

Transcript of the 2014 Duguid Memorial Lecture, held on Monday 17th November at Flinders Victoria Square, and hosted by Flinders University.

The lecture was given by Dr Anita Heiss.

Participants:

F: Female Participants

M: Male Participants

Simone Ulalka Tur: Good evening everyone, welcome to this wonderful event my name is Simone Ulalka Tur and I'm the Director of Yunggoendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research at Flinders University. I'd like to welcome you to the 2014 Duguid Memorial Lecture, co-hosted by UniSA and the Flinders University and I will be your MC for tonight. Prior to beginning though, could I please ask everyone to put their phones on silent, thank you? I'd now like to welcome Dr Uncle Lewis O'Brien to offer a Kurna welcome for this evening's event, Uncle Lew.

Dr Uncle Lewis O'Brien: [Speaking in Indigenous language]. On the behalf of the Kurna people I welcome you all to Kurna Country, and I do as Ambassador of the Adelaide Plains people, my brothers, my sisters, let's walk together in harmony. There was a young lad talking to his grandfather and he said, "Grandfather can you croak like a cane toad?" He said, "Certainly," but he said, "Why do you ask?" He said, "Dad said to me the other day, when you croak we're going to Surfers Paradise."

Simone Ulalka Tur: Thank you Uncle Lewis.

We love your jokes Uncle Lewis. Okay, now I'd like to invite Professor Daryle Rigney, Dean Indigenous Strategy and Engagement at Flinders University to offer the formal welcome and to introduce our speaker tonight, thank you Daryle.

Professor Daryle Rigney: Thank you Simone, let me begin by thanking you Uncle Lewis for acknowledging and recognising we're in the land of the Kurna people. I always take that very serious and I know when we hear it a number of times it doesn't devalue it in anyway but you hear the story and you go, yeah we've done the right thing and we move on. But I think we actually need to reflect about what the importance of that is and so I want to thank you very much for your introduction and welcome. There's a few things I have to do, first up is to make some acknowledgments one is of course Uncle Lewis, but also Miss Khatija Thomas the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement and her mum Aunty Joyleen Thomas who came in with her. Professor Peter Buckskin the Dean of Indigenous Scholarship Engagement and Research at the University of South Australia and Professor Kurt Lushington the Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor Education Arts and Social Science at the University of South Australia. I also want to acknowledge Associate Professor Simone Tur the Director of the Yunggoendi First Nations Centre. To elders and community members and Flinders, the general public, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the 2014 Duguid Memorial Lecture.

We have some apologies as well and sometimes you see that this huge list and you wonder about the value of reading it out. I will do that though because there's a number folk have particularly asked that they be acknowledged in that way. So in no particular order I want to firstly apology from Mrs Jane Duguid, from the Honourable John Rau Deputy Premier, from the Honourable, sorry Vickie Chapman MP, the Deputy State Liberal Leader. From the Honourable Jennifer Rankine, Minister for Education and Child Development. The Honourable Gay Gago, Gail Gago the MLC Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills. From Dr Duncan McFetridge the MP Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. From Mr Mark Parnell MLC Parliamentary Leader for the SA Greens. Professor David Lloyd the Vice-Chancellor and President at the University of South Australia. Ms Gill Troup Vice President Strategy and

Community Engagement at Flinders University. I told you it was a list. Professor Paul Worley Dean School of Medicine at Flinders University. Professor Kim Economides the Dean of the Flinders Law School. Professor David Giles the Dean of the School of Education. Professor Allan Evans Pro-Vice and Chief Academic Officer at the University of South Australia and Professor Mads Gaardboe Head of the School of Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia. A distinctive list but again, important to acknowledge that.

Okay now my next task is to set the scene for the lecture and give a little bit of an overview of where the Duguid Memorial Lecture emerged from. It's a public lecture, jointly organised by the University of South Australia and Flinders University in honour of the lives of Doctor Charles Duguid OBE and his wife Mrs Phyllis Duguid OAM who were advocates for the advancement of Aboriginal people, particularly in South Australia but more broadly. The purpose of the lecture is to perpetuate the Duguid's vision for an honourable place for Aboriginal people in Australia through better race relations within the community. The lecture is held every 2 years, with the responsibility that alternates between Flinders and the University of South Australia.

I want to actually say a few words about Charles Duguid and Phyllis Duguid. Charles was a medical practitioner beginning as a GP and later practicing as a gynaecologist and obstetrician. He was also a moderator within the Presbyterian Church, he was born in Scotland in 1884, he passed away if you're not aware in 1986, so 102 years of age. Immigrated to Australia in 1912 just before the beginning of the first world, world war. He's been variously described as a skilled medical practitioner, a passionate humanitarian, a teacher, an advocate, and relentless in his pursuit of advancing Aboriginal rights, denied to Aboriginal people.

Phyllis Duguid was born in Australia in 1904, attended school at the Methodist Ladies College at Adelaide and later when on to study at the University of Adelaide before working as a teacher between 1927 and 1930 at the Presbyterian Girls College Adelaide. She's been described as a very – well she's very active in her own right and been described as a campaigner, a child welfare advocate, a feminist, humanitarian, and a women's right activist. Phyllis was a passionate supporter of Charles' work often editing his writing and participating as a prominent activist for the welfare of Aboriginal women in her own right.

