[Please cite as: Stanley, P. (2020). Walking home: An autoethnography of hiking, identity, and (de)colonization. In A. Herrmann (Ed). *The Routledge International Handbook of Organizational Autoethnography*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.]

Walking home: An autoethnography of hiking, identity, and (de)colonization

Phiona Stanley
Edinburgh Napier University

ABSTRACT

As a white, Scottish woman living on violently acquired, never-ceded Gadigal land on the east coast of what we now call Australia, I came to see that I was part of a big, unresolved problem. I understood this through engagement with Indigenous people and Indigenous scholarship, certainly. But it was mainly through hiking that I came to feel most viscerally what it means to be in place or out of place. This understanding, in turn, led me to leave the last of the "homes" I'd imagined for myself in twenty-five years of living overseas. Earlier this year (2019), I came "home" to Scotland, where my ancestors go back tens of generations, maybe more.

This chapter considers the idea of organization in two ways. First, I discuss the tangible organization of how one comes to hike and camp in the wilderness as a woman who goes alone. Second, I interrogate the rather less tangible organization of my own identity through hiking in places that are conceptualized as either colonized and/or colonizer. That is to say that hiking in Australia and then later in Scotland was how I organized my thinking about my own identity, its place in the world, and how this brings me to a sense of where I feel at home.

Using embodied, walking methodologies (Springgay & Truman, 2018), I consider the notion of homeland through a lens of decolonization. Hiking on stolen Aboriginal land feels very different from hiking in the Scottish Highlands, even though it, too, was 'cleared' of its original inhabitants. In this chapter, then, I present insights from walking in both contexts as a way of coming to understand my own place in two very different de-populated homelands.

INTRODUCTION

For twenty-five years of living overseas, I've said I'm Scottish and I've believed it. But what does it mean to be *from* a place? *Of* a place? Is it only that I can trace my people back there for generations? Is it the stories that run through me, like the lettering through a stick of rock? And/or is it also to do with where we feel most in place, or *out* of place? Perhaps it is all of this.

This chapter considers the idea of organization in two ways. I discuss the tangible organization of how one comes to hike and camp in the wilderness as a woman who goes alone, and I interrogate the rather less tangible organization of my own identity through hiking in places that are conceptualized as either colonized and/or colonizer. I trouble the binary, though, of colonizer versus colonized, showing how Scotland's history and its social imaginaries of itself better lend themselves to a (would-be) colonizer *and* a (sort-of) colonized framing than an either/or binary. This, I posit, has been part of the complexity in organizing my own identity.

The chapter is laid out as follows: in section 1, I consider how Scottish identity is organized through everyday discourses of *having been colonized*, and in particular the use of Englishness as a foil against which to define the self. In Section 2 and then again in section 4, I turn to hiking as a methodology with which I problematized my own migrant presence on Indigenous Australian land, settled but never ceded and still very much colonized. Contrasting this with Scottish imaginaries of colonization produces a juxtaposition that I return to in sections 5 and 6, in which I consider Scotland's history as a *colonizer*, making the case that the lack of Scottish settler colonies was not for want of trying, and that some Scots, at least, benefitted enormously from the spoils of the British Empire. In the meantime, in section 3, I consider *tangible* organization in the practicalities of hiking, a discussion I return to in section 7, in which I contrast this with the *intangible* organization of identity.

1: "IT'S SHITE BEING SCOTTISH"

As a child, I knew Edinburgh well and spoke it fluently: its sounds, its places, its dialect. "We point were feet", a dance teacher said when I was tiny, and we pointed *were* feet because we didn't know they were *our* feet, that the teacher spoke Scots, and that this was a bad thing. Using schoolbooks from far-away England, out teachers trained us out of ourselves, dismissing our 'playground voices' and teaching us, instead, 'classroom voices': a commentary on our "uneducated" Scots dialect. "I am, *amn't I*?" we'd ask, and they'd rephrase us, their eyes rolling, "*aren't* I". So it was that, over time, I became part of *educated* Edinburgh: accented, but standard-English speaking. To be educated meant being a bit less Scottish.

But walking home from school in Edinburgh's old town, I stepped over a millennium of Scottish history. We were steeped in it, saturated, like the strong tea on every table. Scottish history was a mainstay of what we learned from teachers and it was also the foundation of the stories that filled our everyday lives. "Mary Queen of Scots," we chanted as we skipped in the playground, "Got her head chopped off!" The stone of Scone, we all knew, on which the Scottish kings had been crowned, was stolen by Edward Longshanks, the English king (reigned 1272-1307). In the 1950s, four Scots brought home our 'stone of destiny'. They were caught, though, and the stone was sent back to London. Adults told and retold this story, a heist every bit as heroic as any war narrative. In ancient history classes, we learned about the Picts of Caledonia who repelled the invading, first-century Romans, causing them to retreat and build Hadrian's Wall to contain "us"; history teachers in Scotland very much took sides like this. In modern history, we learned about the Scottish Enlightenment, and a tea towel in every tourist shop on the Royal Mile celebrated the many inventions and discoveries credited to Scots: penicillin, anaesthetic, tarmac, steam engines, postage stamps, and thermos flasks, among other items. In English classes we learned *Macbeth*. Pride in our Scottishness was everywhere, but in our complex victim/victor binary, there was also resentment that Scotland was still colonized, and that we were second-class citizens in the problematically uneven 'United' Kingdom.

