Reconciliation Agendas in the Australian Curriculum English: Using Postcolonial Theory to Enter the Fray

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this document/website contains references to people who have passed away. Since this article was initially written, one of the main people discussed, Dr G. Yunupingu, has passed away. At the National Indigenous Music Awards held on Larrakia Nation in August 2017, David Djunga Djunga Yunupingu paid tribute to his late nephew, Dr G. Yunupingu. The essence of his tribute encapsulated the peaceful soul and connectivity that resonates through Dr G.'s music. He referred to his music as a 'bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia'.

Abstract: This article begins by discussing the Australian Curriculum: English and its remit to contribute to this nation's reconciliation agenda. Ever cognisant of our individual identities as non-Indigenous teachers and teacher educators and our relations to this topic, we hone in on one Content Description from Year 10, and analyse one stimulus text, an interview transcript between Michael Hohnen and Patrick Pittman. In the interview, Hohnen reflects on the long term collaborative relationship with Dr G. Yunupingu, a hailed musician from Galiwinku (Elcho Island), North East Arnhem Land. The theoretical grounding for thinking about these reflective recounts is drawn from a critical theory paradigm imbued with a postcolonial lens. Specifically, we draw on Bhabha's (1994) notion of cultural hybridity. Our analysis of this text points to the utility of using postcolonial theory for framing discussions of this ilk. We conclude by commenting on implications for non-Indigenous teachers and teacher educators working within an agenda of reconciliation in subject English.

The Reconciliation Agenda: The shift into schooling spaces

In 1988, at the Barunga festival in the Northern Territory, Indigenous representatives Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Wenten Rubuntja presented then-Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke with a statement of Aboriginal political objectives. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities sought, yet again, to peacefully redress the long history of dispossession, assimilation and racial and constitutional discrimination. Hawke responded with a promise that a treaty would be signed with Indigenous Australians by 1990. On 5th June 1991, the House of Representatives passed the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Bill.* This Bill formally set in motion the 'Reconciliation Decade' (Pratt, 2005) and a process of reconciliation which has become a major, albeit slowly progressing, theme of Australian political and civic life. Since the introduction of the Bill, major debates such as native title, the stolen generations, practical reconciliation and Rudd's 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples' (Parliament of Australia, 2008) have taken place.

The Australian Government currently defines reconciliation as the 'unity and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians. It is about respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians' (2017, para 1). This version of reconciliation has overtly shifted into schooling spaces as a result of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2008). This landmark document declared that all Australian students should 'understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' (p. 8). Furthermore, it was also the impetus for the development of the inaugural *Australian Curriculum* by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (hereafter ACARA). One curricula, the *Australian Curriculum: English* (hereafter AC:E), was implemented in the initial rollout in 2012. Aside from its more conservative intent of creating 'confident communicators' and 'imaginative thinkers', the AC:E (ACARA, 2017, p. 4) is designed to help students to 'become ethical, thoughtful, informed and active members of society' (p. 4). The rationale affirms that the AC:E 'plays an important part in developing the understanding, attitudes and capabilities of those who will take responsibility for Australia's future' (p. 4). Embedded within the AC:E and the other curricula developed by ACARA (for example, 'History') are three cross-curriculum priorities, one of which is *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures* (p. 16). This cross-curriculum priority provides the overt justification for including reconciliation agendas in the disciplinary field of English. The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* cross-curriculum priority was embedded not just for the benefit of Indigenous Australian students (Shipp, 2012), but to benefit all students. The AC:E states that the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* priority 'provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest living cultures. This knowledge and understanding will enrich their ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia' (2012, p. 16).