In 1936 the Duguid's established a mission at Ernabella in North Western South Australia which allowed the local Pitjantjatjara people to freely practice their culture and teach their children in their own language. Both of these approaches were unusually far sighted at the time and generated national attention.

The Duguid's in 1939 went onto establish the South Australian Aboriginal Advancement League, which initially sponsored a hostel for young Aboriginal people coming to Adelaide to gain an education and which later worked to expose an overcome racial discrimination in the workplace. The League sought to raise the consciousness of the broader community to "the sufferings of Aboriginal people" and endeavour to repeal discriminatory legislation engaging white Australians in campaigns for more intelligent and humane social policies.

In 1947 Doctor Duguid led a campaign against the establishment of a British Australia rocket testing program in the Central Australian Desert region. It's worth noting that not less than 2 weeks ago on the 5th November, 2014 some 60 years on from the atomic test conducted by the British Government between 1955 and 1963 that a significant part of Maralinga Tjarutja peoples country, following it's cleanup and rehabilitation from nuclear waste contamination was returned to those peoples only 2 weeks ago and I think that's a really significant thing to, to acknowledge.

I could go on about their lives, they wrote books and did many, many things, so I won't do that, but I want to acknowledge that in 1994, one year after the passing of Phyllis Duguid the Aborigines Advancement League donated a considerable sum of money to - as a gift to the University of South Australia and to

Flinders University to do a couple of things. One to enhance support through study grants for successful Indigenous graduate applicants from the University of South Australia and Flinders University who are undertaking post-graduate study at either university and the 2nd thing to establish the Charles and Phyllis Duguid Memorial Lecture, the event that we attend tonight. I think Anita Heiss who I'm going to introduce very shortly in a moment with a short biography, is one of a number of very distinguished Duguid lecturers to date. And I won't, I will name them and not their titles and all the other things that come after their names it'd be like the apology list it'll grow. But I do want to acknowledge that in order actually Paul Hughes, Jenny Baker, John Moriarty, Jackie Huggins, Lowitja O'Donoghue, Tracey Bunda, Klynton Wanganeen, Peter Buckskin, Dennis McDermott, Irene Watson and tonight's orator Anita Heiss, so distinguished group of people as you can see.

Anita herself, this is the final part of my, my talk, I had 7 minutes I'm probably typical Ngarrindjeri we say talk, talk, talk. Anita welcome to Kurna country. Dr Anita Heiss is an author of non-fiction, historical fiction, commercial women's fiction, poetry, social commentary and travel articles. She is a regular guest at writer's festivals and travels internationally performing her work and lecturing on Indigenous literature. A proud member of the Wiradjuri Nation of central New South Wales who I know well, we work with them closely. Anita is an Indigenous Literacy Day Ambassador, a role model for the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy and an advocate for the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence. She's an adjunct Professor with the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology Sydney. And currently divides her time between writing, public speaking, MC'ing and being a creative disruptor – I kind of like that. Anita was the finalist of the 2012 Human Rights Awards, and the 2013 Australian of The Year Awards and listed as Australia's 27th favourite novelist. I'm not how sure you count those things but 27th, I would think you should be much higher in my view, but I want to welcome Anita to Flinders University, on behalf of the University of South Australia and Flinders and welcome her presentation today titled, Considering Sameness, Dr Anita Heiss.

(Applause)

Dr Anita Heiss: Thanks Daryle. Who'd have thought a crowd like this in Adelaide on Monday night?

(All Laughing)

Thank you Daryle for that lovely and warm introduction. And thank you also for the invitation to deliver this very significant lecture this evening, I do feel like I'm in esteemed company and I feel nervous now. I'm a Wiradjuri women from central New South Wales, I'm a Williams from Cowra, Brungle Mission, Griffith and Tumut. I was born on the land of the Gadigal Clan in Sydney but I've spent most of my life living on the land of the Dharawal people out near La Perouse. My home suburb is strategically placed between Long Bay Goal, Malabar Sewerage Works and Orica Industrial Estate and I will probably die there, but it's the perfect setting for creative inspiration. I jokingly refer to myself as a concrete Koori with Westfield dreaming and I pay my respects this evening, Uncle Lewis thank you for that warm welcome to country, I don't think I've ever had a trip to Kurna country where you haven't been part of that. So I'm really pleased to see you, so thank you. And I pay my respects to all the Kurna mob, both the ancestors and those who are here this evening as well.

I was born as I mentioned in a suburb called Matraville and never as a kid did I imagine that I would be delivering anything like the Duguid Memorial Lecture. And I do like the name Duguid, I just have to say that. I was, as a kid playing cricket and football in the street I never imagined either that I would write books and have a career or even go to University. As a child I wanted to be a nun, I went to a Convent School and I liked the look of the Convent, and but then I realised I couldn't wear make-up and have jewellery and then I got older and realised I couldn't have other things.

(All Laughing)

I could be a nun now. Then I wanted to be an air hostess, and then I wanted to be – I know some of you will recognise this picture, do we know who this is? Who is it?

(Audience): Tina Louise.

