

New Zealand and Australia Visiting Fellowships

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Photo taken at the Forum for Indigenous Research Excellence Seminar at Macquarie University

Introduction

Nwa mkpi shi la njefuga du mma melu ya ji jee ibe nne ye lolu muta isolu olu elu – Igbo proverb.

Young billy goat said that travel is good and that that was why he went to his mother's kindred and learned how to pout.

As a Professor who is invited to deliver keynote lectures or run workshops in many parts of the world, I often wonder if I can say that my work is guided by the principle of hedonism or that of positivism or rather that of commitment to a good cause of public enlightenment? Everyone I meet on my travels abroad and on my return to base asks me if I enjoyed my trip and the way they ask makes me wonder if they expected the answer to be negative. Some may wonder why anyone would leave family and the comfort of a familiar bed and jet off to the other side of the world to reap a jet lag and swollen ankles if this was not the punishment of 'transportation' for some serious felonies. It is the pleasant interactions with colleagues, including students, the regular income, and the expenses-paid invitations that make the work of learning, discovery, and community engagement satisfactory and fun like play.

With all due respect to the colleagues who honor my work with such invitations, I often answer that I do not find the subject matter of the oppression of Indigenous peoples, the poor and women by imperialist patriarchal white supremacy to be pleasant as a work theme. But I would be lying if I claim not to enjoy the affirmation and the attention that my work attracts. [All My Work Is Play](#) was a banner behind the desk of Anambra State Radio Playhouse producer, Emeka Ekpokoba, to whom I submitted my radio play scripts as an undergraduate student and I decided to adopt it as the guide for my scholarly work. As a Professor,

I regularly work a few days a week in the office and work the rest of the time at home in addition to the paid summer holidays when I continue to do my own research. But to say that it is play is not to say that it is easy or that it is always fun. As in any sport, being a scholar-activist comes with some passion, pleasure, stress, sweat, disappointments, rewards, growth, and not just the three pleasures of conventional criminology identified by [Stephen Pfohl and Avery Gordon](#) – surveillance, mastery and sadism.

Ko te pae tawhiti, whāia kia tata; ko te pae tata, whakamaia kia tina: [Māori proverb](#)

Seek out distant horizons and cherish those you attain.

Meeting in the Indigenous Studies Hall or Waipapa Marae in the University of Auckland as a senior international visiting scholar for a workshop on the decolonization paradigm in criminology and justice in the first week of June 2018 was a revelation in humility and generosity. We all gathered in front of the hall designed with Indigenous architecture and we removed our shoes before walking in with hushed tones and found ourselves surrounded by sculptures of the images of ancestors of the with which the walls and ceilings were adorned. I asked why they were sticking out huge tongues, flipping the middle fingers, bulging out their eyes and dangling their private parts as if obscenely; were they saying to the invaders that they survived the genocide with defiance? I was told that that the bold tongues, the bulging eyes, the pointing fingers and the nakedness were all methodologies of Indigenous knowledge systems and not acts of rudeness or barbarism as the conquerors may have imagined. I obviously need to decolonize my mind some more. I had a similar experience when I moved to Trinidad and Tobago and thought that the local [Kiskadee](#) birds were being rude to one another because they sounded as if they were saying, ‘Fuck you’, ‘Fuck you too’, to one another. An elder explained to me that they were saying, ‘Bless you, bless you too’.

Just as the All Blacks start their matches with the performance of the Māori traditional dance, Haka, we could not start our workshop until a Māori man was called to sing a welcome song to us with a translation of the good wishes afterwards. A German colleague of Roma descent who was fluent in the Māori language also performed another Māori song to welcome us. Then we lined up and greeted one another with the rubbing of our noses together but the American colleague and I misjudged the distance and butted heads really hard with awkward smiles. I was told. I acknowledged the Indigenous peoples who owned the land and told the audience that I am an Indigenous person of Igbo descent who survived a major genocide in Biafra at the hands of the Nigerian government, aided by the British and Soviet governments and by oil companies that were greedy for the oil and mineral wealth in our land.

The Director of the Indigenous Studies Program who studies cases of genocide in places like Rwanda on behalf of the United Nations shared the poetry of incarcerated young women who left school at 9 due to abuse and were jailed at 14 for life for the murder of people who tried to help them after they had been hurt so much that they did not trust anyone. It took time before they opened up to start participating in the prison creative writing workshops, she told us. The poetry written by those young women in minutes of workshop time in prison indicated that they had enormous talents that were neglected by the state that only operated under the classical philosophy of hedonism with the goal of dishing out just deserts even to juveniles. Later, she spared her precious time to meet with me briefly as she packed to travel the next morning to the US. She said that if I could return for a longer visit, she would like to work with me to help Indigenous youths in gangs to turn their lives around. I suggested providing video cameras and film scripts to the gang members to act out their fantasies nonviolently and maybe help them to make a living as film stars. She seemed to like the suggestion of film-making and a documentary film-maker who attended the journal launch also liked the idea. Dr. Robert Webb and some of the graduate students started the process

of applying for funds to bring me back for a longer visit.

