. The expedition party was large, with 18 people, 25 camels, 22 horses, some wagons, two years supply of food, as well as 80 pairs of shoes, beds, hats and buckets, and some firewood.

The expedition made a depot camp on the banks of Coopers Creek at Bulloo Bulloo waterhole in the area of land now the northwest corner of New South Wales. Burke, and three others Wills, Gray and King, set off leaving William Brahe and his party at the waterhole with instructions to wait three months. The depot party actually waited at Coopers Creek for over four months but before leaving Brahe buried some provisions in case the Burke party did return and carved a message on a tree to mark the spot 'Dig 3 ft NW'. Although Burkes party reached the Gulf their expedition was a disaster. They underestimated the harsh conditions of the country and their food requirements and Gray fell ill and died. Burke, Wills and King finally arrived back at the depot on the evening of 21 April 1861 exhausted with only two surviving camels and almost no food to discover that Brahe had departed that same day. The three men left the site following the creek and eventually Burke and Wills perished (AHDB 1983).

The Dig Tree landscape is the waterhole and its landscape setting. The Dig Tree is a mature Coolabah (*Eucalyptus microtheca*) believed to be around 200 years old. Nearby is a later tree carving of Burke by John Dick in 1898, called the Face Tree, while a few kilometres away are the graves and memorials where Burke and Wills died. While other explorations with fewer men and provisions successfully crossed the continent without any loss of life, it is this story of misadventure and the tragic spirits of the Dig Tree landscape that are best remembered in popular histories.

Barcaldine Shearer's Strike Camp

Some thirty years after the Dig Tree episode, when pastoralists properties were well established in the outback, shearers lived and worked in appalling conditions. Although they tried to negotiate standard reasonable conditions through their union, the pastoralists drew up their own agreement employing whom they liked. As a result a thousand shearers rallied in January in 1891 and set up a strike camp near the town of Barcaldine in southwest Queensland. The strike was eventually broken by police and military troopers in May of 1891 and the six strike leaders arrested and charged with sedition and conspiracy. However, the shearers' resistance was a watershed in Australian political history that transformed the loosely knit workers into a political force, instigated the election of the first Labour representative to a parliament and the beginning of workers in politics. Barcaldine is regarded as the birth place of the Australian Labour Party (Egloff, O'Sullivan and Ramsay 1991).

The strike camp site was a travelling stock reserve and although intermittently used for that purpose it remains today virtually unaltered since the event. It is in the western extent of the 'Brigalow' belt landscape – flat with hardy shrubs and grasses and occasional trees such as Gidyee (*Acacia cambangi*) and Eucalypts in the creek courses.

The shearers' strike of 1891 is portrayed in a picture painted at the campsite. A few features from the event remain such as the blazed tree that carried the shearers' motto – 'United We Stand Divided We Fall A.L.F. The Strike Camp 1891' and numerous artefacts from the strike were located by archaeologists in 1990. The poem by Henry Lawson 'Freedom on the Wallaby' conveys the rallying emotion at the start of the strike.

*So we must fly a rebel flag,
As others did before us,
And we must sing a rebel song
And join in rebel chorus.
We'll make the tyrants feel the sting
O' those that they would throttle;
They needn't say the fault is ours
If blood should stain the wattle! (Lawson 1891)*

However, the poem 'On the Wallaby' written by Lawson soon after the strike was broken, excludes the word 'Freedom' in the title and captures the broken spirits of the workers when they were forced to abandon the strike (Egloff, O'Sullivan and Ramsay 1991):

*... When my tent is all torn and my blankets are damp,
And the rising flood waters flow fast by the camp,
When the cold water rises in jets from the floor,
I lie in my bunk and I list to the roar,
And I think how to-morrow my footsteps will lag
When I tramp 'neath the weight of a rain-sodden swag.*

The strike and others like it established the profile of the hard working ‘battler’ embellished by the bush ballads of the era and today the spirits of the campsite must rejoice when the results of their efforts, the Australian Labour Party is in government Federally and in every Australian State.