F: Tina Louise I wanted to be Tina Louise but I was more like Mary-Ann, my mum used to do our hair in plaits and I was a tomboy and so forth. As I got to be a teenager and I went to school I was one of 2 Koori girls at the school the other was my sister and you don't hang around with your sister in high school. And I wanted to be a journalist and I didn't go to University and study journalism because I afraid that when I came out, back in those days, there were far less opportunities to write, like and I think Fairfax had 12 cadets at the Sydney Morning Herald in those days, we didn't have online writing. So I didn't want, I didn't go to university and do journalism because I was frightened when I came out I wouldn't get a job. So I went and I studied, I did an Honours Degree in History and my thesis was on the 1967 referendum and it was during my time at university that I became aware of the lack of published works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Nearly every book I got off the shelf during my time at university about anything to do with Aboriginal Australia was written by a non-Aboriginal person. And sometimes are written by people that'd never been to Australia, of course that's aside from people like the late Kevin Gilbert and the late Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Now in my Honours year I got a book off the shelf uniquely titled, Australian Aborigines. Now it was written by someone who'd never been to Australia and it was based as were many books back in the early 20th century on letters and journal articles. Well this, this particular volume was based on letters by somebody in New South Wales who would write letters back to his mate in Britain and say, "Today we did this with the natives and today we did that with the natives. And one day 5 Aboriginal men took this fellow hunting and they left him for a short of period of time and only 4 came back." So he assumed they ate the 5th one.

And we can laugh because it's insane, but what I try to say to my students is when we die we take our opinions with us but the written word lasts forever. So he writes this letter back to Britain saying, "The natives are cannibals because I went hunting with 5 men and they left me and 4 came back, so they must have eaten the 5th one." So for the first time in my life I get a book off the shelf at the University of New South Wales in 1991 I think it was, '91 reading about cannibalism for the first time in Aboriginal culture and I never it again until Pauline Hanson came into power and we don't need to waste any time on that. But and so what I – I had two realisations or epiphanies as it were at that time, the first one was that there's no such thing as objective history. Now there maybe historians in the room who'd like to argue that with me, but I have the microphone. So there's no such thing as objective history, if we all came back here tomorrow night and I asked you to record the history of this evening, I guarantee you every single one of you would record it differently. There are facts you can't change, we are on Kaurua country, it is Monday, I'm fabulous, facts you can't change.

You're all hearing the same thing, you've heard the same welcome, you've heard the same introductions, you're all hearing the same material, but the way in which you remember that and what you choose to remember and if you read Henry Reynolds the Forgotten War is it? You'll realise this, this, how we're very good in Australia about forgetting things. So I learnt there's no such thing as objective history and obviously the way in which the colonisers remember and record history it's going to be significantly different to the way in which the colonised remember and record history. And just in case you're wondering I am getting to the topic in some point, just an introduction. The other thing I realised is that I had responsibility as someone with an education in my family, first Williams's person to go to university and the first black fella to graduate with a PhD from the University of Western Sydney, was that I had a responsibility to use the skills that I got at university to make some change. And, and so I wrote my first book not knowing I'd ever write another book called, Sacred Cows. And it was a direct response to all the books that I got off the shelf at university by white fellas about black fellas. The difference was I had been educated and socialised through non-Indigenous systems, I'd done karaoke at the pub, I'd been to the cricket, I'd done all these white cultural traditions. I started off by writing about this – remember the ad throw another shrimp on the barbie? So those of you who are old enough to remember that, you will also

remember that before that advertisement that Paul Hogan made for American television to lure Americans to our shores, Aussies never ate shrimp. Aussies ate prawns, either fresh or covered in honey and sesame seeds at the local Chinese restaurant. And all of a sudden the whole country's throwing shrimp on the barbeque because Paul Hogan makes ads for American television and they're making, like they're making fun of our culture. So I thought, I just, I just wrote things about things like that.

So I didn't know at the time as I mentioned that I would write anymore books and I've just released this year my 13th book called, Tiddas. So some of you will know, heard of the band The Tiddas? Okay so a household name between 1990 and 2000, a generic term largely on the east coast but known nationally as, I guess young people say today, you're BFF, this and this is the woman that you would choose to be your sister. Now the story is really about the strengths and weaknesses and challenges of female friendships but essentially what connects women as friends throughout their lives, their values and ethics, their love of literature, their love of family and friends, their desires as women. It is also, it's also just been optioned as 6 part TV series, so I want to throw that in. The point is I want to write stories that bring people together using what connects us as human beings, while highlighting what makes us individual and special and that is what makes us different.

So much of my work during the week is running workshops, creative writing workshops in schools because I've learnt that significant learning can be done through writing workshops and being creative is a great way to engage young people to talk about identify, diversity, sameness and, and bringing people together, reconciliation, the future and so forth, what it means to be Australian. So when I go to in a classroom I always ask students, who likes to read? A few kids will put their hands up. I ask them, who wants to be a writer? Virtually no one puts their hand up. I say, you can be a novelist or a poet or a playwright or a songwriter. I tell them that I was born in the suburbs, my mum was from Cowra, my father was from a one horse, one cow village in Austria, that I was born in the suburbs and that anybody, if you've got a dream you can be whatever you want to be and that there's people in the room that will help them be that. They still doubt their capacity to have the life that I have today, mind you I didn't know what I wanted to be when I was their age; I wanted to be a nun remember. So what I do is I do a bit of a rap for them about my writing journey, so I thought I would do that for you tonight, but it's not really a rap because I'm too old to rap and I don't have a cap on backwards. But I want to share that with you and then I'm going to talk about how I use my writing to connect and make us the same. Is everybody okay?

Right, beautiful. If you're taking photos, tag me. So the Facebook people know that.