My identity, as a child, was also about nature. Scotland had so much of it! I often camped out in a purplish-green glen in Highland Perthshire: as a teenager, every year, I went to a youth-club camp near Loch Rannoch. There, my friends and I would lie flat out on the muddy earth, tufted sedge grass spiking into our chests as we felt the slow pulse of the world beneath our ephemeral human bodies. We stretched out our fingertips and imagined ourselves spinning through space as we held onto the earth, facing any others who might be doing the same thing at the same moment: giving the world a hug. On sunny afternoons, we draped ourselves by the River Errochty on the boughs of trees, whose leaves reached out and touched the water. What

kind of trees were they? I don't know. I never knew. We were sprawling, giggle-snorting teenagers, and they were simply "trees". So were the hundreds of other "trees" that surrounded our campsite, marching in lines out of the valley and over the hills. (We knew for sure what those ones were, though: those were *Christmas* trees.) Then, at night, we stargazed. The Milky Way —contoured, like a mountain range— glowed bright, but in its valleyed crumples it sucked light, hovering black and mysterious. This was place, for me, then; this was nature. This was Scotland.

It was how I organized my own national and place-based identity in childhood. Then, later, layered into this, came the protest discourses of the nineties, in my young adulthood. In *Trainspotting* (Boyle & Macdonald, 1996, Corrour Station Scene), Mark Renton says:

> It's shite being Scottish! We're the lowest of the low. The scum of the fucking Earth. The most wretched, miserable, servile, pathetic trash that was ever shat into civilization. Some people hate the English. I don't. They're just wankers. We, on the other hand, are colonized by wankers. Can't even find a decent culture to be colonized by. We're ruled by effete arseholes. It's a shite state of affairs to be in … and all the fresh air in the world won't make any fucking difference.

William Wallace in *Braveheart* (Gibson, 1995, Bannockburn Battle Scene), says:

> In the Year of our Lord 1314, patriots of Scotland, starving and outnumbered, charged the fields of Bannockburn. They fought like warrior poets, they fought like Scotsmen, and they won their freedom.

These ideas wove their way into my sense of national identity, an imaginary (after Anderson, 2006) that then became cartoonish as I left Scotland so young, in 1994, aged twenty-one, to teach English in Peru. The retreat into an exaggerated national identity is well-documented among migrants (e.g. Fechter, 2016), but I did not realise at the time that this was happening to my Scottishness. Then, after Peru, I stayed away, working in half a dozen places over the next decade. Without realizing it, I traced the pattern of generations of Scots before me, in a tradition of diaspora in part forced and in part enabled by empire (Cage, 1985; Devine, 2003; Harper, 2003; Ross, 2001). I was Scottish but living elsewhere. I was a long way from "home". And my own sense of national identity was changing: paradoxically, the worldlier I became, the more Scottish I seemed to be, too.

In Poland in 1999, I raised a whisky to the new parliament in Edinburgh, because from 1707 to 1999 Scotland's parliament did not exist. I cut out a newspaper headline about it from *Gazeta Wyborcza* and stuck it on my wall. *Szkocja dla Szkotów*, it said: Scotland for the Scots. Then in Mexico City in 2000, heading to the British Embassy to renew my passport, a cab driver asked me:

"¿De dónde eres?" (Where are you from?)

"Escocia." (Scotland)

"Entonces, ¿Por qué nos vamos a la embajada británica?" (So why are we going to the British embassy?)

"Pues, Escocia es parte del Reino Unido. 'Británico' quiere decir el Reino Unido." (Scotland's part of the UK. "British" means UK.)

"¡No puede ser! ¡Tienen un equipo de fútbol!" (It can't be! You have a soccer team!)

"Es así." [I indicate the *Guía Roji*, the Mexico City street atlas] "¡Si encuentres una embajada escocesa, que vayamos allí!" (That's the way it is. If you can find a Scottish embassy [in the street atlas], let's go there!)

[Taxi driver, stopped at the traffic lights, starts flipping through the index, looking for Scottish embassies]. "¡Suiza!" (Switzerland).

"No, Escocia." (No, Scotland)

"¡Suecia!" (Sweden)

"No, Escocia." (No, Scotland)

"De veras, no hay." (You're right, there isn't one).

"No hay." (There isn't.)

"¡Ustedes están colonizados todavia! Estabamos colonizados por España, pero ya no." (You guys are still colonized! We were colonized by Spain, but not anymore.)

"Sí. Es así." (Yes, that's the way it is.)