The High Country and the Man from Snowy River

A few years after the Strike Camp event another Australian legend was born in a landscape very different to that of the flat Brigalow belt. It arose in the landscape of Australia’s highest mountains proudly called the Australian Alps or more colloquially the ‘high country’ where a particular set myths and traditions of Australian identity were born. The high country of the Snowy Mountains is the locale of Australia's most famous man of the mountains – ‘The Man from Snowy River’, a mythical man that appeared in a poem published in 1895. It is the story of a valuable racehorse, which escaped into the rugged mountain country and joined a mob of ‘wild bush horses’. Although the best riders in the region gathered to chase the wild horses and capture the valuable racehorse, the country was too difficult for all of them - except for one person, the Man from Snowy River riding his ‘small and weedy horse’.

As heroes go he is admirable, small, tough, modest and with great horsemanship skills. He and his horse (part Timor pony) symbolise courage and endurance. The landscape they are part of is wild and powerful and the imagery in the poem is rich with action.

*But the man from Snowy River let the pony have his head
And he swung his stockwhip round and gave a cheer
And he raced him down the mountain like a torrent down its bed,
While the others stood and watched in very fear (Patterson 1895).*

The mythical man was adopted by the mountain stockman who practiced high country grazing for 150 years. The Man from Snowy River, decked out in a ‘Driazabone’ coat (whether he wore one or not) and riding his horse is the iconic symbol of that life style. Some claim the man was Jack Riley from Corryong, but the ‘man’ was essentially the creation of a poet Andrew Barton (Banjo) Paterson, a Sydney lawyer who produced numerous rollicking ballads of a highly romanticized rural life that he marginally experienced. A popular paper, the Bulletin, published his poems and *The Man from Snowy River* inspired the nation.

The poem has given rise to two films, *The Man from Snowy River* and *Return to Snowy River*, as well as a TV series. The Man did not die like his creator and a web site will tell you that every year ‘the Man from Snowy River Festival is held in April at the town of Corryong to celebrate the heritage of the high country with Riley's Ride, bush poetry, a parade, a wine and food festival and much more’.

Other than the National Park Service which has been trying to expunge wild horses, grazing cattle and horse riders from the alps, most people love this mythical character the spirit of the mountains and the Snowy River and the last lines of the poem couldn’t be more true

*‘the Man from Snowy River is a household word today
‘and the stockmen (now the nation) tell the story of his ride’*

The man and his horse, the spirit of freedom and heroism live on, they opened the Australian Olympic Games and you can find them featured on the Australian \$10 note.

Mount Kosciuszko

There is another spirit being nurtured in the high country. It is the spirit of Kosciuszko. Mount Kosciuszko is Australia’s highest mountain, named by the Polish explorer Count Paul de Strzelecki after the Polish freedom fighter General Tadeusz Kosciuszko who believed in equality and lobbied for human rights and liberation of slaves. When Strzelecki viewed the highest point in Australia it reminded him of the famous hill monument built by Poles in

Krakow and he wrote ‘amongst a free people who appreciate freedom and its votaries, I could not refrain from giving it the name of Mount Kosciusuzko’ (Andrews, 1991).

Unlike Strezlecki, 60,000 Polish people came to Australia to seek political refuge during 1947-53, migrating from war torn Europe and the Nazi Holocaust (Polish Historical Society 2008). In 1988 the Polish Republic donated a statue of Strezlecki to Australia that is located in the mountain town of Jindabyne. In recent years, the Polish community and Puls Polonii have organised an annual festival in the mountain towns and in 2007 it featured a pilgrimage to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko to appreciate the spirit of Kosciuszko, the man and the mountain with songs, music and dancing, and a Catholic Mass by Polish Jezuit priests.

Mount Kosciuszko, as the summit of Australia is at 2228 m and about a 10 km round trip walk from the nearest carpark. Over 100,000 people do the summit walk each year. The name, Kosciusko, has been extended to the surrounding national park but is mostly not pronounced softly as in Polish. Pronounced the Australian way it springs off the tongue and many give it the affectionate abbreviation of ‘Kosci’. Mt Kosciuszko is familiar to all Australians and although not all know who gave it that name or why, thanks to the Polish community, the spiritual association of freedom and democracy grows stronger each year.

