



MONASH University

After the Apology: responsive narratives and the 2008 Apology to Australia's Stolen Generations

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DEDICATION

For Dan, for Jess, and for Lorna

Let us return to the good we are seeking and ask what it can be.

- Aristotle

*The limits of my language are the limits of my
world. All I know is what I have words for.*

- Wittgenstein

The story is so profound. It's everything, I think.

- Jackie Huggins

ABSTRACT

Apology is a special form of both politics and narrative. As a political event, the 2008 Australian Parliament's Apology to the Stolen Generations (the Apology) amply demonstrated the complexities underlying both the virtue and potential of narrative politics. The Apology recognised ongoing repercussive damages when it presented a history of Australia's settlement that clearly acknowledged mistreatment of Indigenous peoples as a direct effect of colonisation. The associated redress or repair, however, has failed to materialise in the Apology's aftermath. This thesis focuses on apology-responsive narratives in order to understand this failure, and as new ground for the study of political apology.

My research investigates the importance of response in actualising apology, particularly political apology. I explore the social justice value of Apology-responsive narratives with an interpretive research approach framed by political theory on apology and collective action.

Theoretically, the justice value of apology is understood to hinge on its ability to acknowledge historical injustices and to herald some kind of socio-political redress. Many theorists and philosophers imbue apology with transformational qualities of the kind that might interrupt political relations to the benefit of victims, and by extension, their society. Others, however, question the political capacity of apology: for example by looking critically to more contextually pragmatic actions, or even asserting apology's irrelevance, claiming that group relationships will progress towards peace or not, with or without apology (see Jennifer Lind).

My thesis recognises that while the impacts and virtues of political apology are contested, it nevertheless has great potential to engage moral and critical judgement. This engagement comes about because publics are familiar with the interpersonal apology form, its virtues and its flaws. The existing theory and philosophy on apology reflects its slippery potential. However, this thesis ultimately argues that intolerance for the complexity of pluralism and diversity (such as that seen in Apology-responsive narratives) destabilises or undermines apology's ideals. These findings demonstrate a need to look at political apology as inter-subjective, and – as the respondents have done – as an invitation to dialogue rather than as a singular event. In this thesis, I argue that the repair of

political membership, if it occurs at all, first occurs in dialogue. Responsive narratives offer points of intersection for ethics and politics. They contribute to our construction and re-construction of society, of collectives and of us; expressing more ideal conditions for political life, they guide a practical ethics.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ANTaR	Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation
ANU	Australian National University
APH	Australian Parliament Hansard
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
FaHCSIA	Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Federal)
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NLA	National Library of Australia
NSDC	National Sorry Day Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (United
SLQ	State Library of Queensland
UoM	University of Melbourne
UN	United Nations

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: the (im)possible apology

With the 2008 Apology to Australia's Stolen Generations (the Apology) as its case study, this thesis examines the narrative culture of political apologies. The thesis explains that we can understand apology as narrative, particularly as an ethical narrative, and that we can understand its reparative (political and justice) action through interpretive narrative research practices. Crucially, the thesis illustrates that the politics of collective apology reside in the way it stimulates, sustains or demands collective dialogue and debate about national identity, historic injustice and group relations. The research demonstrates that this dialogue is often comprised of narrative practices and works to establish a narrative culture of apology. Overall, in terms of the 2008 case study, this thesis argues that despite the scepticism, criticism and ambivalence around political or collective apologies, they are capable of holding value. The Apology's effects have been very distant from the ideal. Yet while acknowledging the force of criticisms levelled at the Apology, this thesis shows how we can better recognise its politics when we consider apology-responsive narratives.

In addressing reparative justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, of what value is/was the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations? How do political apologies take effect? What is the social value of narrative for politics in general? With the 2008 Apology central to the inquiry, how do political apologies and narrative-based interactions generate, influence, sustain or otherwise work to effect group relationships and social experiences?

By nature, narrative cultures emerge in diversity. Australia's history – its national narrative – is complex and contested. The event that Australia's Federal Parliament Hansard records as 'Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples' quickly became better known as the 'Apology to the Stolen Generations'. This meaningful transition in many ways reflects the complexity of acknowledging history. In this context, the thesis looks at the way in which mediatisation is an integral component of political action and representative of contemporary society's drift towards simplification and essentialism. I use the term mediatisation to refer to processes whereby institutions act through and with media (Burgess, Klaebe and McWilliam 2010:1). During the period preceding the Apology, mediatisation practices enabled some of the history of settler-Indigenous

relations and governance to become more widely known and these accounts were both acknowledged and contested in mainstream society. Responses to both new forms and new versions of history, however, were situated within a larger international historical and moral context and so I will also briefly outline this context. Importantly, this was a time when post-colonial/settler societies and previously warring nations became engaged in intra- and inter-state reconciliation and reparation processes to address the emergent accounts of historical injustices and to repair damaged relationships. These processes became – and are – central transactions in what has become conceptualised as ‘moral economy’ (Barkan 2000). Political apology is emblematic of moral economy. Apology’s delivery, which involves providing an explanatory narrative, also reflects a generalised social desire for a settlement of historical accounts.

This thesis builds on prior studies and theories of the politics of apologies by demonstrating that the political action of apology resides in the way in which apology actually sustains and facilitates a plurality of responsive narrative practices, and that in turn, these give affective shape to our political interactions and relationships. In this thesis, I build an understanding of the political action of apology by examining responsive narratives on the Apology. I observe that scepticism and ambivalence toward the Apology are reflections of the disappointment of hopes for social/material changes. Expectations of apology and anticipation of further actions led to the sense of elation and relief that was witnessed as an immediate social response to the Apology. These emotions, however, dissipated over time as progress towards tangible reconciliation and social justice outcomes failed to materialise.

While Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s apology is available to contemporary political memory, it did not achieve a settlement of the historical narrative of injustice. The responses and dialogue around the Apology continue, even now, to inform affective dimensions of reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice. Despite this positive achievement of political apology – the stimulation of social discourse – I also demonstrate that in the responses of some members of the Stolen Generations, the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the justice activist community, we can see that the Apology continued to elicit what can be understood as justifications for apology or for redress. These responses reflect a level of disenfranchisement from the Apology that chimes with the unapologetic end of Jennifer Lind’s apologetic remembrance spectrum (2008:16-18). Developed by Lind to assess the quality of a

society's remembrance of past violence over time from apologetic through to most unapologetic, this spectrum takes into account how social commentary and actions influence victim groups' perceptions.

With regard to perceptions of an apologetic society, I also consider whether the demand for response associated with political apology might represent a form of politics that perpetuates historical power imbalances rather than provides a form of redress. This consideration then leads to a further question of how the ongoing practice of sharing and mediating testimony and other forms of response to apology refines relationships and responsibilities within the context of overcoming a traumatic national history. It is in this light that I develop and utilise a progressive concept of socialisation that helps to explain my proposition that responsive narratives reflect, influence and shape the expression and meaning of social action.

The variety of critical and sceptical responses to the 2008 Apology, and the contrasting approaches to assessing the value of this particular Apology (specific reference) and political apology (generic reference) in general, reflect the complex nature of political apology. These complex politics of apology stand in addition to the complexities of the actual historical and socio-political circumstances in Australia that led to apology.

Though it was a highly orchestrated, emotionally and politically loaded event, the actual apology that this thesis is concerned with was delivered quite simply: PM Rudd, then leader of a new incoming federal government, entered parliament on the morning of the 13th February 2008 and at the arranged time, after his formal recognition by the Speaker, stood to deliver the promised apology (see the full apology transcript at Appendix 1a).

In the immediate aftermath, responses to the Apology were highly mediated. Australia's national broadcaster (ABC) provided live coverage of the Apology from both within and outside parliament. Crowds gathered in capital cities to watch the televised event on outdoor screens. In an unprecedented move, of those newspaper reports that were published on the day of and day after the Apology, almost half (approx 380 of 800 reports) contained verbatim comments from members of the public. Over 50 television news reports were broadcast (Australia has 3 commercial and 2 public broadcasters). The Australian news media outlets collectively produced over 1200 reports during the week of the Apology. Numerous other Apology- responsive narratives were recorded across

multiple media platforms, including responsive public speeches, community forums, online commentary, and oral history projects. The extended repercussions and resonance of the mediatisation of the Apology will be explored in the following chapters.

In this chapter, I will firstly discuss and demonstrate the narrative nature of the Apology, providing justification for the narrative research approach taken by the study. The political theory on apology will then be introduced as the research inquiry's framework, with particular emphasis on the qualities of political or collective apologies. The third part of this chapter will provide an overview of the research focus and subsequently outline the work of the thesis.

Apology and narrative

When the Australian Labor Party undertook to make a formal apology to Aboriginal Australians as an outcome of the 2007 federal election (Donald, ABC 2008), it renewed a commitment made under the leadership of Kim Beazley (APH 1997, 1999). Yet the Parliamentary Apology came about over ten years after the influential *Bringing Them Home* report (1997) recommended apology as one of a large number of reparative measures for the historic injustices experienced by Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report was unique to its time, and included hundreds of testimonials from members of the Stolen Generations. The testimonials were produced during the national inquiry into the separation of as many as 1 in 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities over the period 1910-1970. The inquiry accepted oral or written submissions from 535 Indigenous people throughout Australia and included many individual stories in their report. These testimonial stories came to be widely and publicly disseminated, and a mediated revelation of injustice and intergenerational trauma arose. For many Australians, these stories were an introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences of injustice. The stories challenged a dominant national identity and their veracity was challenged in turn by a number of conservative historians, media commentators and other members of the Australian public.

Another report and inquiry, the 1991 *National Report (five volumes) of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody* (also the subject of a 1996 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) report), had received some attention but public responsiveness was minimal compared to the response to *Bringing them Home*. The disparity

can be attributed not only to the presence of the emotive testimonials in *Bringing them Home*, but to the positioning and characterisation of each report's subjects: there was simply more empathy and compassion available for stolen children and bereft mothers than there was for the (mostly male) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in legal custody. The inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families was, however, conducted partly in response to the revelations of that Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Johnston 1991) which found that in almost half the cases before the Commission, the person had been removed from their family as a child (Cuneen 2001:61).

These HREOC reports have been credited with providing much of the impetus for the contemporary reconciliation movement (Augoustinos and Penny 2001) and are directly linked to the 2008 Apology. *Bringing them Home* revealed an assimilation policy that was enforced and practised by various levels of government, public and private sectors, from the police to church-run homes to adoptive families (HREOC 1997). Collectively, the group of people subjected to the 'removal' policies came to describe themselves and to be known as 'the Stolen Generations': stolen from their families, their communities and their cultures. The first-person Stolen Generation testimonies reported demonstrated that the impacts of the removal, segregation and assimilation policies and practices have been deeply experienced across generations and have led to inequitable social, political and cultural outcomes for many (HREOC 1997; DEECD 2010). These outcomes were also apparent in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, also instigated on the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and which records that 12500 of the 15700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interviewed had been taken away from their natural families (ABS 1994, 1996). While there is ongoing debate about responsibility for, and appropriate responses to, disadvantage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians continue to be collectively the most disadvantaged group in Australia.

On the tabling of *Bringing Them Home* in Federal Parliament (26 May 1997) highly emotional personal testimonies were disseminated by the news media. The majority of reporting that responded to the victim testimony took a sympathetic and supportive stance (HREOC 1999:32). These media reports made extraordinary testimonies, such as the following, available to mainstream Australians:

I just couldn't stop crying. All I could see was our little camp. My baby brother's bottle was laying on the ground. And I could see where my brother and sisters (had been) making mud pies in a Sunshine milk tin that we used for our tea and soup. I didn't know where my parents were. I was sad crying lost, didn't know what I was going to do ... They sniffed us out of the bush like dogs. (Wright 1997)

Mum remembered once a girl who did not move too quick. She was tied to the old bell post and belted continuously. She died that night, still tied to the post. No girl ever knew what happened to her body or where she was buried. (Jopson 1997)

The official conclusion, on the very last page of my file, reads: 'Paul is a very intelligent, likeable boy, who has made remarkable progress, given the unfortunate treatment of his mother by the department during his childhood'. Paul drove into the Victorian countryside and found his mother working in an Aboriginal hostel, looking after 20 children. In the next five years, she was to give him his identity, his culture and a sense of security, reassuring him he was loved and valued. When she died, aged 45, he held her hand and said, 'This is the second time I've lost you, Mum'. (Heinrichs 1997)

Aside from media attention, the report itself was broadly distributed, as well as purchased and downloaded from the HREOC website. HREOC stated in its 1996-97 Annual Report that:

Media coverage and analysis of *Bringing Them Home* was extensive. The public response, in the form of requests for the community guide, has been overwhelming. Ten thousand telephone calls from all over Australia were received over a two-week period, each requesting copies of the community guide. AGPS outlets sold out of the initial print run of the 700-page report within 24 hours of it being tabled. Subsequently, over 5 000 copies of the report have been sold. The Commission has distributed 30 000 copies of the community guide free of charge.

The *Bringing Them Home* report was priced at \$59.95. HREOC's 1997-98 Annual Report notes that a total of 7,500 reports were sold up to June 1998 and fifty thousand copies of the community guide were distributed to schools, educational institutions and community organisations.¹ As they 'percolate(d) through the national community' (Whitlock 2001:198), Stolen Generation testimonies actively elicited the acknowledgement of non-Indigenous Australians of their connection to the disturbing history presented by these testimonies. Testimonies also reinforced existing knowledge within Aboriginal communities. Arguably, they instigated 'a kind of listening, a response, a taking-on of responsibility' (Frow 1998:355) in their audience, who through hearing the testimonies became witness in turn. Some of the social and political impacts of the publication and

¹ The Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS) ceased operations in 1997.

circulation of these testimonies were reflected in the ‘sorry movement’, a popular movement that responded to *Bringing Them Home* and participated in a number of commemorative and apologetic actions. This responsiveness is consistent with the politics of a contemporary international human rights movement that recognised and utilised the value of the empathy created through stories that testified to experiences of injustice (Schaffer and Smith 2004; Gready 2008).

Bringing Them Home classed the state sanctioned actions to assimilate Aboriginal children into ‘white’ Australia as genocide and stated that everyone affected by the removals was entitled to reparation (1997:27-29). The report made strong and cogent recommendations for an official government apology, in the context of a number of other official apologies, as quoted in full below:

Recommendation 5a: That all Australian Parliaments

1. officially acknowledge the responsibility of their predecessors for the laws, policies and practices of forcible removal,
2. negotiate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission a form of words for official apologies to Indigenous individuals, families and communities and extend those apologies with wide and culturally appropriate publicity, and
3. make appropriate reparation as detailed in following recommendations.

Recommendation 5b: That State and Territory police forces, having played a prominent role in the implementation of the laws and policies of forcible removal, acknowledge that role and, in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, make such formal apologies and participate in such commemorations as are determined. (BTH 1997:249-50)

Recommendation 6: That churches and other non-government agencies which played a role in the administration of the laws and policies under which Indigenous children were forcibly removed acknowledge that role and in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission make such formal apologies and participate in such commemorations as may be determined. (BTH 1997:253)

While over following years each state and territory government and a number of national and state institutions offered official apologies to the Stolen Generations, the governing Liberal National Party coalition, led by Prime Minister John Howard, very deliberately decided not to apologise officially. In his address to the Reconciliation Convention on the day after *Bringing Them Home* was tabled (27 May 1997), Howard explained that he refused to allow ‘Australians of this generation ... to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control’ (Howard 1997). This official anti-apology and

anti-reparation polemic polarised public opinion: some members of the Australian public supported Howard's views, while others showed support for the Stolen Generations by participating in the sorry movement and Sorry Day (established 26 May 1998), which is still commemorated annually on the anniversary of the report's tabling (26 May 1997).

Sorry Day accords with the following recommendations of *Bringing Them Home*:

Recommendation 7a: That the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, in consultation with the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, arrange for a national 'Sorry Day' to be celebrated each year to commemorate the history of forcible removals and its effects.

Recommendation 7b: That the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, in consultation with the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, seek proposals for further commemorating the individuals, families and communities affected by forcible removal at the local and regional levels. That proposals be implemented when a widespread consensus within the Indigenous community has been reached.

(1997:254)

Sorry Day is a prime example of a spontaneous community expression of sympathy and support and is firmly marked on the Aboriginal community calendar as a day of remembrance. Because Sorry Day is attended so well, the National Sorry Day Committee requested of Rudd that he coordinate the promised parliamentary apology with the Sorry Day anniversary (NSDC 2014).

To proponents of the sorry movement, acts of apology were thought to represent 'readily available gesture(s) acknowledging that as Australians they shared in this national failure and were unavoidably tainted with the legacy of shame' (Celermajer 2006:157). A people's apology was also recorded in approximately one thousand Sorry Books that were circulated after a campaign launch on Australia Day 1998 and are now held by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). The Sorry Books include statements such as:

I am very sorry that as a young adult and teacher I did not teach the truth about our aboriginal friends – I'm really very sorry. (Pat Ephinston, AIATSIS website viewed 2014)

Forgive me for my ignorance. Now that I know the truth, I promise I will not cease from saying it. (Germaine Greer, AIATSIS website viewed 2014)

I'm saying sorry because the Australian Government lacks the imagination to say sorry for us. Australians reject racism. (Kathy Lette, AIATSIS website viewed 2014)

Please accept my apology. There is so much to learn about our Aboriginal culture and the future is for everybody to share. Sorry. (Narelle J Wilcox, AIATSIS website viewed 2014)

Estimated to contain around half a million statements or signatures, the books were presented to representatives of Indigenous communities on the first Sorry Day and at least 460 of these books are held by AIATSIS. The apologetic statements touch on the guilt and shame that, along with Howard's refusal to apologise, polarised and complicated the public discourse about apology. The prospect of apology, recognition and contestation of historical injustices, and questions of responsibility, guilt and shame fed into a vivid public debate, which came to be known as 'the History Wars' (Manne 2009).

The History Wars² were played out in the news media, academia, the political arena, town hall debates, and around many dinner tables. Central to the debate were the Stolen Generations, the testimony contained in *Bringing Them Home* and Indigenous Australians' experiences of injustice. The disruption to dominant versions of national history, presented by the Stolen Generations and Indigenous-centred perspectives on frontier settlement, was met with resistance and contested by cultural and political conservatives. Arguing against an apology, conservative historians such as Keith Windschuttle, claimed a lack of evidence for the experiences of the Stolen Generations (exemplified by his 2002 book, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*); tabloid journalists, such as Padraic McGuinness and Andrew Bolt campaigned in prominent newspapers and proffered the misleading notion that Aboriginal children were 'rescued' (McGuinness 1998) rather than stolen. Robert Manne contested many of the conservative arguments as false and misleading and successfully argued that there was enough evidence of the Stolen Generations' experiences to support the need for apology, apologetic remembrance and reparations (2000). Aboriginal academic and leader, Noel Pearson, later stated that the Apology (or the prospect of it) 'became a weapon in this (cultural) war' (2008)

Notwithstanding the support for apology, the anti-apology discourse of 1997 and beyond led to an observation that Howard had moved 'the claim of violation away from Aboriginal people and delivered it to white Australians who, in being blamed for something they did not do, could now justifiably count themselves as victims of injustice'

² Key texts include: Geoffrey Blainey. 1993. 'Drawing up a Balance Sheet of our History'; Robert Manne. 2003. *Whitewash*; and 2009. *In Denial: The Stolen Generations and the Right*; Keith Windschuttle. 2002. *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*; Anna Clark. 2002. *History in Black and White*; Stuart Macintyre & Anna Clark. 2003. *The History Wars*.

(Celermajer 2006:159). Howard's refusal to formally apologise on behalf of the Australian government and people was articulated as the Bringing Them Home report was tabled:

This week the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission into The Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families will be tabled in Parliament. Like all such reports, it will be subjected to proper analysis and scrutiny. It will neither be uncritically accepted nor summarily swept aside.

However, let me make this clear. Personally, I feel deep sorrow for those of my fellow Australians who suffered injustices under the practices of past generations towards indigenous people. Equally, I am sorry for the hurt and trauma many people here today may continue to feel as a consequence of those practices.

In facing the realities of the past, however, we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism. Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects the overall story of great Australian achievement that is there in our history to be told, and such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history.

Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control. (Howard, 1997; see Appendix 1d for full speech)

Howard's description of the injustice reported by HREOC as a 'blemish' was particularly offensive to justice activists. His preference for an 'overall story of great Australian achievement' and his assumption that 'the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of this country' would also choose that story flagged the antagonistic national debate that was to follow. In the speech, Howard's framing of non-responsibility for historical injustice is a political act; by inviting 'proud Australians' to reject the shameful implications of responsibility for injustice, he is engendering support for a conservative political approach. The Howard government's 'practical reconciliation' policy stance and focus on a liberal form of equality failed to grant any recognition for the special rights of Australia's first peoples and nor for their inherited circumstances.

As the public debate fired up, stories of Australia's history and responses to those stories were central to the forms of justice that became available. Aboriginal-focused policy is fraught with difficulties, particularly in rural and remote regions. It is also heavily storied. Inarguably, regardless of how the origins of disadvantage are conceptualised, the politics are complicated. The History Wars exposed just how polarising and complex these narrative-based politics are. At one pole, Peter Sutton argued that progressive politics of

social reconciliation and policies directed toward self-determination have unintentionally perpetuated Indigenous disadvantage, that scholarship has largely been silent on the influence of ideology, and recommended ‘in the long-term that the best action would be to actually withdraw government from interfering so much with people’s lives and racially structuring the community so that there are developing two nations’ (Sutton, interview, 2009). Sutton argued that contemporary inequities and social breakdowns in remote and rural Aboriginal communities are not connected to dispossession, but rather to the progressive policies of the 1960s onwards. He has, however, been criticised for oversimplifying state policy processes and for not engaging with scholarship that does take into account cultural issues and policies that are successful in Indigenous communities (Altman 2009). In contrast, at the other pole, Anna Haebich’s history of the *Stolen Generations* (2000) documents the detrimental effects of policies based on racial separation of communities in Australia. With life history stories, such as the tragic opening story of Warren Braedon, Haebich makes direct connections between the policies that enforced an outsider status onto Aboriginal communities and the fragmentation of families, the breakdown of cultures and societies and the damage to individuals.

Arguably, the History Wars also reflected a socio-psychological difficulty in reconciling pride in one’s nation and contemporary culture with shameful events of a settler-colonial past, a difficulty experienced in many ‘post-colonial’ or ‘settler’ societies. There were diverse historical accounts – stories – that could not be reconciled. The difficulties, including how to incorporate a negative history with a positive and inclusive Australian socio-national identity, manifested as the type of ambiguity that arises when a positive and a negative version of events are both made salient (Doosje et al. 1998). This ambiguity can limit the public responses of social collectivities through a kind of inertia. The complex social experiences of collective guilt, shame, outrage and responsibility can lead to many political and intergroup divisions. Social groups with the power to change social circumstances are also resistant to collective guilt and responsibility (because they are high identifiers with a positive Australian identity) and may discourage or actively resist positive social acts of reconciliation (McGarty and Bluic 2004; McGarty et al. 2005). The dominant (or settler) cultural group retains interest in seeing its past in a positive light even while the experiences of disadvantaged groups become more widely-known. First nations groups also have interests in positive accounts of their resistance, activism and

resilience and of the endurance of their cultures. General social attitudes then contribute to acceptance (or not) of particular versions of history and relationships between social groups. Public apologies – even the possibility of public apologies – bring all of these complex issues and conditions of social membership to the fore (Tavuchis 1991:52).

The promise of the 2008 Apology seemed to draw a conclusion to ten years of public debate and discussion of the *Bringing them Home* findings and recommendations and the energetic public dialogue about Australia's history. The Labor Party's promise represented apology not only as a measure of reparation and redress, but also as an ideological expression – a signifier of a new politics in Australia. The values associated with apologising and with support for Indigenous claims were claimed for Rudd's Labor government. As such, the promised apology acted symbolically to differentiate Rudd's government from the preceding years of Howard's Liberal-National coalition governance. In his apology speech, Rudd specifically references this difference, telling a story of achieving apology's delivery that contrasts his actions with that of the previous government's silence and denial. He makes heavy use of a quest genre in order to achieve these effects.

Obama's presence (the Obama phenomena) in international politics had publicly demonstrated the benefits of utilising narratives to support political objectives (Andrews 2014:82-107) and perhaps he reminded political orators of the potency of heroically toned narratives (Polletta 2008). For in asserting that apology is a right and moral response, Rudd was also asserting that he and his government were decent, right and moral. Utilising rhetoric and the grand narrative of a quest, Rudd positions the delivery of Apology as a victory, mixing it in with the jubilation of an incoming government:

These stories cry out to be heard; they cry out for an apology. Instead, from this nation's parliament there has been a stony and stubborn and deafening silence for more than a decade; a view that somehow we, the parliament, should suspend our most basic instincts of what is right and what is wrong; a view that, instead, we should look for any pretext to push this great wrong to one side, to leave it languishing with the historians, the academics and the cultural warriors, as if the Stolen Generations are little more than an interesting sociological phenomenon. But the Stolen Generations are not intellectual curiosities. They are human beings; human beings who have been damaged deeply by the decisions of parliaments and governments. But, as of today, the time for denial, the time for delay, has at last come to an end.

The nation is demanding of its political leadership to take us forward. Decency, human decency,

universal human decency, demands that the nation now step forward to right an historical wrong.
(Rudd, APH 2008)

Yet, even with the heroic tone of the apology speech, Rudd still acknowledged the resistance to apology:

Some have asked, 'Why apologise?' Let me begin to answer by telling the parliament just a little of one person's story... (Rudd, APH 2008)

As Nobles points out, simply because these sorts of apologies are given by politicians, they bring in to question the potential of apology to indicate moral codes (2008:x). Along with the historical resistance to apology, scepticism of political apology is also reflected in the Australian literature. This questioning of political apology's potential recurs throughout this thesis and for better or worse, extends through to a questioning of narrative's potential.

Political theory on apology

At the time of the Apology, our post-colonial world experienced what has been termed an apology epidemic (Thompson 2002). There was a growing theoretical and popular consensus that associated political apologies with the furthering and facilitation of reconciliation processes between and within nations (Malley-Morrison et al 2013). As a form of reparative justice, apology had also been associated with personal healing and micro social justice processes. While such apologies represent engagement with the moral values and ideals of our time, the ways in which apology works to facilitate reconciliatory and reparative outcomes, including whether they are achieved at all, requires closer examination in order to illuminate apology's relationship with justice.

In this section of the chapter, I compose the theoretical framework in which I situate my study. Key texts at this juncture include Nicholas Tavuchis's leading work, *Sociology of apology and reconciliation* (1991), Jennifer Lind's study, *Sorry State* (2008), and Melissa Nobles' reparative justice primer, *Membership theory of Apology* (2008).

Apology and moral economy

In the late 20th Century, Australians were among many national members acknowledging and attempting to address a discomforting past. Internationally, other post-colonial/settler societies such as Canada were also attempting internal social repair,

and a spate of post-war apologies from one nation to another were aimed at facilitating smoother international relations. While apologetic speeches may have occurred in the past, the high volume and range of political apologies that occurred around the turn of this century marked the emergence of a new international public morality. In this regard, apology seeks the return of a moral relationship with the offended – it is a moral enterprise. It is also a public enterprise.

Conditions of return to moral relationship include a public demonstration of understanding of the nature and extent of damage incurred to the relationship (Tavuchis 1991:15-44,119-21). An historic example can be found in Aaron Lazare's exemplar of apology – Lincoln's 1865 inauguration speech, which included an apology for the practice of slavery. Lincoln concretely acknowledged both victim and perpetrator (Lazare 2004:79). Lazare cites Lincoln's apology for slavery as one apology speech that he cannot read without tears and feelings of shame, he suspects 'that the quality and specificity of the narratives contribute to that response' (2004:84). Lazare particularly reflects on the narrative power of the acknowledgment stage of Lincoln's apology for slavery:

Lincoln's description of slavery is stark and unsparing: "One eighth of the whole population" whose "two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil," enforced by "blood drawn with the lash," enabled some to wring "their bread from the sweat of other men's faces." (2004:79, quoting from Lincoln's second inaugural speech, delivered on 4 March, 1865)

In its ability to recognise injustice, political apology is at the core of moral economy (Barkan 2000; Barkan and Karn 2006). Moral economy operates when 'less powerful groups have fewer resources and rely upon moral appeals in order to get what they want' (Mouradian and Nobles, 2008). Moral economy also depends on the value of morality to be realised by the more powerful political groups. In other words, in order to achieve a particular justice objective, moral value must be attached to the objective for it to become attractive to other groups. As Nobles says, 'there's value, of course, in bringing morality to bear. That's just the dynamic of the world in which we live' (Mouradian and Nobles, 2008). The world that Nobles takes as context for apology is democratic and morally self-conscious – it responds as Lazar did. Groups with little or no traditional power also recognise that if they are to have a stake in democracy, democratic society ought to be responsive to their moral demands.

Public and collective apologies in recent times, many of them in a post-colonial context, have been supported by liberalist and socialist politics rather than by conservative politics (Cunningham 2012). Political apologies become available when governments support group rights; they answer to discourse reflecting an awareness of some deficit in the group relationships within or between nations. Nobles argues that official apologies ‘are desired, offered, and given in order to change the terms and meanings of membership in a political community’ (2008:x) and that ‘apologies play an important if under appreciated part in bringing certain views about history and moral obligation to bear in public life’ (2008:xi). Apologies are challenged, debated, called for, given and denied and, in the particularity of its social and discursive context, each political apology is constructed to suit: it is crafted from the public discourse of its time.

The framework that informed the recommendations for apology in Australia, amongst other remedial actions in *Bringing Them Home*, is an internationally recognised set of principles, the ‘van Boven principles’ (1996) which were developed for the United Nations to aid member states, international organisations and NGOs operating in post- conflict contexts (often following violent inter-group atrocities). The principles ‘adopt a victim-oriented perspective and clarify the scope of the right to a remedy and outline what can be done to realise it. Importantly, they do not limit the concept of reparation to monetary compensation but also provide for other forms of redress, such as restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition’ (UN OHCHR 2005). In this framework, political apology is just one form of redress and is closely associated with human rights and social justice work, with acknowledging and repairing the damage of historical injustices, and with asserting collective morality. There are clear links between the concept of a moral economy and the van Boven principles.

Truth Commissions have operated as political alternatives to state apologies and, as another form of restorative or reparative justice, are also linked with reconciliation outcomes. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996) is an exemplar of these commissions and has been the model for many other similar commissions. While there is agreement that these commissions are beneficial for some purposes, such as encouraging the cessation of inter-group conflict or for the expression of personal grief and associated healing, their processes are also subject to questions of efficacy in achieving justice outcomes for victims where truth is valued above retributive justice (for example, Rotberg and Thompson 2000). Political apologies are also engaged

with truth-telling; as a political statement, apologies represent ‘a more self-reflexive trend in the political morality of states’ (Cunningham 2012:144). The story-based truth-telling of apology can address issues around the recognition of group rights and experiences of injustice. In this way, the restorative justice of apology is about social and historical repair (restorative justice is also known as reparative justice) but is often not associated directly with reparations in the form of material compensation. As Elazar Barkan outlines, the difference between restitution and reparation is in whether or not a belonging or condition can be returned (2000:xix). In the interest of achieving justice, if what has been lost or stolen cannot be restored, then the use of apology perhaps underlines acceptance of the alternative: participating groups must negotiate repair. This thesis ultimately looks to responsive story-telling as both a form of negotiation and a method of repair.

Despite inconsistent definitions and understandings, reparations and reconciliation are more commonly understood as practical and tangible outcomes that may flow from apology or that come about after apology. As Nobles states, although ‘reconciliation is best understood in its specific context, at minimum it refers to positive changes in emotional dispositions’ (2008:30). In the following sections, I will reference some inter- and intra-state apologies and studies of their associated challenges and outcomes in order to highlight lingering concerns about political apology’s purpose and efficacy but also to establish that story is central to the politics of apology.

The political and social symbolism of apologetic and contrite acts often appears to be a key consideration of their undertaking – they are a symbolic response to a moral demand. Apology has utility as a political act within the process of inter- and intra- State reconciliation and/or reparation for historical injustices and may be negotiated by or on behalf of state members. Centring on responsibility for and acknowledgement of political-historical offences, political apology may be called on to deliver multiple possible outcomes yet is particularly useful in post-conflict situations where it may ‘assist, accelerate, or commence the process of post-traumatic reconciliation in a manner that enables a nation-state to build or rebuild’ (Rotberg 2006:33).

The membership of groups in the apologetic dialogue is an important factor in any ongoing political action but as discussed earlier, this membership comes with a set of psycho-social difficulties to overcome and apology needs to address these difficulties successfully. Theoretically, apology can alleviate some socio-psychological tensions by

emphasising positive emotions in its narrative, such as pride in undertaking acts of apology and recognition, courage in the act of facing up to the past and compassion in dealing with the damage of the past. Apology narratives could also emphasise the ‘us’ and ‘them’ construction that keeps social groups related in tension – see for example, Tom Clark on Keating’s Redfern speech (2013). It could equally be argued that an apology shifts responsibility for further reparations away from the dominant group (who has benefitted from inequitable historical situations) and towards the victim- group (who are expected to ‘internalise’ the apology to achieve its reparative effects). Elements of each of these potential outcomes are evident within responses to the 2008 Australian apology. Before turning to discussion of the research problem, however, I will outline some specific features of both inter- and intra-state apologies that will provide the dimensions of the study that follows.

Inter-state apologies

While effective apologies have been found to reduce resentment and stabilise peace between previously warring or colonised nations, peace has also been found without apology (Lind 2008). In Lind’s apology research, historical public discourse in the form of media reports, literature and educational texts was analysed through the theoretical framework of threat perception and supplemented with a series of interviews. Lind’s work examined how ‘apologetic remembrance (or ‘contrition’) reduces threat perception and promotes reconciliation’ (2008:9) yet, while this was evident in some cases, she also found that the controversy over state contrition towards foreign victims often damaged international relations. Apologetic or contrite expressions can prompt a backlash from conservatives, who offer:

a competing narrative that celebrates – rather than condemns – the country’s past and justifies or even denies its atrocities. Thus contrition can be counterproductive: observers will be angered and alarmed by what the backlash suggests about the country’s intentions. (Lind 2008:4)

Lind contrasts Germany’s deeply introspective acceptance of guilt post-WWII with Japan’s denials and ‘whitewashes’ of war crimes. She examines the way in which each of these countries appears as threatening or sincerely contrite to their neighbouring and previously aggressively assaulted countries, France and Korea.

In 1998, Japan’s apologetic acknowledgement of ‘damage and pain’ inflicted to Koreans under colonial rule was a reflection of a changed public understanding of Japan’s

relationship with Korea. As Lind discusses, the Japan of the 1950s and 60s would not have engaged in apologetic remembrance and was rather more likely to deny wartime atrocities and to believe the occupation of Korea and other parts of Asia led to positive outcomes for those under occupied rule (2008:39), ongoing expressions of which understandably did not reassure Korea of Japan's apologetic intent. So, despite the acknowledgement, Korea remains wary and distrustful of Japan. France, on the other hand, required comparatively little contrition to be directly communicated by Germany in order to enter into reconciliation discussions post-WWII. Germany's acceptance of guilt and open acknowledgement of Nazi-era crimes assured France that their post-war relationship was friendly.

For Lind, these two examples were central to her observation of the way in which relations move towards peace with or without apology. While the examples serve to illustrate the affective dimension of inter-state apology, and the dialogic nature of political apology in general, the proposition to be explored further is that contrition, truthful and apologetic remembrance can increase trust and facilitate positive relationships, while limited and unpopular apologetic acknowledgements can serve to increase tensions or further damage relations.

Intra-state apologies

With potential to shape the affective dimensions of reconciliation, and influence political arrangements and policy direction, intra-state apologies 'change the terms and meanings of membership in a political community' (Nobles 2008:x) and narrate the links between history and Indigenous disadvantage (2008:27). Many of the issues associated with unpopular apologies – as identified by Lind – are also faced by national minority groups when seeking recognition of injustices. These issues were demonstrated clearly by the History Wars of pre-apology Australia. The apologies examined by Nobles (New Zealand, Canada, Australia, United States) importantly led to the identification of political actors in intra-state apology. These pre-apology political actors agitate for, support or provide apology in recognition of minority group claims and fall into three principal groups: justice activists, government officials and public intellectuals/historians (Nobles 2008:14). Whether or not apology ultimately provides the desired outcomes for these political actors (with regard to group membership and recognition of history) can be

discussed using two examples of apologies closely examined by Nobles, New Zealand and Canada.

In New Zealand, the Queen's apologies of 1996 and 1998 were disconnected from policy making, whereas Canada's 1998 'Statement of Reconciliation' enabled the governing party to use apology to 'justify the further strengthening of institutions of Aboriginal self-governance' while making limited concrete changes (Nobles 2008:37). A decade on from the 1998 apology, however, Canada had made little or no progress towards the policy changes recommended in the wake of the apology. These underwhelming Canadian outcomes can be compared to the annual Australian Prime Minister's 'Closing the Gap' report, which follows progress in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations against social justice objectives flowing from the 2008 Apology and which also continues to report minimal progress.

Nobles' general findings confirm the ability of apology to generate public discussion of national narratives and the terms of reconciliation (2008:40) but are unclear on apology's effects with regard to political re-arrangements. In addition, the role of political actors following apology remains to be theorised.

Australian theory

Along with the extant theory and philosophy on political and collective apologies, a large body of critically-engaged work preceded the 2008 Apology in Australia. In the call for apology and redress that followed the publication of *Bringing Them Home*, social and political theorists and philosophers reflected on responsibility, reparation and political reasoning, taking up rational and critical discourse perspectives (for example, Augoustinos and Penny 2001; LeCouteur and Augoustinos 2001; Augoustinos, LeCouteur, and Soyland 2002; Augoustinos and LeCouteur 2004; Muldoon 2005; Celermajer 2006). After the Apology, theorists took a largely critical view and reflected on the inherent limits of apology without subsequent constitutional amendment (Reilly 2009) or reparation (Lino 2010), and on the type of politics associated with promising (Muldoon 2009). The legal-rational claim here is that the promise contained in the Apology must 'find institutional expression' (Muldoon 2009:17). Political apology practice is seen as 'a sign of late modern malaise; of our disappointment with the promises of a rationalised politics' (Celermajer 2009:3). Apology – and the moralisation of politics – is a turn away from rational politics. Yet while apology has the potential of becoming an important symbolic act in the process

of reconciliation (Murphy 2011), it can also become part of the disappointment and malaise from which it arises.

Other policy-oriented research examining government policy has attempted to quantify progress on ‘Closing the Gap’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and to evaluate which policies and programs are working to reduce discrimination and inequalities in Australian society (Priest and Paradies 2010; Russell and Wenham 2010). The research questioned the ability of government to meet the commitment expressed in the 2008 Apology, and pointed out that very little has been done to measure or monitor progress: for example, no baselines had been established for a number of social justice indicators against which progress could be charted. Further, the annual Prime Minister’s report to Parliament since the Apology has consistently reported lowered sights year-to-year as it records failure to reach the goals set within the original Closing the Gap policy framework (APH, Opening of Parliament business, 2009-ongoing).

It is difficult to draw connections between the Apology and changes in sentiment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Though polling before and after the Apology (Solomon 2008) showed that support for apology increased over time, it has also been reported that attitudes toward government policies on Indigenous Australians (transfer of land rights and government assistance) had ‘softened independently of politics’ (McAllister cited by Canberra Times 2012; McAllister and Pietsch 2012).

In contrast with the rational, legal and policy perspectives, other studies such as historical social research often included personal reflections or ethnographic studies to illustrate experiences and evaluations of apology. These accounts offer critical perspectives of the Apology and question its effects, claiming that the Apology covered up genocide (Barta 2008), and that white Australians still need to take responsibility for furthering apologetic action (Fredericks 2010). Christine Fejo-King, a social worker and member of the Stolen Generations Alliance, documented her experiences and observations in the lead-up to, and aftermath of, the Apology, including the way in which members of the Stolen Generations were consulted about the content of the Apology speech (2011). She offered an alternative biography of Nana Fejo, the woman whose story featured in Rudd’s speech. Fejo-King’s reflections stand in contrast to those later penned by Rudd (2011), not only in the selection of Nana Fejo’s biographical details, but also about the process of writing the Apology speech and the transformational nature of apology. Reflections and

accounts of first-hand experiences of the transformation of hope to disappointment were also published in the years following the Apology, as the promise of significant changes in circumstances for Aboriginal Australians did not eventuate (for example, Gay McAuley 2011).

Research focus

While Tavuchis (1991), Celermajer (2006, 2008, 2009), Barkan (2000) and Lazar (2004), among others, theorise the great reparative potential of apology, Nobles' (2008) survey of political apology does not provide clarity on apology's reparative effects. Particularly with regard to political re-arrangements, the role of political actors following apology remains to be theorised. Reassuringly, Nobles' general findings confirm the ability of apology to generate public discussion of national narratives and the terms of reconciliation (2008:40). While Lind's work illustrates affective dimensions of apology, and the dialogic nature of political apology in general, the proposition to be explored further is that contrition, truthful and apologetic remembrance can increase trust and facilitate positive relationships, while limited and internally unpopular apologetic acknowledgements serve to increase tensions or further damage relations. Martha Nussbaum's (2001, 2013) extensive considerations of the role of emotions in determining and motivating social action/relations are helpful here, as is the contrast between antagonistic and agonistic group relations established by Chantal Mouffe (2013).

However, perhaps the most promising, yet still under-researched question about the 2008 Apology and apologies more generally, concern the effects of their moral and emotional demands on collective responses to historic injustices. On this track, for example, Augoustinos, Hastie and Wright (2011) focus on the use of emotion and identity categories within the act of apology. Their work describes the invocation of empathy as an important action of apology discourse and claim that its ability to humanise the 'other' provides support for social justice (2011:507). This thesis partially extends this research track, yet questions the power of empathy to sustain political action. In following chapters, I articulate concerns with a reliance on factors like empathy, compassion or the humanisation of the other to provide redress for injustice, particularly from outside intimate community. In this light, I unfold some of the violence around apology's demand for response (after Butler 2004, 2005).

This thesis is generally concerned with the culture of apology, and whether apology-responsive narratives generate, influence, sustain or otherwise work to effect group relationships and interactions. This thesis aims to provide insights of the narrative nature of political apology in general and of the 2008 Apology specifically through a close examination of the workings and context of, and responses to, the 2008 Apology. By engaging with apology-responsive materials produced by key actors in political apology, the thesis furthers the work of those theorists parsed above to enlarge and nuance an understanding of the narrative politics and culture of apology.

Thesis plan

In Chapter 1, this introduction, I outline the possibilities of political apology. The complexities of political apology and its mediatisation are made apparent. Working with both theory and existing analysis I illuminate the political expectations of apology, especially by providing the particular historical context for the Australian apology. Acknowledging the scepticism around apology, though, and the potential for it to intensify injustice by bringing about the opposite of a desired effect – polarising instead of reconciling societies – this introduction explores some hypotheses around what contributes to an effective political apology and the way in which apology contributes to social and moral repair. In this way, the research problem emerges.

Chapter 2 sets out the narrative research approach and narrative analysis framework, describing the materials collected and why they were selected. I explain that because apology can be construed as narrative, a narrative approach is well suited to the examination of apology's political value. The narrative analysis framework is designed to account interpretively for apology's effect and action and is here purposively informed by both Lind's (2008) and Nobles' (2008) comprehensive studies of apology. I specifically draw reference to Lind's apologetic remembrance scale and Nobles' membership theory of apology and their common anticipation and understanding of the role of history and education in the achievement of long-term reconciliation objectives.

In Chapter 3, I go on to consider the ethics of using stories as political strategies to support or secure justice outcomes for collectives who are traditionally under-resourced in political and material capital. By identifying and discussing the political strategies of the stories central to this research project, I also identify what is seen or considered to be reparative justice in the Australian context. Importantly, this chapter begins to explore

how and why these stories, which often rely on compassion and empathy, can fail to seed the justice responses desired.

The early chapters demonstrate that the 2008 Apology was an orchestrated and mediated public political event. Because it was so well mediated and attended, first-hand narrativised accounts and responsive dialogues are readily curated in public space. Chapters 4 and 5 thus engage closely with interview and video accounts to describe the way in which stories function politically. I show how stories can be seen to resist and express different positions in relationship to the Apology and to other collectives, negotiating political re-arrangements. Chapter 4's analysis and discussion further incorporates such personal reflections of the Apology's value to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice. It discusses the way in which the Apology's politics are characterised by differing perspectives. These perspectives – as political subject positions – are both taken up by experiential narrators and assigned to others as they compose and participate in the ongoing narrative act of Apology. Chapter 5 examines expressions of national membership constructions in relationship with Apology and the distributed positions within respondents' accounts. It investigates how shifts in political membership (belonging and relating) can occur through subject constructions. As a result, Chapter 5 extends the discussion of Chapter 4 in exploring the socialisation of apology. That is, the way in which apology culture shapes social interactions and vice versa.

In Chapter 6, however, I look at the issue of responsibility and reparative action by considering how testimonial stories can alienate and shame people who would otherwise be considered responsive fellow members of a moral community. I also discuss the way in which the reparative effects of political apology can be constructed as private and individual rather than social. Following recent political theory this chapter claims that responsive emotions can have a great impact on the reparative potential of political apology. It investigates this suggestion by analysing how participants conceptualise and theorise moral community in their stories and responses to the Apology. Chapter 6 ultimately shows that while apology highlights the value of moral community, the shame and contempt that eventually arises in response stymies the repair of such community.

Because of the interactive nature of apology and the plurality of responses and subject positions, Chapter 7 moves on to the ways in which political apology reflects the practice of democracy. As detailed in previous chapters, storytelling, as responsive narrative

practice, can challenge the sedimentation of a single and hegemonic narrative of the 2008 Apology. Individual storytellers do this by refusing victim subject positioning, by disrupting hegemonic moral and political values (and providing alternate constructions of political reality), and eventually, by utilising apology for their own political purposes. This chapter demonstrates the radical and agonistic nature (after Mouffe 2013) of the political apology form, revealing more about the transformative aspects of apology response narratives.

Further, this last strand of the study demonstrates that a response of acknowledgment, which I claim is constituted by the sorts of stories that feature in this thesis, is a means of keeping the dialogue politically active, of keeping it radicalised. Finally, I note that without thoroughly addressing responsibility, political apology leaves itself open to subversion.

As far as the contribution that this thesis makes to the field, my study extends Nobles' membership theory of apology beyond the event of apology and enlarges Tavuchis's sociology of apology, specifically his work on the political complexities of collective apology, from the study of formal apology texts to a study of responsive stories. Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of narrative as political action and how political culture might be transformed. Practically, the study provides a phronetic framework for understanding how political cultures can be revealed and transformed through narrative contest. Importantly, my study shows that response narratives constitute radical and agonistic democratic politics. If you talk to someone about the Apology, they will invariably talk about Aboriginal injustice or perpetrate one form or another of the symbolic violence that has been a part of the injustice for so long.

CHAPTER 2

Narrative: a research approach for ‘a special kind of enacted story’

Introduction

In his sociology of apology, Nicholas Tavuchis describes apology as a ‘special kind of enacted story’ (1991:18). He recognises that the complexity of apologies involving collectives is derived ‘primarily from the condition of plurality’ (1991:69). In this chapter, I demonstrate how an understanding of the 2008 Apology as narrative supports a study of apology’s ability to effect group relationships and interactions. By defining apology responses as the experiential accounts – stories – about the event of the Apology and its repercussions, I address the plurality and complexity at the core of political and collective apologies. Stories examined in the study include testimonies of social injustice theoretically addressed by the Apology and efforts to make amends and to secure restorative justice or personal healing. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Apology and its politics rely on story telling for effect; the Apology interaction is comprised of a chain of stories and responses. As I have also indicated, this apology story-telling culture is highly mediated. For these reasons, I have chosen two kinds of Apology responses: publicly available videos which recorded some Indigenous and politically elite people’s responses to the Apology, and; my own interviews with people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, involved in the politics of the Apology where we reflected on the Apology and its political meanings and effects.

This chapter establishes the methodological assumptions of my research and describes how I collected and analysed relevant documents and interviews. After revisiting the research questions in order to clarify why a narrative research approach has been chosen, this chapter describes the details of the narrative and interpretive approach and makes some relevant points concerning the links between apology and narrative. The process of selection and elicitation of specific narrative data for the study is discussed here in detail. The chapter then goes on to describe the data and the research participants before discussing the practice of interviewing, analysis and other interpretive and practical considerations of the iterative and inductive methods applied in this study.

The research question

Specifically, this thesis is a study of the value of the 2008 Apology for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reparative justice. It addresses the question of how apologies work politically and assesses the social value of narratives for politics in general. With the Apology central, this thesis is generally concerned with how political apology and narrative-based interactions generate, influence, sustain or otherwise work to effect group relationships and social experiences.