2: HIKING AS KNOWING – PART ONE

I left Mexico, lived in Qatar and China, then arrived in Australia in 2004. As with so many others before me, my British passport and my native English language –standardised by schooling– had taken me around the world. It would be years before I acknowledged my own postcolonial British privilege (e.g. Stanley, 2017; Stanley & Vass, 2018). In my head, I was part of a proud, plucky, but oppressed Scottish nation, conquered by England as part of the "servile, pathetic trash" of Empire. In my imagination, I was far more colonized than I was a colonizer.

But my Scottishness nested within my Britishness like Russian dolls. Whenever it suited me, I could be British, too. Teaching English in Peru, I worked for a British institute. Working for a Swedish multinational in China, I packaged and peddled myself as a *British* expert. When it suited me, I could emphasize the worldliness of my native English, playing down my Scottish vowels. Identity is performative, contingent, relative, and negotiable, after all. I still carried Edinburgh in my voice, but returning home for a visit, another cab driver asked me where I was from, and this time would not believe the true answer, which was, "Here". I had become 'worldly' enough to be recognised as not-quite-Scottish even in Scotland. This felt good, in a way. Hadn't we been trained out of sounding like ourselves at school?

But a new problem was emerging. I wasn't quite Australian either. Having arrived in Sydney in 2004, over time I'd started to engage with Australian Indigenous scholarship. And as I did, I came to understand that, as a blow-in, whitefella migrant –no matter how colonized I understood my own little nation to be– I was nevertheless part of a big, unresolved problem. I lived on Gadigal land, settled but never ceded, and when, at a conference, an Indigenous academic casually termed non-Aboriginal people in Australia "settlers" and "invaders", my cheeks reddened, and I struggled to arrange my face. Because unlike white Australians born in Australia, I had chosen to immigrate and to apply for citizenship, acquiring a blue, Australian passport to complement my red, British one. And no matter how much Scotland constructed itself as colonized, I realized that I was *precisely* an invader and a settler on Gadigal land.

I needed to learn more. I started reading Indigenous writers: Keelen Mailman, Noel Pearson, Stan Grant, and Anita Heiss. Grant (2018, p.ii), writes "The country does talk to me. It talks in a language as old as humanity. … If we open ourselves up, it will speak to us all." I kept reading and everyone said *the land*: listen to the land. But my culture hadn't given me the tools to listen to –or, to hear– the land. I didn't have a language of this kind of thing.

I could camp, though. I could lie on grass, facing down, and feel like I was embracing the whole world. I could hike. And I lived near the Blue Mountains. That Sydney is a spectacular city is well known. But what is less famous is that it is unrivalled as a big city so very close to nature. Within a few hours of a city almost as big as London, there are wild, green spaces. So, it

was in these places, at first, that hiking became both my interface for how I engaged with and came to process the land I was on but also an empty space for tuning out of conscious thinking altogether. Without meaning for this to happen, hiking became the tool I used to understand what "home" might mean.

Over time, around Australia, I walked forest trails: the Thorsborne Trail, the Six-Foot Track, and the Grose Valley. I walked red, desert trails: Wilpena Pound and Cape Range. I walked boggy, leechy trails: Wughalee to Cape Pillar, The Overland Track, and Mount Glorious. And I walked exposed, rocky trails: Kanagra Walls and Mount Kaputar. Mostly, I walked alone.

And walking, I listened.

And listening, I learned how to hear.

Here is what it feels like to listen and to hear through walking. This is what it means to be wholly in a place and to come to understand simply by being in that place:

> It is dusk. I've been walking all day. It is still warm. The swimming hole [in the river, by my campsite] is perfectly calm and inviting. I go down to the water's edge to collect water and realise I want to swim. So, I strip down, and I do so. There is no-one else around. I float on my back, looking up at the bats and the tree tops and think: I am lucky. I am grateful. (Trail Notes, Megalong Valley, 2015).

Hiking-knowing exists only in the very moment of doing. I did not know, intellectually, that I wanted to swim and I did not conceptualise my luck and gratitude. Those things I perceived only by walking. This is a different kind of being-in-place than European or American nature writing, which tends towards classification, naming, and observation of this species or that. What I was doing was being in nature in a holistic way. John Muir (1911; p.110; fellow Scottish émigré) writes that "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." So it was with my engagement with the Australian landscape. By accident, I was listening to the land as I had learned to do years earlier in Scotland: enjoying being in nature and not seeking to understand or to categorise anything.

3: ORGANIZATION OF HIKING: THE TANGIBLE

But hiking and camping do not simply happen. Preparing for hike-in camping is a question of organization. Over the years, I've acquired many gear options, and my pre-hiking evening is a series of binary questions cascading into a mental flowchart. My warmer sleeping bag and inflatable pad or the lighter-weight, summer ones? Or a combination? (Check the temperature.) Then: my ultralight *Hexamid* one-person tent –which weighs no more than a small water bottle– or my roomier but heavier two-person *Tarptent*? (Check for rain and decide how uncomfortable I can deal with being. Long week at work? Take the *Tarptent*. Ready to go rough and fast? Take the *Hexamid*.) Wait, why take a tent at all? Better to take the hammock? It's slightly heavier but worth it –so much more comfortable– although the right kinds of trees are everything. They can't be densely packed fir trees, and of course a hammock is useless for camping above the tree line. (Do an image search of the trail; what does it look like? Are there trees? What kind of trees?) And: is there enough fuel in any of my half-used *Jetboil* canisters? (Weigh them, check.) Or should I take the spirit stove? I like how light it is to carry, but it's *so damn slow* to boil water.