Hanging Rock

In central Victoria is a small rocky hill known as Hanging Rock. Geologically the hill is a volcanic plug (mamelon) and a landmark feature arising from the surrounding countryside in a series of vertical pinnacles. Hanging Rock has been a Crown Reserve since 1884 and a recreational feature since the 1860s (AHDB 1991). It also has an associational history with the bushranger Dan (mad dog) Morgan who used the place as a lookout.

Hanging Rock is imbued with a mystery and one website states that it is famous because it is where five school girls went missing during an excursion in the early twentieth century and were never found (Fiona and Ashley 2008) but the website fails to note, probably purposefully, that the story is a work of fiction by the writer, Joan Lindsay, published in 1967. The story became more widely known when it became a feature film in 1975, directed by Peter Weir. The evocative film utilised the unusual rock formations with their narrow passageways along with eerie exaggerated insect sounds to add tension to the sense of mystery. And so a small segment of landscape has been imprinted with a myth and although barely 50 years old, the story has metamorphosed the place into a landscape of mystery with the lingering fictional spirits of the missing schoolgirls.

The Franklin and Gordon Rivers

Other landscapes in Australia have initiated hard struggles to become protected landscapes. Today in Tasmania one can visit the Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, a landscape of powerful wild river beauty. Although most national parks have developed from community campaigns to save landscapes of beauty or scientific importance, in this case the campaign was a particularly hard battle that divided Tasmanian communities. The Tasmanian State Government in 1982, decided to build a dam near the junction of the Gordon and Franklin Rivers in Tasmania's southwest. Many Tasmanians were in favour of the dam believing that it would generate much-needed jobs while others wanted to protect the landscape. A huge media campaign incited protests around the nation, blockades on the river by a fleet of rubber duckies, and appeals by eminent scientists defended the protection of the river. A focus of the campaign was an evocative landscape image, ‘Rock Island Bend’ by the landscape photographer, Peter Dombrovskis.

On the 1 July 1983, the High Court of Australia overturned the Tasmanian government's decision using federal powers to protect world heritage. The case was a landmark in Australia's environmental and constitutional history that confirmed the federal government's

power to intervene and protect sites of world heritage value. It led to the protection of the Franklin River and to the formation of the Australian Greens Party. The campaign that involved valiant efforts of many protestors has imprinted the landscape with a lingering spirit and inspired other campaigns to save special forests such as Terrania Creek, the Daintree and the Lemonthyne.

Gulaga – Birthing Woman- Mother Mountain

During the last 40 years the Aboriginal associations with landscapes have become more known to other Australians through the popularity of Aboriginal art, books, stories and dancing. As previously noted the Aboriginal bond with the landscape is an indivisible link of spiritual importance, stories, art and ‘caring for country’. There are also countless places of newer spirits significant to contemporary Aboriginal people, some of which are sites of massacres such as the Myall Creek Massacre landscape, places of dispossession and places of asserting independence and traditional rights such as the Wave Hill Walk Off Route (AHDB 2008, 2007). There are also places where the dreamtime spirits are so strong that they appear to also embrace the non-Aboriginal people. One such place is Gulaga originally named Mount Dromedary by Captain Cook because of its double humped form.

Gulaga, a mountain clad in temperate forest, is a dominant landmark feature of the south coast of New South Wales. As told by one of the elders; ‘it is sacred to the Yuin nation and has a dreamtime story that brings people back to where their spirits can rest in their own land. To the Yuin nation she has always been the mother mountain, a place of great power, for women especially, but also to men. Gulaga is regarded as a place for teaching, creating, curing and protecting (AHDB).

Another story is that Gulaga had two sons Barranguba and Nadjanuga. Barranguba ran away to the sea and is now an island. Nadjanuga stayed near his mother Gulaga as a small rocky hill. The story parallels the geological history – 95 million years ago Gulaga was a volcano and Nadjanuga and Barranguba were two subsidiary volcanoes while the guardians of Gulaga, are the dominant extrusions of large tors of monzonite rock. There is also an apron of volcanic soil flowing from the Gulaga to the sea that was cleared of its forest by settlers who exploited the highly fertile soil to sustain a dairy industry, two cheese factories and their associated workers’ towns of Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba nestled in the Gulaga foothills (Peter Freeman et al 1992). Although only the Yuin know the details of the sacred places, Gulaga is an omnipresence spirit that dominates the dreamtime story, the scientific story and the settler story as well as appearing in the literature of the region such as the award winning trilogy *Just Relations* by Rodney Hall (1982) and poems such as the following by a local resident.