Political apology is a familiar and contemporary form of reparative justice within the human rights framework and has been understood as a valid means to recognise and acknowledge historical and social injustices. Undertaking apology assumes some kind of political value and effect in the lives of those it concerns and addresses. The outcomes of political apology, however, are not well understood and appear haphazard. For example, in the Australian case, Rudd later aligned his 2008 apology to 'Dr King's freedom rally' and referenced knowledge of apology's transformative effects for relationships (Rudd 2011) as well as discussed the unpredictable nature of reactions to the Apology (Rudd 2011, 2012). Despite the bi-partisan and national support for the Apology, indicating a majority sentiment that the Apology should lead to material effect for those it addressed (after Luke 1997), Indigenous Australians continue to be the most disadvantaged minority group in Australia. For example, as noted in the Introduction, there has been little progress made with regard to the 'Closing the Gap' objectives, which were articulated at the time of the Apology in 2008.

Stolen Generations members' narratives are still circulating as testimony of this gap, with an implicit request to others to listen and understand and to support restorative justice processes. Indeed, many post-Apology testimonials reflect those of the pre- Apology period. These narratives continue to be circulated almost 20 years after the delivery of the report of the Inquiry into the removal of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families and Communities (1997), which brought wide public attention to injustice in the lives of Indigenous Australian people. It seems that contemporary life in Australia is imbued with the revelation of injustice and traumatic experience. In 2013, for example, the Australian Government established a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, with its final report due 31 December 2015. The

Commission's public hearings and associated legal actions have been widely reported by the news media.

In another example, in 2012, an Act of Recognition was introduced to Federal Parliament (Gillard APH 2012) as an interim step towards a referendum to enable constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians (a similar proposal was previously rejected with the 1999 republic referendum). The recognition referendum was due to be held in 2012, but was delayed by the government citing concern at low levels of public awareness (Recognise 2014). The experiences of removed children, their families and communities, the intergenerational impacts of trauma and disadvantage for Indigenous Australians, and the community's awareness of – and responses to – these experiences and injustices, resonate with other ongoing projects around personal and community healing, reconciliation and recognition. This thesis, therefore, seeks to generate a nuanced and in-depth account of the value of political apology for these social projects, and the political role of associated responsive narrative practices. It aims to do this by engaging with those affected by the historical injustices.

Methodological perspectives

The methodological approach adopted for this thesis relies on interpreting the value and impacts of political apology by closely examining and better understanding narrative responses. I define apology responses as the experiential accounts, that is stories, about the event of the Apology and its repercussions, including testimonies of social injustice and efforts to make amends and secure restorative justice or personal healing. Responses to the Apology have not been only formal and staged, and there are many examples of more spontaneous Apology-related narratives and responses. At the time of the Apology, news media carried reports (newspapers, news websites and television), which included immediate verbatim (1-2 sentences) responses from people attending Apology events around Australia. Several media reports presented longer interviews with various members of Australian society, which featured their response to the Apology. Others, such as community leaders or social 'elites' commented in speeches or editorials, where more detailed, considered and comprehensive response narratives were articulated. Some of these reports were published in advance of the

Apology's delivery and responded to the previously circulated wording of the Apology. Thousands attended the event in Canberra and an estimated 1.3 million people viewed

the live televised broadcast (DSS 2013). It is also the case, however, that media attention was not sustained and a marked decrease in frequency of reporting is evident (these details are reported in a following section discussing available data materials). Further, some early responses were already ambivalent and cynical, indicating some mistrust of the motivation and intentions behind the Apology and particular concern at the lack of associated monetary reparation. In light of this multitude of mediated tellings and responses, where media culture and apology culture overlap and intertwine, examining the Apology and related discursive events through the lens of narrative practice seems amply justified.

In addition, the literature on the Apology, and on the political uses of apology in general, makes repeated reference to the presence of apology-related stories, storytelling practices and story facilitation (Tavuchis 1991, Barkan 2000, Lazare 2004, Barkan and Karn 2006). This focus on narrative texts and practices led me to an interest in those who organise and collect narratives and utilise narrative practices for political purposes. As I explore in following chapters, Apology related narratives and responses can be regarded as more or less curated (that is, organised and overseen). This curation is sometimes literal, as in the examples of response narrative videos produced by the Queensland Library with production values that resemble standards from museums. But we can also use the metaphor of curation to reflect on how responsive narratives have been circulated in and across media. This thesis, in a sense, through its collection and analysis of Apology responsive narratives, draws on and exemplifies a transparent form of curation.

The thesis to some extent also challenges the closed nature of the Apology's delivery by examining responses, however inorganically they arose. In person-to-person apology the response qualifies the act (Tavuchis 1991:46-50). This qualification of apology in turn reflects the ethical value of apology and forgiveness (Arendt 1958:237-241; Levinas 1961), in that the ethics and politics of apology open a transformative space where the balance of power shifts to favour the victim(s) of injustice. The act of forgiveness (and/or acceptance) by the victim is sought and valued for its ability to restore or repair what is morally lacking or damaged in the perpetrator. Theoretically, the balance of power shifts and a different political relationship is established. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to explore and examine responses to the Apology, its political effects, and its capacity to further reconciliation and social justice for those engaged by the Apology. The methodology I have developed for this thesis addresses political apology as both delivery

and response, recognising apology as relational and interactive – as open dialogue – as opposed to a closed-off one-way communication with taken-for-granted effects.

The ability of apology practice to sustain political dialogue is considered in the analysis developed in this thesis. As Ron Jacobs explains, taking in both Habermas's and Arendt's conceptions of political action:

the outcomes of public communication depend in large part on the forms of representation used to make events meaningful. Communication cannot be considered solely in terms of its ability to produce a shared commitment to a singular vision of the good, or to some 'rational' consensus; it must also be evaluated in terms of its ability to keep a conversation going, and to protect the possibility of opening up these conversations to new narratives and to new points of difference. (Jacobs 2000:47)

Drawing on this valuable perspective, my research reflects on the potential of political apology to open and sustain dialogue. Because apology can be considered to be a form of narrative, responses to apology can be treated as responsive narratives; that is, they are part of the conversation around apology and therefore part of the larger overarching apology narrative. Narrative is the form of representation that is used to make the Apology meaningful. This is not to say that narrative is isolated from other forms of action - because the narratives are experiential, they report the social actions and experiences that play a large role in making sense of the Apology.

A narrative research approach also has the benefit of illuminating the dimensions of value, the meanings and the effects associated with the 2008 Apology and how they circulate over time. Apology narratives reflect, sustain and help to question the cultural stock of knowledge of the value and effects of the 2008 Apology. Such narratives also make it possible to question, debate and 'theorise' the politics of the Apology and its repercussions. As Squire has shown in relation to everyday representations of living with HIV in South Africa, the sharing and reinvention of narratives can be the site of political action, as opposed to being merely reflective of it (Squire 2005:97). The production, consumption and dialogue of Apology narratives therefore open to view the political action that is achieved through the Apology. Detailed analysis of how these narratives are assembled, and circulated out into conversation with each other is revealing of the Apology's political functions and effects (Gubrium and Holstein 2009; Frank 2010).

As discussed in the Introduction, this thesis also draws on Nobles' membership theory of apologies (2008) and Lind's research on apologies and remembrance in international

politics (2008), particularly the methodological approach Lind developed. Nobles' work lends two important aspects or lenses to this research: firstly, her membership theory of apology, where political apology enables rearticulation of national memberships (and national histories), and secondly, her identification of the political actors in pre-apology states (mobilised minority groups, state officials and intellectuals, principally historians) who influence the expression of official contrition and responsibility for historical injustices. The three groups of political actors that Nobles examined shaped some of my initial searches for materials to study, specifically in the identification of 'apology discourse leaders' in Australia and the ultimate selection of interview participants who were politically engaged with the Apology and/or the Stolen Generations.

Lind, researching apologies in international politics, set out to examine the quality of apologetic remembrance and threat perception between states by examining the statements made by members of the public and by elites. Lind selected two international case studies, Japan and Germany. She included public opinion polls, media coverage, archival documents, secondary sources, memoirs and elite-authored scholarly articles and opinion-editorials as her data sources and, for contemporary information, she supplemented these materials with interviews with government officials, academics, journalists, and think-tank analysts. While she particularly examined statements that linked perceptions of Japan and Germany with the quality of their remembrance of past violence, Lind also examined a selection of other documents and activities, focusing on the influence of leaders' statements, institutionalised remembrance (such as state policy and litigation), commemoration activities and history textbooks. Lind's use of multiple indicators is beneficial as it effectively triangulates perceptions of intentions and threat as the effects of remembrance (2008:20). These sources are cited throughout her text, providing illustrative material for Lind's unexpected findings that reconciliation is largely independent of apologetic sentiment between states and that sometimes contrition can actually have harmful effects in inter-state relations. This harm occurs when society's response to state-sanctioned expressions of contrition is one of denial or of further glorification of the violent history, a finding that resonates with the Australian experience of the period following the release of the *Bringing Them Home* report.

Lind's mixture of pre-existing texts and elicited statements serves as a model for the approach I have taken. I have located and examined first-person reflections on the Apology or on issues associated with the Apology, including speeches, articles, papers,

oral history recordings and other recorded interviews addressing the Apology in the periods before and after it was delivered. I have, therefore, considered and analysed a number of these pre-existing documents and story materials alongside the narratives on the Apology I elicited during this study in interviews with people politically engaged with or affected by the Apology.

Another dimension to my research approach concerns theories of emotion in politics (Nussbaum 2001; Thompson and Hoggett 2012) and communicative/political action (Arendt 1958; Habermas 1977, 1984, 1992; Mouffe 2013). That is, I will follow Nussbaum to ‘think of emotions as essential elements of human intelligence, rather than just as supports or props for intelligence ... this view entails that without emotional development, a part of our reasoning capacity as political creatures will be missing’ (2001:3). Because emotions provide motivational energy (Turner 2007:179), they also indicate potential – and available – social actions that might follow from their expression. Further supporting this perspective, Simon Thompson and Paul Hoggett consider that emotions ‘provide both the motivational basis for our intellectual lives and enhance our reasoning capacities’ (2012:5) and other social theorists (Ahmed 2004; Squire 2007:148) consider emotions as not just expressed through, but produced by, representations. Combined, these theories lend the research a framework with which to understand how narratives work to political effect by representing and cultivating emotions that, in turn, motivate us to act (or ‘re-act’) in certain ways. The Apology, as narrative, was capable of motivating action and of producing or reinforcing knowledge (narrative knowledge) through its elicitation of emotions, which increase the salience of information/experience. Emotions were a product of both the event and the expectant states of those who attended the Apology speeches in 2008. Many who attended visibly expressed emotion (joy/elation, sorrow/grief, anger) and while these emotions can be associated with pro- or anti- social behaviours, they can also elicit emotions in response. For example, compassion motivates positive actions toward others that may result in gratitude, trust or further compassion; while anger motivates negative actions that may result in further anger, distrust or resentment.

Where political apologies respond to the moral demands of minority groups, they are performing a kind of emotional gesture, enacting a strategic narrative designed to alleviate moral injury and assert a collective ethics (e.g., Tavuchis, Barkan, Lind, Thompson, Gibney, Celermajer). These strategic apologies attempt moral restoration and

perform symbolic repair through narrative practices. Part of the research practice I have developed then is informed by Arthur Frank's work on dialogical narrative analysis, which he succinctly explains in this way: a 'dialogical narrative analysis studies the mirroring between what is told in the story – the story's content – and what happens as a result of telling that story – its effects' (2010:71). Stories are accepted as part of the world they describe; they function as strategies and pragmatic theories of experience (Squire 2007:194), negotiating a collective ethics as they are told and attended to.

In keeping with the focus on apology responsive narratives in dialogue, this thesis adopts an interpretive approach, which places emphasis on meaning and the hermeneutical agency of those who generate, curate, receive and respond to political narratives. This approach draws on the work of narrative researchers from Squire and Andrews to Plummer and Frank, who have taken narrative approaches to the study of narratives as strategies for living ethically and with agency, while also experiencing, respectively, HIV in South Africa (Squire 2007), political change (Andrews 2007), sexualities (Plummer 2002), and serious illness (Frank 1995). These researchers have also published informative works on the application of narrative methods to socio- political inquiries from which I draw guidance (e.g., Plummer 2001; Frank 2010; Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2008; Squire 2008, 2012a, 2012b; Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Harrison, Hyden and Hyden 2014). Interpretivism also foregrounds the hermeneutical skills and preferences of the researcher, a feature of this research I discuss in a section to follow. This interpretive approach allows for aesthetic and critical engagement with narratives on the Apology, in a manner which 'focuses on the complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges' (Klein and Myers 1999:69) and on the moral and emotional qualities of apology narratives. In this thesis, I consider the practice of storytelling and curating alongside narrative content and effects. Through engagement with the Apology narrative field, this approach facilitates gradual sensitisation and enables the field to be theorised, with narrative knowledge of the Apology accumulated as a result of, and by doing, the research.

Collecting and eliciting Apology narratives

To enable consideration of the value and political action of the Apology, I decided to examine some existing Apology response narratives and to elicit further narratives from people who were politically engaged with the Apology and its repercussions. I wanted to

understand what these narratives said in response to the Apology by looking at their content and the way in which the narratives were circulated and curated in dialogue with each other. I also wanted an opportunity to explore the accounts of politically engaged actors in interview situations that allowed responsive storytelling and reflective engagement. I was interested in how these actors would perceive and talk about the Apology, 5-6 years after its delivery, and what effects they would associate with the Apology. In general, as the interviews progressed, I also became interested in how participants naturalistically storied their accounts and how they constructed and anticipated audiences outside of the interview situation.

Apology narratives are defined throughout this thesis as a form of political narrative. In this regard, Molly Andrews writes: ‘politics is nothing if not a stage for competing stories to be told about the same phenomenon’ (2014:86). As Andrews explains, political narrative is a tool for re-imagining citizenship and storytelling is a strategy that can enable people to feel part of a national or community whole (2014:85-86). As I will go on to demonstrate in this thesis, Apology responses can be seen as attempts to negotiate terms of citizenship, group identities and national belonging in the aftermath of the Apology event. The complex political nature of the Apology and the surrounding responsive storytelling practices comprise Apology’s narrative culture.

Existing narrative materials

Pre-existing narrative materials on Apology comprise an extensive, sometimes loosely related, highly mediated narrative field (or culture). As noted, brief anecdotes and comments on the Apology have been circulated in news media. Detailed, nuanced apology responses from members of the Stolen Generations are, however, rare. The videos are currently the biggest collection of their kind in Australia and represent an historical response to Apology. The responses that are commonly available have been produced through projects undertaken in the tradition of oral histories, with government funding connected to the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report. Examples include the State Library of Queensland’s ‘Response to the Apology’ digital video projects (2009, 2010) and the National Library of Australia’s ‘Bringing Them Home After the Apology’ oral history project (2009-2011). With regard to the SLQ collection, following the 2008 Apology, funding was made available via the Online Public Access in Libraries program (OPAL) to collect responses to the Apology. The SLQ published their collection

of 25 responses as digital stories on their website and on a YouTube channel. Transcripts are available from the SLQ catalogue. The collection was recorded as three separate series: a 2008 series in Brisbane, a 2009 series in Mt Isa, and a second 2009 series in Cairns, Cooktown and Hopevale. The 2008 series was a pilot project initiative of the SLQ, conducted collaboratively with Brisbane's Indigenous community, media and educational organisations and a research team from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) led by Helen Klaebe. Initially, the intention was to provide a model that would extend the program to other areas of Queensland and Australia (Klaebe 2009), but the project, while extended by the SLQ independently of Klaebe in 2009 to collect a further 18 stories, was not continued.

Other curated responses include a report of Victorian Indigenous community forums, 'Unfinished Business: Reparations, Restitution and Rehabilitation' (Stolen Generations Victoria 2008); a book produced by LinkUp, a service for the Stolen Generations in Victoria, titled 'Where were you?' (2013), showcasing brief reflective anecdotes from 54 Aboriginal and other Australians; and a few short online videos from the Healing Foundation (2013), as 2013 was the 5th anniversary of the Apology. Also of note, produced post-Apology, is an online collection (45 videos) of Stolen Generations testimonies published by the Stolen Generations Testimonies Foundation (2009). The Foundation's online collection mirrors the tradition of online depositories of Holocaust survivor testimony (Yad Vashem and the Shoah foundation, 1953-ongoing).

I selected narrative materials for my study by searching for narratives and then applying criteria to choose narrative materials most suitable for my research. Initial searches of electronic databases for publicly available materials were conducted in

2010/2011. These initial searches were exploratory, broad and open-ended, beginning with a simple search term strategy and then exploring related collections: Apology AND [Indigenous/Aboriginal/Aborigine/Stolen Generations AND/OR Rudd/PM/Prime Minister AND/OR Parliament]. Data-bases consulted were: Google; Factiva; the catalogues of Monash University Library, Melbourne University Library, National Library of Australia, State Library of Queensland, State Library of Victoria, Australian National University, Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII), Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Australian Social Science Data Archive (ASSDA), Australian Screen database, and across various

Government agency websites, such as: <<http://www.nswreconciliation.org.au>>; and <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/>.

This initial searching produced a large volume of materials, created both before and after the 2008 Apology. This list represents the types of narrative materials available and provides some referenced examples:

- Speeches, for example: Kevin Rudd (2011, 2012), Jackie Huggins (2009, 2012), Tom Calma (2008 multiple), Mick Dodson (2008, 2011).
- Reports, for example: Prime Minister's 'Close the Gap' reports (tabled at the beginning of each Parliamentary year since 2009, Australian Parliament APH), HREOC Close the Gap Campaign's shadow reports (2010, 2011, 2013, 2014), HREOC Annual Social Justice and Native Title reports (1993-2013), Priest and Paradies (2010), Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria (2010), Freemantle and Officer (2007).
- Oral histories: National Library of Australia's 1998-2001 and 2009-2010 Stolen Generations oral history projects.
- Journal papers: Frow (1998), Luke (1997), Muldoon (2009), Augoustinos et al. (2004, 2011).
- Television news reports and transcripts (see following).
- Newspaper reports (Australia, 13-20th Feb each year, also see following): 2008 1201 reports, 2009 – 111 reports, 2010 – 49 reports (note: skewed by media saturation of Black Saturday fire event which occurred at time of the Apology anniversary).
- Other texts, for example: Sorry books (1998 community project in response to the findings of the Bringing Them Home report. Approximately 1000 books were circulated in the community and it was estimated that the books contain over one million signatures or statements; 460 of these books are stored with AIATSIS and a selection of signatures and comments are available to be viewed online at the AIATSIS website.), Pearson (2009 – Quarterly essay).

It was during this process that I found oral histories pertaining to the Stolen Generations testimonies. These were richly elaborated accounts, which did make reference to the Apology and could be regarded as prime narrative materials. I decided, however, to exclude them from my research because they did not directly address the Apology; that is,

they were primarily life histories of Stolen Generations members rather than Apology response narratives. For example, these kinds of life narratives dominated the previously mentioned National Library of Australia's (NLA) 'Bringing Them Home after the Apology' oral history project (2009-2010). Many of those who participated in this project had participated in a previous NLA project, 'Many Voices', in 2001. Two collections of oral histories, pre- and post-Apology were therefore possible sources for my research. In the post-Apology collection, however, the respondents' reflections on the Apology are a small feature of the oral histories recorded in 2009-2010. For example, in one oral history, reflections on the Apology take up approximately five minutes of a total of 277 minutes recording.³ Though I found many of these narratives informative in both expression and content, I excluded these materials because the Apology was not the primary focus of the projects or the interviews.

At this time (mid-2010) I also took another search approach and listed 'apology discourse leaders', that is, people whose names were recurrently appearing in the literature and who participated in apology dialogue both before and after the 2008 Apology, and tried to ascertain what kinds of narrative materials each had contributed. This group contributed, and often continues to contribute, a large and varied collection of narrative materials to the public discourse around social justice for Indigenous Australians, including speeches, lectures, interviews, opinion pieces, journal articles, book chapters, and other contributions to public debates. I considered the Apology discourse leaders to be people such as, but not limited to: Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister 2007-2010, 2013 (for the initial apology speech, but also his annual reflections on providing that speech); Larissa Behrendt Professor of Law and Director of Research, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, UTS, Sydney; Noel Pearson, lawyer, academic and land rights activist, founder of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership; Tony Birch, writer and academic, University of Melbourne; Mick Dodson, barrister and academic (Professor of Law), Australian National University; Frank Brennan, human rights lawyer, Jesuit priest and academic (Professor of Law), Australian Catholic University; Gary Foley, activist, a founder of the Tent Embassy and academic (History), Victoria University of

³ This example refers to the four-part interview with Vince Wenberg, a Stolen Generations member, born in 1932 and removed as an eight year old along with his eight siblings, with the boys and girls sent to different institutions. Records later showed that his mother sent letters pleading for their return but that authorities denied her any contact with her children. Wenberg has also been a Chairman of the NSW Sorry Day Committee.

Technology; Carmel Bird, author (*The Stolen Children*); Marcia Langton AM, activist, actor, academic (Professor), Foundation Chair, Australian Indigenous Studies, University of Melbourne; Tom Calma AO, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and Race Discrimination Commissioner; Patrick Dodson, activist, former Commissioner Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Inquiry, Chairman former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation; and Jackie Huggins AM, author, historian, activist, University of Queensland, Spokesperson for Recognise, former co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia.

Having surveyed a vast array of narrative materials, I then used purposive criteria to help me select a specific and manageable set of materials, which would allow me to address my research questions with appropriate depth, breadth and relevance. Qualitative inquiry aims to achieve ‘authentic insights into people’s experiences’ (Silverman 1993). In theory, the narrative data would be meaningful and relevant if selected and elicited based on the theories of political apology established by Nobles and Lind. This purposive or theoretical sampling approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) enabled me to locate relevant and theory-rich narrative data produced and/or curated by apology’s political actors in the form of direct expressions or responses that engaged with the Apology and that were reflective of direct, lived experience. These data are meaningful to the study as they enable close observation of the narrative practices around apology (the politics of apology), including the processes of interpreting the Apology and how it accumulates value and meaning. Because the group of interest to the study initially appeared to comprise a large number of actors and a wide range of narrative materials, I then developed limiting criteria to locate a more specific and manageable set of materials for study. The criteria focused on locating or eliciting narrative materials that directly responded to the Apology, and engaged with the Apology in a hermeneutical manner. That is, I was interested in materials that were produced in an attempt to provide an interpretation of the Apology. I established a source catalogue and noted materials of interest, including website links where relevant. I include information here about the quantities and variety of narrative materials located because it is important to sustain awareness of this range.

Not only the content but the very presence of these narrative materials has an informative influence on my study. They are reflective of the public engagement with, and dialogue around, the Apology. Simply, the Apology’s opening up of dialogue can be considered as a political effect. However, some of the most poignant narrative materials were

deliberately curated rather than coming organically into the public sphere. Their curated nature stands in contrast to other popular mediated stories that go viral as public awareness is increased to a certain capacity. It is possible that without curation and preservation, many stories would not appear outside of their originating community of experience. This practice of curation and publication of Stolen Generations stories appeared to be a continuation of the Bringing Them Home inquiry (and some of the curated stories were a direct outcome of projects funded after recommendations of the Inquiry). I became interested in how the politics of apology might be reflected and contained by the practices of curation, mediation and re-presentation of stories, and how these narrative practices figured in the moral economy of the Human Rights era.

From this limiting of the field, the set of materials that engaged most directly with my research inquiries were those produced by the State Library of Queensland as ‘Responses to the Apology’ (2008, 2009). Before discussing these materials further, the following summarises the limited field of materials that were identified with the refined criteria of:

- a. the document or video file directly address the Apology (i.e. responding, commenting, criticising, discussing, reflecting);
- b. the narrator was a member of one of the groups of political actors in apology, that is, Indigenous activists/state officials/public intellectuals (particularly historians) and other relevant emergent groups and individuals (classified by political relationship in the post-Apology period, such as members of the Stolen Generation or Indigenous community);
- c. the narrative was written or spoken in the first person (i.e. personal experience or reflection on the Apology and related events); or
- d. the narrative was generated/recorded between 2008 –2015.

The materials surveyed from the results of applying this criteria to the field included:

- i. *Television news reports* (including a number of online transcripts); the decrease in reports associated with the Apology is important to note as it reflects the dissipation of public attention or ‘newsworthiness’ of anniversaries. (Note, the 2008 and 2009 set contain some state variations of the same news content and in 2009, many stories connected the Apology to the Stolen Generations to the apology to the ‘Forgotten Australians’)
 - 2008: 51
 - 2009: 23

- 2010: 6
 - 2011: 0
 - 2012: 3
 - 2013: 2
- ii. *Newspaper reports/verbatim expressions.* I reviewed each newspaper report from 2008 and extracted those that contained verbatim expressions – 373 reports (13-14 Feb 2008)
- iii. *Digital Video:*
- Reconciliation Australia: The Apology to the Stolen Generations documentary (2008)
 - State Library of Queensland: 7 interviews (2008); 18 interviews (2009)
 - Healing Foundation: 3 compiled stories (2013)
 - Parliament TV, ABC TV: The Apology (2008)
- iv. *Speeches.* Transcripts of speeches in response or mentioning the Apology: for example, Tom Calma (2008 – multiple, 2009), Larissa Behrendt (2008), Jackie Huggins (2009), Kevin Rudd (2011, 2012), Florence Onus (2012), Tim Costello (2008), Ray Martin (2010), Paul Keating (2011).

Selected narrative materials for study

As demonstrated above, both before and after the Apology, a variety of narrative forms described people's expectations – and accounted for their experiences – of the Apology. In some of these narrative materials, stories also feature as political strategies for their narrators in achieving further response after the Apology – a key discussion throughout the opening analysis that follows this chapter. As a result of the audits of the narrative field around the Apology, two types of narrative materials were chosen: existing digital video responses and elicited semi-structured interviews. These complementary materials provide access to the study of (a) the practice of mediatisation of Apology response narratives and their political purposes and effects and (b) reflective engagement with the Apology and its repercussions in a collaborative and naturalistic interview environment with people politically engaged with the Apology. The analysis of the digital videos informs the focus of the interviews, and each interview then informs the subsequent ones.

The videos (existing) and interview material (elicited) are full of stories that work to interrogate and meaningfully integrate the Apology experience. As mediated responses, the videos reflect a contemporary movement towards online interactions and

electronically enhanced education. The videos are currently the biggest collection of their kind in Australia and represent an historical response to Apology. The video form (digital or ‘new’ media) enables both the archiving and circulation of narratives that were traditionally available in other forms (spoken word, texts), providing a partial simulation of a real-time personal encounter. For myself, I have also had personal encounters with the interview participants – my interpretation of their narratives has a background in my experience of the real-time interview and surrounding discussions, voice recordings, observational notes and transcribed interview text.

The social world can not be analysed without its technological tools or sites of media discourse (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson 1992, Flew 2005), and the Apology will be better understood by taking some of the mediatised forms of responses into account, however, this study’s narrative analysis is largely text-based and focuses on story rather than technology. Across structures and modes of address (Butler 2004:128-132), the political, relational nature of responsive storytelling is amply observed.

1. Digital video ‘Responses to the Apology’

As discussed, the two sets of digital videos produced by the State Library of Queensland projects contained a number of poignant and emotive responses from Indigenous and other Australians, including Stolen Generations elders. The projects produced personal experience narratives, direct to camera in some cases, edited from what appeared to be a semi-structured life-history style interview situations (2009) and supplementing these reflective personal responses with still images (2008, 2009). The twenty-five digital stories are approximately two to four minutes each, and are in full colour. These stories are accessible online (transcripts available) and can be used for research purposes under a ‘creative commons’ licence but also under the terms of the QUT ethics committee approval for the 2008 project. The videos are an example of the wide-ranging and diverse media culture at the time of the Apology. More importantly, they are also rare examples of people actually talking about their lives in connection with the Apology.

These SLQ videos contrast with the Stolen Generation Testimonies Foundation videos, however, and with other Stolen Generations video story projects – such as Connecting Home (Frankland 2010); LinkUp Victoria (Thompson 2012) – which are naturalistic, respondent-centred productions. A different kind of production setting is evident in the SLQ projects, as the live production context positions the camera operator/interviewer to

the sides and often above the respondent. While this may not have been intended, the effect is an impression of asymmetrical power relations and control of the interview environment by the producers. Indeed the producers have edited out the interviewer's questions or prompts and, as audience, we can only imagine the producer's presence. Other marks of control are evident in the editing and inclusion of photographs.

Five of the seven 2008 videos were produced in the Brisbane-based library from a collaborative group workshop. Then Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, and Governor General, Quentin Bryce were specifically and separately interviewed and recorded. The remainder of the 2008 videos consist of a voice-over of the respondents reading a prepared response, along with still portraits, with the exception of Nadine McDonald Dowd who provided video footage from her personal attendance of Rudd's Apology event. This valuable hand-held camera footage of the Apology event is rare in the public records. The 2008 set also included still portraits of the respondents with a voice-over (the respondent) reading a prepared response. In Sam Wagan Watson's 2008 video response, for example, images of him handwriting his response were included.

The 2009 set were produced at regional locations in Australia: Mt Isa, Cairns, Hope Vale and Cooktown. Mt Isa stories were recorded at MOB FM, the local Indigenous radio station. The interviews from which the videos were edited focused on the Apology, feelings on the day, previous Government legislation and the current status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. These topics are present across the whole Response to Apology collection.

The 2009 interviews with Robyrta Felton, Patricia Lees, Valerie Craigie, Soraya Johnston, Lila Pigliafiori-Baker, Jasmin Minniecon and Barry Lea, were conducted by Gavin Bannerman, then Outreach Librarian at SLQ, whom I also interviewed as part of my study. The curated interviews are edited with cuts away to photographs and momentary black screens punctuating the audio-visual recording of the respondents. The interviewer's presence (image, voice, questions) is edited out but each respondent's line of sight makes his/her presence known as behind or beside the camera. In some cases, the respondent appears to be addressing his/her response to others in the room or to the camera operator.

The photographs that appear in the SLQ collection (edited into the recording as still footage, or interspersed with the image of the speaker at certain points of the narratives)

are further marks of production. These images were provided by the respondents, produced at the time of recording or sourced from library collections, and show images of community, self-portraits, historical family photos and community settings. The images add further narrative material to the stories told, becoming part of the preserved history. These visual materials have not been used to stimulate or provoke reflective narratives, as they might be in sociological research. Added to the digital recording post-interview, the images are not interpreted or discussed by the respondents and it is left to the audience to assign meaning to them. Some images, such as portraits, show the respondent in other surroundings and identity contexts. Some show the respondents interacting with other members of the community, in the case of the elite participants, with members of Indigenous communities, as if to demonstrate connection. Other images of landscapes and historical scenes also function contextually, to associate a respondent with time and place, though never specifically; that is, these photographs are not titled in connection with the narrative. Effectively in dialogue, the juxtaposition of the small and sometimes domestic environments of the responses with the ceremonial environment of the Apology's delivery, along with the contrasting historical and contemporary images, gives us a sense of the space, time and politics of the Apology dialogue.

Queensland University of Technology academic Helen Klæbe, who designed the 2008 project as a model or pilot for other collections of responses, and described it as undertaking 'participatory public history', outlined one perspective of the commissioning of the sets of responses:

By asking participants to focus on their own experiences of the event, whether experienced 'live' in Canberra or via the television coverage, political responses to the Apology are grounded in the perspectives of the participants; creating a form of public remembrance that is distinct from the 'official' record, and reminding us that the Apology itself, while enacted at the centre of settler power, was actually the product of and a response to a rich and detailed tapestry of the stories of individuals, families and communities who had been affected by past Government policies, and whose stories had come to light over the past decades. Because they are being permanently collected and published by Queensland's institution of public memory, they are not only comments on an event in public history, they are themselves as of this moment, explicitly part of the official historical record. They are a permanent reminder that the conversation is far from over, and a permanent record of the vocal insistence by several of the participants that the Apology represents not only an opportunity for listening but also the need for meaningful action. (2009:9)

The project itself, however, was not extended beyond the 2009 activities. This is most likely reflective of a limited funding environment but could also be taken as reflective of the value of the responses to the state. As Klaebe also related, digital storytelling is designed to amplify ordinary people's voices (2009:3) and these stories were:

multiply mediated – through the digital storytelling form itself, through the collaborative circumstances of production, and through the embedding of the project within discourses of the state via the partnership with the State Library of Queensland. However, we suggest that this does not necessarily result in these personal reactions becoming sanitised – indeed, the anger, hurt, and differing perspectives including pointed critiques of the Apology's limitations are evident in these stories. (2009:5)

As for other benefits to the participants, Klaebe claims that, 'while their generous contribution of time and personal stories benefits the public good more than it benefits the participants individually, some of the participants also report personal benefits' (2009:7). One participant corresponded with the SLQ project manager to relate that telling her story had given her confidence in a job interview.

Table 1: SLQ video participants

The following summaries are drawn from the SLQ website and information provided by the participants in their video responses. Videos were first accessed online during 2-11 March 2012 and repeatedly at various dates afterwards. Extended descriptions, transcripts and links to the online videos are provided at Appendix 2.

Name <i>date and place of video recording</i>	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology <i>as described in the video response</i>
Jeremy Robertson 2008 Brisbane	M	Youth	Learnt about Stolen Generations experiences at time of Apology (Aboriginal)
Tiga Bayles 2008 Brisbane	M	Middle	Attended Apology event, grandfather stolen (Aboriginal)
Natalie Alberts 2008 Brisbane	F	Middle	Organised community event to witness Apology, family affected by removal policies (Aboriginal)

Name <i>date and place of video recording</i>	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology <i>as described in the video response</i>
Sam Wagan Watson 2008 Brisbane	M	Middle	Slept through the Apology (due to shift-work), describes family as intact (exemption from protection act received), writer (Aboriginal)
Nadine McDonald Dowd 2008 Brisbane	F	Middle	Attended Apology event with mother who was invited as Stolen Generation member (Aboriginal)
Anna Bligh 2008 Brisbane	F	Middle	Premier Qld, witnessed Apology with Qld Parliament event
Quentin Bryce 2008 Brisbane	F	Senior	Governor General Qld, day of Apology was a quiet day
Patricia Lees 2009 Mt Isa	F	Middle	Invited but did not attend Apology event, watched on TV (Aboriginal)
Robyrta Felton 2009 Mt Isa	F	Senior	Saw video of Rudd apologising, grew up on mission, family impacted by protection policies (Aboriginal)
Barry Lea 2009 Mt Isa	M	Middle	Community event at MOB FM, some family members impacted by removal policies (Aboriginal)
Jasmin Minniecon 2009 Mt Isa	F	Middle	Same family as Tiga Bayles and Sam Wagan Watson jnr, great grandfather removed and placed as station hand, doesn't describe witnessing Apology (Aboriginal)

Name <i>date and place of video recording</i>	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology <i>as described in the video response</i>
Lila Pigliafiori-Baker 2009 Mt Isa	F	Middle	Watched Apology, Mother and family affected by protection act (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
Valerie Craigie 2009 Mt Isa	F	Middle	Community event at MOB FM, grandparents and aunt impacted by protection act (Aboriginal)
Soraya Johnston 2009 Mt Isa	F	Youth	Valerie Craigie's daughter, school would not allow students to watch or listen to Apology (Aboriginal)
Angeline Stevens 2009 Cairns	F	Senior	Father had exemption card, grew up afraid of removal, other family impacted, watched at home (Aboriginal)
Des Bowen 2009 Cairns	M	Senior	Watched Apology on TV (in hospital), grandparents removed to missions (Aboriginal)
Dora Gibson 2009 Hope Vale	F	Senior	Watched Apology at work (school), family impacted by removal policies (Aboriginal)
Estelle Bowen 2009 Hope Vale	F	Senior	Father stolen, doesn't describe witnessing Apology (Aboriginal)
Frankie Deemal 2009 Hope Vale	M	Senior	Organised community event to witness Apology, family affected (Aboriginal)

Name <i>date and place of video recording</i>	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology <i>as described in the video response</i>
Herman Bambie 2009 Hope Vale	M	Senior	Mother taken away, he grew up on mission and worked unwaged for the church, doesn't describe witnessing Apology (Aboriginal)
John Wenitong 2009 Cooktown	M	Middle	Had forgotten Apology was happening but received calls and emails from colleagues, his mother's sisters were removed but family got them back (Aboriginal)
Mark Wenitong 2009 Cooktown	M	Middle	Organised community breakfast at community clinic on day of Apology, mentions mother as if she was impacted by removal policies (Aboriginal)
Peter Scott 2009 Cooktown	M	Middle	Mayor of Cooktown, re Apology comments there was 'nothing special happening' that day
Terry O'Shane 2009 Cairns	M	Middle	Extended family separated by protection laws, doesn't describe witnessing Apology (Aboriginal)
Val Schier 2009 Cairns	F	Middle	Mayor of Cairns Regional Council, attended Aboriginal community event to witness Apology

If I compare and contrast these SLQ videos with the Stolen Generation Testimonies Foundation videos, which are much more naturalistic and respondent-centred productions, as with other Stolen Generations-led video story projects (Connecting Home; LinkUp Victoria), a paternalistic attitude is evident in the SLQ projects. That is, while the digital stories are valuable records of responses to the Apology, their eventual delivery (and the vision of the research team) is somewhat compromised by their production. In another paper, Klæbe and fellow authors Jean Burgess and Kelly McWilliam, discuss the institutional mediatisation of public memory (2010) reflecting on how state institutions conceive of the social value of memory resources as they mediatise

their collections and attempt to engage the public. In the SLQ projects, it sometimes appears that the institution privileges still images over naturalistic storytelling (2009 series) and the differing production treatment of the elites (2008 series) is a further example of preferential treatment. The politics of approaches to curation and institutional mediatisation of Apology narratives will be discussed further in the analysis chapters.

Six of the twenty-five digital videos were selected for in-depth analysis and report, and were identified according to theoretical sampling principles (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:201-215). These principles allow for the selection of a manageable set of data that is relevant to the research inquiry and that represents the variation and dimensions of the event or happening under study. Each video was considered for its ability to progress the development of interpretive concepts and build theory, the respondent's engagement with the Apology and its repercussions, the presentation of different perspectives, and differences in production environments. Selection also reflected the gender balance and age range of the original twenty-five project participants (sometimes age could only be assessed by appearance and content but I attempted to include a range of ages, from the most junior in appearance to some of the most senior in appearance). Once I had identified six cases, the overall analysis was then inclusive of my awareness of the general applicability of the interpretive concepts and categories to the whole set of twenty-five digital stories.

2. Elicited narratives on the Apology and its repercussions

As noted, I also sought out accounts of people linked with the political action associated with the Apology to deepen my research into Apology, its value and effects. As with my selection of existing narratives, recruitment of interviewees followed a purposive logic where I aimed to collect information-rich narrative material from a diverse group of people politically active around the Stolen Generations and therefore implicated in the Apology dialogue. I made a list of possible interviewees who had commented in public forums about a national apology or about making amends for historical injustice in the years following the publication of the Bringing Them Home report. This list of respondents was then assessed in light of Nobles' membership theory of apology, where the political actors of apology shape and drive the apologetic discourse. The list was therefore enlarged and generalised to include two different groups of people: 1) Indigenous activists and 2) people working in areas of Indigenous- focused policy or

program delivery. Noble's political actors are those who call for or demand an apology: they can be the victims of injustice but often act in the interests of the victim group. My groups also include those who would be well placed to observe whether or not the Apology was of value and whether associated social justice objectives were furthered by the act of apology. This process generated a starting list of 18 people from most States and Territories of Australia and others were added to the list as the project progressed. For example, those on the initial list were working in a small number of fields (academia, politics, law), so I then considered organisations to approach that would add to these fields (i.e., cultural history, health, the arts, Stolen Generations services). I also decided that, despite the small size of the group I wanted to interview, a mix of men and women and a mix of generations, if possible, would also be important to generating theoretical perspectives on Apology narrative, because I wanted to avoid the bias of a men-only or a young person-only analysis. That said, the policies that created the Stolen Generations ended in the 1970s, so those with personal life experience of these policies (theoretically, even if not effectively, the Apology's primary target audience) would most likely be 45-50 years old or older. In addition, I determined that I should seek out Indigenous activists and not simply political actors. I also focussed on recruiting people willing to comment on (a) their own responses to the Apology, and (b) their observations of the political effects of the Apology among those around them based on their position as an insider of their own community/social collective.

The number of interviewees was limited to a maximum of 12. This number was chosen to allow for breadth and depth of analysis and enabled me to strike a balance between interviewing enough people to generate theory on Apology narrative but not so many people that a nuanced and in-depth analysis of Apology narrative would be inhibited. Eventually, I interviewed 13 people. One of these interviews was not recorded on request and restricted to a few pages of notes.

I recruited interviewees on an opportunistic basis. I began with a number of formal approaches to some of the individuals I had identified and engaged in a more organic process of social networking and introduction for others. Other participants or organisations became relevant to the study as the interviews and literature review progressed. In particular, while I made formal approaches to some of the listed people I had identified, I also approached people after an introduction by others or when I approached organisations to help me recruit people for interviews. For example, an

approach to the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service led to me being introduced to two members of the Stolen Generations, both working within other Aboriginal-focused organisations. The person who introduced us was effectively acting as a gatekeeper for this Victorian community and I later interviewed him as well. I was introduced to Tony Birch by a friend who was his colleague at the time and to Jackie Huggins by her cousin who was also a PhD candidate at Monash and who attended a seminar where I spoke about my project in its early stages.

I found that recruitment of informants was not a simple matter and was necessarily organic and informal. Some approaches I made failed, despite repeated attempts. For example I made two separate and direct approaches to the Healing Foundation approximately six months apart followed by phone calls to no avail – they did not say no, but did not say yes either, repeatedly deferring me. Introductions were spoken of but did not eventuate, and sometimes other potential participants were identified when I discussed my project with interested people in my personal circle. As the recruitment progressed, it was clear that it would be particularly difficult to recruit Indigenous activists. Contact details were sparse and outdated. I attempted approaches to the political activist organisation the Aboriginal Embassy via Facebook but had no response. I sought introductions and followed up recommendations. I approached two published/performing poets through the not-for-profit poetry agency that represented them. The agency agreed to forward project information to them for me, but again, I did not receive a reply. I approached another well-known Indigenous author/activist at a conference but she declined to participate. I also approached people at a rural and remote mental health service via an offered introduction, with no response. While these approaches were unsuccessful, other successful approaches continued to build the sample.

From twenty-four approaches, I was able to conduct thirteen interviews, as noted. The participants, therefore, are not representative of political actors in the apology dialogue, but as demonstrated in the discussion of the analysis, they do present different views and experiences that provide varied and rich narrative responses to the research questions. Of the thirteen participants, six are males and seven are females, including seven Aboriginal people, two of whom identify as Stolen Generations members and of the thirteen, nine are older than 50. Each of these participants is briefly described in the following table and further biographical details are available at appendix 3a.

Table 2: Interview participants

Name (how recruited) interview date and place	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology	Role at time of interview
1. Dr Tony Birch (introduced) 19 July 2013 Melbourne	M	56	Participated in History Wars Did not attend apology but later gave ‘informal lecture’ response at UoM with Mammad Aidani. (Aboriginal)	Author; Academic at UoM (historian, creative writing)
2. Mrs Doreen Mellor (approached) 1 August 2013 Canberra	F	65	Project Manager ‘Many Voices’ National Library Australia Curator and educationalist (Aboriginal)	Semi-retired but member of many boards including the Qld Museum (which is how I located and approached her)
3. Prof Danielle (Dany) Celermajer (approached) 7 August 2013 Sydney	F	49	Worked at HREOC during Bringing Them Home Inquiry Has published on apology (philosophy) Attended Canberra grounds with family	Academic (Professor – heads Human Rights Masters program at University of Sydney)

Name (how recruited) interview date and place	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology	Role at time of interview
4. Mr Gavin Bannerman (approached) 5 November 2013 Brisbane	M	31	Project manager (filmed and edited) the SLQ responses (2009)	Acting Manager, Digital Collections, SLQ
5. Dr Jackie Huggins (introduced) 6 November 2013 Brisbane	F	57	Author of Aunty Rita (life history of mother), Commissioner for Qld hearings of the BTH Inquiry (Aboriginal)	Educational and cultural consultant, member of various boards, adjunct Professor UQ and ANU
6. Mr Len Tregonning (approached organisation) 11 February 2014 Melbourne	M	59	Grew up in Aboriginal community, was removed to boarding school as teenager and placed in foster care. Attended Federation Square event (Aboriginal)	Cross Culture Coordinator, Koorie Heritage Trust (educational presentations and Melbourne walking tours for school, community and corporate groups)
7. Prof Anna Haebich (approached) 14 February 2014 Perth	F	63	Participated in History Wars by writing comprehensive and award-winning history of removal policies in WA, co-edited NLA report 'Many Voices' Attended Parliament	Academic - Historian (Professor – Curtin University)

Name (how recruited) interview date and place	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology	Role at time of interview
8. Mr John Baxter (introduced) 10 March 2014 Melbourne	M	53	Removed to group home at 2 years of age Interviewed in 2 video documentaries on Stolen Generations (Aboriginal – Stolen Generation)	Cultural Education Consultant Board member, First Peoples Disability Network Australia
9. Mrs Bev Murray (introduced/referred) 20 March 2014 Melbourne	F	50s	Watched apology on TV with mother Grew up in family of 8 children – aware of separation of other families Worked at Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (Aboriginal)	Program Manager, LinkUp (SG service, part of VACCA)
10. Mrs EvaJo Edwards (introduced) 27 March 2014 Melbourne	F	50	Invited to Canberra as Stolen Generation member Removed to institution at 5 years old (Aboriginal – Stolen Generation)	Case worker and Community partnerships at Connecting Home (Stolen Generations service) Provides cultural awareness education to groups, for example new VicPol recruits
11. Anon (invited) 17 March 2015 Skype	F	45	No strong recollection but worked in Child Protection in remote Aboriginal communities following Apology	Counselling/Education

Name (how recruited) interview date and place	Sex	Age	Engagement with Apology	Role at time of interview
12. Anon (introduced) Not recorded on request 20 March 2015 Melbourne	M	60s	Televised in-house Aboriginal Affairs	Aboriginal Affairs
13. Mr Alister McKeich (invited) 1 April 2015 Melbourne	M	36	Overseas at time Worked with Vic & Central Desert Aboriginal communities Politically engaged/ educator re Stolen Generations	Legal Officer assisting clients to appear at Royal Commission of Inquiry into institutional responses to sexual abuse Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

The group of interviewees includes people associated with Indigenous-specific policy and program implementation rather than outright political activism, though policy development and public education provision could be construed as a form of activism or at least, as being informed by the politics of Apology. Because the interview participants were employed in organisations delivering policy or programs, including education, and/or associated with Nobles' political actor groups, they were also likely to have a background that included a high level of education, and to be living in urban locations. The location of the participants was also partly influenced by my urban location (Melbourne) and the limited amount of funding available for interstate travel. I did, however, travel to Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane and undertook two interviews via Skype – with a participant located on the West Coast/Perth and with another located in Queensland. The quality of the sound recording was poor in comparison with those recorded face-to-face, but for the purposes of the research study, the additional review and checking required in this case was justified. Balance was also sought between female and male participants and within fields of work or different policy and program areas.

The sample ultimately favoured those who were engaged in work related to the Stolen Generations, education, history or social justice. Given the aims of the research – to elicit narrative responses that would enable an understanding of the value and effects of the Apology and its narratives – the skewing of the sample in the ways I have noted does not undermine what I want to say about Apology narrative. As understanding increased of the narrative interactions that surrounded the Apology, each of the interviewees contributed valuable perspectives and was able to reinforce previous observations made of the narrative strategies and theories at work as politics of apology.

Conducting the interviews

Interviews took place in a quiet, uninterrupted environment that was convenient, accessible and safe for both participant and researcher. Ideally this was an office or meeting room within a public building during daylight hours. Interviews took 1-2 hours and were digitally recorded. The interviews were later transcribed in full by a contract transcription service. The transcription included repetitions and conversational interruptions (in square brackets) but did not record emphases, pauses or other external sounds. Notes were made immediately following the interview of my impressions of the participant's surroundings, and their physical behaviours and expressions. The whole interview was then replayed soon after conducting it, to make further brief notes of points of interest and reflection. When the transcript was received, it was checked against the recording before being supplied to the participant for their review, if they had chosen to do so. As I explain in the ethics section to follow, participants were given the choice of being named in the thesis or remaining anonymous. All but two of the participants chose to be named. Participants were also given choices with regard to their ongoing informed consent and whether or not they wanted to review their transcript before inclusion in the project. Four respondents elected to provide further consent when I included any of their interview material in a document intended for publication, and three additional respondents elected to receive notice of publications from the research project. For those who elected to review their transcript (seven of the ten received copies of their transcripts and only minimal edits were made, if at all), a subsequent follow-up telephone discussion, meeting or email conversation was held to finalise the interview transcript and reaffirm participant consent.

Because the interviews followed an open-ended schedule (appended) and employed a naturalistic style, they enabled thorough consideration of the research questions and provided rich narrative material for analysis. The interview questions were informed by the literature review and the themes evident in the initial survey of narrative materials. As interviews progressed, however, the questions I asked and how I asked them was informed and refined by previous interviews. This iterative research practice enabled me to build theory on Apology narrative and ensure that I explored emerging themes and concepts as thoroughly as possible. In this way, I was actively learning. I was also interested in what we talk about when we talk about apology. That is, the interview was framed as being about the Apology: I reminded the respondent at the very beginning of each interview that we were going to talk about the Apology, and I then asked for biographical and familiar information before turning the conversation to consider the Apology. But respondents also introduced other related topics, stories and issues to the interview.