Then, depending on the "big three" –sleep system, shelter system, and stove system–, which backpack? There's the *Golite* (ultralight, weighs 800 grams; capacity only 10kg) or the heavier, more comfortable *Osprey* backpack? (1300 grams). Packing, I weigh up options as I weigh every item on a kitchen scale, making detailed lists and cutting gear grams even as my body carries excess kilos. (Perhaps *because* it does.) I pack clothes (deciding between my fleece,

at 500 grams, or my down jacket, 680 grams), food (trail mix, cheese, packet soups, instant mash), small essentials (flashlight, map, trail notes, Personal Locator Beacon), and small luxuries (*Kindle*, in-camp sandals). Finally, I weigh the whole pack, standing on a bathroom scale with my pack on, subtracting my own weight to know the pack's weight. For a one-night summer trip, I can get it down to six kilos (thirteen pounds). In winter and for multi-day trips, it may be eleven kilos (twenty-four pounds). Rarely does my pack weigh more than thirty-five pounds (sixteen kilos), unless I'm gone for days or I'm going somewhere really dry.

My pack, as I set out –in July 2016– on a challenging, life-reaffirming, solitary eight-day hike of the Larapinta Trail, in the central Australian desert, weighed a lot. Twenty kilos (forty-five pounds). I carried eight days' worth of food and my winter camping gear. I had every last water source mapped out along this very driest of trails, but even so, dry camping most nights, I sometimes carried seven litres of water in collapsible Platypus water bottles.

But what of going alone? People die out there, not least in Australia, where snakes, and cliff-falls, and bushfires can kill you. In particular, as a fat woman hiking alone, I get a lot of people explaining things to me; can critical scrutiny kill you, too? I wonder. People –implicitly or explicitly– often question my right to hike at all, let alone by myself (e.g. Stanley, 2018). Why, then, do it? In fact, I've often walked with others, and some of them are my hiking buddies even now: people with whom I actively look forward to hiking. But I've also hiked with plenty of people whose pace differs from mine. Some are too fast, and I'm panting, feeling emotionally and physically wrecked, and not having any fun as I feel I'm holding them back. These experiences pack the *hauntology* (Derrida, in Buse & Scott, 1999, pp.11-12) of competitive team sports at school and the fat-kid shame of being picked last. In contrast, some hikers are too slow, inspecting *every damn tree* and *every damn bird* when, really, I just want to get some rhythm going and feel like I'm walking. It is not easy to find the right hiking buddy. Walking groups are also not my scene, though more socially than physically. When I've camped at organised campsites, I've been surrounded by the endless yip and natter of carping, competitive hiking-club groups whose 'conversations' seem to consist of comparing gear and establishing trail status (after Sorensen's 'road status', 2003) by bragging about other, harder hikes they have done elsewhere. No, this is not the company I seek.

My friend Miko and I walk well together: when I'm fit, we walk in sync. When I'm less fit, we each walk alone and I'll come around a corner and find him waiting for me, sitting on a rock and reading a novel. My other walking buddy, Matthew, is a keen photographer, and where he slows to compose a shot, I'll slow because I'm slow. And so, we also walk mostly in sync. With Miko and with Matthew, I feel no pressure to keep up or to prove anything. However, Miko lives in the Netherlands and Matthew is currently in Colombia. And so, my three-way choice is this: I could hike with someone whose company does nothing to add to my experience. Or I could not hike and camp at all. Or I could hike and camp alone. Faced with this choice, I go alone. Over many years, I've learned how to make good gear choices and how to stay safe on trail. It's a risk, but a calculated one. It's worth it, I think.

Hiking and camping are 'flow' activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The mind calms. I focus on the immediacy of the trees, the sky. The clatter and clutter of life become quieter, further away. It is like setting day-to-day worries into a smaller font, perhaps putting them into a footnote. Connection with nature is foregrounded. But is it safe? Well, no, not entirely. (I also cross roads in cities. Manifestly unsafe.) Arguably, though, in some ways, it is *safer* to hike alone. In a group it is easy to assume that someone else has the know-how or will bring the map:

relying on collective organization, everyone may get lost. But when I go alone, I alone am responsible and I, alone, take responsibility.

Also: being perfectly alone in nature is, quite simply, a thrill. Like an addict, I return for the 'high'. For this reason, I organize myself in tangible terms –my gear and my knowledge, both acquired over many years– and thus organized, I hike. I hike alone.