A Māori colleague, Dr. Juan Tauri, outlined the struggles that forced him and others to start developing teaching in Indigenous Criminology by drawing from my work and the work of others around the world. One of the major outcomes was the groundbreaking book he co-authored with Chris Cunneen, [*Indigenous Criminology*](#), which details the oppressive practices that Indigenous peoples face in the criminal justice system. Authoritarian criminology was dominated by white men who tended to discriminate against contributions from Indigenous scholars and their supporters. In this connection, he organized a workshop under the Forum for Indigenous Research Excellence (FIRE) at the University of Wollongong in New South Wales, Australia, where I was an invited keynote speaker in 2016 and which yielded a special issue of the [*Journal of Global Indigeneity*](#) in 2018. A Māori colleague, Robert Webb, who was at that workshop later obtained funding in New Zealand to invite me as a visiting international scholar that gave rise to the new workshop. The next few days we were scheduled to run a Masterclass workshop for graduate students on how to do critical criminology. Two days later we were scheduled to launch the [*Decolonization of Criminology and Justice*](#) journal with a presentation that would be the first article to be published in the journal.

My presentation on the decolonization paradigm in criminology and justice was well-received. I summarized my argument in [*Counter-Colonial Criminology*](#) that criminology was the discipline that was most closely linked to imperialism and yet criminologists had continued to ignore the complicity of the discipline with imperialism to the disadvantage of the entire discipline. I referred

to my finding in [*Black Women and the Criminal Justice System*](#) that over 90% of Black women in UK prisons were incarcerated for drugs offences to suggest that one way of contributing to the decolonization of justice and criminology was for criminologists to add their voices to the struggle for the legalization of drugs. I also highlighted that our Indigenous research methods could be further decolonized by adopting the methodology of committed objectivity as scholar activists and by abandoning data collection methods in favor of data reception through which we treat information from the community as gifts to be reciprocated by making recommendations that the people can act on instead of directing all our recommendations to the imperialist state.

The invited discussant from an Australian university, Dr. William Wood, wondered if decolonization was a feasible project in criminology given that the discipline is more closely tied to the purse strings of the state than other disciplines. I answered that the state itself is structured in contradiction with forces of opposition or minority parties and so the expectation of total obedience to the agenda of imperialistic reason is not a realistic expectation in democratic societies. Whereas it is true that oppositional thought may attract less funding from the state in any discipline, we are aware that funded projects tend to yield less in original contributions to knowledge than theoretical thoughts that question taken for granted assumptions without any research funding and end up being foundational. Moreover, scholar-activism has succeeded in pushing back the control-freak state in modest ways that encourage us to insist that penal abolitionism is feasible. It is true that decolonization would not result in an overnight end to racism-sexism-classism but there is no excuse for not pushing for greater democratization.

Some graduate students wondered privately if critical and oppositional scholar-activism was advisable when they still felt insecure and precarious in the job market? I chose to address this concern during the Masterclass by asking the students to close their eyes and count the number of critical scholars who were unemployed. I suggested that critical scholars are sought-after despite employment discrimination in some universities because the critical scholars fill a gap in knowledge that is neglected by the majority authoritarian scholars. The enormous success of critical intellectuals like Karl Marx and W.E.B. Du Bois even when they were not offered employment by the imperialist state encouraged me to tell the students to pursue their convictions with courage and be rest assured that they will be recognized and honored by their peers. Rob Wood expressed doubts about the feasibility of critical scholarship given that those criminologists with huge funding from the state have the resources to recruit graduate students and mold them in their own images. I agreed that they are called disciplines because there are systems of instruction to discipline the students and make them conformist but that criminology is not structured like the natural sciences where the professor owns the lab and assigns small portions of his or her project to the graduate students in a feudal system of master and apprentice. In the social sciences, the students are more like colleagues who define their own areas of interest and conduct their own research with advice from supervisors that they choose. I recommended the book, [*How to Get a Ph.D.*](#) by Estelle Phillips Derek Pugh to the students because they did not ask any practical questions as I expected.

During the keynote lecture for the launch of the *Decolonization of Criminology and Justice* journal at Auckland University of Technology, I was pleasantly surprised to see colleagues who travelled from distant locations for the event. I told them that it was a huge honor to be witnessing the history

of the birth of a new paradigmatic journal as a keynote speaker and not just as a spectator. After a Māori scholar and Dr. Antje Deckert welcomed us in the Indigenous language, I restated my thesis that imperialism is the general character of all crimes because irrespective of their levels of seriousness, all crimes share the tendency to be caused by the desire to invade and colonize the spaces of others. Hence, the increased decolonization of justice, liberation of the oppressed, and the democratization of society remain crucial intersectional tasks.

I emphasized that the decolonization paradigm is a nonviolent approach because it is a scholarly and not a militaristic tendency in criminology especially given that whenever Indigenous people are armed, they tend to turn those arms against fellow Indigenous peoples. Criminologists write books and articles and no matter how much the colleagues find their books to be ‘angry’ or ‘unnerving’, they are nonviolent exchanges of ideas about opposing policy preferences, theoretical orientations and methodological foundations in research. I commended the student activists in [JustSpeak](#) who helped to organize my visit and told the audience to support their campaigns to end the oppressive and discriminatory prison industrial complex as they demanded in a recent report: [The Case Against Prisons](#). I also expressed support for the pending referendum on the [legalization of marijuana in New Zealand](#). I hoped that the new journal would recognize that no culture ever industrialized by relying on the language of colonizers and therefore would allow the publication of criminology articles in Indigenous languages when possible as Ngugi wa Thion’go has been advocating in the form of the linguistic [decolonization of African Mind](#).