The interviews were naturalistic, with some friendly conversation prior to the recording and often afterwards. Not only did the interview elicit first person stories of experience, I also asked participants about Apology stories, of hearing them, coming to know of them, sharing them and noticing them. In this sense, my participants and I were engaged in our own practice of curating narratives, of reflecting on and elaborating on the narrative knowing of the value and effects of Apology with attention to the narratives' roles in history and education. I also aimed to be sensitive in the interviews to the meanings of Apology for the interviewees, to allow opportunities in the interview for them to express their perspectives. During the interviews, I was attentive, encouraging talk and I frequently reflected statements back to check understanding. My paraphrasing was only rarely taken as a challenge, and if it was, I would re-engage with a more open approach. Close attention and the friendly preamble and opening of interviews were conducive to relaxed conversation.

As each interview progressed, the participants became more open and so, sometimes, I asked an earlier question again or re-phrased it in order to encourage elaboration. A number of participants made in-group jokes and references, used colloquial or unfamiliar terms, and assumed shared references. Indeed, we did have many shared references but a couple of times the interviewee and I both struggled to name a public figure. This kind of talk is part of the naturalistic interview environment and I

indicated understanding frequently, sometimes stopping to double-check that I did understand the reference. Other ways I encouraged respondents to talk included using phrases such as ‘tell me...’, ‘I wonder if...’ and ‘what happened then?’. During the interview I also mirrored their body language, but maintained an open posture, with eye contact reflective of their own, and I made lots of ‘yes’ noises. Though these ‘yep’s’ and ‘yeah’s’ were recorded in the transcripts, I have edited them out in most of the quotes for ease of reading.

I made a conscious effort to end each interview in a positive manner by using the shared humour that had developed in the interaction or by shifting attention to a different, lighter matter. It was later important to listen to the audio again to note laughter, facial expressions and other non-verbal features of the interaction, especially where the meaning did not translate well to the transcript form.

During and at the close of interviews, some of the respondents offered gifts and loans of informative materials and invitations to attend cultural events. I received three DVDs about the experiences of Stolen Generation members (Connecting Home, LinkUp) and a book of Apology responses (LinkUp 2013). I was also loaned a rare copy of the out-of-print ‘Many Voices’ (NLA), a book about the history of the Koorie Heritage Trust, and a Stolen Generations ‘kit’ to assist with accessing public records. I accepted an offer to attend a walking history tour of Indigenous Melbourne (Koorie Heritage Trust 2014) and the Sorry Day opening of an art exhibition with artworks and talks by Stolen Generation members (LinkUp 2014). These gifts, invitations and loans could be taken as an extension of the participants’ education role (as in, their participation was motivated by an opportunity to provide education), the participants’ positive regard for the project, or professional generosity, and as such these were accepted gratefully and with appreciation.

Analysing the found and elicited narrative materials

As discussed, this study employed narrative research because this approach enables explorations of individual and social change in its everyday nuances and contradictions (Squire and Andrews 2008:2). A narrative approach enables us to consider sense-making and experience in social contexts as a study of ‘everyday narrative activity that unfolds within situated interaction’ (Gubrium & Holstein 2009:24). With this approach, the study engaged with both narratives and narrative practices – their purposes, their effects,

contexts and politics – as it considered the meaning and value of social interactions around the Apology.

The analysis followed Squire's (2007) narrative approach. I undertook a content analysis and then a narrative analysis of the existing and elicited responses to the apology. These analyses were then used to assemble theoretical perspectives on the value and effects of apology as established by those politically engaged by the Apology and its repercussions. The analysis of each set of narratives was complementary and intertwined. The digital stories were examined prior to, and then at the same time as the interviews were undertaken (over a 12 month period). Some individual interview analysis reports were drafted as case studies. The draft analysis report of the digital stories was finalised first, then the draft analysis report of the interviews was finalised, with all of the interview case study drafts developed in between.

Digital stories

Six digital stories from the SLQ 'Response to the Apology' collection of twenty-five stories were selected for in-depth analysis. All twenty-five were closely viewed at least twice and then again, in conjunction with downloaded transcripts, with any corrections noted. The Healing Foundation videos were also reviewed. I produced transcripts of the Healing Foundation videos and provided these to the Healing Foundation as a courtesy. The videos were viewed at the YouTube online platform (with the views recorded at that time appended) and the transcripts were downloaded from the SLQ website. Biographical details supplied by SLQ were noted. The first viewing of each video was with close attention and notes were made on each subsequent viewing regarding features of the production (images, live or still, physical environment, expressions, sounds/voices), narrative content, and narrative themes and affects. Transcripts were adjusted if necessary, and supplemented with descriptions of the images, production settings and physical presentation of the speakers.

As themes or types of stories were evidenced, these were noted (highlighted on the transcripts) and described in the analysis report. Interpretive categories identified after reviewing the collection were: self (positioning); family/separation; history; effects (of the Apology, including affects); documents/records; Apology event experiences and

evaluations. These categories related closely to the content of the videos. Another set of interpretive concepts, developed when the cases were comparatively analysed, provided the framework of the narrative analysis. These concepts focused on the strategic and political functions of the stories for the narrators and their actual or perceived/constructed audiences, the politics of the production environments, narrative knowledge creation, affect and the positioning of narrators and their audiences. The interpretive categories and concepts are detailed further in the analysis chapters.

Each of the selected six video stories (text and images) was analysed closely as a case study (content analysis), with an emerging set of themes used to structure the discussion of this analysis and enable comparison: presentation, identity, community, and perspective. In a further narrative analysis, the case studies were compared and discussed in terms of the interpretive concepts mentioned above. As drafts of the analysis report were discussed with the researcher's supervisors, the analysis was also collaboratively designed. Important elements of the first drafts were identified and expanded upon in subsequent drafts, in an iterative process across the cases. The presentation of the transcript and production features in the report text was adjusted for clarity. Thus the analysis practice resulted in the development of a set of interpretive categories, themes and concepts, and began to identify some theoretical perspectives of the value and effect of the Apology. These are the focus of discussion in the analysis chapters (illustrated with extracts from the video transcripts) and, in addition, the theoretical perspectives and concepts informed the analysis and conduct of the interviews.

The URL for each video referenced is available in Appendix 2a. The reader is encouraged to view some of the videos online.

Narrative analysis of the interviews

As discussed, the interview practice also involved note taking and observation. In the analysis, these notes and observations are included with the transcript and other public autobiographical information available about the participant. The analysis was, however, largely based on the transcript with occasional reference to the audio recording.

For each interview, an analysis report (case notes) was drafted. Each report included autobiographical information about the respondent, my observations of the interview experience and surroundings, and examples (extracts) and notes relating to a developing

set of categories. This analysis was done by hand using printed transcripts and sometimes revisiting the interview recordings (taking into account differences between information provided ‘in voice’ and ‘on paper’). Stories and accounts were analysed as representations and evaluations of a sequence of events and/or experiences, theorising these events and experiences in the telling – as Christine Black writes, ‘theory is a story that elucidates a people’s sense of self’ (2011:350). From these stories, some categories were developed and were then updated or modified or abandoned as further interviews were analysed. For example, a category developed for one interview might not be relevant for another interview which might involve adjusting the category dimensions or developing propositions for the presence or absence of the category’s properties.

The analysis first involved a systematic process of locating biographical information and recording it discursively, quoting from the transcript where pertinent. I then identified and extracted the respondent’s account of the Apology event and other extracts from the interview as examples of the interview themes and discrete stories. I noted interview themes, emotions (particular emotions, whether implicit, explicit or discussed), characterisations (organising schemas), apologetic remembrance, political effects and value/meaning statements and stories. General notes were also made about narrative strategy (purpose of telling), form and presentation (or performance) throughout the interview, including the anticipated and possible shape of audiences outside the interview. A synopsis of each interview case was written.

Interpretive concepts

Though many aspects of responsive narrating are discussed in this thesis, some concepts are key to reflexive engagement with narratives and are central to the discussion in following chapters. These interpretive concepts include: storied accounts, narrative strategies, narrative ethics, emotion and context.

Storied accounts

In both the videos and interviews, narrators used stories to depict events and illustrate meaning. I describe these as storied accounts because they document past events, imagined futures and subjective experience in story form. I observed that themes and types of stories recurred across videos and interviews, particularly in response to interview

questions. For example, stories about others' experiences were often used to illustrate or discuss injustice and racism.

In order to explain what I mean by storied accounts, I introduce two examples here. In the following extract, a response to my observation that the concept of personal healing seemed more prevalent in the current Aboriginal injustice discourse than social reconciliation, Anna Haebich (interviewed 2014) related a story of her husband's work to reflect on the impact of the Bringing them Home inquiry. This storied way of responding to my questions highlights how people who participated in my interviews and seen in the videos employed narrative practices to engage with Apology politics. In the example, Anna Haebich explains the benefits of a practical healing framework but also explains how a resistance to 'going back over everything' is reflected in Aboriginal people's disengagement with the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse. In this way, Anna Haebich tells a story to explain politics but also demonstrates the political utility of stories about experiences of suffering and their relationship with healing:

AH: Healing is coming up so much, so much, and I'm in the centre of the storm with it because my husband Darryl's doing a lot of work with red dust healing. I don't know if you've heard of that. It's an Aboriginal framework that's come from Aboriginal men over east, and one of them who comes up here a lot is Tom Powell. And Darryl's a trainer as well, and they're doing a lot of work in WA, and it's been incredibly effective. And it's given people frameworks for looking at their lives and strategies, and little, little reminder things for when something comes up and you can use it for looking at your family tree and background. Things like that. So it's a group thing. It can be done in a group or on your own but it's not like a whole lot of psyche counselling stuff. You don't have to go back over everything. And, you know, I think Aboriginal people aren't so keen about going over everything after all the testimony to the inquiry. When the Royal Commission into sexual abuse ... I think it's just been in Kununurra and I don't think any Aboriginal people turned up for it.

KM: Do you think that's because they've already been before the inquiry into the removal policies, the Stolen Generation?

AH: I think sort of ... yeah. But I it's just not on their radars. But when the Bringing Them Home inquiry came, they did so much to involve and work with people. They did a lot of work, and the community responded. For example, I was in Hall's Creek when it went there, and that was absolutely fabulous. Hall's Creek's as big as nothing and they had the racecourses all set up and they had everything set up beautifully. They had killa inna woollock cooking at lunchtime and it was such a well-done hearing. And they had all the old people coming in and in new cowboy outfits, and the guys and their families translating for them. It was very moving, a very moving day. And so, total involvement there and Broome as well. Just a totally different perception of an inquiry. And I think, maybe it's

more, you see so much about Nyungar Aboriginal people now having sort of got on with the adoptions. There's adopted Aboriginal people, of course, like Louis Johnson. But I don't know. I just feel like people think maybe it's not about, it's not about those people. (Anna Haebich, interview 2014)

Of note here is the way in which Anna Haebich's stories are often followed or prefaced by an explanation of their significance and meaning, a method of story-telling which was common in the interviews. The self-conscious way in which these stories were staged and told is another way in which the respondents exercise the political value of story-telling.

Keeping with the theme of healing, another example of a storied account comes from the interview with Doreen Mellor (2013). In the interview, I needed to check whether she was giving me an analogy based on a real experience (which I awkwardly called 'the real time'). She goes on to provide a hypothetical story to reassure me of the connection between her story as an instance where self-induced healing may have been required, and the point she is making:

DM: I think that that process was begun in the joy that people felt. In the relief that people felt. That they were recognised. That their suffering, that their pain, their trauma, that the terrible things that were done to them externally by others that had nothing to do with who they were or their own actions, those terrible things were recognised. But it doesn't matter, you know, if you, ... I've slipped on the ice outside. I've hurt myself. It could have been hugely worse. I could have cracked my head open. I could have broken a leg, an arm. You know, I could have gone down those big stairs. I very nearly did but I didn't, luckily.

KM: Are you talking about the real time? You're talking, I thought you were giving me an analogy.

DM: No. No. I'm talking now.

KM: You actually have slipped?

DM: Well I have slipped, yes. But, anybody, if you do anything, if you have a car crash, you have to heal and you have to come to terms with whatever happened. If you did break a lot of bones and have to go through a long process of sequential surgery, for instance, you have to gather the strength. It's no use blaming the steps. You have to gather the strength within yourself to actually deal with that, to come to terms with any restrictions that that may then place on you and to live with them, and live within them. So I guess it is an analogy 'cause I think, emotionally, that's how we have to look at life if things happen to us. And the older you get, the more you realise things happen that are painful in life and the worst things are when that pain is caused by another person, in a purposeful way. So, if somebody strikes you or assaults you, or kills your father, or whatever, if somebody does that purposefully, that is the hardest thing to overcome. And that is what Aboriginal people are overcoming. But it has to be overcome by us. It cannot be overcome by others.

Doreen Mellor's reference to slipping on ice is ambiguously a possible reference to a past event but also an imaginative kind of 'what if' story used to make the point that traumas of all kinds need to be healed. Doreen also appears to modify her story to make the additional point that deliberate, "purposeful" harm is not equivalent to an accident but that also, the enormity of such trauma also calls forth resilience as a step towards healing.

Both Anna's and Doreen's storied accounts also give reflections on the politics of injustice a material, visceral quality. For example, Doreen shifts her storied account from slipping to a hypothetical, but more calamitous car crash, giving her account of apology politics and healing a sense of the endangerment and mending of bodies. This way of accounting for injustice had the effect also of drawing attention to healing as necessarily embodied and happening from within.

Storied accounts can also work with an allusion to a story, as in the allusion to Louis Johnson's story made by Anna Haebich in the above extract. Storied accounts can also make allusions to stories themselves as 'little scenarios' that can do things like bring out feelings, an observation made by Dora Gibson in her SLQ video response (2009, accessed 2012).

I think you have to start small, you have to begin by creating little scenarios about being sorry, you know, and bringing out the feelings.

As the above extracts demonstrate, by placing an interpretive focus on the storying of the account, my research attends to what stories and storytellers can achieve politically.

Narrative strategies

Frank writes that we 'think with stories' and that this depends on 'telling certain stories over and over, hearing different nuances of potential meaning as the story is told in different circumstances and at different ages of our lives' (1995:24). The stories people tell about and in response to the 2008 Apology assist us with understanding its political action. Through repetition and audience participation or collaboration, narratives become culturally contextualised expressions of meaning, emotions and aesthetics, they are both a form of knowledge and a way of knowing about experience (Squire, Andrews et al 2008:16). Narratives function as grounded theory, they can sustain knowledge by keeping memories, meanings and possibilities of experience in a form that is social and

repeatable; they provide collective structures of meaning from which we continually and repetitively make sense of experience. In traditional Aboriginal cultures, narratives are law (Black 2011a, 2011b).

A focus on narrative strategies throughout the thesis enhances awareness of what stories do. Squire drew attention to the act of performing and being storied by narratives, to considerations of which narrative genres were represented, and to the links between personal stories and cultural narratives (2007). Frank (1995) also finds genres an important indicator of the role and function of narrative and its connection to everyday experience. Squire's 2007 narrative study, however, guided the analysis, enabling me to consider how the narratives functioned strategically for the narrators; for example the mobilisation of story forms to memorialise or testify, and as theories of the Apology's effectiveness.

By looking at responsive narratives as populated with stories to express or develop theories of the meaning and value of Apology, I examine how stories work within responses as narrative strategies. These cumulative narrative strategies are the focus of discussion in the following chapter. Political strategies that can be demonstrated in these narratives include resistance, subject positioning and re-positioning, identity- work, and subversion. The most important strategy, however, is the way in which stories progress socialisation because they further connection and belonging. In this way, I claim that stories have a socialising function – they establish and sustain social cohesion around the sharing of the values and meanings associated with the Apology and therefore reinforce group relationships and interactions.

Responses, and responses to these responses, provide points of connection or differentiation with the value and meaning of the Apology – they shape and contextualise the Apology, bringing experiences of apology to the fore. For example, some of my analysis follows Lind's apologetic remembrance spectrum, a critical approach for observing how apology is associated with long-term socio-political reconciliation objectives and processes. I consider how types of stories could be understood as expressions of trust or distrust of the Apology. Reflective questioning during the work up of cases was around: In the context of responding to apology, how are these narratives evaluative, expressive, judgmental, and reflective of apology? And what does narrative practice mean for political participation?

Narrative ethics

Considerations of how the immediate and distant audience is addressed, anticipated or constructed through the telling, and the affective and ethical aspects of narrating are seen as what Frank describes as ‘the moral genius of storytelling ... each teller and listener enters the space of the story for the other’ (1995:18). While Bruner highlights the communicative process of what he calls ‘telling’ (or ‘hermeneutical composability’) (1991:8), Judith Butler highlights the ethical process of narrating the self for another (2005). Butler describes the ethical process of narrating as a ‘demand’ central to a subject formation of self as the basis for ethical agency and responsibility (2005:135). She carefully relates the generosity of accepting an invariable opacity in another’s account of self (2005:42) and this too has been an important consideration in my analysis approach.

Butler’s (2005) and Frank’s (1995:18,163) emphasis on the listener’s role in narrative ethics is taken up in the analysis along with other aspects of listening well to narratives. Understanding why some narratives are hard to hear, place moral demands on their audience, or might not be heard at all, helps with observing narrative ethics and accepting the incoherence and opacity in some stories and, in turn, with understanding how such aspects play out in narrative politics with subsequent impacts on national memberships.

I reflect on the ways in which Apology/Stolen Generation politics represent an ‘ethical programme’ of the kind that Squire describes when she discusses the narrative ethics of telling stories about HIV and the psychological tone of the discourses (2007:168-175). If understood as an ethical programme, the sets of narratives allow the observation of strategic narrative practices involving the ethics of positioning and subjecthood, and the agential nature of speaking out (about living with HIV or about traumatic experience). Further elements of an ethical programme are explored in the analysis chapters.

Emotion

As mentioned, because emotions are evaluative and indicative of perspective, understanding and potential action, my analysis also identified and discussed the political or moral emotions expressed within or represented by the apology narratives. These are a group of emotions that are other-focused, and include anger, guilt, shame, gratitude,

elevation and compassion (Haidt 2003). These emotions may be present as the storyteller's own, as narrative effect, or as audience response. Emotional responses may be implied or anticipated with the telling or presentation of a particular story or curated set of stories. Such responsive and evaluative emotional reactions may be assumed to be universal or to be shared by the teller's community of experience as a kind of common-sense emotional response. Their taken-for-grantedness can be understood as reflective of the process of socialisation towards belonging I have already discussed.

With regard to apology, the presence and play of these emotions provides us with an idea of action that may flow from apology because emotion puts a person into a motivational state. Emotions tell us about reactions and responses that shape group memberships and that influence and inform political reasoning; that is, they are especially related to belonging - how one feels about being a member of a group or if one, in fact, feels like part of a national collective at all. In this thesis, I explore the role of moral (other-focused/responsive) emotions in societal reconciliation and re- construction processes. For example, accepting responsibility for injustice can be implied by expressions of guilt and shame, while angry or compassionate expressions may motivate and predict responsive other-focused action. I speculate that moral emotions impact political relations because their expressions shape understandings of social responses to the agents and events of history and therefore also influence contemporary relationships and the constructions of national memberships and experiences.

Culture and context

In the analysis, I also considered the contexts of how/when/where the story is told; for example, a story can be told about telling a story. This examination of context also addressed and recognised the practice of collaboration and co-construction of interview narratives and the social conditions and environments (cultures) in which stories are performed and are meaningful. Gubrium and Holstein describe how a researcher might look for the context:

While the themes and plot structures of stories ... might be identified and documented, discerning how these relate to particular social contexts requires an understanding of what people do with words to create and structure meaning. ... the same account might be appreciated in one setting or at a particular time, but be disparaged, ignored, or silenced in others. This, we believe, is a valuable partner in the project called 'narrative analysis'. (2009:25)

Along with other considerations of the affective and ethical aspects of narrating, the analysis and discussion develops and opens up understandings of how context matters in the way stories are told and heard.

Ethics approval

Ethics approval to conduct the research study was granted by the Monash University Standing Committee on Ethics in Research involving Humans (SCERH). The project number issued by SCERH was CF13/1042-2013000508, 28th June 2013.

Many of the publicly available materials detailed above were available to the researcher under a 'creative commons' copyright, allowing for their use for private study and research purposes. Under the creative commons copyright, the author and source must be attributed and content used for non-commercial purposes only. This copyright is in place for the SLQ public holdings, for example, and is implied for the content available via YouTube. Other publicly broadcast materials, such as TV news reports, online reports or radio interviews, are available for research purposes under the Copyright Act.

Elicited accounts were made available through informed consent. These accounts are reported as per the participant's choice: if they selected anonymity, any identifying details were to be removed from any reported transcript excerpt. As discussed previously, participants were invited to review their transcripts before inclusion and could also choose from a hierarchy of consent options with regard to the use of their transcript in any publications arising from the research. Copies of the interview consent form and project statement are included as appendices 4a and 4b.

The ethics application and research approach took into account that the foreseeable risk to participants might be more serious than discomfort; the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in research classifies the project as higher-risk under the guidelines of the Monash University HREC. I also referenced the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007), the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' 'Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies' (AIATSIS 2012) and the Monash University Guidelines for Health and Safety. The project and approach was also discussed with the Head of the Monash Indigenous Centre before submission to the ethics committee.

Reflections

Having established the foundations of the work to follow, it remains to reflect on how I came to undertake this study of the Apology. When I developed my PhD proposal following the completion of my research Masters, I was curious about the potential role of social hope in Australia and interested in exploring positive – or better – forms of social participation and inter-group relations. The Apology had by then passed its second anniversary, yet held great potential as a case study for the kind of social and political inquiries I was interested in making at the time. The further I engaged with the politics and philosophy of apology, the more the 2008 Apology resonated as a moment of positive anticipation with great reparative potential. Yet, as I also found in those early days, the depth of hope surrounding the Apology appeared to be no indicator of its ability to effect repair of group relations or to preclude meaningful, practical, impacts of apology-heralded policies related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

My engagement with the research study derived from both my hermeneutical skills and a predisposition to narrative, foregrounded by the interpretive practice undertaken. A feature of this research is that I often privilege first-person experiential/interpretive narratives over other materials, and the narratives of those close to injustice over the narratives of those more removed. This is a democratising technique; an undertaking to value the experiential stories of participants just as much as, if not more than, the theoretical works of academics and to utilise each to scaffold the other. The suitability of this approach for understanding – and demonstrating – how people interact with their culture to make sense of (and socialise) experiences and events in their lives is, however, supported and reinforced by other social researchers such as Squire, Frank, Plummer, and Andrews (as referenced throughout). For this research, I consider their research practices and experiences as ideals. I also recognise that, following Frank, I had the inclination to somehow re-enchant a wearisome world:

Searching for the moral impulse in our own contemporary idioms of authenticity requires imagination and a democratic faith. Hearing the moral impulse in others' stories enables us to become part of their struggle to re-enchant a disenchanted world. Failing to hear this impulse we seem doomed to a pessimism that can only lament what is not. Such pessimism, I believe, articulates all too well with neo-liberalism, which as political economic practice first deforms the personal and then holds up this deformed version of personal life to attest to its core belief that people are only consumers. By affirming the authenticity of the personal, narrative analysis can initiate a significant political intervention. (Frank 2002:18)

Like Frank, I leaned towards enchantment in seeking to understand how political acts like the Apology can contribute to social justice. The iterative research practices required – of exploration, reflection, analysis and purposive engagement with respondents and narrative materials – were intense and overwhelming at times. Social research is personally demanding, swinging as it does between disenchantment and re- enchantment. At the same time, the exposure to so many narratives allowed me to become sensitised to the risk of flat or essentialist interpretations and, importantly, to keep actively learning during the research process, particularly from each interviewee. As the research progressed, insights were applied retrospectively and inductively to earlier interpretations of narratives and theory. I have tried to maintain a sense of this progressive dialogue and practice throughout the thesis as the discussion integrates and contextualises theory from the body of storied materials examined.

The observations I ultimately make with this thesis are confirmation of Tavuchis's own: that apologies involving collectives are complicated. I show that complications are enhanced by the way in which apology is only made meaningful by responsive social interactions. In this regard, I follow Tavuchis, who with his work 'tried to shed light on a dimension of social life that is at once commonplace and familiar, and a potentially important cultural resource for tempering antagonisms and resolving conflicts' (1991:vii). I undertake the work that follows because I believe that if we can understand the complex practice of political apology, we can better envision a political culture of diversity/plurality and explore our collective capacity to rise to the ethical demands associated with responding to others.

CHAPTER 3

The ethics and politics of Apology practice

Introduction

This chapter engages in a sustained consideration of the way in which the ethics and politics of apology practice are manifested as narrative practices. The chapter does this particularly by focusing on the narrative substance of the official/formal Apology and by reflecting on how Apology responses illuminate the way in which narratives are a constituent component of moral economy. This analysis will focus on the extended practice of using stories as political strategies to support or secure justice outcomes for collectives who traditionally are under-resourced in political and material capital. By identifying and discussing the political strategies of the stories central to this research project, I also identify what is seen or considered to be of value in apology culture. Importantly, this chapter begins to explore how and why these stories, which often rely on compassion and empathy, remain unable to seed the justice desired. Though I reference cultural theories that have been used to understand the practices of mediating Holocaust testimony, this chapter ultimately proposes an ethical framework of narrative practice as it applies to the politics of apology.

In the first half of this chapter, I review the idea of narrative production and processes in order to further illustrate the mediated and political dimensions of the Apology. The focus in this first section is on the narratives of the political elite and engages with the narrative aspects of Kevin Rudd's apology, an analysis supported by reference to Brendan Nelson and Tom Calma's 2008 Parliamentary Apology response speeches, and with two historically important speeches in the context of the Apology – John Howard's opening address to the reconciliation convention (1997) and Paul Keating's Redfern speech (1992). This section shows how the Apology, offered under the terms of the political and cultural elite, supports their privileged position rather than moderates inter-group responsibilities. As with the aftermath of the Apology, the second half of the chapter then turns to the responses that are central to the thesis, and focuses on the responses of the politically less- or non-elite. I provide examples of the political work that the Apology-responsive narratives of the SLQ video and research interview responses illuminate and on the impacts of production practices. In the discussion of how to

understand the accounts of injustice and trauma that are central to such responses, I raise ethical issues, considerations of audience engagement, and begin to consider the role of empathy.

As I explained in Chapter 2, the SLQ video responses were chosen for analysis because they exemplified the mediatisation (Klaebe 2010:150-153), institutional and political uses of apology response narrative. In the interviews, I elicited additional responsive narratives in order to add nuance to the initial research observations. The aim is to investigate the political and cultural significance of the presentation, production and organisation of stories about injustice. I do this by examining how responsive narratives transform, question, appropriate and resist the Apology's ethics and politics. While this chapter references the political agency of video respondents, the video producers, and interview participants, I also reflect on the ethical implications of the narrative practice and narrative curation undertaken for this thesis.

Narrative production

The testimonials of the Stolen Generations have been prominent in Indigenous social justice dialogue at least since the 1997 publication of the findings of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. That report, *Bringing Them Home*, opened with two painful and personal testimonials, both reported confidentially, and which featured as examples of why this was described as 'no ordinary report':

Grief and loss are the predominant themes of this report. Tenacity and survival are also acknowledged. It is no ordinary report. Much of its subject matter is so personal and intimate that ordinarily it would not be discussed. These matters have only been discussed with the Inquiry with great difficulty and much personal distress. The suffering and the courage of those who have told their stories inspire sensitivity and respect. (HREOC 1997:3-4)

HREOC included the testimonies in their report in order to both acknowledge and communicate the experiences of witnesses:

We carefully report what we have heard so that the community generally will know the different perspectives on what has occurred. We also sought out independent sources where possible and include them in this report. We have ensured that our findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by the overwhelming weight of the evidence. ... The Inquiry took evidence orally or in

writing from 535 Indigenous people throughout Australia concerning their experiences of the removal policies. In this report we relay as many of those individual stories as possible. (HREOC 1997:17)

In the discussion that follows, the practices behind the presentation of injustice stories are understood as indicative of a production process that has broad implications for understanding the politics of the Apology and responses to it. When analysis highlights the production process, multiple interests informing the collection of responsive narratives can be identified. For example, though the HREOC findings and recommendations were based on those 535 testimonies given before the Commissioners, other similar testimonies were also collected throughout Australia by organisations independent of the inquiry, for reasons including the establishment of an online repository of injustice stories (HREOC 1997:17). This ad-hoc collecting of stories is also apparent with responses to the Apology. With the SLQ video series, understanding the narrative elicitation and production process can help to identify divergent interests such as those of the respondents who participated, the institution responsible for archiving the collection, and the producers who developed the videos for their eventual audiences. The concept of production also allows consideration of whose attention – that is, what audience – is sought, and how this audience is itself produced. Different narrative technologies can be observed at work (such as voice, live footage, still images, and institutional framing) as well as other narrative qualities (metaphor, allusion, simile, address). The political utility and purpose of archived narratives of injustice and apology-response can then be examined in the context of these aggregated qualities and effects.

This chapter demonstrates how an understanding of injustice story production can provide insight into the nature and potency of narrative practices and politics. That is, we can examine the political practice of procuring and disseminating collections of storied testimonials in order to advance social justice alongside the individual's own narrative presentation of personal experiences. In the following discussion, production processes and narrative politics are examined through interpretive engagement with the narrative aspects of Apology-related speeches and responses. This examination of the nature of injustice stories reveals that sincere attention to such stories and to those people whose experiences they describe, as well as to the others who repeat the stories, is central to understanding the narrative ethics and justice outcomes of political apology.

In narrative interactions, sincere attention involves a willingness to respond to the story and is differentiated from other forms of attention to narrative, such as a desire to be

entertained. These motivations are intertwined however, as Susan Sontag observed with regard to engaging with images of suffering. Yet her frank observations assist with the ethical question of narrative engagement separate to the context of initial production:

...images cannot be more than an invitation to pay attention, to reflect, to learn, to examine the rationalizations for mass suffering offered by established powers. Who caused what the picture shows? Who is responsible? Is it excusable? Was it inevitable? Is there some state of affairs which we have accepted up to now that ought to be challenged? All this, with the understanding that moral indignation, like compassion, cannot dictate a course of action (Sontag 2003:117).

The intimate testimonies contained in *Bringing Them Home*, many told in life-story form, exposed an undeniable history of injustice with which many Australians engaged. While the 2008 Parliamentary Apology (a core recommendation of the report) facilitated further mediated exposure, the personal experience stories had been circulating broadly since at least 1997. This chapter considers some of the Apology- responsive narratives in order to examine how organised mediation can be understood as part of the socio-political aspect of the Apology interaction. Focusing on one video in particular, I show that this responsive interaction encapsulates the core politics of the Apology. Further, I propose that while the ability of political apology to promote reparative justice can be facilitated by sincere engagement with apology responses, ethical narrative practices are also important. In this regard, the chapter presents an ethical framework of engagement with the narrative politics of the Apology and invites general consideration of the way in which personal experience stories become utilised as political resources in the context of furthering and/or denying social justice.

In this chapter I also claim that the moral value of political apology is reflective of contemporary morality; that is, Apology's value is bound into contemporary Australian culture. To understand the political value of injustice stories, I also look at what these stories tell us about reparative justice outcomes. In the following discussion, I relate the production of injustice stories with the practice of political apology. Most importantly, within the frame of apology practice, the value of stories and the workings of moral economy are open to view.

Nobles' work showed that political apologies driven by political groups are emblematic of contemporary morality (2008). In this chapter I extend Noble's framework of moral economy to examine the production of injustice stories. I do this in order to propose that

stories, particularly of injustice, comprise the political practice of apology. Recognising too that there is a political and ethical value (or cost) of trauma and violence stories to society, I consider how moral economy works to influence the way such stories are told, heard, when and how often. In problematising such stories, we can engage with troublesome cultural values and representations of trauma in relation to the Apology and begin to challenge some assumptions about the effectiveness of these kinds of stories as political strategies to achieve Aboriginal and Islander justice in Australia and social justice in general.

The Apology

The 2008 Apology was not a singular event: it was surrounded by many other comments and apology-like narratives and responses to Rudd's speech have continued to reverberate in private and public life. Immediately following the Rudd Apology, Brendan Nelson, the leader of the opposition party, provided bipartisan endorsement of the Apology. Both of these Apology speeches were delivered within the House of Representatives where there was an audience consisting of other Parliamentarians and a public gallery, many of whom were Stolen Generations members. Rudd's speech was met with a standing ovation from those present, including the Parliamentarians, who stood and directed their applause and gaze at the public gallery.

Nelson's speech, though declaring support for Rudd's speech, was met with indifference, however, and many in the public gallery turned their backs on him. The negative response to Nelson was most apparent when he echoed Howard's sentiment, saying: 'Our generation does not own these actions, nor should it feel guilt for what was done in many, but certainly not all cases, with the best intentions' (Nelson APH 2008). A later, further negative response arose when it became apparent that Nelson had also quoted – without authorisation or notice – an incomplete and non- contextualised personal statement of Mrs Faye Lyman that he or his staff had obtained from the National Library of Australia's 'Many Voices' project (2002). The aggrieved Lyman, who had to experience Nelson's misappropriation of her story in front of her family and community, was later provided with Nelson's own personal apology for the indignity (Hastie 2009).

The 2008 Apology was not usual parliamentary practice. Within the traditional political framework, other ceremonial events were introduced. The day preceding the Apology had been the first performance of an Aboriginal welcome to country within the Federal

Parliament. Before the speeches, on the day of the Apology, Stolen Generations' elder, Auntie Lorraine Peeters, presented the Parliament with a glass coolamon, to thank them for the Apology on behalf of the Stolen Generations. Following the speeches, Rudd and Nelson then jointly presented the coolamon to the Speaker. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) shook hands with members of the Stolen Generations seated in the visitors' gallery. Later, outside of the House, in the Members Hall, another, formal, response was provided by Tom Calma, then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Calma had been invited to respond to the 'Parliament's apology' by the National Sorry Day Committee and the Stolen Generations Alliance (both organisations had been consulted in advance of the Apology with regard to wording and to the staging of the event). Each of these three speeches was prepared in advance of the apology event (the Apology text was released to media the day preceding) and demonstrate that, even prior to the day of Apology, orchestrated responses had begun, mobilising replies and elaborations. However, as I show in this thesis, such responses have never indicated full acceptance, trust, and therefore closure of (or catharsis through) what the Apology signifies.

Collective or political apologies, however, are typically delivered without the means to accept a response from those to whom, or in whose name, the apology is given. Despite the staged and organised nature of the 2008 Australian Apology event, and the anticipation associated with it, there was no provision for community response – the Apology was staged as a one-way form of communication. The media appeared to assume responsibility for documenting responses on the day. This mediated reception of Apology became a record that enabled some to claim that the Apology was met with acceptance (e.g. Nobles 2014:129; Rudd at Caux 2013). Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, the initial positive reception by those attending is not the final, or eventual response. It is difficult to determine whether and how decisions were made but it is clear that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) was engaged in inviting Stolen Generation members, Indigenous elites and other political actors to attend Parliament; over 100 members of the Stolen Generations received invitations and government assistance to attend Canberra, community hosts

provided accommodation, and there was a formal breakfast reception for invited guests who were each personally greeted and welcomed by Rudd and his wife, Therese Rein.

The Apology speeches, response speeches, and their precedents

Taking a closer look at the narrative substance of the Apology and associated speeches assists with understanding the complex narrative interactions surrounding the 2008 event. At its most basic level, the 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations provided Australian Government acknowledgement of sustained intergenerational injustices perpetrated against Indigenous Australians. Following is the opening – or staging – movement of Rudd’s formal apology, which shows such recognition:

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry. (Rudd, APH, 2008)

Because of the importance of recognition of injustice, the Apology was intrinsically associated with a hopeful Indigenous social justice movement that, in late 20th century Australia, was buoyed by political moments like Prime Minister Keating’s Redfern speech (1992) and the Australian High Court’s Mabo ruling (1992). The social justice movement was also defined and bolstered by antagonistic moments like Howard’s opening address to the 1997 Reconciliation Convention. During this period, amidst formal institutional recognition of injustice, other collective and informal expressions of solidarity included ANTaR’s Sea of Hands (established 1997), Sorry Day (established 1998), the community circulation of Sorry Books in 1998, and the 2000 Reconciliation Bridge Walks. These speeches and political expressions make up the context of the Apology, and thus both Keating’s and Howard’s speeches are relevant to this chapter and will be discussed in what follows.

In 2008, after delivering the formal Apology motion in Parliament, Rudd delivered his own speech (both appended) and narrated the following story of Stolen Generations' elder Nanna Nungala Fejo who was removed from her family at age four.

Some have asked, 'Why apologise?' Let me begin to answer by telling the parliament just a little of one person's story – an elegant, eloquent and wonderful woman in her 80s, full of life, full of funny stories, despite what has happened in her life's journey, a woman who has travelled a long way to be with us today, a member of the Stolen Generation who shared some of her story with me when I called around to see her just a few days ago. Nanna Nungala Fejo, as she prefers to be called, was born in the late 1920s. She remembers her earliest childhood days living with her family and her community in a bush camp just outside Tennant Creek. She remembers the love and the warmth and the kinship of those days long ago, including traditional dancing around the camp fire at night. She loved the dancing. She remembers once getting into strife when, as a four-year-old girl, she insisted on dancing with the male tribal elders rather than just sitting and watching the men, as the girls were supposed to do.

But then, sometime around 1932, when she was about four, she remembers the coming of the welfare men. Her family had feared that day and had dug holes in the creek bank where the children could run and hide. What they had not expected was that the white welfare men did not come alone. They brought a truck, two white men and an Aboriginal stockman on horseback cracking his stockwhip. The kids were found; they ran for their mothers, screaming, but they could not get away. They were herded and piled onto the back of the truck. Tears flowing, her mum tried clinging to the sides of the truck as her children were taken away to the Bungalow in Alice, all in the name of protection.

A few years later, government policy changed. Now the children would be handed over to the missions to be cared for by the churches. But which church would care for them? The kids were simply told to line up in three lines. Nanna Fejo and her sisters stood in the middle line, her older brother and cousin on her left. Those on the left were told that they had become Catholics, those in the middle Methodists and those on the right Church of England. That is how the complex questions of post-reformation theology were resolved in the Australian outback in the 1930s. It was as crude as that. She and her sister were sent to a Methodist mission on Goulburn Island and then Croker Island. Her Catholic brother was sent to work at a cattle station and her cousin to a Catholic mission.

Nanna Fejo's family had been broken up for a second time. She stayed at the mission until after the war, when she was allowed to leave for a prearranged job as a domestic in Darwin. She was 16. Nanna Fejo never saw her mum again. After she left the mission, her brother let her know that her mum had died years before, a broken woman fretting for the children that had literally been ripped away from her. (Rudd, APH, 2008)

Rudd indicated that Nanna Fejo gave him permission to share her story and referenced it as one of many such painful stories that, in conjunction with the testimonies contained in the Inquiry's 1997 report, 'cry out to be heard' (2008). Yet, according to Rudd after

listening to her story, he asked her what ‘she would have him say’, and in contrast to the anguish of crying out to be heard, Nanna Fejo stoically asked that he ‘should say today that all mothers are important’. And she added:

Families – keeping them together is very important. It’s a good thing that you are surrounded by love and that love is passed down the generations. That’s what gives you happiness.

Rudd appears to provide an interpretation of Nanna Fejo’s story that does not marry with her own message. There is a contrast between the emotional tones of anguish and stoicism that Rudd did not acknowledge nor comment on. He instead incorporated Nanna Fejo’s story into his apology narrative as an example of experiences that ‘cry out to be heard’ and appears to utilise her story to draw out an emotional response from his apology-resistant audience. In my interpretation, Rudd attempts to mobilise emotions – such as empathy for Nanna Fejo, and awe for the heroic act of apology – in order to secure acceptance of his own authority. Amid the recognition of injustice that the formal Apology proffered, doubts about, and the limitations of, remorse remain embedded in his narrative.

Perhaps attempting the same authorising effect for an alternative political stance, Nelson’s speech also included a personal account from a Stolen Generations member, though as discussed, his usage of her story was most definitely unauthorised. Nelson incorporated Faye Lyman’s story in his reply speech in the following way:

Faye Lyman’s life is one of the Many Voices oral history at the National Library of Australia. Faye left her father when she was eight. She said this: Personally, I don’t want people to say, ‘I’m sorry Faye’, I just want them to understand. It was very hurtful to leave Dad. Oh, it broke my heart. Dad said to me, ‘It’s hard for Daddy and the authorities won’t let you stay with me in a tent on the river bank. You’re a little girl and you need someone to look after you.’ I remember him telling us that, and I cried. I said ‘No, but Dad, you look after us.’ ... But they kept telling us it wasn’t the right thing.

She went on:

I don’t want people to say sorry. I just want them to understand the hurt, what happened when we were initially separated, and just understand the society, what they have done ... You don’t belong in either world. I can’t explain it. It hurts so much.

There is no compensation fund for this—nor should there be. How can any sum of money replace a life deprived of knowing your family? Separation was then, and remains today, a painful but necessary part of public policy in the protection of children.⁴⁴

Using Faye Lyman's story as a strut to support the narrative that removals were necessary and compensation is unnecessary backfired for Nelson. Nelson's 'good intentions discourse' (Hastie 2009:713) was immediately recognised and his support for the Apology was seen to be hollow. Interview participants from my research who attended various Apology events, including in Canberra, described how the gathered crowds turned their backs on Nelson in a gesture of shaming.

Tom Calma, then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, gave another reply speech in the Members Hall of Parliament House after the formal Apology. He refers to the apology as 'the Parliament's Apology' and in his reply, Calma tells a family story about his great grandmother who was taken from her family and community. The theme of belonging is both key to the story and to the context of his response.

Let me tell you what this apology means to me. For many years, my family has been searching in vain to find information about my great-grandmother, May, who was taken at the turn of the 20th Century.

Recently, Link Up in Darwin located some information in the Archives. In a document titled 'list of half-castes in the NT' dated 2 December 1899, a government official named George Thompson wrote the following about my great-grandmother:

Half caste May is a well grown girl, is living with her mother in the black's camp at Woolwonga, her mother will not part with her, she mixes up a great deal with the Chinamen, she only has a narga on.

My great-grandmother's ordeal was not un-common and nor was the chilling account - 'her mother will not part with her'.

The apology is not about black armbands and guilt. It never was. It is about belonging.

The introductory words of the 1997 Bringing Them Home report remind us of this. It reads:

the past is very much with us today, in the continuing devastation of the lives of Indigenous Australians. That devastation cannot be addressed unless the whole community listens with an open heart and mind to the stories of what has happened in the past and, having listened and understood, commits itself to reconciliation.

⁴⁴ Full speech available at Appendix 1b.

By acknowledging and paying respect, Parliament has now laid the foundations for healing to take place and for a reconciled Australia in which everyone belongs.

For today is not just about the Stolen Generations – it is about every Australian.⁵

Calma reinforces the value of the Apology's acknowledgement of historical injustice but also underscores the need for a sustained social effort to effect a change in national relationships. In claiming the Apology's relevance for 'every Australian', Calma emphasises the potential for the Apology to mend collective relationships and create 'a reconciled Australia to which everyone belongs'. Belonging, in Calma's narrative, is associated with the tearing emotion behind his great-grandmother's separation. Belonging is defined in terms of what it is not. That is, belonging is not being separated. This negative relief style of conveying meaning is extended to the Apology. Calma has been careful to call it 'the Parliament's Apology' rather than the nation's apology yet is also careful about acknowledging that the Apology is about 'every Australian'. I argue, however, that Calma, just as Rudd and Nelson before him, shows a misdirected faith in stories. Instead of an invitation to ongoing apologetic dialogue within and across Australian communities, Calma endorses a political belief in Apology as the foundation story on which social and political change can be built. He does this by seeking the construction of a political narrative that is not in existence – 'a reconciled Australia where everyone belongs'.

In this context, however, the Apology is placed on a pedestal, rather than as a structural or institutional cornerstone of justice. By the end of that day in 2008, the Apology had become both a way to narrate experiences of injustice in order to attain formal recognition and a didactic form of social politics crafted to procure political ends such as authority, esteem, social remorsefulness or political endorsement/acceptance of policy directions. The stories and experiences referenced by Rudd, Nelson and Calma were purposefully curated to support the Apology narrative, yet I claim that together they crafted a closed narrative. It was closed not only to those who might question the Apology's legitimacy but also to those who would respond and negotiate everyday forms of justice to follow.

⁵ See Appendix 1c for full text.

In other words, the formal Apology was a continuation of the flawed political culture underlying the injustices it attempted to address: it operated on the terms of the political and cultural elite in order to support their privileged position. Rudd's Apology reflected assimilation and patronising politics in the way it positioned Nanna Fejo and other Australian Aboriginal and Islander peoples as victims of history, despite their endurance, bringing their stories into service for his own political ends. Nelson's acknowledgement misappropriated the story of Faye Lyman in order to serve his politics, and Calma – who could only give his speech from outside of the Parliament – co-opted his own family history to support the politics of the day. What was lacking was a conversation about modern Australian society's complicity with injustice (see Haebich 2000, for example), vaguely referenced by Rudd in the following:

Then we come to the argument of intergenerational responsibility, also used by some to argue against giving an apology today. But let us remember the fact that the forced removal of Aboriginal children was happening as late as the early 1970s. The 1970s is not exactly a point in remote antiquity. There are still serving members of this parliament who were first elected to this place in the early 1970s. It is well within the adult memory span of many of us. The uncomfortable truth for us all is that the parliaments of the nation, individually and collectively, enacted statutes and delegated authority under those statutes that made the forced removal of children on racial grounds fully lawful. (2008)

The intergenerational responsibility that Rudd seems to limit to parliament (with an exculpation of responsibility for reparation/liability), was actually at the core of both Keating's (1992) and Howard's (1997) political speeches. By looking at their pre- Apology speeches, we can further interrogate constructions and assumptions about the social and political culture that lies dormant in the background of the Apology. The claim I am making here is that removal policies were enacted in a social and political culture of racial discrimination that was still in effect at the time of the Apology.

In Keating's time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences of injustice and the intergenerational repercussions were increasingly coming to light, and continued to be revealed in the years following. In his 1992 speech to a relatively small audience in the urban Aboriginal community of Redfern, the notion of intergenerational responsibility is expressed as a collective *mea culpa*, as the following extract illustrates.

And, as I say, the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non- Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with the act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the

disasters. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask - how would I feel if this were done to me?

As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us. If we needed a reminder of this, we received it this year. The Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody showed with devastating clarity that the past lives on in inequality, racism and injustice in the prejudice and ignorance of non-Aboriginal Australians, and in the demoralisation and desperation, the fractured identity, of so many Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

For all this, I do not believe that the Report should fill us with guilt. Down the years, there has been no shortage of guilt, but it has not produced the responses we need. Guilt is not a very constructive emotion.

I think what we need to do is open our hearts a bit.

All of us.

Perhaps when we recognise what we have in common we will see the things which must be done - the practical things.⁶ (Keating 2011:20-22)

Keating's speech is now noted as one of the most unforgettable political speeches (Clark 2013); it pre-empted the 1995 commissioning of the inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. In stark contrast, Howard's speech to the 1997 Reconciliation Convention in the week of the tabling of that commissioned report, refused any intergenerational culpability.

Second, all Australians indigenous and otherwise need to acknowledge realistically the interaction of our histories.

Our purpose in doing so should not be to apportion blame and guilt for past wrongs, but to commit to a practical programme of action that will remove the enduring legacies of disadvantage. At the same time, we need to acknowledge openly that the treatment accorded to many indigenous Australians over a significant period of European settlement represents the most blemished chapter in our history. Clearly, there were injustices done and no-one should obscure or minimise them. We need to acknowledge as a nation what European settlement has meant for the first Australians, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and in particular the assault on their traditions and the discrimination and violence they endured over many decades.

This week the report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission inquiry into The Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families will be tabled in Parliament. Like all such reports, it will be subjected to proper analysis and scrutiny. It will neither be

⁶ Full transcript of speech available at Appendix 1c

uncritically accepted nor summarily swept aside. However, let me make this clear. Personally, I feel deep sorrow for those of my fellow Australians who suffered injustices under the practices of past generations towards indigenous people. Equally, I am sorry for the hurt and trauma many people here today may continue to feel as a consequence of those practices. In facing the realities of the past, however, we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism. Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects the overall story of great Australian achievement that is there in our history to be told, and such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history. Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control. (Howard 1997)⁷

Both Keating's and Howard's speeches might attempt a shift in focus to 'practical things', but it is only Keating who explains the responsibilities of non-Aboriginal Australians. While Howard's unfortunate metaphor blithely characterising a traumatic period of history as a 'blemished chapter' carried through to Rudd's 2008 speech, the last line of this extract from Howard's speech is the crucial barb, with the denial of guilt and blame transfigured as a denial of responsibility.

