

THE MICROPOLITICS OF FILMMAKING
OTHERWISE: THE KARRABING
COLLECTIVE

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Abstract

Disrupting the assumed ontological expectation that film represents the 'real', this paper is concerned with the overlooked, non-representational registers of film. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's cine-philosophy, film is rendered here not as a normative, stable artefact, but as an intensive and affective becoming that has the potential to disrupt habitual thought and transform the ways in which we relate both to the world and to ourselves. Empirically, this is teased out through an embodied, non-representational praxis and is explored in my cinematic thought experiment with the two films I have selected from the Karrabing Collective's oeuvre; *Wutharr: Saltwater Dreams* (2016) and *Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland* (2018). An Indigenous group working in Northern Australia, the Karrabing Collective use film as a form of resistance to critically probe the conditions of their existence within the context of contemporary settler colonialism and its attempts to deny and discredit their modes of being. Rejecting almost all conventional film grammar and techniques, their films are avowedly experimental and improvisational, providing a disruptive and animating cinematic experience. Tracing their exuberant aesthetics, I illustrate the ways in which the Karrabing play determinedly on film's non-representational registers to open up the space for alternative thoughts, subjectivities and worlds. By unsettling teleological time and destabilising the ontological security of the human, their films undermine the foundations on which normative, hegemonic narratives are sustained. Duetting alongside Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notion of the minor, I reframe the Karrabing Collective's 'filmmaking *otherwise*' as a minor practice, arguing that its valence and political force lies not in its major political representational content, but in the deliberate cultivation of the micropolitical expressions that their novel techniques and practices generate.

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Film stills in this dissertation have been used for the purposes of critical review, considered 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

1. Overture

“Just like the old people, we are dreaming. We have a new dream with technology. We’re using the newest technology with the oldest culture” (Taylor, 2011: 189)

As a curious geographer, it was perhaps not surprising – on reflection – that I would wish to find out more about Australia’s socio-cultural geographies during my study year in Melbourne. Looking to cultural expression as a navigational tool, I clearly remember my first visit to the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. There I read not only about colonial misrepresentation of Indigenous Australians¹ in film, but also about the surge of ‘new wave’ cinematic activism through which Indigenous Australians are taking creative control over their own stories. My curiosity heightened, I attended a talk concerning ‘Decolonising the Moving Image’, where director Beck Cole and actress Rachael Maza discussed this emergent field of cultural production. Pushing cinema to new places, such films refuse coloniality by deconstructing false narratives and replacing these with their own truths as part of the nation’s healing (Hocking *et al.* 2019). With Indigenous non-professional actors and improvisational storytelling techniques, the filmmaking practices are low-budget and highly experimental (*ibid.*). Intrigued, I sought to find out more; my research led me to the Karrabing Collective².

A cooperative of extended Indigenous Australian family and friends, working with anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli, the Karrabing are one of a number of groups, though not a ‘clan’ *per se*, practicing in the realms of Indigenous filmmaking (Biddle and Lea, 2018). The Karrabing use film to analyse their existence within the cramped spaces of settler colonialism and its relentless attempts to deny their agency and ways of being (*ibid.*). The first time I viewed one of their films, *Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland* (2018), I felt unsettled, animated and challenged: it is hard *not* to be bewildered by their avowedly unusual films. I had never experienced such a unique aesthetic, the rejection of almost all conventional film grammar and the unleashing of new thoughts, conflicts and sentient worlds that came with this. While their films are admittedly a disruptive experience, this should not deter further interrogation. Rather, it was their very complexity that provided the impetus for this paper; to understand how their films worked to engineer my thoughts. In this sense, this paper addresses a question of aesthetic crafting – how do these films do what they do?

Taking a cue from non-representational theory (NRT), this paper explores film’s potential as an intensive becoming with affective capacity. This semi-tonal shift towards the affective register has

¹ Acknowledging the problematic nature of the term Indigenous, references to Indigenous Australians and Indigeneity are in no way to deny heterogeneity but for brevity only. Where appropriate, I refer specifically to the Karrabing Collective.

² Referred to hereinafter as the Karrabing. In Emminyengal language, Karrabing refers to ‘low tide turning’; “a mode of connectivity *and* independence, of sameness *and* difference” (Edmunds in Lea and Povinelli, 2018: 36).

hitherto largely been ignored by a disciplinary longing to uncover film's meaning (Dewsbury, 2009). Distinct from emotion, affect is taken as "the motor of being" (Connolly, 2001: 586), a "virtual force, a material effect and an immaterial disposition" (Dewsbury, 2009: 20) that ebbs and flows between bodies. As Genosko (2012: 250) notes, these intensities "come flush with sensibilities not yet entangled in dominant modelisations of identity and social relations", generating new possibilities for thinking. Gilles Deleuze's cine-philosophy (2005[1986]; 2005[1989]) provides a conceptual sandbox for attending to the affective sensibilities that cinema cultivates. A radical alternative to traditional critical-representational approaches, Deleuze questions how images take part in new events of thinking by invoking shocks to thought.

Drawing on Deleuze and co-author Felix Guattari's (1986) studies of Kafka, who used the major German language so that it could be interpreted *otherwise*, I suggest that the notion of the 'minor' provides a potential nexus that draws together continental philosophy and the Karrabing's filmmaking. To be clear, the minor is neither opposed, nor inferior, to the major. Quite the contrary, the minor works from within the major, using the same components but in alternative ways such that it pushes beyond the normative conventions of the major (Bogue, 2007). Conjectural and experimental, minor practices do not act to *represent* the world but instead, by unpicking convention and recomposing thought through affect, are 'modes of action' that create new subjectivities, thoughts and worlds (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986).

As a summary: the structure of what ensues. First, I situate this paper within the context of intellectual thought on film, geography and (non)representation, outlining Deleuze's cinematic nomenclature with reference to falsifying techniques. I then delineate Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the minor before tracing the Karrabing's filmmaking *otherwise*, which I suggest finds an ethical alliance with Deleuze and Guattari's 'geophilosophy'. The interlude sketches how I embody a non-representational praxis to extrapolate the affective registers of the films investigated. The discussion considers how the Karrabing's filmmaking practices and techniques might be considered as a push to the minor in their deliberate generation of micropolitical expressions which create space for possibilities of being *otherwise* and disrupt the foundations on which hegemonic narratives are sustained. Micropolitics refers here to a politics which, much like the minor, traverses alongside the macropolitical but works through affect rather than representation to transform thought (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Finally, the paper is brought to its (dé)nouement; an (un)finished conclusion in the sense that everything is "always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any liveable or lived experience. It is a process" (Deleuze, 1997: 1).

I provide a broad aim that drives the impetus for my project: to explore how the Karrabing's films play on cinema's capacity to disrupt habitual ways of thinking and chart the "generative unfolding of

new possibilities” from a non-representational vantage (Bogue, 2007: 106). However, much like their films, an exhaustive response cannot be guaranteed. Quite the opposite: I am entirely open to Sontag’s (1963) disposition that the answers might destroy the questions.

2. Literature Review

To place the matters of this paper, this literature review explores conversations at the intersection of film, geography and (non)representation, identifying the lacunae to which this paper attends. I then outline Deleuze's non-representational approach to cinema, paying particular attention to falsifying techniques, and introduce Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the minor. Finally, I articulate the Karrabing's filmmaking *otherwise*.

2.1 Geography's Visual Preoccupations

The body of knowledge broadly called 'Geography' has a well-established reliance on visual aids – from cartography to climate modelling; indeed, myriad practices spanning the discipline illustrate the intrinsically ocular way in which geographical knowledge is derived (Doel and Clarke, 2007). Influential oeuvres in visual scholarship including John Berger's (1972) *Ways of Seeing* have been particularly relevant in their critique of geography's tendency to inscribe subjectifying power relationships onto the landscape (Rose, 1993). Such critiques exposed the role visual artefacts play in constructing knowledge (rather than simply mimicking geographical concepts) (Kennedy and Lukinbeal, 1997). This 'cultural turn' prompted geographers to expound the worth of cultural objects, including film (Chaney, 1994). Engaging with the broader concomitant – the 'crisis of representation' – geographers exposed the relationship between the 'real' (what the camera filmed) and the 'reel' (the image produced on the screen) based on the recognition that film could no longer be viewed as "mere images of unmediated expressions of the mind, but rather [as] the temporary embodiment of social processes that continually construct and deconstruct the world" (Cresswell and Dixon, 2002: 3-4). Thus, film's representational accord was called into question; how can films represent reality when there is no objective, knowable reality ready to be filmed? (Aitken and Zonn, 1994). This has not meant that film has had limited geographical potential, quite the opposite. As David Harvey remarked, film has "the most robust capacity to handle intertwining themes of space and time in instructive ways" (Harvey in Kuhlbeck, 2010: 83). This indispensability has led geographers to discern the geography *of* film – exploring production, dissemination and reception – as well as the geography *in* film – as a means of recording, representing and simulating (Doel and Clarke, 2007). Recognised now as inherently geographical, films are landscapes of work – "both product and agents of change" (Aitken and Dixon, 2006: 331).

Despite unsettling film's representational status, the underplayed, affective registers of film, those often-unnoticed forces working pre-consciously, have yet to be duly acknowledged (Connolly, 2002a). Doel and Clarke (2007: 891) highlight the duplicitous ways in which film's form shapes our

optical unconscious, immersing viewers into the “afterimages of non-representational obscenity”. Through a tripartite of film theory, neuroscience and politics, Connolly (2002a: 75) perceives films as ‘neuropolitical’ mechanisms through which “cultural life mixes into the composition of body-brain processes” to stimulate thinking. As such, filmmakers can mobilise techniques that enable viewers to “explore the realm between thinking and affect” (*ibid.*: 67). Harnessing this capacity, film as an affective ‘resonance machine’, can expose viewers to the role visual media plays in manipulating political and ethical regimes. Ergo, as Latham and McCormack (2009: 260) assert, geographers must think *with* the moving image and attend to aesthetics not as “some representational veneer” but as part of the productive becoming of film; a clear call to which I, through this paper, respond.