Absent from this policy was the greater reality that the vision for reconciliation is complex and highly contested by researchers who dedicate their work to this territory (see Nakata, 2003; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2009; Wallace, 2010; Freeman, 2014; Worby, Irabinna-Rigney & Ulalka, 2011). Freeman (2014) cautions that too often formalised processes and discourses of reconciliation serve to reduce the differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples instead of negotiating, acknowledging and respectfully embracing difference. Worby et al. (2011) include a statement from Patrick Dodson's 2000 Lingiari Lecture speech. Dodson insists that the quality of reconciliation in Australia will depend on an ability to embrace all its aspects over four levels:

> There is the personal level. This is the level of human encounter … then there is the reconciliation at the social level. These are the social policy matters that have to do with health, housing, education, employment, welfare and an economic base … then there is the reconciliation of governance. This is about governments making laws that remove rights, or enhance them … Finally there is the reconciliation of recognition. The sovereign position that Aboriginal peoples assert has never been ceded … to have any substantial reconciliation we must encompass all these aspects, no matter how challenging that may seem. (2011, pp. 205–206)

To address all elements is beyond the scope of this paper. This paper is primarily concerned with the 'personal level' of reconciliation: the level of human encounter and the processes of negotiating ways of working together in 'unity' and 'respect' (Worby et al. 2011). We offer a possible way forward for negotiating, acknowledging and respectfully embracing difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In the section that follows, we each introduce ourselves and our identities of relatedness with this topic as they are understood in this place at this time. The third section highlights the inherent tensions of working as non-Indigenous teachers and teacher educators on topics that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. In the fourth section, we delve into the AC:E and hone in on a Year 10 Content Description that requires students to 'analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices' (ACARA, 2017, p. 118). We introduce a stimulus text, a transcript of an interview between Michael Hohnen and Patrick Pittman (Hohnen & Pittman, 2011). In the interview, Hohnen reflects on the long term collaborative relationship with Dr G. Yunupingu,

a hailed musician from Galiwinku (Elcho Island), North East Arnhem Land. We draw on a postcolonial theory of cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) to frame our discussion about instances of Indigenous and non-Indigenous human encounters and the processes of negotiating ways of working together in 'unity' and 'respect' (Worby, Irabinna-Rigney & Ulalka Tur, 2011). Our logic for doing so is to inspire the English teacher to consider how postcolonial theories can frame future classroom discussions. We conclude by considering the utility or otherwise of this approach for helping to break down the us/them social divide.

Our individual relatedness to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Academic and Indigenous Elder Karen Martin (2008) highlights the importance of relatedness to Country for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Martin (2008) explains that the footprint of relatedness is grounded 'on the ontological premise' of the multiplicity of Entities in the human and non-human world (p. 71). She states that 'how you come to know about your world' can be dependent on an awareness and openness to acknowledge how one is positioned in a multitude of relationships (p. 71). With the rise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples working collaboratively on shared visions and endeavours, Martin (2008) asserts that 'this relatedness remains core' (p. 76). It is thus essential for each of us to declare, as best we can, who we are, from where we come and why we seek to explore within the space of intercultural relations. We each come to this discussion as teachers or teacher educators from different backgrounds and experiences.

Author one, Megan Wood, is a passionate primary school educator, determined and inspired by her colleagues, students, community and the local, national and global affairs that inform and influence the societies in which we live. She currently lives and works in Wadeye on *Kardu Diminin* land, in the *Thamarrurr* region of the Northern Territory. She believes that to be a progressive, successful and reconciliatory non-Indigenous educator in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community school, educators require an active awareness of dominant ideologies that are imbued across the borders of cultural difference 'in an attempt to position others' (Giroux, 2005, p. 100). Furthermore, an ability to continually reflect on how we (as cultural, social beings) are arranged and positioned when collaborating at the borders of

cultural difference, is essential for positioning intercultural partnerships. She maintains an ongoing awareness of the colonial legacy of Western researchers who have attempted to represent the cultural orientation of Indigenous peoples through 'different conceptualisations of things such as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialised forms of language and structures of power' (Smith, 1999, p. 45). In attempting to generate postcolonial conversations regarding Indigenous affairs one must be constantly reflective so as to mitigate the risk of producing self-proclaiming narratives that reinscribe a particular type of authority that counters the author's initial intentions. She acknowledges that there may be moments where her writing may be perceived as slipping into the colonial authority we attempt to avoid. These moments, documented as written discourse, need to be challenged and discussed to continue to support a progressive and postcolonial way of thinking and being that can be embedded into institutional practices.