I may have painted a bleak picture of the politics underlying the 2008 Apology, but the discussion of these political speeches only reveals some of the narrative politics at play. For the remainder of this chapter, I will go on to demonstrate how responsive narratives are actually at the core of any political efficacy of Apology even as they further highlight the inherent problems and complications of the political exercise of apology for historical injustice. The implications of the Apology's initial narrative politics will be apparent during the following initial discussion of the way in which narrative responses demonstrate resistance, acknowledging rather than accepting the Apology, and draw attention to previous generations as absent but intended recipients. In particular, responses demonstrate resistance to the victim constructions inherent in the formal Apology, resistance to what this chapter construes as a proposed narrative.

'Responses to the Apology'

In the context of the formal political speeches discussed above, ordinary means of responding to the Apology from a range of community perspectives were only made

⁷ Full transcript of speech available at Appendix 1d

available via engagement with the media or with intimate social networks. This is one reason why the SLQ series stood out – the response videos were organised as formal records – they were preserved.

Klaebe, who designed the 2008 SLQ pilot project, described it as undertaking ‘participatory public history’. In 2009, Klaebe outlined one perspective behind the commissioning of the responses in this way: ‘They are a permanent reminder that the conversation is far from over, and a permanent record of the vocal insistence by several of the participants that the Apology represents not only an opportunity for listening but also the need for meaningful action’ (2009:9). The major differences between the 2008 and 2009 series of videos are associated with production. The 2008 series was produced in a workshop environment with the participants collaborating in production. The 2009 series were finished independently of the participants after the interviews and photographs had been recorded. The 2008 videos are comprised of still images, while the 2009 videos contain a mix of live-to-camera and still images.

A notable power asymmetry is seen in the ensuing institutional incorporation of the stories. That is, while the digital stories are valuable records of responses to the Apology, they are also hosted by the state and therefore vulnerable to future changes in state values. In an article written after undertaking the digital response project, Klaebe and fellow authors Jean Burgess and Kelly McWilliam discuss the institutional mediatisation of public memory (2010), reflecting on the ways in which state institutions conceive of the social value of memory resources as they mediatise their collections and attempt to engage the public.

These video responses are not the product of structured research or justice activism but of archival and media communication activity, hence – unlike the production of the interview narratives for this present study – documented details are sparse regarding methodology, funding and production. These recorded oral/audio-visual materials, while short, provide both personal accounts of the Apology and its effects (desired, anticipated or perceived) and stories of family and community experiences. They are a valuable form of documented Australian history, responding to an important, collectively experienced event. Further, the accounts preserve responses and promote awareness of the contemporary event of Apology, while connecting this event to Australia’s past.

Responses, in both video transcript and interview transcript form, can be taken to provide forms of 'local knowledge' (Squire, Andrews, and Tamboukou 2008:16) and act in dialogue with Rudd's Apology and with each other – for example through referencing similar experiences or production techniques – to build a distributed narrative of historical injustice and its contemporary effects. As experiences of injustice are recounted, the moral emotions articulated – particularly compassion and anger (righteous indignation) – are capable of evoking these same emotions in a responsive audience. Politically, this mobilisation of affect is correlated with the action tendencies associated with compassion or anger, that is, to offer assistance and to restore fairness (Haidt 2003). Sometimes these stories reflect the way in which individuals have personally come to account for and deal with injustice in their lives. In stories of persistence and resistance, potentially demoralising experiences have been withstood and neutralised through humorous storytelling performances (Critchley 2002:87) and through connection with a community of experience (Critchley 2002:73-75; Crossley 2000:11-16).

The narrative mosaic produced through the collection, presentation and analysis of these digital stories is also a representation of the fragmentary nature of responses to and experiences of the Apology. These responses speak to a morally aware audience, seeking acknowledgement and further actions of justice, and inviting their audience to participate in the type of negotiated ethics facilitated by narrative practices.

As noted, the digital videos allow both observation of responses to the Apology and the curation of such responses, demonstrating an opportunity to understand how the Apology has been both experienced and mediated. These responses were not isolated narratives; they are embedded in the broader narrative field of apology responses and politics. Contained within the collection are a number of poignant and emotive responses from Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, including Stolen Generations elders. There is an impression of others in the room when respondents look beyond the camera or to other points in the room, as seen particularly during emotionally difficult parts of the videos of Herman Bambie and Estelle Bowen. Herman Bambie is filmed in close frame and distinctly looks to two other points in the room as well as direct to camera, and when he describes the feelings that remain about his mother dying before she knew her real name he looks above the camera. Similarly, Estelle Bowen's video shows her looking just above the camera as she gives a description of her grandmother painting her father

black with charcoal. The curators/producers are thus disembodied and absent, while the respondents are inescapably present.

There are also semantic tensions between some verbal and visual expressions of experiences that make identification of any preferred readings impossible. While many images appear matched to the verbal accounts, Tiga Bayles' account of his grandfather's experiences, for example, addresses experiences of injustice (and associated loss of agency) but is overlaid with images of protest marches. Other videos might show an historical family photo while respondents speak of the present. Patricia Yaeger writes about this kind of denial-of-intimacy in her observations of viewing Holocaust testimony, seeking to understand:

the way that testimonies themselves handle the ethical question of community, entanglement, proximity: their deliberate invocation of apotropaic effects – of figures of speech or body language that deflect an audience's rapport even as they summon us (2006:405).

While the tension between the photos and the spoken words highlights elements of production, it also opens interpretation of the video responses and suggests that there is a limit to how much intention can be ascribed to the producers and narrators who selected the images and their sequencing. The stories are, however, capable of creating affect in the same way as Rudd's Apology itself, and function as historical testimony, supported by visual evidence. For example, Angeline Steven's response enlarges awareness of living conditions under the Aboriginal Welfare Act and shows us an image of her family in this historical context, offering the audience imaginary access to her memories. The inclusion of a photograph of an historical act is repeated in a number of videos. Through this institutional framing, agency – not only the ability, but the responsibility – to restore or to establish fairness is placed with the dominant socio-political group imagined as one of the audiences of the videos. On the other hand, from the perspective of the respondents, the stories often appear to be shaping a sense of that experience and formulating ways of arriving at their own forms of justice. The purpose of the collection is rendered moot by the unresolved tensions in many of the storied accounts, and by the calls for action beyond the words of apology.

While the collection's purpose may be problematic, the responses are connected through common narrative genres, the shared semiotics of these narrative materials, and therefore the recurring patterns of signification of meaning within stories. In concert, these

cohesive responses are capable of informing a range of meanings of the experience of Apology. Because they complicate the Apology in this way, the videos cannot be completely contained within a news media- or government-controlled dominant narrative. When audiences engage interpretively with texts, these kinds of responses open the possibility of dialogue and deny political closure. Respondents, by posing possible justice outcomes, continue to point out existing injustices, giving their audiences cause to reflect and to evaluate the Apology.

As previously established, the evocative qualities of trauma and injustice stories prove politically valuable to marginalised groups accessing moral economy. Some studies of trauma stories, for example, those undertaken by Lawrence Langer (1991, 2006a, b) recognise the limitations inherent in the affective reactions of audiences (Langer 1991:16-20). The doubt, questioning, blame and denial that can occur as the audience withdraws from discomforting emotions, as evidenced in response to the *Bringing Them Home* report and the subsequent culture/History Wars, can perpetuate harm and feed a culture of shame. The psychoanalytic model of storytelling as healing is contingent on audience empathy (Kaminer 2006:488-9) and yet, as Smith and Schaffer point out, if ‘victims fail to receive affirmation through the telling of their stories, they remain entrapped within the trauma’ (2004:110). Further, they remind us that:

when non-Indigenous listeners or readers accept an ethical responsibility to acknowledge the story and the veracity of the tellers, narratives of shaming place tellers in the position of victim, with listeners as advocates and agents, thus reinforcing pre-existing power relations. (2004:111)

This observation of the positioning that occurs with trauma narratives is, importantly, reflected in the SLQ project. The state institution, as the immediate listener, is positioned as advocate and agent. By seeking, recording, and then amplifying the responses to the Apology, the SLQ plays a role in positioning the Indigenous storytellers/story-subjects as intergenerational victim(s). For example, in many SLQ online catalogue descriptions, the intergenerational features of the respondents’ accounts are highlighted. In the case of the video collections, the positioning concept is also extended. The post-production audience, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, and the respondents who provide accounts of related others, become subject to ethical responsibility and enter into the political play of the Apology. They too position themselves and each other in relation to the event and to the injustices.

When power relations like those discussed can be observed in the production or dissemination of the responses, we also see how the collection is reflective of and risks reinforcing the history of state paternalism and assimilation, perpetuating injustices and romanticising suffering, just as Langer warned (1991). Burgess and Klaebe, however, describe the video response project as a form of collaborative and participatory public history, designed not to ‘appropriate the voices of ordinary people but to amplify them as a relatively autonomous and worthwhile contribution to the public culture’ (2009:3). These tensions of intent and outcome are tied in with the ethics and politics of the production of injustice stories, and with any social research practice that engages narratively with experiences of injustice, trauma or marginalisation.

Mediatisation of responses – preservation or activation

As with other fields where mediatisation is practised, the establishment of the SLQ video response collection(s) appears to be informed by multiple interests, including: institutional adoption of new media technologies (institutional mediatisation); available funding; Indigenous and regional community engagement policies of the SLQ; the Apology event; as well as employee training and development objectives. While some of these mediatisation and public value interests are discussed by Klaebe, in two papers (2009, 2010), the SLQ website described the videos in 2013 as a celebratory memorial of the Apology:

In 2013 the National Apology Day fifth anniversary occurred. To celebrate this event the State Library of Queensland has placed five digital stories online for clients to view ... The Apology Project Digital Stories reflect several people’s experiences during this momentous event’ (Schafer 2013).

Thus the stated aim of the curation practices across the SLQ collection is the preservation of Apology experiences as a form of public memory. Both the respondents and the producers had a role in establishing the records but as I will go on to demonstrate, audience reception completes the mediatisation (after Stuart Hall’s theories on the discursive production of subjects (e.g. 2000, 1995)). In a sense, I am re-mediatising the SLQ responses in order to stimulate another response of understanding or awareness. Interview accounts are also mediatised, produced and constructed to support understanding and awareness of the practice and culture of political apology. Public value interests implied in research and education are thus extended to this thesis.

The interviews with political actors were conducted in order to elicit further Apology-responsive narratives to sustain the research and analysis work of this thesis. Importantly for this chapter, the interview environment provided an opportunity for deeper questioning of the role of responsive narratives in apology practice and the ways in which such narratives provide a window to intersubjectivity. Interview narratives connected interviewees, as they made references to other participants (for example, Anna Haebich referenced Tony Birch and Doreen Mellor; Doreen Mellor and Alister McKeich referenced Anna Haebich), and sometimes to experiences, perceptive/interpretive frameworks and subject positions that were similar to other interviewees and video respondents. Like the video respondents, interviewees produced their own stories in the interview scenario, choosing which stories to share in response to the interview context. While I had access to the full interview (the unedited video footage was not retained by SLQ), as the researcher, I then further edited these narratives in order to incorporate relevant extracts in the thesis and to relate them to the discussions that follow. I was careful with my selections because stories told in response to the Apology are often of a sensitive and intimate, even painful, nature, and are revealing of a political culture that is, at the least, disenchanted. The stories contained in this thesis theoretically have the potential for more reaching repercussions than simply knowledge and awareness of injustice.

Painful stories and storytelling practices

Familiar reasons for the production and mediatisation of trauma and injustice stories by political, advocacy or educational institutions endorse a popular psychology concept that storytelling is an important part of personal healing, and that such stories can be used to pursue justice, solicit monetary and other support, create community and solidarity, foster empathy and encourage interest in political causes (Raushenbush 2008). HREOC stated as much in the opening of *Bringing Them Home*:

the primary need is to enable people to tell their stories, to have them recorded appropriately and to enable the survivors to receive counseling and compensation. The experience of the Shoah Foundation and of this Inquiry is that giving testimony, while extraordinarily painful for most, is often the beginning of the healing process. (HREOC 1997:18)

In the context of social justice, production may also involve the elicitation, commissioning or even appropriation of stories of injustice and trauma. The practices

and purposes of story collection and representation are often rationalised by referring to the ability of such practices to raise the voices of victims in a way that the victims themselves may not be able to accomplish (Schaffer and Smith 2004).

Even though the story production may be a collaborative effort, the advocate producer often brings the tools of mediatisation and socialisation (distribution to an audience) to the practice, and makes decisions about the form and context of the story's end representation within a collection. The collection may then support and facilitate a political strategy (Van De Carr 2013). As such, despite the care taken to collect the story, one of the risks to the respondents is that their story, once public, may be utilised for purposes other than that for which it was originally communicated, especially if it falls outside a dominant interpretive frame. Another risk is that stories may not find a sincerely receptive audience, perpetuating distance rather than facilitating relationship. Advocates can try to access – but cannot guarantee – an agential audience willing to interpret or act on the storyteller's behalf. Paul Ricoeur reminds us that the relevance of narrative is in its interpretability – the creativity of language means that it will always lend itself to new meanings and therefore elicit different responses. For Ricoeur, interpretation is the opening up of the world of the narrative (1976:88).

While this openness of meanings and interpretations (or the dialectic of explanation and understanding (Ricoeur 1976:76-79)) are part and parcel of narrative practice, the use of another's story for one's own ends is where we encounter the ethical question. Risks of appropriation (seen, for example, with Faye Lyman's experience) are present even before we consider, as the academics involved with the SLQ Apology response project Jean Burgess and Helen Klæbe put it:

whether the spirit of sincere listening has yet been or ever will be translated into effective policies to remedy the deep structural inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. (2010)

In many research contexts, informed consent is the norm and varying levels of ongoing formalised consent are often made available to participants, particularly where the participants are identified, or identifiable, or where there is a risk of harm (NHMRC 2007). In other contexts – for example, news media, entertainment, grassroots activism, politics, and history – consent processes are more ad hoc, particularly when historical stories are revived. Consent in these other contexts may simply involve the signing of a simple permission form, talking to a journalist or voluntarily contributing a personal story

to an online forum (Wadsworth 1997; Buchanan 2006; Dougherty 2013). An ethics committee is not always required when a victim-survivor's story is co-opted to further a cause, but it is becoming more important to consider how and whether storytellers are involved in the curation and dissemination of their stories and to consider the story's purpose from the teller's perspective. How an audience sustains listening, interprets a story and responds, very much depends on the context of the story's presentation. That is: who tells the story, where the story is told and where the story is heard. Both telling and listening can be difficult (Frank 1995:xii, Whitlock 2001). One way in which this chapter considers the ethics of the narrative processes involved in securing and practicing political apology is by focusing on how the tension between dominant characterisations, such as that between victim and witness, is resolved by the construct of a transcendent victim-survivor-witness identity/narrator in stories of injustice.

In the apology-responsive narratives, however, it is not only the victim of injustice who is entreated to transcend their role as witness. The video form constantly reminds the viewer that they are positioned as audience with the camera and I claim that this can facilitate what Caroline Wake categorises as a tertiary form of witnessing, 'defined by its paradoxical combination of spatiotemporal distance and emotional co-presence' (2013:111). As James Young, another cultural theorist, points out, 'images and pictures of faces, in particular, affect us viscerally, evoking emotional, parasymphathetic responses over which viewers have little control: that is we respond to pictures of people as if they actually were people' (1988:163-4). Or as Sontag writes, our reactions to photographs of suffering are not 'under the supervision of reason and conscience' (2003:75).

There are impressions of deep psychic pain among the video stories; Herman Bambie's and Estelle Bowen's videos (both SLQ 2009, first accessed 2012) provide particularly affecting examples. The producers sometimes enable a deflection or shift of the viewer's gaze away from the narrator as the camera moves to other images, yet predominantly the production dwells on the respondent. The respondent is most often the focus, with close-up portraits and personal details highlighted, including hands, other still portraits and, particularly, voice. Both the brevity of the videos and the close focus on the respondents emphasise their voice as the apology-affected person sharing their storied accounts of the Apology and its aftermath. As audience – or witness to the witness – do we engage with the person and their response to an event, or as in Young's alternative framework, with the making of the witness as a process, or both? In which case, the audience/viewer is

both witness to the witnessing and part of the witness's making: 'the aim here becomes to document the witness, the witnesses' memory of events, and the transmission of this memory – not the events' (Young 1988:166).

The witness/survivor paradigm of trauma culture arose in the mid to late 20th century with the Holocaust survivor testimonies of the Eichmann trial in 1961 (Rothe 2011). The paradigm has repeatedly been invoked in the following years in literature, oral history, and other public trials and commissions that call for testimony. In this way, victims of trauma and injustice have been widely constructed and normalised as witnesses/survivors (or as witness/survivor -to-be). Testimonies are valuable moral commodities and have been distributed beyond the courtroom to social and political forms of media, such as novels and films (Rothe 2011), political campaigns (Andrews 2014, Polletta 2008) and legislative reform (Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service 2015). Writers and filmmakers draw on the context and circumstances of the emergent non-fictional accounts to develop fictional accounts of trauma. Dominick LaCapra touches on the question of how best (ethically, respectfully) to present trauma stories when he writes that:

Historians have not yet worked out altogether acceptable ways of 'using' testimonies, and their task is further complicated by the at times marked differences between the conditions and experiences of victims as well as their responses to them. (2001:110)

When victim/survivor stories are mediated and remediated, there is the risk of romanticising suffering. In order to promote reparation – one of the implied preferred readings of the stories – people can be constrained in flattened victim or survivor roles regardless of their specific experiences and agency. Stories of surviving, which perpetuate a fallacy of assured redemption or heroic recovery, appear more acceptable to audiences than stories of meaningless suffering but perhaps that is just because they are easier to hear.

There is a cultural need for redemptive representations of experience; when storytellers practice 'the ethic of inspiration' (Frank 1995:133), such narratives become models and metaphors. A healed or resilient victim's transformation to witness/survivor is shared so that it may be emulated, so that it may inspire others. These narrativised experiences, however, require the individual victim to account for their own healing, recovery, survival, and to re-construct their own effective subject position for others (for example, see Frank on transformations of illness narratives (1997:134-138)). The latent problem in

contexts of injustice, however, is that if a survivor demonstrates effective agency, any broad political or social responsibility (i.e. opportunity for transformative cultural change) can become obfuscated. The victim's self-repair seems to obviate the need for social or political therapy.

On the other hand, in a social justice advocacy context, curated stories of injustice and trauma can promulgate passive subject positions. Both paradigms of victim and survivor are implemented as passive in order to further political objectives (for example, to secure justice, raise awareness and garner support, whether moral, financial or political).

Crudely put, a victim story illustrates a need for assistance and a survivor story shows a prettier picture after assistance. By focusing on the individual-centric victim/survivor position, the original and social context of injustice often evades attention. The question with which this chapter engages is not whether injustices should be addressed; but rather – after a few decades of such narrative curation practices in relation to human rights and justice matters – how effective these strategies and paradigms are in achieving justice outcomes. The chapter therefore draws attention back to the people who tell their personal stories of injustice, the audiences they seek and how personal narratives might operate as social justice strategies.

While a state institution such as the SLQ arguably has a record making rather than a justice-seeking function, in addition to forming a memorial of the historical event, the collection functions to exhibit experiences of injustice in relation to the Apology and, I claim, as a ground for engagement with the Apology. The collection also highlights the Indigenous narrators' resilience and agency. In doing so, it challenges any audience tendency to see them primarily or exclusively as victims (i.e., direct recipients of the Apology). As is the nature of mediatisation, narrative collections and the forms of their presentation are open to re-interpretation and different re-presentations over time, in differing contexts or to meet differing institutional or community needs. Further, each respondent, and each audience, brings other – outside – socially narrativised understandings into play. The narrators' resilience and agency is, however, contained within their storied accounts and, as long as these are intact, victim constructions are only a part of the picture.

The original SLQ pilot project had a stated objective of creating a mediatised record of personal responses to the Apology as a form of participatory public history. While the

video collection is a tangible record of experiences, and each video could stand alone in the tradition of oral history, as a collection it serves not only the public history function of the commissioning institution but also the social politics of the Apology; the responses offer a point of focus for the negotiation of reparative justice. The immediacy and presence of the respondent in the video enhances not only the elicitation of affect but political connection with – and the moral and political responsibilities of – the audience.

Justice responses

Despite a plethora of both victim and survivor narratives circulating in the public sphere in the wake of the Apology, especially around the government acknowledgement that previous governments had sanctioned injustice in the form of the removal policies, disadvantage persists and inequality is still entrenched for Indigenous Australians as a collective (Australian Government Closing the Gap reports 2009-2014, also Gooda 2014). Experiences and perceptions of inequality have often been exacerbated by the State's sluggishness in facilitating compensatory legal claims, land rights and developing other pragmatic, accessible and enduring justice measures (Burnside 2010; Pilger 2014). Government funding for practical community-based programs is constantly at risk in the ebb and flow of political and public interest in Indigenous affairs, with frequent changes maintaining 'an atmosphere of uncertainty' (Gooda 2014). Any special considerations arising in the context of intergenerational trauma and disadvantage appear to have been ignored in favour of a one-size-fits-all social benefits model or punitive practices in the administration of government benefits. In effect, social welfare is commandeered to operate as a crude substitute for social justice.

Why are stories of trauma and injustice valuable?

The value of stories of trauma and injustice resides in their ability to elicit emotional response. Rudd appeared to employ this value of narrative when he included Nanna Fejo's story in his apology speech. The national response to apology is affected deeply by feelings of compassion, forgiveness, hopefulness, anger, despair and grief. The inclusion of Nana Fejo's story and the request for empathy, 'imagine if this had happened to you' (Rudd 2008), was almost certainly engineered to elicit support and to justify the Apology. Not all theorists agree that empathic identification is the surest way to justice, however. Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Science at Yale University, Paul Bloom, for example, claims that empathy is biased and narrow (2014). It is impossible to know what

it is really like to be another person; it could also be quite an invasive undertaking. Ricoeur's explanation of 'empathy' may assist with understanding how an empathic-identification perspective is limited – he describes empathy as 'the transference of ourselves into another's psychic life ... the principle common to every kind of understanding, whether direct or indirect' (1976:73). In other words, our understanding is limited because we can only imagine the narrator's experience using the resources of our own experience. Accepting the opacity of an account is to accept (and perhaps, in the case of apology, to realise) the distance between oneself and another. On this, Bloom suggests that 'empathy is not the only force that motivates kindness' (2014) and that if we want to know what the needs of others are, the best insights into others lives will be gained by listening to them. He claims that acknowledging the limits of empathy ought to 'motivate a certain humility when it comes to dealing with the lives of others' (2015).

Bloom's observations principally support a more objective morality, and are important to hold in mind because they underscore a way of listening to injustice stories in order to facilitate justice. I take his observations a step further in this thesis, however, to explore narrative practices as forms of intersubjective morality – as a way to negotiate justice.

In discussing the mobilisation of emotion that injustice stories appear to facilitate, the following section also discusses how and why political apologies attempt to draw out and utilise emotions. The discussion focuses on the political act of engaging and mobilising survivors' emotional trauma and the moral emotions of other addressees. Examples from this analysis demonstrate the social constructions and narratives of emotional trauma and the politicisation of emotion that occurs through the production of such stories. The following analysis particularly considers the emotions associated with apology (such as compassion, forgiveness, hopefulness, anger, despair and grief) and what these might mean for long-term collaborative social justice processes.

Narrative capabilities

The capacity of personal experience stories to contribute to or change public culture, politics or social justice depends on their ability to engage an audience. As such, advocates who produce or mediatise accounts must appeal to the audiences they wish to draw. While the SLQ videos are particularly noticeable for their presentation in story form, they also reference experiences that may be difficult for audiences to constructively attend to. The video responses feature experiential accounts of injustice, particularly

separation and loss, and restoration – personal agency, resistance, recovery, resilience and reunion. Though very short, these stories or vignettes are emotive, descriptive and often told with empathy by the respondents. Such accounts demonstrate the respondents' knowledge and experiences of the forms of injustice that the Apology aimed to acknowledge and address and, importantly, which remain to be addressed.

In contrast, the extended interview narratives that feature throughout this thesis demonstrate interviewee's knowledge and experiences of injustice. That said, many of the responses, both video and interview, are already discursively involved with Rudd's Apology and with other stories of the related historical and contemporary injustices. Across both forms of responsive narratives, responses to the Apology are most often of acknowledgement, rather than acceptance.

Des Bowen (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012) for example, responded by reflecting on his grandparents' experiences, acknowledging and reinforcing the Apology's engagement with historical injustice. The following is the full transcript of his video response:

Yep, they told me that the Apology was on and everybody was all excited and, yeah. I saw it on the TV at the hospital and it brought tears to my eyes too because I started thinking about my grandfather, George Bowen, when he was brought up from Proserpine, only about 12 years old and that was in 1903 and my grandmother, my mum's mum, she was brought from Chillagoe across and some of them went to I think Kuranda and Yarrabah and she was brought up to Hope Vale. Yeah, I thought about these old people, how they sort of, you know, felt.

My granddad only spoke about how he was brought up here and how some of them tried to run back to Proserpine, go back to Proserpine, you know only got as far as Cooktown and my grandmother she, she hardly spoke about it, only now and again you know, when she felt sort of comfortable, yeah.

To hear it from a top person, you know top man in Australia, say sorry, well that meant a lot to our people, meant a lot to me too, because I've had my non-Indigenous co-workers that we used to work out on the station with, well they rang me up and said, 'you know Des, look, we're there for you,' and but I knew they were there all the time, you know (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012).

Des Bowen indicates that the Apology had some impact ('it brought tears... I started thinking'), and his response arguably demonstrates a form of catharsis. In this case, catharsis is possible because the Apology evoked memories of his grandparents. These memories engaged his sympathy through their activation of imagination and emotion and, in doing so, aroused an emotional response: 'I thought about these old people, how they sort of, you know, felt'. The relief of catharsis, associated with a positive evaluation

of the experience, is represented in his account when he then acknowledges that the Apology, specifically as it was from the Prime Minister, ‘meant a lot’ to him and to ‘our people’, and describes how his former non-Indigenous colleagues, also witness to the Apology, responded by offering him support. Des Bowen’s response is an acknowledgement rather than an acceptance, however, as he draws attention to the experiences of his grandparents, focusing on them as the intended recipients of apology.

Des Bowen engages with the personal and familial meaning of the Apology as he talks about the injustices experienced by his grandparents and about his own experience of the Apology. This meaning is exemplified in the language that he uses to describe the experiences of his grandparents, and their lack of agency is central to his account: ‘he was brought up from Proserpine, only about 12 years old’, ‘she was brought from Chillagoe across’. The lack of agency (i.e. subjectification) indicated in the passive form, and also where the paternalism of governance is inescapable – ‘some of them tried to run back to Proserpine, go back to Proserpine, you know only got as far as Cooktown’ – are also at the core of the historical injustices that the Apology was crafted to address. Additional meaning of the Apology is contained within the mapping of the movements of his grandparents from place to place throughout the brief account: Proserpine, Chillagoe, Kurunda, Yarrabah, Hope Vale, Proserpine (running back to), Cooktown. The importance of country and belonging to Aboriginal culture is evoked by this collection of names, as is the indeterminate nature of the government’s movements of Indigenous peoples. By bringing these places – these countries – to his response, Des Bowen links the Apology to personal/family experience using a localised in-group framework of values.

While Des Bowen’s account is resonant with the meaning of the Apology, his response, like many others in the collection, functions to achieve more than the definition of this meaning. Responses such as these also provoke relationship and provide learning opportunities. Intergenerational and contemporary community connections are made by association and demonstrated with the use of membership categories such as ‘we’, ‘our people’ and ‘they’. His sympathetic association with the experiences of his grandparents’ generation establishes the ‘we-relation’ of consociates (Schutz 1964) – ‘these old people’, ‘our people’ – that extends beyond contemporary relations. Des Bowen and other respondents extend an invitation to their audience to relate and connect to their intimate family stories. Note that many people, including myself, would not normally be privileged to hear these intimate stories. As such, the intimate quality of the stories is capable of

establishing a sense of connection (what Wake (2013) calls emotional co-presence) at the same time as they establish a temporal distance. For Wake, this paradoxical condition of both intimacy and distance is the basis of the experience described as tertiary witnessing (2013:111).

The naturalistic and seemingly real-time video format of these responses further enhances the intimacy of the accounts and emphasises the respondents' participation in the project out of good will. By creating an 'illusion of direct address' with oral expression (Yaeger 2006:416), in which the narrator appears to speak directly to the viewer/reader, the video audience is positioned as responsive and hermeneutically capable witness, competent to evaluate action on the Apology. This positioning of the audience reflects what John Frow described as 'a form of ethical responsiveness which recognises a duty to the story of the other' (1998:364); narrators inscribe that duty into their telling. Contrary to the experiences he has described, Des Bowen does not appear to anticipate that his audience will subjectify, victimise, patronise or take away his agency in other ways. Instead, he shares a personal moment of emotional response, intimate family experiences, and relates how he was also gentle as he responded to his workmates. He demonstrates trust. I claim that this kind of trusting response is also part of the illusion. Not only do the video responses give off an illusion of direct address for their eventual audience, the production environment facilitates an illusion of direct reception for the narrator. That is, Des Bowen, in demonstrating such trust, acts as if he perceives an audience who is responsive and familiar.

In this way, the videos, like the Apology, infer responsiveness and reciprocity on the part of the audience/viewer. In the context of recorded testimony, James Young explains that:

If to testify means literally to make witness then perhaps it also means to make others into witnesses. In viewing these testimonies, however, we become witness to the making of testimony and its unique understanding of events. For it is not the experiences that are being transmitted in testimony but the special understanding of them that only a survivor can have, the particular understanding of one who was subject to both events and his interpretation of events as they occurred (1988:171).

The success of any narrative strategy, however latent – such as to 'make others into witnesses' – depends on the narratives being heard as they are told, in trust. Audience, though absent and anticipated, is a presence in the production environment of both the video and the interview accounts.

Narratives as political strategies

Perhaps understanding responsive narratives as capable of making others into witnesses is difficult, just as it is to accept that narratives create victim-subjects, but I would suggest that narrativising an event or an experience of an event is, at the least, a strategic attempt to politically engage with others. This is the political nature of responsive narrative.

Within an interpretive framework that recognises the politics and ethics of apology, political strategies can be discerned at work in the responsive narratives that are at the centre of this study.

One of the most important strategies of the narratives is, however, not engagement with but resistance to the Apology's narrative. Despite discursive engagement with the themes and metaphors of the formal Apology, political resistance operates in narratives about injustice, testimonials, rejections of healing, and the seeking of further redress, whether material or institutional. Resistance is a strong theme within Des Bowen's video but is also present in other video and interview accounts; many vignettes, expressions and evaluations deflect or reject the Apology. Powerfully, these kinds of narratives resist Rudd's request/presumption that the Apology be met with acceptance by its addressee-victims. With the resistance narrative strategy, respondents highlight the failings of Apology and demonstrate or illustrate the impotency of the Apology in their evaluative statements or stories.

One other predominant method of resistance can be seen in the narratives when a narrator shifts the audience's gaze beyond the respondent to prior/absent generations who cannot possibly be healed. This narrative strategy again resists the Apology framework conceived by Rudd, which focused on healing and achieving closure for victims of injustice, and was future-oriented. Examples of resistance to both the future orientation and the healing imperative of the Apology statement are given in the following extracts. Senior respondents Angeline Stevens and Herman Bambie provide responsive narratives that refer to their absent mothers:

I thought myself it was too late for my mother to hear it but I don't think it would have made any difference. (Angeline Stevens, 2009, SLQ Video accessed 2012)

And we travelled back to Stonehenge just a few years ago to find the family but everyone we found there they reckoned they probably moved on. The Prime minister said sorry but I don't know what he

meant by that. He said sorry but the hurt that I've got, you know I don't think that, nobody will take that away from me. I still think about her today. (Herman Bambie, 2009, SLQ Video accessed 2012)

Respondents and participants might acknowledge the Apology; yet, instead of talking about healing or the future, they focus on irreparable damages rendered in the past. In the accounts, damages are most often suffered by elders who have since died – particularly mothers or grandmothers. Even respondents who valued the Apology pointed to previous generations who would never hear the Apology:

At this particular breakfast there was another Aboriginal doctor so she and I both said because our mothers had just died in the previous month that gee it would have been fantastic for them to see something like this. (Mark Wenitong, 2009, SLQ Video accessed 2012)

So while the Apology elicited memories of family members and aroused emotions associated with those memories, these resistant responses more often associated the grief of loss with elders, and portray the narrator's own emotional response as one of empathy or compassion for these elders:

For me it was a time to think about my Grandmother and her being taken to Palm Island and some of the family didn't find, didn't see their mother until they were like 45, but she knew them instantly when she saw them. And her going away and the pain of being separated from country, you know never being able to really stay over there and coming back here and how she just loved our hills and she just pined you know for the country. (Valerie Craigie, 2009, SLQ Video accessed 2012)

In this sense, the political strategy is not to forgive, but to remind, and is related to memorialisation and the blame or shame that positions non-Indigenous Australians as perpetrators or witness/bystanders with more Apology work to do. Following chapters will expand on the discussion of how responsive narratives position self and others in relationship to the Apology and to injustice.

Just as for Des Bowen, recollections of experiencing the Apology prompted others to speak compassionately (and at times with quiet indignation) about those grandparents and parents as the intended but absent recipients of apology: 'that's who that apology was meant for' (Tiga Bayles, 2008, SLQ video, accessed 2012). Patricia Lees, for example, refers to the impossibility of healing in her account because of these absences:

I got really emotional because I was thinking about my mother and all the other mothers and the people that have since gone on and what the apology would mean to them. Could you go to the

gravesite and take that there? Could it bring that loss? Would it restore the loss to me? (Patricia Lees, 2009, SLQ Video accessed 2012)

Stories that identify these absent recipients of apology – those whose lived experiences have been judged as most impacted by the injustices – shift the audience’s gaze (and anticipated emotional responses) beyond the storyteller to these others, these recipients of the respondent-storyteller’s own compassion. What is often highlighted by reflections like these is the irreparable nature of historical injustices, as the next example powerfully demonstrates:

You know, colonisation did do this to our people. They took away our culture, they took away our language, they tried to assimilate us into their society. And I think for me hearing that apology it really is, it doesn’t take away that sort of, that pain of that. And it doesn’t take away, you know, that story of my great grandfathers, you know, they were taken and that story will remain of what happened to them and it will be passed down to generation to generation. And I’m just, I think, what really upset me, I was talking to my mother last night and she was saying, you know, it affects her still. And it’ll surely affect generations to come. And if you really think about it, that they couldn’t be here to hear that, you know, to hear Prime Minister Rudd say sorry to them, my grandfathers, you know, they passed away at an early age, you know, in their lives. So they weren’t here to experience that release or that freedom and to hear that acknowledgement. (Jasmin Minniecon, 2009, SLQ Video accessed 2012)

Jasmin Minniecon not only points out all the matters that the Apology aims to address and is unable to ameliorate, but that the history of injustice is great and enduring. The losses she specifies are irrecoverable, and therefore the possibility for ‘acknowledgement’ or ‘release’ that the Apology offers is misdirected and defunct. Jasmin Minniecon is indignant on behalf of her mother and previous generations. As her audience, we can share the moral evaluation of past injustices and the impossibility of undoing them expressed in that indignation – we can take part in the illusion of being with Jasmin Minniecon.

For the respondents, a narrative strategy of resistance to the formal Apology works against paternal governance and the limited identity and agency that is implied through the Apology and its highly coordinated and constructed delivery in 2008. The dialogue of Apology structurally positions its recipients as victims, affected onlookers as bystanders or witnesses, and the apologist(s) as perpetrators, beneficiaries of injustice or deliverers/guarantors of justice. These positions will be discussed in detail in the following two chapters. For the time being, it is pertinent to note that a countering of the

victim-recipient position occurs in these narratives, and as demonstrated in Des Bowen's and others' responses, resistance to the victim construction that the Apology offers is represented in accounts that deflect the Apology by externalising it or assigning it to others. In so doing, respondents re-position themselves as witnesses (and narrators) despite the victim frame developed through the video production.

It may be that the library's preservation objectives mostly inform the processes of documenting responses to the Apology, but these objectives also inform choices in the editing suite of which narrative extracts to include in the final video. Because accounts of historical injustice are included, it would appear that the producers value these particular accounts over others. Yet through the focus on stories of injustice, the position of Aboriginal person as apology-recipient/victim is enhanced. In some digital stories (Jasmin Minniecon, Estelle Bowen, Herman Bambie, Terry O'Shane (all SLQ 2009, first accessed 2012), the respondent's engagement with the Apology is not part of the final recording. In a research interview with me, Gavin Bannerman confirmed that library staff and contractors edited the 2009 series away from the initial production environment (Bannerman, interview 2013). In contrast, the 2008 series (pilot) was co-produced with respondents in a workshop environment.

In conclusion

As awareness increases of the production practices in place around stories of historical and contemporary forms of injustice and associated trauma, including the process of making witness, these practices and processes can be understood as part of the Apology event and response. As demonstrated, Apology responses are capable of invoking that sense of duty and responsiveness reported by Frow (1998) and the empathy and relationship (however illusory) demonstrated by Des Bowen and other participants. In attending to the stories and accounts that comprise the responses we can see how narrators use stories to exercise agency and how viewers or readers may become secondary or tertiary witnesses but remain unsure of how to respond in turn. Yet it is with these stories that respondents connect, relate and interpret the experiences, events, meanings and emotions integral to the politics of apology and in these stories, ethical action is also demonstrated.

These political and ethical narratives, of which the videos are a pertinent example, and to which my thesis contributes, are also exposed. They are outside of their original context

of production and therefore vulnerable to being ‘reedited, remediated, redistributed and re-enacted in ways never anticipated’ by those who established the collections (Wake 2013:112). Though Wake writes about video archives of Holocaust testimony, I claim that her (following) speculations apply to any archive of narratives which are responsive to injustice and which engage with personal or community trauma, grief and loss:

it may be that we need to focus less on the ontological and more on the ideological, in order to consider when and where these video testimonies are being digitised and distributed, what cultural and political work they are being asked to do and what witnessing work they ask their spectators to do too (2013:139).

The processes of production entail both collection and distribution of narratives; if voices are ‘raised’, then so are audiences (the ‘spectators’ of Wake’s account). The responses to Apology draw particular and limited audiences, and perhaps not the audiences imagined by the respondents. Yet whether certain types of accounts or audiences are more or less effective with regard to collective political action, the role of stories remains central, particularly for groups without high political or material status. In this regard, it is also valuable to consider whether and how response stories work in conjunction with political apology to reframe injustice and re-position parties to justice. This chapter proposes that such considerations are central to the ethics of apology. Realising the limitations and benefits of narrative politics for social justice depends on a continual examination of the way in which personal experience stories, such as those examined in this thesis, are produced, accessed/re-presented, valued and responded to in turn. In another frame, an understanding of these concepts assists with thinking about the nature of moral economy and what it takes to participate in forms of moral economy like the Apology.

In the chapters that follow, further concepts will continue to illuminate the political and ethical nature of Apology and Apology-responsive narratives. Concepts that have already been introduced to the discussion will be expanded upon. These include subject positioning/re-positioning, transformations, reparative justice, and subversions/appropriation. In unpacking and explaining each of these concepts, I will demonstrate that in order to understand the Apology, we need to understand the way in which responses, as complicated – and even as radicalising – as they are, comprise its politics.

CHAPTER 4

Perspectives of political apology

Introduction: the politics of subject positioning

The concept of subject positioning comes from a psycho-narrative discourse, in which it is utilised to interpret and understand how people position themselves and others in relationship to each other or to events, and through speech interactions. The position is a perspective from which a person sees and experiences their life-world. As Davies and Harre state:

An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. (1990:46)

Davies and Harre describe subject positions as incorporating access to:

both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned. At least a possibility of notional choice is inevitably involved because there are many and contradictory discursive practices that each person could engage in. (1990:46)

This chapter extends Davies and Harre's framework of determinate speech acts to consider the Apology (inclusive of response) as a determinate narrative act. Because political apologies depend on socio-political endorsement to be effective, they need to be widely acknowledged and endorsed for any lasting social or personal reparative effects to take place:

what it is that has been said evolves and changes as the conversation develops. This way of thinking about speech acts allows for there to be multiple speech acts accomplished in any one saying and for any speech act hearing to remain essentially defeasible. ... The social meaning of what has been said will be shown to depend upon the positioning of interlocutors, which is itself a product of the social force a conversation action is taken 'to have'. (Davies and Harre 1990:45)

In the context of the Apology – which I claim is an ongoing political conversation in Australia – subject positions reveal the Apology's impact and its meanings. Importantly,

and what Davies and Harre explain, conversation/narrative can also shape and construct positions from which to perceive meaning. The meanings of Apology accord with differing positions taken in relationship to it. Further, I claim that the nature of apology means that the social meaning and value of the Apology is capable of developing and evolving through conversation. This chapter thus articulates the concept of subject positioning as an interpretive tool and an appropriate way to think through how we collectively make sense of political acts and how these acts take social effect.

In the larger Apology narrative, which is constituted discursively, we see a number of interpretive positions expressed as differing perspectives of Apology. These positions reflect and sometimes challenge predominant cultural characterisations (and cultural resources) as well as demonstrate degrees of agency and political efficacy. This chapter argues that the positions taken up in accounts of personal experience, specifically in storied accounts, are responsive to the Apology. They contribute to a negotiation of the overall narrative of the Apology and are directly reflective of the core value of political apology. That is, storied accounts demonstrate the way in which political apologies generate conversations about what it is to be a member of a society in the midst of such dialogue on injustice and reparation. Storied accounts also offer an opportunity for new positions, new interpretations of history and new relationships to emerge.

Many, almost universal, subject positions are described in culturally context-specific folk stories. Vladimir Propp's research (1928) identified common structures of stories and actors across a range of cultural circumstances, asserting that the fairytale structure is common across all narratives. As folk psychology, these kinds of stories engage with the implications of living according to a particular characterisation or position. Experience trajectories are in-built in these culturally and historically specific subject positions, and are drawn from those available within the fairytale structure, such as victim, villain, or hero. Tzvetan Todorov also expands on the fairytale to identify cultural roles and explain the agency associated with positioning:

There are thus four roles in any historical narrative with an ethical dimension: benefactor, beneficiary, malefactor and victim. ... To be the beneficiary of an act is less glorious than being its agent, because the fact of receiving constitutes a mark of our own need or powerlessness; to be the victim of a misdeed, on the other hand, is more respectable than being its agent. (2003:142)

Trauma culture theorists, working to understand humanity in a post-Holocaust society (1960s-1970s), articulated a range of victim-subject positions (Rothe 2011; Langer 2006). At that time, and still presently, a very small number of individuals stood in to represent the broader malfeasant culture of the Holocaust. Though one of the best known now, Adolf Eichmann was one of those few who was diligently characterised as banal (Arendt 1963). Victims, however, initially characterised as inhuman by their oppressors, through their own emergent stories of suffering and witnessing, transformed into survivors and heroes, while the Nazis generally became figured as inhuman. In addition, victim testimonials became commoditised and made more valuable than perpetrator testimonials. Thousands of mediated survivor testimonies are now archived.

The trauma positions, because they were modelled on the familiar multi-cultural constructs of fairytales, became readily utilised in public discourse, particularly around experiences of collective human rights violations and personal suffering. In experiential narratives of injustice, actor positions such as heroes and villains, audiences and choruses, the fallen and the redeemed, abound. These characters or positions are also recognisable within health and illness discourses, with people being characterised, for example, as sufferers, victims or survivors of villainous illness. Redemptive life paths – those that provide transition from sufferer or victim to survivor or victor – are privileged in each of these discourses, receiving prominence over other kinds of trajectories of experience. In contrast, Todorov finds the tragedy genre more relevant to history narratives, and emphasises ‘the impossibility of good’ (2003:147) that this genre represents, in which no good or evil position can be claimed, but neither can they be separated out from the narrative.

The Apology narrative and national membership

The Apology narrative is fluid, made up of diverse storied accounts, which function as theories and philosophies of the Apology and its historical context from different perspectives/positions, as in a multi-perspective story told by different characters.

While these perspectives enable us to see how the Apology has been experienced, the positions of various parties to Apology are also defined and distributed within the polysemic Apology narrative. This distribution happens in a dialogical fashion, that is, through ongoing exchange and interaction. The Apology narrative noticeably contains dialogue about political and social experiences, history, injustices and issues of

responsibility for reparation. Focussing particularly on the storied accounts that make up such dialogue, I claim that stories function strategically to memorialise or testify, but that they also express constructions of belonging and group membership that are political.

Group membership constructions and their distribution within the Apology narrative are the focus of this chapter. Such a focus on narratives as ‘exemplars of pragmatic “theories” in action’ (Squire 2007:194) allows for an interpretive and inductive analysis of the way in which storied accounts, as part of the practice of Apology’s narrative politics, not only demonstrate the everyday politics of national memberships but construct and distribute these memberships.

Collective identity and group membership constructions

The formal Apology motion focused on simple and clear membership categories. This first part of the Apology, crafted through consultation and cooperation with Stolen Generations members and advocates (NSDC 2014), described the Parliament, Indigenous peoples, the Stolen Generations, non-Indigenous peoples and the collective nation. Each of these categories was characterised throughout the formal Apology motion. The collective perpetrators are identified instrumentally as the ‘laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments’. The anonymised perpetrators, who could equally well be identified as Ministers and the citizens who voted them into – or did not vote them out of – Parliamentary and government office from the 1860s to the 1970s, ‘inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss’ according to the apology speech. Their victims are described as the ‘Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history’. The formal Apology tells a story about how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, although now characterised as respected, were mistreated in the past, particularly during one ‘blemished chapter’ in history. The Apology acknowledges that Stolen Generations experienced ‘pain, suffering and hurt’, as have their descendants and their families left behind.

Within the formal Apology, then, the audience is provided with a clear characterisation of Indigenous peoples and Stolen Generations as victims and the current Parliament as heroic moral leaders: ‘we harness the determination of all Australians’. Yet this audience is also left with only a vague notion of who the perpetrators/malefactors (i.e., villains) are. This raises an emerging ethical question about the origins and purpose of legislation. That is to say that legal instruments are purposively brought into operation by

Parliamentarians in order to regulate and guide society's behaviours and actions. The Australian legislation, for which Rudd apologises, was not only enforced but also proposed, agreed to, enacted and made viable by representatives of the Australian people. Over time, there was ample opportunity for subsequent Parliaments to examine and review the application of those particular laws.

Also unexplained is how, in the same address, a national 'us' can be characterised as both future equals and contemporary separates – who is 'harnessing' whose determination and to what ends? In this first part of the Apology, Rudd has no choice but to position himself as a member of the agential Parliamentary 'we'. As soon as he begins his own speech, the second part of the Apology, his use of 'I' (Prime Minister), and another version of 'we' (the Australian Labour Party) enables Rudd to reposition himself as leader of a new heroic Parliament.

This second part of the Apology noticeably contains a number of descriptions of Aboriginal peoples' painful and traumatic experiences of unjust governance, the most prominent being Nana Nungala Fejo's story, which Rudd introduces as an answer to the question 'why apologise?' Nungala Fejo is the only individual named in the entire apology. In the text she represents not only the Stolen Generations but also forgiveness within Aboriginal community. There is no parallel demonstration of responsibility and intra-community forgiveness in the account of how such injustice came to be legislated. Perpetrator others, whose names are in fact readily accessible in historical accounts, remain anonymised through the use of their official titles of 'politicians', 'parliaments of the nation', 'the Northern Territory Protector of Natives', 'the Western Australian Protector of Natives' and those 'Commonwealth and state protectors of natives' in attendance at the 1937 inaugural conference on Indigenous affairs.

Rudd said he spoke to Nana Nungala Fejo in order to understand the Stolen Generations' experiences of suffering, the grief of separation and the resilience/attitude required to overcome these damaging experiences. Yet throughout his speech, he makes a plea to the Parliament for bipartisan action and resolve. Even though Rudd declares that bipartisan political and social responsibility exists for repair of historical injustice (a concept vaguely represented by the term 'reconciliation'), his use of varying and transitioning 'we' collectives – from his political party to the Parliament to all Australians – effectively serves to resist declaring accountability. The inconsistent characterisation of

the responsibilities and capabilities of his ‘we’ collectives allows even those who do identify as responsible to defer the action to a different sub-collective, or indeed, with Nana Nungala Fejo’s resilience and compassion on display, to infer that the capacity for recovery best resides with Stolen Generations individuals themselves.

In order to better understand the construction and distribution of individual and collective identity positions within the larger Apology narrative, my discussion will draw further on the concept of subject positioning in discourse (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman 2003) and re-introduce the membership theory of apology (Nobles 2008). The following part of this section will then compare the membership categories of Rudd’s apology speech with those of Keating’s Redfern speech in order to illustrate the way in which collective memberships can be constructed either explicitly or ambiguously.