2.2 Re-orientation to Non-Representational Theory

Geographical engagement with film has tended to centre around the signifying semiotic moulds of psychoanalytic theories. Seeing films as ‘cinematic landscapes’, these phenomenological approaches overlook film’s non-representational and affective registers in their unapologetic pursuit of decoding meaning (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002). Such frameworks succumb to a singularity of perspective, stifling film’s innumerable possibilities “for the sake of orders, mechanisms, structures and processes” (*ibid.*: 438). This curious vampirism naïvely assumes that “meaning is first and foremost a picture that is formed in the mind” (*ibid.*). By reducing film to semblances, the multi-sensory forces of bodies, experiences and events (including of images themselves) are neglected (Lorimer, 2010). Addressing this critique by taking its cue from a different register – that of non-representation – this paper sets out to disrupt the embalming assumption that films stand as metaphors for representation and signification.

The non-representational vernacular is not so much a ‘theory’, as an umbrella idiom for the mosaic of work attending to “our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multi-sensual worlds” (Lorimer, 2005: 83). Developed in dialogue with Deleuzian philosophy, NRT is simultaneously a critique of the epistemological conviction of representational thought, and a desire to attend to “*the geography of what happens*” (rather than a geography that can theorise the world) (Thrift, 2008: 2, emphasis in original). Much of these ‘happenings’ – the everyday events and becomings – take place before they are registered by conscious sense-making (Massumi, 2002). Prior to emotion (which functions through the cognitive categorisation of feelings), come intensities, blocs of affects and percepts – becomings – which correspond to “the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implies an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act” (Massumi, 2004: xvii). As an “uncircumscribed force unbounded to a whole self and unanchored in human subjectivity” (Vannini, 2015: 7), affects transcend the human. They are “not about you or it, subject or object. They

are relations that inspire the world” (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002: 439). This attention to affects reflects a broader post-humanist manifesto that human existence is not stable, unsettling the arborescent idea (a legacy of the Enlightenment) that severs mind from body and positions humans above all others (Thrift, 2008). This emphasis does not relegate thinking, but rather, attends to the “particular layering of affect into the materiality of thought” (Connolly, 1999: 27).

To clarify, NRT is not an attack on the representational thing itself, but rather an approach for attending to the performative becoming of that thing and the affects generated (Dewsbury *et al.* 2002). So, geographers navigating NRT’s tumultuous terrain seek to understand how the cinematic encounter mobilises affective spectatorship, acting as a conduit through which affects flow (Carter and McCormack, 2006). Indeed, cinematic images are “refigured as bodies of affective intensity with the capacity to affect other kinds of bodies” (*ibid.*: 235), participating in material events that bring “new spaces of thinking and moving into being” (McCormack, 2003: 489). Regarding the cinematic encounter as a machinic event, NRT creates opportunities to recalibrate thinking away from a solely cognitive model towards a definitively more bodily, sensory register (*ibid.*).

2.3 A Non-Representational Approach to Cinema

Opposing linguistic-centric theories that “reduce the image to an utterance”, Deleuze (2005[1989]: 20) explored such non-representational cinematic forces in his volumes *Cinema I: The Movement Image* (2005[1986]) and *Cinema II: The Time Image* (2005[1989]). He argued that cinema has potential to shatter habitual thought and bring to light entirely ‘uncharted’ paths (Lapworth, 2016). Extending the Spinozist critique of the Cartesian mind:body binary which rallied against the idea that the body is “a discrete entity defined by stable boundaries and a set of fixed characteristics” (Bignall, 2010: 83), Deleuze asserted that cinema operates through the affective sensibilities generated by its composition of images and signs. Unsettling the “subject-centre diegesis” (Doel and Clark, 2007: 894), the stimuli of thought is not the human, but rather cinema itself; “one is struck by thought. Thought is not a matter of reflection. It is the result of an encounter” (*ibid.*: 897). It is cinema’s ability to engender this alternative understanding of *what it means to think* that makes Deleuze’s work less a philosophy of cinema, and more cinematising philosophy (Stam, 2000).

Per Deleuze, talented filmmakers are those whose films require viewers to make sense through alternative ways of seeing, feeling and thinking. Developing this, Connolly (2002a: 94) identifies that certain techniques foster a “rethinking of cultural conventions”, which function as “periodic challenges to established scripts of normalisation”. Distinguishing between two types of cinematic image: the movement-image and the time-image, Deleuze (2005[1989]) marks what he saw as a fundamental reawakening of film’s potential in the transition from the former to the latter.

Movement-images typify conventional Hollywood films founded on linear narratives (perception-affectation-action), to form a 'whole' – "a model of Truth in relation to totality" (Rodowick, 1997: 12; Deleuze, 2005[1989]). This movement-image, where time is subordinate to movement, "constantly sinks into the state of the cliché: because it is introduced into sensory-motor linkages", anaesthetising spectators through its banal chrono-linear causality (*ibid.*: 21).

Reflecting the crisis of belief that emerged post-World War II, the time-image undermines this somewhat clichéd way of thinking by unshackling thought from the sensory-motor schema. Drawing on Bergson's (2013[1889]) notion of 'duration', the time-image is imbued with elasticity such that time's passage ebbs and flows. Departing from spatialised sequential units of clock-time, time endures such that in any moment, the present both draws on the past and flows into the future (*ibid.*). Despite Deleuze not explicitly defining a time-image (this would be somewhat antithetical to his *raison d'être* after all), the time-image is "a pure optical and aural image", that "comes into relations with a virtual image, a mental, or mirror image"; generating a *direct* image of time (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 52). Oscillating between actual and virtual, the time-image concerns memory, complicates chronological time and makes indiscernible the real and the imaginary (Rodowick, 1997). The virtual in this sense is the real without being actual (Deleuze, 1991), a space of potential "where futurity combines, unmediated, with pastness [...] where what cannot be experienced cannot but be felt – albeit reduced and contained" (Massumi, 2002: 30). It is the "thought-without-image" engineered by the time-image through which thinking is unchained from habitual circuits of sense-making, fomenting new associations with the virtuality of time (Flaxman, 2000: 3). Ergo, Deleuze's (2001: 66) contention that cinema invents "new possibilities of life", or, "other liveable configurations of thought" (Marrati, 2008: 79).

2.3.1 Falsifying Techniques

Drawing on Nietzschean 'powers of the false', the time-image creatively mobilises falsifying techniques which, by creating new virtual worlds, bring into disarray the so-called adamantine transcendence of truth (Deleuze, 2005[1989]). Techniques such as irrational cuts, lighting, framing and disjuncture between sound and visuals call into question the deceptive basis of even those constructions presented as rational (such as chronological time) by ushering into being the virtual potentialities incorporated within the present (*ibid.*). Deliberately deploying such techniques, filmmakers push to rebut film's representational certitude, setting off instead to chart the "generative unfolding of new possibilities" from a non-representational vantage (Bogue, 2007: 106).

'Powers of the false' also encompass the concept of 'legending'. With regards to Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) notion of the minor, Bogue (2007: 100) sees legending as a "practice of a minor

people engaged in a process of self-invention". Legending, a "story-telling of the people to come" is a method of narration with no singular, identifiable voice (Deleuze, 2005b: 215). This counters the 'truthful narration' of conventional ethnographic documentaries which, in their objectifying gaze, depend upon the truth-producing power of representation (Sharma, 2006). Dissolving the line between truth and fiction, legending puts in its place a truth *of* narration whereby diverse and contradictory voices question the notion of a legitimate version of events (Bogue, 2007). A process of re-imagining, legending seeks to create its own truths, constructing "a new mode of collective agency" (*ibid.*: 105).

2.4 The Notion of the Minor

Bogue's (2007) reference to the minor alludes to Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) reading of Kafka which, as a minor literature, used the major German language such that it could be interpreted *otherwise*. By their nature, minor practices can only operate within the major, so this is no major:minor dualism. Rather, the practices interweave, the minor acting in (dis)harmony with the major, creating a polyphony of sorts. Deleuze and Guattari (1986: 18) outline a minor practice's attributes as: "the deterritorialisation of language, the connections of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation". Experimental and tentative, these practices do not passively represent the world but, as 'modes of action', *create* the world (*ibid.*). To clarify, they simultaneously encompass deterritorialisation (the process of a "coming undone" of codes and structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 322)) and reterritorialisation (the recombination of deterritorialised elements into new forms) where both exist as a sort of obligatory symbiosis.

Minor practices may appertain to Guattari's (1995) 'ethico-aesthetic paradigm'. By rallying against ideological politics, Guattari espouses the capacity of creative practices, such as film, to produce new subjectivities and spaces. Embodying non-representational thinking, Guattari's ethico-aesthetic project departs from form and knowledge enslaved to the realm of representation, instead experimenting creatively to address issues emerging in the world. These creative endeavours compose the virtual, harnessing the potential for immanent modalities of subjectivation. For this reason, Guattari (1995: 107) asserts, such interventions have ethico-political implications, not moral responsibilities *per se*, but "to speak of creation is to speak of the responsibility of the creative instance with regard to the thing created".

Having considered intellectual thinking on film's potentialities to reconfigure thought from a non-representational vantage, I turn now to situate the Karrabing's filmmaking approach.

2.5 The Karrabing's Filmmaking *Otherwise*

"Folks are around; moods are good; an iPhone is charged; the place is right. And why not?" (Povinelli and Lea, 2018: 43).