*We see her now head thrown back,
Knees drawn up,
Gently curving breasts and belly against the sky
Sometimes winter covers her with a possum cloak – a mist. (Amy Abbott 1989)*

Discussion

The examples of landscapes with spirits have been selected to convey the acquisition of a national identity through imprinting spirits and iconisation of landscapes. The spirits of Port Arthur epitomise the melancholia of those forcibly brought to the country while the spirit of Ned Kelly in the Kelly Country, portrays how a first generation individual defied spurious law officials to defend his family. The spirits of the Dig Tree landscape are evidence of how the dreams of the new nation were pinned to the Burke expedition only to be devastated by its disastrous demise. Coming near the end of the nineteenth century, the spirits of the Barcardine Shearers’ Strike, remind of how some people endured difficulties and punishment in seeking

for improved social conditions for the working class. A little later, around the time when the colonial governments were forging national unity through Federation, the poet, Banjo Patterson gave birth to the Man from Snowy River. At the turn of the century this spirit was one the newly formed Australian nation needed – the quiet, modest, skilful, courageous person and his horse, who ‘conquered’ one of the roughest landscapes in the country. The less well-known but equally fictitious mystery of Hanging Rock denotes how we desire to imprint spirits onto the landscape. In the twentieth century there is the emerging uplifting spirit of Kosciuszko, to remind us of the best of human values while the spirits of the Franklin River and various forest landscape battle-grounds epitomise the nation’s recognition of Australia’s landscape beauty and our passionate efforts to safeguard it.

From the examples provided it is plain that spiritual loci is definitely strengthened by artistic and literary works of any degree of sophistication. A ballad or a folk song is just as successful in fortifying spiritual loci as a classical masterpiece.

Although the spirits discussed are popular nationally and the landscapes they inhabit are anchored in heritage lists, the spiritual value is still immature. Can modern Australians accept the concept of spiritual places? Haydn Washington in his work *A Sense of Wonder* (2002) quotes the philosopher John Passmore who said that sacred landscapes were ‘mystical rubbish’. In arguing against Passmore’s harsh words and devotion to rational thought, Washington quotes Einstein who noted ‘the most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious –It is the source of all art and science’ (Washington 2002, 81). Australians travel long distances to contemplate, enjoy and be emotionally affected by the wonders and meanings of the Australian landscapes but because of prevailing western rational philosophy few will admit to the concept of embracing the spirits of the place.

Many other nations recognise spiritual landscape value. A discussion by Olwen Beazley on sacred mountains in 2003 analysed a selection of World Heritage listed mountains that included the Chinese World Heritage sacred Mt Lushan and Mt Emei that have spiritual importance while Mt Tai and Mt Wuyi are associated with the birth of philosophical and religious doctrines that shaped their nation. Mt Althos (Greece) and Mt. Althos (Egypt) also have strong spiritual association (Beazely 2003, 5). There are numerous spiritual landscapes throughout the world such as the megaligth landscapes of Europe, the British Isles, Asia and also the Pacific that are strongly associated with myths, legends or ancient religions.

It is encouraging to note how many if not most ancient cultures accept and revere spiritual landscapes. It is also interesting to contemplate on the origins of their spiritual meanings and just how long did it take from the earliest germination of spiritual meaning to full-blown sacred landscape status. For some of the fledgling ‘white man’ spirit places described in this paper it may be hundreds of years before there is a full flowering of their spiritual influence.