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman explain that ‘social constructs “fix” the range of identity positions available to people, usually as a set of historically constituted discourses amongst which each person has to locate her or himself’ (2003:39). With reference to both Lacanian and Kleinian perspectives, they propose that in order to understand and explore the assignment – which I call distribution – of subject positions ‘a combination ... between a rigorous awareness of the constructing activity of social processes and an equally potent analysis of the agentic struggles of individual subjects’ is required (2003:41). In the dialogic Apology narrative, we can observe both the social and individual processes of subject positioning. While Davies and Harre emphasise that position choice is possible – they refer to a ‘choosing subject’ (1990:52) – the work of Frosh et al., while attempting to address why individuals locate themselves in certain positions demonstrates that ‘subject positions are coercive and complex’ (2003:52) and that individuals do not necessarily make conscious choices between one position or another. The subjective positioning of Indigenous peoples in Australia was not an identification of choice. It was imposed by the laws of successive settler governments and parliaments and reinforced by the persistence of white social privilege. Further, the inter-subjectivity of the Apology supports the historical construct of a privileged ‘us’ (a powerful white majority) and a disadvantaged ‘them’ (a group within a minority).

In terms of the broader social context of experiences of apology, it is timely to remind ourselves of the operation of moral economy. As discussed in the introduction chapter, Barkan (2000) conceptualised the moral economy at work in justice dialogues and, as

Nobles explained in an interview, the moral economy allows less powerful groups to trade on morality in rights claims (Mouradian and Nobles 2008). Moral economy works to further the justice demands of minority groups by highlighting the enduring value of morality. Justice is obtained and the (nobly) victimised group transfers moral redemption to those implicated in the injustice/justice. Moral economy underpins the membership theory of apology developed by Nobles (2008). Her theory works to explain how the intra-state apology process articulates the rights, obligations and responsibilities of citizens in order to ‘change the terms and meanings of membership in a political community’ (Nobles 2008:x). Nobles claims that political apology is an important symbolic act because it can effect such changes and therefore has potential to shape the affective dimensions of reconciliation, and to influence political arrangements and policy direction.

While Nobles focuses on characterising groups that act to drive the delivery of apology, this thesis extends the membership theory to apology responses as respondents take up positions within the groups that they associate with their own identity and with their own relationship to the Apology. Nobles claims that apologies re-shape historical dialogue when they offer new understandings of history and that this is at the core of political apology’s outcomes. I further this theory by claiming that, when thinking about the range of positions available to the respondents and spoken of in their accounts, the ways in which the narrative act of apology makes positions available is of most relevance to the understanding of how apology achieves redefinition of national membership. For both apologetic post-colonial and post-conflict states, the way in which apology shapes narratives of belonging and responsibility and how these narratives then effect contemporary national relationships is an ongoing research concern.

Membership positions allow actors to engage politically in social interactions by taking up and referencing the political and/or moral capital with which a position or social collective has been culturally endowed. For example, in our interview, when Tony Birch talked about the way in which the Apology ‘allowed Rudd to make a statement about his position as prime minister’ he included examples of political speeches from Prime Ministers Paul Keating (1992) and Julia Gillard (2012):

So, in relationship, if you again compare it to something like the Redfern speech or even something like Julia Gillard’s misogyny speech, I think it allowed Rudd to make a statement about his position as a prime minister (Interview 2013).

Though Tony Birch may not have meant to reference identity positioning theory, this remark is a useful entry point to further discussion. The position of Prime Minister (PM) is powerful in itself, regardless of the individual who is in the role. Yet the character of PM can be shaped and tested by that individual's actions. His or her public persona and grand political gestures while in the role – the way in which an individual displays and utilises the position's endowed power – can impact on the position's very legitimacy. Conversely, the position of Stolen Generations member is imbued with a sense of victimisation and powerlessness that is also attached to individuals' actions.

Of the three examples of symbolism given above by Tony Birch, Rudd's Apology was the most highly orchestrated. In 2008, the pre-event circulation (government to media to public) of the formal statement of apology built anticipation and set up political positions. Rudd's Apology speech was not only an apology but confirmed a change of guard in Australia's culture wars. In contrast, Keating's Redfern speech was poorly attended but has since been recognised as one of the great speeches of post-colonial times and is still often referenced in conjunction with reconciliation and Indigenous peoples' justice. Gillard's misogyny speech, directed at the then leader of the opposition, Tony Abbott, was filmed in the usual course of a day in Federal Parliament, was widely shared and commented on by an online public and quickly circulated globally as an allegory of modern feminism. Each of these three memorable political moments reflects on the historical character and position of Australian Prime Minister.

As described previously, Rudd positioned himself as a righteous and heroic leader of Parliament and the nation. Gillard, while presenting herself as morally offended but not victimised, characterised her political opponent Abbott as a hypocritical misogynist. In contrast to the high moral positions of Rudd and Gillard, and the authorising context of the Parliament, Keating assumed a low-rhetoric style in a much more informal outdoors environment.

Within each of the three political speeches, different membership groups are characterised with 'us' and 'them' or 'we' and 'they'. In Gillard's case, it was a female and moral 'us'. Both Rudd and Keating focused on Aboriginal reconciliation and so the 'us' became non-Indigenous. As discussed earlier in this section, Rudd described his non-Indigenous 'us' using a variety of different categorisations and positions (Parliamentarians, politicians, the ALP, settler society, state and religious institutions, the

Australian nation) and his ‘they’ as Indigenous Australians, particularly Stolen Generations and their descendants. In comparison to Keating’s Redfern speech, Rudd’s non-Indigenous groups are complicated. Tom Clark claims that Keating’s speech ‘invokes a curiously empowering version of the ‘us-and-them’ narrative framework underpinning the Indigenous reconciliation project in Australia (as elsewhere)’ (2013:11). I am arguing that the difference – the empowerment – comes from Keating’s very clear definition of ‘us’ as non-Aboriginal Australians:

The starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians.

Rudd’s Apology narrative consistently objectifies Indigenous people as victims for example referring to proposed government-funded services that will provide dignity and equal opportunities. In contrast, Keating describes the injustice being done by the non-Aboriginal collective – the Indigenous ‘they’ have been subject to the non-Indigenous ‘our’ injustice, to ‘our ignorance and our prejudice’. Keating then includes reference to the influence and ‘remarkable contributions’ of Aboriginal people:

They have shaped our identity ... we should never forget they have helped build this nation.

Nobles’ theory of apology as being capable of re-articulating national memberships is not evidenced in the 2008 Apology. In particular contrast to the inclusivity of Keating’s ‘nation’, Rudd’s implications are instead that Indigenous people are exclusive of the national collective. The fleeting nature of the Apology’s ability to re-articulate the ‘us-and-them’ relationships is demonstrated in the following research interview extract. Bev Murray describes both an Aboriginal and an Australian collective, and the movement between identification with each at the time of the Apology and afterwards:

I think the big emotion for me was finally there was an acknowledgement about the shocking things that were done to Aboriginal people. Finally. ‘Cause before that, it was something, especially through John Howard’s era was that we didn’t, we didn’t count. What happened to Aboriginal people didn’t matter. It was all something that happened during the settlement and we were just collateral who obviously didn’t, we didn’t count. So, and I think, I’ve never, I’ve never really seen myself as an Australian. Always Aboriginal. Not felt a part of this country. You know, the white Australia – that’s how I’ve always seen it. And it was only then that I felt, ‘Oh, I do feel proud of Australia and being Australian.’ But it didn’t last long. (Interview, 2014)

The reader must remember that those Aboriginal Australians who were removed and to whom the Apology was most directly addressed, often had both Aboriginal and white

parentage/heritage. The removal and assimilation policies were designed to impact Aboriginal culture and identification. Stepping between collectives, or what some research participants called ‘two worlds’ (Edwards, Murray), and whether or not they acknowledged the accuracy of this description, the culturally defined membership positions have great personal and political meaning in each ‘world’. Narrative genres as cultural resources provide links between personal and cultural narratives. That the genre at work in the Apology narrative is most recognisably a dark fairytale speaks to this discomfiting reality of injustice. The dark fairytale was mentioned in the research interview with Tony Birch (2013) as a reference to black/white relations in Australia. The darkness of such narratives aligns them more with the brothers Grimm’s retelling of original tales over, for example, Disney versions.

As mentioned previously, understandings of the subject positions that occur in relationship to the Apology are drawn from the theory of cultural experiences of trauma. The victim/heroine (objectified), survivor (hero), bystander (anti-hero), perpetrator (villain) and witness (hero) positions can all be taken up in relation to the Apology as well as to trauma and injustice. The perpetrator and bystander positions are somewhat absented from the Apology narrative but nevertheless exist by implication. Through Rudd’s proposed narrative, the state as silent perpetrator of injustice/trauma (villain) attempts a re-positioning as the witness (hero) with the endorsement of society’s bystanders who, through association, also become repositioned as witnesses as if at a trial of the perpetrator. In this attempt at coercive repositioning, the state seeks to redeem its moral standing through the process of political apology, yet it reasserts its paternalism by remaining an absented perpetrator. Human instrumentality is initially obscured by a focus in the Apology speech on ‘decisions’ and ‘deliberate calculated policies of the state’ (Rudd 2008) as if the offensive laws and policies have had a life of their own. Rudd appears to identify responsibility in the following assertion:

put simply, the laws that our parliaments enacted made the Stolen Generations possible (2008).

Yet, even here, it is not a simple expression of position; Rudd’s collectives shift swiftly between the Australian and state parliaments and society so that the only clear line of accountability leads to the laws.

While collective and group identities have so far been described in terms of large collectives, the language throughout respondents’ narratives is often reminiscent of

smaller more familial relations and characterises such positions as relational. The language of parent-child relationships reflects the power asymmetries in national relationships between Aboriginal and Islander peoples and the non-Indigenous population, particularly government. This parental paradigm can work both ways. In Tony Birch's stories of responding to the injustices associated with the Apology, for example, non-Indigenous people are positioned as the child – too immature, and irrational to take collective responsibility and to act with maturity:

Soon as you start to say, 'Well, hang on. It's not a simple story. It's a very complex story and ...' people just find it really difficult. It's not peculiar to these stories but it is in the sense of a national story. You see there are similar violent reactions amongst men when you're talking about violence against women so that men find it difficult to take a collective responsibility. So, in other words, it might be that a man hasn't himself been violent towards women but he can't understand – 'but we're not talking about you as an individual, necessarily, but the notion of collective responsibility and what are you prepared to do about it?' So it's about getting people over that hurdle of it being an individual thing 'cause you're talking about a collective response. It's about people having the maturity to take collective responsibility and I don't think people can do that (interview 2013).

Two further examples of collective identities feature in Tony Birch's story: the males who resist collective responsibility and the collective who advocates against violence. The resistant male becomes part of a membership category that Tony Birch speaks to from its counter-position ('we're not talking about you'). As discussed, membership categories, both large and intimate (familial), that occur throughout the Apology narrative broadly separate into 'we' groups and 'they' groups. This is not, however, a simple and straightforward association. In the following research interview extract, EvaJo Edwards positions herself as both Australian and Aboriginal as she uses 'we' to associate herself with both groups. She then utilises 'you' and 'us' to separate herself from white Australia:

it's so important that Australia knows its history and, if you choose to call yourself Australian, you need to know that. And even when you come to this country as a new Australian, you need to know how this country was settled and the battles that were fought. It wasn't as easy as 1788 and those white sails, sailing in the sun there. You know? There was so much more pre-1788 that people choose not to know about. We have that debate every year on Survival Day, which is Australia Day. The changing of the flag, and the impact that celebration – that you celebrate – and how does that impact on us. 'Cause for us, for a long time, it was a day of mourning and now we call it 'Survival Day' 'cause we have survived 230 years of white settlement. So, amongst all that, letting people know the impacts of the removal of us Aboriginal children and why some of us are like we are (interview 2014).

Groups are identified and characterised when narrators identify restricted collective descriptions; as with the above examples, ‘they’ groups are exclusive of the narrator, whereas ‘we’ groups are inclusive. The narrator may, however, also take a hypothetical position as a member of a ‘they’ group, or make an analogy with the ‘they’ position in order to nuance and trouble such categorisations. ‘We’ groups are often described by respondents as they speak inclusively (using ‘our’, ‘us’ and ‘we’) in accounts of collectives, and where they describe their own identity or response in terms of a collective context. The interpretive approach of this thesis to the identification, analysis and discussion of different collectives in the videos and research interviews draws on Alfred Schutz’s work (1964) on intersubjectivity. Schutz’s categorisations of contemporary social collective relations and their separation into ‘we’ (face-to-face/immediate)-relations and ‘they’ (typified/presupposed)-relations are useful in the interpretive framework that this chapter presents. Schutz’s framework has, at its base, a possibility that ‘they/them’, once known or encountered, can become ‘we/us’.

In the interview narratives of EvaJo Edwards (above) and Bev Murray (below), shifts between ‘we’ and ‘they’ groups are associated with shifts in narrative contexts and perspectives – shifts in relationships – and this is why I also speculate that collective (and personal) identity associations are faceted, pragmatic and depend on context for their expression. That is, the group relationship (which we could also think of as a subjective identity as well as a position) most salient at the time becomes most relevant for the expression of the narrator’s perspective. Davies and Harre’s theory allows for such multiplicity of self-positioning, as they explain that it is not incongruent in everyday life to take more than one position:

If we are to come close to understanding how it is that people actually interact in everyday life we need the metaphor of an unfolding narrative, in which we are constituted in one position or another within the course of one story, or even come to stand in multiple or contradictory positions, or to negotiate a new position by ‘refusing’ the position that the opening rounds of a conversation have made available to us. With such a metaphor we can begin to explain what it means to ‘refuse’ to accept the nature of the discourse through which a particular conversation takes place (1990:53).

We see such refusal and positional plurality in the research interview narratives when, narrating the impact of the Apology, respondents who spoke about the impact for Stolen Generations members expressed their identities as Stolen Generations by degrees, as being or not being affected by the removal policies, and by extension, the Apology. For

example, Len Tregonning compares himself to his cousins when describing what it was like to experience the Apology:

It was all right on the day. I mean there were lots of people that were affected. In my case being taken away at the age of 12 whereas other ones I know, some of my cousins, they were removed as babies. So those sorts of things are really traumatic for some of them. Yeah, pretty emotional but it was also a day of celebration, finally. Unlike Mr Howard where everyone turned a back. (Interview 2014)

In this regard, Len Tregonning is a Stolen Generations member, but he complicates this position by identifying cousins who were more affected by their removal, reinforcing differential experience even within a 'we' group.

In a further example, Bev Murray, not a Stolen Generations member but narrating a personal impact of the Apology, expresses identity as a member of the Aboriginal community within the broad Australian community. She refuses the Aboriginal person-as-victim position offered by the Apology, as she takes on an alternative witnessing/advocacy perspective:

The full story has not been told yet and we need to hear from those people who experienced the removal, being kept away from their family deliberately. Being told lies. And just the, the shocking treatment of these people, you know, by the churches and the institutions, and government. It has not been told. Some of it's coming out again through the Royal Commission and, I guess, some of it is just unforgivable I think, 'cause we hear their stories here. I'm just, I'm just shocked. You don't realise how bad it, it was. And for me I'm just amazed and inspired by how our mob have survived and how they can walk around, you know. And sure they may have issues and some of them have, you know, drug and alcohol addictions but they get – they have their own families and, you know, it's not perfect but nothing is. No family's perfect. And I'm just, you know, inspired by them. And, you know, how they've, how they've managed to, how they've managed to survive and can walk around, and, and be happy. Not all the time. As I said, you know, they're big issues. There's such severe trauma in the community and we're only touching the, the tip of the iceberg now. (Interview 2014)

Bev Murray distinguishes groups within groups in her refusal, again introducing complexity. In his interview, Tony Birch (2013) took a subject position of observer in relation to the Apology and this perspective was quite stable throughout the interview narrative. His expressions of membership, however, shifted across collectives and produced the type of complexity seen with the examples above. Different subject positions and memberships allow differing expressions of the experience of political apology.

Tony Birch, as observer, was particularly adept at taking a hypothetical perspective from an others' position. These distanced external and hypothetical perspectives are a feature of the observer (as Greek chorus/omniscient narrator) to apology position. The observer attempts an objective or intellectual position. In Birch's observations in the following extract we can see how hypothetical positions – such as the flippant apologist ('what else do people want?') and apology-resistant collective ('why do we have to go over this again?') – become a means of perceiving and shaping a broader national group that encompasses many collectives (i.e., many positions). The outside perspective of the narrator allows him to even differentiate inclusive groups as he makes his observations: 'we saw a lot of, yeah, tears by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people'; 'we give the apology then we don't talk about it again'.

So it's also the thing that I've been interested in since I've been writing in this area and that is that it's a strange phenomenon of Aboriginal people being allowed to speak once but not twice so that I've certainly heard people say quite openly since then, 'Oh look we gave the apology. What, what else do people want?' Or, 'Why do we have to go over this again?' As if, therefore, as an end point, it becomes something where it's, we give the apology then we don't talk about it again. Now that's really important I think because there's something quite peculiar to this as a colonial issue because we don't find this when we talk about other issues of trauma and violence. (Interview 2013)

These two distinct parties to the Apology are characterised by Tony Birch taking on their hypothetical perspectives, such that he takes a non-Aboriginal voice (the apologist/collective) to narrate that perspective. In addition to his ambivalent evaluation of the Apology, Birch appears fluid about his collective identity and group membership and his constructions of these vary throughout the interview. In the extract above, for example, 'we' refers to two quite distinct collectives: with 'we give the apology', it's a national non-Aboriginal or non-Stolen Generations collective; and with, 'we don't find this when we talk about other issues', an intellectual/advocate collective. The way in which Tony Birch differentiates himself from some groups as he constructs them and aligns himself with other groups by using 'we' or 'they/them' is also common throughout the responsive narratives studied.

In the interview narrative, one group from which Tony Birch distinctly differentiates himself is the Stolen Generation and intergeneration. This group is privileged with relation to the Apology. Tony Birch excludes himself from this collective both through his outside observer position and by effectively characterising the Apology as belonging to

the ‘people who were taken’, and further, to those members of the Stolen Generation for which the Apology has actual meaning and relevance (‘for some people it was so important to hear those words’).

As demonstrated, the ‘us’ and ‘them’ positions of the Apology are complex not only within Rudd’s speech as propositions, but in the ensuing responsive dialogue. These positions are, however, further complicated by discussants (such as those cited in this section) as they engage with and negotiate their own and collective interpretations of what it means to be party to the Apology. Responsive narratives come from positions that resist or refuse those positions available in Rudd’s formal Apology. While Rudd keeps the position of victim broadly characterised as Aboriginal, he breaks down the position of apologise or perpetrator into smaller units. As discussed in Chapter 3, the simple positions brought into play by Keating are larger categories, which allow for complexity within the position of perpetrator and which, in turn, enables better identification with a position of responsibility. Positions articulated by national leaders matter because at stake are the terms of belonging to the national collective represented by the leader. The positions characterised by Rudd thus differ from those characterised by Keating in their potential to effect a re-articulation of national membership and collective responsibility. Rudd’s positions fail to engage those who cannot imagine themselves in the positions of responsibility/agency that Keating described. Following Stuart Hall (2000), this thesis supports the theory that recognition and inclusivity of complexity and diversity – both the necessity and the ‘impossibility of identities’ (2000:29) – is better ground for the imaginative and discursive construction of emergent collectives.

Political apology: an ethical programme?

With the preceding discussion in mind, the ethics of subject positioning – those guiding systems and principles that come onto play when we position others and ourselves in our stories of experience – can now be more closely examined. The following brief discussion outlines why the ethics of subject positioning need to be acknowledged, and how such an approach interacts with Nobles’ theory that apologies provide for a truthful expression of national history.

My argument goes along these lines: that any apology narrative, if it is to be taken as a new true version of history, must also clarify new and true subject positions in relation to this history. On the topic of a truthful expression of national history, it is important to

recognise that the concept of historical truth brings with it an indication or recognition of a certain amount of historical deceit or ignorance. The Apology's ability to overcome deceit is associated with its political integrity, as in the following:

Lies can destroy the integrity of national life only because we value truthfulness in ways not reducible to the practical benefits it may bring. People find it terrible to live a national lie just as they do to live a lie in their personal lives. (Gaita 2000:188)

In this way, truthfulness, or, in other words, acknowledgment of historical injustice, is an ethical programme (Squire 2007:168-175, after Foucault). The ways in which Apology politics distributes subjects and their relationships matters as much as the acceptance of the Apology. To accept the truthfulness of the Apology's recognition of historical injustice, and its categorisation or positioning of victims of injustice, means also to recognise the truthfulness of a collective position of responsibility for that injustice. Positioning is both an expression and attribution of agency (including narrative agency) and actions can be made available through or attributed to a subject position. Many subject positions are unconsciously taken up, however, and this unconsciousness extends to the Apology. For confirmation of the complacent, unconscious way we often accept classic subject positions, one need only think about the novelty of a disrupted narrative. In a re-imagined folktale, positions are made more visible (for example, in the popular 'Shrek', a classic construct associating beauty with heroism is challenged because the ogre is the hero and the princess is ugly).

In relation to the Apology, constitutive elements of an ethical programme are evidenced in the political structures and processes made visible within stories about the self and the other, for example, the difference between Rudd's account of himself and Rudd's account of Nana Nungala Fejo. Apology narratives, which encompass apology dialogue, act politically to offer alternative realities and histories. But to influence and shape contemporary relationships, behaviours and attitudes, the narrative must be negotiated through interaction. As an ethical programme, the Apology narrative and the relational positions it gives rise to are negotiable. Simply, re-distribution or re-assignment of political agency through subject positioning could be a successful outcome of political apologies.

Positioning is a useful analytical construct (Squire et al 2014:64-66), and discussion in the following chapters will further explore the authority a narrator/orator has to position

others, how they persuade their audiences that these positions are valid, and how one constructs or takes up an influential position in the dialogue of apology. The preceding outline of the ethics of subject positioning is further developed in the closing pages of this chapter, however, as discussion turns to the principles underlying positioning processes.

Perspectives on Apology

Danielle Celermajer (2009) argued in a paper she published that Rudd's apology became politically and socially endorsed because it shifted the frame away from Howard's rhetoric on responsibility – and refusal to accept responsibility – and focused on acknowledgement of shame instead. In this chapter, I have drawn attention to political apology as a proposition to the aggrieved and the aggressors in the form of a narrative. For the 2008 Apology, this proposed narrative seeks, through acknowledgement of injustice and shame, to reposition the state as witness-hero and by extension invites the implicated constituency to also position themselves as witness-heroes by endorsing Rudd's narrative acknowledgement. Such a proposition, however symbolic or rhetorical, is politically coercive or at least persuasive as Rudd also seeks political legitimacy through this narrative.

As Tony Birch pointed out in his interview with reference to the films, *The Rabbit Proof Fence* and *Sapphires* (see Chapter 5), history can be blurred by popular media representations of real life events. Such stories are at risk of being regarded as entertainment rather than as dramatisations of history. The Apology was always at risk of being taken as cathartic entertainment rather than as a proposition for acknowledgement of a more full and truthful Australian history that would facilitate changing relations between settler and Aboriginal peoples. If we understand political apologies as propositions, we can indeed observe that the narrative proposed by Rudd in 2008 has been shaped and reshaped over time, and that subject positions have been re-distributed and re-defined sometimes in concert with those implied within the Apology, and sometimes quite differently.

With reference to the previous chapter's discussion, I claim that the moral economy is coercive here in attributing cultural value to certain kinds of stories. Stories of surviving, which perpetuate a fallacy of assured redemption, seem to function better as moral commodities than stories of meaningless suffering. Such demands, however, place the responsibility with the individual victim to heal, to recover, to survive, that is, to re-

construct their own subject position. The problem is not with the victim's resilience or transformation to witness/survivor; the problem is that any political or social responsibility or opportunity for transformative cultural change can become obfuscated by the survivor's redemption. Additionally, the audience/perpetrators become inert; no action is needed on their part for a satisfactory outcome from the process.

The teller-audience dynamic that operates in the context of political legitimization or coercion is described by Alister McKeich (interview 2015) in the following extract. His response illustrates the emotional dimensions of the teller-audience relationship in the context of telling and hearing historical accounts of trauma and abuse:

I think it's harder for people to listen to [Okay] and to appreciate, and to understand. It can be very difficult for the person talking as well ... I think people feel uncomfortable that those crimes were allowed to happen. People feel uncomfortable about the society in which we live. I think it also upsets people that, out of an empathetic kind of reason as well, that people don't, you know, generally, speaking, people don't like to see other people go through pain and harm, and suffering. And also because this happened when people were children, that adds another layer on top of that as well in terms of the injustice of it and the damage that it caused. And I think it also challenges people in the way we feel comfortable in our society, and the power structures, and the worldview that people grow used to or they're very fond of, or committed to, particularly if they are of religious persuasion, and it really shakes their integrity and the pillars of, so-called pillars of our society that people take for granted. Either take for granted and don't think about it really much or actually actively support and participate in those pillars. Suddenly the, the reality of their, their worldview is challenged and they're uncomfortable with that. I was actually just telling my partner the other day about Salvation Army Box Hill Boys' Home and she was like, 'My parents used to go to that church.' And I was like, 'Yeah, that's where,' well we filmed Uncle Jack Charles and that. I was like, 'Boys were getting like – had some serious shit go down in that building.' And she was like, 'I can't believe that that's where we used to go to ...' She just couldn't actually, I mean she could believe it but it was just like, 'Wow! That was actually the church my parents went to,' and that's where she went, 'That's really crazy.' And so, when people start to hear things like that it's too challenging and then, suddenly, their world – they have to change their whole world view to encompass that information. (Alister McKeich, interview 2015)

Acknowledgement that hearing information contrary to an established worldview is a challenge assists with understanding why it is so difficult for audiences to hear and legitimate alternative narratives. In turn, it helps to explain the difficulties encountered by those who present – or live – alternative or traumatic narratives. As Rothe (2011) repeatedly demonstrates, once acknowledgement of victimhood occurs, the responsibility for the transformation to survivor often becomes an individual one. Audiences can legitimate the position of victim, but they have more difficulty legitimating and taking up

a position of effective responsibility for the victim's wellbeing. Shame and responsibility become entangled while individual or more specific groups of perpetrators cannot be identified. The general population resists identification as perpetrator and therefore deflects shame and resists responsibility. In the case of historical injustice and contemporary impacts in Australia, broad political change is left to trickle down from the dazzling but blinding, and numbingly entertaining, ceremony of the Apology. As Tony Birch said: 'people often think that more came out of it than actually did' (interview 2013).

Some of the positions taken in the Apology narrative resist legitimating the coercive narrative provided by the State. Many responsive narratives in the Apology dialogue, both from Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, engage with the concept of shame and the forensics of blame and responsibility, demonstrating a resistance to the State's narrative. Yet the Apology's association with shame problematises Nobles' theory of how apology effects changes in national relationships. With shame comes responsibility avoidance, and this dimension of the politics of apology remains under-theorised. That is, once apology has been collectively experienced, in what ways does shame stifle its potency? With John Baxter, the analogy of apology as opening the door led to a rich account of the way in which victim or cultural leader characterisations both serve to subdue shame but not to establish relationship.

KM: Just picking up on your analogy of apology as opening the door, I wonder what it might have opened the door to if, if things had flowed on from it?

JB: Oh I guess the sky is the limit I suppose but ... you know, I s'pose you look at a, a scenario where, I mean I worked with the Koori night market, I'm with the Victorian, with the Reconciliation Victoria with the First Peoples' Disability Network. And, on those boards, on those committees, there is a percentage, you know, a voting percentage of Aboriginal persons. And so you've got a, either an even vote or actually a, a bias towards your Aboriginal persons within the, the voting structure. And you say, 'Well, you know, is that negative discrimination?' And I said, 'Well no, it's not.' I said, 'Because what we're endeavouring to do here is to put a good, positive, Aboriginal focus into decisions that are made.' And they said, 'Well the only way you can really do that is by having Aboriginal people make, making the decisions,' you know. It's like, if I go over to China and live in China, well is there an expectation that maybe I should learn Chinese? That I should know the Chinese customs and fit into their society? I have to obviously abide by their rules. Somebody should have told Schapelle Corby that, you know. She's sitting there trying to blame everybody else but herself and trying to get off early, you know. I think she should have sat there for a full term and then some. This is it, you know. And I think it's part of that, that not wanting to. So, you know, well look, you know, it's something we don't,

you know, it's this, it's this apathetic misunderstood understanding that, oh, you know, we're all gonna fall into living in humpies and burnt-out dwellings in the middle of nowhere that have got no electricity, live in our third-world conditions. And you're thinking, why, what would make you think for a moment that Aboriginal communities enjoy living in, in those conditions, you know, with no education, with the discriminatory policies that are enforced on them, you know, every day of their life? They just want to live a normal life the same as everybody else and practise their culture you know. And we have many migrants come out here. I'm going to a festival called Global Fiesta next week down in Box Hill and that's a multicultural festival that celebrates Harmony Day. You know, and you think well this is good. We're allowing cultures from all over the world to come here and freely practise their culture and their religious beliefs. It should be the way, you know. But we still have a thing with it, you know, we don't know about the Aboriginal culture and, you know, are they gonna take over the land just because they were here first? So we can't allow that to happen. So, you know, we'd better put, you know, serious things in step to ensure that that doesn't happen. You know.

KM: Where do you find that attitude expressed most?

JB: Older people. I was talking to a reconciliation group and they said, 'Well, you know ...' 'cause they're very set in their ways and, and they said, 'Well probably reconciliation ...' to them their interpretation was, '... is not, is not engaging with Aboriginal people but it's an understanding of the history and the life of Aboriginal people.' So they don't want to – you know, on an official capacity, you get, you know, someone to come in and do a Welcome to Country or smoking ceremony, or do some training, or whatever, whatever, you know. Show them their sacred site. Yeah, that's okay but, you know, inviting them around to their place for tea and, you know, babysitting their kids, and blah, blah, blah, you know. That's why they have the, you know, the little raise money jars, you know, places like McDonald's – yeah, 'cause that makes you feel good about yourself. You've appeased yourself. You know, like going and getting confession, you know. 'And so therefore I've helped the little kiddies out and so I'll sleep better at night,' you know. 'So I don't have to get my hands dirty.'

KM: I'm seeing a picture here.

JB: Yeah. So, and you're thinking, 'Well maybe they should have not been so helpful and that's why maybe things aren't working as well as they could. Because we're not really wishing to commit, you know. We're looking through the plexi-glass of life.' (interview 2014)

In this chapter, I contend that the way in which the Apology positions and characterises victims and perpetrators of historical injustice in Australia interferes with any desired change. The Apology narrative continues to anonymise state and social perpetrators yet identifies victims and further, celebrates survivors as if there are only personal circumstances at play. That is, the Apology celebrates the individual without addressing the social circumstances of ongoing disadvantage and trauma amongst those who may be instead characterised as sufferers, or even as dysfunctional individuals who are strangely unable to convert to survivor. Further, the perpetrators' – and their beneficiaries' –

anonymity persists under the cover of shame and any of the pathways to acknowledgement and acceptance of social and collective responsibility and relationship, that is, real national membership, remain in the dark.

Conclusion

To summarise the discussion and analysis of this chapter, I have shown that differing subject positions are made available and distributed within the Apology narrative. This distribution takes effect through everyday narrative interactions and demonstrates the implications of Apology politics. Participants in Apology dialogue express subject positions as they describe themselves and others in relationship with the Apology.

These political observations are present in the respondents' narratives as different perspectives taken in order to interpret – that is, to narrate – the Apology's political value over time.

By noting the distribution of positions of the Apology and responses to it, this chapter identifies a key problem with political apology: that it is necessarily undertaken by perpetrators, by an institutionally dominant hegemony politically, legally, and socially. In this chapter, I have used 'perpetrators' to describe a continuous historical collective (i.e., 'white' settler society) in the same way that 'victims' has often been used to describe intergenerational victims of injustice. One could claim that the nation's integrity has been damaged by the injustice of historic policies and practices of removal. Yet no matter the moral damage sustained by the state, the gap in life circumstances and experiences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians illuminates and clearly identifies groups of beneficiaries and intergenerational victims of historical injustices. Additionally, with the offending white settler hegemony still in place, the Apology can in fact hinder progress towards social justice because, at the same time as admitting fault, the collective perpetrator-beneficiary is also asking for endorsement of their hegemonic power to apologise. In other words, the collective's ability to wield a reparative power operates under hegemonic terms. In this way, the perpetrator-beneficiaries continue to secure a privileged position in the political relationship between settler and Indigenous peoples while deflecting responsibility for reparation and re-distribution of power.

In one-to-one apology, it is easy to distinguish positions, roles and responsibilities. In this regard, it may be more helpful to think of the dyadic relationship between apologisee and

apologised-to as aggressor and aggrieved or offender and offended. The aggressor has injured the aggrieved, is therefore at fault and, by apologising, recognises both some responsibility towards the aggrieved and the value of a restored or repaired relationship with the aggrieved. An apology is as much a statement of responsibility as

it is of commitment to moral relationship. In order to re-establish or repair relations, the cooperation of the offended is the important and potentially transformational aspect: the offended endorses the offender's apology narrative when they accept the apology by accepting also that they are indeed victim/offended. In political apology, which is more often tri-partite, this legitimation may also be sought from third-party observers and witnesses who are in a position to endorse the version of events that the apology narrative offers. The endorsement of such acknowledgement of historical injustices by the wide group of observers and witnesses actually reinforces victimhood. Taking up a position of third party observer/witness is to also not take a position of victim/offended or of perpetrator/offender. Sedimentation of the position of victims (rather than perpetrators) extends beyond the moment of apology to influence enduring national membership constructions and affiliations, subject positions, selfhoods, social relationships and everyday interactions. With these effects in mind political apologies, which acknowledge wrongdoing/injustice but do not lead to broad and responsive remedial actions, can be seen instead as attempts to secure the paternal and reinforce the self-legitimizing moral position of the state.

CHAPTER 5

Transformations (shifts in political memberships, subjects and values)

Introduction

This chapter engages further with Nobles' membership theory of apology and builds on the previous chapter's discussion of the way in which subject positions are distributed in the Apology narrative. As Chapter 4 explained, membership positions allow actors to engage politically in social interactions by taking up and using the political and/or moral capital of particular positions. Here, I particularly examine the 'transformative' potential of political apologies. I do this by inquiring whether the respondents' storied accounts and experiential reports of the Apology, that is, their narrative responses to it, transform or revise conventional/historical constructions of the terms and meanings of national membership. The chapter shows that by constructing different subject positions these narrative responses can achieve some of what we might call the transformational effects of political apology.

By acknowledging historical injustice, political apologies attempt to transform or repair society. As I go on to explain, it is not only official political apologies, but also just as importantly narrative responses to them that attempt to repair society by transforming national belonging and collective responsibility. Earlier, I emphasised the way in which political apologies reflect government support of group rights: apologies are an answer to an awareness of some deficit in the group relationships within or between nations. Nobles argues that official apologies 'are desired, offered, and given in order to change the terms and meanings of membership in a political community' (2008:x) and that 'apologies play an important if under appreciated part in bringing certain views about history and moral obligation to bear in public life' (2008:xi). Official apologies offer a re-statement of national histories in the full view of contemporary society. At their most valuable, political apologies attempt to include the experiences of historical victims and perpetrators in the nation's sense of its political self, refining the concept of national membership to include acknowledgement of injustice, agreement about histories, group rights, political action and social responsiveness, and also to express a sense of collective morality about what is right and what is wrong. Such subtle transformations are,

however, difficult to demonstrate. With this in mind, this chapter examines the potential transformations of political community and moral obligation in the context of the Apology through close and interpretive engagement with extracts from the research interviews and the series of video ‘Responses to the Apology’ produced by the SLQ in 2008 and 2009.

This chapter shows that the main way in which apologies can transform or repair political community is by stimulating dialogue that re-articulates a range of cultural subject positions. National members take part in such apologies and contribute to their transformative potential by participating in apology-responsive dialogue that ultimately acts to change the terms and meaning of membership in the political community. As I demonstrate, politically participative citizens do this by contesting and re-constructing historical distributions of membership and subject positions. Transformation can also be conceptualised as a socialisation of apology. We can say that a political apology has become ‘socialised’ when a narrative of belonging and responsibility towards other national members drives cultural and emotional shifts that renew or repair relationships. In this sense, a political apology becomes socialised when it enables the re-membering (Tavuchis 1991:8) of the nation. As politically active citizens re-articulate the terms of belonging and national membership in their responses to a formal apology, the differently construed subject positions they identify open up the possibility of renewed or transformed relationships. Such shifts or transformations are required in order to realise the social justice goals at the core of genuine⁸ and effectively socialised political apologies. In this chapter I will first examine conventional and contested discourses of Australian national community and collective responsibility prior to the 2008 Apology and then analyse the transformative potential of narrative responses.

Political community and belonging in Australia

Before the 2008 Apology, conceptualisations of political community and belonging had been repeatedly fractured and repaired by national conversations around history, shame and responsibility. These conversations erupted around the findings detailed in Bringing

⁸ While some consideration is given in the thesis to the constitution of genuine political apologies, the scope of the current work does not include pronouncement of whether or not the 2008 Apology was genuine. The thesis focuses on responses to the Apology.

Them Home. The emotionally challenging findings influenced the way in which many Australians thought and talked about themselves and each other.

Pre-Apology politics

In the decade preceding the Apology, counter-challenges to the moral and legal implications of HREOC's findings and recommendations had fuelled the History Wars (as discussed in Chapter 1). The competing rhetorics of the political and media elite were part of everyday language capable of signalling if one was left, right or politically apathetic. As the History Wars simmered from the early 1990s through to the time of the 2008 Apology, politics of the left and right in Australia separated further over our involvement in the Iraq war, immigration policy, economic security and environmental concerns. In the immediate lead up to the Apology, however, the political mood shifted left and the Howard LNP government was voted out of office after a governing period of twelve years.

In late 2007, Rudd's ALP government took office amidst electoral promises that included an Apology to the Stolen Generations (Donald, ABC 2008). Government- Aboriginal relations had been damaged again in the political period leading up to the Apology as many institutional and social apologies to the Stolen Generations were offered but none came from federal parliament. This electoral promise was a direct appeal to the Aboriginal community. It was also a direct appeal to national morality. The Aboriginal activist community was, and remains, divided over the issues of apology, responsibility and recognition. Nevertheless, the prospect of apology had long promised an end to an antagonistic political period.

Belonging

The community that gathered around Australia on Sorry Days and then in 2008 to witness the Apology expressed membership based on the values associated with apology – most notably, a regard for relationship and responsibility. While Nobles described the feeling of political belonging along with a sense of mutual obligation as the affective core of national membership (2008:38), this is currently an unexamined aspect of the Apology. This section will focus on the ways in which shared or common understandings of Australian national narratives may act as an important bridge between apology and belonging. As discussed in Chapter 3, belonging was a central tenet in Tom Calma's

formal response to the Apology. As I will show, apologetic dialogue is the basis and mechanism of the transformation of such ideas of belonging. This is so because apology responses give citizens the opportunity to negotiate and re-negotiate the terms of their collective relationships. With sensitivity to the telling and hearing of difficult stories (also canvassed in Chapter 3), apologetic dialogue slowly allows for the collective recognition of historical and contemporary injustices and negotiation of justice and repair.

Analysis overview – interpretive framework

My analysis utilises an interpretive framework that takes stories as an important medium for the transformation of membership categories. In this discussion, the primary units of analysis are stories about experiencing and attending to the Apology and accounts that reflect on the value of the Apology. Storied accounts can develop different conceptualisations and meanings through dialogue and interaction. In this way they transform membership categories and relationships. I show how, in these accounts, interview respondents and SLQ video participants position themselves and others. I suggest that these responses construe membership through the construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’ positions and through other inclusive or exclusive collective identities, for example, victim, survivor, witness, or observer. Others’ perspectives and positions are characterised relative to the narrator.

Us and them constructions

The reason for paying attention to the ways in which people utilise ‘us’ and ‘them’ constructions in dialogue is that these constructions can identify and characterise a person’s understanding of memberships and relationships. As explained in Chapter 4, my use of ‘us’ and ‘them’ as a concept to understand social memberships in the context of apology is derived from the work of Alfred Schutz. He theorised that the way in which we come to understand human actions and social relationships is through our own everyday and ‘common-sense’ experience (1964:21).

Our social interactions are typified by Schutz as we- and they- relations. A we-relation (‘us’) is the kind of social interaction we form with a well-known other. A they-relation (‘them’) forms with our contemporary others, who may later become known (entering the ‘us’ relation), but who are for all purposes, anonymous. Membership categories are mutable but important constructs: an us and them conceptualisation of national and

collective belonging reveals conditions of belonging. What I value about Schutz's framework and what has been useful for this thesis is his emphasis on intersubjective relationship. Rather than constructing fixed, antagonistic oppositions, Schutz recognises that 'we' can still have good regard for 'them' because of the possibility that 'they' could become known as well as one of 'us'.

I first raised the difference between inclusive and exclusive us-them constructs in Chapter 1, referencing Clark's identification of the us-them relationship that Keating established in reconciliation discourse (2013). Clark's analysis described how the empowering use of we and they in the context of Keating's Redfern speech did not construct division but rather provided terms of connection, a way of accounting for tension in relationship without severing the moral terms of that relationship, but demanding that 'we' engage with 'them' to establish a new relationship. The 'we' of Keating's non-Indigenous collective had work to do with 'them', the Aboriginal collective.

Stories

Chapter 2 described the kinds of stories with which this research engages. As we saw, these stories expressed traditional/folk story structures. The 'us' and 'them' groups in folk stories are often about good and bad rather than reflective of Schutz's intersubjectivity. In folk stories, 'we' are good; 'they' are bad. 'We' understand each other, 'we' share experiences and perceptions; 'they' do not. When folk stories are not structuring experience, they are standing in for experience or structuring possibilities and expectations of experience. Polemic or contestational constructions of 'us' and 'them' are more difficult to overcome than those that allow for the possibility of transformation – those which accept the anonymous others' potential to be known. In Schutz's model, the possibility of transformation from 'them' to 'us' is ever-present in social relationships.

Culturally, because of their intrinsic relationship to experience, our stories make us at the same time as they are made by us. We narrate ourselves in order to make sense of the world around us, our relationship to it and our practices within it. In turn, the world in which we live is represented within our stories. Meanings are shaped before, during and after experiences and interactions. Philosopher, Simon Critchley suggests that story praxis is the expression of 'our historically and culturally embedded life as finite selves in a world that is of our own making' (2001:72). We are constantly interacting with our actual and potential experience through stories. As representations of a sequence of

events and/or experiences, stories and storied accounts can describe both causative and evaluative links between events and experiences. I suggest that in order to understand the meaning and value of apologies we need to fully consider the role of stories like those featured in this study. Here, stories often function for the participants as examples or illustrations within an account: they explain experience, hence ‘storied account’. We most especially need to consider how such stories of experience shape and account for relationships. In the discussion that follows, I explore whether us-and-them constructs remain stubbornly polemical or antagonistic or if they carry transformative possibilities. And, if they do so, how these accounts establish such possibility.

Audience

One way of examining the potential of experiential accounts to shape and transform relationships is by looking at how they are received. When stories and storytellers interact with an audience, interpretive engagement is based on sharing a perspective of history and experience, including questions of right and wrong, injustice and justice (Ricoeur 1976:73). The successful use of metaphor and allusion relies on common conceptual understandings and, as a story can also be metaphorical, these common understandings are important aspects of storyteller-audience interactions. They are important to apology dialogue. In a public international human rights forum, Rudd (Rudd, Huggins, and Rigney 2012) explained his understanding of the importance of these interactions for the efficacy of apology. As seen in the following extract, the speech Rudd gave at that forum about delivering the Apology also demonstrated interpretive anticipation with the use of religious references and attempted humour.

The ... point I'd make is this: if an apology is authentic and if it is received with an open heart, then it can be fundamentally transformational. This is a difficult thing for those of us in the formal business of politics to comprehend. We are accustomed, particularly in the west, to think about politics and policy as formal processes. We have a committee for that and we have a committee for this. We don't yet have a ministry for human feelings. It's the problem. It's also the opportunity. Because the truth is as human beings in our relationships with one another, as cultures with relationship with one another, certainly as countries with relationships with one another, if we simply see this as a formal set of political and economic and cultural exchanges, it will be at best a part of the picture. Underneath it all, each of us in this room, wherever we have come from, thinking, feeling, sentient, deeply emotional, highly emotional, human beings – collectively, the wonder of god's creation. Though sometimes I think, he must wonder – or she must wonder. But if it is got right, an apology is genuine and is received with an open heart, the ability to transform the way in which people feel about themselves

and feel about others when they have had traditional conflict is quite remarkable. I describe it in these terms, as something of a secular sacrament. The outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual event. (Rudd 2012)

Like Rudd, who described experiencing a visible emotional response to the Apology, those narrators reported in this chapter also conclude from the elicitation and mobilisation of moral emotions (such as empathy, guilt, shame or anger) that their own story telling has had an impact. Interpretive engagement has taken place. Further, when the emotions elicited match the tone of the story, agreement with the evaluation (or coda) of the stories is especially perceived.

Both political apologies and the storied accounts that result from and form part of the broader Apology narrative require audiences if they are to distribute subject positions and characterise responsibility, including making appeals to a common morality. In turn, a story may be attended to and repeated by an audience of intimates or an audience of strangers. Stories are portable and adaptable. As discussed in Chapter 3, respondents, as experiential storytellers, may anticipate a familiar audience and interpretive community. As seen in the example from Rudd's speech to an audience of human rights workers at Caux, these expectations of a relating audience are built in to emotive and impressionistic accounts of attending to (or witnessing/receiving) the Apology. Conversely, storytellers may anticipate negative attitudinal responses or an ignorance of/alienation from the experience at the core of their storied accounts, and may withhold or qualify information based on such expectations. For example, interview respondent, Anon (m) stated that he had:

experienced a lack of knowledge about Aboriginal Affairs with the Australian public that has driven me to silence in debating the topic. It's a case of being non-committal to avoid ill-informed argument. (interview notes 2015)

In such cases, the experiential storyteller refuses an audience because of the anticipation of a lack of common understanding or difference of opinion. In these situations, silence means something different to each participant in the interaction. One can remain silent to withdraw from potential conflict, while the other can perceive it as agreement. These differences are something which only further conversation can reveal (Maher 2009:62-9). Other research participants defer the 'responsibility' of learning to those who have demonstrated ignorance or to those in perceived positions of authority. However, as I will

demonstrate in more detail in the following chapters, the storied accounts that are provided in the context of Apology do grant opportunities to learn.

Subject positions

As discussed in the previous chapter, the range of subject positions that arise in everyday accounts are derived from cultural archetypes. Positions taken up in relationship to the Apology – capable of being characterised as general ‘us’ and ‘them’ groupings – are a means of distributing responsibility and agency. They are characterised with different attributes or attitudes associated with a certain kind of perspective of the Apology. Often, positions are taken in association with the historical and contemporary injustices that the Apology attempts to address. It is important to note that the apology stories relate and position audiences in relation to two different phenomena: (i) the Apology and (ii) the injustices.

For the remainder of this chapter, subject positions in relation to the Apology will be discussed in turn. There are three key subject positions to be discussed in relation to political or collective apology: Apologiser, Recipient and Observer. In political apology the traditional (person-to-person) apology dyad is drawn out into a triad with the presence of an observer. Membership of each of these categories is distinguished by relationship to the historical injustices for which apologies are offered:

- the Apologiser (or apologetic party): may be related as benefactor (i.e., provider of justice), or a perpetrator/malefactor or beneficiary (national descendant) of injustice;
- the Recipient: the victim or intergenerational victim (or beneficiary of apology);
- and Observer: a witness or spectator to the Apology and possibly the injustice.

Those who are absent or inattentive are excluded from the considerations of this part of the study because they do not have a relationship with apology.⁹

Cultural archetypes are resonant in this range of subject positions (such as hero, villain, victim for example). None of these positions is static or exclusive. They do, however, enable us to discuss how national membership – that sense of political belonging and

⁹ Such a study would require a different, and equally substantial piece of research, constituting a valuable extension of this present study.

responsibility – is or can be transformed through political apology. These positions are represented in Figure 1 below. This figure presents simplified positions and provides a rough guide that usefully identifies some common or ideal type relationships, but does not present an exhaustive account of the various subject positions that might arise within apology responses. My analysis has observed that complex, cross-cutting identities can emerge in apology-responsive narratives.

Figure 1: relationships to political apology



Apologetic party

Theoretically, the apologetic party is the perpetrator, or as is more often in the case of political apologies for past injustices, the apologetic party stands proxy for the perpetrators.

In political and collective apology, this role/position is complicated by the substitution of a specific perpetrator with an apologetic collective that does not necessarily accept a position of responsibility. A person in authority is capable of apologising on behalf of an historical collective but only in some cases does that person take on responsibility for the effects of wrongdoing (Barkan 2000). Without a perpetrator, political apology becomes less an admission of responsibility and more of a statement of acknowledgement and recognition. My analysis suggests that collective apologies result in a characterisation or acknowledgement of perpetrator(s) that can not be communicated in a way that would facilitate the transformative repair said to be the valuable potential of apology.

To understand why a certain characterisation of perpetrator as responsible is valuable to apology, let us consider the implications of unauthored, unexplained injustices for those who have been harmed and for those who have actively or passively done harm.