Author 2, Beryl Exley, was born on *Wiradjuri* land in the state which is known as New South Wales in the 1960s and grew up on *Yuggera* land in the state known as Queensland. Whilst she has Aboriginal kin in her maternal and paternal family trees, she identifies as white Australian because her life was not/is not infused with an Indigenous perspective. Her schooling years only offered 'romantic white notions of Australian history' (Sarra, 2010, para 7) where 'learning about contemporary Indigenous culture never included learning from or deep questions about other ways of knowing'. She has been a teacher and teacher educator in schools supporting and supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for the last three decades. Her specialisation is the enactment of the AC:E, with a particular focus on inquiry based learning for coming to understand the Language, Literature and Literacy strands. Through her connections with some Indigenous educators and Indigenous community members in the Torres Straits (see Exley, 2010, 2012) and Logan community (see Exley, Davis & Dooley, 2016), she has learnt the importance of forgoing the Western researcher-educator's illusion of the right to know all, instead learning to listen, observe and participate in culturally appropriate activities when invited to do so. Beryl's warrant for contributing to the penning of this article is tied to her professional responsibility as a teacher educator. In some ways, Beryl is representative of the myriad of

well-intentioned but not necessarily knowledgeable non-Indigenous Australian teachers implementing the AC:E and its inherent reconciliation agenda.

Author 3, Linda Knight, was born overseas and moved to Australia as an adult. She now lives on *Turrbal* land in the state known as Queensland. As someone who has predominantly lived overseas she recognises that the majority of her perceptions of the world have been shaped by a white, colonial culture. Consequently during her time in Australia she has come to build an awareness of the importance of taking responsibility for her part in Australian history, society and culture and that the past and present are important to continue to understand from different standpoints. Through her work as an artist and community educator she embeds this shared responsibility into her teaching and research about young Australian children, their families and communities, their education and care. After seventeen years in Australia she still has much to learn about the Indigenous knowledge systems that have shaped and continue to shape the histories, spaces and lives of all who live in Australia. She understands the importance of committing to nurturing relationships that are built and sustained over time, and that are dynamic, trusting and mutually respectful, and she works to generate, interpret and respond to these aims as she conducts her work in early years education.

The reconciliation agenda in the AC:E and tensions for non-Indigenous teachers

The literature on the uptake of the Reconciliation agenda in teaching practice is limited (Kanu, 2012; Harrison, 2011; Buxton, 2015; McLaughlan & Whatman, 2015). So too is the literature which reports on reconciliatory work within the AC:E. Two manuscripts, however, are noteworthy. The first manuscript, written by non-Indigenous teachers, Wagner and Wenlock (2012), recount the planning of a unit of work for Year 8 English students exploring Australian Identity through films which highlight experiences of Indigenous Australians. The second manuscript, written by non-Indigenous curriculum commentators Exley and Chan (2014) explores tensions between AC:E policy and practice. In an attempt to better understand the challenge of introducing a reconciliation agenda into the AC:E, it is instructive to overview literature that explores pre-service teachers' and teachers' understandings of the colonial and imperialistic history of this nation.

Concerns about preservice teachers' knowledge gap of Aboriginal culture and history were noted in a study by Anderson and Atkinson (2012). In her PhD dissertation, academic and Indigenous Elder Phillips (2011) reflected on her work in preservice teacher education courses over eight years, concluding, in the main, Indigenous viewpoints are poorly understood and attempts to embed Indigenous perspectives were aggressively challenged by some preservice teachers. Harrison (2011) comments on observations of proactive teachers unwittingly drawing on stereotypes, Internet, media, books and journals about Indigenous histories and cultures to compensate for gaps in their knowledge bases. Research studies undertaken by Craven and Price (2011), Harrison and Greenfield (2011), Santoro, Reid, Crawford and Simpson (2011), and Zurzolo (2010) add to the collection of studies that confirm many non-Indigenous teachers are still developing an inadequate appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Buxton's (2015) Master of Philosophy thesis concluded that some non-Indigenous teachers had an under-developed repertoire of suitable pedagogies for teaching about understandings of Indigenous cultures.