The Karrabing's³ filmmaking *otherwise*⁴ emerges from their mode of existence at large. Departing from reflective realism, their performance is not underpinned by 'actors' seeking to fit some pre-determined model (Lea and Povinelli, 2018). Cognisant of the violence perpetuated by representational regimes, the Karrabing eschew attempts to document how they live retrospectively; their films are no solution to the tired paradigm concerning ethnographic authority (*ibid.*). The Karrabing's improvisational technique – with people acting as themselves – is what Biddle and Lea (2018) coin 'hyperrealism'. A term consciously borrowed from Euro-American art history, hyperrealism does not seek "to re-create the illusion of a reality elsewhere [...] this is art at work to make the real *more* real, when the real is itself what is at risk, at stake: namely, Indigenous history, language, presence, silenced, denied, ignored" (*ibid.*: 6, emphasis in original).

Film is not solely about the 'object', community betterment or *for* anything beyond production itself (Lea and Povinelli, 2018). Producing films entirely on their own terms, the Karrabing use filmmaking's processes to take seriously the everyday 'quasi-events', to manifest new arrangements within the cramped spaces of Indigenous existence (*ibid.*). Informed by people's desires and by events that arise in the milieu within which they film, the Karrabing explore what emerges in the encounter (*ibid.*). While Deleuze and Guattari did not explicitly engage with Indigeneity, this approach, I suggest, duets harmoniously with their geophilosophy which, although not formally termed until *What is Philosophy?* (1994), underpinned their collaborations (Woodward, 2016). Its undercurrent is a retheorisation of how thinking takes place in the world. Specifically tied to the event, geophilosophy is a consideration of how life emerges, transforms and de/reterritorializes, with the assertion that earth is a plane in which concepts are created, re-configured and arranged (*ibid.*). In other words, thinking does not happen in a vacuum; earthly forces make us think.

Through "sweating back into country", the Karrabing explore the often-nuanced interrelations between human existence and other modes of existence (Lea and Povinelli, 2018: 41). Considering metaphysical questions on dreamings, they grapple with how ancestral stories might be refigured in the context of settler colonialism, with its attempts to undermine and deny their analytics through what Povinelli (2016: 4) terms *geontopower*, the "discourse, affects, and tactics used in late liberalism

³ By focusing on the Karrabing's specific practices rather than encompassing them within broader categories of Indigenous or subaltern, I hope to avoid the limiting nature of these heavily loaded terms.

⁴ *Otherwise* is conceived as filmmaking that operates to push beyond the conventional norms of film as a representational artefact.

to maintain or shape the coming relationship of the distinction between Life and Nonlife”. Povinelli (2016) explores this governance of difference, which both promulgates and undermines certain economic and cultural practices in order to endorse the settler colonial rationale. Drawing attention to the Karrabing, she describes their practices as manifestations of the ‘virus’ – an antagonist that unsettles this dualism.

2.6 A Moment of Reflection

I pause now to draw together this paper’s strands thus far. Allying with the ethical energies of Deleuze and Guattari, this paper investigates how the Karrabing’s techniques are embodied in the generative becoming of their films, through the cinematic encounter. To be clear, filmmaking and film do not constitute a product:consumption binary but are interdependent such that each encompasses the other. Through this, I explore how the Karrabing’s practices may be considered as a push to the minor in generating micropolitical expressions. This is no dismissal of the intellectual traction brought to the Karrabing’s discourse, including Povinelli’s engagement. Rather, it is an early contribution to this continuum through a yet-to-be fully explored avenue for geographers – non-representation and filmmaking *otherwise*.

3. Interlude: Methodology

As posited hitherto, this disquisition's manifesto is an attendance to film's underplayed, affective vectors. Such a manifesto demands a non-representational mode of engagement, which I expose here.

3.1 *Doing* Non-representational Theory

While this section ostensibly outlines my methodology, there is no specific method through which NRT is 'applied' (Dewsbury, 2009). Rather, it is an ethos – “a new experimental genre: a hybrid genre for a hybrid world” (Vannini, 2015: 3) – that I embody. I approach this uncharted territory with some trepidation but am reassured that NRT welcomes failure insofar as failure allows the creation of novel ways of thinking experimentally in “the movement from theory to the empirical and back again” (Gerlach and Jellis, 2015: 143). Untethered from expectations, I am open to the infinite possibilities of what may emerge; as Deleuze (1988: 125) insightfully remarks, “no one knows ahead of time the affects that one is capable of”. In taking this empirical risk, I understand that my vulnerability to discomfort and disorientation is somewhat inevitable given the effort necessary to disentangle film from its doggedly representational status. Yet the result, I hope, is a productive re-theorisation that pays due recognition to film's non-representational register and takes seriously the micropolitical expressions generated.

I employ an autoethnographic approach that allows my body to become the epistemological nexus of research (Spry, 2001). No simple act, the challenge is profound. I must relinquish the hard-wired instinct to reduce images to their semblances in exchange for novelty, unconventionality, “more imagination, [...] more fun, even” (Thrift, 2008: 18-20), becoming alert to the affective resonances of cinematic images, the plenitude of what they *do* and their intensities. By using autoethnography, ‘data’ emerges through my body and the sum of its senses (Dewsbury and Naylor, 2002); my research diary reflects this (Appendix 1). Rather than attempting to craft a definitive or heroic narrative that would accentuate reductionist ideologies, in Deleuze's footsteps, my readings of the films seek to *add* to the world. Guided by NRT, focusing on the cinematic encounter as an event and becoming (as opposed to a subject:object model), I bypass the plague of critical-representational approaches to film that unavoidably entail speaking-on-behalf-of-others. Singular interpretations that pin down meaning are highly problematic, particularly in discourses around Indigenous politics where the restriction of conceptualisations to narrow imaginings are used to reinforce the hegemonic rationale (Hunt, 2014).

To provide some degree of reflexivity, I recognise that “all knowledge is situated” (Rose, 1997: 305). My subjective experiences are in no way universally ‘true’ or all-encompassing, for fieldwork and researcher are inseparable (Dewsbury and Naylor, 2002). This is no confession or limitation, rather I

acknowledge that affects do not transparently ebb, flow and dissipate through my body. My body is predisposed and susceptible to my existing interest in the subject; after all, “if you don’t love it, you have no reason to write a word about it” (Deleuze, 2004: 144).

3.2 Film Selection

Watching the Karrabing’s films affords an exciting array of cinematic experiences⁵. Having watched their full oeuvre, to conduct my thought experiment in sufficient depth I focus on two films that provoked highly distinctive, interruptive responses in me⁶; *Wutharr, Saltwater Dreams* (2016) and *Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland*⁷ (2018). As each film’s narrative unfolds over several layers simultaneously, a linear description is challenging to provide. Indeed, attempting to do so defeats the very nature of the films and my encounters with them. However, to provide context, I proffer a tentative outline, paraphrased from correspondence with Povinelli (2020, personal communications, 24 January).

Wutharr (2016: 28:53)

The plotline weaves around the possible reasons why a boat’s motor has broken down, leaving some of the Karrabing stranded out bush. As a result, the group set off an emergency flare leading to a punitive state fine that they cannot afford. Through surreal ‘flashbacks’, members explain their versions of events and the roles jealous ancestors, Christianity, the State and faulty wiring may have played.

Mermaids (2018: 26:29)

In a near future, fictional world, only Indigenous people can survive ‘outside’ because toxic mud, caused by white people, has poisoned the land. A young Indigenous man removed from his family as a ‘mud child’ for medical experiments is released back into the outside world. Journeying with his relatives across the dying land, Aiden encounters potential futures and pasts.

3.3 Living the Experiment

To give primacy to my bodily responses, during the first viewing I noted my responses: sensory experiences that provoked affective shock, ruptures in habitual thought, and any other unanticipated

⁵ I highly recommend watching the films’ trailers on YouTube.

⁶ In an ideal world I would have liked to have explored all.

⁷ Referred to respectively as *Wutharr* and *Mermaids* hereinafter.

responses. I subsequently returned to these interruptive scenes, investigating the inductive cinematic techniques used and the “shifts of gear they engineer[ed]” (Powell, 2007: 5).

3.4 Representing the Non-Representational

Undertaking this paper has required me to wrestle with conveying that which is difficult to convey, to push against false solutions offered by social science’s orthodox methodologies that craft easily consumed answers and the “making-reasonable of experience” (Manning, 2016: 32). I look to Deleuze’s paratactic writing style as a prism for this practice; such a *modus operandi* regards the art of writing itself as a mechanism to explore ideas. My discussion weaves together description, affective vignettes, film stills and an exegesis of intellectual thought, arranged as an imperfect storyboard of kinds, allowing visual and discursive lines of flight; a requirement of active interpretation by the beholder. Through its expressive materiality, I hope my discussion re-activates beyond these pages, creating a “disjunction and non-specificity that undermine[s] logical clarity and causality, leaving room for a certain vagueness, and for interpretation” (Gillespie in Leppert, 2002: 62-3).

4. Discussion

“Cinema creates an opening in life and gives us a chance to fabulate a detour, to meander along life’s indirect ways” (Pape, 2017: 30)

The ensuing discussion traces my thought experiment into the Karrabing’s inventive filmmaking practices, including my affective vignettes (shown in italics). While both films share novel techniques, my discussion in *Wutharr* focuses on key scenes that highlight the cinematic techniques used to ‘unsettle teleological temporality’, including incommensurable scenes, false continuity of sound, and flashbacks-within-flashbacks. In *Mermaids*, I explore the roles of soundscape, disembodied eye and superimposition in ‘making perceptible the imperceptible’. In drawing attention to these practices, I elucidate the ways in which they riff on film’s non-representational register to rupture habitual thought, open vistas for new possibilities for thought and experience, and disrupt the foundations on which hegemonic narratives are sustained. Further, I argue that the valence and political force of the Karrabing’s filmmaking lies not in its major representational content but in its deliberate cultivation of micropolitical expressions generated by their composite techniques.

