
Volume 9 Issue 2 – 2015

The Borders of Communication Design

Matthew Kiem

Western Sydney University, Australia

Abstract:

This article presents a critical reading of Plan 2050, a media design project from early 2014 that attempted a political intervention on the issue of the Australian government's policy of mandatory detention for unauthorised migrants. The discussion begins by outlining a position on communication as designing or mutual orientation that is informed by theories of ontological designing. The concept of communication as designing is then brought into connection with arguments about the borders of artifacts and the genre of national identity so as to draw out problematic continuities between the violence of the Australian government's communication designs and Plan 2050. The conclusion drawn here is that borders of Plan 2050 as a communications design operate within the genre of nationalist identification. This analysis is then set within a broader context of what decolonial theorists such as Walter Dignolo have called the 'colonial matrix of power'. Here it is argued that the colonial matrix enforces a spatial order made up of nation-states that control the movement of people looking to respond to or resist the violence of coloniality. Drawing on Hannah Arendt, the paper argues that the concept of 'refugee' is a juridical category that has emerged as a strategy of containment designed to sustain a colonial spatial order against the movement of people it renders 'dispensable'. The concluding claim is that a communication design politics that looks to address the so called 'migration crisis' ought to adopt a counter frame to that of the colonial spatial order and recode movement as a legitimate means of survival and adaptation.

Introduction

The basic argument of this article is that the borders of nations are ontologically designed into and through mediated communications. The implication here is that those who wish to practice a decolonial design politics ought to incorporate an awareness of this effect into the work of delinking identity formation from the designs of nation-states. This conclusion comes from a critical reading of Plan 2050, a media design project from early 2014. Plan 2050 was an attempt to intervene in the ongoing issue of the Australian government's policy of mandatory detention for undocumented migrants who attempt to reach the country without an authorised visa. The impetus for Plan 2050 came in the fallout of what became known as the 'PNG solution', an extension of the offshore processing system designed to increase the 'deterrence' factor of Australia's mandatory detention policy. While the 'PNG solution' has since resulted in the 'real world' reconstruction of a detention centre on PNG's Manus Island, this article frames and compares the 'PNG solution' and Plan 2050 as competing exercises in communications designing, both of which attempt to mobilise the image and affect of crisis towards a course of action that presupposes and sustains the nation-state (and its borders) as the form of a solution. Given the historic and present day role of the nation-state in enforcing the colonial spatial order, this presupposition will be put under question.

Taking an ontological perspective on what design is and does (Fry, 2012), this article asks what kinds of being-in-the-world are designed by both the 'PNG solution' (herein invoked specifically as media spectacle) and Plan

2050. While Plan 2050 differed in important respects from the 'PNG solution', its framing within the genre of national identity, delimited the impact of the address to the borders of nation. The analysis presented here begins with the borders of communication designs before placing this effect in the context of the colonial spatial order. The conclusion will be in keeping with Walter Dignolo's blunt but accurate assessment: 'Under present conditions "a country", that is, a nation-state, cannot decolonise' (Dignolo, Fry, & Kalantidou, 2014, p. 178). In response, communications designers ought to consider the possibility of recoding meaning movement outside the terms that are given within the colonial spatial order.

The 'PNG Solution'.

On 19 July 2013, in view of an election to be fought in part on the issue of 'border protection', the then-Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd staged a media conference to announce a newly agreed Regional Resettlement Arrangement with the Papua New Guinea government. Colloquially referred to as the 'PNG solution', the plan marked a return to a previous policy of detaining asylum seekers on PNG's Manus Island. Under the new arrangement, however, asylum seekers who passed screening criteria would be refused entry into Australia, with settlement in PNG given as their only option. Rudd's announcement was quickly followed by a media blitz across Australian print, television, and social media, with the message being 'If you come here by boat without a visa you won't be settled in Australia'. While the content of the message was styled as an address to asylum seekers, the wide circulation of the message across Australian domestic print, television and social media made it clear that the target of the policy was as much the Australian voting public as anyone attempting to find refuge.

Criticism of the policy came in various forms, including from the Australian Greens, Amnesty International, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and orderly street protests occurred over consecutive weeks in major cities around the country (Amnesty International, 2013; Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2013; UNHCR, 2013). On the same day of the announcement a detainee protest over processing delays in the Nauru detention centre escalated to the point at which much of the camp was destroyed, an event reported in Australian mainstream media (Farrell, 2014). The backlash, however, failed to halt the policy trajectory, with the subsequently elected Liberal-National Coalition government exceeding Rudd's authoritarianism with their own ultra-militarised 'Operation Sovereign Borders'. The communications strategy of the Coalition policy was deployed in the same manner and violent intent as the 'PNG Solution', albeit this time under the slogan 'No Way: You Will Not Make Australia Home'.