The largest national study on broader issues around the education of Indigenous students, *The Stronger Smarter Learning Communities Project*, asserted that the potential of embedding an Indigenous perspective in Key Learning Areas may not be realised due to inappropriate pedagogical approaches that had the collateral effect of 'defining and positioning the sole Indigenous student in the class as an *object* of study and commentary' (Luke, et al., 2013, p. 224, emphasis in original). Relevant to our discussion is key finding Number 16 which claimed 'broad community support for the embedding of Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum, but Indigenous students and staff report significant problems with non-Indigenous teacher knowledge and intercultural sensitivity' (p. 120). After evidencing demonstrations of this ilk on multiple occasions, the research team cautioned that 'the Australian Curriculum mandate for the embedding of Indigenous knowledges raises major issues in terms of the requisite depth of teacher knowledge of Indigenous cultures, histories, issues and languages' (p. 417).

The AC:E cross curriculum priority of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* requires teachers to be knowledgeable about localised Indigenous content and ways of knowing, accumulated over 70 000+ years. Trudgen's (2010) recount of life as a *Balanda* (non-Aboriginal) in a remote Aboriginal community in

Strand	Substrand	Content Description	Selected elaborations
Literacy	Texts in Context	Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices (ACELY 1749).	• Considering ethical positions across more than one culture as represented in text and consider the similarities and differences • Questioning the representation of stereotypes of people, cultures, places, events and concepts, and expressing views on the appropriateness of these representations • Analysing the way socio-cultural values, attitudes and beliefs are presented in texts by comparing the way news is reported in commercial media and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media

Table 1. ACELY1749 Year 10 Content Description (ACARA, 2017, p. 105)

Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory provides a lens through which to view the complexities of coming to know and understand the world view of another person. After living, working, laughing and crying with a proud and functional Aboriginal mob for more than 10 years, he asserts no definitive list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives or world views exists. Rather, a 'people's world view is the product of a host of environmental and historical factors' that shift continuously over time and space (p. 102). Thus for us, a number of related tensions emerge: (i) to remain silent on the cross curriculum priority within the AC:E is to contribute to the symbolic violence of silencing the reconciliation agenda; (ii) to enter into the reconciliation space of the AC:E as a non-Indigenous educator with a limited knowledge base is to contribute to the marginalisation of Indigenous knowledges; and (iii) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are not always known, and sometimes can never be known by non-Indigenous educators such as ourselves (see Exley, Davis & Dooley, 2016).

In the pursuit of identifying educational practices that are reconciliatory, Worby, et al. (2011) suggest an exploration of productive intercultural partnerships. They emphasise exploration, cautioning that merely acknowledging or celebrating successful intercultural collaborations runs the risk of being tokenistic. Sutton (2009) draws on examples of well-functioning Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, explaining how these intellectual partnerships contribute 'to the rich fabric of understanding and appreciation of Australia's cultures' (p. 193). He asserts that the relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, where cultural differences are ever present, is the kind of reconciliation that 'matters most'. In the work presented here, we consider how this take on the reconciliation agenda might come to be part of the classroom discussion. This work on intercultural partnerships stems from a Masters of Education Dissertation completed by Megan Wood (2015) and supervised by Linda Knight and Beryl Exley. The following section introduces one Year 10 AC:E Content Description, a stimulus text and an overview of the theory of cultural hybridity that could be used to frame the teaching and learning.

The AC:E content description, the stimulus text and the theory of cultural hybridity

In an attempt to explore the kind of reconciliation that 'matters most' (Sutton, 2009), we hone in on one Year 10 Content Description from the Language Strand of the AC:E (see Table 1).