During the discussion, an African American colleague based in New Zealand, Dr. Adelle Norris, invoked the thoughts of Carter G. Woodson in [The Mis-Education of the Negro](#) to call for the

education of criminologists to be for scholar-activism and not for elitism or careerism. A scholar of Samoa descent, Dr. Sailau Suaalii-Sauni, also spoke eloquently in support of the decolonization paradigm. A Caribbean colleague, who had worked in New Zealand for more than 30 years as a scholar, wondered if the decolonization paradigm could allow scholars to engage with Indigenous communities other than the one from which they originated and with which they were more familiar. I recognized the historical specificity of the question but suggested that the struggle for justice and for decolonization can be found anywhere scholars are located and so they should engage with the community where they are because the struggle is everywhere. To say that you can only comment on the struggles in your place of origin could be a cop out because the university really expects that scholars should study the entire universe and not only their own local particularism. That is why many men support the struggles for women's rights as human rights, many Europeans support the struggles against racism and many rich people support the struggles against poverty.

Another colleague from psychology advised the editorial board to ensure that articles submitted to the journal would sign the ethical requirement that the research was approved by Institutional Review Boards in accordance with the importance of ethics as the core concern in Indigenous research methods according to [Linda Tuhiwai Smith](#). I agreed that one such ethical dilemma faced scholars who had a choice to condemn genocide the way [Wole Soyinka](#) did during the Biafra war that earned him detention without trial in solitary confinement in Nigeria while most other scholars kept silent in the face of that tyranny. Thus, even when the research is exempt from IRB protocols because it is of a theoretical or artistic genre, the journal would ensure that unethical supremacists

thoughts that are inconsistent with the decolonization paradigm would not be accepted for publication. I left for Australia the next day.

Adelaide, Australia

Karmer unggga! Karmer unggga! Translates: We will spear you! From [*Dark Emu* by Bruce Pascoe](#)

For two weeks in June, I was hosted by Dr. Maria Giannacopoulos, the Coordinator of Postgraduate Studies for Law, Socio-Legal Studies and Criminology in the College of Business, Government and Law at Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia, as a visiting international scholar. I was scheduled to present a roundtable keynote on the topic of Law, Love and Decolonization, to meet one-on-one with graduate students, participate in a theory reading group and join a research collective on social exclusion. Along the way, colleagues generously hosted lunch, dinner, wine tasting tours, beach walks, visits to botanic gardens, to nature reserves and to arts galleries and libraries where we discussed opportunities for further collaborations. I was on the lookout for new knowledge to enrich my experience and something told me that I was going to be taught a useful lesson on this trip.



During my roundtable keynote, I ran a looping power point presentation with graffiti images that said repeatedly, [‘Fuck the Law’](#). Millions of such images are available on the internet and my question was why criminologists have neglected such critical views of the law? I suggested that it might be because criminologists were scared of losing research grants, being rejected by publishers, and losing jobs and promotions if they were seen to be seriously examining rude perspectives about the law. I suggested that it is important for criminologists to understand that part of the reasons why popular culture appears oppositional to the law was because the law tends to be imperial and undemocratic. Thus, with increasing democratization of the world and greater freedom to responsible adults to live their lives without posing a risk to others, there might be increased respect for the law. I recommended that law makers, law enforcement agents and criminologists should be encouraged to go about their duties with love as a central ethic instead of

assuming that they are up against public enemies. I also called for Love Studies Programs to be founded by scholars to counterbalance military academies around the world.

In his response to my roundtable presentation, Professor Willem de Lint, a Canadian of Dutch origin, wondered whether my thesis on imperialism as the general form of criminality was not running the risk of confusing the seriousness of apex crimes like imperialism and genocide that require critical forensics with street crimes that are generally less serious than crimes of the powerful. He emphasized that the liberal state seeks to erase differences and to homogenize the culture through systems of reward for conformists and repression for deviants. I agreed with him that forensic evidence is often seen as fool-proof scientific evidence whereas they are subject to critical examination just like any other evidence and so research in critical forensics may help to educate the general public that scientific evidence is always falsifiable as [Thomas S. Kuhn](#) would have it. On the levels of seriousness of imperialism and predatory rape or robbery, I also agreed that the levels were different but that my comparison of them was based on the causal factor which appears to be the abuse of power that calls for the increased democratization of society through increased decolonization from the individual to the global levels of the exercise of power and accountability. Dr. Marinella Marmo reminded us that people in authority also act as if they were giving the middle finger to the law when they disregard the law in their scramble for power and influence.