Plan 2050

For many including myself, the announcement of the 'PNG solution' and subsequent failure of the general political response, prompted reflection on the limits of existing approaches to ending the policy of mandatory detention. The government's media campaign proved effective at demoralising many who opposed the policy and there was a sense, as much brought about by the mediation of the event itself, that the issue lay beyond the reach of the available mechanisms of political dissent.

In an effort to go beyond the reactive protest cycle and an ineffective appeal to human rights discourse, a project was formed amongst a group comprised of artists, lawyers, researchers, and designers to imagine what an alternative policy might look like – one that moved in the direction of an open/no borders position – and how this might be presented to a public using the same techniques as existing policy communication campaigns (video, imagery, text, and social media). The aim in a sense was to produce a counter imaginary to that of the 'PNG solution'.

Presented as a series of posters, info graphics and videos, the Plan 2050 policy fiction looked to remove the question of migration from a discourse of national security and border protection and reposition it within a discourse of climate change adaptation. Safe migration within an epoch of 'unsettlement' – the term Fry (2012) uses to characterise how practices and experiences of habitation are predicted to change as climate change proceeds to exacerbate existing socio-political problems – was thereby framed as a service upon which an Australia nation-state could demonstrate international leadership, the benefits of which would be a larger workforce and diverse knowledge base to address a range of profound economic, infrastructural, and cultural changes. The message, in essence, was that the nation could not only be redeemed but also renewed; that a national identity organised around meeting the challenges of a different image of the future, was possible to imagine and put into effect¹

The aim of this article is to analyse how the ontological designing of communication designs articulates with the broader structural issues that give rise to such policies as the 'PNG solution'. What follows is a reading of communication designs as artifacts that embody borders and, in the context of the colonial spatial order, reinforce the conditions that give rise to border controls. The meaning of the colonial spatial order will be explained below but what follows here is an examination of the borders of communications designing.

Communication as ontological designing

In *Understanding Computers and Cognition* Winograd and Flores argue that language, – whether as sound, mark, or gesture – does not aim at accurately reflecting a ‘real’ or objective world outside of language but, rather, at constituting ‘worldhood’ itself (Winograd & Flores 1987, pp. 17-20, 54-79). Language is the medium through which a social understanding is formed in relation to a primordial and otherwise unspoken background of shared concerns, actions, and beliefs. Communication relates to forming, reforming and, where necessary, transforming the character of the being-with that constitutes an essential condition of our being-in-the-world. Language thus works towards a mutual orientation for action and understanding that is linked into and gives direction to socio-material ecologies. When the flow of ordinary activity breaks down – as in the case when something no longer makes sense or fails to work, or an inchoate potentiality beyond an existing understanding is sensed – language comes to the fore as a medium of creative interpretation that helps to bring into being the kinds of innovations that disclose new understandings and domains of action. To communicate is to take part in the shared re-creation of the naturalised-artificial or, as Winograd and Flores put it, to ‘design ourselves (and the social and technological networks in which our lives have meaning) in language’ (Winograd & Flores 1987, p. 78).

Communications design is therefore not about the effective transmission of information that represents or corresponds to an external reality, but rather, the designing of mutual orientation or how ‘we’ are-with-others. An ontological analysis of the PNG solution and Plan 2050 therefore brings into focus the question of what kind of being-in-the-world these forms of communication designing give support to, or, to put this another way, what kinds of mutual orientation are designed by these communicative strategies.

What is of interest in this article is not so much the fact of mutual orientation as such, but the consequence of its effects with respect to the politics of borders. While communication designing supports the experience of mutual orientation it also implies making decisions about who is to be orientated and in what way. The issue at stake, therefore, is how communication designs connect with wider structural forces in order to bring about particular experiences of norm, difference, and deviation (Ahmed, 2006). The issue in this respect concerns how borders are designed into a communication so as to delimit the form of communality that communication looks to accomplish. The argument to be made here is that, notwithstanding their differences, the ‘PNG solution’ and Plan 2050 were both attempts to shape different forms of national identity. Both designs, therefore, share and reinforce the designing of the borders of nation.

The borders of designs

John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid (1994) have argued that all designs imply the designing of borders. Designs are relational and only make sense with respect to a context of use, a context that is always itself a matter of design. The relation of a design to its context gives meaning to what an artifact is. Brown and Duguid described this as the relation between the centre and periphery of an artifact. An example they use is the significance of the sound that a keyboard makes as it is being used. While the tapping of the keys would not be considered central to the design of a keyboard it nevertheless still influences the rhythm of the typist and provides an awareness to those within earshot that someone is at work. In this respect both the centre and the periphery are necessary to the sense of what a design is. To take away a keyboard’s sound would be to change in some respect what a keyboard is.

