

*C H O R A - L O G I C:
ELECTRACY AS REGIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY*

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*A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND CREATIVE ENTERPRISE
FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY
ROCKHAMPTON, QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA*

2007





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ABSTRACT

Arising out of the work of Marshall McLuhan, Eric Havelock, Walter Ong, Jacques Derrida and Gregory Ulmer, among others, it is widely thought there are three stages in the history of human communication: the oral, the literate and the electronic. Nonetheless, debate is ongoing over the integration, ordering and the substantive separation of these stages. An upshot of these debates is that each stage is loosely allied to a particular socio/political structure: hunter/gatherer or tribal societies, nation states, and globalisation respectively. In the current alloying of 'electronic communication' and 'globalisation' though there is a rising interest in what is termed 'new regionalism', or regionalisation, even regionality.

Accordingly, *Chora-Logic: Electracy as Regional Epistemology* examines the possibility of an emerging conceptual alliance (and through reference to two Australian regions a sometimes embodied and situated one) between the embryonic communicational infrastructure of *electracy* and the age-old spatial scale of the region, a relationship that might just come to represent a means of rethinking the civic and the psychic, the commercial and governmental frameworks of an electro-energised global skein. It may also be a way of reinvigorating a study in the relation of the body (in its capacity as a citizen-subject) to the nation state, especially as all these entities are increasingly though ambiguously constituted in and through globalisation.

The method of synthesising *and* antagonising these relations between electracy and regionalism is through the philosophy of *chora*, Plato's conception of embodied place as found in the middle section of the *Timaeus*, coaxed along by a range of interpretations of this important genesis myth in Western philosophy. In particular, *chora* is taken up in the work of Gregory Ulmer as a key method in the ongoing conceptualisation of an electracy epistemology. Arising out of these concerns *Chora-Logic* is an experimental re-configuration of the sovereign, abstracted and disembodied citizen-subject of the Cartesian mould (a significant psycho-political mooring of the literate national character) to one situated both in the virtual density and multidimensional actuality of a particular *place* (organically conceived of herein as an idiosyncratic mix of psychic, domestic, workplace, local and regional proximities), but whose both [dis]±[embodied] self-knowledge and world-knowledge are now increasingly realised by access to an electronically arbitrated global/regional polis. In sound-bite terms, the bumper sticker could just as easily proclaim the following inversion: 'Think and feel chora-logically, act globally'.

Finally, the nucleus of *Chora-Logic: Electracy as Regional Epistemology* is a risky praxis whose experimental eddy (in both formal and content terms) spins within the current ambivalence, uncertainty and fast-paced change in electronic communicative arrangements (*electracy*), as these are themselves wrapped in the psychic and socio-political variabilities of spatial affiliation, all of which are symbiotically entwined regardless of the historical period and/or the geographical context.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'm very much indebted to my supervisors at Central Queensland University for intellectual, administrative and encouraging support: Denis Cryle, Geoff Danaher and Phil Roe. This project would not have even had a beginning without their say-so and support. I would also like to thank their CQU colleague Warwick Mules for a number of thoughtful discussions.

I would also like to thank Jo Kijas and Greg Maybury for invaluable discussions on many of the themes herein. Rod Sims also proved invaluable in both these discussions as well as for the layout and the formatting in Layer Five: 'Rough Grid: Electrate Regionality'.

A component of 'The Electrate Imagination' has been published in an earlier version in the journal *M/C Media and Culture* under the title 'The Literacy Control Complex'. A component of 'Rough Grid: Electrate Regionality' has been published in the journal *Transformations* in an earlier version under the title '[Captain Cook):(Re-Births):(Byron Bay]'. I remain grateful to the editors and the peer reviewers of these journals for their invaluable advice.

Finally, *Chora-Logic* is dedicated to my first and second teachers in electronic 'logic' — John Mackison (the technician) and Peter Jeffery (the poet).



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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Terrence Shaun Maybury, aged 6 months, 1957; Maybury Family Photo Archive, Photographer Unknown (p.165).
2. Reginald Royce Maybury and Mary Patricia Berryman, Wedding Photo, Nyngan, 1946; Maybury Family Photo Archive, Photographer Unknown (p.168).
3. Wagga Wagga Beach, Murrumbidgee River, 1960s; Wagga Wagga Library, Local Studies Collection, Used by Permission; Photographer Unknown (p.174).
4. Terrence Maybury, Feeding the Chooks, 1960s, Maybury Family Photo Archive, Photographer Unknown (p.194).
5. Aerial View, Family Farm – Weja, Maybury Family Photo Archive, Photographer Unknown (p.211).
6. The Gravestone of Thomas Jenkins, Buckingbong Cemetery, via Narrandera, 2004, Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.214).
7. Massacre Island, Murrumbidgee River via Narrandera, 2004, Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.217).
8. Buckingbong Homestead, via Narrandera, 2004, Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.222).
9. “No Justice on Stolen Land”, Graffiti, Baylis Street, Wagga Wagga, 2004; Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.226).
10. “West Wyalong”, Russell Drysdale, 1949; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Used by Permission (p.232).
11. Main Street, West Wyalong, 2004; Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.233).
12. Cement Handprint – “Terry”, 2005; Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.242).
13. Remington Typewriter, Riverina Museum, 2004; Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.244).
14. Uncle Cliff Harwood, Coolaman Cemetery, 2004; Photographer – Terrence Maybury (p.254).
15. “Earthrise”, NASA Apollo 8 photo, 1968; Creative Commons, Photographer Unspecified (p.270).



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DISCLAIMER

This thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at any other university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed:

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