The Content Description is broad, so on this occasion, we focus on the use of verbal language in one stimulus text, the interview transcript between non-Indigenous musician Michael Hohnen and non-Indigenous journalist Patrick Pittman, entitled 'Michael Hohnen and Dr G. Yunupingu are Collaborators' (Hohnen & Pittman, 2011). Michael Hohnen is a long time musician and co-director of Skinnyfish Music. Many reflective outputs have promoted the partnership and collaborative endeavours of Michael Hohnen and Dr G. Yunupingu. Pittman is a writer, editor and radio broadcaster 'who loves pushing magazines to feature more about development politics' (Peard, 2013, para. 1). In the interview, Hohnen reflects on the long term collaborative relationship with Dr G. Yunupingu, a hailed musician from Galiwinku (Elcho Island), North East Arnhem Land. Dr G. Yunupingu regularly appeared in magazines, newspapers, concert advertisements, television performances, and social media, however, it is widely known that Dr G. Yunupingu wouldn't give interviews. Friend and musical collaborator Michael Hohnen embraced the role of Dr G. Yunupingu 's spokesperson. The interview between Hohnen and Pittman was published in *Dumbo Feather*,

a magazine that documents interviews with 'extraordinary people' (About Dumbo Feather, 2016). *Dumbo Feather* is published quarterly on the internet and as a print magazine. Each edition contains five profiles explicating the stories of people across various vocations, for example education, science, fashion and the Arts. The magazine claims to appeal to an audience 'who want to be inspired and told a different story than the one they hear every day' (About Dumbo Feather, 2016, para. 2). The interview transcript is documented in 5,960 words with approximately 26 questions/prompts from Pittman. The stimulus text has been read in its entirety and for the purposes of this paper, three reflective recounts have been identified because they showcase respectful cultural intersections.

The goal of the Year 10 Content Description is to 'analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices' (ACARA, 2017, p. 118). We are interested in how processes of intercultural negotiation are actioned and accounted for. In our analysis, we draw on the postcolonial theory of cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) to seek insight into one of many pathways that re/envision the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples.

The absence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authorship is a noted limitation of our analysis. Furthermore, the stimulus text promotes non-Indigenous story which also favours perspective from non-Indigenous logic. These elements of the paper may be considered a contradiction especially given that the analytical frame is postcolonial theory. However, we need to be clear about the boundaries of our work here. We use Hohnen's reflective recounts to explore how non-Indigenous peoples' stories and experiences can elicit critical conversations about the ideological power imbalance in societies, in particular, contexts where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples are working together. We view this analysis as an example of reconciliatory work; when time is taken to critically consider the differences between social and cultural beings, there is a deepened insight that challenges the mindset and potentially supports non-Indigenous people in the social level of reconciliation. This limitation provides opportunity for an analytical frame that deconstructs and challenges the assumptions of the 'West' (Bhabha, 1994).

The theoretical grounding for our thinking about these reflective recounts has been drawn from a critical theory paradigm imbued with a postcolonial lens. Postcolonial theory offers ways to think about the effect of colonisation on culture whilst challenging us to acknowledge the hierarchical and imperial legacies of colonialism and how colonial power takes form and perpetuates inequality in Western discourse (Kaplan, 2013). We draw on the postcolonial theories of Homi K. Bhabha, in particular the concept of cultural hybridity as introduced in his text *The Location of Culture* (1994). Cultural hybridity, the emergent and performative act of cultural translation, is a term used by Bhabha (1994) that explores processes of negotiation and accommodation at and within cultural boundaries. Cultural boundaries refer to the borderline between culturally different people and societies. This concept of cultural hybridity denies the oppositional colonial binaries that attempt to represent and 'give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential (often disadvantaged) histories of nations, race, communities and people' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 246). Cultural hybridity refers to the way we critique our own behaviors and those of others in order to produce a meaningful way of behaving together. Hybridity is a conceptualisation of the intercultural. It is the 'the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 56). Documented moments of cultural hybridity enable a social imagery of the way subjects (in their multiplicity) entangle in moments of cultural translation. Bhabha's (1994) theories of cultural hybridity assist us to think about multiple identities working as 'hybrids', each bringing different ways of being that influence the processes of negotiation.