4.1 Unsettling Teleological Temporality in *Wutharr*

As posited hitherto, the Karrabing use filmmaking to experiment with quotidian issues and how they “might act upon those conflicts if [they] try to act them out” (Povinelli in Simpson, 2014). By validating creative experimentation to address issues, such practices find harmony with Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic intervention. While macropolitical concerns are indeed enmeshed in the films, it is through the exposition of minor events that these are played out. Plotlines encompass specific yet potentially unfathomable problems that have or could have happened, such as the threat of eviction or the contemporary reconfiguration of ancestral stories – “a truthful capture of being Indigenous today” (Lea and Povinelli, 2018: 41). Suggestive of a minor practice, the Karrabing deterritorialise conventional filmmaking structures in exchange for improvisation as this creates space to gather affect and bring micropolitical collective desires and realities to the event (*ibid.*). As becomings, thought emerges through its own activation in the event of filmmaking – rather than being imposed *a-priori*.

Such a rationale underpins *Wutharr* where I become part of the Karrabing re-making the event of their boat breaking down. Through a series of ‘flashbacks’, possible explanations are proposed; to suggest these are discrete narrations of the event, however, belies what is an emphatically interruptive, interweaving and fragmented narrative. Rather, they “explore the multiple demands and inescapable vortexes of contemporary Indigenous life” (Povinelli, 2020, personal communications, 24

January). The following discussion investigates several techniques used to unsettle habitual perceptions of time before an intermezzo which considers how these techniques might be understood as micropolitical.

4.1.1 Incommensurable Scenes

At the start of the film, the Karrabing members are in the yard discussing the aftermath of the event. Trevor recalls evidence of ancestors everywhere in the bush, suggesting they must be responsible. Linda asserts that putting faith in the Lord will fix the boat, while Rex places the onus on wiring. Trevor states that he wants to tell his story, and I then move from the yard into Trevor's flashback where, enucleating Bergson's (2013[1889]) notion of duration and memory, the past is called upon to compose the present. This transition is signalled by conventional cinematic grammar techniques, including muted tones, the grainy quality of the images and high exposure, which transform into affects, working on my visceral register to lend the scene an ethereal quality and signify its temporal positioning (*Figure 1*) (Powell, 2007).



Figure 1-2: Incommensurable scenes

'Abruptly, I am wrenched out of the oneiric state of Trevor's flashback (Figures 1-2). Strong colours flood the screen, a brutal contrast to the sepia tones and warm light that had previously invited my touch. A monolith of documentation looms over me. With harsh edges and flapping pages, the entity seems to have a force of its own. My sense of anxiety is heightened by a disembodied radio voice-over charting a woman's arrest for a fine's non-payment, which juxtaposes starkly with the dream-like auditory allusion of the Shepard-Risset Glissando of moments ago.'

This abrupt cut from Trevor's flashback does not return me to the earlier 'present' conversation in the yard, which would have aligned to a mechanism of "psychological causality", a "closed circuit" (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 47). Instead, denied the revelation that would bring me back to the 'whole', I am confronted with an interior of a truck, where '*a monolith of documentation*' shot from below '*looms over me*'. Pushed off the edge of my habitual doxa, I am wrenched from my '*oneiric state*' to this new image, thrown into "a state of uncertainty" (Rodowick, 1997: 15). Disarticulated from any subjective perception, the image itself becomes an intense mode of sensation – rather than a capture of any discrete moment – that forces me to venture into alternative narrative directions. Yet this is not "single, right direction, but in all directions at once" (Bogue, 2003: 333). Such is the disjoint, I am prompted to not only see the disparate images, but to work through the 'unrepresentability' of the images in the virtual to interpret their relationship, to restore "the lost parts, to rediscover everything that cannot be seen in the image" (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 21). Rather than its content, it is the cut itself that forces me to think, dissolving the rhythm of time. This disruption is the force of time working in the interstice between the incommensurable images, undoing the subordination of the image to movement and giving way to aberrant movement and illogical spatiotemporal coordinates, enhancing my sensitivity to the flow of time itself and tapping into my "visceral register of human sensibility" (Connolly, 2002b: 1). Such jarring cuts between incommensurable scenes are a consistent *leitmotif* within *Wutharr's* presentation of unsettling teleological time, often leaving me disconcerted as I can no longer rely on common-sense mappings of space and time. Indeed, no scene has a *telos*; with no expectation of what will come next, or even what has just happened, I am driven to experience the brusque disruptions of place and time "usually thrust upon Indigenous subjects" (Lea and Povinelli, 2018: 1).

4.1.2 False Continuity of Sound

The breakdown of the semblance of wholeness that is implied by conventional logical causality is accentuated by *Wutharr's* marked use of sound, particularly through false continuity. Back in the yard, the group discuss the fine's content. Linda announces, '*I'm going to put down my version of what happened*'.



Figures 3-5: Intruding Linda's flashback

'Even before Linda has left the yard, sonorous church bells call me to her story, eliciting a sense of mysticity. The affective allure is heightened once again by the dream-like, auditory allusion of a Shepard-Risset Glissando. Pavlovian in my response, I anticipate shifting temporality once more.

Linda becomes a ghostly figure, on the cusp between the here and not here, the colours transmogrifying from solid primary to over-exposed tonalities (Figures 3-5). The moment crescendos.

I hover freely between yard and church, transcending the possibility of linear temporality and physical space. Now in the church, normative ambience returned, I orientate myself anew. Abruptly, a sharp voice intrudes from the yard (Figure 5) disrupting the church's serenity and bringing me harshly back to the fine's documentation.'

The commencement of Linda's flashback is signalled by non-diegetic mechanical effects of dream-like sound editing. Cultivating machinic affects, these pure sound images diverge from the visible *mise-én-scène* and, linking up with the virtual, induce my *'sense of mysticity'*. Traversing with this *'ghostly'* figure, I make a temporal leap to an indefinite moment in Linda's flashback. I am struck by the ebbing and flowing nature of time, made apparent through the juxtaposition of the hurried discussion in the yard, accentuated by jumping point-of-view shots, to the tranquillity of the church, where a long take elongates the moment as Linda walks forward. From the chaotic conversation in the yard to the church, *'normative ambience [is] returned'*. Yet my enjoyment of the calm reverie is pierced abruptly by a harsh, disembodied voice which I can only assume is intruding *'from the yard'* (Figure 5), jerking my situatedness out of the flashback and rendering it impossible to pin down chronology. I am suspended – the false continuity of sound challenging the *'truthful narration'* in the movement-image – to create a caesura where the actual image opens up to the virtual (Deleuze, 2005[1989]). Superseding the form of true, the editing provides a *'line of flight'*, severing any predictable narrative and instead engendering contemplation and the proliferation of possible interpretations and perspectives. This disembodied voice repeatedly demands attention throughout *Wutharr*, contributing to my overall sense of vulnerability and lack of control.

4.1.3 Flashbacks-within-flashbacks

In an indeterminate moment in Linda's flashback, she explains once again, to characters in the church, that she wants to tell her version of events.



Figures 6: Entering the helicoid of versions

Characters in the Church: *Where are you?*

Linda: *We're stuck in the middle of nowhere.*

'Linda's exchange in the church further unhinges any sense of chronology, leaving me utterly unsettled (Figure 6). Even as Linda talks to the characters in the church, I am then moving with her again, to another flashback (or flashforward?), placing me where the boat is broken (Figure 7). Moments later, Linda begins to pray. The sensory music crescendos, the church bells hammering once more. Entering a helicoid of versions-within-versions, I find myself back again in the church, Linda asking for help once more. Abandoning any hope of stable space or time, I too feel stuck in the middle of nowheres... in a space of hesitation and (im)possibility.'



Figure 7: Middle of nowheres

In this scene, I move with Linda through space-times in a way that denies easy interpretation. Linda says she wants to tell her version, yet comments that she is '*stuck in the middle of nowheres*'. During this conversation, I then jump to another moment in her memory, which I learn is the '*middle of nowheres*', then back again to the church. So rather than commencing her flashback at the '*beginning*', I leap to indeterminate, enigmatic sheets of the past, *ad infinitum*, shattering the sensory-motor schema from within (Deleuze, 2005[1989]). In Linda's web of memories, moving through flashbacks-within-flashbacks, time is made malleable, with fragments left incongruent and uncertain. By denying Linda's flashback the status of succinct diversion from the narrative flow, these anomalous leaps require me to shift from unworn routes of thought to active navigation of the experience, throwing my Cartesian coordinates into a state of unbalance and disarticulating the model of truth (Rodowick, 1997). Refusing to allow me a fixed position in relation to spatial and temporal closure, I must re-orientate myself with the sporadic temporal leaps pulled up in this helicoid of flashbacks, engaging with the virtual to re-link Linda's version to events so far; past/present/future are not semblances of linearity but coexist. In this way, the image is no longer claiming to show a true world but "a seeing function", that can "replace, obliterate and re-create the object itself" (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 12,19). On the cusp of suspense, I am unaware which aspects of the virtual I will need for later radical reconfiguration to make sense of the experience, in which the virtual "detaches itself from its actualisations and starts to be valid for itself" (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 127). These reinsertions into unidentified positions in the past toy with my assumptions, unsettling "the taken-for-granted relationships that occur along linear temporality" (Kindon, 2015: 451). Without temporal substratum, I am left '*in a space of hesitation and (im)possibility*'.

Back in the church, still within Linda's version, Linda continues to pray for help.