I'm from the Wiradjuri Nation and without hesitation I pay my respects to the traditional owners of land and I thank ... for all that I am. I tell stories through literature, you'll soon get the picture, but I also hunt for kangaroo and turn into yummy stew, or sometimes I'll make a roo curry, but if I'm in a hurry I'll throw some roo in the wok with some Bok Choy, oh boy. I make a delicious roo stir fry, you should try, it's called culinary fusion there's no delusion all people's have evolved, we have not dissolved because of colonisation or assimilation it's called integration, our diverse nation. And just so you know, I don't go walkabout, and I don't catch trout, I drive a silver sports car, it's the best by far, sunroof and leather seats, it can't be beat, when the roof goes down, I go brown but I don't get burnt, because I have learnt that sun cancer is not cool and I'm no fool and black fellas can get sun cancer. I went to uni, I did a PhD, I graduated in a fancy hat and robe without the strobe lighting, I had snow white hair then it was frightening, I look like a clown, it's much more normal brown. Well nobody told me ladies, I was told blondes have more fun, not even a date, nearly bleached my hair off my head.

Okay, I don't tell time by the sun, unlike some, I wear a nice watch and I don't drink scotch, I don't wear ochre and I don't throw a spear and I don't drink beer. I love going to the beach and into the classroom to teach Indigenous studies for my students, are my buddies and I tell them about Aboriginal life in Sydney Town and although my skin is brown, they shouldn't frown, because we're all the same. I want to tell you about my writing, how exciting I hear you say, so with no delay, I wrote a book called Token Koori some

call it poetry, I call it, what do I call it? I call it social observations, my own translations of conversations with while fellas and me. It's about being invisible because racism is divisible; it's about pride and identity, what it means to be me. It's about reconciliation, survival of the Aboriginal nation and my own self-determination. It's about defining who we are which is by far something others have done too much in a rush to make us different. But a name can make us all the same, and that name is – what can make us all the same, what name?

Human okay. It's about being lonely, if only I had someone to love, but don't fret because I bet I just need to look in the meantime here's my next book. I wrote a story about Mary Talence on a young Aboriginal girl who not by chance had a life of misdirection – sorry, oh yes under the act of protection. She was one of the Stolen Generations, without explanations, her identity and family taken, fears awakened. She grew up in a place called Bomaderry, which wasn't like life with her own family, she was fostered by the Burkes and new brother Sam was a jerk, but she made friends with Tony and Dot and that meant a lot. But a cruel boy Jonny Jones called her names and she had no games but she could sing and play the guitar which got her far in dealing with life, of not being white. Mary Talence was a strong girl in the white world, at only 10 she asked then, who am I? Mary's life is no lie, for my grandmother too was taken, be not mistaken, you need to read for although books don't bleed, hearts do when broken. My next book was, Me and My Mum it's for some who can't read well but who can tell the story from pictures with words, it's not absurd but it is if you can't read, so plant the seed that books are deadly and be ready to read and have fun. Dhuuluu-Yala is a Wiradjuri phrase meaning to talk straight, some say this is a great book about Aboriginal writing, I'm not skiting just trying to rhyme and stick to time, it's my PhD thesis turned into a book, please take a look. I penned a book called, I'm Not Racist, but... it has words that look like I'm in a rut but it is a common phrase that often pains my days and so 15 years and thousands of miles and fake smiles caused me to put words on pages to deal with my rages, of those who were racist and blind to the niceness in mankind and how we all just want to live in peace. I wrote a book called Yirra and her deadly dog, Demon it's about a husky who spends his time scheming it's set in La Perouse and Demon keeps stealing shoes and the neighbours undies, toys, iPods and other sundries. Yirra must get him trained so her friendship with Demon could be maintained or she'll have to give him away. I wrote another book where the kids from La Perouse, Demon's still up to his tricks but he's not stealing shoes, this time there's a harmony garden that needs protecting but who's the vandals, everyone's suspecting. We head to Bondi Beach and we check out the surf, we get native plants and we lay some turf. Writing this book was one of my greatest joys so far because now these Koori kids are on the literary radar. You've heard of Bridget Jones, have you heard of Carrie Bradshaw? I'm Koori Bradshaw, without Mr Big and a loft in Manhattan. My novel Not Meeting Mr Right, is about the fight to find a man if Alice ate in a can, she's a little like Brigid Jones and doesn't want to be alone. And I wrote this book about dating, about finding love, not hating, as I listen to sad songs and wrote about my Mr Wrongs. I'm happy for the novels narrator though she doesn't marry an ice-skater she does find love and like a silk glove it fits. In avoiding Mr Right, I wrote about a women called Peta, I really think you should meet her, she moves to Melbourne following a dream and there's also great shopping ladies, if you know what I mean? She's not looking for a husband or a man she's going to escape one if she can and set up the new Department of Aboriginal Affairs, of Politics and Policy is where she puts her cares. But in no time at all, she's in for a shock when she meets Mike the local cop, she thinks it's like a Nazi dating a Jew but interracial relationships are certainly not new. Peta finds herself in a terrible bind because she does not believe that love should be blind, unlike Lauren Lucas in Manhattan Dreaming, set in New York where the summer is steaming, where Native American and Aboriginal art meets Lauren's job at the Smithsonian is no mean feat. She loves the shopping and people and mostly cheesecake, Manhattan's a great place for her to escape. Lauren is young, talented and with a gift but she gets claustrophobic in every lift. We follow her from Canberra to the US of A and we walk in her footsteps every day. Then we go forward, then we travel with Libby Cutmore, she goes to Paris and shops and eats galore. Libs works at the famed MQB before doing Indigenous Arts at the Australian Embassy, she makes friends with a Romanian afraid of deportation, and she hates the French banning the Burka legislation. Libby is busy and has no time for love when the right one comes along, it's a sign from above. As you can imagine researching in Paris for

me was a chore, where eating croissants and macaroons is almost the law. I also bought this handbag on the Champs-Élysées and put it on the cover, so I could write it off on tax. Right.

