Country, Memory, Culture

I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him.

Abraham Lincoln

Places have power. This is not a notion that is completely foreign in western academic thought, but it is one that has perhaps not been taken seriously enough. There are epistemological, existential and ontological aspects of place which need to be addressed in relation to memory in Alpurrurulam. In the first instance, as Rockwell Gray says in *Autobiographical Memory and Sense of Place*, ‘we must literally stand somewhere in order to be in the world at all’. Place is an important context for remembering. It can be a cognitive cue and provide a setting for experience and remembrance. Beyond this, as was discussed in the previous chapter, in this context place is also an important narrative element. Place, when used as an exophoric element in narrative, serves to provide a rich phenomenological aspect to narratives which might otherwise appear to be ‘skeletal’ accounts. In addition, in many stories place functions as an indexical element, allowing stories to be placed with other stories to form a coherent pattern of association. Therefore it is essential our engagement with place in Alpurrurulam is grounded in a framework which sees places as ‘discrete, temporally and perceptually bounded unit[s] of psychologically meaningful material space’. Places are not passive landscapes.

Power of place

Beyond the role of place in human memory in Alpurrurulam agency, and remembering, are not limited to human subjects. This attitude is reflected not only in Dreaming stories but also in everyday encounters.