This paper has engaged with post-qualitative inquiry to mobilise and provide a forum for postcolonial theory. Patti Lather (2013) states that post-qualitative inquiry aims to generate knowledge differently, by denying the 'standpoint epistemologies' (p. 635) that privilege a humanist subject voice as 'transparent descriptions of lived experiences' (p. 635) in search of the 'truth'. For the purpose of this paper, an analytical process of 'thinking with theory' has guided the discussion in response to the reflective recount, which in turn minimises the risk of producing totalising 'answers' to a conceptual frame that cannot be contained to codes. Post-qualitative inquiry promotes the evolving and ever-changing mind, matters and behaviours of society, aiming to fulfill both the ontological and epistemological rigour of the theoretical grounds. Thus this post-qualitative inquiry guides us to reveal and

deliberate about the negotiations and accommodations of difference at and within the borders of cultural difference from the perspective of non-Indigenous peoples. The following section introduces the three reflective recounts we focus upon.

Introducing and analysing the reflective recounts

Reflective Recount # 1 – Hohnen Does the Talking: Working Together / Going With It
Reflective Recount # 1 is in response to a thought-provoking question from Pittman (see Table 2). Pittman is alluding to the contested history which still resonates today when non-Indigenous peoples speak 'on behalf' of Indigenous peoples.

Patrick Pittman	You find yourself in this role as a spokesman for Dr G. Yunupingu as well as the label man. That must be something that people are suspicious of, the white man doing the talking?
Michael Hohnen	I reckon. I feel it's the only choice I've got. You saw him, he doesn't want to have anything to do with it at all, and won't commit to any answers. Occasionally when he's with me for a few days, I can get a few things out of him. He listens to a lot of things that I say on radio and tells me what he thinks, in private. He doesn't come out with much to me, and we've hung out together for fifteen years. We don't talk a lot about anything that heavy, it's more of a social and musical relationship. It's a fun relationship, he has his own life and I have my own life and it's really healthy in that way. He never asks loads of questions, and I never delve deeply into his world. When we're working with Dr G. Yunupingu, we have to go with him, we have to be with him and try and make it work for him. A lot of people are quite tight and rigid and can't change the way they're structured and their business, or their family life, or anything, to go in that direction. I think that probably helps us achieve what we're doing.

Table 2. Hohnen and Pitman, 2007, paras 43–44

We construe Pittman's question as one that supports creating imaginings of Hohnen as the white man doing the talking, dominating the partnership, reveling in the glory of the music's success and rousing suspicion. In response to Pittman's question, Hohnen simply states 'I reckon. I feel it's the only choice I've got'. Hohnen affirms that Dr G. Yunupingu maintained awareness of what Hohnen talked about and would let him know what he thought. He continues to elude that this process of collegiality is private, between them and 'happens when it happens'. He proceeds to talk about multiple topics: the human agency of Hohnen and Dr G. Yunupingu; the materiality of music; and the interviews, advertising and media responsibilities that welcome outsiders to question and consequently contribute further subjective perceptions of the relationship. In Hohnen's reflective recount, Hohnen and Dr G. Yunupingu are entangled together, creating what Bhabha (1994) would reference as a 'hybrid site of cultural negotiation' (p. 255). Bhabha (1994) purports that these differences cannot be totalised as there is no common measure for differences that dwell in the same space. Each moment is entangled with multiplicities that create the signifying differences, before being reinscribed and relocated by another reflective recount. It seems that the processes of negotiation are always evolving and bound by specific contexts of time and place (Bhabha, 1994).