The response from Professor Margaret Davies was more challenging because she focused on the justifiability of private property and the implications of how the law protects property. I saw the challenge to my call for the decolonization of criminology and justice through penal abolitionism

in the sense that when the private property of an individual is stolen by another individual or when the communal property of Indigenous peoples is stolen or even when the people are stolen by the colonizers and enslavers, it would be a good idea if the law could be relied upon to punish the thieves and restore the property to the rightful owners; but this is not always the case. Hip Hop artists may say Fuck the Law but when their copyrights are violated, they run to the law of property rights for protection. I wondered if she could extend the discussion of property beyond the institution of private property to address the origin of the family and the rise of the capitalist state, the way that [Friedrich Engels](#) did, to explain why capitalism rewards the theft of the labor of poor workers, the land of peasants, and the reproductive labor of women without demanding punishment for patriarchal white supremacist imperialists. The policy implication preferred by Engels is that the institution of private property in the means of production should be abolished as the precondition for reparations and restitution to the original owners of the wealth that is collectively produced but privately accumulated as profit. The law should be allowed to wither away so that administrative rules of from all according to their abilities and to all according to their needs would be adapted from the [New Testament](#). To believe that the empire of law was the be all and end all in property rights as Ronald Dworkin suggested in [Law's Empire](#) is to continue to suffer from nomophilitis, my extension of the insightful critique of [nomophilia](#) by [Giannacopoulos](#). Fuck the law of ill-gotten private property. Fuck oppressive immigration law.

Another colleague invited from Melbourne, Dr. Claire Loughnan, questioned if love is teachable the way I suggested with the call for Love Studies. She said that love is relational and not curricular in such a way that we may never have courses on Love 101 on the syllabus. I responded that love is not rocket science and even if it was, rocket science is taught systematically in universities. Part

of the reasons why there is a crisis of law and order may be because we are not taught how to love one another or even how to love ourselves. Instead, we are taught how to kill masses of people and no wonder that there is so much violence around the world. Fuck the law of war. Another colleague also invited from Macquarie University in Sydney, Dr. Lara Palombo, presented on the punishment of foreign women who were arrested with drugs and who were incarcerated even when they were dying of cancer. I encouraged her to join the campaign for the legalization of drugs to deny the imperialist state that excuse for locking up women. Someone asked for a definition of love and I suggested that if we landed a man on the moon but still ask for a definition of love, we must start developing Love Studies. The definition may be difficult but we know love when we see it especially when it is love for the enemy who came to your country, committed genocide against your people and stole the land but Indigenous people are not seeking revenge, they are naming their children after the invaders even while demanding for their sovereignty to be recognized and for reparations to be paid through unresponsive nomophilism or love of the law.

I heard some of the Indigenous students at the roundtable shout, 'No', when I said that Indigenous people did not hate white people. I explained that you name your children after people you love and that racism exists because white people hate Indigenous people but that Indigenous people exhibit the love for the enemy which is the meaning of my name from a long line of African priests who pray for all, including their enemies – Agozino – I bless the enemy. [Jesus may have learned this lesson in Africa](#) where he grew up because ancient Africans believed that the same sun that shines for us also shines for our enemies and so we should love all of humanity as brothers and sisters. The Jews used to believe that Jehovah was the exclusive God of the Jews but Jesus told them that both Jews and Gentiles deserve salvation from the Father of all. Professor Irene Watson's

echoed during the discussion and references were made to her theory of the giant frog who greedily drank up all the water in the world to ensure personal survival even if all other creatures would die of thirst. The other animals took pity on the frog and tickled it to make it laugh and let out some of the water or the giant frog could have drowned from all that water and young frog tadpoles and eggs would have had no water to survive in the amphibious stage. The lesson here is that they did not kill the frog to recover the water, they only tickled the greedy bourgeois frog to let everyone share the healing balm of the waters of world.

Talking of healing, I left on this trip with a clear belief that I was going to learn something very important. I had no idea what I was going to learn but I was alert to chances to learn from the Indigenous people quite unlike students who study abroad and who pretend that they knew all that there was to learn and that they were the new Tarzans out to save the natives from themselves. Thus, when I told graduate students that one effective study skill is never to skip breakfast, Dr. Juan Tauri and Dr. William Wood joked that I practiced what I preached because I ate a mountain of a feast for breakfast. I resolved to moderate my breakfast portion but I did not know that the type of items in the breakfast might be also problematic until I arrived in Australia and a colleague observed that I ate breakfast cereals with milk and said that it was not good for me. She suggested that I should try juicing green vegetables for breakfast and that I should abstain from milk and dairy products because they raise blood sugar. Meanwhile, I was hearing from everyone that there was an epidemic of diabetes among Indigenous peoples. I decided to get the 'Green Giant' juice from a café at the Central Market in Adelaide and to skip milk and my body responded instantly with approval. I was surprised that I could go for long hours without needing bathroom breaks. Indigenous peoples are always being told what to eat or what to avoid but it is high time we took

what Linda Tuhiwai Smith termed ‘the dirtiest word’ in the vocabulary of Indigenous people, research, and clean it up for our own investigations of what is good for us without posing risks to human subjects.

I Googled the side effects of milk and found an article in [MotherJones](#) that suggests that new scientific evidence shows that milk may be bad for adults. I started spreading the information among Indigenous people immediately. Apparently, milk was something that they were encouraged to spend their food stamps on because it was good for them and it kept the farmers in business but milk was for baby cows, even adult cows would not touch a drop of it, neither should adult human beings. An Indigenous elder told me that the poor preferred dried milk because it preserved better but the preservatives in it probably made it worse for them. I am a natural healer and author of the book, [ADAM: Africana Drug-Free Alternative Medicine](#). I have been told by a caller to a radio station that I should not call it alternative medicine because it is the original medicine while commercial pharmacology should be called the alternative. Similarly, we should speak of our community interventions as the original justice systems and not as alternatives to incarceration. That is probably why I was attentive to this lesson instead of becoming defensive the way many highly mis-educated people do when they get healthy tips. We should all include healing recommendations that the people could act on instead of seeing policy as magic that only the government can work on the people. In my doctoral dissertation on *Black Women and the Criminal Justice System*, I made all my recommendations to the women and their supporters because the government had mountains of recommendations from conventional researchers already.