Figures 8-10: What the heck

'Church bells take up their hammering again. The screen floods with light, resplendent through stained-glass windows. The dream-like sensory music begins. Linda turns... what has she sensed? I share her confusion (Figure 8). Time held in suspension, I await its revelation, breath held. Linda's body distorts, the oneiric sounds crescendo. The church fades but Linda's body hovers, made spirit-like herself through the layering's moiré. The halo-effect of light bridging the images augments the hallucinatory allure. Signalled now to the ancestors' version in 1952 (Figure 10), I am traversing an infinity of paths.'

Linda: *What the heck*

The close-up of Linda's face, an affection-image, at the beginning of the scene expresses pure intensities, "unfilmable internal intensive states" that transmit from the screen such that *'I share her*

confusion' (Deamer, 2016: 82) (*Figure 8*). My senses are bombarded with haptic, kinaesthetic and synaesthetic images which combine to imbue the image with a spiritual intensity (Powell, 2007). Linda's forms – both translucent and solid – appear to shimmer, accentuating the '*hallucinatory allure*' as I move with Linda from her version to the Ancestors', time shifting restlessly once more (*Figures 9-10*). This further interruption surprises even Linda. I come to realise that in *Wutharr*, with its interweaving, fractured flashbacks, there is "no longer any question of an explanation, a causality or a linearity" (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 42). Rather, underwritten by sporadic movements from alternative perspectives on a past which itself is open to interpretation, *Wutharr* exposes the irresolvability of truth or explanation in the present. This prompts a wider point, mooted by Connolly (2002a: 57), that rather than pursuing "sufficient knowledge, deep explanation, or narrative integrity", one could rather appreciate the "layered effectivity of the past on the present".

4.1.4 Intermezzo: Reflections on *Wutharr*

To summarise my thought experiment, I reflect on the implications of the micropolitical expressions generated by the techniques discussed. By determinedly rebutting chrono-linear causality and the 'truthful narration' of convention in exchange for a fractured, indeterminate narrative fabricated by various 'powers of the false', *Wutharr* deliberately unsettles the established regime of time and the notion of a legitimate version of events. The narration is incessantly remodified as a result of de-chronologised moments such that past/present/future are no longer discrete entities shackled to linearity's stultifying stricture. Even following several engaged viewings, questions remain unresolved, moments incoherent to others. It is precisely the impossibility of giving *Wutharr* a single, totalising interpretation which explicates its eschewing in representational terms. Arguably a push to the minor, *Wutharr* illuminates the notion of the image, not as a representational capture of discrete moments assembled together, but in an interminable series of potential interpretations, in an unremitting metaphoric disequilibrium between image-spectator, brain-screen.

This re-configuration of time has wider political connotations, highlighting both the partiality and potential destructiveness of claims to a universal truth, and undermining the foundation on which hegemonic narratives are sustained. If the present draws on a past that may or may not exist, and the future is never fully exempt from a present that perpetually moves in it, then ultimately, modernity's narrative is called into question. As Rose (2004) explains, coloniality and indeed Western insular modes of thinking depend on teleological temporalities which position the present and future as transcending the past; a notion spatialised by depicting Western society as the modern future to which nonmodern and nature aspire, acting as the "object of policies of improvement" (De la Cadena, 2010: 345). Challenging the construct of linear time on which the treadmill of progress is upheld arguably

contributes to the broader “decolonisation of the idea of being” (Mignolo, 2014: 22). Through their filmmaking, the Karrabing hope that the “audience begins to feel the disorientation of their own moral, political, and social compasses in a way that Nietzsche might appreciate” (Lea and Povinelli, 2018: 4). In this way, I suggest that their ethico-aesthetic proposition is maintained as they simultaneously engage with film as a major ‘representational’ articulation but in a minor way to push beyond the constraints of its convention, creating new subjectivities, spaces and thoughts. As such, the film’s force is less about major content or subject matter. Rather, its political impetus lies in the micropolitical expressions generated which, in diverging the mind into anomalous activity, disrupt clichéd and stultifying temporal perceptions and re-compose patterns of thought.

4.2 Making Perceptible the Imperceptible in *Mermaids*

Much as *Wutharr* breaks free from “the entangling associations of conventional narratives” (Bogue, 2007: 106) so too does *Mermaids*. Inventive filming and editing techniques actuate the Karrabing’s most unnerving, stylistically experimental film yet (Povinelli, 2020, personal communications, 24 January), potentially highlighting the potentials for filmmaking *otherwise*. Discussing two scenes, I unearth the technical aspects (soundscape, disembodied eye and superimposition) that play into ‘making perceptible the imperceptible’, before an intermezzo which goes on to consider the wider implications.

Unfolding through bifurcated storylines, *Mermaids* is a complex entanglement of temporalities and worlds through which the Karrabing are present, attending to country-based obligations and ancestral relationships in the context of the governmental push to make these unliveable (Lea and Povinelli, 2018). While the film’s narrative alludes to the major political concern of Australia’s Stolen Generation of Indigenous children, much of the film’s puissance comes from its vibrant aesthetics.

4.2.1 Disorientating Sonic Ecology and Disembodied Eye

Pushed into the ‘outside’ world, Aiden traverses the bush with his relatives. They approach a waterhole.

Aiden: *What are those things over there?*

Uncle: *Oh, those are Mermaids. They take all the young kids through a hole there and come out at the island.*



Figures 11-13: Disorientating sonic ecology and disembodied eye

'Underneath their conversation is an asynchronistic hum... disembodied, disjointed, futuristic and hypnotic. Its vibrations drill into my head. I'm frowning, my state of apprehension accentuated by the steadfast denial of a stable, identifiable 'human' viewpoint to which I can harness perception. At one moment I am among the foliage looking on (Figures 11-13). Who – or what – am I? Why am I

watching? The group seems unaware. My viewpoint shifts again; I am here, there... everywhere. Discerning three women in the distance, my anthropocentric assumption falters when the uncle says they are mermaids.'

A powerful affective atmosphere signalling a negotiation of alterity emerges from the abyss between image and sound. The preternatural *'asynchronistic hum... disembodied, disjointed, futuristic and hypnotic'* comes from nowhere and everywhere, an (in)visible presence, dissonant from the visible *mise-én-scène* yet coercing my attention. As the "actual is cut off from its motor linkages" (Deleuze, 2005[1989]: 123), I must contemplate both sensory dimensions. Rich and intense, the non-diegetic sounds are themselves non-living lifeforces, persistent (non)presences haunting my thoughts, setting free the potentials of the virtual and playfully taunting the subject:object framework. The palpable foreboding sensation elicited by these pure intensities is triggered by haptic responses of other senses below the threshold of intelligibility, contributing forcefully to my perturbation (Powell, 2007; Connolly, 2002a). A consistent element of the Karrabing's films, this overwhelming non-human sonic ecology is arguably a deliberate attempt to deterritorialise 'vococentrism' – the conventional framing of film sound design privileging the human voice over all other sounds (Chion, 1994). Decolonising the senses, the Karrabing accentuate the heterogenous affective fragments and traces that accumulate and re-activate impalpable 'memories of the senses' and, by doing so, draw out the co-constitutive tripartite of body-brain-screen.

The disorientating sonic ecology performs alongside the *'denial of a stable and identifiable 'human' viewpoint'*. Struggling to anchor my perception, I float freely, becoming anonymous and unidentifiable, *'here, there... everywhere'*. Reflecting Deleuze's (2005[1986]: 83) "immanent perception of the world", I am struck by the absurdity of the notion that the human is an ontologically secure figure governing all images that follow. Confronting perception that is not my own, "a mode of 'seeing' that is not attached to the human eye" I meet face on that which I have yet to think (Colebrook, 2001: 29). In pushing against the reinforcement of molar human-centred perception, this scene nullifies "subjectivity as a privileged image in [...] 'the aggregate of images' (the material world)" (Trifonova, 2004: 134). Disembodied shots demand that I go beyond the realm of concrete objects and events with perceptions lacking orientation in space-time; I come to an "understanding.. [of] what is around but not in our field of vision" (Povinelli, 2016: 4). This combination of techniques makes palpable non-lifeforces as they reverberate in the pre-individual arena and become part of my cinematic experience (Deleuze, 2005[1986]).

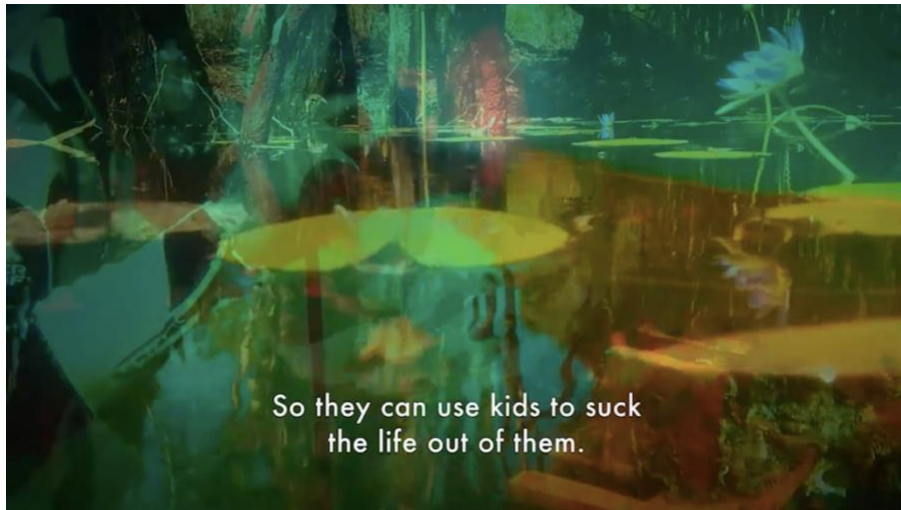
As my perception shifts, three older women come into view. My assumption of their human status is unsettled. Are they mermaids? I can infer as much but no answer is forthcoming. As Lea and

Povinelli (2018: 44) make clear, “the Karrabing did not form themselves to be a translation machine”. These women intermittently appear, muttering and beckoning whenever mermaids are alluded to. Belying any neat ontological line between human:nonhuman, living:non-living, their performance does not “map cleanly onto those settler colonial imaginaries” (Johnson *et al.* 2019: 1334). Bypassing straightforward equivalences between the Karrabing’s interpretation and my own Western mode, I simultaneously experience sensations of uncertainty and productive indeterminacy. Militating counter to the canon of ethnographic documentaries, the Karrabing tease through ambiguity, ensuring that aspects of their cosmologies remain enigmatic to outsiders; this is not through their ignorance but a deliberate act to necessitate active interpretation by spectators (Lea and Povinelli, 2018). While admittedly my curiosity about the mermaids stems from my habitual representational bent – the assumption of impossible metamorphosis – the polysemy of translation I encounter has arguably opened up a vista for me to rethink my narrow imagining of a dreaming.