Bhabha's (1994) assertion that 'a moment when something is beyond control, but it is not beyond accommodation' (p. 12), is a reminder of the subjects that influence given moments of intercultural interaction. Cultural hybridity incites moments of uncertainty. The way others perceive the hybridity of a particular relationship or have opinions about how it should be, has the potential to effect the way one behaves. In relation to Hohnen's reflective recount, if one believes they are evoking suspicion based on totalising assumptions about how to behave, this has potential to alter the way one behaves. The subjectivity of onlookers or outsiders has the potential to contribute to the way people engage in intercultural interaction. Non-Indigenous people are frequently represented in the binary opposition as dominating, more powerful and oppressive – more often than not, for justifiable reasons. A negative representation of non-Indigenous peoples is not necessarily a negative thing; an acknowledgement of the power and ideology imbued in colonial relations is a critical element in the production of a discourse of difference (Giroux, 2005). However, applying a notion of power and control as a general conjecture to all non-Indigenous people working in an intercultural space risks the reproduction of presupposed assertions.

Hohnen's reflective recount takes us beyond the border and 'instead of papering over difference' (Lather, 2013, p. 642), we see some of the roles for which each person is responsible. Theories of cultural hybridity also enable us to consider how relationships can change from day to day. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the stimulus text and therefore the analysis, is limited with regard to understanding

the extent of Dr G. Yunupingu 's unwillingness to 'do interviews', and Hohnen's jurisdiction to talk on behalf of him. The essence of this analytical reference is that of negotiation, figuring out 'roles and responsibilities', being aware of the strengths and limits of your significant other.

Perhaps sometimes it was appropriate for Hohnen to 'speak for' Dr G. Yunupingu, and perhaps there were days when it was not. Cultural hybridity provides opportunity for people working at and within the borders of cultural difference to negotiate the construction of their relationship (Bhabha, 1994). There are many ways this negotiation of roles and responsibilities can unfold, depending on the context, the collaborative endeavour and the differing political investments of individual positions and people. Hohnen's reflective recount does not explain the negotiation process. For example, he does not disclose how they both came to know and activate their individual roles and responsibilities or how they established the expectation that neither of them 'delve deep' (para. 43) into each other's worlds. Instead, Hohnen explains the negotiated outcome and we are reminded that each moment of intercultural encounter is different.

Reflective Recount # 2 – Making an Album Together

Reflective recount # 2 talks about Hohnen and Dr G. Yunupingu making an album together, providing insight into some of the active and reflective processes (see Table 3). Hohnen describes the toing and froing of creating an album, highlighting the certain protocols that Dr G. Yunupingu needed to observe before making a recording.

Pittman's question lends itself to challenge the binary. Hohnen's explanations do not explicitly state that he adapted to the intercultural encounters based on the cultural responsibilities of Dr G. Yunupingu or that the album writing processes he and Dr G. Yunupingu followed were 'out of his control'. We learn that the song writing processes cannot be prescribed. There may be reoccurring elements that arise, for example Dr G. Yunupingu needing to check certain lyrics with family, however, how they make an album in its entirety cannot be prescribed. The reflective recount emphasises the notion of cultural hybridity that suggests that moments of social and cultural interaction cannot be controlled but can be accommodated. In this reflective recount we learn that Hohnen and Dr G. Yunupingu were 'enmeshed' with other subjectivities that work together to create the emergent

Patrick Pitman	Let's talk about how you guys make an album together. Does he bring songs to you; does he sing to you, do you jam them out? How does it work?
Michael Hohnen	Yeah he does. He'll play something in the hotel, and I'll say it sounds great, so he'll work on it for a while longer. Six or twelve months later, he'll have lyrics for it, and he's checked those lyrics with lots of family members. It makes sense, he doesn't want to present something to the public until he knows and he's been told by not just one person but lots of different people that it makes sense. You should use that ancestor's work, or you can't phrase it like that. One interesting thing for this album is that I've heard two or three really strong songs by his family. I'll say to him, what about that song by those guys. Now, I need about three or four years – I suggested one song on this album about three years ago, and then last year he played it for me, in a dressing room. He didn't say anything, but we were just sitting there and he played it and sang it to me. That was like saying: 'Oh, Michael, you know that song you asked me to do two or three years ago? Here it is.' There was none of that, but he just sat there grinning, because he knows that I thought that would be a great song for this album. Or something that he should do in the future, so it's more me seeding ideas, him going with some and him rejecting some totally. There was another song that we wanted on this record which was a Manduwuy (Yunupingu of Yothu Yindi) song, from their big album, and we talked about it, he suggested it, and we couldn't get in touch with Manduwuy for two or three days while we were in the studio. He wouldn't do it until he'd been given the go-ahead, so we didn't do it on the album.