We attended a 'Theory Reading Group' to discuss a paper by Geographers who chose to co-author with the land, [Bawaka Country](#), as the lead author. We went round the table expressing initial positive reactions to the paper before discussing the shortcomings. I said that I found the paper humbling in the sense that the authors were reminding us that no one could author outside the land and so when we publish with our institutional affiliations acknowledged, we are also co-authoring with the land but we do not always acknowledge the Indigenous peoples who own the land the way the authors did. Also, I pointed out that what we call signatures were probably derived from the study of the natural signs with which plants distinguish themselves from other plants and they are called signatures by botanists. By focusing on the methodology of digging for yam, the authors may be reminding us that even when we are doing research on other topics, we too dig for our food because we get paid to do the work we do. Finally, I told them that I came from the Indigenous Igbo culture where yam is the king of crops and so I could imagine the yam vines that the authors were describing and the ways the women dug for yam in Bawaka country. I asked if they gathered yam in the wild or if they also cultivated it the way we do in Igbo land where only men are allowed to dig the soil to plant yam which has since vanished from our farms probably because we excluded the women who did the bulk of the farm work from tilling the soil for yam, unlike the Bawaka people?

Dr. Maria Giannacopoulos reminded us that the decision of Mabo recognized continuous title to land if the Indigenous people could prove that it was '[desert and uncultivated](#)' because the colonizers seized all the fertile land for themselves. Therefore, if they did not cultivate any land after all those years, then it must be uncultivable and can be given back to the Indigenous peoples; except when it is rich in minerals that the Crown claimed to own. Someone asked what benefit

Bawaka country got from being a co-author given that Wright and the other co-authors were going to be getting professional recognitions and promotions at work. Should the researchers adopt Indigenous names and develop the Indigenous languages as a way to pay back to the land? The professor visiting from Brazil was asked how Indigenous peoples in the Amazons would react to any attempt by scholars to co-author with their land. Would it attract more attention from researchers who would go digging for the yam of knowledge in the amazons and thereby lead to more deforestation the way MacDonald's is digging for beef out there by clearing forests. He answered that the Indigenous people were conscious of the need to go beyond multiculturalism and embrace multibiologism or bio diversity. I asked if the roundtable reflections by Professor Margaret Davies on private property justifications could say if the yam was collectively owned until someone digs it up and puts it into her basket to make it private property or if another person could come and take some from the basket without being accused of theft? The baskets were probably collectively owned by mothers and daughters and so they would not accuse each other of theft the way a capitalist could accuse his own son of theft if he withdrew money from his account. Among the Igbo, theft of yam is known but the farmer who harvested a lot of yam shares some with the community by feeding the community for days in order to be recognized as Ezeji or Yam King. My father did that ceremony for me when I was a boy.

On another day, we had a meeting of the research group on social exclusion. Each of the participants had an abstract of their areas of interest and they varied from the Apex Crimes and critical forensics of Professor Willem de Lint, to campaigns for those who were convicted but innocent, to immigration and sovereignty rights by Dr. Maria Giannacopoulos, etc. The former Associate Dean for Research, Dr. Marinella Marmo, who co-edited a book on [Human Rights](#)

[Criminology](#) to which I contributed a chapter and who had worked in the same department that I used to work in Liverpool John Moores University, invited me to comment. I said that they were all doing valuable work that deserves support. However, I suspected that they were framing the project as a policy contribution that could attract huge funding to the group. My suggestion was to examine the topic of exclusion to see if the marginalized were ever completely excluded rather than being oppressed and exploited. Once this is recognized, then the discussion would have to go beyond exclusion to recognize the various ways that people resist oppression and exploitation. The group was running the risk of excluding resistance from their studies of social exclusion perhaps because studies of resistance would be less likely to be funded. I called on the group to consider that funded research tends to make less significant contributions to knowledge than theoretical research that tends not to be funded. For this reason, I advised the group to explore original theoretical contributions that could emerge from their collaborations even when they get funded. Finally, I observed that the members of the group appeared to be focusing on problems in isolation from others whereas similar collaborations in the natural sciences would be inclusive of co-authorship through which the outputs are multiplied with each member taking the lead in drafting one co-authored paper to enable the group to produce dozens of publications. This may be easier done in the natural sciences because ideological divisions are not so sharp as in the social sciences but there must be areas of commonality in a collaboration to allow co-authorship in law, business and the social sciences too. One of the members stated that even justice could be used to enforce social exclusion and I asked him to explain this more. He appeared to define justice in the authoritarian form of the force of the law to incarcerate and punish but I suggested that if we define justice as social justice, then it becomes a means of including all. One of the members who also got his doctorate from Edinburgh University where I got mine and who cited some of the professors

that I knew there was leading the campaign to prove the innocence of people wrongly convicted. I suggested that he may be more successful if he did not narrow down his focus the way academic researchers were required to do given that in politics, the norm is to build broad coalitions and alliances by focusing on other kinds of injustice rather than on the injustice of wrongful conviction alone. They must have liked my thoughts for they invited me to join their collaboration and I humbly accepted. Meanwhile, Maria, Willem and I have started drafting a paper on the puzzle that cultures that rely on their own languages tend to be more advanced technologically than cultures that are forced to use the languages of colonizers.