My initial sense that someone or *something* could be watching the group endures throughout the film. My awareness of alterity is palpable; I do not have to *see* the mermaids to feel them, rather, I sense their force, shifting the ontological configuration of the scene by their (non)presence. While sometimes they are corporeal (as in *Figure 13*), this visibility relies not on their presence being made felt; “that which is made seen is only ever the cusp of all that is felt” (Szymanski, 2017: 45). In other words, what I see transmits the affective atmosphere created by the multiplicity of virtual forces which, together, have engineered my cinematic encounter.

4.2.2 Unruly Superimpositions

Mermaids’ rich sonic ecology is often mobilised creatively in tandem with unruly superimpositions to engineer a cacophony of intensities and sensation. In this scene, the uncle’s version of the dreaming is abruptly thrown into doubt when the brother says ‘*that’s bullshit*’. My uncertainty deepening, the brother goes on to tell his version.



Figures 14-16: Near-psychedelic hybrid layers

'An unnerving heartbeat thud is in tension with the whimsical, asynchronistic undercurrent, making me feel uncomfortably anxious. These sounds and the brother's narration form an audio-bridge as the screen cuts to a disturbing superimposition of several discontinuous images, their colours

distorted and exuberant. The bloodcurdling, disembodied sound of children screaming and coughing pierces my eardrums; the engulfing heartbeat makes me shiver. The near-psychedelic hybrid layers are too fast and complex... Compelled to submit to the chaotic movement, the image quivers with immanent becomings, alive with resonances forced upon me. The images and sounds refuse to settle, filling me with deep feelings of unease... I am being sucked into a sort of virtual vortex.'

Avoiding the trouble that comes with interpretation, I acquiesce to the 'unrepresentability' of this unruly superimposition; deterritorialising convention, the very nature of its affective resonances ensures that the superimposition stymies representational capture. As Deleuze (2005[1989]) suggests, images must be unfamiliar, ineffable and challenging in order to rebut the assimilation of an image into cliché. That said, this superimposition arguably problematises Deleuze's taxonomy of images in enabling the interactive becoming of multiple spasmodic actual and virtual images simultaneously (Figures 14-16). This is no dismissal of Deleuze's cine-philosophy, reflecting as it does the space-time cinema occupied in Deleuze's lifetime (the genesis of US and European cinema from the 1930s onwards), nor of his taxonomy which is not intended to be 'applied' as such. Rather, it suggests that contemporary filmmaking is extending Deleuze's philosophical foundations concerning film's affective sensibilities to heightened levels. Before "consciousness intervenes to pull [me] in this or that direction", the affects this image mediates operate on a mechanism of perception that works below the cognitive level (Connolly, 2002a: 94). Dissolving the discursive fissure between spectator and spectated, the visceral manipulation of chaotic, discontinuous images catalyses my own input into a "hallucinatory trip through unplumbed grottos of pure sensory disruption", forcing me to cross into new territories of experience and thinking (Bergson, 1991[1908]: 152). Sensory flooding of over-saturated colours and aural discomfort of unfamiliar nerve-grating sounds induce a portentous affective atmosphere, leaving me with 'deep feelings of unease'. This is reinforced by the 'neuro-physiological vibration' created by the 'hybrid layers [which] are too fast', making it impossible to assimilate the dislocated images into a unified 'whole' (Deleuze, 2005[1989]). Although I cannot access full understanding of this harrowing superimposition, the "hallucinatory images that short-cut the operations of common sense" (Bogue, 2007: 106) throw me into another lifeworld, leaving palpable feelings of hopelessness and intensive suffering.

4.2.3 Intermezzo: Reflections on *Mermaids*

Enticing my perception of the (in)visible along new, unexpected lines of flight, my encounter with *Mermaids* has made perceptible the imperceptible. Determinedly illustrating Deleuze's approbation for cinema's ability to provoke an alternative understanding of *what it means to think*, *Mermaids*, by mobilising technical tactics (disembodied eye, soundscape and superimposition), has shaken my

habitual perception, shifting my awareness of non-life forces as present, active bodies that operate with other machinic elements to co-create the cinematic encounter. Alerting me to the “motion of otherwise imperceptible lifeforces in the existing world” (Ingawanij, 2013: 99), at stake here is an alternative conceptualisation of subjectivity, beyond its normative transcendent connotation. Deterritorialising film’s assumed representational coding, the Karrabing effectively fashion “a new mode of collective agency” (Bogue, 2007: 105), re-imagining the body as one amongst “complex assemblages formed with other bodies in its social milieu” (Bignall, 2010: 84). Are encounters not always co-constituted by a multiplicity of *non-life*? Self:other, human:nonhuman, life:non-life, the scaffolding of self and the hegemonic narrative that positions the human and mind over all other bodies begins to fall away; I am always-already becoming through non-living, non-human bodies. As a result, I begin to contemplate the potential for an existence of being that takes seriously the agency of non-life on our modes of existence; an existence not limited to the Karrabing’s analytics, nor to Indigenous ontologies, but a way of being and relating *otherwise*. Reflecting on Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy and its pertinency to my cinematic experience, I am cognisant of a ‘geo’ that refers not solely to a cartographic image of earth as Gaia. Rather, it is a ‘geo’ lived through the composition of diverse onto-genetic beings – including non-living, affective, virtual as well as human and other living bodies – manifested so pertinently through a cinematic encounter with the Karrabing’s films (Woodward, 2011).

5. (Dé)nouement

“The images of art do not supply weapons for battles. They help sketch new configurations of what can be seen, what can be said and what can be thought and, consequently, a new landscape of the possible. But they do so on condition that their meaning or effect is not anticipated” (Rancière, 2009:

103)

To draw my thought experiment to a coda, I provide here a précis of the main contributions emergent from this paper in relation to its aim: to determine how the Karrabing play on film’s capacity to disrupt habitual ways of thinking and chart the “unfolding of new possibilities” (Bogue, 2007: 106) from a non-representational vantage. I addressed this through an engaged encounter with the Karrabing’s films *Wutharr* and *Mermaids*. In *Wutharr*, I drew attention to several techniques (incommensurable scenes, false continuity of sound and flashbacks-within-flashbacks) which worked to unsettle my familiar temporal coordinates, ultimately undermining the narrative of linearity and modernity shackled to the hegemonic narrative. In *Mermaids*, I explored how cinematic techniques (soundscape, disembodied eye and superimposition) engineer affect and sensation, enticing me to perceive the imperceptible forces involved in encounters and events. Reflecting Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy, these deliberate ploys accentuate the ways in which we are always-already becoming through a connective multiplicity of different non-living, non-human bodies and forces which exceed the “corporeal finitude of the human in extensive, intensive, temporal and ontogenetic ways” (McCormack, 2003: 489). In summary, eluding the snares of representation and signification, the Karrabing’s films determinedly riff along the semi-tonal, affective registers of film to punctuate the surfeit of binaries and trademark onto-epistemologies that characterise habitual Western thinking, in turn gesturing towards the possibilities for relating to ourselves and the world *otherwise*. In light of these sensibilities, I argue that the Karrabing’s filmmaking might be thought of as a push to the minor, illuminating the fruitful possibilities for filmmaking *otherwise* and its material, political implications. As such, this paper valorises the micropolitical potential of affect in recomposing thought and highlights the potency of cinema and its techniques to do so.

By drawing together non-representational geographies and the Karrabing’s filmmaking *otherwise*, this paper has contributed to the burgeoning non-representational purview through a re-theorisation of film in geography, unsettling film’s assumed capacity to represent reality. More uniquely, perhaps, it has highlighted the political potential of filmmaking *otherwise* as a world-making activity to create lines of flight; as-yet-known subjectivities, thoughts and worlds through the bundle of affects and percepts that the cinematic encounter co-constitutes. On this note, within the

Karrabing's oeuvre, there remain many avenues – scenes, techniques and films – that for now await to be explored. Conceptually, the meeting of Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy with the Karrabing's filmmaking *otherwise* through geophilosophy and the notion of the minor suggests a potential alliance. While Deleuze and Guattari were silent on Indigenous politics, this paper has identified affinities between their ethea in that both critique arborescent modes of thinking and, through their attendance to the emergence of life through onto-genetic bodies, usher into being “a mode of thought that is not defined representationally” (Povinelli, 2011: 105).