Brown and Duguid emphasise that the determination of what is central and what is peripheral in respect of a design is a border question imbued with social significance. Importantly, this question of centre, periphery and border emerges in practice or the context of use, and while it can become the object of design it is not strictly reducible to intellectual determination. For Brown and Duguid (1994) the border of an artifact, the question of what is considered to be either integral or marginal to its being what it is, is a resource that gives definition to a community of users and to relations between other communities. In the relation between drivers and pedestrians the question of what is rendered central and peripheral in the design of motor vehicles (speed, size, safety, comfort, noise, visibility, emissions etc.) becomes a site and a source of contestation.

The borders of artifacts emerge through conventions or continuities of design. Conventions ‘speak’ or make sense to communities who have been brought into mutual orientation by a process of ontological designing. Brown and Duguid describe this as the indexical work of border designing, the question of how an artifact is designed to address or ‘point to’ a particular audience (1994, p. 14). The issue of designing for the border of an artifact concerns the question of who will be made to feel as though they are being addressed or included in the domain of activity disclosed by the artifact. Implied in the designing of this address is a community of users who have been brought together by the conventions of past designs. The designing of the border of an artifact is thus a hermeneutical process in so far as it aims to address an audience with a preformed understanding that stands to be affirmed, modified, or alienated through its interaction with a design.

The designs of nationalist identification

In the course of their argument about the social ontology of the borders of artifacts, Brown and Duguid draw an analogy between the borders of an artifact and the borders of nations². What this belies, however, is the fact that national borders are not simply analogous to those of artifacts but that national borders are themselves artifacts, albeit complex ones. Folding back into this statement is the point made by Angela Mitropoulos concerning how the complexity of national borders encompasses the extent to which they operate not simply at 'the border' but within the homely designs of national identity (Mitropoulos, 2012, pp. 62-3). Designs circulate within and shape social space in ways that are naturalised by those who are favorably embraced by the nation-state.³ These points bring into focus the ways in which both the PNG solution and Plan 2050 both work to design a specifically nationalist forms of identification.

Anne-Marie Willis has spoken of national identity as a particular genre of communication that in the Australian context is constructed and coded according to a dominant Anglo-Australian tradition (Willis, 1993, p. 17). As Ghassan Hage (1998) has argued, this cultural dominance, one that is largely transparent to those who possess and benefit from it, persists as much in patronising forms of multicultural nationalism as in more vulgar and explicit expressions of racism or xenophobia. As Hage puts it, the difference between 'good' and 'evil' white nationalism is one of degrees of tolerance wherein the decision to both tolerate and enter into debates over the threshold of the tolerable is defended as the sovereign right of white nationals (see also Mitropoulos, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

These structures are of course the consequence of colonialism, including, as Anderson (1991) argues, the ethno-class identifications that emerged in connection with mass media and territorial administrative systems. Modern nations thus emerged as a form of identification shaped by and for the governance of states. In this respect they became a powerful means of legitimating and reproducing state power. In Willis' words, 'the nation is the figure that commands emotional resonance' (1993, p. 19). While the formation of nations was always connected to the global capitalist system, Willis notes that the rise of corporate power has re-organised the political-economy of nationalist identity in new ways, with states often working with or following the lead of, for instance, departments of trade and tourism in the production of nationalist imaginaries. The production of national identity is thus a public-private partnership – states and corporations have become the clients of advertising agencies, film production companies, and other sectors of the cultural industry (Willis, 1993, p. 24). Such a move allows national identity to be seen more explicitly for what it has always been, that is, a dynamic, purposeful, and synthetic construction, a work of design that designs. Willis notes that:

“ 'national identity' is never a 'reflection' of characteristics of 'the people', but has more to do with 'power blocs' attempts to bring into being favoured forms of behaviour; 'national identity' then can be deployed as soft coercion (1993, p. 26). ”

The performative economy of 'favoured forms of behaviour' is of course weighted in the interests of those who possess and mobilise the codes of the dominant Anglo culture (Moreton-Robinson, 2012). Those who cannot become the targets of 'harder' forms of coercion, including exploitative work and visa conditions, police harassment, imprisonment, and deportation. As the production of nationalist identity has been outsourced so has the enforcement of its border, with privatised prison, detention, and security industries giving rise to new ways of translating the circulation of racially coded border anxieties into capitalist forms of value (Mitropoulos, 2014).