Arguably, without identification and recognition of the agents of injustice, there is no release from the injustice. Proper recognition of responsibility or passive involvement might instead enable forgiveness for the sake of both the offender and offended and so that the promise of apology can be legitimated (Arendt 1958:243-4). Such acknowledgement of responsibility is important for the success of an apology because, in some sense it releases the recipient from the past while committing the offender to remedy the harm he/she has caused.

Tavuchis states that even though a collective *mea culpa* shifts moral responsibility for forgiveness to the victim, a collective apology that ‘accepts corporate responsibility’ and convincingly expresses institutional authority (1991:113-114) can precipitate societal transformations. Tavuchis uses an example which demonstrates that forgiveness is not necessary, that in fact what is better is a response of acknowledgement that does not release the apologisee from ‘the consequences of what it has done and condoned’ (1991:115).

The example Tavuchis provides is a ‘many-to-many apology’ (that is, one collective’s delegate to another collective’s delegate), in the 1986 apology of the United Church of Canada to Canadian natives for ‘past wrongs’. Much later, in 1988, a native elder, having consulted the group’s members, officially responded to the Apology with a decisive and sanctioned acknowledgment, but not acceptance. This acknowledgment was different from the initial positive reception of the Church’s apology. The elder explained that the group wished to acknowledge but not accept the apology because the Church’s oppressive treatment of native people was a difficult thing to heal. Tavuchis (with echoes of Arendt) describes the acknowledgment as:

A nice touch and display of moral tact that served to credit the apology with good will without disregarding the gravity of past and recent indignities by forgiving too easily or quickly and thus releasing the church from the consequences of what it had done and condoned. In this case, the immutability of collective memory prevented the washing clean of what had happened, the emotively charged and conciliatory tone of the public exchanges notwithstanding.

Whatever the residues of private doubt, anger, or indifference following the apology and its ‘acknowledgment’, there can be little question as to its decisive role in venting the source of mutual

disquietude and paving the way for structural changes in the relations between the two groups.
(1991:109-115)

Following this line of argument, I show that acknowledgements of the 2008 Apology attempt to re-negotiate responsibility. The difference between acknowledgement and acceptance or forgiveness is in the addressing of the harms of the offence for which apology is offered. Acceptance/forgiveness implies an overcoming of the harms of the offence – writing a new page, beginning a new chapter. Acknowledgement grants recognition of an effort to overcome the harms. But it keeps the reparative effort in motion, in progress towards, in this case, broad and lasting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice outcomes.

For Arendt, forgivable consequences arise from irreversible actions. Arendt claims that without the possibility of forgiveness, we would not be able to act at all. What Arendt describes as forgiveness is not necessarily forgiveness that reciprocates apology (i.e., in response to seeking forgiveness) but relates to our understanding that actions are irreversible and we cannot know their consequences, that we therefore depend on the possibility of others' forgiveness for our capacity to act in the world. Arendt's premise that the consequences of acts are unpredictable is supported by her concept of promise, the act of binding oneself to others (1998 [1958]:236-247). Arendt can only write about such a concept of forgiveness with the inclusion of the concept of promise. This promise is a way of describing the social contract that exists between publics – the same contract that apology aims to repair. In this approach to understanding the Apology, responses of acceptance recognise a promise to repair, and it is with this recognition that they evoke forgiveness, a kind of agreement to maintain relationship.

I contend, however, that because the 2008 Apology under study is without a proper characterisation of perpetrator on the record, the consequences of actions remain unaddressed. In many of the storied accounts of my research, acknowledgments of the Apology question Arendtian promise and the implied social contract between the apologist and apologised. While acknowledgment recognises the event of apology –and credits it with good will – it keeps space in the apologist-apologised relationship for further actions of reparative justice to occur. These accounts provide content and meaning in response to the empty nature of Apology. As ethical demands associated with transitioning from acknowledgment to acceptance of apology, they describe what is necessary to restore and repair the damaged contract.

In a further complication, observers of apology also usually position perpetrators as anonymous institutional other – ‘they’, ‘the government’, ‘white people’. Accordingly, as discussed earlier, the ‘they’ is too anonymous to be considered a potential ‘we’, held accountable or party to a transformed relationship. Furthermore while both victims and observers have identified themselves in the storied accounts studied in this research, perpetrators or perpetrating descendants’ accounts are not so forthcoming. This thesis theorises that the responsibility accompanying the position of perpetrator is associated with shame, guilt and humiliation, making self-identification emotionally difficult and therefore resisted. Such self-identification includes that associated with being a member of a perpetrating collective or as a bystander to/beneficiary of a perpetrating collective. Unfortunately, in the Australian context, the perpetrating and bystander collectives are socially and politically more powerful than the victim or activist collective. The perpetrators/bystanders or their beneficiaries comprise the collective most able to institutionalise recognition of ongoing responsibility. This collective is also the most exposed to shame, most inconvenienced by reparation and therefore also least likely to address responsibility. Yet, as political historian Colin Tatz expressed, one can also be associated as a bystander to injustice by being a companion to events:

It seems never to occur to those who deny involvement, or legal or moral guilt, or who distance themselves from past events, that they were, and are, indeed companions, and therefore in some degree complicit. (Tatz 1999:4)

I propose that in order to realise the ethical and transformative potential of political apologies companions of perpetrators, those distanced from the injustice but still complicit, as opposed to the observer who is distanced and not complicit, who need to transform shame to guilt rather than suppress the implication. From a position of moral responsibility, it is possible to act as a companion to justice, or as companions to victims as they attain justice: to act differently from the way that elicits shame. This is a difficult emotional transformation and the role of shame, guilt, humiliation, contempt and anger in the socialisation of the Apology will be discussed in the next chapter. For now, the focus is on how apologisees characterise themselves – and are characterised – as representative of or as embodying the collective perpetrator.

Perpetrator

As discussed in the previous chapter, the perpetrator position is the least represented of all relationships to the Apology. While a collective victim group is identified in the Apology by the nature of the historical harms and subsequently characterised through individual stories about these harmful experiences, a collective perpetrator group is characterised only through implication by a logical pairing with the collective victim. Rudd and many respondents only implied the perpetrator of injustice. This is far from where the definitive categorisations of Tatz (1999) or Tavuchis (1991) might lead, that is, with the Federal Government as leading agent, or all members of the offending culture implicated as perpetrators. In the 2008 Apology, the collective perpetrator appears as an impersonal, anonymous institutional process, system or body rather than as a process or system authored or inhabited by a conscious social collective. In the videos and interviews, the figure or idea of perpetrator is most particularly an anonymous ‘it’ or unknowable ‘they’. For example:

You know, colonisation did this to our people. They took away our culture, they took away our language, they tried to assimilate us into their society. (Jasmin Minniecon, SLQ video 2009)

In those days the Government took all the half-caste children away. (Estelle Bowen, SLQ video 2009)

My Grandmother was actually cooking them dinner on the Cloncurry River and the police turned up and just took them away. (Valerie Craigie, SLQ video 2009)

The collective characterisations present in Rudd’s apology speech are of distinct but diffused groups with differing levels of agency, separated generally as Indigenous and non-Indigenous, citizens and government, government and parliament. While apologising on behalf of numerous governments and parliaments, he ultimately identifies ‘the laws’ of 1910-1970 as – again, inanimate – perpetrator:

put simply, the laws that our parliaments enacted made the Stolen Generations possible. We, the parliaments of the nation, are ultimately responsible, not those who gave effect to our laws. The problem lay with the laws themselves. (Rudd 2008)

Yet correspondingly, respondents broadly disperse responsibility by using a generic description to describe perpetrators in other storied accounts, for example:

They took a hundred thousand Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders from their families. (Len Tregonning, interview 2014)

They knew what they were doing. But you know, you see governments are pretty shifty so and so's.
(John Baxter, interview 2014)

John Baxter's characterisation of governments as consciously malicious and deceptive in their lawmaking contrasts with Rudd's characterisation of government as writers of laws that somehow went awry. Both generalisations, however, provide a certain opacity with regard to responsibility. Neither characterisation provides recognition for the human element – that governments are comprised of and by individual people.

Human perpetrators, and their emotional difficulties in accepting this position, are characterised most clearly by Tony Birch in discussion about the emotional disparity between connection with a story of injustice alongside disconnection from the idea of compensation:

It's interesting. I think there are many things or there are several [reasons]. I think that, once it becomes a much more of a legal, national issue in that way, people rather than feel empathy become implicated in the negative. In other words, as perpetrators. I think that, that's one. There's the old thing that, 'yeah, we throw money at Aboriginal people'. 'This is just throwing more money' or 'they don't know how to use the money'. You know, 'if we give them money, they'll waste it anyway' would be another issue. And I think, just generally, strangely I think that while it's told as this sort of story, it's almost like a fiction or, or a terrible dark fairy tale. It makes it a hard, cold fact to make it a legal issue and again that makes it much more confronting. In regard to Aboriginal history, generally, or contested histories of colonialism, I think that it's much more difficult to countenance that because it's about victims and perpetrators, and perpetrators being those who, you know, should otherwise be able to show sympathy. So I think like, if you took *Rabbit Proof Fence* as a film, those three girls, the actors are gorgeous. And it allows people to feel great comfort being with them, being upset for them. If you look at that in reality, it's, people find it much more difficult to address that. And, you know, you just have to be in a room with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and, if Aboriginal people start to make, you know, demands of that audience to get real and to ... people just get really anxious, upset and can't cope. So it is that. I think it's what Marcia Langton called 'national psychosis'. I think it is a national psychosis. (Tony Birch, interview 2013)

In this characterisation, perpetrators are fellow community members of the victims but their shame-filled, guilt-riddled position in the relationship hinders both the expression of sympathy and the acknowledgement of responsibility. The anxiety that Tony Birch describes fits with Haidt's (2003) description of behaviours associated with shame, as I will discuss in greater detail in the following chapter.

Beneficiary

Also in discussion about the expression of emotion in response to a Stolen Generation member's story, Anna Haebich identifies collective national/generational perpetrators:

But they were so emotional and, the whole thing about mothers and children, it really tears at the heartstrings. And there was a feeling, people feeling ashamed that, to think we'd done that, treated people like that. (Interview, 2014)

The descendants of perpetrators are, however, largely characterised through their absence. As with perpetrators, this group exists, albeit in the shadows, because victims and their descendants exist. As Danielle Celermajer describes:

We only exist as a 'we' insofar as we're represented, right. There is no Australia outside the way in which – we only have a sense of ourselves through the reflection of representation. (Interview, 2013)

While Prime Minister Keating firmly represented a perpetrator 'we' in his 1992 Redfern speech, Prime Minister Rudd provided a variety of membership group characterisations that could be associated with perpetrating. This diffusion or obfuscation of the perpetrating descendant position places significant limits on the possibility of contemporary recognition of communal/collective responsibility. Perpetrators, their descendants or their bystander companions are unable to transform political relationships if they do not take up a position of responsibility and acknowledge and deal with all that this position entails – shame, guilt, anxiety, reparative obligations. If the perpetrator is not sufficiently represented in the Apology dialogue, guilt and shame and moral responsibility do not become a central part of the national conscience. This aspect of the discussion will also be expanded in the following chapter.

Recipients

Recipients are related to apology through their experience(s) of harm – that is, they have been damaged by the actions of others (offended, wronged, traumatised, disadvantaged, maltreated, neglected, abused, politically sidelined or otherwise unjustly treated). In the political apology interaction, these harms are construed as a collective experience, such that a national group is identified as collective victim, in this case the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. The equivalent of recipients in Nobles' membership theory would constitute the 'mobilised minority group' (2008:14-7). This

thesis argues that political apologies can transform such activists to recipients (passive) or witnesses (active but removed).

Victim

Victims are already constructed as passive in folk theory and story. Our cultural understandings of what it means to be a victim or to be victimised have been informed by multiple and plural discourses. While the trope, ‘history is written by victors’, is familiar, the victim’s history is also written/storied by victims and witnesses. To understand how the position of victim is constructed in relation to the Apology, we can look at how victims are characterised in storied accounts of attending to the Apology.

Firstly, the position of Stolen Generations member is imbued with a sense of victimisation and powerlessness because of the very nature of the injustices. Members were removed as powerless children from families and communities rendered powerless (we can think of this powerlessness as being ‘overpowered’) by acts of removal and obstruction. Secondly, Rudd’s apology focused on the negative characterisation of Indigenous peoples as victims (particularly the ‘Stolen Generations’) who had been ‘mistreated’ and endured ‘pain, suffering and hurt’, and had their families and communities broken and subjected to ‘indignity and degradation’. Rudd needs to do this in order to rhetorically justify the Apology to a non-Indigenous audience perceived as resistant to the expression, in particular the Liberal National Party MPs present. Indigenous Australians, according to Rudd, are ‘human beings who have been damaged deeply by the decisions of parliaments and governments’. Rudd also gave historical examples of the way in which Aboriginal peoples were governed as wards rather than as members of the Australian nation.

A more generative alternative, with regard to political transformation, would have been to balance or outweigh the negative characterisation of Aboriginal peoples as victims with a negative characterisation of settler peoples/patronising governance. This rebalancing would have reinforced recognition of injustice as a result of the unjust actions of perpetrators (over the under-explained experiences of victims), that is, to definitively declare that human beings were damaged by other human beings who undertook specific acts. As I argued above, clear characterisations of actors and actions allow for the emergence of clear lines of moral responsibility. It is this recognition that enables the transformation at the core of political apology’s potential.

Instead, from a description of the collective victim, Rudd's speech moves to characterise one individual, Nana Nungala Fejo, as a heroic survivor of such victimisation – 'elegant, eloquent and wonderful'. And in the closing paragraphs of his speech, Rudd expresses a will to:

embrace with pride, admiration and awe these great and ancient cultures we are truly blessed to have among us – cultures that provide a unique, uninterrupted human thread linking our Australian continent to the most ancient prehistory of our planet. Growing from this new respect, we see our Indigenous brothers and sisters with fresh eyes, with new eyes, and we have our minds wide open as to how we might tackle, together, the great practical challenges that Indigenous Australia faces in the future. (2008)

In the logic of Rudd's apology, which positions the anonymised collective Aboriginal community as victim of history, white communities are cast as the 'embracers' – the helpers and heroes – rather than the bystanders and villains.¹⁰ Rudd's focus on the injuries suffered and endured actually encourages a construction of Aboriginal peoples (collective victims) as passive subjects of misfortune.

Thirdly, a different problem arises from describing a collective as resilient. In contrast to Rudd, Calma's response emphasises the dignity and resilience of Stolen Generations members alongside their suffering:

Through one direct act, Parliament has acknowledged the existence and the impacts of the past policies and practices of forcibly removing Indigenous children from their families. And by doing so, has paid respect to the Stolen Generations. For their suffering and their loss. For their resilience. And ultimately, for their dignity ... And can I pay tribute to the members of the Stolen Generations, for your incredible resilience, stoicism and dignity in the face of untold suffering. (Calma 2008d)

While it is positive to represent a collective that has endured historical injustices as resilient, it can also establish a problematic ideal of heroic survivorship that not all victims can reach (see Chapter 3). Finally, both Calma and Rudd simplify the plurality of the Stolen Generations experiences in order to speak about them collectively as victims; as passive, resilient, dignified subjects of injustice. That some parents of stolen children made great efforts to recover their children and were obstructed and defeated by bureaucracy, or that children attempted to return to their communities or – futilely – to

¹⁰ The problematic positioning of the apologetic white collective is discussed in a later section.

bring evidence of mistreatment before their guardians (HREOC 1997), speaks more to the overwhelming forcefulness of the racist policies than is otherwise suggested by the almost complicit passivity built into such resilient, dignified characterisations.

As Stolen Generation members, John Baxter, EvaJo Edwards, Len Tregonning (interviews), Des Bowen and Herman Bambie (SLQ videos) demonstrate in dialogue, there is a psychological resistance to positioning oneself as a recipient of apology and I argue that this is because of the overshadowing negative characterisation of passive victim associated with apology. Even though John Baxter had described himself as Stolen Generation in a video made by LinkUp Victoria, in our interview, he simply described his upbringing as: ‘interesting, complicated ... I was brought up by others other than my family.’ Wary of the Apology, John Baxter said:

I chose not to watch it on TV. You know, ‘cause TV, well, the media tend to present a version of events and you think, ‘Well, you know, what is the message? What is, what are they trying to, you know, is this a hard luck story? Is it a, some emotional roller coaster ride we’re supposed to be on?’ You know, this is a, pat the, the poor child on the back, make him feel good and then send them off back to the coal mines sort of routine, you know. (Interview 2014)

Len Tregonning, removed for a period from his Aboriginal community at Lake Tyers, also did not want to engage with the Apology:

It was, it’s a really strange thing to see it, and especially the amount of people that can’t even watch it. It’s – it didn’t move me like other people. Like I wasn’t emotionally upset by it. And it didn’t resolve anything. ‘Cause I’m aware of that, you know, even at the end of the apology, if you wanted compensation, you’ve then gotta go through the whole process of a court case. In my case, I wasn’t prepared to revisit my past and drag up some really horrible memories of, of those people. (Interview 2014)

While Len Tregonning described the separation of his mother, brother and himself from their community at the age of ten (‘under the custody of an ex-policeman’) and further being ‘taken away’ and ‘sent to a boarding school at the age of 12, when I was separated four and a half years’, he pointed to his cousins who ‘were removed as babies. So those sort of things are really traumatic for some of them.’

EvaJo Edwards, who was brought up in an institution and was invited to attend the Apology in Canberra, spoke about how at the event:

the sadness set in. Like my mum and my dad, and my little brother, and my niece, they weren't there or alive to hear that. And that, I think was pretty heart-wrenching. But I got to sit in the gallery. I got to listen to it. (Interview 2014)

A resistance to positioning oneself as a victim and revisiting trauma – to being a recipient-victim of apology – is evidenced in deflection, whereby in their storied accounts, respondents personally deflect the position of victim and instead describe other persons as victims. EvaJo Edwards, for example, gave the following account of her brother as one person 'who should have been there' to experience the Apology:

He should have been alive, you know. And, to experience this. 'Cause his life was, you know, he was adopted out and then his adopted mum died, and then he was put back in the homes 'cause his adopted dad remarried and she didn't want a little black child. So, at the age of five, he was put back in with us and his life went into a whirlwind when he turned about like 17. That identity crisis on who, you know, nobody wanted me. Nobody loved me, you know. And, and he couldn't deal with that. (Interview 2014)

Sadly, EvaJo Edwards partial account of her brother's suicide speaks to the importance of belonging, and the trouble with not belonging – not being wanted – associated with an integral part of her brother's physical being: his black skin. Struggling for insight into how a five-year-old child would make sense of his situation, and why a seventeen-year-old would have an identity crisis that led to his suicide at age twenty-five, brings us only a little closer to EvaJo Edwards' own bitter-sweet experience of the Apology.

It is apparent that the Apology actually elicited the painful reflections that are conveyed in responsive narratives. In his account of attending to the Apology, Des Bowen focused on his grandparents as the intended recipients of the Apology, detailing the indignities they experienced.

Yep, they told me that the Apology was on and everybody was all excited and, yeah. I saw it on the TV at the hospital and it brought tears to my eyes too because I started thinking about my grandfather, George Bowen, when he was brought up from Proserpine, only about 12 years old and that was in 1903 and my grandmother, my mum's mum, she was brought from Chillagoe across and some of them went to I think Kuranda and Yarrabah and she was brought up to Hope Vale. Yeah, I thought about these old people, how they sort of, you know, felt. (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012)

Both Des Bowen and EvaJo Edwards engage with a spectrum of emotions but they also position themselves as not-victims by describing the painful experiences of others in their intimate communities. It is a familiar positioning strategy in storied accounts from both

the interviews and videos and a further example is provided in the following extract from Herman Bambie:

Mum came from Stonehenge, she was taken away from there I think when she was 6 years old and brought to Cooktown and they had her in the watch house with her sister for a fortnight and then taken over to Cape Bedford mission and she grew up there didn't know the language, she had her own language but when she came there, while she was growing up she forgot about it ... I still got the hurt today like for mum, when she passed away she never went back to her home she don't know – we don't know her surname. I don't know where she got the name, they named her Lizzie and she had a sister Bessie, but I don't know if they named her over there at the mission or she went over there with that name ... And we travelled back to Stonehenge just a few years ago to find the family but everyone we found there they reckoned they probably moved on. The Prime Minister said sorry but I don't know what he meant by that. He said sorry but the hurt that I've got, you know I don't think that, nobody will take that away from me. I still think about her today. (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012)

In telling the story of his mother and his young working life in the SLQ video response project, Herman Bambie portrays himself as a person affected by injustice, still searching for family, and yet he resists the position of victim by demonstrating a greater compassionate grief for his mother's experience.

Deflection is a correction to position, and in it we can see an attempted transformation of membership as people reposition themselves in their storied accounts away from the implications of being victim-recipient (specifically Aboriginal and Stolen Generation) in order to become witness-observer (part of a broader national collective). In the position of witness-observer, EvaJo Edwards spoke about the impact and value of the Apology being associated with inclusive recognition of historical wrongs:

I don't think a lot of Australia actually knew why he was apologising until they listened to the speech. And I would have liked to have thought that 80 per cent of the nation had agreed with it. 'Cause if you looked at the crowds that were at every capital city that put it on the big screen – and I look at Melbourne Federal Square – how amazing, overwhelming and emotional was that for not just us but for you, and those people that do have an understanding and a compassion and an empathy for us as Aboriginal people with what we've lost over 200-and-nearly-50 years. (Interview 2014)

Inclusive recognition is an element of national belonging, and the Apology bought a community of witnesses together, 'not just for us but for you'. Such a communal sense of belonging around mutual attendance and social response to apology resonates with Nobles' membership theory, whereby apology potentially works to achieve national unity in support of Indigenous group rights. Political apologies also prompt national expression

of the status of Indigenous group rights and local expression of intra-group rights. The expression and experience of intra-group rights/belonging is an element that is overlooked in the literature on the Apology, but both EvaJo Edwards and Bev Murray provide insights. EvaJo Edwards, who was removed from her mother and grew up away from Aboriginal community, reflected on the difficulties associated with re-connecting or establishing a community connection, but never takes on a victim stance:

And acceptance coming back to this community was the hardest thing in the world. It was why I was talking about the two worlds. It's like, I wasn't accepted in my white community 'cause I was too black and I wasn't accepted in my black community 'cause I wasn't black enough, and because I spoke differently, I dress differently. And, and I, it was only that I had the strength ... and I think I just, I would have had that no matter if I grew up with my parents or not, and I honestly believe that I needed to pursue this. And I chipped away and knocked on that door for 20 years. And I shouldn't have had to. And I couldn't, I can't help that I didn't grow up in community. (Interview 2014)

Bev Murray, whose work currently focuses on practical and reparative justice for members of the Stolen Generations and who therefore is strongly positioned as witness/advocate, credited the Apology with influencing her decision to work closely with Stolen Generations members:

When I heard about this job, I was very keen to get involved. So it influenced me personally to take on this role. 'Cause before that, I guess I felt like a lot of Aboriginals felt. Well, if you're not stolen then you shouldn't be in there. But it's not about that at all; it's about me bringing my particular skills and experience to the position, and doing whatever I could to support the Stolen Generations – to support the clients. And also it's about, we all were affected. So, there's that. And I guess just looking at what I could do. So going to some of the events and learning more about the Stolen Generations, and ... But, yeah, for me personally, I got working in the sector didn't I? (Interview 2014)

Bev Murray, without distributing a passive victim position, explains that the experiences of the Stolen Generation impact the whole community of which she and they are part. She has relevant skills and experience to support clients – people seeking her organisation's services. The description of Stolen Generation members as clients provides them with much more agency than a description of them as victims.

Intergenerational victims

Intergenerational victims are characterised by their relationship to the 'original' victims and traumatic incidents, asserting a collective rights claim. Throughout the storied accounts that are the subject of this study, particularly the videos, intimate family

members are often described and storied as Stolen, with the intergenerational loss of cultural and familial connections, a result of, or part of the theft of a person from community and country. Separations particularly impact on the parenting experiences of those who were removed as children, and can therefore impact their own children. EvaJo Edwards, for example, discusses the relevance of intergenerational recognition:

I mean I go out and I educate, like I said, on the history of this country and the removal of Aboriginal children and the impacts that it has had on us. And I think the more that I – if we just make sure the government is held accountable for those recommendations that were made back in '97, we can hopefully start to heal a little bit more and move forward that much closer. Especially the generational stuff because it's impacted on our kids and it continues to impact on our children. So, apology, as much as it was well overdue – and we'd been trying to get that apology from Howard in the whole 12 years that he was in power, and the non-recognition that man gave to us, like we were still flora and fauna of this country ... And it's really sad and tragic. (Interview 2014)

This following extract from EvaJo Edward's daughter, Akira Edwards Thorpe, who participated in a 2015 report to the Victorian Government, provides further insights to 'the generational stuff':

what affected us the most is that mum didn't know how to be a mum. She met her dad when she was 21 and her mum when she was fifteen and never seen her mum again so she was never really taught how to be a parent. So it was very difficult on her behalf and then struggled to show us affection, things like that (VALS 2015:185).

The intergenerational Stolen Generation is represented by many of the Aboriginal Australians cited in this thesis. As they provide storied accounts about their Stolen family members, the deflection of the Apology-recipient role can be seen as a form of correction of the narrative. Corrections made in the responsive storied accounts of Doreen Mellor and Estelle Bowen, for example, shift the focus to the activism rather than the victimisation of previous generations and, in turn, reposition intergenerational victims as active rather than passive. These corrections – also emphasising the actions of families to seek reunion – include storied accounts like the following:

I've lived a very fortunate life as an Aboriginal person because my family was not – my, my great-grandmother was taken away so we lost all of our contact with any of her family members and, you know, it's, it seems that we have, right at the end of that project, reconnected with, with people and found, you know, the, her siblings or descendants of her siblings. But she herself was taken away from her siblings and she never spoke about them to me. She may have done to my grandmother. At the time, it was quite dangerous to talk about your, 'cause my grandmother was nearly taken away as well

from her, and, you know, through the forties and fifties, it was rife taking children, so it was something that wasn't talked about a great deal. It was sort of tempting fate, really. So, you know, how did I get onto that? So yes, although it has been part of my family and it has affected me directly, I don't have that personal trauma of having lost my mother. That is very personal. (Doreen Mellor, interview 2013)

There was sort of like, that's why then I'm sort of like strong in child re-placement in that children's service. That we were saying then, I feel that if my father went through it, that's why then I've got on as a chairperson for ATSIC and working with Child Safety. That we don't take these children away now, from their parents, because by us getting to put them into Cairns, they will lose their culture, so that's why I'm strong to say we've got to have registered carers in the community. So that those children don't lose their identity, they don't lose their language. Because as a person who, my Dad was a Stolen Generation, he lost his identity, he lost his language, now we have learned the Guugu Yimithirr, instead of learning our own tongue, or this Gugu Dhayban. So it's sort of like I feel now that we need now to change it, that the children don't become Stolen Generation. (Estelle Bowen, SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012)

I grew up with a very strong mother who was very much involved in the 1967 referendum and I watched her work the politics around the town, and come together with non-indigenous people. And I thought, 'One day I'll probably do that,' and I certainly have followed in her footsteps ... She was very much a role model inspiration of my life, so it was a natural progression for me to do this kind of work that I do now. (Jackie Huggins, interview 2013)

In all of these examples, respondents are making small adjustments and corrections to the Apology narrative, taking up and redistributing positions in relationship to Apology. Estelle Bowen is motivated by her father's experiences, positioning herself as more witness than intergenerational recipient. Doreen Mellor goes on to say that she doesn't need to be compensated on behalf of her great grandmother and grandmother, noting generational distance from injury. Jackie Huggins emphasises the activism and inspiration of her mother (who was removed to a mission), positioning herself as intergenerational activist rather than intergenerational victim, again an active witnessing position. In addition to the identification of particular family members as the true recipients, these accounts of activism further challenge the passive construction of the collective Aboriginal victim-recipient of apology.

In summary, all recipients of Apology are consigned to a passive position despite, or in spite of, the sustained political activism required to achieve the Apology and the agency demonstrated in the storied accounts included in this research. In fact, none of the research interviewees described themselves as recipients of the Apology. They instead described others as recipients, those in passive circumstances of suffering and who were

emotionally affected by the Apology. I propose that in order to counter the resistance to receiving apology, as in person-to-person apologies, a deep expression of humility is required from the apologetic party in order to match and alleviate such constructed passivity, and to reassure recipients that the relationship established in apology is of moral equality. The active alternative to the victim-recipient position in relationship to Apology is observer and this position is discussed in detail in the following.

Observers

Observers are related to apology through being audience to the expression and reception of apology. The attentiveness of observation may range from being aware of the event (either pre- or post-apology) to being in the immediate physical proximity of the apology event. If a person did not attend to the apology at all, they cannot be described as party to apology, as they have not experienced apology nor taken or expressed any position in relationship to apology. Their relationship with apology of course, has no corresponding association with their relationship to historical injustices; one can be a witness to injustice without being a witness to apology and vice versa. This discussion focuses on the Apology, not the injustices.

While varying degrees of relationship to an apology may be experienced by third parties (Tavuchis 1991:50), in this thesis, degrees of actual observation and relationship are represented by the simplified positions of witness and spectator, described in the following pages. In the storied accounts, direct observation allows one to feel part of a collective and to express pride and other responsive emotions. Delayed or distant observation especially allows one a more stoic and critical engagement with the outcomes of the apology.

Witness

In the participant's storied accounts, the Witness position is the most commonly self-assigned position. It is a cultural position of moral authority with a vantage point that allows commentary on all aspects of the Apology and national memberships including shifting uses of us/them. Characterised by justice activism and by attentiveness to justice outcomes, the witness position allows criticism, assessment, active oversight and judgment. The moral heft of the witness allows access to a political equivalence with those in positions of traditional authority (Tavuchis 1991:50-4; Barkan 2000:xxix). Yet

witnessing – testifying – also places an ethical demand on the narrator to be responsible and responsive to another person (Butler 2005).

Witness perspectives include those described by Tony Birch, Danielle Celermajer, Bev Murray and Jackie Huggins, each taking up a variation of the witness position, from active involvement with the Apology to retrospective consideration of it. Bev Murray describes witnessing the Apology with her mother and the effect of this experience:

I was at home with my mum doing some work on this project and I can remember we, we both, she was watching TV and she called out to me and said 'It's on!' and we watched it on TV. Now that was very special for me 'cause my mum passed away not long after ... I think the big emotion for me was finally there was an acknowledgement about the shocking things that were done to Aboriginal people. Finally. 'Cause before that, it was something, especially through John Howard's, era was that we didn't, we didn't count. What happened to Aboriginal people didn't matter. It was all something that happened during the settlement and we were just collateral who obviously, didn't, we didn't count. So, I think, you know, I've never, never really seen myself as an Australian. [Really?] No. Always Aboriginal. Not felt a part of this country. You know, the white Australia – that's how I've always seen it. And it was only then that I felt, 'Oh, I do feel proud of Australia and being Australian.' But it didn't last long. (Interview 2014)

Both Danielle Celermajer and Jackie Huggins attended the apology event in Canberra, and both describe a collective atmosphere from a witnessing perspective. Like Bev Murray, they each felt part of the collective while observing the apology. This first extract is from Danielle Celermajer. She talks about her experience of observing the Apology against a background of having worked on the *Bringing Them Home* report:

We went. I had not been back in Australia for that long and so I was, although I'd been writing about the debate in Australia for a long time and was, it was, you know, very much in my intellectual world, I'd been a bit disconnected from Australian politics but I felt like it was very important for me to go, and mostly I felt that it was important for my daughter to go. So my partner and my daughter, and I drove down and I anticipated that it was a fulcrum day in Australia's history, and I, I just wanted her to be there and to witness it even though she was only nine. So I knew that the memory would be somewhat amorphous for her but I felt like that was an important moment in Australia. So we were obviously outside – we didn't get into Parliament House – and it was a, it was a very electric atmosphere. I think 10 years of disappointment and hope had generated a great deal of energy and the people gathered there, there was, I think Australians outside the sports arena don't get that much opportunity for a sense of collective identity, and there was a very strong sense of collective identity in the anticipation, in the atmosphere. So we were all outside Parliament House and those big screens were up, and then I remember everybody listening very intently to the apology. And the way in which Rudd's words, I mean his apology was, it was very thorough. It was very thoughtful but also the way in

which he tried to weave the nation together through talking about it being like a war pact and bipartisan commitment to a certain move forward that was above politics. And that did seem to very much capture where a lot of people were until Brendan Nelson spoke. And then there was a really strong reaction and everyone, lots of people turned – we, most people turned their back to the screen. And so there was a sense that there was still quite a strong underlying anger at denialism. And, and then I remember after leaving and coming back, and being quite astonished at the degree to which the nation had stopped. So finding out that, you know, people had gathered in very, very large numbers in Martin Place, in Federation Square, that people had stopped. And obviously I followed the debate quite a lot afterwards. And reading people talking about how they had been surprised by how affected they'd been. So I wasn't surprised to be affected – I knew that I would be affected – I mean I'd been writing about it, waiting for it, advocating for it. (Interview, 2013)

In her account of witnessing the apology, Danielle Celermajer draws attention to collective identity, relating to other apology witnesses through anticipation, her experiences and the emotional impact of group empathy – she also belongs to other collectives: such as mothers, and politically engaged persons. In the following account, Jackie Huggins similarly describes the emotional intensity of anticipating and witnessing the Apology and empathising with recipients in real time.

We had never – well, we're never going to experience something like this in our lives before or in the future. And I had, I was under no illusion about what it might mean for all of us, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I was under no illusion that this was a very important move for the nation, for the parliament, and to bring us together. So I was really – and, as a historian, I knew the big impact it would have on our history and what that might mean for our nation. It was very nation-building. It was a very nation-building exercise. And it was very well-organised from the FaHCSIA point of view. And the people who organised that. I was very pleased that they had done it so graciously, especially for the mob who were taken away, the Stolen Generation people who they treated with such dignity and respect at the time, and have done so since. So for me it was, it was just one of those magical days in your life that will never come again. So, I was ready for it. I was. I'm a bit of a softie anyway when it comes to those things, do you know. I cry in movies and so forth, and we cried that day. Real tears. So it was just incredibly emotional and moving but hopefully, at the end of that, would come an impact as well. So for me it was one of those truly magical days that you'll probably never see again in my life but in a different way. I'd probably count that as one of the highlights of my life, in terms of the political struggle but personally for me too because we had tried so hard from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in the mid-nineties to actually fully get their apology. And you know what? I remember Lowitja O'Donoghue saying to me, 'We will not, if we don't get an apology, we don't have reconciliation.' And I thought how odd that was for her to say that. And I thought, 'Surely ...' I was being idealistic, young. I was in my mid-thirties. I thought we could truly drive it in a, in a big way but she was right. As she usually is. And we're still going through that process. (Interview 2013)

Tony Birch witnessed the Apology in retrospect, rather than at the time of its delivery. As evidenced in his account, this distance allowed a critical analysis:

I wasn't doing anything special. I didn't listen to it or I didn't go down to Fed Square. I was at home. The only thing I remember about that day is that I was sitting here in the afternoon having coffee downstairs with a very well-known Aboriginal activist who's a friend of mine, and a woman came up and said, 'Isn't it wonderful about the apology?' and he said, 'Fuck the apology,' and she got right, really upset. So I remember that quite distinctly. On the actual day itself, there's not much else. I mean I probably would have seen the news stuff that night and I'm sure I saw, well, at some stage, I saw the footage from Federation Square in Melbourne and the footage in the federal parliament, which I'm not sure if that was the same day or around the same time, certainly. So I took a very strong interest in it probably afterwards, but it wasn't an event that I, you know, it's not an event that I set out to, to engage with or to be part of. And not out of any sort of political stance either. I just, I certainly just didn't feel a need to be there. (Interview 2013)

In these above examples of witnessing the apology, the strength and value of identifying with a witness collective is evident. In contrast with the identities of collective victim, perpetrator, or their descendants, the witness position allows contemporary Aboriginal (including Stolen Generation members) and other Australians to relate to the Apology in a way that maintains their political agency and independence from government. They can feel proud to be a part of a group that has offered, agitated for, or has the ability to critically assess, an apology.

Spectator

In contrast to the Witness position, the Spectator position is largely assigned to others and is a removed perspective separated from both responsibility and responsiveness. Tony Birch described a spectator attitude when he commented that some people would view the Apology as entertainment, as morally passive watchers of the Apology who enjoy the emotional expression – the political theatre – but take no responsibility. For various reasons, people who otherwise might be recipients may have also deliberately chosen not to position themselves in closer relationship to the Apology and to instead simply note the Apology (describing an emotionally or politically detached interest). Interview participants, John Baxter and Len Tregonning, whose responses I discussed previously for example, provided a more distant observation of the apology than those cited here and gave further reasons for not involving themselves more closely. That is, they observed the Apology but did not position themselves in relationship with it.

Conclusion

Following the previous chapter's explanation of the way in which subject positions are taken in relationship to political apology, this chapter has focused on the transformations of national membership that may take place as a result of such subject positioning. By taking up a subject position in relation to apology, individuals take on collective positive or negative attributes and agency in response to apology. This allows intimate relationship with others. Relationships are defined in context with other subject positions, in effect socialising the Apology. Everyday expressions, interactions and experiences actually realise collective apology's focus on relationship and responsibility. With reference to Nobles' membership theory of apology, the current chapter has extended the examination of apology beyond the political actions that contribute to a delivery of apology, to the way in which apology must eventually be socialised if it is to provide some political or moral value to society. While Nobles' membership theory provides definition of the different collectives involved in the lead up to political apology, this chapter provides a much more detailed observation of collective identities – some from members' perspectives – and the way in which these can be impacted or altered by apology.

This chapter demonstrates that because both the 2008 Apology and the responses to it do not clearly identify and represent the perpetrators of past injustices or their descendants it limits the potential for the Apology to transform the national community and extend and deepen ties of ethical responsibility. By representing its recipients as passive or resilient victims the formal Apology (a) limits the acknowledgement of these victims' past and present capacity for political agency; and (b) implies that reparative actions are best undertaken by victims. It becomes the victim's own responsibility to overcome trauma and to desist from anticipating future collective acts of reparation.

This chapter showed how Apology recipients seek to address problems of repair and responsibility by conceiving and representing themselves as observers rather than recipients of Apology. In doing so, they open up the possibility of taking an active stance towards the Apology. Lastly, however, I also suggest in this chapter that without the proper acknowledgement and representation of perpetrators and their descendants, formal apologies and the wider network of apology responses cannot realize the full transformative potential of apologetic political action. Yet, as I discuss in the following chapters, even though it is vital for the transformative potential of political apologies,

significant obstacles, both political and emotional, lie in the path of representing perpetrators and their descendants as a necessary means of establishing the grounds of political repair and a commitment to collective responsibility.

CHAPTER 6

Reparations: political shame and contempt

Introduction: the emotional politics of apology

This thesis has so far engaged with Nobles' membership theory of apology in order to examine the ways in which the Apology may have effectively altered the terms of belonging and national membership in Australia. This chapter further elaborates the concept of membership by examining the ways in which moral community features in participants' storied accounts. It aims to discover whether and how political apologies might contribute to repairing community by creating or recreating certain kinds of moral relationships among national collectives. Tavuchis identified how through apologies we seek to reclaim membership of a damaged, yet valued relationship or community:

apology expresses itself as the exigency of a painful re-membling, literally of being mindful again, of what we were and had as members and, at the same time, what we have jeopardised or lost by virtue of our offensive speech or action. (1991:8)

Seen through Tavuchis's framework, the agents of political apology aspire to re-create moral relationships, that is, relationships based on, at minimum, shared values of respect and equality along with the recognition that community entails responsibilities to others. In this chapter, I demonstrate that storied accounts around the anticipated and actual value of the Apology provide characterisations and representations of moral community that are helpful for understanding the outcomes of political apology.

One common view is that proper historical understanding of the Stolen Generations' experiences and public recognition of wrongdoing will facilitate bonds of connection, including social responsibility and compassion, between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In accordance with this view, public recognition of historical injustice and political apology is necessary for reconciliation – understood in this thesis as a common social ground, after Hage (2015). HREOC's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families makes a statement to this effect in the introduction to their report:

In no sense has the Inquiry been 'raking over the past' for its own sake. The truth is that the past is very much with us today, in the continuing devastation of the lives of Indigenous Australians. That

devastation cannot be addressed unless the whole community listens with an open heart and mind to the stories of what has happened in the past and, having listened and understood, commits itself to reconciliation (HREOC 1997:4).

At the core of this view are a series of under-explored assumptions about how truth and apology might transform the social and moral emotions of the various groups who compose the national community. In this respect at least, personal apologies are analogous to political apologies: both aim to engage a range of emotions and in doing so transform damaged relationships. Consequently, in order to understand the reparative potential of political apologies I investigate what I have called the emotional politics of apology. This chapter makes the claim that moral community is effectively an interplay of values and emotional politics and that apology (or its idea) is capable of instigating the dynamic that leads to such play. Emotionally charged attitudes, judgements and orientations such as contrition, recognition, responsibility, forgiveness and acknowledgement are intrinsic components of genuine apology. This chapter focuses on how political apologies elicit moral emotions and the role these emotions – including the nature of their elicitation – might have in achieving or hindering the reparative potential of apology. Here, I consider the proposition that political apologies transform moral communities through emotional politics. I particularly focus on what limits or prevents transformation.

The first part of this chapter brings together relevant concepts from previous chapters. It shows that emotions are integral to apology's effectiveness because social and political transformation relies on their motivating force. I then discuss how repair to community comes about through a process of socialisation of apology and the devolution or dispersion of responsibility. The second part of the chapter concentrates on storied accounts of the Apology's effects and impacts both anticipated and realised, how its acknowledgement of injustice is understood as a claim for the value of moral community and the emotional politics around these outcomes. I discuss the ways in which Australia's moral community, and notions of responsiveness become defined through such accounts. Finally, the chapter demonstrates the emotional politics at work around the Apology as complicating forces.

After investigating the emotional politics of apology we will be better able to understand how political apologies take effect and, importantly for the present case study, why a greatly anticipated political apology often appears to effect so little social change. The

discussion will show how on their own the acknowledgement and recognition of past injustices that official political apology provides, even along with mass contrition, are not sufficiently socially transformative to realise the full potential of apologetic political action. Without an apology dialogue that allows for an extended negotiation of moral community, including the re-articulation of relationships and subject positions, immediate responsiveness and receptiveness to apology are but fleeting opportunities for social transformation. Effective transformations can only be realised in a constant articulation of moral community, that is, through the ongoing, continuous practice of emotional politics.

Morality, politics and emotion (revisited)

In this section I argue that political apology must affect or transform moral community in order to contribute to positive changes in social relationships and practical remedies of injustice. Political apologies, I claim, attempt to transform moral community by eliciting and changing inter-group emotional dynamics and emphasising collective values, effectively mobilising emotions in order for them to be collectivised/socialised. The traditional usage of socialisation in sociological discourse connotes experiences – often in early childhood – of learning (and internalising) how to be in the local social world, how to interact with others in culturally meaningful ways, how to behave and what kind of behaviours one should expect to encounter in response (for example, Hughes, Martin and Sharrock 1995:184; Thompson and Tunstall (eds) 1971:124-125, 557-561).

Throughout this thesis, however, I am extending the term socialisation in order to communicate a sense of a discursive process underlying ongoing cultural change. With regard to the Apology, the term socialisation offers a way to describe how the transformations and ideals of apology, as theorised in previous chapters, might become normalised through everyday encounters. In other words, the success of political apologies rests on the narrative practice of emotional politics. The opportunity to interact is, I argue, the most important reparative social transformation offered by political apology. To see how political apologies might contribute to transforming the moral community in this way, my discussion needs to briefly return to the discussion of ‘emotional politics’ and social transformation in the context of historic injustices.

Thompson and Hoggett’s typology of political feelings (2012:7-12) emphasises that moral emotions are specific and integral to political life. Responsive emotions, particularly

anger, guilt, fear, pleasure and happiness are integral to politics because they express or reveal evaluations of fairness and justice (Turner 2007). These responsive, evaluative emotions directly relate to the experience of power within social relationships. Emotions offer value judgements and, as Nussbaum states, are ‘essential elements of human intelligence’ (2001:3) that underwrite our capacity for political reasoning. Judgements and evaluations that favour the victims of historical injustices effectively work to repair whatever social dysfunction led to the original harms and to prevent those conditions from arising again.

As discussed in the opening chapters, political apology is associated with morality in a number of ways, not least because of its declaration of wrongdoing. Apologetic expressions (contrition, guilt, responsibility, shame, empathy, sympathy) are traded for moral redemption in the moral economy; the ‘*mea culpa*’ of apology is a claim for membership in a moral community (Tavuchis 1991:7). With the potential to reveal contemporary moral life (Turner 2007) and normative social principles (Tavuchis 1991:4), it follows that political apology relies on the evocation of emotion and community to take effect. Without emotion, political apology is empty of reason; without community, it is empty of purpose.

Repair

In the introduction chapter, I considered the notion of repair as a negotiated form of justice. As Barkan outlines, the difference between restitutive and reparative justice lies in whether or not a belonging or condition can be returned (2000:xix). In the case of the Stolen Generations, much of what has been damaged cannot be restored; these non-restorables include family bonds, cultural knowledge, shared experiences and life opportunities. Despite inconsistent definitions and understandings, reparations and reconciliation are more commonly understood as practical and tangible outcomes that may flow from apology or that come about after apology. As Nobles states, though ‘reconciliation is best understood in its specific context, at minimum it refers to positive changes in emotional dispositions’ (2008:30). Her later assessment of the effect of the Apology in Australia reflected (a) her impression that it was supported by a large plurality of Australians, and (b) based on an 20.5 per cent increase in self-identification as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander from the 2006 to the 2011 census, that it seemed to have increased self-esteem for Indigenous Australians (2014:129). There is another

hypothesis to be tested in this observation of increased self-identification for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and that is that the Apology affected Aboriginal community relationships through acknowledgement of the Stolen Generations' experiences. More usefully for this thesis, where we are considering national membership, Nobles observes that apology 'serves as the marker where the competing interpretations of these efforts [to mitigate 'Aboriginal disadvantage'] are conceptualised and contested' (2014:134). She reiterates her theory that apology gives the nation a chance to express relationships of obligation and social responsibility.

In order to contribute to positive changes in social relationships, I argue that political apology must affect moral community beyond being widely supported. This is the most important reparative social transformation that political apology offers. As discussed in previous chapters, political apologies work to recognise and acknowledge acts of historical injustice. The 2008 Apology acknowledged a number of harms: pain, suffering, family and community break-ups, personal indignity and cultural degradation. Additionally, Rudd (2008) proposed that the Apology was 'part of the healing of the nation', inferring that the nation was suffering or in disrepair. Rudd declared that 'injustices of the past must never, never happen again', that the government would work to 'close the gap', develop 'new solutions' and that all Australians would share an 'equal stake in shaping the next chapter' of history. In offering these accounts of historical harms, the Apology created an opportunity for the broader community to agree that these were in fact injustices that should be repaired. Through agreement about wrongs and rights, a community asserts its morality.

At the same time the formal Apology provided its acknowledgement of harms, however, it also designated a collectivised victim and described the historical and ongoing suffering of this collective. As discussed in Chapter 4, subject positioning complicates apology.

Recognition and acknowledgement of injustice is important to victims because it enables them to access reparation. Political apology speeches do not, however, morally privilege the victim collective in the way that their independent and active airing of experiences of suffering do in the agitation for apology. When agitating for apology, the victim or the victim's advocates are able to take on a position of witness. In pacifying these victim-witnesses, political apology can all too easily morally privilege the apologisee, that is, the non-victim collective. In a way, political apologies dis-empower activists by delivering a

narrative that re-constructs them as passive victims. Especially when society shirks its responsibility towards victims, political apology can ultimately function just as shallow/hollow personal apologies do: viz., they quieten the claim to justice rather than repair the injustice or wrong. Thus we can recognise at least two important dimensions of a successful political apology that realise its transformative goal of creating collective responsibility for the past. The first is peace, the reassurance or re-establishment of moral community, and the second is repair, the alleviation of historical/contemporary harm and suffering. Both of these effects – as the everyday social practice of apology's ideals – must happen after the Apology and, I speculate, this general diffusion of responsibility for repair is what could lead to a transformation of moral community (a peacefulness). In other words, moral community depends on the perpetual realisation of collective and relational responsibility.

In apologising for historical wrongs, providers of political apologies, including Rudd, do not address culpability. Rather they claim a limited liability for lawmakers, and an even more limited liability for law enforcers. They assert that, as a national community, we can nevertheless acknowledge wrong and work towards specified justice outcomes. This claim of political apology rests on a transformation of moral community. My argument here is that when a political apology does not establish specific liability, society in general – especially those elements of society with existing social governance responsibilities – must take on a dispersed or devolved responsibility in order to provide the social peace and repair that apology promises. That is, our everyday actions ought to work towards the reparative justice objectives of apology and this requires a moral shift that is underwritten by contrition and concern for community.

The remainder of this chapter is focused on the experience and potential for post-Apology action, and examines selected extracts from research interviews to further the discussion. In this light, I examine social responsibility and responsiveness as contingencies of moral community. That is, the experience of social responsiveness very much depends on the uncertain nature of interacting groups' values and interests. Throughout the following analysis, I also observe the obstructive nature of the shame and resentment associated with the recognition of responsibility for repairing historical wrongs.