Despite an emergence of cinematic activism there remains the risk that film, as a medium, will continue to be co-opted to act and serve as the emblem of representation. As the Karrabing recognise, their films “enter a culturally saturated visual contract that threatens to tip their productions back into recognisable, morally responsible, set of resemblances” (Lea and Povinelli, 2018: 1). All the more reason, therefore, to reiterate that film's valence should not be perceived in terms of its commercial returns or its ‘power’ to debunk and mystify representational tropes. Rather, a more pertinent prognosis of its potential is its “heterogenesis of systems of valorisation” (Guattari, 2015: 31); its micropolitical force in transforming thought through its affective register – a merit only grasped through a non-representational approach. As Guattari acknowledges (2009: 266), although our social and cultural world continues to be “contaminated by dominant representations”, the possibility remains for a “minimal aperture” to become during a filmic encounter that can derail habitual thought and the ways in which we relate to the world and ourselves. Indeed, minor practices that work from within could be a gambit to unmoor film from its representational anchorage, and to re-inscribe film and filmmaking as a micropolitical, ethico-aesthetic endeavour. What, then, is the outcome of all this? Perhaps the greatest contribution of this paper is to stress the importance of minor practices as so uniquely and innovatively actuated by the Karrabing which, in rebutting regimes of representation, create “a sorcerer's line that escapes the dominant system” (Deleuze, 1993: 15).

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Appendix 1

The following appendix includes my notes from the research diary that I wrote during my cinematic encounters with the films (first and second viewings). I then crafted more detailed affective vignettes on the key disruptive moments, as documented in the substantive part of this paper.

Wutharr: Saltwater Dreams

First viewing key observations:

- Interweaving/fractured narrative from indeterminate moments of the past – complex, difficult to comprehend, moving around space-time. Confusion/unease/anxiety. Does not lend itself to easy telling – impossible to place events on a timeline – this would go against the nature of the film anyway. Definitely attempting to undermine the idea of progression or an ‘end point’. Moments left unresolved/incoherent. Denies easy telling of a story. No clear-cut meaning for Western viewers.
- Sense of many possible versions of past event – rebutting truthful narration in exchange for polychrony of events that may or may not be there. Engaging with the virtual to re-link events. Flashback-within-flashback – but not in the Deleuzian forking paths sense – arguably problematising his taxonomy.
- No subjective framing – move around from one version to the other and from different perspectives e.g. from below, above – bodies not subjective entities to an objective framing of the world. Defies attempts to characterise subjects, or sense of character development.
- Time ebbs and flows – past has a certain *longueur* at times (wandering around, long-takes, passing of time is apparent).
- The repetition of certain images/sounds e.g. jojo you’re stressed out about the forms. Brusque interruptions/playing with time-space. Feelings of intrusion/constantly like I’m on edge that this voice will disrupt my thoughts.
- Incommensurable scenes – cuts from one version to empty spaces – become more sensitive to times passing. Again, forces me to engage with the image – interpret the relationships between images.
- Inability to place indeterminate moments/impossibility of interpreting events – affects/memories are incongruous, uncertain – feelings of no control/partiality.
- Dramatic contrast in cinematography. Distinct use of certain techniques to engineer affect e.g. oneiric sounds for flashbacks, prismatic light, distortion, superimpositions – heighten awareness to affect and sensation, make me feel like I am travelling through multiple temporalities.

Second viewing detailed notes:

- Sea crashing, title page
- Distinct lack of facial images/disembodied shots – shot from inside engine – wiring. Long-take.
- Panoramic view of the yard – BBQ in the foreground. People hanging around.
- Bodies walking through the frame. Police car siren. Body walks towards the yard – disembodied. Close-up on the police artefacts on body’s belt.
- Police car on way to community church.
- Cuts to an unknown place. Disembodied woman walks through the frame. Shot from below Scratches the floor – coin 1953.
- As she walks to the church, there is a flash of a superimposition and chaotic soundscape
- Overwhelming, intense soundscape – sirens/birds song/clapstick music

- Use of chaotic superimpositions – too complex to pin down meaning – unpicking convention
- Cuts back to inside the police van
- Sudden cut – black screen
- Back to yard from community church
- No subjective perspective, close-ups of everyday objects (buckets, BBQ, wiring)
- Close-up of feet.
- Often no body associated to voice.
- Men arrive to the yard – in the truck with them. Camera jerks when the truck door slams – use of iPhones?
- Camera jumping all over the place – no stable positioning/perspective
- Discussion of what broke the boat/ensuing fine and how they will pay for this/whose fault it was
- Varying explanations – angry ancestors, faulty wiring, the lord and the state – multiplicity of versions/contradictory
- Enter into the 'Trevor's version'. Engineering of light/sound/music signal this.. prismatic light/refraction of his face/close-up/exposure.. follow his gaze into his reverie – mechanic effects into machinic affects.
- Vignette effect in the boat. In the boat with him (camera framing). Warm light, high exposure. Vintage photograph look. Talking about the dreaming.
- Digeridoo music – playing with cliché?
- Going to country.
- Can of coke stands out against the nostalgic feel of the image.
- But version not filmed from his perspective, no subjective framing, disembodied shots, shots within the version without him in it.
- 'try smelling them' – two women hiding in the bush. Sniffing them.
- Camera pans back – image of footsteps on the sand.
- Narration carries on over images of disconnected spaces.
- Strong fish-eye lens – hallucinatory like
- Camera jerky – perspective shift from behind – whose watching them?
- Back to the women in the bush 'punish them' 'punish them' – colours saturated
- Group walk along
- Image with someone's finger blocking half of it so unable to see full framing.
- Low level shots in foliage, switch to high angle shot
- Undercurrent of music and 'punish them punish them'
- Camera shakes as they walk through foliage, sound is prominent.
- Cut to the ancestors – almost like they are looking on. Superimpositions of the ancestors and the group. Colours hot house and saturated.
- Switches to a black and white image of women hiding in the bush with face paint on, during Trevor's narration.
- 'Do you feel the spirits of the old people?'
- 'punish them punish them'. Superimposition of bush, trevor walking through. Photographic effects, black outlines of the bush imprinted on top of the group walking through the bush.
- Reverberating music.
- Suddenly, all stops. Music dissipates, slowness of the group walking returns.
- Cut. '...and battle the invaders'.
- Modern music comes on.. disjuncture between sound and image
- Group waiting on the beach. 'You hear that crow singing out?'
- Image of ash on the floor – evidence of ancestors?
- Waiting for the boat, slowness of the music adds to this effect.
- Group see a white guy – ask him for water.
- Cuts to a disembodied shot of a person on a boat.

- Interaction between the white person on the boat and the group on the beach. White body no face. Unsure whether this is still a flashback – colours have seeped back in
- Jumping from images of any-spaces-whatever – a tyre on a beach, a mangrove.
- Cut back to the boat like the start of the flashback – colours faded. Dream-like music.
- Screen cuts black. Leap from his version back to another present – in a truck, unconnected space, colours return. Voice-over of radio about arresting a woman. Irrational cut/incommensurable scenes from reverie to unconnected space – disruption of time and space. past/present/future implicated simultaneously – must work through the unrepresentability of the images – not linear progression
- Woman delivers the form to the yard. Sitting around. Trevor there too – no indication of where/when his flashback ended – doesn't bring back to the whole
- Discussing the form's lengthy documentation – 'far out'. Disembodied shots.
- Shot from different perspectives. Unable to understand the form's language. Arguing about who made the group go on the boat to the land – so this must be post-event.
- Dream-like music starts.
- Cuts to a close-up of a character's face – unknown.
- Bells start tolling. Crescendo of auditory allusion. Hover freely with Linda as she walks from the yard to the church.
- Enter 'Linda's version: unto the lord'
- Voice from yard punctuates the calmness of the church. 'Jojo you're stressed out because of the forms'
- Conversation in the church unhinges familiar space-time – wants to tell her story yet already in the version? She says she needs help and they've broken down.
- Close up shots of objects in the church.
- Linda needs to tell her story. Camera zooms into her face, black screen. Incoming image, high exposure, like in Trevor's version. Starts when Trevor and the group get off the boat – repeat of before – sunburst flare through the middle of the image. Clapstick music starts again over them fishing in the creek.
- slow-motion of girl's foot moving up a mound of foot. Zoomed in/blurred. Haptic sensations. Jolty camera movement.
- image of foliage – slowly moving around the corner.
- Sudden cut to the boat. 'punish them punish them' comes back. The boat breaks.
- Close-ups of the engine/wire.
- Sat on beach, close-up of the flare. Linda starts to pray.
- Cuts back to an image of the church's stained-glass window. Back to the conversation with the characters in the church. High exposure. Falsified voice-over 'jojo you've gotta do those forms' – brusque interruption. Confusion
- Linda goes to pray. Camera jerks, light resplendent through the stained-glass windows. Oneiric music starts again, bells ringing. She says again 'we're stuck in the middle of nowhere' – potentially in her day-dream?
- She turns around, affection-image, looks confused, body distorted as her body duplicates, she enters 'Ancestor's version' in the community church with two people in make-shift cloaks. Vibrancy of colour and light intensities. Shots of the floor.
- Linda: 'what the heck!?' as she moves outside the church with the two people. Screen switches to an old tv style. Superimposition of many images – hard to interpret. Tv trying to find signal.
- The characters discuss who this woman is (Linda), video is overlaid on top of their conversation – unsure what it is but looks like it is an old video.
- It's 2015, ancestors: no it's 1952 and you need a permit! Linda: 'I need help, where am I?' In Delissaville – you're home now. Linda: 'you dead people must have broken the boat'. Colours intense/high exposure. Version-within-version-within-version... flashback-within-

flashback. But not in delezian sense of forking paths. Video overlaid on top of the images comes to the fore.