I also met with Dr. Tanya Lyons who teaches African Studies within International Relations and edits the [Australian Review of African Studies](#). She encouraged me to apply for a job in another university in Australia where the search is for an African scholar to lead African Studies. I promised to nominate someone for the position if she did not want to take the job herself but she said that the preference was for an African scholar. She encouraged me to write something for her journal and expressed interest in using my blog article critic of the film, [Black Panther](#), as a required reading in her class where she plans to screen the movie. I met with doctoral students individually and gave them tips on how to complete their dissertations and how to highlight their original contributions to knowledge.

One of the most memorable events that I witnessed was the Cabaret Festival to which Maria took me to hear Indigenous songs by the [Mission Songs Project](#) and also by [Archie Roach](#). The two shows were moving and they revealed aspects of the lives of Indigenous peoples who used songs as a methodology for historical documentation. When Archie Roach sang a song urging us to heal

the earth, I could not help but remember [Michael Jackson](#) urging us to heal the world. When Roach sang about meeting his brother at the age of 15, he was reminding us of the stolen generation of children who were removed from their families and placed in missions supposedly as part of the civilizing process. When he talked about the tradition of placing the placentas and umbilical cords of new born babies at the roots of trees, I was reminded that we do the same in Africa. He reminded us that the [Aboriginal National Flag](#) was designed in Adelaide and that he and his wife spent some memorable time in the city. After the show, we had dinner at a classy wine bar with live music ran by a Nigerian immigrant.

At some time, we discussed the theory of [‘raw law’ that has been here forever](#) according to Professor Irene Watson, to indicate that the Indigenous peoples did not need to go to the law of the colonizers to legitimate their sovereignty. I asked many Indigenous scholars that I met what were their Indigenous names but they often said that they had no Indigenous names. I was surprised and asked if the elders may know their Indigenous names but they said that they did not know if they would ask the elders such a question because they might see it as an insult against the intelligence of a people who have been robbed of almost everything, including their names and languages. They would not even retell the folk tales of the people without communing with the elders and obtaining the blessings to use their intellectual property. I asked if the dream time concept by Indigenous peoples tried to democratize dreaming and time-consciousness by emphasizing that everyone has exactly the same amount of time every day and everyone has the ability to dream whereas the American dream and the Australian dream were not accessible to the poor. I found paintings of [Big Yam Dreaming](#) by Kwementyay Kngwarreye, a woman who started painting in her 70s and whose work depicts the inter connectivity between nature in such a way

that the individualism of capitalist colonization culture would be a nightmare rather than a dream to Indigenous people who prefer to co-become and co-exist with other living things in a dream world that is all too real.

We talked about the Theory Reading Group paper co-authored by Bawaka Country and a colleague gave me a copy of a book on the theme of precolonial Indigenous agriculture, [*Dark Emu*](#), by Bruce Pascoe and I found his discussion of the massive cultivation of yam by Indigenous people. Professor Margaret Davies treated us to a trip to the nature reserve where I saw kangaroos for the first time and I recalled the games we used to play as kids in Africa: ‘

Kangaroo’, the chaser would call;

‘Oh kangaroo’, the rest would reply;

‘Catch me if you can’;

‘Oh catch me if you can’;

‘Who uses lizards to make soup?’; ‘

‘It is snake o!’; and we would run from one end of the football field to the other, trying to avoid being caught by the catcher. All those caught would join the catcher to chase from the opposite end of the field until everyone had been caught. There were no individual winners.

We wondered how the animals in the wild could co-exist and co-become without committing genocide against one another the way the supposedly more intelligent human beings who habitually commit genocide against other peoples even while preserving nature. It was all very exciting for me and I remain full of gratitude for the generosity of my hosts.

Sydney

The next day I flew to Sydney and took an Uber to Macquarie University from the airport. I relaxed and prepared for another roundtable modelled after the one at Flinders University. An exhibition on the [death of 48 Indigenous women in police custody](#) had ended a few days earlier but the organizer, Associate Professor Pauline Clague of the University of Technology, Sydney, who leads the Jumbunna Cultural Resilience team, a Yaegi woman from the North Coast of New South Wales, kindly brought some of the items to the roundtable to share with us. I was wrapped with a possum cloak that felt very warm and comforting despite being covered with messages about the dead women and we were all given possum skin keychains as presents. A doctoral student came with her months-old son and her uncle to the roundtable and told us that her research was about the collaborations between Indigenous peoples and Africans in Australia, especially given that her father was Ghanaian. She allowed me to hold the baby for a while. We were served light lunch before the start of the roundtable.

