

THE HEART OF THE MATTER: CHANGING THE SETTLER'S NARRATIVE

TROY REYNOLDS
GOLDFIELDS ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE
CENTRE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

WANGKA KANYILKU WANGKAWA! :
DECOLONISING FIRST NATIONS'
LANGUAGES CONFERENCE

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Goldfields

Aboriginal Language Centre

Wangka kanyira ngalipirniku

PRESERVING OUR LANGUAGES FOR ALL OF US



IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT...

- CONFUSING VERBAL SYSTEM:
 - LACK OF DISCERNABLE VERB CLASSES
 - REGULAR VERB FORMS IN SIMPLE PRESENT *EXCEPT* FOR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR
 - PRIMITIVE SUFFIX INVENTORY
- PECULIAR PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM
 - STOPS CAN BE CONTRASTIVE DEPENDING ON SUBTLE RUMBLING IN THE THROAT
 - WEIRD PUFF OF AIR AFTER SOME STOPS
- COMPLETE DISREGARD OF AVOIDANCE REGISTERS
- PRIMITIVE AND EGOTISTICAL DIRECTIONAL SYSTEM



Ingkalitj

By Nurman Tintayil and Tayitji Payitj



WHAT IS THE SETTLER'S NARRATIVE?

THE STORY TOLD FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF THE SETTLER.

HISTORY BEGINS WITH FIRST
CONTACT.

FIRST NATIONS' VOICES AND
PERSPECTIVES ARE UNHEARD.



SUPERIORITY

Just knowing that someone measured our 'faculties' by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought offends our sense of who and what we are. (Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2012)

SUPERIORITY

The settler's ethnicity, culture, social structure, customs, and language are the default standard from which all others are to be judged.



Image: Stanley posing later (in London) with Kalulu in the "suit he wore" when he found Livingstone.- Public Domain



WHAT'S CIVILISATION GOT TO DO WITH IT?

- URBAN SETTINGS
- POLITICAL AND MILITARY STRUCTURES
- ECONOMICALLY-BASED SOCIAL STRUCTURES
- MATERIAL COMPLEXITY
- DISTINCT RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES
- WRITTEN LANGUAGE
- ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY



EXOTICISATION

From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary.

(Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2012)

EXOTICISATION

Academics begin taking serious interest in the culture, society, and languages of First Nations, but still see them as a fascinating 'other' or 'subject'.

The noble savage.

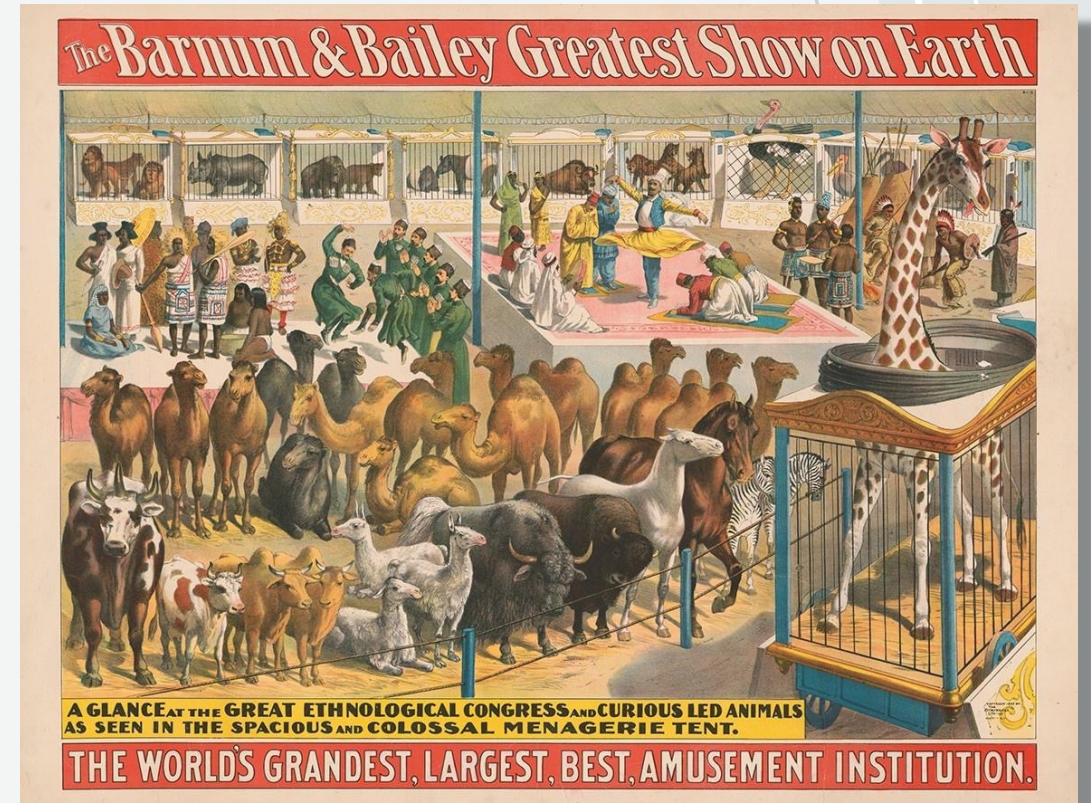


Image: The Barnum and Bailey greatest show on earth--A glance at the great ethnological congress and curious led animals ...- Public Domain

A decorative vertical band on the left side of the slide, featuring traditional Maori patterns. It includes two large circular motifs with concentric dots and a central white circle, separated by sections of wavy lines with repeating orange and black 'U' shapes. The background of the slide has faint, light blue concentric circles.