Alright with my latest, with my memoir, *Am I Black Enough for you*, the aim was to demolish a stereotype or two. It focuses on the strong women and role models in my life; it says you can have purpose though not a mother or wife. It challenges expectations placed on Koori's and Nungas every day, it's about an identity they cannot take away. And basically that's my life as an urban based writer, my days at my desk or research and could be no brighter. I'm awake by 6:00am on the go by 7:00am, by 9:00am I'm in writer's heaven. I check Twitter and Facebook and I organise my space, my office in Rosebery is my own sacred place. Sometimes I run along the beach or I'll sit and I'll stare and the words and my deadline are my only care. Sometimes I worry I don't have the right word and hearing this you might think I'm a nerd, but truly I love what I do, because being a writer this evening has brought me to you. Okay.

Thank you. And so then the kids are ready to write their own little raps and things so that's how we have fun with that. So basically I write for many reasons, I'm getting to theme of the conversation. I want to break down stereotypes of who we are as first nation's peoples in the 21st century. Actually last week I ran a workshop in Melbourne about for non-Indigenous people wanting to, wanting to write novels, write the Great Australian novel. And of course you can't write the Great Australian novel if you completely omit First Nations people. So we ran this workshop on creating Aboriginal characters and I realised when I was creating this workshop that I've spent my life trying to breakdown stereotypes. And I thought, I need to shift the way I think and why do stereotypes always have to be negative, why can't I just write to create new positive stereotypes. So that's my new goal. So I write to put Aboriginal people in the Australian literary landscape and across genre's, I write so Aboriginal women and children can see themselves on the pages of books. And in recent times I've discovered the importance of writing about what makes us all the same.

Now when I first started writing chic-lit as choc-lit as my friends at 93.7fm Koori radio called it, I wanted to connect with Australian women. To talk about the things that were important to me, Aboriginal art, social justice, politics and so forth. And I think Maya Angelou said, write the book you want to read, and I was reading a lot of fantastic Australian women's fiction but I never saw women like me in there. I never saw, not as main characters, we're not even as friends of the main characters they just, we, we didn't appear anywhere. So when I first started writing, I had to think about how do I engage with these women that catch the train from Parramatta or Penrith into Central every day who never heard of Anita Heiss, may never have read a book by a black fella before, may never have had a cup of tea or a yarn with an Aboriginal women before. May have seen us marching on television against black deaths in custody or against the NT intervention and 1) not understood why or worse case scenario, had never thought about us at all. I thought how do I reach these women and get them to start reading about the things that I think all Australians should engage with? Had to think about what we had in common, what did we have in common? What made us the same aside from the love of reading or a good story? And that is of course, experiences that we have as women, with other women and the experiences of everyday human emotions and of course it's the same for men. So like other women we fall in love, we fall out of love, we fear rejection, we suffer heartache, we know what it's like to be infatuated, we experience grief, sympathy, empathy. These emotions are universal; they are not limited by socioeconomics, or geography, age, gender or cultural heritage. It doesn't matter if you're from Kaurna country or you're Gurindji or you're Gubbi Gubbi, it doesn't matter if you're from Adelaide or Artarmon or Armidale. So I use sameness is my chic-lit and I write about the way we connect as women, how we cherish our friendships, our relationships with our mothers and, and how we live out of a sense, I hope for the most part of sisterhood in our everyday lives. Of course there's differences and I'm writing commercial women's fiction and it's about dating and so forth, so while we might all want to meet a companion whatever gender, we may want to meet a companion and have a life that we share, I have a lot of first dates because my first dates usually turn into cultural awareness training workshops.

And you know and just for the record, I don't want to be someone's Personal Indigenous Studies 101 tutor on a date. So if I'm, you're asking me a 1,000 questions about everything to do with black stuff that I do all day, I will invoice you in the morning gentlemen. I learned about sameness from these kids at La Perouse. So specifically working in the classroom and working on our two books, but I got there following an interesting conversation that I overheard on a QANTAS flight from Sydney to Los Angeles in 2003. I was travelling to the US to do a peace and justice lecture series for Macquarie University, planes backing out of the, whatever it's called they back out of?