4: HIKING AS KNOWING – PART TWO

On the Larapinta Trail, I wrote in my journal:

> [Hiking], I prove to myself I am capable. I am strong. I may be fat, but also, I am fit. I am determined. I can keep going. I push through foot pain, the fear of falling, the fear of failing. Here, it is just the landscape and me. …Mainstream culture is a cacophony of voices telling me hateful things about my body. But out here those voices are quieter, further away, quietened by the wind. On the hilltop, I pause, and look around, and read a Neruda poem aloud to myself from my notebook. Poetry is as necessary as water here. The poet's words fill the air. They fill me. Like the wind, they hold back the critiques, the hatred, the scorn. Instead of the self-loathing of hating my fatness, my body, myself, I am choosing to find wonder and calm and beauty in nature. My body is the interface, the only one I will ever have, and it lets me walk in forests. Here I am, embodied, reading aloud to myself on a hilltop because the sun is shining, and because I can.
>
> (Stanley, 2018, p.140)

Again, I did not know intellectually what I felt. These things I perceived only by listening to the land. Hiking is thus an epistemology as well as an ontology. Springgay and Truman (2017) conceptualize walking methodologies as "attend[ing] to the vitality and agency of matter, the interconnectedness between humans and non-humans, the importance of mediation and bodily affect, and the necessity of acknowledging ethico-political responsibility" (p.27).

My senses were heightened on that walk, in the red desert of central Australia. There, I heard birds and the wind but mostly I heard nothing, the big, blue silence of the winter sky and my own pulse in my ears. I saw jagged rocks and the surprising green of rebel branches clinging tenuously to crevasses. The taste was a vague crunch of fine dust, and the smell was radiating heat over dry, dry, dry earth. And to my city body, the rhythm of walking felt meditative and ancient, because and although the rubble underfoot caused me to focus, careful not to twist an ankle. But my five human senses aside, I felt it. It: the other heart that beats just under the surface of Australia's grafted-on, three centuries of white history. It: a 60,000-year old heartbeat, as deeply human as it is magical. It: the songlines, the Dreaming: the ancientness of this most magical of places. I felt, but I did not presume to understand, or to try to. I simply felt.

This place was not mine: I got it now. My ancestors had inscribed *their* songlines over little shopfronts in southwest Scotland. They had buried their dead in the peaty highland soil, before the Clearances. But in the red earth of the central desert, my people —not my direct ancestors, but my people nonetheless (and maybe yours, too?) —the British— had come, uninvited. And they had called Australia *terra nullius*, Nobody's Land, breaking a continuous line of history, the oldest civilization in the world. And in the desert, walking, I came to understand that my living in Australia was an incendiary act.

5: WALKING TO DARIÉN, SCOTTISH PANAMA

In January 2019, twenty-five years after leaving, I came home. I thought I knew what "home" meant. I grew up in Scotland. My parents were born here, grew up here, have always lived here.

Their parents were Scottish, and theirs, and theirs. My maternal great-grandfather, born in 1862, ran a general store in Castle Douglas. My paternal grandfather was a chimney sweep and roofer in Edinburgh. His wife's family, way back when, had come from Shetland to Leith. We were Scottish. All of us. Through and through. When your ancestors have stayed put, "home" is easy.

But travel and migration had shaken the simplicity out of me. Over the years, I'd become fluent in Spanish, made friends from distant places, and learned to care about stuff that my Scottish ancestors would know little about. It's impossible to step in the same river twice but it is not only the river that changes. It is also the foot. Twenty-five years after leaving, I was coming "home". But I had changed.

I arrived back in January, winter, and on a dreich Edinburgh day, I set off to walk around Edinburgh: the places I remembered. I found myself in Greyfriars Kirkyard, its graves dating from the 1500s. Nearby, a wall plaque caught my eye and it jogged a memory of a story I'd read in Panama years earlier. The plaque said, simply: "Site of Darien House, built 1698".

Over the next days and weeks, I read into Darién: Scotland's settler colony. In the 1690s, Scotland suffered seven years of failed harvests and famine: Edinburgh filled with beggars and child prostitutes, and perhaps ten percent of the population starved to death. Rich men came up with an audacious plan. Spain and England already had colonies in the Americas, and wealthy Scots had been taking note. Their idea was to control trade to the eastern Pacific by establishing a kind of overland Panama Canal: a Scottish colony in Darién, in what is now Panama.

An interlude. A road runs the length of the Americas today, the Panamerican highway. It runs from Alaska to southern Chile, stretching 19,000 miles. But there is a small break in the middle, a hundred mile stretch that you can't drive, even now. That stretch is the Darién Gap. 320 years after Scotland planned to build a colony in Darién, the area is still impenetrable mangrove swampland (Redwood, 2005).

In 1603, Scotland and England had united under the same monarch. But by the 1690s, the English merchants regarded the Scots' Darién ambitions as a threat to their colonies' trade monopolies in the Caribbean and Canada, and although King William (who reigned 1689-1702) was notionally king of both England *and* Scotland, he decreed that not so much as a barrel of clean water was to be offered and that no English colony was to trade with the Scots. Nevertheless, in 1695, the Company of Scotland was founded with optimism, its directors including Robert Chieslie of Dalry, the former Lord Provost of Edinburgh. Money was raised from Scottish investors: ordinary people, rich and relatively poor, punting their life savings of a couple of pounds, or more, at a new venture; 400,000 pounds were raised in the first six months, which was about 20% of all the capital then available in Scotland.