Professor Bronwyn Carlson, Head of the Department of Indigenous Studies, welcomed us and acknowledged the Dharug people, the Indigenous owners ‘who had never ceded their land’ to invaders. She indicated that the roundtable was a formal relaunch of the [Forum for Indigenous Research Excellence \(FIRE\)](#) that she had founded at the University of Wollongong before she moved to Macquarie University where she would continue publishing the related [Journal of Global Indigeneity](#). I was pleased to meet her for the first time after she funded my earlier visit to Wollongong to present a keynote at the workshop on the decolonization of criminology and the justice system organized by Dr. Juan Tauri while Professor Carlson was on a study leave in the

US. I was already adopted as a member of FIRE and my 2016 keynote was already published in the journal in 2018. I feel privileged to be allowed to participate in such an important space that allows scholar-activists to articulate oppositional thought in favor of decolonization.

I presented the same material examining why there is a culture of silence among criminologists and legal scholars regarding the frequently occurring expressions in popular culture, ‘Fuck the Law’, that is found around the world and in cyber space. During the discussion, Professor Joseph Pugliese, originally from Italy, who supervised the doctoral research of Dr. Maria Giannacopoulos that yielded the intriguing concept of [nomophilia](#), was proud to see the work of his student being affirmed in my presentation. He spoke of his work on ‘deathscapes’ including the launch of the website <https://www.dethscapes.org> which maps race and violence in settler states and he mentioned the influence of his mentor and collaborator, the late Uncle Ray Jackson. He also indicated that he was doing related work by comparing the treatment of immigrants by Canada, US and Australia. I commended his project but suggested that they should consider extending their focus to his previous work on Europe where thousands of Africans were drowning in the Mediterranean trying to reach fortress Europe since if it was Europeans who drowned in such high numbers, there would be safer ferry services from North Africa to Europe already.

A law professor present, Francesca Dominello wondered whether it is right to say that people are lovers of the law because obedience to the law was what was required and not necessarily love. It is true that obedience is based more on the fear of the force of law but it is also true that law-enforcement is carried out as if the people are expected to love the laws of the land as a patriotic duty. It is also true that many laws are lovely enough to be obeyed even by youth who flip the

birdie at the oppressive laws but my suggestion was that we need to study love and the law more closely to see if increasing love would decrease the tensions that call for the force of law. Anyone who loves the law more than the people must be suffering from nomophilitis like those who committed genocide against the people in obedience to their beloved laws and orders from above.

A criminologist from Mexico, Dr. Rolando Ochoa, shared the information that more than 300,000 people had been killed in the war on drugs in Mexico and so my call for the end of the war on drugs resonated. However, he believed that class struggle might be the only conflict that is reflected in the discriminatory enforcement of the law. I agreed with him that the prisons in every country are full of poor people irrespective of race and gender but it is also true that poor whites are deceived by white supremacy to support the systems that oppress poor people. For instance, if poor whites knew that although Indigenous people are over-represented in prisons in Australia more than any population anywhere in the world, over 70% of prisoners in Australia are poor whites (if poor immigrants are added to the total, 73% of prisoners will be non-Aboriginals), they would become more active in supporting the campaigns against injustice by Indigenous peoples. Similarly, we need to ask why mass violence is almost always committed by men than by women. Thus race-class-gender articulation may be the best approach rather than the crude economism of class struggle as the only struggle in decolonization movements.

Dr. Toby Davidson, a white male Australian from the department of English wondered if Freud had something right about his theory of the fear of male castration and the anger that young white males feel towards their fathers for separating them from the first woman they ever loved, their mother. I agreed that young white men are obviously angry with the oppressive ways they are

treated by white supremacy but we should not blame it on fathers given that the state plays a stronger role in the socialization of males than fathers do. With masses of the youth being recruited to train in the military and equipped to specialize in killing masses of people, it is not surprising to hear that some [Australian troops in Afghanistan flew the Nazi flag](#) on their military vehicles and gave one another credits for the number of people they killed during the occupation. Freud was known to be on drugs when he theorized that women were jealous because men had something that women lacked but Freud may have been jealous because he wished that he had a bigger one. Fuck Freud. He may have had a point that sex is a strong driving force in human behavior but he exaggerated the importance of sex to the extent of imagining that young white boys fantasized about killing their fathers and marrying their mothers. We need Love Studies to systematically guide us beyond militarism and repression as the basis of civilization.

From Macquarie, I went to the University of Sydney on the last day of my trip in Australia. There I met Dr. Gaynor Macdonald, an Anthropologist who was active in supporting Indigenous land title claims with ethnographic research. She organized a one-day workshop on the genealogy of a family of Indigenous people in attendance to show that their family have continuously been present in the area since the 19th century. I was amazed to meet legendary Indigenous leaders at this discussion. They mentioned that they met with Nelson Mandela when he visited Australia and got him to promise to support policies that favored Indigenous people but when Mandela came to power they did not see any evidence of such support. I agreed that the ANC government has been a disappointment to many who expected rapid revolutionary changes in the new South Africa. However, I pointed out that the compromises were not the personal choice of Mandela but the decision of the ANC and the Communist Party of South Africa to pursue a national democratic