Yep, I don't know if we were in a hangar at this point, but anyway, we're reversing. And I have a PhD it's embarrassing. I overheard this conversation between an American man and a gentlemen from Melbourne. And the American man says, "I've just been to Australia, had a great trip and I met a 4th generation Australian, that's pretty good isn't it?" So the guy from Melbourne says, "Wow 4th generation Australian you just don't get anymore Australian than that." And so my colleague and I looked at each other, Professor Michael McDaniel he runs Jumbunna at UTS and we're like, "Try 4,000, try 4" can someone say it? "Try 40,000, 4,000th generation." So we're talking about generation, generations and we looked at each other and go, "Not even on the radar, not even on the radar of being Australian." And so I went out to La Perouse and I said to the then, the late, now late ... that I wanted to write book, a books with these kids at La Perouse, because I wanted to put them on the national identity radar. Now it's, I do believe it's better now than it was in 2003/4 where the conversation was still very much around, hyphenated Australians. So we've got Greek-Australians, Italian-Australians, Chinese-Australians and real Australians who of course were Anglo-Australians. And I do believe that we are, we've, we've been quite assertive in getting ourselves into the conversation, we still struggle with the terminology of first Australians, there's theories around that, first peoples, where other nations use it already in Aotearoa New Zealand and in North America and so forth. And Michael's theory is that, if we, if Australians fully engaged and embraced the terminology and I'm talking about language because I write, I have a very small vocab though, they same the average person has a vocab of about 10,000 words. George Bush had 5,000, I've got 5,000 they've different words, but we're talking about language and this is why I'm talking about this.

I should stick to my notes really, because, really quickly though, the theory about if, if Australians really embraced the terminology First Nations, what that really, First Peoples, what that does is, it firmly cements everybody else as second peoples, nobody celebrates coming second. It's true though, it's not as silly as it – it's absolutely true, where's the big party for, "Oh yeah we're the second peoples." So I wanted to put these kids on the radar and I went out and I learnt about the sameness from them. So these kids some live on the mission, some live off the mission, most of La Perouse Public School is, is I think there's about 60 kids there. Most of them are Koori kids, they watch the Simpsons, they eat fish and chips, they go to the beach, they have iPhones, interestingly though some of them still listen to Charlie Pride I thought was interesting, that's a real black thing. And then but they dance, they do shell work, they're strong on identity, so they're very much like other Aussie kids and eating cornflakes and doing all that. So I wanted to say, I wanted other Aussie kids to go, "Oh they're just like us." But I wanted other Indigenous kids, the country over to go, "Oh what are these kids down in Sydney who like they live on the mission and they're brown or whatever and they do this, this and this." So we wrote those 2 books and they, I'm very, very proud of those kids who are now like in, some of them have left school.

I want to talk a little bit about identity and our National identity and your identity and my identity and how can we be the same if we have different identities in different cultural backgrounds? Here's where as a writer I see the importance of language and how westerners often use language for Indigenous peoples the world over, that they don't use for themselves, which serves to disconnect us really as human beings. This was also pointed out to me by Professor Michael McDaniel, so I want to do a really quick exercise, I'm going to ask the non-Indigenous people in the room who identify as Australian if you could just raise your hand please. Okay thank you, could you raise your hand again if you identify as Australian but you have some other cultural heritage, English, Irish, Chinese, Milan? Thank you, so my maths is pretty bad, I'm going to just have a stab in the dark and say 90% of the original. So for the people who

put their hands up twice would it be fair for me to say to you that you have one identity, that of being Australian, with many heritages? Would that be a fair thing to say? Well so do we, one identity, I have one identity as a Wiradjuri women, obviously I've got Austrian heritage, we have that the same, but I never hear non-Indigenous Australians say, "Oh yeah like I'm half-caste Australian because my mother was born in Greece." "Or I'm quarter-caste because my grandparents were born in Ireland." That language was given to us for a reason, we're not going to talk all that, I just wanted to point out, that we have the same thing, the one identity, saying it's mixed heritage just like everybody else.

I want to talk really quickly again about language and how western societies evolve, the language in western societies and sweeping generalisations and some of you can argue, again I've got the mic. And, and thanks for my lovely long introduction we don't have time for questions.

So sweeping generalisations, generally speaking western societies talk about having modernisation, we're told we have cultural loss when we modernise. Western societies have development; we're told we're having cultural disintegration. Western societies make progress; I'm told I'm trapped between two worlds. Western societies become cosmopolitan, I just like to drink them – that's a joke, no western – don't Tweet that. Western societies become cosmopolitan, we're told we're becoming urbanised and we're losing touch with our roots. Western societies become multi-cultural, we're becoming culturally contaminated. Western societies can adopt from another culture, we're told we're becoming that culture. "Oh yeah but your people have an oral, you're, or have oral literature, so if you're writing books you're becoming white." Yeah? "Oh you drive a car, a sports car?" I go, "Yeah it's ... faster you get from A to B in a car." And where you have things now, we didn't have things to carry around, now we have you know it's like, we have, I have this argument all the time, we have a civil rights movement so we could have access to education and employment and so forth and the minute we actually do well, we can't possibly be black anymore, you've become the other.

On that note I want to talk a little bit about my identity and why I wrote the memoir. So it was important for me that people like you, all you fabulous people that have come here on Monday night and Australian readers generally that you understand that I didn't write this memoir as a response to being identified, or defined for the first time at the age of 41 I think I was, as a light skinned Aborigine or a, or a white Aborigine. Are people aware of the court case, really quickly, I won't bore you with that again. I try to have a Bolt free day occasionally.

I'm talking about sameness again the initial idea for this book came from reading two separate memoirs, one was by a fabulous Chinese, Cambodian women in Melbourne Alice Pung who wrote a memoir called Unpolished Gem, first line of that book I'm reading it like at 3:00am in the morning. This story does not begin on a boat and it goes on to say there are no wild swans or falling leaves, so let's get rid of this stereotype that all refugees are smuggled in on boats, because she jokes about being smuggled in her mum's belly. And let's get rid of the exotic notion and I'm lying there going, oh my goodness I need to write a book because I do lots of work in schools, and I can see that young people and our teachers have very strong and fixed stereotypes of who we are, even today. And there's not many living in Adelaide to and when I walk in the classrooms kids, Adelaide never gets a mention about where do you think most black fellas live, never gets a mention. So I thought I need to write a book, this story does not begin in the desert and there are no didgeridoos and dot paintings. My people do possum skin cloaks and emu eggs, but we've got this sense of pan-Aboriginality and everybody does the same thing.