The first fleet sailed from Leith in 1698 carrying around 1200 settlers. Four months later they made landfall in Darién, planted the "Caledonia" flag, and set about building its capital, New Edinburgh. Of course, transplanted, out of place, their agriculture failed, the local people weren't interested in the trinkets they'd brought, and no one wanted to incur the anger of the Spanish or English by trading with Scots. Within the first year, three quarters of the original settlers were dead: malaria and yellow fever. Panicked, the remaining 250 set off back to Scotland, via New York, where they learned that more Darién colonists were already on their way south. So, the second fleet arrived to find an abandoned settlement and fled almost immediately to Jamaica, where the English colonists would not let them in. Most died. But word *still* hadn't reached Scotland, and in 1699 a third wave of more than a thousand settlers set off, arriving months later to find the ruins of the failed colony but also a Spanish siege of Fort St Andrew, which eventually repelled them. Again, most died. Of more than 2500 that set out to the

Scottish colonies, only handful returned to the now broken Scotland (Barbour, 1907; Burton, 1849; Insh, 1924; Little, 2014; Stirrat, 2010).

As a child in Edinburgh, I walked past the site of Darién House every day. I never noticed the plaque and didn't know the story. But returning "home" twenty-five years later and walking to make sense of things, I looked at the site of Darién House for a long, long time. Having been the headquarters of the Company of Scotland, part of it became a "lunatic asylum for the paupers of the adjoining workhouse" (Grant, 1882, p.324), and today, it is the 'Bedlam' Theatre, its name a hint at its past. Indeed, one of its first inmates may have been Robert Chieslie of Dalry, former Lord Provost of Edinburgh. Bankrupted and shamed by the failure of the Darién project, he disappears from historical records after 1698 but is not recorded as buried in Greyfriars Kirkyard until 1705.

So, *was* Scotland colonized? In exchange for the 'Equivalent', £398,085, paid by England to Scotland in part to compensate those who had invested in the Darién Scheme (although arguably, more so, to bribe Scottish parliamentarians to vote their nation out of existence) the Scottish Parliament ceded Scottish nationhood to the United Kingdom in 1707. In 1791, Rabbie Burns, Scotland's national poet, wrote:

> Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame, Fareweel our ancient glory, Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name, Sae fam'd in martial story. …
>
> The English steel we could disdain; Secure in valour's station; But English gold has been our bane: Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.

Arguably, Scotland signed away its own sovereignty. Arguably, England forced Scotland's hand. But what is certain is this: that Scotland did not become a wealthy colonizer was not for want of trying. Walking and reading these histories, I realised that my easy narrative of Scotland-as-colonized was just as problematic as my unthinking presence in Australia.

6: WALKING TO INVERNESS, GUYANA

Over Easter, three months after coming "home", I set off hiking again, four days, three nights: through the Great Glen, Laggan to Drumnadrochit, along the Caledonian Canal, up through dark forests, and across heather-tinged hilltops high above Loch Ness. During the Highland Clearances (1750-1860), following a series of nationalist uprisings, tenant farmers were kicked off their lands throughout the Highlands because it was more profitable to farm sheep. The reason many poor Scots –"settlers", "colonizers"– emigrated to Canada and also, latterly, to Australia was because they were refugees in their own land. Scotland's clan system was broken: a thousand-year-old kingdom subsumed into the "Union".

Hiking in Scotland felt very different from hiking in Australia. There were no songlines but there were life-lines. My ancestors lived and were buried here. I am Scottish and this is my land. My place. As I walked, I loosened my white-knuckle grip on all the mundane new-job, new-flat practical stuff that had absorbed me. As I walked, I forgot. But also, I remembered. Walking, I noticed outlines and indentations, and kicking tussocks apart, I uncovered the past: buried stones; buried stories. These were the foundations of crofters' cottages, the homes of those who were exiled from their lands. Cleared. Forced to migrate. Forced off their lands to make way for sheep. All over the highlands, there are these empty glens.

On the trail just south of Loch Oich, I saw a half-buried railway line, constructed during the reign of Queen Victoria. As I walked on the flat trail that was once its track, I stroked weathered, mossy stone bridges and thought about all they had witnessed. Then, as I hiked near Loch Ness, I noticed Dochfour House, a clotted-cream-coloured, over-the-top mansion the likes

of which abounds in Scotland, where impossibly rich landowners still own most of the land (Wightman, 1996; 2013). Idly googling the location to find out more, I read:

> Hugh Duncan Baillie (1777-1866) was left …a share of the West Indian interests, and James Evan Baillie (1782-1863) the rest of the Bristol and the West Indies property. …James left a very substantial fortune …the majority passed to his nephew, Evan Baillie of Dochfour, who at his death in 1883 owned 92,648 acres in Inverness-shire and Ross & Cromarty. It is no surprise, therefore, that he was able to afford greatly to enlarge Dochfour House in 1838-41 and again in 1870-71, creating the house that exists today.
>
> (Landed Families, 2018)