revolution in the form of one person, one vote, as a qualitative leap forward from apartheid. It is up to us to continue campaigning for more substantive revolutionary changes in South Africa in the form of land reclamation, adequate housing for all, universal healthcare coverage, decolonization of criminal justice, and publicly funded free education at all levels. They asked me about Indigenous people in Africa and how they compared with Australia especially after decolonizing to a greater extent. I answered that it is true that Indigenous people in Africa own land especially outside the settler-colonial locations but sadly, the rulers in Africa act as neocolonial authorities who specialize in committing genocide against fellow Africans to facilitate the exploitation of natural resources in the interest of capitalism. I told them that I survived the genocide against the Igbo in Biafra as a child. They asked for books on Biafra and I referred them to Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, [*Biafra Revisited*](#) and to Chinua Achebe, [*There Was a Country*](#). I also shared the discovery of the links between milk and diabetes after they mentioned that the disease is rampant in Indigenous communities and in Africa. I found out later that from [*Dairy Reporter*](#) that the bulk of the dried milk consumed in Africa is imported from New Zealand and Australia. We talked about place names and how the Indigenous people sometimes suggested a street name that means ‘lies’ when asked to come up with a name. The workshop lasted until the evening before Gaynor connected me on her phone with a Nigerian lawyer who was married to an Indigenous woman that I had met on my first trip to Australia in 2002. He told me about the work he was doing with immigrant youth and Indigenous youth to mentor them and about his foundation that seeks to promote unity among Africans and among Indigenous peoples.

The final event that I attended on the trip was the performance of a play, [*Blackie Blackie Brown*](#). It was a play about an archeologist who was digging on a site for a shopping center to make sure

that there were no important cultural artefacts before the building was constructed. Despite the high qualification of Dr. Brown, her white supervisor kept calling her Blackie and she kept protesting that her name was not Blackie. She said that she needed more time to dig at the site after discovering a skull that turned out to be that of her great grandmother who was gang-raped and killed as part of a massacre but the supervisor said that there was no time left before the building went up. A hologram of the great grandmother appeared on stage to instruct her to get revenge and shun reconciliation for the massacre by tracking down the descendants of the killers and killing them. Dr. Brown protested that she could not go and kill 400 people but she was persuaded to do it and she went ahead to track them down and kill them, except the young son of Mr. Smith that she spared out of hope, mercy or pity. The use of lighting and special effects, especially animations that interacted with the actors, made the play look like watching a movie. What was uncomfortable was that the predominantly white audience laughed repeatedly at painful lines that Gaynor and I did not find funny. That was probably why the dozen tickets that Gaynor reserved for Indigenous people to join us at the theatre were not claimed.

Conclusion:

Mmua lebe o abo a bua la gagwe – Tswana proverb from Bagele Chilisa, [*Indigenous Research Methodologies*](#): Everyone has a right to a say, for even what might appear like a bad suggestion helps people to think of better ideas.

One powerful lesson that I learned on this trip is the admirable ways that colleagues in New Zealand and Australia always acknowledge the Indigenous peoples on whose land we stood. This

is acknowledged on standard email statements and on syllabi as a formal acknowledgement in some cases and it is optional on emails in other cases. I have already proposed to the administration of Virginia Tech to consider including similar acknowledgements of the Indigenous peoples on whose land the university stands and also the enslaved Africans who worked on the plantation that still stands on the site of the university. Students' complaints about the naming of buildings and streets after officers who fought in the Civil War to keep slavery going and the naming of places on campus after slave holders led to a committee being set up by the administration to study historic names on campus after [I brought the concern of the students to the notice of the administration](#). My proposed statement reads: "We acknowledge the Indigenous Monaca and Tutelo American Indian Natives on whose land Virginia Tech was built and we acknowledge the enslaved Indigenous Igbo and other Indigenous Africans whose forced labor developed the plantation that still stands on the site of the university."

I flew back on June 29 from Sydney to San Francisco with swollen ankles and started writing all over the Indigenous cover-design notebook that Professor Bronwyn Carlson gave me as a present at Macquarie University. I learned a lot on this trip and some of these lessons will be detailed in my formal academic papers that have been solicited for publication. Before I left the country, I got an email from Professor Carlson detailing visiting fellowships opportunities that she would like me to apply for to enable me to visit again for a longer stay in Australia. I may very well do so with many thanks to the colleagues who took a chance to support my scholar-activism.

One major issue that occupied me on the journey was a debate online about Wole Soyinka's play, [Death and the King's Horseman](#) which I cited as an anti-monarchical play in support of my review

of the Black Panther film. To my surprise, highly educated Nigerians said that I was misreading the play and suggested that it was simply an anti-colonial play that told the British not to meddle in Yoruba tradition that required the horseman to commit suicide following the death of the king. I suggested that Soyinka was deliberately using the play to critique his fellow intellectuals who supported the genocide against the Igbo in Biafra just as it was the highly educated characters in the play who championed the call for obedience to the tradition that required ritual suicide. I pointed out that Soyinka spared the life of the horseman in the play even though his highly educated son volunteered to commit suicide in place of his indecisive father. Soyinka offered in his unusual 'Author's Note' to award a prize in illiteracy to those who chose to misread his work as a clash of cultures especially when referring to [Season of Anomy](#) which was Soyinka's fictionalized eye-witness account of the pogrom against the Igbo before the genocidal war. Similarly, it is highly educated criminologists who today are most vocal in support of the genocidal imperialist state and who oppose calls for decolonization as unrealistic. Soyinka is wondering what sort of intellectuals would be the cheer-leaders for crimes against humanity? Whenever I mentioned this controversy that was raging online during my visit, colleagues encouraged me to write up my interpretation of the play and I am working on that right away.