Table 3. Hohnen and Pitman, 2011, paras 41–45

differences, similarities and limits within the relationship. The subject of time, cultural tradition, family epistemology (knowledge) and ontology (ways of being), and music, are mutually produced in the enactments of cultural hybridity.

Reflective Recount # 3 – Cultural Difference

Reflective Recount # 3 comes towards the end of the interview (see Table 4). Pittman comments on the different cultures Hohnen's music label works across, provoking a conversation about cultural difference.

Rather than explicating his knowledge of the diversities that may/may not exist between the cultures with which he works, Hohnen refocuses his thoughts of cultural difference to support cultural hybridity. His articulations refrain from naming cultural differences between himself and his collaborators and

Patrick Pitman	You must have to work across many different cultures for the label.
Michael Hohnen	All through Arnhem Land, it's like a miniature Europe. Think about how differently the French and the Germans think of their own cultures, language and everything is structured so differently, and it's the same. At one stage, there were hundreds of different countries. I think we all know that much more now. There were similarities, but if you go west of Darwin, it's quite different again. When you go to Japan, or anywhere else, you pick up that you have to change the way you act in those countries. Unless you're a Bogan and you go to Bali and decide that you're going to go to parties all day and you don't actually go and meet Balinese people and deal with them. It's the same when you go to Aboriginal Australia; it's a totally different world.

Table 4. Hohnen and Pittman, 2011, paras 50–51

he makes no assertion that cultural difference is a problematic within these intercultural relationships. Hohnen's articulations remind us that unless an effort is made to confer sense at cultural boundaries, the potential is to maintain interpretations of the cultural 'Other' through outsider perspectives. Bhabha's (1994) notion of 'beyond' is evident in Hohnen's articulations. Hohnen suggests when you go to different countries, there is a raised awareness of the need to 'change the way you act' (para. 51). Critical consciousness, the deepening awareness of the sociocultural reality that shapes one's way of being and the ability to alter that reality, is an important attribute in developing capabilities to negotiate effective cultural encounters. This reflective recount inspires potential conversations about the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identities. It also amplifies the inability to define how to behave within moments of intercultural collaboration based on the cultural labels that are assumed and assigned to particular cultural groups. Bhabha (1994) emphasises that a deeper understanding of how to work across different cultures is the performative process of cultural communication through negotiation, where opportunity for translation and shared understandings evolve.

Conclusion: renewed tensions and building to greater outcomes

In this paper we have considered the reflective recounts of intercultural collaboration from the perspective of one non-Indigenous person working in an intercultural context. Hohnen's reflective recounts enable an opportunity to imagine the wonder, awe and potentially of working in such a partnership that offers different and unique ways of being in the world. Motivated by a desire to explore possibilities for embedding *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* into Content Descriptions from the AC:E, we drew on postcolonial theory to analyse how difference is enacted, performed and negotiated within sites of intercultural interactions and collaboration. We found this theory provided a critical consideration of the differences between social and cultural beings, a deepened insight that challenges the mindset and potentially supports non-Indigenous people in the social level of reconciliation. This realisation brings us to a new and not yet resolved tension: we are cognisant that this focus on reconciliation seeks to support and strengthen the understanding of non-Indigenous peoples. This heightened understanding, ironically, carries potential to further contribute to the social dominance of non-Indigenous peoples. We, thus, maintain concern for and focus on situations where non-Indigenous peoples (unfortunately) dominate. We also hold some hope that an increased awareness of the underlying power dynamics within sites of intercultural collaboration has potential to support critical reflection and reconsideration of actions. In all, this paper serves as evidence of the evolving depth and breadth of disciplinary knowledge for English teachers implementing the current AC:E.

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