Back in Edinburgh, I dug deeper. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the Baillies made their fortune through their ownership of slave-labour plantations, including one called *Inverness*, in the Caribbean. In Guyana in particular, "at least thirty places in the [Scottish] Highlands give their names to [sugar-growing] plantations" to which Indian slaves were trafficked in inhuman conditions (Bahadur, 2013, p.180). Scotland may have failed to colonize Darién, but individual Scots nevertheless made their fortunes in the British colonial project that came later. (Indeed, in August 2019, Glasgow University would announce twenty-million-pound reparations to the University of the West Indies –restorative justice– to atone for its historical role in the transatlantic slave trade.) I reeled from this information, appalled at my own hubris. How many Mexicans and Indigenous Australians and others did I tell, unthinkingly, that "Scotland was colonized too, you know? Arguably, it still is"?

7: ORGANIZATION OF IDENTITY: THE INTANGIBLE

Walking on a remote trail is a calming, rhythmic thing. Walking in Australia, and in Scotland, I fall into the rhythm of walkers throughout and since what my culture calls pre-history and what Indigenous Australians simply call time. On walking trails, my thoughts sometimes crash around like spooked horses, and I don't know why, or why *there*, or why *then*, but I try to hear what is meant by the feeling and to feel it in my body rather than always to search for feelings with my mind. More often, when I walk, I'll realise an hour or more has gone by and, dream-like, I can't quite account for where I've been in my head. On a trail, there is usually no getting to anywhere specific, or at least, no real schedule. Walking alone, I carry my tent –or a hammock– and I factor in plenty of time for taking it easy: stargazing, drinking coffee. When I feel like it, I'll set up camp. Walking, there is day, and dusk, and night, and dawn, and day, and dusk, and night, and dawn, again and again, in an unbroken chain. Sometimes, there is rain. Cold. Heat. The rattle of wind through bone-dry eucalypt leaves or the sizz sizz sound of striding in waterproofs across a spongy Scottish moor.

This stands in stark contrast to measured city time, of rushing and pushing and striving. I can't be doing with the blather and natter of people on hiking trails: so much self-aggrandising and so many words. Words, words, words. In contrast, I hike to feel connected: to the earth and to myself. Against timeless time and the hugeness of nature, I feel small.

As I walk, I am aware that all trails trace ancient lines, but in Australia I cannot understand their meanings. It's like hearing a foreign language and knowing it contains vivid and precise semantics, but not having the tools to decipher it. In Australia, walking, I feel but I do not understand. In Scotland, in contrast, I understand a little. I know intellectually that the Highlands were cleared and, walking past the ruined foundations of a cottage, I feel something that I cannot name. Intellectually, I feel aggrieved for the people who were forced off their land. In my body, though, I feel this as a hole in my culture like a hole in my tooth that I cannot keep my tongue

out of. Something, *someone*, is missing, and it feels like something is missing from my body. (Of course, I cannot begin to imagine what the Indigenous Australian experience has been like. What does it feel like to walk songlines where, until recently, there was sixty-thousand years of meaning, and where memories have since been brutalized beyond remembering, people brutalized beyond re-membering? The Scottish experience is important, but it is small in comparison to the Indigenous genocide. I know that, now.) Hiking has thus helped me to organize my own sense of who I am and how I come to know what I know. Hiking is both an ontology and an epistemology.

8: WALKING HOME

My (hiking/homecoming) journey is far from finished. As I write, I've been back in Scotland for eight months. Coming to organize my own sense of identity and, related, my understanding of what home is: both are still works in progress.

This weekend I'm planning a camping trip to *Coire Gabhail*, the hidden valley next to Glencoe in the northwest of Scotland. Like so many places in Australia, there is a bloody past of massacre there. Unlike the murders of so many Indigenous people in Australia, though, there is a recorded and acknowledged history of the butchering of human beings that took place in Glencoe in 1692. Engaging with this history —and reflecting on its historiography— helps me think through my own privileged place in the world. Scotland would have been a settler colonizer, too, if Darién had worked out. Plenty of Scots got wealthy from the British Empire. And many others, ordinary people, my ancestors included, benefitted from infrastructure –like railways– which the Empire paid for. We need to remember these facts. This is a lesson, then, in seeing shades of grey and not jumping to binarize into monochrome the labels of "colonizer" and "colonized". This is a lesson that transcends both hiking and the organization of identity, of course.