So I was reading Alice's book and previous to that I'd read, you would've heard of Boori Monty Prior, fantastic memoir called Maybe Tomorrow. And in that Boori's this amazing story telling and funny and he goes and does school visits and he dances with the kids and he does storytelling and they play the didge and he talks about a couple of instances where he's getting, he's changed for the day and he's in his jeans. And one of the kids says, "Oh so Mr Boori you've finished being an Aborigine for today, what do you do tonight?"

And just the way, it's beautiful, like they're kids and just the way he so generously and warmly responds to that. And the other kid says, "So Mr Boori how long have you been an Aborigine for?"

And we laugh because it's out, out of the mouths of babes; it's when someone's 40 and they ask you that question. So I really, my idea came from reading those two memoirs, that I wanted to write something, for a, for a student or a school audience to, to simplify what appears to be a very complex issue for other people. Now I had the court case as we all know and I realised very quickly that I needed to finish this book because I thought maybe, maybe if people had a – Australians had a general understanding of who we are, and didn't see us as so far as different as human beings, maybe I wouldn't have gone through a whole lot of racist, so much racism and I wouldn't have needed a bodyguard when I travelled and so forth with threats. Now my aim was really to demonstrate that we as Aboriginal people have our own forms of self-identification and self-representation. And when writing I am aware of the importance of the words that I choose to use, I'm always conscious that there weren't any Aborigines at the point of invasion, there were just people. People who were identified and known by their relationships to each other and through familial connections through country and language groups and so on, Aborigines as we, we know we are, were created when the colonisers used a Latin term to mean original inhabitants, to describe the peoples whose land they were basically taking. More commonly used today as we know is the term Indigenous which is another Latin term meaning native too and I've used these terms throughout my work, it's, they're very general terms which are easy terms to, to define Australia's First Peoples. But they are terms that impact on identity and because we have our terms as I mentioned, Koori, Murri, Noongar, Nunga and so forth and where we know where we're fortunate enough to have language groups and our nations, obviously we identify using those.

I wanted this book to be a statement of pride, just as other Australians are proud to be Australian, we want to be able to express the same way our pride, without people saying, "Oh but why, why wouldn't you tell us some in your Lebanese instead," or and so forth. When I, when this book came out and I got hammered in the Australian by Caroline Overington who had a black silhouette of me, with big red lips and a big diamond necklace, I haven't read the article because everyone rang me said, "Don't read the article." It was quite terrible, but what was good was all the Indigenous organisations stepped up and sent out media releases. Now Jody Broun who was the Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's first peoples at the time, she sent out a media release basically saying, "Let's be clear, Aboriginal identity is defined by us, no one else. We are a diverse peoples reflecting the contemporary Australia we all live in."

Now I'm going to just move on because I know we're running out of time. Now our identity is not about blood quantum, it's not about the colour of one's skin, it's not about whether or not we work in an Indigenous organisation or we wear land rights tee-shirts. I'm top heavy; I don't wear tee-shirts, so my friends and I are designing protest wear for ladies who like to wear frocks, basically.

I wanted to mention really quickly, in two weeks in a row, one week I was at Port Douglas speaking amongst Australia's business world and then next week I was in a remote community in the Northern Territory wearing man shorts and I was wearing a tee-shirt because I had to wear it for the group, role modelling in a remote community. I went to this conference, it's a – I'm part of a group in, in, it's – I call it the Sisterhood of Australian Business, it's the Commonwealth Bank, the theme, the mantra is, women can, I prefer to say, women do. Now I was there last year, sitting there thinking to myself, not knowing anyone, there was about 5 brown girls in the room but we hadn't connected. I think what am I doing here, I'm not motivated by money, I'm – my business is social change through writing. I'm listening to people who are turning over 100 million 250 million to a billion dollars a year, Australian women, what am I doing here? What have I got in common with these women? No one's talking about social diversity, no one's talking about how corporations should have the triple bottom line and have money for charity, they're talking about how there's not enough women on Boards. And I'm thinking, look all the black organisations I know we have women on Boards, that's a, that's a white problem. But what do I have in common with these women? I went away and I thought about it and I went back to the Commonwealth

Bank this year and I said, "I want to speak at your conference this year, because I want to talk about social diversity and I want to put Indigenous business women on this, on their, these women's radar." So I do my little spiel and I get up and I ask the women in the room 140 women invited to be at this conference I said, "Can you please put your hand up if any of these goals are your goals? Does anybody want to contribute to their sector, provide a service or product they believe in? Do they want economic development and sustainability and so forth?" They all put their hands up, I said, "So do I and so do the Indigenous women that I know that run their own businesses, that's what we have in common." I said, "So next time you're looking for a hairdresser you can actually go to an Aboriginal women, she doesn't just cut Aboriginal hair, she cuts hair, we like and use products and do things as well." So it was about saying we have this in common, we mightn't do the same things, I mean I, this was specifically I was thinking about myself and so forth and my – and I put a slide with a whole lot of Aboriginal women who run their own businesses. Saying, "Here's just a few, a couple are being launched in October."