Management

Landscapes such as the ones described are *associational cultural landscapes* that illustrate the interaction of humans and nature. The identification of heritage involves considering the authenticity and integrity. For associational cultural landscapes, establishing the values relies on gathering as much evidence of intangible association from as many sources as possible such as art, literature, experts, community, tourism advertising and now web sites to establish both the quantity and quality of the association. The quantity confirms that the value exists broadly and has meaning for many people. The quality of the association needs to be substantiated by factors such as longevity of the association or events that commemorate the association. For example, in 1991 at the centenary celebrations of the Shearer’s Strike Camp, the place was visited by the then Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke along with many labour politicians proving the strength of the association. The annual celebrations of Mount

Kosciuszko by the Polish community attest strength of attachment. The Franklin Dam dispute brought down a government and changed Australia's politics.

If the place has strong and meaningful associations for the community for spiritual value then the spiritual value must exist. If the places ceases to retain current spiritual importance to people then the spiritual value will not exist. Monitoring of landscapes with associational value requires occasional consultation with owners and communities verify that the value is continuing.

Boundaries of associational landscapes can be both easy to define or difficult. In the examples provided most places are reserves and managed as such. Kelly Country has a number of heritage-listed sites of associational value but the one spirit not clearly anchored to a specific landscape is the Man from Snow River. The landscape of his epic event was never clearly identified and associational value now spreads over an area of around 1,000,000 hectares.

Management of associational landscapes in Australia must always consider Aboriginal people who have been living on the continent for 30 –60,000 years and have a spiritual association with probably every landscape feature in the country including the examples discussed; Mt Kosciuszko, Hanging Rock, the Franklin River, the Dig Tree Landscape, the Barcardine Shearers Strike Camp and particularly Gulaga. Recognising the strength and extensiveness of the Aboriginal spiritual landscapes as well as respecting the rules of their spiritual management is something that newer Australians are slowly learning. There are challenges in managing the spiritual places but as Jason Ardler said at the Mountains Conference in 2002, 'it is about respecting the values of the culture and their associated laws, and acknowledging that Aboriginal people are the owners and interpreters of their heritage' (Ardler 2003, 8).

Where new white-mans spirits are being layered over places that have Indigenous spiritual meaning such as for example Mt Kosciuszko, then the relevant Aboriginal people who are the traditional owners of the place should be consulted and informed about the additional spiritual meanings. Although there may be some challenges in managing landscapes with multiple layers of spiritual values but they are not insurmountable.

Interpretation or transmitting the value is a further consideration. It is important to be aware of sensitivities of the value to the community. Therefore interpretation may need to be modified or indeed, not provided. If possible, tourism advertising should also be respectful, and not excessive or exaggerated (Australia ICOMOS 1995).

Conclusion

People move to new countries leaving behind the land of their indigeneity where their forebears may well have had strong spiritual associations with the landscapes. New Australians have brought and continue to bring a culture of language, stories, literature, dress, music, song, dance and skills. They have built cities, churches, temples, mosques, opera houses, racetracks, and sportsgrounds to assert cultures from elsewhere. They have named places after features from their cultural heredity such as the Babylon, Jericho and River Styx in the island state of Tasmania. But landscape spirits cannot be easily brought and installed in a new land. A spiritual loci is specifically place based.

It appears that some sort of catalyst is needed to germinate the seed of a spirit into a landscape, be that an event, an inspiring life, a myth or a religious happening. If we ask the question 'how does spiritual value arise' these Australian examples show that it comes from inspiring stories, dispiriting events and collective aspirations that remain strong enough to capture our emotions and shape our national character. The landscapes are integral with the story of the spiritual value.

Appreciating a 'spiritual loci' also involves a change in heritage perception that involves moving from the more objective visual aesthetic experiences of landscapes to the deeper phenomenological appreciation and many spiritual will have no exceptional visible beauty.

All of the landscape examples discussed are well known to Australians and most are heritage listed. They were selected to demonstrate creating the spirits of places and as well as forging national character that is mostly derived from the wretchedness of convictism but now extends to passionate intrepid actions to save beloved landscapes.

We can only speculate on the landscape spirits of the future. Some of the places will become more prominent in our culture and more exaggerated in their heroics. Some may disappear, new spirits will have germinated and some may have even hybridised with Aboriginal stories. The examples of the Australian landscape are the 'white man's dreaming' and also the building blocks of our national identity.

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