Acknowledgement

The formal 2008 Apology recognised contemporary and long-term impacts of historical injustice in a formal acknowledgement of harms and suffering given by the leader of government and the federal parliament. Rudd did this with reference to long-term impacts of injustice, that is, harms which require healing and social gaps which require closing, and the prescribed governmental actions such as funding for Stolen Generations healing organisations. In turn, among many other responsive emotions, the observing public responded with clear expressions of empathy and sympathy.

Here I wish to examine whether or how this collective acknowledgement of injustice might become a means to confirm moral community and relationship. As I have stated, the extent to which political apologies recognise and address injustices – which I interpret as a questioning of the existence of moral community – is at the heart of many accounts that question the value of Apology as a mechanism of reparation.

Expectations of the Apology were high. For example, Bev Murray spoke of her hopes for the Apology, and the sentiment she expressed was present in other accounts that figured the Apology as the outcome of a long quest:

BM: I thought that what would come from the Apology was that the things that were, that had been going on with Aboriginal people, there was going to be a change. That we were going to be consulted. That decisions about us weren't going to be made without consultation and some meaningful dialogue about and involvement of us. That there was going to be some real honesty. That, yeah, all these hopes and I thought, 'This is it man!' Can't – we're finally there. There's no going back. And that's, that's how I felt. Very jubilant.

KM: Did your mum feel the same do you think?

BM: No, not the same 'cause I think, given her age and what she'd been through, and it was – oh, I think she would have been more pessimistic about it. 'Cause she'd been through some really bad things. But I think there was some hope there too. (Interview 2013)

While many storied accounts showed an awareness of cynicism and pessimism towards the Apology, most measured the value of the Apology against their anticipation. Tony Birch astutely provides a description of the potential effect of cognitive dissonance under the circumstances: 'people often think that more came out of it than actually did' (Interview 2013). Where expectations and anticipation were high, strong communal feelings as described by Bev Murray accompanied the Apology. Nevertheless, the

enduring value of the Apology, as repeated throughout the interviews (2013-2015), was the way in which it provided acknowledgement of historical injustices.

Another valued aspect of the Apology was the opportunity it provided for people to come together and to have an experience of supportive, inclusive community. The Apology offered a platform for visible community. In terms of feeling, this was conveyed as support (empathy, compassion, understanding) and is characterised in the following previously cited extract from EvaJo Edwards:

'Cause, if you looked at the crowds that was at every capital city that put it on the big screen, and I look at Melbourne Federal Square how amazing, overwhelming and emotional was that for not just us but for you, and those people that do have an understanding and a compassion, and an empathy for us as Aboriginal people with what we've lost over 200-and-nearly-50 years. (Interview 2014)

As Danielle Celermajer pointed out, however, there are limited opportunities for expression of Australian community. From Danielle Celermajer's perspective, it appears that the community that EvaJo Edwards described was ephemeral, and in this transience the question of whether it was also a mediated ideal arises.

KM: Do you think any other – that the other kinds of changes that people talk about coming out of an apology – that redefinition of national membership, redefining the national narrative, that that has had an impact? That it's held?

DC: No. Because I don't think anybody really held it. And I don't think it was just because nobody held it in relation to indigenous issues. I think it's because there's a complete dearth of any sort of moral leadership in politics and so there's no sense of being called as a nation to any sort of ethical identity in relation to anything. And so why would there be in relation to indigenous politics? Whereas, if you have, I mean it's a boring thing to say but, if you have a Mandela, right, then there is this kind of constant call to be one's best self, one's best collective self. But here, I mean politics is not, it's just not about who we are as a nation to any degree. From anyone. I mean, really, that was kind of the last moment. I can't remember really there being a moment in politics where, apart from Julia Gillard's speech about sexism, there's not been a whole lot that's actually been about who do we want to be. It's been who do we want to keep out, who do we want to manage the economy. You know, what's wrong with the other party. But ...

KM: In a sense, does that then become what shapes who we are?

DC: Well, again, I mean I go back to what I said before. We only exist as a we insofar as we're represented, right. There is no Australia outside the way in which ... we only, we only have a sense of ourselves through the reflection of representation. And so, yes, it does. It doesn't mean that that's who all Australians are. And, you probably see in sub-state forms of organisation like the bushfires, for

example, you get the possibility of the kind of performance of an ethical nation but it's a bit more local. As a nation, we don't get it. (Interview 2013)

While Danielle Celermajer may recognise the Apology as an opportunity for that 'performance of an ethical nation' such that EvaJo Edwards perceived, she does not see that an ethical nation exists at all. In her example of ethical leadership, Danielle Celermajer points out the value of a constant demand for the performance of an ethical self – that which I will conceptualise in this thesis as the constant articulation of moral community that Apology dialogue offers.

In another interview, Jackie Huggins described the Apology, narratives of community, and offered another way of understanding the development of communal relationship between black and white Australia. A discussion of this extended section of the interview narrative follows the extract. Here further points are raised that are important to this thesis's observations of the way in which the ongoing Apology interaction and the narrative development, contains potential for expression and repair of moral community.

JH: Now, when the apology came up, and it's something that Aden [Ridgeway] has said that always stuck in my brain, he said, 'Well, you give an apology. Somebody else has to receive it and forgive.' Now the big word was around forgiveness.

KM: Forgive or accept?

JH: Well it was forgive. Yeah. We've got, you have to forgive and accept, there are two words there, but the pivotal one was around forgiveness. And we thought, 'How are we gonna ask our mob to forgive after all that's happened?'

KM: How do you do that?

JH: And all that's happened. And some of our mob said, 'No, we're not gonna do that.' Some of the mob said, 'No, we're not gonna do that at all. We're not gonna forgive them. Why should we forgive them?' And so there was a little debate that was happening there on the sidelines for a while and other mobs said, 'Yes, we need to forgive 'em because, we can move on, we need to move on.' So, that sort of happened. It didn't gain too much wider traction.

KM: Did you get a sense of what it would take? For people who said, 'No, we're, we're not gonna forgive,' you know, what would it take to ...

JH: For their whole lives to have been changed. Not have been taken away. For them not to have been massacred. The mob had been massacred. All the unpalatables of history.

KM: All of these things you can't undo.

JH: You cannot change. Yeah.

KM: And you can't forgive?

JH: Yeah, you can't forgive. It's too hard. Like, someone has abused you, you take the personal challenge whether you forgive that person or not. And so it was a very personal call I think for a lot of people as to forgiveness but the mob that I saw forgive were just quite amazing. And the older generation, people like my mother, never bitter, never bitter. She was put on to the back of a cattle truck and sent to Cherbourg Aboriginal Mission. You'd think I'd wanna forgive 'em? And no, I didn't. I couldn't forgive white fellas for a very long, long time. Then I got involved with reconciliation and I thought, 'Oh ...' I started thinking it through and I thought, 'Yeah, well white fellas got a story too. As much as I hate to admit that, they have.' And my mother always said,

'Don't hate white people,' 'cause I did. 'Don't hate white people because you're hating yourself.' And those wise old words didn't come to me until a long time after she passed.

KM: So there's forgiveness there even without an apology?

JH: Oh yeah, there was, there was in certain sections of our community, there was. Just didn't open the floodgates for forgiveness when they apologised.

KM: Yeah. It sounds more like a way, an approach to life. Like you said, to not be bitter about ...

JH: Yeah. And, when you carry that pain with you, that inter-generational trauma, which every Aboriginal person in this country has, it manifests itself in you. You get sick. You get angry. Who's listening to you? And, as a young woman, I found that I couldn't move. I was paralysed by that hatred and in hating white people, really, which I did for a long, long time. I suppose it was when I went through university ... so I guess for me it started when I'd found out the true history of our country and studying history because I thought, up until the age of 19, we'd passively handed over the country, 'cause that's what I was fed at school. And, when I went to university, I thought, 'Oh there's all these wars and stuff, and my mob actually did fight,' and I was really happy. Really happy to hear they'd put up that fight. So I carried that with me and then, all through my, mostly all through my twenties and thirties. And then I came to the Reconciliation Council, and I was about 36. And then I had to listen to other people. Much as I inadvertently didn't want to. But, and I thought, 'Yeah,' we all sat around the table and I thought, 'Yeah, you fellas got story too. So I've gotta listen to you too for a change.' And everyone has pain. And family issues. Aboriginal people don't have the monopoly on that.

KM: Yeah, so there's something about listening to other peoples' stories?

JH: Oh yes. I'm a great believer in it. See we grew up like that. Aboriginal people grew up on an oral culture. ... so it's so easy for us to have dialogue and stories, and do storytelling. Second nature to us. So we've gotta listen. We have to really take on board that whole aspect of story 'cause it is so powerful. It is so powerful. I have a segment in my book too. Auntie Rita. I don't know if you know that one where I've talked about my mother's memory in terms of her story and how I've had to even look at white documents to try to not so much legitimise it 'cause it should be the other way around, but the story, the story is so profound. It's everything I think. (Interview 2013)

The first observation I would like to make about this extract is the way in which Jackie Huggins stories her account of relationship with a larger Australian community, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. She is not only speaking of the value of stories, she is demonstrating how a story enables connection with experience. Using stories to illustrate her points, Jackie Huggins provides resources for her audience that will help them to understand her experience. She explains how she became politically active against white people as a result of learning a ‘true history’:

it started when I’d found out the true history of our country and studying history because I thought, up until the age of 19, we’d passively handed over the country, ‘cause that’s what I was fed at school. And, when I went to university, I thought, ‘Oh there’s all these wars and stuff, and my mob actually did fight,’ and I was really happy. Really happy to hear they’d put up that fight.

Then she uses another story about listening to others stories to explain how she came to relate to white people:

then I came to the Reconciliation Council, and I was about 36. And then I had to listen to other people. Much as I inadvertently didn’t want to. But, and I thought, ‘Yeah,’ we all sat around the table and I thought, ‘Yeah, you fellas got story too. So I’ve gotta listen to you too for a change.’ And everyone has pain. And family issues. Aboriginal people don’t have the monopoly on that.

In philosophical terms, forgiveness is a power that the collective victim holds once their experiences have been acknowledged. The victim’s occupation of power-to or power-over positions is restorative while the offender’s return to moral community is valued (Arendt 1958:236-241). What Jackie Huggins illustrates, though, is that the (self-)repair that forgiveness offers is available with or without the offender’s acknowledgement or desire for moral community. Jackie Huggins altered the approach of her activism from originally being directed against white Australians to reconciliation with white Australians, because as she started to listen to their stories of experience, she found that she could connect and relate (‘everyone has pain. And family issues’). Her own experiences were placed in an alternative, possibly less persecuted, perspective through that relatedness (‘Don’t hate white people, because you’ll be hating yourself’). Jackie Huggins’ observations – her storied account of self-repair through narrative repair – are complemented by Doreen Mellor’s observations in the following extract:

I think the money is simply a symbol. It’s something tangible that people can see as the next step whereas I think those next steps are very internal and very much part of a process of a kind of restitution of your self or restitution of emotions that have been ripped. And I don’t, see I don’t mean

restitution by the other person to an aggrieved person: I mean restitution of that wounded person into wholeness. Because I think that can only come from within the wounded person. And it's helped by external happenings. It's helped by apology because they can take that phenomenon, that, that thing, that apology, that gift from the other person and use that to restore themselves. But the other person can never do it. It's always something that has to be done by the person or the group, the collective, the community that is wounded. It's the community itself that has to restore itself. Whether that's done with support or not. So that's what I think of apology. It's utterly necessary. (Interview 2013)

Doreen Mellor describes apology as an important element required for the restoration of wounded community. Apology manifests this theoretically restorative potential in a re-narrativisation of history, the accompanying sincere acknowledgement of experiences of injustice, and a repositioning of the victim collective as active rather than passive (that is, as capable of self-healing and not dependent on a perpetrator for restitution).

Concepts of restoration, recognition and acknowledgement are repeated throughout the interview and video narratives. They appear in accounts of how we come into moral community, how attitudinal shifts occur and how people's lives and their living of them change for the better, whether or not the Apology has anything to do with these effects. Anna Haebich, for example, emphasises the way in which learning (e.g., acknowledging covert racism) provides a different or renewed perspective:

Richard Mills, he writes on this, he's an American, he sort of gets in on it about why people can keep doing all these things and – and you can't even see what's being done 'cause you're so imbued with your racism. So there's all these things that really need to be tackled like racism, racism, racism, and, and also peoples' living conditions – all those things – but not, not with the big stick and telling people what to do but really empowering people and listening. Listening. All those words that Rudd said, that you just sort of quoted, equal partnerships, all of that. That's going to take a lot of learning though from certain colonists. Yeah. We've got a lot to learn.

The idea of what it takes to speak the truth about historical injustices – requiring an element of risk-taking, courage and immunity to collective norms (naming the obvious while others are silent is also shouldering that burden of truth-telling for those others) – is seen here in Anna Haebich's and Jackie Huggins' (following) related conceptualisations of the 'reveal' of the Apology:

I think to speak the truth. I think that was the core value to speak the unsaid. To expose the elephant in the room that had been sitting there so dormant for so long. And to have that resurgence and to state the unsaid, and to really ... And even Kevin will tell you, he wasn't sure he was doing the right thing either. (Jackie Huggins, Interview 2013)

In a further example, Doreen Mellor expresses the relief (associated with the social peacefulness discussed previously) of such truth telling in the following extract:

I think the value was in, in making the recognition of the wrong that was done to a group of people, the wrong that was done for no, through no fault of their own for no apparent reason except a feeling of superiority I think the fact that that was recognised is tremendously important in the spiritual life of a community, in the emotional life of a community and in the social life of a community. So that at the bottom is the reason it was a positive occurrence. I also think that there was a great wave in the community for that to happen. There was, I just believe that, in general, the community felt, 'Ah. That's done now and it needed to be done.' And I think, I think it was recognition of a collective requirement for the community to be able to continue in a way. I think that it was quite held back by the lack of that recognition, the lack of that apology. (Interview 2013)

Membership of a moral community can be construed in a number of ways, but what Doreen Mellor does here is to emphasise the way in which truth telling about injustice also recognises the value of moral community. Doreen Mellor describes a dimensioned community in the above extract by specifying spiritual, emotional and social aspects of community membership.

In promoting political apology, Jean-Marc Coicaud proposes that the recognition that apology 'brings to the wrong/crime helps the victim to reconcile with oneself, and in the process, with others and the world'. Further, that:

the inner peace that apology brings to the victim turns out to be a tool of outer peace, of social peace. Its contribution to inner (psychological) security translates into outside security for society at large. It is in this that the political benefit of the moral value of apology resides. (2008:90)

Witnesses and the apologetic descendants of perpetrators can also experience the peace of mind that acknowledgement offers to some victims and their descendants.

The extracts from interviews with Doreen Mellor, Anna Haebich and Jackie Huggins discussed in this section, demonstrate the varying capacities of political apology to contribute to justice in terms of transforming and repairing the moral standing of members of the community as a whole. These valued capabilities (or potentialities) of political apology rest in its ability to instigate self-repair, encourage social peace, and articulate the value of moral community. In all cases discussed above, the way in which Apology emphasises the value of moral community has been raised. In the storied accounts of this research, the term 'community' was utilised to describe a number of

membership states, from an intimate community (such as Jackie Huggins' 'our mob') to a national community. When Aboriginal respondents mentioned community though, they most often meant the Aboriginal community (whether local or national depended on the context of the account).

In order to further understand Coicaud's important notion of the contribution that apology makes to personal-societal reconciliation and repair for all involved, the next section will discuss the responsiveness associated with the recognition of injustice.

Responsibility and responsiveness

Tavuchis claims that in personal apologies the responsiveness of wrongdoers 'in terms of sorrow, [is] the motor and organising principle of apology' (Tavuchis 1991:120).

Responsiveness drives apologetic dialogue. Ideally, the realisation that one has breached a moral norm, and the sorrowful implications of this breach, results in an apology. In this regard, apology is a plea from the offender for return to a moral relationship with the offended – it is a moral enterprise. Conditions of return to moral relationship include a demonstration of understanding of the nature and extent of damage incurred to the relationship (Tavuchis 1991:15-44, 119-21). Similarly, Charles Griswold (2007) understands forgiveness as a moral relation, one which requires the offender to accept responsibility for damage. In this section I argue that participants in the Apology dialogue effectively attempt to negotiate terms of moral repair and that they – narratively – produce and refine concepts of responsibility and responsiveness as they do so. In other words, respondents not only suggest that political apologies transform the moral spirit of the community, at least momentarily, but that apologies must also afford recipients the opportunity to negotiate the terms of belonging to this community. Apology dialogue enables negotiation of the kind of responsibility and responsiveness to others required for membership of this community. In this way, parties to apology attempt to redefine who 'we' are in terms of a shared moral responsibility to others. Barkan theorised that 'as victorious histories of the elite and the rich are replaced by the lives of the conquered, the poor, and the victimised other, the public over time encounters its own identity, one that includes immoral acts, suffering and oppression' (2000:xxiv). Barkan's 'public', with its moral flaws exposed in the context of apology, can ultimately negotiate moral restoration – that is, it can respond to the victimised, by working on being responsive to the

experiences of the victimised. Observing these practices should prove valuable to our understanding of the impact of political apology.

With a concept of responsibility present but obscure in the formal apology, participants in the research interviews and the SLQ's video participants build this concept into the Apology narrative with their storied accounts and evaluations of the Apology. In this way, they highlight what it would take for victims and witnesses to perceive responsibility and/or responsiveness in an apologetic collective. Respondents address responsibility in various ways, from culpability and compensation to respect and recognition of community. Birch, for example, prefers a framework of rational logic to justify compensation, sidelining emotionality and privileging 'hard' over 'soft' politics:

I actually think, interestingly, too much emotion in regard to indigenous issues is really problematic so, because it contains issues of pity and, yeah, well I think non-Aboriginal people involved in that process want to be forgiven by Aboriginal people, they want to be hugged, they want to be loved, and I think what should happen I think, in regard to say native title legislation, other forms of legal outcomes is that that sort of emotion should be taken out of it. And I think that, unless you accept, well, if you accept the pain, if you accept the suffering, well then you must accept that these things in the civil courts require a civil and monetary remedy. I don't know why people would find that unusual.

In this evaluative statement, Birch extends the logic of apology to question the fair application of contemporary society's legal-rational governance. That is, he restates a common understanding of the operation of civil law that once injustice is acknowledged, compensation is due, and asks why this concept is so problematic in this case.

In the following representative extracts, however, characterisations of moral responsiveness take precedence over characterisations of responsibility. The argument or aim of the accounts appears to be to address responsiveness to injustice rather than to identify and attribute responsibility for injustice. There is a difference between these two moral obligations and relationship states. Responsibility/culpability for historical injustice is a complex issue, being particularly difficult to establish and even then, not necessarily helpful in terms of reparative justice (Walker 2006:191-230). Affirmation of moral community is an alternative route to repair, but comes with its own set of difficulties. Jackie Huggins, for example, talks about responsiveness in the following extract in terms

of ‘decent honest Australians’ responding to knowledge of the race clause in the constitution:

We just need to get the message across. We need to educate white fellas. Here we go, the magical word that the constitution still has a race clause in there that discriminates against people on the basis of their race. Now I think, if decent, honest Australians knew that, they would be horrified. So in 1967, okay we got some things right but we didn’t remove some of the discriminatory legislation there. So we need to keep talking that up and that’s why we’re having these, the cycling and the walking, and the journey of recognition right around the country, to try to highlight that. (interview 2013)

Quentin Bryce spoke of responsiveness to the Apology, and ‘closing the gap’, as working towards the dignity and worth of all Australians:

I think it gives us a way forward, a new determination across the country to close the gap. The most powerful figure out of that is the horrific 17 per cent gap in life expectancy – those health issues. But I think it’s a very good term, when we’re thinking in our hearts about what we can do, every single one of us individuals, to address in 2008 and in our futures, the recognition of the dignity and worth of every person in our country. (SLQ video 2008)

Nadine McDonald-Dowd related, at a more intimate level, the effect of knowledge of mutual experience and the communicative responsiveness it gave rise to. Note that she takes on her mother’s voice at the end of the following extract to relate an effect of the Apology (or the apology event):

Because they brought all these members of the Stolen Generation together, the other thing that she was scared about was having to talk about her own experiences to everybody again and bringing up that pain. When they had the dinner, she just seemed a little bit more at ease, because everybody else in that room had gone through the same experience.

She was able to sit and talk and talk and I think they all talked about anything and everything for three days straight. It enabled her to be a lot more comfortable around people and share it.

The apology for her on that day was a final kind of recognition that I actually, I exist. My name is Veronica Anne McDonald. (SLQ video 2008)

Responsiveness towards victims was discussed in the previous chapter with the most effective responses coming from within an intimate community. Accounts of broader community or government response were less forthcoming and figured less convincingly as reparative. This is one of the key problems with endowing political apology with the ability to create moral community. Unless there is mass participation in apology – sustained responsiveness – its effects are limited. The formal apology focused reparative action on ‘little children’ and education. It reminded parliament of its political leadership

responsibilities for setting ‘a destination for the nation’ and seeking a ‘new partnership’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The video responses and interview participants’ evaluative accounts instead provide terms of relationship based on social responsiveness, the very condition for national membership and belonging.

As discussed, however, the position of victim is at risk of a negative passive identity, especially when constructed by an outsider community. Coicaud elaborates on these sensitivities around the apology recipient-victim positioning, explaining that apology:

must treat the victim with dignity ... apology has to project towards both the victim and the onlookers that it is respectful of the victim. This calls for the person who has suffered from the wrong not to be reduced to the status of being a victim. This requires seeing the person behind the victim, that is for the victim not to lose his/her individuality and agency. For while being recognised as a victim necessitates seeing the act committed against the victim as a crime, it also demands the victim is considered as a fully-fledged individual and not as a passive and almost inanimate entity, essentially on the receiving end of life. (2009:114)

To Coicaud’s recommendation to preserve the victim’s individuality and agency I add the suggestion that we need to look at perpetrators in the same way – to see their individuality and agency too. I proposed earlier that in order to remedy the negative subject status of victim, and conversely, to secure compensation or repair, some degree of responsibility needs to rest with the position of apologise/perpetrator. A problem to be addressed is how to overcome or accept the negative emotions associated with inhabiting each of these positions – the victim or perpetrator (i.e. both the harmed person seeking repair and the person responsible for harm/or capable of securing repair). Negative emotions effectively function to motivate resistance to these subject-positions. For the person harmed, resistance to the inherent passivity of the victim position leads them to claim a more agential position, such as witness or survivor. This, in turn, and particularly in the case of this Apology, allows those harmed to reject paternal governance, deflecting victimhood and showing active compassion for other victims instead. For those members of the group associated with perpetrating harms, resisting an apologise position is to avoid a troublesome immoral identity and therefore results in either an attempt to deflect responsibility or refines the terms of apologise-victim relationship in such a paternalistic way that the victim is further victimised. For example, as discussed previously, an apology that reinforces hegemony can transform an apology activist to an apology recipient, a victim. In order to develop these observations of what hinders the reparative

and transformative potential of political apology, however, we need to understand some other obstructions. Both shame and contempt are potential obstacles to successful political reparation.

Shame and contempt

While many observers to Apology reacted with empathy and publicly showed physical emotionality that indicated acknowledgement of harms (Maher 2012), beyond the Apology event it is difficult to determine how such emotional energy motivated further response. Nobles (2014) claimed that general consensus indicated broad support for apology, and that this would lead to social benefits, but another claim can be made that an ephemeral responsiveness is not supportive of a socialisation of apology, and in fact, can undermine the Apology. We can explore this second claim through a discussion of shame as inhibitor of apology's socialisation or 'barrier to compassion' (Nussbaum 2001:344) and contempt as its conspiratorial partner in establishing these community barriers.

According to Haidt, shame, a self-conscious emotion, is a painful feeling and increases the motivation to 'hide, withdraw or disappear, and making movement and speech more difficult and less likely' (2003:860). Physically, this may look like discomfort (shifting, turning away), while emotional or psychological discomfort might impact the social presence of a person, such as a withdrawal from dialogue or cooperation (avoidance of subject, silence, refusal to engage, rejection, anger). Socially, shame distances and separates. Contempt, an other-condemning feeling of moral superiority (Haidt 2003:858), is also associated with discomfort, increasing motivation to push away, exclude or otherwise distance the subject of contempt. Together, shame and contempt exert strong anti-communal force. Both shame and contempt can manifest in withdrawal or turning away from what has elicited the feeling. In the Apology interaction, observing and recognising that a dominant and elite social collective is implicated in historical injustices as perpetrators makes a large and powerful collective vulnerable to shame and to the contempt of the victim collective and other witnesses. Shame's moral and political dangers can be illuminated in contrast with the positive effects of guilt. As Nussbaum explains: 'Moral guilt is so much better than shame, because it can be atoned for, it does not sully the entirety of one's being. It is a dignified emotion compatible with optimism about one's own prospects' (2001:216). Optimism about one's prospects is attributed to

the way in which a clear moral framework of guilt and responsibility can provide opportunity for repair – leading to the recovery of moral community membership. In acknowledging guilt, that is, responsibility for wrongdoing, relevant right-doing/reparative acts ought to be revealed. This is also why Turner and Haidt describe guilt as a ‘justice emotion’ or ‘moral emotion’ (Turner 2007:293; Haidt 2003). Yet while Turner closely associates shame with guilt because of their shared trigger emotions (anger, fear and sadness), Haidt distinguishes the two by how self-interested the expression of each is. Both shame and guilt involve the violation of social norms, but shame is ‘triggered by violating a norm and knowing that someone else knows about the violation’ (2003:859) whereas guilt is associated with the harm of another and ‘triggered most powerfully if one’s harmful action also creates a threat to one’s communion with or relatedness to the victim’ (2003:861). Shame dissociates; guilt connects.

Peter Sutton (2009) has written of the differences between frames of Aboriginal classical or traditional thought and Judeo-Christian or Western thought. While Nussbaum, Turner and Haidt write from that latter perspective, their concepts of shame are compatible with Sutton’s understanding of traditional Indigenous concepts. It is pertinent, though, to consider Sutton’s warning against the projection of Eurocentrism. Sutton explains, from his years of experience with Aboriginal communities and languages, that ‘shame’ in Aboriginal languages is conceptualised along a continuum of ‘sulkiness or withdrawal, shyness, squeamishness, embarrassment, anger and even rage.’ Further:

there is no vocabulary for the inward barbs of self-criticism. The notion of ‘shame’ is often transitive. One speaks of shaming, which is to ostracise another, this being followed predictably by the withdrawal of their sociality, either by ‘talking sulk’ or by angry attack, or by both, in just that order. Sulks and attacks are denials of relatedness, and simultaneously, affirmations of its value, grief about its loss. Relatedness far outclasses abstract justice as a priority in such a society. (2009:200-201)

It is appropriate to take this notion of shaming as ‘denial of relatedness’ into the discussion because it is a valuable framework for understanding the social dynamics of shame and contempt and their negative implications for ‘re-membering’ community in the context of experiences of injustice.

I will explore these dynamics in this closing section of the chapter by discussing how perceptions of apologetic actions feature in the storied accounts. I am interested here in

observing reparative responses toward victim-recipients or towards repair of moral community. In the case of Des Bowen, for instance, he states in a quote (from Chapter 4) how his workmates called and offered support and that he had always known their support existed:

To hear it from a top person, you know top man in Australia, say sorry, well that meant a lot to our people, meant a lot to me too, because I've had my non-Indigenous co-workers that we used to work out on the station with, well they rang me up and said, 'you know Des, look, we're there for you,' and, but I knew they were there all the time, you know. (SLQ video 2009)

I claim that we can see in the co-workers' expressions of the above story, a valuing of relationship, and an attempt to overcome or negate their own potential shame. It seems that Des Bowen is saying that while he knew he had established a relationship with his non-Indigenous co-workers, they were wishing to re-confirm the relationship in light of an acknowledgment of past injustices. Perhaps in response to the Apology his co-workers were reaching out in order to confirm their own membership of a moral community. Drawing on Sutton's description of the classical Aboriginal cultural description of shame, along with Nussbaum's, Haidt's, and Turner's accounts of contempt and resentment, the remainder of this chapter will engage with some of the other storied accounts studied. The purpose of this discussion is to further understand the morally transformative potential of Apology narratives by examining the ways in which they express perceptions of reparative responsiveness.

Other immediate responses and expressions of fellow-feeling were described by those who attended the formal apology event on the 13th February 2008, but in reflection, after the Apology, apologetic responsiveness was much more subdued and tied less and less to an appreciation of the kind of sorrowful response (the *mea culpa*) encountered in 1997 when the testimonies of Stolen Generation members were mediated. When EvaJo Edwards describes funding cuts to her Stolen Generations' organisation as a withdrawal of support, she seems to perceive this with contempt or resentment:

Well, when we've had funding cuts at an organisation level that actually services the Stolen Generations and we have no more healing funds, what happens with our healing? We are still going to be out there. We're still going to be falling into depression and, and, cutting ourselves, and close to suicide, and all those things because we can't deal with, with society as what it is. Where do we go to get help? And sometimes mainstream organisations don't understand that. (Interview 2014)

Others, like Len Tregonning (see following extract), noted that they had not perceived any changes in keeping with the formal Apology's promise. Key phrases from the formal Apology, cited as an interview prompt for the participant's reflection, were connected with talk of failed promises. In this way, contempt mingled with disenchantment:

If anything, I've seen a reduction in funding, to Aboriginal services, particularly in the health and legal area. That is the most important for people that don't have representation. They've got no voice. You know, they've taken all the funds away from a lot of legal services. Mutual respect is – go to the Northern Territory. You've still got the quarantine thing. So that's not really respect. Those issues. A very different state Victoria, compared to other ones. It's always been. The state government's been very prominent here but, whoever's in power, a lot of them support a lot of Aboriginal initiatives because they've been involved. With the new one, prime minister, he's actually appointing himself as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. So he is controlling everything, which is just like a mission manager from the 1800s to the 1900. I will tell you that I'm gonna appoint an Aboriginal to be the person in-between, which is Warren Mundine, which he elected and put, he wasn't elected by the Aboriginal congress of 100 people, which are supposed to be these groups. He's also cut their funding so they've got no voice, although they're gonna continue on, on their own 'cause, as separate to government and all, don't necessarily need to be relying on them for funding. So those sort of things are happening right now and, you know, they're signing mining leases on behalf of Aboriginal groups. That's not really what we call 'mutual respect'. Different in Victoria. We haven't got all what you call 'traditional lands' left. We've only got the mountains. And there's the state and, basically state and crown lands – that's all we've got – whereas the other groups they've got, still got, you know, thousands of miles of traditional homelands and all that stuff. And also they've got a lot more impact with mining and other things compared to Victoria. Yeah, I haven't seen a great, great improvement in that. I mean one of the latest statistics is that Victoria is still having its Aboriginal children taken away and put into foster care, in this day, in this age. It's one of the highest, which is pretty disappointing when we look around and think of all the new services that are out there. But then we remember people keep breeding and our population is the youngest, you know, that age group between 20 and 23 is gonna be, that's where the government should start looking out 'cause a lot of them are unemployed and they will need housing, they will need all the other opportunities that everyone else has. But I haven't seen anything exciting. Well, you know what I mean. Apart from ... yeah, nothing. Yeah. I haven't seen a great deal. It's just things being cut. (Interview 2014)

Len Tregonning's wide-ranging assessment of post-Apology actions in the Aboriginal social sector reads like a description of a retraction of apology. The twinned underlying concepts that inform his assessment – voice and respect – have been at the base of disenchanted responses. I have chosen to provide this extract in particular however, because it highlights the importance of country and community representation to Aboriginal peoples and in this way, emphasises the kind of politics at work across

Australia. Len Tregonning's assessment is active – he knows what is happening in the sector. Likewise, Alister McKeich reviewed the list of Rudd's policies before wondering if the Apology was supposed to achieve anything but acknowledgement. He voices a growing contempt for the idea that the Apology would alleviate Aboriginal disadvantage as he works through this list:

KM: Yeah. Which leads into the next question about things that Rudd mentioned that would happen after the apology, such as Closing the Gap, and other statements of change included in the apology. And, and then I'll just see if there's – if you have a response to any or all of them. He mentioned closing the gap, not letting similar injustices happen again. New solutions to old problems. Developing mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility, and becoming equal partners with equal opportunities and an equal stake in Australia's future. Do you think –

AM: Well none of that's happened. KM: Okay

AM: Not a single one. So, if we're like, wanna like tick them off ... Where are they? Closing the gap: that's actually some of those social indicators in which they do closing the gap have gone backwards. I think Year 12 retention rates have gone up. That was one of their indicators. Incarceration's not actually even included in the Closing the Gap things but that's actually gone up 57 per cent in the last 15 years. Aboriginal people have been more incarcerated. Not letting similar injustice happen again: well they're still taking kids away at a rapid rate of knots. New solutions to [old problems]: they're still just trying to assimilate people and some of the policies are just reflections of stuff they were doing in the 1800s. Mutual respect, that's a joke 'cause they had the intervention and they're now closing 150 communities. And equal partners, equal, yeah, that's all bollocks as well, basically. Feel free to quote the word 'bollocks' in your report as well. But that's the thing though. It's just like well this, the ... yeah, the effect of the apology is – yeah, doesn't actually affect what happens on the ground. Like it's good I guess for the psyche of the country and for us to learn more about our history, and for acknowledgement of the, what happened. And so it's kind of almost good in a therapeutic way for some people but in terms of actually changing on the ground circumstances and the poverty, and alleviating poverty and disadvantage of Aboriginal people I don't really believe that it's had an effect. But then, like I was saying before, was its purpose to? But then, if Kevin Rudd's apology was genuine then he's obviously thought that saying sorry is gonna lead to this but it hasn't ... And that could be because the purpose of the sorry wasn't to do so or the current government we have actually doesn't give a shit about what that sorry really meant in terms of that. So it's ... an apology without any kind of follow-up in changes in the way you develop policy, and roll out policy, if there's no change in that then you can expect it to only go so far. And so it was I think, therapeutically, for the country, it was a really positive thing but if the government's not gonna back it up ... Like sorry followed with a compensation would have been really great. Sorry with rolling back the intervention would have been great. But, actually, the Labor government just continued the implementation of the intervention legislative measures under Stronger Futures. (Interview 2015)

Alister McKeich's response separates the potential therapeutic benefits of the Apology ('a positive thing') and the alleviation of disadvantage ('I don't really believe that it's had an effect') in order to talk through the Apology's promise and impact. Theorising a number of reasons for why the Apology is not connected with positive changes in circumstance, like Len Tregonning (interview 2014), he ultimately highlights the intervention and lack of compensation/special funding as evidence for his assessment.

Without practical, material impact, the symbolism of apology rings hollow and leads to expressions of disenchantment. This is also the case for other respondents, such as Anna Haebich:

It felt like the sound of a drum being hit with the sound being hollow and without love. At first his spirit was raised in expectation that someone actually acknowledged his pain that came with being forcibly removed from his loving parents. (Haebich, quoting her husband speaking about his uncle, interview 2014)

The dissipation of the Apology's sentiment – the lack of material outcomes/changes in circumstance – is spoken of as a withdrawal of its promise. The accompanying disappointment and cynicism, as indicated by the tone of these above extracts, is a way of shaming those who have failed to act in line with the Apology and distances the narrators from what is seen as an impotent apology collective. These are responses of contempt and resentment and cause for shame, and, for the national community, demonstrate that the moral struggle of how to contain and accommodate the wellbeing of disparate collectives in one nation remains unresolved almost a decade after the Apology.

Conclusion

The initial discussion of this chapter demonstrated how political apologies contribute to repairing communities, stretching from intimate to national communities. By acknowledging past injustices, by truth telling, the perpetrators or those who apologise on their behalf demonstrate that they conceive former victims as moral and political equals. As we saw, widespread public acclamation of a political Apology reinforces this reparative capacity. The narrative responses examined in this section showed how the sympathy for victims expressed through the Apology and its immediate public reception enabled recipients to feel part of a shared, morally responsive community of equals. Here we saw the central role that emotional politics plays in political reparation.

Political reparation is facilitated by the cultivation of sympathy between those divided by past injustices, and to the extent that political apologies engender such sympathy they can contribute to communal repair. Political apologies can play a key role in reparative justice insofar as they stimulate this kind of emotional responsiveness within a divided community. Yet, as discussed, in post-conflict and post-colonial societies there are many obstacles to achieving an enduring, sustainable community characterised by this kind of emotional responsiveness. If emotional politics offers some solutions to the problem of political reparation it also presents some difficulties. The mutual attunement that underpins and motivates a collective commitment to reparative justice is also impeded by a whole range of other emotions. As we saw in this section, shame undermines ongoing social relationships predicated on mutual respect. In this section I showed how many narrative responses to the Apology expressed the view that it only fleetingly repaired the community. My analysis of these narrative responses shows that for the respondents the failure of the Apology to generate practical outcomes (compensation etc) engendered a sense of shame about, and resentment towards the national community. The mutual sympathy engendered by a formal apology is undone by the shame about and contempt for a community that does not then fully realise its claim to justice.

I conclude then that while political apologies fleetingly point towards the possibility of political repair something more is needed for them to fully realize their transformative potential. As we shall see in the next chapter, we need to follow the respondents conceptualisation of political apology not as a single event, but as the trigger for an ongoing, continuous, agonistic negotiation of political community.

CHAPTER 7

Subversion: a different kind of politics for a different kind of community

Introduction

This chapter draws together reflections on the narratives depicted in the SLQ video project participants and those generated by my interviewees. It details the ways in which these different responsive narratives develop and convert – and ultimately subvert – the meaning of the formal Apology, as exhibited in Rudd’s 2008 speech. In what follows, I claim that narrative participation enables apology to be socialised. That is, for justice responses to be culturally embedded in post-apology societies. In particular, I examine how responsive narrative disrupts the hegemonic meanings and values of the formal Apology. Storytelling in response to the Apology can be seen as political dialogue and a way for publics to address the ethics implied in apology. As I will show, these stories enable dialogue on ethics by exhibiting the narrative agency and power of victim-recipients and of all parties to apology, but particularly by keeping Apology dialogue open and contested. The effect of such disruption and opening is a radicalising of the Apology narrative, which provides opportunities for a conversion of the greater Apology narrative from political inertia to political action on the part of its publics. In this thesis, I argue that the transformation and conversion of political membership, if it occurs at all, first occurs in dialogue. Such dialogue, figured through responsive storytelling, comprises a political negotiation of the terms of moral and political community. Apology dialogue differentiates contemporary terms and forms of national community, transforming apology into an ethical programme of political engagement.

The radical nature of apology

In previous chapters, I established Nobles’ membership theory of apology as a useful explanation of the manner in which a political apology is delivered in the context of contemporary moral economy. Drawing from the work of Tavuchis, this thesis shows the kinds of effects a political apology achieves through the social processes of responsive storytelling that occurs after its delivery. While recognising the value of dialogue and the acknowledgement of historical injustice, the thesis has theorised the obstructive nature of

some emotional responses to the moral dimensions of the Apology. I have claimed that the moral emotions of shame and humiliation, combined with the problematic collective identities associated with the subject positions implied by the Apology, mitigate and block the Apology's reparative value for individuals and the nation. But there is another way of examining the value of the Apology, despite its failings and problems and questionable political value for Aboriginal justice and equality. In this chapter, I propose that radical democratic theory (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 2001; Habermas 1984, 1989, 1990) and the role of radical politics in general (Zournazi 2002; Laclau 2006; Critchley 2012; Mouffe 2013) can be used to re-examine and re-value the potency of the narrative on the Apology. In particular, here I will examine the currents and ripples of dialogue that began with the promise and event of the Apology and that continue to shape post-Apology collective identities.

In this final analytical chapter, I consider whether the politics of apologies in general can be fruitfully understood as radicalising. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001) conceived of radical democracy as a form of post-Marxist politics: a political space that accepts 'the plurality and indeterminacy of the social' (2001:152). In dialogue with Mary Zournazi, Laclau and Mouffe discuss the ways in which radical democracy provides a 'new social imaginary' (Zournazi 2002:128). For Mouffe, the crucial work of radical democracy is to sustain agonistic social relations, by which she means the 'struggle between adversaries' (2013:218). Radical democracy is a form that accepts constant contest or struggle as a condition of democracy, but one that ultimately sustains pluralism, participation and respectful political relations. Mouffe differentiates agonism from antagonism by emphasising respect for the participation of these others:

Contrary to the antagonistic friend/enemy relation in which there is no shared symbolic terrain and in which the different sides aim at eliminating their opponent, in an agonistic relation the adversaries share a common symbolic space and they recognize, at least to some degree, the legitimacy of the claims of their opponents. A sort of 'conflictual consensus' exists between the various groups. They agree about the ethical principles which should inform their political association, but they disagree about their interpretation. (2012:632-633)

This thesis has observed the practice of Apology dialogue by engaging with the storied accounts of some who attended to the Apology and to Apology-related issues. Fundamentally, apology is a form of dialogue that seeks the participation of the other. However great the conflict or distance between the participants in apology, the very act

of participation draws them into relationship. I propose that Apology and its reciprocation becomes the ‘common symbolic space’ that Mouffe describes as a condition of agonistics.

In apology dialogue, as I have discussed, responses are also radicalised. That is, responses can be instigated by apology without being directed to the apologisee. A simple example would be where victims responsively share a conversation about their experiences, like the experiences of her mother described by Nadine McDonald-Dowd in the following.

I think the biggest fear for her was that the Prime Minister wasn’t going to say sorry. That he was going to get everybody there and disappoint everybody, and I said well you know, he wouldn’t be that kind of man I don’t believe to actually shame himself and not actually go through with what he’s promising to go through.

And another part of that was that because they brought all these members of the stolen generation together, the other thing that she was scared about was having to talk about her own experiences to everybody again and bringing up that pain. When they had the dinner, she just seemed a little bit more at ease, because everybody else in that room had gone through the same experience.

She was able to sit and talk and talk and I think they all talked about anything and everything for three days straight. It enabled her to be a lot more comfortable around other people and share it. (SLQ video 2009)

While the kind of dialogue described above may not be adversarial, conversants may come to have different ideas about how to achieve the outcomes towards which the Apology gestures. Different structural approaches might be cause for agonistics. In the following two extracts from the SLQ videos, while both support progressive justice for Aboriginal communities, Dora Gibson articulates her vision as ‘grass roots’, while Mark Wenitong’s is ‘high level’.

Dora Gibson says:

In the future I would like to see first and foremost would be Australia working towards reconciliation in a big way, I think more Indigenous input in our own affairs, not only from people who are up there but from the grass roots, people coming back and working with communities back here and listening to what we have to say.

I think you have to start small; you have to begin by creating little scenarios about being sorry, you know, and bringing out the feelings.

It will have a lasting effect if it is not just a small drop in the ocean and we forget about it, it needs to be continued, if it is to have an impact on our lives, it needs to be followed up, you know? Have ideas

about what sorry is all about and keep it going, keep the momentum going don't just leave it there hanging in mid air. (SLQ video 2009)

These reflections can be contrasted with Wenitong's:

I still think we really need high level engagement and high level legislated relationships with the Australian government and I mean maybe not a treaty but something that's similar to that where we are not at the whims of politics every time a new party comes in for this kind of thing to happen. If you have something locked in at a higher level, they can't do that, and kids are safer for the rest of their lives, they have actually got something to live for rather than just surviving, and I think that is the big deal for me. So I think the high level agreement is the most important thing and a lot of the other things will follow from that if we get it right. (SLQ video 2009)

While these extracts are examples of the situation where agonistic communities may emerge in Apology dialogue, the difference between agonistic and antagonistic dialogue can be seen in the varieties of response stories on the Apology and the presentation of Aboriginal-settler relationships in general. Agonistic dialogue occurs when there is a common symbolic space for contest (Mouffe 2012). This of course requires some consensual negotiation of what that space comprises. Ricoeur provides a relevant conceptualisation of the referential power of text/discourse, which is that 'the disclosure of a possible way of looking at things' (1976:92) provides the reader and the writer with a fused 'world horizon' (1976:93). With the Apology dialogue, the Aboriginal community and the community of apology or justice activists share a common symbolic space or horizon where political and material justice is sought, but where perspectives and values of apology's role differ but are respected. Dialogue in this space therefore helps to establish pluralist post-Apology communities. Antagonism, however, in its attempts to homogenise and define terms of community, creates impermeable borders, particularly where a rationalist or deliberative framework is utilised. For example, in the question of apology, Howard's 1997 reconciliation convention speech embedded an antagonistic dynamic in apology dialogue that resonated for a decade. Howard's politics can be seen as an attempt to eliminate a claim for justice rather than legitimating contest over the constitution of such justice. Antagonistic contest attempts to separate reason and logic from experience and emotion, whereas for agonistics, contest resides in the process of establishing equivalencies. In the democratic project, collectives recognise the struggles (and respect the differences) of other collectives and relate these struggles in the push for a radicalisation of democracy (Mouffe 2013a:133, 2013b:100; Zournazi 2002:129).

Apology, then, is a democratic process in the way that Mouffe conceives of it: an ongoing dispute over rights and identities with the potential to reveal and critique contemporary ethico-political practices and to shape collective identities. This chapter addresses how we might conceive of apology as a flashpoint of radical political praxis. My central theory is that apology responsive narratives form the common symbolic space for agonistic political engagements (Zournazi 2002:122-148).

Apology as an empty signifier

One of Mouffe and Laclau's central concepts of radical democracy is that of the empty signifier. If Apology is taken as an empty signifier, it is easy to explain why we talk about injustice when we talk about Apology. In dialogue with Zournazi, Laclau explains:

I think that one has to point out that, whenever there is an attempt at transcending a certain social system, there exists in the discursive elements which organise it something which is given through 'empty terms'. For instance, if you say you want something like human liberation in a certain context it is going to be an empty term, but the content is going to be provided by a plurality of demands which establish an equivalential relationship between them. (Laclau in Zournazi 2002:124-5)

Laclau claims that the emptiness of any discourse (which we can apply to narrative) is the 'source of its force' (2002:125). An empty signifier 'can evoke different demands in different situations' (2002:125). I claim that, as an empty signifier, the Apology evokes these different demands (an Apology response) from a plurality of perspectives and subject positions.

Further, the emptiness of apology is apparent in the theory of Tavuchis on apologies and the ways collectives add complexity (1991:69-117), which he says 'derives primarily from the condition of plurality: the presence and mobilisation of an offended Many' (1991:69). As we have seen, and shall go on to examine further, the Apology should be ethics-in-dialogue that responds to apology with acknowledgment and contestation, or in Mouffe's terms agonism.

What we talk about when we talk about the Apology

In this chapter, I argue that political apologies, particularly responses to them, can be characterised as agonistic democratic political practice because:

- Apologies stimulate (and responses constitute) a rights dialogue

- Responses reveal what is contestable about apology
- Responses challenge (or attempt to uphold) hegemonic meanings
- Responses present ideas of ‘better’ relations (a moral propulsion)

This framing of storytelling in response to the Apology helps us to understand the political value of Apology dialogue as one means to further the agonistic politics of reparative justice. In this regard, the political value of apology dialogue is greater than that of the formal apology speech itself. Without response, there is little contest of political identities and practices and no basis for challenges to the limiting, hegemonic narrative of injustice and reparation. In making this observation, I am not claiming that the Apology dialogue engaged the entire nation uniformly: from the participant’s perspectives, Apology-related narrative practices appear only now to take place within Aboriginal and activist communities. However, this situation does not detract from the value of the current analysis showing how political apology takes effect.

A rights dialogue

In conceiving of Apology and Apology responses as a rights dialogue, this thesis highlights the ability of political apology to stimulate conversation about political representation, and about the right to political participation. Mouffe gives egalitarian and rights discourses a ‘fundamental role in the reconstruction of collective identities’ (2013:83). In Australia, political participation has long been connected to collective identity. Aboriginal Australians were not able to participate in elections as full political members of Australia until 1967, even though by then many had participated as national members in both the first and second world wars. It is probably no coincidence that the removals policies were retracted not long after Aboriginal peoples were empowered to vote for representational governance.

Many storied accounts studied in the course of my research take the Apology as the entry point for similar discussions about injustices that relate to collective identity constructs. Subject positioning and re-positioning is undertaken, in these accounts, with regard to injustice. There is an inherent plurality in these stories of experience and perception. They are rarely the ‘who did what to whom’ kind of testimonials that might be sought in a truth commission, for example (see the Ball, Spierer and Spierer [2000] model of analysis). Though the accounts often detail experiences of injustice without attributing them to a specific perpetrator, they also present concepts of the ways and means of

working towards reparative justice. In this way, those who respond with such accounts describe how justice was achieved in isolation from punishment or revenge.

For example, in the following extract from a video response, Tiga Bayles seems to suggest that recovering language and culture is a self-reparative response. Tiga Bayles' story reports how Aboriginal people, stolen and taken to missions or stations, were punished if they spoke their language or practiced their culture. These practices were not subject to litigation at the time, as with other such brutal behaviour. Tiga Bayles does not talk about punishment as a response.

