



Australia

"We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love...and then return home..." (Australian Aboriginal Proverb)

"Those who stop dreaming are lost". (Australian Aboriginal proverb).

"The Christian fear of the Pagan outlook has damaged the whole consciousness of man". (D.H. Lawrence, **Kangeroo**)

It wasn't until I received an invitation to present my trauma theories in relation to time, space and fractals in New South Wales that I realized how little I knew about Australia. Over the years, I have read novels such as Colleen McCullough's **Thornbirds**, D.H. Lawrence's **Kangeroo** and Bruce Chatwin's **The Songlines**. I have also enjoyed a variety of movies such as Peter Wier's **The Last Wave**, and **Picnic at Hanging Rock**, Nicolas Roeg's **Where The Green Ants Dream** and more recently, **Rabbit-Proof Fence** directed by Philip Noyce. Yet, somehow, I never really expected to actually visit this island continent which is also a country that seemed so very far away. And, as I soon discovered a bit of time travel is also involved as well, if one chooses to arrive by air. Flying from North America to Australia, entails losing an entire day as one crosses the international date line. In practice, this meant that while I left Arizona on January 28th, 16 hours later I would arrive in Sydney on January 30th minus a January 29th and then return to the USA on February 8th before I left Sydney. One also needs to prepare for a reality wherein the seasons are reversed, the Moon phases opposite and our

rightfully positioned constellations appear upside down.

My literary guide for this first trip Down Under was travel writer and award winning humorists Bill Bryson, whose, **In a Sunburned Country**, is a wonderfully funny, fact filled volume which manages to combine humor, and wonder, with his truly remarkable, all-encompassing curiosity. While marveling at the sheer vastness of the scale of the place, he has a lot of fun with the fact that while this apparently, mostly empty country is teeming with life, it also home to more things that can kill you in extremely nasty ways than almost anywhere else on Earth. Sharks, crocodiles, the 10 deadliest snakes on our planet, toxic caterpillars, box jelly fish (don't ask) and even seashells that can attack you....all in lethal combination with dangerous rip tides and the sun baked, water-less wastes of the outback. Needless to say, Bryson absolutely loves Australia, and is delighted to report that: Wee Waa, Poowons, Borrumbuttock, Suggan Buggan, Boomahnoomoonah, Mullubimby, Jiggalong and the supremely satisfying Tittybong, are all real places. (Random Hous

Eventually Byrson sets out to discover the latest information as to the peopling of Australia, before the colonial times, which has been and remains controversial with new evidence appearing now and then . In general it could be said that the more that is known, the further back their time line needs to be reset. Estimates range anywhere from Aboriginal presence on the continent beginning around 400 years ago, during the early 20th century until more recent skeletal finds indicate that arrival date is more like 45,000 to even 60,000 years ago. Since Australia has always been an island they likely arrived by sea through a process of island hopping from somewhere within the Indonesian archipelago. This means that for the first 99.7% of Australian history they had the continent to themselves.

These first people rapidly spread out and mastered their environment with the skill to accommodate the wettest rain forest to the driest dessert and have (barely now) maintained one of our planet's oldest continuous cultures. It is thought by

many pre-historians that the Australian language family may be among the oldest along with their art and systems of belief. This important and singular achievements have received minimal recognition and the Australian indigenous remain among the most invisible people within our modern world. Their numbers are rapidly dwindling, survivors of direct and indirect genocide have been marginalized, and they are dying out. There is long and all too familiar story in all this, sadly repeated on various parts of the globe as variations on the theme of what happens when white people colonized territories occupied by other races; resulting in massive amounts of historical, generational and ongoing social trauma.

One of our hosts during the Austral-Asian conference was Aboriginal shamanic healer and musician Danny Doyle, who graciously provided music and ritual for our gathering in Collaroy. I was heartened that he chose to attend my presentation about trauma: time,space and fractals; for many reasons, including the fact that these amazing geometric patterns which replicate throughout the natural world, on a continuum throughout macro and microscopic levels, were known and understood as sacred long before European mathematician Benoit Mandelbroit accidentally discovered them by introducing equations into his computer during the early 1980's.

Danny's presence was especially important for me and our participants because of the seldom acknowledged reality that our very first and early trauma specialists were shamans and medicine people, long before our "civilized science and academically sanctioned concepts of "mental health" emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Along with shamans and other medicine people, many innovative trauma specialists, including Drs.Peter Levine, Karl-Heinz Rauscher and myself have expanded our concepts of trauma to include the healing powers of Nature, indigenous wisdom, non-verbal, body-oriented methods, and an appreciation of the healing power of inclusive community.

Before my presentation began, I felt that it was important to acknowledge this reality to both the audience and Danny as he sat quietly and in reflection, just next to me on my left. As the presentation came to end with questions and so on and then really to an end...Danny said only: "We speak the same language ... not such a usual experience for me". Perhaps, since I can still dream, I can also imagine a time, place and space where such an interchange could become much more "usual" before it's too late for them and for us.