- Cuts now to an image of the empty community church, with the superimposition of the women in the bush as in Trevor's version – flashbacks all linked? Linda: 'I'm here!'
- Cut. All the chaotic music stops. Linda stands there, looking confused. Shot of the penny again which says 1953 on it. She picks it up. 'Jojo you've gotta come in here and do those forms!' again – interruption. Linda walks into the community church, fades, and out comes Rex and some other characters. They find a wire at the back of the community church.
- Close-ups of objects in the field of the community church. Shots of feet/wiring/inside the wiring. They walk into the church and it cuts to Linda walking from the yard into house – and into the church again superimposed. Clapstick music begins again. 'Maybe someone will rescue us..or the boat will start' – still in an indeterminate moment in her flashback of sorts.
- Cuts back to the community church and Linda walks out with the people in the make-shift cloaks, as she did in her flashback.
- Cut to the inside of the police car 'going there now'. Bombardment of sound again – sawing, voice-over dialogue, church bell, thrum of crickets, bird sounds, 'punish them punish them'. Superimposition of the police car, the community church and the women in the bush. Linda as voice-over 'we're stuck in the middle of nowheres'.
- Cuts from an image of the yard to the old community church, dream-like, high-pitched music in the background.
- Cuts again to trevor coming up to the yard like in the beginning in slow motion.
- End credits shows a video of the Karrabing making their film and music being made.

Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland

First viewing general observations:

- Impending sense of doom – end of the world, overall sadness evoked (sci-fi music, harrowing screams, colour editing).
- Multiple stories loosely weaved together – jump from moments in one to another. Many temporalities. Like Wutharr, the impossibility of adding the events up – they don't come back to the 'whole' or causality. Karrabing aren't making it easy to understand, but again they aren't translation machines as Povinelli states. My own vision/understanding isn't sufficient to comprehend – can only sense. Not semantically transparent.
- Intense sonic ecology – at times, overwhelming, piercing. Leave a sense of uneasiness/anxiety.
- Visually thick – layered, overlaid images, superimpositions, hot house colours, exposure. Hallucinatory images, into another lifeworld. Overlap of contemporary conflicts and dreaming. Vibrancy of dreaming – superimpositions colour/light/sound/movement. Saturation/editing/aesthetics – affects and sensations. Poetic and dense.
- Disembodied shots again – close-up of the state's white hands typing etc.
- Sense of *something* watching on – disembodied eye – here, there.. everywhere. Sense of this affective atmosphere from all the forces that have cultivated from the sound etc.
- Polysemy of translation – who are the mermaids – never given answers, old women beckon when mermaids are alluded to but left to interpret this.
- Incoherent/undetermined characters – e.g. girl 'food food food'. No explanation forthcoming.
- Inability to interpret – images are difficult, ineffable and unfamiliar. Interruptive and uncomfortable viewing – new thoughts, ideas, conflicts. Inability to think through everything. No clear-cut meaning, explanation.

Second viewing more detailed notes

- Buzzing, mechanical sound – title page
- Buzzing, strange hypnotic sound. Starring: the mermaids – those who see them and those who don't.
- Intense colour change from blue to red – begins to look like fire. Intense crackling/burning sound.
- 'Inside' – title page.
- Hospital sounds, but no image. Black screen. Door slams.
- Confronted with detached image, shot from below. Camera jerking, blurry. Bleeping of medical device. Rove over a body from below upwards.
- Sudden irrational cut to a viewpoint outside – empty landscape, devoid of people. Industrial. False continuity of sound from the hospital.
- Back inside, hospital reception. Extremely blurry image. Close up of wires. Yellow
- Conversation about medical experiment not working – close up of a woman's face 'sorry son'
- Cut to a hygiene sign – blurry again. Intense piercing of screaming sounds 'noo' unattached to the image. Sounds like a child.
- Can hear a loud breathing sound, hazmat bodies walk into the frame. Blurry. Voice-over 'they say it's like she's melted inside out'. Shots from ground level. Voice-over 'and why is there so much mud everywhere?' 'who cares, we get over time for mop-ups'.
- Disembodied shots, panning camera.
- Cut to a woman walking with paperwork but no face. Footsteps intensified. Still no faces – just the hands of a woman stifling through paperwork. Disembodied conversation. Talking about the natives.
- Cut again to outside – camera from above.
- Hazmat suit image interrupted by sounds of an alarm. A burnt body passes through the frame very quickly. Strange child 'I need to go look for food'. Blurry/jerky camera. Voice-over 'grab her god dammit'.
- Cut to a black screen – 'outside'
- Image of a water hole – sounds of birds/water – submerge underneath
- Fades into image of birds in a tree, then to the ground – blowfly sounds – intense buzzing – jerky of camera. Voiceover 'just shove him out the door you idiot' – disjuncture between sound and image.
- Disjuncture between sound and image as man is pushed out a door – screaming, shouting.
- Close-up image of some feet on the ground – unconnected image
- Disembodied shots, close-ups of unknown characters. Man banging on a door, ominous sound underneath. Voice-over: 'stop winging, you're a native'.
- Conversation uncle and Aiden – ominous sound underneath and bird calls. Talking about dreamings that explain everything. High exposure. Sound of gunshots at the end of their conversation. Sensory bombardment. Aural discomfort.
- Black screen. Switches to an industrial barbed wire plant. Voice-over 'civil defence agency'. 'nothing to fear'. 'return to your home' But very ominous sound below. Irrational cut to a forest, colours seeped from it, vignette effect. Gunshot/bomb. Sci-fi music. Close-up of burning wood, blurry.
- Shots of a government sign, camera jerky. Voice-over: 'this area is under a level 2 biohazard quarantine' as we watch the young man and relatives walk through the bush. Intense sound underneath.
- Camera angles switch, from below looking on. 'they are the mermaids'. Dream-like sound. Panning shot – watch on to the men. 'See those mermaids?' women dancing in the distance. Switches to a image of water, reflection on the top of it of the women seen in the distance. Intense, brilliant colours. Pans over the waterhole – saturated colour – yellow, magenta,

turquoise. Hothouse colours. Uncle narrates his version of the dreaming. Sonic ecology/chaotic/unruly superimposition. Complex.

- Cuts back to the men talking. 'is that true?' 'bullshit' – doubt. Brother tells his story – talks about the blow fly mud dreaming that took the boy to the experiment.
- Switches to an unruly superimposition – chaotic, discontinuous images. Very disturbing. Coughing/screaming/heartbeat sound/help. Images of hazmat body shining in. blue/magenta colours. Fades into an image of pipes like snakes. Faded image, bubbling sound/water, camera swinging around, no stability. Superimposition of unknown character painted face/waterhole. Cuts back to the brother's story – sci-fi music begins again – sense of doom. Very creepy. Disembodied shots of hazmat suits.
- Switches to women, prismatic light refracts on their face, fish-eye lens – almost psychedelic. 'zap em, dumb mermaids'. Mermaids beckon. Superimposition/layering/double vision effect. Electric buzzing sound. Harrowing screams/sci-fi music. Very uncomfortable sounds. Eerie, mechanical non-diegetic voice 'kill them all kill them all'. Superimposition of a hazmat suit/skeleton. Voice-over childlike laughing. Cuts to an image of boots. Everything very hallucinatory. Narrative about getting kids for the mud. Chaotic/discontinuous images. Woman and young boy – boy being taken for the mud. Cuts to a close-up of the woman – unknown character. No easy telling/interpretation of events.
- Cut. Black screen. 'Aiden through wonderland'. Incommensurable images – no continuity/linear progression. Sci-fi music. Back to the image of the burning wood. And the same young boy and grandma as before. Burning forest. Bang/bomb like sound – as before.
- Close-up of young boy – 'this from fracking or what?'
- Dark image of the trees/skyline – colour seeped from it. Discussing mermaids coming out at moonlight. Flashback? Burning sound carries on. Switches to the industrial plant as before. Incessant mechanical sounds. Older woman still narrating. Left with sense of doom. They now walk through the industrial plant. Hum of power station intensified. Talking about how mermaids do not come out anymore. Overwhelming sound of mechanical buzzing.
- Young girl 'need to find some food' – enters into their journey. They don't seem to be aware or care about her presence? Her voice has been edited – eerie/high pitched.
- Cuts to close up of a tree, bark peeling away. Sounds of sci-fi/bird calling in tension. Argument about drinking water from the waterhole. Cut from this scene to the young girl finding food, hazmat man finds her and takes her away.
- Cut to the first 'story' of the relatives walking through the bush. They walk the same route past the industrial plant as with the older woman and boy. Shot from below again, looking on.
- Sugarbag dreaming – continued sounds of sci-fi.
- Next to the waterhole again – superimposition of the mermaids on the surface of the waterhole.
- Close-up of trees, bark moving in the wind. Seemingly unconnected images.
- Voice-over 'chemicals'.
- Cut. Black screen. 'the mud place'. Heavy breathing. Pelican sound.
- Chaotic superimposition of swinging tubes, hallucinatory-like.
- Older woman and boy talking about the mud place. Crying of children, and a mechanical like sound of breathing. Black screen: 'I don't want to die'. Cuts to them walking through the bush. Cut to the young girl finding some food. 'food food food food food'. Girl's body fades into a fire burning and cuts back to the boy and grandma on the beach where they watch the fire. Screaming/'take him'/coughing. Writhing pipes in the mud.
- Cuts to the boy and relatives' story – the chaotic sounds continue into their story. Pelican dreaming – non-diegetic sounds of birds. Blowfly superimposition.
- Repetition of crying/screaming sounds. Relatives talking about the world ending. Disembodied shots. Shots of old woman as in the first part. Low-ground shots of foliage,

watching on as Aiden walks through the bush. Heartbeat sounds/hypnotic sounds again as in the mermaid's superimposition. Watching from behind. Fish-eye lens. Fades from image of branches to pelicans back to branches. Undercurrent of the heartbeat songs continue throughout. Vignette effect of this image. Cuts to image of the snake-like pipes, fades into image of pelican and Aiden walking away.

- Mermaids are smoking, superimposed on the waterhole. Dancing mermaids, all the superimpositions overlaid on each other – mermaids/blow fly/waterhole/mud place.
- Dark image of the young boy in the mud, flies superimposed on top of the image. Harrowing sounds – screams, flies buzzing, faces of a child in agony as before in the mermaid superimposition.
- 'is that true?' – end credits.
- Narration carries on throughout the end credits.