COMMODIFICATION

It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. (Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2012)

COMMODIFICATION

First Nations' cultural phenomena become recognised as resources that can be made into saleable items that can make a profit for others.



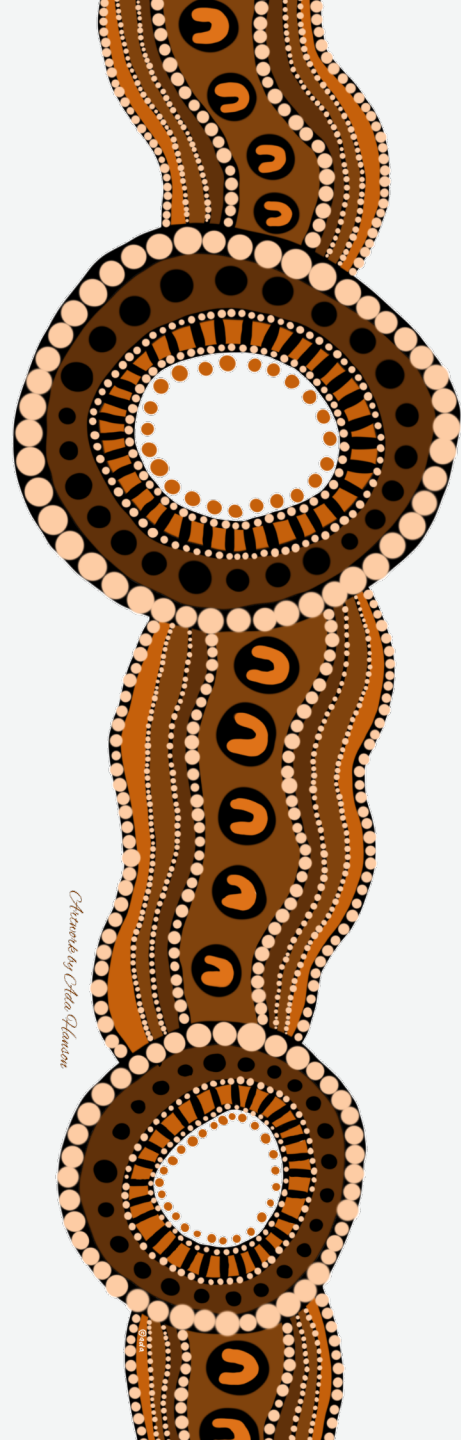
TERRA NULLIUS

The legal idea of an uninhabited or unused area of land.

Also can be extended to cultural phenomena.



Image: 1818 Pinkerton Map of Australia New Zealand - Geographicus - Public Domain



WHOSE NARRATIVE IS IT ANYWAY?

The power of research was not in the visits made by researchers to our communities, nor in their fieldwork and the rude questions they often asked. In fact, many individual non-indigenous researchers remain highly respected and well liked by the communities with whom they have lived. At a common sense level research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument. It told us things already known, suggested things that would not work, and made careers for people who already had jobs.

(Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2012)

WHOSE NARRATIVE IS IT ANYWAY?



Image: Gough Whitlam pouring a handful of red soil into the hands of Vincent Lingiari - Mervyn Bishop, 1975

THE PEN IS MIGHTIER

PERÚ SUYUKUNAPAQ SAN MARCOS KURAQ KAQ HATUN YACHAYWASI
Perúsuyumanta Hatun yachaywasi, Américapi ñawpaq watakunamantaraq
SEQ'EKUNAQ HATUNWASI, RUNAKUNAQ HAMUT'AY
QHEPA SUTINCHAY CHASKIYKUNAPAQ KANCHA



Yawar Para

**Kilku Warak'aq, Andrés Alencastre Gutiérrezpa harawin pachapi, Qosqomanta runasimipi harawi
t'ikrachisqa, ch'ullanchasqa kayninpi**

HAMUT'AYNIYOQ K'USKISQA

Perú suyumanta, Latinoamericamanta Hatunyachaywasimanta qhelqakunamanta Hamut'ayniyoq chaskikunanpaq



Thank you

**Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre Abor.
Corp.**
2 Burt St, BOULDER WA 6432
info@wangka.com.au
(08)9021 3788
Wangka Youtube
www.wangka.com.au
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/wangka.com.au/>



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