Just to finish now, on the topic of sameness, my message is a simple one. The next time you catch yourself considering how someone is different to you, slap yourself in the face, not literally unless you feel you need to and go for your life. But I want you to stop and think, rather than looking disconnected from that person, what might connect you? What human qualities or values might you share when you see a news clip of someone in the Northern Territory and you think that's so far removed from you, you can't even fathom what you might have in common. When we're talking about asylum seekers and if you're a parent what lengths would you go to, to give your children a better life? I'm not a parent, but I know what lengths my parents would have gone to, have gone to, to give their children a better life. Now I want to say also I'm not, I'm not saying we don't notice a difference, we don't celebrate diversity at all, I think it's important to teach our kids to celebrate and respect diversity but you also acknowledge what we have in common because I believe that by truly understanding and appreciating what we have in common as human beings, with those we think that are completely different to us, that we have a better chance of finding personal and communal peace, thank you very much.

Simone Ulalka Tur: Thank you very much Anita for your amazing speech and your inspirational words. I'd now like to ask Professor Peter Buckskin, Dean Indigenous Scholarship, Engagement and Research, University of South Australia to say a few words and offer his thanks.

Professor Peter Buckskin: Thanks very much Simone and also can I acknowledge I'm speaking on lands of the, of the Kurna people and thanks Uncle Lew again for that acknowledgment of country. Well where do you start Anita? Got a couple of things that I'm writing down here and having met you as I've joined late in my life the University Sector and when you visited the University of South Australia, and having read some of your stuff and heard about you, I was really impressed, really about how brave you are in terms of being one of the first across a whole range of things where you've given us voice in an area that, traditionally hasn't been a place where we have had a voice. And if the Australian Curriculum does anything, they need to get your books and put them in the literature area of Australian literature and get more people to read them. Clearly you have a resilience around you, based on your heritage, your rich heritage and your connectedness with country and understanding where you, where you come from. And that comes through a great love of family and commitment to learning from your elders. I think you've brought a new approach to our capacity to continue to share the stories that we so, as an oral tradition we do that so well, and you've taken it into the 21st century of putting it in writing. And to so many kids that I see in schools that you're demonstrating and I often say, sometimes our kids can't be what they can't see. And you're going in to schools and looking and they're success and I think that's the greatest, I think legacy we can give our children is to show. So we have a whole diversity within a generation that has achieved success based on the heritage and the tenaciousness and resilience of our grandparents and our elders. I think you have a great sense of humility around you, I think there's a, there is much more that connects us rather than divides us, I think the answer the lady gave about humanity is absolutely there true. And some, some unfortunately too many non-Aboriginal and Torres Islander Australians just don't think we're human, human enough for them to connect with us, they think we are the other, we are different. And you bring a sense of, of a real commitment around that humanity. It was great to see the

Lapa kids, I was going to Lapa for a long time as a young educator in other jobs that I've had. And thinking of looking at those kids I was looking, thinking about Joyce Woodberry, the late Joyce Woodberry who was a life-long member of the New South Wales AECG but I met her, as an education worker. Was much more than an education worker, she was an educator and those, and she held a grandmother, she brought such much maturity to the work and I don't think there was a Principal or a school teacher anywhere in New South Wales that would want to take Joyce on, but what a strength of character she had in terms of our women's voices in the education movement. And she didn't need a degree to tell her story, she just, she just shared it.

So, Am I Black Enough For You? Well absolutely yes, and I know of the pain, I felt the pain when I saw you being discussed in the western white press in a way that you were. And I'm so glad that our people stood up for you, our women and our men wrote back to some of those really quite racist arguments that were put into the Australian public space. So that's why I described it that you're so, you're really brave.

Can I, it's my job now to thank people is that right; I've got a list of things here to talk about?

So you have joined as Simone read out a great list of wonderful Aboriginal people and I'm including our wonderful Lowitja O'Donoghue from now, from one of our hero's of our State and indeed a hero within our nation. So you've joined now as a result of giving the Duguid Lecture that wonderful list. I just want to say, knowing the Duguid, Duguid's Legacy I wonder what they must think when you've got Australian Governments now defunding and de-supporting Aboriginal communities. And I think the APY Lands and many community that I come from, where they've already defunded things like at Point Pearce, I'm a Nurrunga man. But when I look at now Ernabella and I've been there a lot at Pukatja and I wonder what's going to happen to those communities when that money runs out? And, and how are they going to be supported in terms of maintaining culture and language and caring for country?

So I really respect the legacy that they've left, that they've left, left for us, it's a great legacy. And the Duguid Lecture and I just want to encourage everyone to apply for the Aboriginal Advancement Leagues in our University both at UniSA and Flinders it is a generous scholarship. And, and that's just, we just need to continue that because they saw us in the future and would be very proud of the people, Aboriginal and Torres Islander people in this room because of the result of the work that they've done.

Can I thank the Flinders University to my colleague and brother Dean Daryle Rigney and to Simone Tur for hosting this year's lecture and the University of SA is very pleased to be able to do this in 2 years time. So we're looking forward to that and I hope that you can all come out on a Monday night or whenever when we do this at the University of South Australia in 2016. So thank you everybody for coming and now it's my pleasure- to offer some gifts and I ask my colleague Professor Rigney to come and join me.