As for the practicalities of my weekend trip. It's cold now, September, autumn already: temperatures are forecast in the forties (about eight degrees Celsius), although it is supposed to stay dry and might even be sunny. That's something. I'll be taking my winter sleeping bag, my R-5 rated "Comfort Plus" sleeping mat, and my cosy *Tarptent*. (There aren't many trees, so the hammock idea is out of the question, sadly.) As I organize my gear, meticulously weighing things and making decisions, my mind focuses on this task alone and, for a moment, I forget myself. This is also what happens on trail. I wonder whether both organizing hiking gear and organizing one's identity through hiking are perhaps ways of finding flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Walking and organizing, each of them flows. Neither is ever complete. Like a contested history or a provisional sense of self, these flowing activities are always becoming, a 'fragmentary whole' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 16). So it is with walking. *Walking home* is both a verb plus a noun *and* an adjective plus a noun: either/or; both/and. I am walking home and walking *is* my home; it is my walking home. Perhaps, then, in the organizing of hiking and the organizing of self, what I am looking for is futile: a fixity, a certainty –even a 'right' answer– where there is none. Packing my Golite backpack and leaving the Osprey one on the shelf, I remember this. The same is true of narrative identities: we choose some possibilities, leaving others on the shelf. I am Scottish, but now I choose to leave the *Braveheart*-style narratives at home. This means that although there is still no Scottish Embassy in Mexico City, I have made a kind of peace with my Scottishness, which is nevertheless a fragmentary identity. And although it is fragmented like Scotland itself, it feels like home.

REFERENCES

Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

Bahadur, G. (2013). *Coolie woman: The odyssey of indenture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Barbour, J. S. (1907). *A history of William Paterson and the Darién Company*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons. From: https://www.electricscotland.com/history/darien/historyofwilliam00barb.pdf

Boyle, D. (Director) & Macdonald, A. (Producer). (1996). *Trainspotting* [Motion picture]. UK: Channel Four Films.

Burton, J. H. (Ed). (1849). *The Darien papers: Being a selection of original letters and official documents relating to the establishment of a colony at Darien by the Company of Scotland trading to Africa and The Indies. 1695-1700*. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable.

Buse, P. & Scott, A. (1999). A future for haunting. In Buse, P. & Stott, A. (Eds.) *Ghosts: Deconstruction, psychoanalysis, history* (pp. 1–20). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cage, R. A. (1985) (Ed). *The Scots abroad 1750-1914: Labour, capital, enterprise*. London: Croom Helm.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Deleuze, G. & Guatarri, F. (1994). *What is philosophy?* London: Verso.

Devine, T. M. (2003). *Scotland's empire 1600-1815*. Allen Lane: The Penguin Press.

Fechter, A-M. (2016). *Transnational lives: Expatriates in Indonesia*. London: Routledge.

Gibson, M. (Director/Producer). (1995). *Braveheart* [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

Grant, J. (1882). *Old and New Edinburgh: Its history, people and places* (Vol 4). Cassell & Company Ltd: London, Paris & New York. From: http://www.oldandnewedinburgh.co.uk/volume4/page144.html

Grant, S. (2018). Foreword. In M. Langton (2018) *Welcome to country* (pp.i-ii). Melbourne: Hardie Grant.

Harper, M. (2003). *Adventurers and exiles: The great Scottish exodus*. London: Profile Books.

Herman, A. (2001). *The Scottish enlightenment: The Scots invention of the modern world*. London: Fourth Estate.

Insh, G. P. (1924). *Papers Relating to the Ships and Voyages of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, 1696–1707*. Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, University of Edinburgh Press.

Landed Families (2018). *Baillie of Dochfour and Redcastle*. From: http://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/2018/02/321-baillie-of-dochfour-and-redcastle.html

Little, A. (2014). The Caribbean colony that brought down Scotland. *BBC Magazine*, 14 May. From: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-27405350

Muir, J. (1911). *My first summer in the Sierra*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Redwood, S. D. (2005). The 300th anniversary Scots-Darién expedition. From: http://standrewspanama.com/scots_inpanama.html

Ross, A. (2002). *David Livingstone: Mission and empire*. London & New York: Hambledon.

Sorensen, A. (2003). Backpacker ethnography. *Annals of Tourism Research, 30* (4): 847–867.

Springgay, S. & Truman, S. E. (2017). A transmaterial approach to walking methodologies: Embodiment, affect, and a sonic art performance. *Body & Society, 23*(4), 27–58.

Springgay, S. & Truman, S. E. (2018). *Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world: WalkingLab*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

Stanley, P. (2017). *A critical auto/ethnography of learning Spanish: Intercultural competence on the* gringo *trail?* Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

Stanley, P. (2018). Walking to heal or walking to heel? Contesting cultural narratives about fat women who hike and camp alone. In P Stanley & G. Vass (Eds.) *Questions of culture in autoethnography* (pp.129-141). Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

Stanley, P. & Vass, G. (2018). On the difficulties of writing about culture in autoethnography. In P Stanley & G. Vass (Eds.) *Questions of culture in autoethnography* (pp.1-12). Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

Stirrat, D. P. (2010). *The Darien Scheme and the Union of 1707 between Scotland and England*. Thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy, University of Vienna. From: http://othes.univie.ac.at/10124/1/2010-04-14_0748965.pdf

Wightman, A. (1996). *Who owns Scotland?* Edinburgh: Canongate.

Wightman, A. (2013). *The poor had no lawyers*. Edinburgh: Birlinn Books.