... and I was thinking of my grandfather, Sam Watson, taken away along with a lot of other young boys of the same age group, he was taken away from Nebo, taken by white pastoralists that came around in a horse and cart, and those young boys were just grabbed and thrown in the back of that cart. He never saw his mum again.

And the impact on my mother and her brothers and sisters, it took them a long time to find out about their country their language, their songs and dances. Our grandfather Sam was flogged by a dog chain, tied up by a dog chain, flogged by that dog chain if he spoke the language or sung any of the songs or done any dances, so that cultural business ceased when he was taken away. (SLQ video 2008)

For Tiga Bayles' family, they responded to grandfather Sam's experiences by finding out about 'their country, their language, their songs and dances'. They restored those losses and thefts to themselves. The seeking of self-repair without punishment reflects the framework of Rudd's formal apology. As discussed in the previous chapters, the figures of the perpetrators of injustice are not clearly apparent in narrations of the official Apology. Rudd's speech canvassed the connection between the past and the present without admitting liability for MPs:

... the deliberate, calculated policies of the state as reflected in the explicit powers given to them under statute; that this policy was taken to such extremes by some in administrative authority that the forced extractions of children of so-called 'mixed lineage' were seen as part of a broader policy of dealing with 'the problem of the Aboriginal population'.

One of the most notorious examples of this approach was from the Northern Territory Protector of Natives, who stated: *Generally by the fifth and invariably by the sixth generation, all native characteristics of the Australian aborigine are eradicated. The problem of our half-castes – to quote the Protector – will quickly be eliminated by the complete disappearance of the black race, and the swift submergence of their progeny in the white ...* The Western Australian Protector of Natives expressed not dissimilar views, expounding them at length in Canberra in 1937 at the first national conference on Indigenous affairs that brought together the Commonwealth and state protectors of natives. These are uncomfortable things to be brought out into the light. They are not pleasant. They are profoundly disturbing. But we must acknowledge these facts

if we are to deal once and for all with the argument that the policy of generic forced separation was somehow well motivated, justified by its historical context and, as a result, unworthy of any apology today.

Then we come to the argument of intergenerational responsibility, also used by some to argue against giving an apology today. But let us remember the fact that the forced removal of Aboriginal children was happening as late as the early 1970s. The 1970s is not exactly a point in remote antiquity. There are still serving members of this parliament who were first elected to this place in the early 1970s. It is well within the adult memory span of many of us. The uncomfortable truth for us all is that the parliaments of the nation, individually and collectively, enacted statutes and delegated authority under those statutes that made the forced removal of children on racial grounds fully lawful. (Rudd 2008)

In contrast to sitting with uncomfortable truths (an allusion to shame), response narratives appear to stand for social justice and seek fellowship, duty and responsiveness in the same way as a testimonial in a truth commission. I claim that such accounts seek acknowledgement of ongoing injustice and the need for socio-political repair or change. Justice in these contexts is construed as better life circumstances and possibilities for victims, rather than the legal-rational sense of justice as the punishment of crime. People instead spoke of the need for representation and connection, like Bev Murray in the following:

BM: That's what we need more of. In this country, any country, you, people, need to feel that they are part of community, they are part of the country and, and I know in Australia there's just so many different people from different countries and they still have that connection. And you've got indigenous people who, as I said, I've never felt a part of this country. Never felt proud to call myself Australian.

KM: Do you feel that more now though after the apology? [BM: Sorry?] Do you feel more Australian now?

BM: No. It's gone back to where I was before. After the things that, like the intervention in the Northern Territory. That was outrageous. And the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act. It was just outrageous. No, it's, ... so no, there are things that happened then that put us back to square one.

KM: Okay. So that kind of undoes it all?

BM: Yeah. It's undermined it. As I said, it was a lost opportunity and they've just gone back to where it was before. (Interview 2014)

The Apology elicited emotions such as sorrow and grief, which were in turn responded to with compassion and sympathy. Some of the SLQ video respondents to Apology appear to seek acknowledgment of injustice through stories which are capable of accessing audience empathy, sympathy or compassion, expressions of which might manifest as supportive action and indicate community. Other accounts, more common in my

research interviews, are evocative of indignation. As discussed throughout, however, all of the public and research accounts under study anticipate audience. The interpretive community (Plummer 1995) of the storied apology dialogue comprises ‘political as well as cultural actors’ (Squire 2005:101). Smith and Schaffer stress how the reader/audience ‘acknowledges his or her role in identifying with the victim of trauma and taking responsibility for recognising the victim’s trauma’ (2004:109). Empathy – an ability to understand another’s experience – is central to that responsibility and to responsiveness. As outlined in Chapter 1, parliament did not orchestrate a community response to the Apology but, rather, invested effort in facilitating a community witnessing of the Apology event itself. One of the differences between responding to the Apology with further dialogue and simply witnessing the Apology is in the potential of dialogue to further the progression of justice beyond the moment that has been witnessed. In other words, witnessing is important, but the motivational drive to act responsively after witnessing holds more political potency. This response, from a non-victim perspective (i.e., a perspective that can be taken by an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal person), is akin to the responsibility that Smith and Shaffer describe. Those who participate in Apology dialogue are not necessarily responding strictly to the Parliament even though the Parliament issued the Apology. They are responding to social expressions of grief, to a socio-political silence about the histories of Aboriginal-settler relationships in Australia, and to each other. People participate in a rights dialogue with a view to securing justice, but also to be comforted by – and assert – the presence of a community that values such justice. Even if they disagree about the form(s) that justice might take, a community collects around this rights dialogue to form a democratic community.

Narratives can be construed as theorisations of social mores and politics (Frank 2002; Squire 2005:97). The mobilisation of emotion in these narratives and in the experience of tellers and their audiences can serve to affirm and validate the theories expressed in narrative responses to the Apology, strengthening the politics of rights. In storytelling, and other social interactions regarding personal experience, the elicitation of memory, imagination, concern and evaluation can result in compassion and empathy (Nussbaum 2001:327–342). The fact that the Apology elicited emotion also makes it memorable, and many affects spoken of in response to the Apology (those described as arising in reflection or during the experience of the event) are associated with sympathy, compassion, anger, and righteous indignation. These emotional impressions of the Apology event continue to

resonate throughout the response dialogue, often in anticipation of the advancement of justice (sponsored by empathy) or else an explanation for the slow or non-existent advancement of justice. For example, in the following extract from her interview, Haebich describes the evolution of situated responsibility from empathy:

Through story – personal – that can reach people and that create that feeling of empathy. But empathy is something, but then you're getting that feeling of responsibility and that understanding of the structure of injustice. And people have been talking about that in response to the South African truth and reconciliation commission. They feel like maybe they focus too much on these terrible perpetrators and the terrible things that happen, and people go, 'Well I didn't do that'. But people didn't understand how everyone's implicated in all of those processes. So, you know, we're all settler colonists here, it's a settler colony on a land with indigenous people. So, we have to work it out.
(interview 2013)

Resonating with the descriptions of apology responding offered by interviewees discussed in the previous chapter, Anna Haebich identifies three important elements of responsiveness to the Apology: empathy, responsibility and knowledge. Danielle Celermajer also identified a similar trio: 'there's the feeling sorry, there's the acknowledgement of truth and then there's the taking of responsibility' (interview 2013). Anna Haebich describes personal stories as a way of facilitating empathy as she talks about the conversion of an inner response to an outward focused – social – feeling of responsibility. She makes an allegorical reference to the South African truth and reconciliation commission, however, in order to make the point that if people do not feel empathy, that is, do not see themselves reflected in the story, they cannot gain knowledge of how they are personally implicated or how they might act responsively.

The difficulty of establishing Ricouer's 'fused horizon' (1976:93) in the dialogue of Apology is one of different worlds; a distance in experiences. Among the rights stories that emphasised distance between my (and my contemporaries) experience(s) and those who participated in the SLQ video collection, were Robyrta Felton's account of securing a pension, Herman Bambie's account of working unwaged, and Frankie Deemal's account of the Guugu Yimithirr people returning to their country in the following:

It was just the agitation of many of our older people, who continually agitated against the government and the church to be brought back to our own country, and these years of agitation eventually bore fruit and came back to this community. I think it is important for many new people to this community to understand that, that this community is not set up, just because of somebody's benevolence, it is set

up and we are here because many of our old people refused to let the dream die of one day coming back to this country. (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012)

Accounts that more accessibly situate justice (power and rights) in the context of discussing Apology include, from research interviews, Anon F's (2015) harrowing description of witnessing the grief of a group of older women triggered in response to children being returned to their Aboriginal community; Anna Haebich's (2014) criticism of the narrow governmental approach to Aboriginal affairs; and Alister McKeich's (2015) comparison of an ongoing ignorance of Aboriginal history to 'the continued colonisation of Aboriginal people in Australia'.

Contesting the nature of Apology

This thesis has observed that responsive storytelling can be a strategy for accessing empathy and social solidarity through the mobilisation of moral emotions. Chapter 3 explored a framing of such response stories as ethical and political practice. This discussion so far has focused on the storyteller-audience relationship in a standard way. I now turn to the story-teller-as-audience to others responding to the Apology and therefore to his/her perceptions of the audience. This perspective or awareness of audience is usually made possible by media representation. By this I mean that when the storyteller provides an account of their experiences of the responses of the audience, they speak from the perspective of having been an audience to those witnessing the formal Apology event in Canberra or to various media representations of the Apology's audience. For example, at the Apology event in Canberra were Doreen Mellor and Anna Haebich (in the Senate), Jasmin Minniecon (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012) (in the anteroom), and Danielle Celermajor (on the lawn outside Parliament); Len Tregonning watched a live public broadcast in Melbourne, Tony Birch watched it later on TV, and like many others, Des Bowen watched it live on TV. Narrators therefore figure the response story as reportage and first person experience, among other storytelling strategies. As we will see, empathy – or shared interpretive ground – is particularly important to this way of telling apology-response stories.

The following examples are provided as an introduction to the discussion: Patricia Lees and Dora Gibson describe their own experiences of solidarity, grief and compassion in response to witnessing the Apology, but also as the audience of others who witnessed real-time or imagined responses.

I was actually invited to, down to Canberra, one of the hundreds. Rang up and said, 'would you like to?' like that. And I declined, which was a bit of a shock to them and I said, 'no I just want to offer solidarity with a lot of people I know that were similarly involved in that way.' So, anyway, I ended up on my own in a sick bed in this motel and the TV on. And then I got a little bit emotional. Not a bit emotional, I got really emotional because I was thinking about my mother and all the other mothers and the people that have since gone on and what the apology would mean to them. Could you go to the gravesite and take that there? Could it bring that loss? Would it restore the loss to me? And I got myself in quite a lather actually, I was really surprised and then I had the regret of saying well maybe I should've been there, because the kids would've liked to be able to say, 'well Mum got invited and she was there'. (Patricia Lees, SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012)

I do remember just stopping and sitting down and waiting for that time when Prime Minister Rudd said sorry, you know, and it just brought out all these emotions. We actually stopped and looked at it. And at the actual time when he said sorry, we watched the camera scan around to the different people showing all the emotions and we got caught up with it as well. The fact that our Prime Minister actually did that, really did something for us that Australia is caring, and it is a big step in reconciliation. (Dora Gibson, SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012)

The mobilisation of moral emotions, such as a compassionate response to others displaying emotion or to the memories of others, demonstrates an evaluation of the Apology event and associated memories of injustice. The expression of this emotional evaluation is what the audience both perceives and provides in the ethical political dialogue of apology. For example, Dora Gibson 'watched the camera scan around to the different people showing all the emotions and we got caught up with it as well' and then says of the Apology that it meant 'that Australia is caring, and it is a big step in reconciliation' (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012). The evaluation inherent in compassion, which psychologically primes helpful actions, is also valuable as an expression in itself. For example, after her strong emotional response to the Apology, Patricia Lees considers that her attendance might have been meaningful for her children: 'I should've been there, because the kids would've liked to be able to say, "well Mum got invited and she was there"' (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012). Dora Gibson similarly equates her emotional reaction, along with the other reactions she saw, with seriousness and caring. Politically, the elicitation or witnessing of a compassionate response in the context of the Apology provides some reassurance that the historical injustices have been collectively evaluated as morally wrong and the Apology is itself valuable. Such communal expressions of moral emotion also appear to establish a basic sense of connectedness to others.

A compassionate response, or a helpful fellow-feeling, however, does not necessarily lead to further helpful action. Ideal and just futures may only be imagined, as when Quentin Bryce connects the individual to the collective through apology by positing that justice comes about:

when we're thinking in our hearts about what we can do, every single one of us individuals to address in 2008 and in our futures, the recognition of the dignity and worth of every person in our country. (SLQ video 2008, accessed 2012)

This appeal to 'thinking in our hearts' lacks the pragmatism by which the ethical and political ideals of apology can be realised. While Quentin Bryce expressed political leadership that contrasts with the other storied accounts among the SLQ collection, Patricia Lees and Dora Gibson observe and engage more closely (and pragmatically) with the injustices and recipients of the Apology (the Aboriginal community). Quentin Bryce's example of responsiveness to the Apology – flying the Aboriginal flag at Government House – turns attention to settler Australians. In this symbolic recognition of Australia's colonial history, there is a suggestion or challenge to the settler/squatter collective to take reparative action towards 'dignity and worth'. Her use of 'we' is inclusive of the whole Australian polity: 'every person in our country'.

Challenging the semantics of Apology

Earlier in this thesis, to consider how narrative practices figure in the moral economy of the Human Rights era, I canvassed the role of stories in personal healing and political change. The literature (see Andrews 2007; Schaffer and Smith 2004; and Squire 2007, for example) suggests that, in human rights and justice matters, such stories can be sites of political action that connect the personal and the social. In other words, both realms work together to affect terms of belonging. Narrative practices can facilitate political activism and progressive change by giving narrators the opportunity to develop political representations of events and experiences; in other words, to undertake political acts.

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, stories told in response to the Apology recognise underlying injustice by mirroring the Apology's rhetoric. These responses describe the injustice, demonstrate the extent of the damage and the need for further action, and/or specifically seek further action. As noted, the apology:response dialogue furthers the Apology's politics by narrating ethical, political and symbolic difference to Rudd's parliamentary apology. Some examples include the way in which SLQ participants

provide personalised accounts that contextualise the story of Nana Fejo which featured in Rudd's speech. In particular, different personal histories of Stolen Generation peers of Nana Fejo are contained in the SLQ collection. These include first-person accounts from Robyrta Felton (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012) and Angeline Stevens (SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012), observations from Quentin Bryce (SLQ video 2008, accessed 2012) and also Nadine McDonald-Dowd's (SLQ video 2008, accessed 2012) intimate perspective of her mother's Apology experience.

Another example of a storied account of response to the apology as political action is found in Terry O'Shane's video response (SLQ 2009, accessed 2012), particularly in his provision of a meaning of 'stolen' that differs from Rudd's and has the potential to deepen his audience's knowledge of injustice. Terry O'Shane engages with the symbolism of 'sorry' as if he is providing the narrative coda of Rudd's Apology speech. A coda in effect signs off on a story, turning to the listener in the present (Squire, et al. 2008a:8). Because Terry O'Shane's emphatic responses appear to be largely unedited, he is positioned as a confident voice of authority. Terry O'Shane explains that to be sorry and to feel grief in response to the many losses of the Stolen Generation members is to acknowledge theft rather than loss, destruction rather than suffering. His claim is that empathy grounded in real life circumstances is more politically valuable than empathy arising from abstracted knowledge.

When they talk about stolen, it's not just about the people being stolen off their parents, it's being stolen out of their, out of their history, out of their societies, out of their culture, out of their traditions, out of their language, out of their laws and customs. They were stolen in their entirety, the whole life has been absolutely destroyed from them being removed from their communities. And people think, 'oh, it's just stolen away from their Mum and Dad'. No, it's a theft that occurred that is actually just destroyed their whole ... life, you know, it's just everything (Terry O'Shane, SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012).

Terry O'Shane's detailed reframing of the word 'stolen' and the need for understanding the extent of loss is a decidedly political retelling of the Apology response. The emphasis on the outcome of such understanding – real respect – is, for Terry O'Shane, political.

It's almost impossible to explain to people unless people understand people's culture and who they are and where they are and their identification to this world and in their community, and in their families – unless they understand that, then to talk about a stolen generation in sort of a glib way it doesn't pay any real respect to what really happened to the stolen generation (Terry O'Shane, SLQ video 2009, accessed 2012).

Terry O'Shane's account of what is symbolised by the word stolen stands in contrast to the use of the word by Rudd and adds an existential dimension. Though Rudd's speech also carries the claim that intimate knowledge gives rise to empathy, he cannot know the depth of loss experienced by Nana Fejo. Nana Fejo herself cannot know the losses. Her life was changed beyond recovery at the moment she was stolen. Her 'identification to this world' was stolen. That possible life and identity was lost. Terry O'Shane identifies what Rudd had not considered in his descriptive apology speech: the irreparability of such damage (Derrida's 'unforgiveable' [2001]). While Terry O'Shane speaks of 'theft' and destruction, Rudd's formal apology describes these same acts as 'removal'. His apology speech further articulates the acts as 'forcibly taken', 'forced extractions', and 'forced removal'. Rudd's speech climaxes in ideal solutions to injustice: describing reunion and reconciliation, equality, and effective policy with 'a centralised organising principle' (APH 2008). Terry O'Shane focuses the definition of stolen as multi-generational cultural and community loss, broadening the concept of Stolen Generation to incorporate culture, society and place/country, therefore extending it beyond the traumatic fragmentation of particular families or the personal experiences of those who were stolen from their families and communities.

Terry O'Shane's reassertion of the full meaning of the word stolen has the potential to deepen the significance, expectation and possibility of the Apology's meaning for its response narrators and their interlocutors. As he defines and details what was stolen, he is, at the same time, defining what cannot be restored. In this framework, apology is an empty promise. It cannot repair. This redefinition of political apology is an effect of the engagement with narrative. When the meaning of a term is extended (by the symbolism or semantic stretch of a storied account), the term itself can be transformed. Further, Terry O'Shane's description of that which needs to be understood reflects his impression of what has not been understood by 'them,' a generalised non-Indigenous Australian society or government, and that therefore respect is also lacking. In this evaluative segment of his response, Terry O'Shane states that the government policies are not able to give back what was stolen and, therefore, cannot implement restorative justice. He discounts the Apology as 'glib' on the basis that it is not providing – or cannot provide – restorative justice, let alone an understanding of what has really been lost.

Terry O'Shane portrays himself as active and strong and his perspective is confidently voiced, as noted. The fact that the producers of his video appear to have left his accounts

unedited reinforces this sense of strength and confidence. When he says, 'we have to mend that up', because his activism is so apparent, the 'we' at first seems to represent his community. This construction of 'we' is significant in the context of the membership theory of Apology, and of theory of reconciliation, in general. Using 'we' to describe a collective nation would mean something quite different to using the term to describe a more intimate community. Perhaps Terry O'Shane's use of 'we' is open ended. We, the audience, can form our own interpretation of whether we are of Terry O'Shane's community or not.

Narrative accounts like Terry O'Shane's can be construed as political acts with potential to secure further positive actions and results after the Apology; actions and results that are often named, anticipated and hoped for. In other words, these kinds of responsive accounts of the Apology politicise the Apology in support of Aboriginal justice. We can understand these storied accounts as political acts because they convert and subvert other Apology accounts, most particularly the formal Apology, in order to work towards justice that is constructed through collective dialogue. Because this collective dialogue is also multiple, I claim that it actually functions to radicalise the Apology.

Narrating 'better': ethics, politics and responsive narratives (revisited)

In Chapter 3, I discussed the production and mediatisation of apology-responsive narratives. In order to understand both the ethics and politics of narrative practice, I looked closely at the production of stories about injustice and the possibility for such narratives to become subsumed in hegemonic political struggles. The separation of ethics and politics reflects a generalised public cynicism about politics (Critchley 2012:130-131). In the following discussion, however, and in keeping with this chapter's focus on the radicalisation of Apology, I consider the way in which narrative practices can actually be conceptualised as fusing or intersecting both ethics and politics. Previously, in Chapter 3, I drew attention to the ethics of narrative practices that relate to political action, pointing out that ethical considerations are necessary because, while storytellers may provide an experiential story for a particular purpose, re-presentation and re-contextualisation can alter or extend the story's original purpose. In this section I show that, whether or not responsive narratives achieve the justice they attempt to engage with, apology:response dialogue is best understood as a form of ethical political practice with the potential to transform relationships, and which I will call practical ethics.

Many of my research video subjects and interview participants constructed responsive accounts that highlighted injustices the Apology attempted to redress. I claim that, in turn, engagement with these accounts (responsive narrative practice) is the kind of politics that, as described by Critchley, is ‘an ethical practice that is driven by a response to situated injustices and wrongs’ (2012:132). By engaging with and circulating responsive storied accounts, the narrators, the institutional workers and researchers like myself, consciously or subconsciously extend the potential for further response dialogue – we undertake political acts. The political value of such dialogue, for respondents, and for their political objectives, is that attending is also a form of politics and one which can further the agency of the respondent. In attending to such accounts, audiences have an opportunity not only to become able to recognise and respect a plurality of Apology experiences and responses, they begin to participate – to respond – politically themselves. For example, I have shown that the accounts of the participants and subjects of this study, in addition to seeking acknowledgement of their experiences and interpretations, express resistance to aspects of the formal Apology narrative, particularly victim positioning. I propose that audiences, particularly those who can inhabit a position of apologetic beneficiary/companion to injustice, might come to recognise a call to participate and respond in turn to either shore up or undermine the re-constructions or re-positioning of the narrator. It is therefore imperative to explore and understand ethics in order to undertake work with narratives.

Before further discussing the radical nature of the fusion or intersection of the ethics and politics of Apology dialogue, I will first examine how some of these responses provide forms of ‘local knowledge’ (Squire, et al. 2008b:16) that reveal the context of power and rights that frames response narratives. The apology-responsive stories at the centre of this thesis describe everyday knowledge of injustice that is often illustrated in relief and balanced by personal/community values. Arthur Frank asks and answers the question of how such stories work as (apology) responses and appeals to justice/socio- political change:

How do stories address disenchantment? How do groups of stories build communities in response to shared disenchantments? These questions reflect the persistence of the moral impulse in people’s lives. People do seek what is better and they form communities based on agreements about what is better. These communities are reaffirmed in shared stories that display those values, even as new stories question old values and propose revisions to what is considered better. Values in this sense reflect not only individual preferences but communal narratives. (2002:16)

In order to demonstrate the process of recognising ethical values in the responses, and the opportunity to negotiate these values provided by responsive dialogue, I will begin with a reference to the research interview with John Baxter. The interview dialogue, while not eliciting much discussion of the apology event, did give rise to many reflections on ‘better’ politics, including a detailed comparative account of the circumstances of PM Gillard’s Australia Day ‘evacuation’ when tent embassy members protested at the lack of Aboriginal recognition in the award ceremony. This particular account ended in an analogy with the Wizard of Oz:

It [the story] went around the world as well. And initially it was, how terrible these Aboriginal people are actually attacking the Prime Minister. But I think it was like the Wizard of Oz. You know, eventually a curtain was drawn apart and you see a silly old man behind a bunch of gears and levers talking into a bellows. (interview 2014)

John Baxter’s political disenchantment is clear – the media and the government are the silly old men manipulating a situation for their political advantage and to further disadvantage the Aboriginal community in the eyes of observers.

Another example of political disenchantment or detachment comes from Bev Murray, who discussed an incident in early 2015 when Marcia Langton (an Aboriginal activist/academic) had criticised Andrew Bolt’s (a conservative media figure) views on an ABC television show. When Bolt claimed that he had been defamed by the criticism, Langton provided a limited apology, which was then followed by a 19 page public essay defending that apology. Bolt, other media outlets and critics of the ABC used the incident as a platform for demanding ABC reform. When Bev Murray introduced these events into the research interview at its close, she illustrated the fraught nature of efforts to call out racism (Bolt had been convicted of breaching the racial discrimination act in 2011), a difficulty addressed in John Baxter’s account of the Australia Day protestors.

Similarly to John Baxter, while Tony Birch consistently turned the interview dialogue away from the Apology, he did have a great deal to say about racism and tolerance, also expressing political disenchantment. But, ending the research interview with the following fable-like account of tolerance, which he had included in his own PhD thesis, he provides a moment of re-enchantment:

I had a wonderful statement by an Aboriginal woman which I think is like to me, if you think of something symbolic – she talked about living in a boarding house she said with Greek women, Greek

women, Italian women, women from all over the world, other Aboriginal women, and I said, 'Did you fight much?' and she said, 'No'. She said, 'We weren't great friends but we didn't fight'. And she said, 'When you've gotta come home from work and you've gotta bath your kid in that same kitchen sink, when you've gotta find a way to cook in that kitchen sink, you've gotta find a way to get on'. And I think that the more people interact with each other in that way either they learn to get on or they become something or a sort of person that you, you wouldn't tolerate. And you find out about yourself. And I think in Australia a lot of people never have to find out about it themselves so they can be nominally tolerant, but tolerance, unless it's tested, is pretty meaningless. And I think most Australians don't have to test their tolerance level (interview 2013).

Like a fairy tale or folk fable, Tony Birch establishes a scene, a context, and a moral learning of the grand democratic ideal found in Mouffe's work (2013) discussed in the previous chapter. The women in the boarding house, from all over the world, represent a plurality of experience and situations, and yet, they each have the same needs – to bath their children and to cook: 'We weren't great friends but we didn't fight', 'you've gotta find a way to get on'. Enlarging the interpretive frame of tolerance (as provided in the story), I propose looking at this story with an agonistics lens: here, the kitchen is the ground for agonistic interaction, in which the women respect and recognise the needs of others. This end-of-day kitchen interaction is where we see ethical politics (or practical ethics).

Through accounts such as those discussed, Apology is embedded in a rights discourse that is critical of aspects of contemporary morality. These aspects of the responsive accounts build complexity into narratives on Apology, with their local descriptions of historical injustice, its contemporary effects and situated aspirations for social justice. The intersecting and fusion of politics and ethics is made possible because emotions associated with rights can be mobilised by accounts like these. Such narratives make an appeal to the re-moralising of society towards an ideal of 'better' (Frank 2002). A number of moral emotions are articulated in response storytelling – particularly compassion, anger and righteous indignation – and these can often evoke the same emotions for audiences. Politically, and psychologically, this mobilisation of affect is similar to the action tendencies thought to be associated with compassion and anger, that is, offering of assistance and the restoration of fairness (Haidt 2003), actions which undertake relationship work. As far as establishing or negotiating relationships in an adversarial environment like that described by Tony Birch, questions of agonistic management and responsibility for political emotions come into play. In responding to Mouffe (2005),

Mihaela Mihai (2014), theorises that hope and indignation are important affective responses to be accommodated by the institution of democracy, pointing out that the institution needs to be valued in order for expressions of affect to be politically constructive.

To take images as an example, Sontag claims that for photographs to accuse or to alter conduct, they must invite an ‘active response’; ‘they must shock’ (2003:64). Perhaps this is true for responsive narratives too. But because emotional co-presence comes with an inability to act in the same time or place as the respondent, that is to physically respond to the physical respondent, the tertiary (or distanced) witnessing facilitated by representation is difficult to sustain. ‘People defend themselves against what is upsetting’ (Sontag 2003:65), shock can become familiar, wear off or be averted by not looking. As Sontag also discusses, however, ‘pathos, in the form of a narrative, does not wear out’ and she identifies cases ‘where repeated exposure to what shocks, saddens, appals, does not use up a full hearted response’ (2003:65). Sontag ultimately appears to accept (and to recommend) awareness and contemplation as an appropriate (ethical, respectful) response to images of suffering. This entails an awareness of distance – an acceptance that, if one has not experienced similar events, one is unable to understand or imagine what it is like for others to have experienced suffering (2003:98-99). In a sense, without experience of the kitchen that Tony Birch describes, an awareness of others’ needs must be accompanied by some acceptance of the inability to truly understand such needs from the other’s perspective. Instead, one can turn to examine one’s own life/privilege/immunity and explore its possible relationship to the need for recognition, healing or justice. In other words, one can learn that sharing the kitchen sink is a valuable, ethical form of democratic practice.

Conclusion

In demonstrating that the Apology is a process comprised almost entirely of narrative response, this chapter has compared it to the practice of radical democracy. The ongoing dynamics of narrative response have the features of agonistic democracy. Talking about the Apology prompts dialogue on rights that may give rise to the different politics referred to by this chapter’s title: a subversion of the hegemonic political relationships that were in existence at the time of the Apology.

Discussing the Apology prompted reflections on power and rights amongst my interviewees. Celermajer said that ‘the apology, qua apology, is a kind of turning around and saying things can be different’ and Anon M, whose experience told him that ‘things don’t change’ because of apology, said that those in communities, the ‘aunties and grannies [of Anon F’s account] are the litmus test’ of any progress. Despite the different interpretations of apology’s potential, for both Celermajer and Anon M, real justice results for Aboriginal peoples are valued and yet to be apparent. From the very presence of storied accounts of injustice in response to the Apology, the problem for many respondents appears to be the presence of ongoing injustice. Perhaps acceptance of Apology would be a turning away from past injustice, leaving it unchallenged and unacknowledged, but more importantly, un-remembered. For many, the question of repair can only be addressed amidst acknowledgment of such damage – a full consideration of consequences and responsibilities or recognition of the unforgiveable.

Rights stories in themselves, however, do not necessarily act practically to resolve any injustices. Examining them can illuminate hegemonic structures of injustice and therefore inform practical strategies for working towards justice (Landman 2012:43; Frank 2012). This is why I claim that narratives offer points of intersection for ethics and politics. Rights stories are therefore an important part of an ongoing process of progress towards justice. Stories told in the context of talking about the Apology potentially reflect the way in which individuals have personally come to recognise and deal with injustice in social contexts. They can contribute to our perceptions of society, of collectives and of us, expressing more ideal conditions for political life – they guide a practical ethics. This is why Apology response accounts are politically valuable – as are the events that elicit them – but also why they are at risk of being appropriated for other political purposes or subordinated and hushed by proponents of the structures they attempt to change or reveal. In the end, the value of political apology resides in the practice of its politics. I have claimed that when these politics are practised through narrative acts they constitute a form of radical, agonistic democracy. Any value of Apology is thus contingent on responses to Apology.

In effect, the work of this chapter is to claim that responsive dialogue subverted the political intention of the Apology, moving it from a statement of liberal hegemony to a radical dialectic, and from rational-legal accounts of history to experiential, emotional and ethical ones. This is akin to a reversal of the way in which the political intent of the

Bringing Them Home hearings (1995–1996) and report (1997) was subverted by the antagonistic dialogue that followed. The subversion of the apparent political intent of the Apology can be seen in the storied accounts discussed throughout this thesis. That is, if we take Rudd's formal Apology to be well-intentioned and genuine, its aim was to bridge a gap between communities in Australia, repair the historical records of Aboriginal-settler relations and provide a new centralised policy approach to reparative justice. In my analysis of response narratives, we have testimony that there has been little policy change. Additionally, the narrators speak of self-healing and collective re-positioning independent of government administration and of the broader nation. The narratives also indicate that there are numerous experiences of injustice to be added to the historical record, reflecting the plurality of experiences and perspectives of the Apology event and its aftermath and speaking to the ineffectiveness of political apology without material redress of injustice.

In the following chapter of the thesis, I will conclude by finalising the review of the value of the Apology, and the potential value of any/all political apologies, revisiting important aspects of the study to synthesise the themes of the thesis.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: the Apology's value

This thesis has theorised that the greatest value of political apology is that it stimulates political dialogue, particularly the apology-responsive narratives that are central to the study and which hold the greatest potency for reparative and reconciliatory justice.

Throughout the thesis, the SLQ video stories and research interview extracts have demonstrated that responsive narratives generate, influence, sustain or otherwise work to effect group relationships and interactions in ways that are strategic, political, ethical and practical. Responsive narratives can be understood as ethical politics because, not only are they politically strategic, they demonstrate – and actualise – practical forms of ethical interactions and relations.

In this concluding chapter I demonstrate how the foregoing argument has furthered the work of key theorists in the field (Lind 2008, Nobles 2008, Tavuchis 1991) and the implications of this study for social membership and political belonging. My key argument will be that for Apology to achieve anything at all ethical narrative practice, as in my analysis, must be embedded in Australian political culture. The thesis also recognises that the difficulties associated with obtaining justice and recognition of historical injustice reflect more on the character of Australian political culture than on the virtue of political apology – understood as intersubjective dialogue – as a form of social repair or political therapy.

After the Apology

Part one of this conclusion provides a summary of the key themes of the thesis. Part two considers the significance of the study's observations and its implications for any further work in this field.

Summary

From the outset, this thesis demonstrated that a narrative research approach is suitable for a study of the complex narrative nature of political apology. I showed, for example how the 2008 Apology was one moment in a chain of narrative-based political interactions that engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice in Australia.

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From the 1992 'Redfern address' to the 2008 Apology and responses, narratives engaging with Aboriginal justice have recognised a history of injustice that began with colonisation. It was only following the 1997 Bringing them Home report, however, that personal stories of suffering and grief were widely circulated in the form of television, online archives and YouTube videos, among other mediations. The response to those emergent stories was not uniform, as was also the case with the 2008 Apology. Amongst the immediate responses were moral shock, compassion, sorrow, anger, shame, demands for recognition and stubborn resistance to the report's implications for the moral foundations of Australian society. These emotional responses engendered a public debate in 1997 that still lingers today, almost 20 years later.

The 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations was a highly anticipated political act. Imbued with the ideal and moral virtue of apology, it was first widely circulated in public life as a 'promise', a last symbolic gesture before reparative justice was secured. Such apologies are potent acts, because:

Even as they are being performed, political apologies are works in progress, introducing novel narratives about responsibility and constituting atypical political forms in the space of contemporary political thinking and practice. (Celermajer 2009:249)

Credited with the potential to repair inter-group relationships and to impact on the terms and conditions of national membership in favour of victims of injustice (Nobles 2008), political apologies are unfortunately also made sense of through less-than-ideal experiences of personal apologies.

By providing a working and contemporary example of progressive change towards justice, the thesis ultimately addressed an under-examined and taken-for-granted aspect of political apology: its intersubjective nature and the ethics implied in the demand for a response to the act of apology. Importantly, my analysis complements and extends existing theories of apology and reparative justice by examining what happens in public life after an apology event. The extant literature focuses on the activist perspective of seeking justice, that is, working within the moral economy in order to lobby for justice 'results' such as apology, support and compensation from government or those with power to make a difference. This thesis instead highlights the political value of progressive responses to political apology and ongoing dialogue and proposes that politicised collectives are formed by and form around such narratives. In this light, justice

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can be viewed as an ethical program subject to negotiation, and as a perpetual process consistent with democracy. Response narratives illustrate the ways in which national memberships are contingent on respect and on the continual accommodation of a plurality of subject positions in the contested field of apology and responses to it, rather than on a consensus model of flattened or hardened perspectives.

The thesis also demonstrated that the possibilities of political apology are embedded within the context from which they arise. In Australia, with its immediate background of divisive public debate (the History Wars), one of apology's most politically potent possibilities was to provide a dominant, government-sanctioned narrative of history. Another important possibility was that an apology would acknowledge and herald reparation for those who had been most disadvantaged and abused in the course of that history. The social anticipation around the Apology recognised these potentialities. Still, political apology also carried the risks of further polarising Australian collectives, disappointing and further alienating some important national groups, and even disengaging others.

Informed by both Lind's (2008) and Nobles' (2008) comprehensive studies of apology, and Tavuchis's sociology of apology and reconciliation (1991), the narrative approach detailed in Chapter 2 engaged with responses to the Apology. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that complex social experiences of guilt, shame and responsibility inhabit the political apology form and argued that apology is, therefore, emblematic of moral economy. Apologies for historic injustices, ideally entailing a victim-oriented perspective, recognise the democratic rights of those marginalised and disadvantaged by hegemony. On moral terms, these victim-groups are able to assert their right to reparative justice because they believe that the state ought to (or will indeed) respond.

Throughout Chapter 3, I question Lind's (2008) and Nobles' (2008) common anticipation and understanding of the role of history and education (both narrative-based fields) in the achievement of long-term reconciliation objectives. In this view, stories of trauma and injustice are capable of eliciting the emotional response on which these kinds of theories of social action are based. And yet, as I show in this study, an emotional response to the Apology narrative is not necessarily the basis for action on social justice. When those who observed the Apology felt something, this feeling was understood as the desired outcome of the apology act: 'a sense that, through the gesture,

more has been achieved than people realise' (Tony Birch, research interview 2013). In this framework, the Apology's work ended with the elicitation of a feeling. Just how such emotional mobilisation furthers a politically educative or therapeutic experience has not yet been clearly theorised.

Broadly, in Chapters 4-7, my interpretive analysis of the SLQ videos and research interviews demonstrates how responses function as a form of political action and highlights the way in which such narratives memorialise, testify to, resist, and evoke dialogue about experiences of injustice and conditions of justice. Accounts of family and personal experiences of injustice memorialise and testify. Respondents who denied the personal relevance of Apology or assigned it to previous generations, however, demonstrated some resistance to the Apology or to its implications, including taking up a victim role in order to accept or receive apology. My study shows that the dialogue that occurs around these responses and others' experiences of the Apology continues to engage with themes of trauma, justice and repair. I claim that in this way, response narratives can constitute a democratic negotiation of progressive socio-political change. The failure of the spirit of apology reflects not only the contingencies of reparative justice but also the limitations of our contemporary democratic political practices.

Throughout the analytical chapters, I examined the rift between the ideal and experience of apology with an interpretive approach that focuses on the perspectives and subject positions of apology-responsive storied accounts. These responses tell us how the Apology failed as a project of reparative justice. But they also highlight the social value of the apology-responsive narratives as a form of political practice.

While stories that reify individual resilience defeat the social objectives of apologies, I demonstrated throughout the thesis that the key value of the Apology has been to open and sustain apologetic dialogue. It is storied dialogue – responsive narrative practice – that carries the ability to effect subtle, difficult to demonstrate, shifts in collective memberships and identities. These narratives do the political work of positioning and repositioning the respondents, their social collectives and others against a 'common horizon' (Ricouer 1976) and in intersubjective (Schutz 1970:163-242) or what we can also call adversarial/agonistic (Mouffe 2011, 2014) relations, where the 'they' is constitutive of the 'we'.

Sentimental education

Philosophers and social theorists have taught us through time that thoughtful questions often seed more questions than answers. I began the work of this thesis with the general, perhaps naive, but under-researched question of the ability of the moral and emotional demands of political apologies to effect collective responses to historical injustices. In the Australian context, I specifically sought to address the question of how apologies work politically and to assess the social value of narratives for politics in general. In asking these questions, and working through the research problem, this study has provided an ethical framework for further engagement and practice.

While I have demonstrated with this thesis that there is some value in apology, with regard to the injustices that the Apology attempted to address, the sorry dialogue is far from over. In traditional Aboriginal culture, the English word sorry has been adopted in a way true to its linguistic origins, ‘sorry business’ means to attend a funeral, and to mourn and honour lost ones (where sorry describes a feeling of emotional soreness) (Sharifian 2008). In some documented Aboriginal languages, there is a word for saying sorry: for the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation (Melbourne, Victoria), their woiwarrung word for sorry is woobedin; for the Noongar people (Perth, Western Australia) it is nyornditj (and means to pity or feel sorrow for another). On taking a part in (sorry) dialogue, Arthur Frank suggests that:

If stories are told to provide provisional moments of rechantment, how is that rechantment to be cared for, as someone starting a fire on a cold night cares for a faintly glowing ember or spark? Our task in disenchanted times is to hear and to amplify those sparks of moral impulse in stories that are too often debased and travestied in their expression (using Taylor’s phrase for a third time). Narrative analyses that offer readers ways to hear in the story what Taylor calls ‘a standard of what we ought to desire’ is, I believe, being far more critical – in the sense of constructively evaluative – than any of the knockers of such stories. (2002:17)

In attempting to answer the research questions, this thesis has at the end of the day offered some words on ‘better’ social justice, politics and collective relationships. These answers and insights have revealed themselves in practice. The impetus to engage ethically with responsive narratives runs true to the narrative researchers whose work I have followed and demonstrates how a questioning imagination can be engaged. As I discussed in light of the SLQ videos and interviews with people engaged in Indigenous

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politics, to engage with the Apology is to contend with the moral questions implied in offering and accepting apology.

This study's emphasis on dialogue, ethical politics and agonistics importantly brings together the work of academic theorists with narrators of everyday experience. By demonstrating how responsive narratives bridge politics and ethics, theory and experience, I show how to enter into and engage with such dialogue.

What remains to be examined are the antagonistic relations that arise in the context of propositions of reparative justice for historically situated harms. This course of inquiry seems apposite in light of the somewhat 'naïve' (Ravenscroft 2015:59) claim by Thompson (2015) that 'equality and historical justice can be balanced by fair dialogue between parties who respect each other's interests.' Instead of inspiring a critical examination of such relations however, the work I have undertaken in the course of this thesis leads towards an exploration of other potent forms of political therapy that complement the narrative practices of apology and response. The second half of this concluding chapter therefore engages with the educative and therapeutic possibilities associated with emotional response to political apology for past injustice.

Bear with me, reader, while I show you how some of these possibilities came to light.

Anon F told me a story about the way in which successive waves of government policy were met with humour and irony in remote Aboriginal communities. The characterisations she made of the Aboriginal people reacting to policy changes, program developments and the ongoing cycling in and out of white government workers and services made the community members appear as the stoic audience of a classic comedy of the Three Stooges slapstick kind. The local community members labelled these Stooge-esque behaviours, along with other white/mainstream cultural habits, as the 'balanda way':

Anon F: When you're working in those community services, you're bound by the acts of parliament that, that oversee your work. So we didn't just put the acts of parliament on the shelf. They were opened. They were highlighted. They were used and within all of our reports and our documents, those acts of parliament had to be reflected in those. There's been a few that passed through to policies and procedures with workers that were out in the communities but, yeah, things then move onto the next government, don't they? And, you know, currently, we're looking at just removing communities in WA. So, as much as there is that, that acknowledgement [the Apology] can never be taken away. I

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think that sits there as the first brick. But whether that wall is completely built on that premise and continues to be built I question because the next lot come through three years later and they'll pull those bricks off 'cause it doesn't suit their, their policies and procedures. And the families out there know that. They know that there's a whole cycle. There's a madness to our white world. There's a community. And there'll be a policy and a procedure set down in place for a community. And then, in three years, that will change and then, in five years, it will change again. And then, in four years, that will change again. And they don't understand that because they don't operate that way. They have a strong basis that's built on that they don't wax and wane from one to the other and one to the other. To them that's madness. Make up your minds as to what you're going to do. And so, in a way, going into those communities in WA and taking everyone away, they will just accept that 'cause it's part of the madness of the white world. And they know that, in three years' time, they'll go back there and they'll be okay. They're almost not above it but they stand back and watch it from a bird's eye view like a – a crazy law. It doesn't have consistency. Did I answer the question?

KM: Yes you did, thank you. Did they, is that how they talk about it, crazy law or crazy laws? Is there a word? A community -

Anon F: Pretty much. Crazy people. Yeah.

KM: I can imagine how it must look like that.

Anon F: There actually is ... they call it 'balanda'. 'Balanda' is white people. They call it 'balanda way'. 'Balanda way' is white way: crazy, inconsistent, chopping and changing, forceful, arrogant. And the moment, the moment the word 'balanda' comes out, you know that you haven't connected with them. They're just putting you in that camp of people that come in, spend one or two years implementing programs that don't happen. Now whether they don't happen because of balanda way or whether they don't happen because it's not indigenous to commit to a program or to have the discipline to stick to a program I don't know, but they do see it as crazy.

KM: It's very interesting. So there's a kind of cynicism there about balanda way and ...

Anon F: Well it constantly changes so how can there not be a cynicism. Their whole world is sit down and dependent, and the laws change every few years, and they go from one extreme to the other. So how can they not sit back and look at this going on over 20 years, and see the craziness of it.

KM: Well I guess there's – 'cause there's two ways of looking ... There's that way of looking at it with apathy and despair or a kind of, that more of a cynical, humorous take on it.

Anon F: There's a definite humorous take on it. The people that I lived with in community they're extremely humorous. They're laughing at us behind our backs. 'Sure, if you want to give me \$400 for doing nothing and going and playing cards, go for it! I'll happily take it. What else will you give me? Will you give me a bed? 'Cause I need a new bed and our community needs a car so how about you give us a car as well? We'll trash it after a week. It'll be left in the gutter but, you know, you're crazy people. Just hand it over'.

In thinking about this story and the role of sentimental education in political perspectives, I would also like to reference a piece of art by Maud Wright –'polArt2008' – a huge white canvas full of black text, detailing the lawmaking activity of settler society as a

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history of legislation, prime ministers and government policy frameworks: the list starts with ‘terra nullius’ and ends with the ‘SORRY’ of 2008.



polArt2008, Maud Wright

This is the artist’s response to the Apology. A photocopied photograph of Maud Wright in the process of working on this piece has been above my desk for the last few years. It does many things, this piece of art (as shown above in its finished form), but as a piece of art in itself, the photocopied photograph shows that the canvas is about as tall as Maud Wright. Her physical presence in the photograph heightens the tension between the words, their meanings and their import. The black and white photocopy throws the artist’s figure into relief and blends the canvas with the wall. The canvas is resting on two stacks, so that she can work on the lower part of it comfortably. With her back to the viewer, she and the letters of the words are the black on a white background. Her person – representing in a dialogic fashion, Aboriginal activism – is juxtaposed with the titles of all the race-based acts of all the prime ministers of Australia’s history that have attempted to intervene in Aboriginal lives. The artwork allows a conversation with history, the artist and other observers. In my idealised symbolic interpretation of this piece, it is a powerful illustration of perseverance through a history of discrimination – showing that the word

‘SORRY’ is overwhelmed by all the other words. Further, it is Maud Wright, a proud Aboriginal Australian artist who is documenting this history, and she is not destroyed by it but actively politicised.

We need different approaches, such as engaging with the narrative forms I describe above, in order to understand and work towards constructive forms of political therapy. Tony Birch valued the grass roots collaborative art projects he spoke about because he saw ‘a great opportunity I think for what you would call a lack of institutional authority’ (research interview 2013). For him, such projects appeared to be antidotal to negative and destructive forms of politics, such as the antagonistic History Wars. At the time of writing, Birch is engaged in another antagonistic arena of politics – the political and social effects of climate change on Indigenous communities – and responding by bringing respect for Indigenous knowledge to the fore (Browning 2015).

Mouffe closes her most recent work (*Agonistics*) with a chapter describing the potential of what she calls ‘artivism’ (2013:85-105). Advocating empathy, and seeking the generation of broad compassion, Nussbaum writes about shared interactions with public monuments as modern democracy’s equivalent of Greek tragedy festivals (2013). Recognising too that bringing images and stories of suffering to light is a fraught process, others, such as Todorov, would also have us grow accustomed to the idea that to even acknowledge the plural experiences of history is to experience tragedy (2003:146-7).

Like an echo to Susan Sontag’s late work (2003) about what images of suffering can do (discussed in Chapter 3), Alfredo Jaar, who is very much an activist in Mouffe’s terms, approaches his work with a question of ‘How does an image of pain survive in a sea of consumption?’ While he admits that: ‘It doesn’t. It needs help’, he then works to take advantage of ‘little cracks in the system’ to find space for freedom of expression, seeking to think a better world as he makes sense of it (Jaar with Glavaiano 2013). Importantly for my work here on the ethics of working with narratives, Jaar works politically by intersecting ethics with aesthetics (artist website 2015) in order to bring or shift attention constructively. Activists like Jaar create models of thinking the world – they encourage intellectual awareness and action in their audience. For Mouffe, such artists provide counter-hegemony and increase conscious awareness of a desire for change, a way to see how things might be different (2013:85-105). From this place of consideration, a future research program may develop the understanding of both informal and radical political

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interactions, and research the nature of places and spaces where ‘things might be better’ – and where contest and difference are crucial, inseparable and necessary components.

It is my proposition that observers of narratives such as those canvassed above, whether visual or oral, cultivate a narrative agency of their own. ‘Ordinary people’ are capable of exercising politics and participating politically in narrative forms that can be compared to those of public intellectuals, such as historians, social researchers, philosophers and politicised creatives. Story practices are both ‘symbolic interactions and political processes’ (Plummer 1995:19). Those who contribute to public thought at any political level engage in democratic practice through narrative politics, exercising the political agency to not only observe and evaluate but to narrate others and events. Further articulation of a collective narrative, such as the Apology, by an observer or participant is a democratising practice – it is sometimes also radical, agonistic and egalitarian – bringing political elites into ordinary view and into relationship with others in a common political field.

Appendices

(Separate file accompanies thesis)

1a Rudd apology transcript (and links to online video footage)

1b Nelson apology transcript

1c Calma apology acknowledgement

1d Howard reconciliation convention address

1e Keating Redfern speech

2a SLQ video URLs

2b SLQ video transcripts

2c SLQ video YouTube metrics

3 Research interview participants (summary biographies)

4a Explanatory statement for research interview participants

4b Consent form

4c Interview questions (semi-structured schedule)

4d Information sheet in case of emotional distress

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