Willis' description of nationalist identity as genre can be brought into connection with Brown and Duguid's (1994) argument about the borders of artifacts. For Brown and Duguid, the work of designing the borders of artifacts is in part a question of conveying the codes of their 'genre', that is, the work of designing an artifact to exhibit clues about how it is to be used, engaged, handled or read. In this respect the designing of both the PNG solution and Plan 2050 aimed to frame policy information in the genre of nationalist identity, that is, to encourage a reading of the content that would speak to an audience of Australian nationals.

The communications strategies of the PNG solution and Plan 2050 were attempts to design two different forms of nationalist identity, one based in the forceful gesture of exclusion and the other as a pitch for inclusion based on re-valourising migration as being 'in the national interest'. In this way both communications strategies rested on the same structure of sovereign identification, that is, on the assumed power to decide who might be permitted to enter both territorial space and national belonging, under what circumstances, and by what processes. While this structure was made more explicit in the blunt declarations of the 'PNG solution', within Plan 2050 the mode of address was equally shaped so as to speak to Australian nationals as nationals, that is, as that community who (it was assumed) had the legitimate power to decide on the question of who was permitted to cross the border. To this extent the borders of the communication designs of the PNG solution and Plan 2050, that is, the borders of the particular type of communality that each sought to affirm and direct, were the borders of the nation-state. The critical point here is that despite its effort to counter the communicative force of the PNG Solution, Plan 2050 was still designed to index a nationalist audience in such a way that affirmed their sovereign power qua nationals to include or exclude.

The borders of both the 'PNG solution' and Plan 2050 are thus the borders of national identity. With this understood, what calls for further discussion is how the genre of national identity articulates with the broader dynamics that obstruct the movement of people across borders, that is, a colonial spatial order that draws upon the nation-state as a strategy for regulating the movement of people according to their position within what Walter Mignolo (2011), following Anibal Quijano has called the 'colonial matrix of power'. What follows here is a discussion of how Australian border policy articulates with broader trends in the colonial spatial order. The image presented is of a Western bloc of countries moving to secure their position of privilege against the autonomous movement of those they exclude.

Border designing and colonial spatial order

The 'PNG solution' represents a particular moment in a trajectory of mandatory detention policies that began in 1992 in response to increasing numbers of people attempting to reach Australia by boat. The growth of the mandatory detention industry within and beyond Australian territory over this period forms part of what Grewcock (2009) has described as the consolidation of "international exclusion zones" across Europe, America and the Pacific, that is, zones that are demarcated and defended as culturally and politically 'Western'. In view of the much longer history of what Mignolo and other decolonial thinkers term the 'colonial matrix of power,'⁴ this shift ought to be read as a mutation, that is, as a process of reorganising the networks of colonial authority, as empowered by discourses of nation and civilisation, in order to defend colonial privilege against the autonomous movement of increasingly large numbers of non-Western people (Mignolo, 2009a; Mitropoulos, 2006). Thus, while the announcement of the 'PNG solution' may have been staged as a dramatic policy shift, within the longer history of Western colonialism the move calls to be read as merely one instantiation of a more profound crisis of the colonial spatial order, a crisis that centres on the modern/colonial system of nation-state sovereignty and the authority of its borders.

The colonial spatial order

Writing from opposite sides of what Mignolo terms the colonial, both Carl Schmitt and Franz Fanon spoke of the significance of spatial order to colonial power (Fanon, 1967; Schmitt, 2006). Both described, for instance, how the Eurocentric division of the globe (Schmitt), or the nation, the city etc. (Fanon) into differentiated zones of privilege, wealth, and security, functioned as the means by which European colonisers asserted and administered authority over the colonised.⁵ As a system built upon racialisation and the expansion of capital, this same order provided a spatial grounding to questions of legitimate warfare, dispossession, international divisions of labour, and the dispensability of lives and cultures under a capitalist system of production (Mignolo, 2006).

Following Mitropoulos (2006), autonomous movement can be read as a challenge to capitalist or colonial power in so far as it undermines the colonial spatial order, an order that attempts to ensure that populations move or remain in place in accordance with its specific political-economic interests.⁶ It is not movement restriction per se that characterises the colonial spatial order but the regulation of movement in general, a task that is achieved through the techniques and practices of racialisation. While the colonial origins of these techniques are typically effaced within contemporary discourses, the actuarial logics of social categorisation and differentiation – the imperative of capital to determine who shall be precarious, labour, be poor, be permitted or forced to reproduce, be excluded, be killed or be allowed to die – remain active within health and social services, welfare, prison, immigration and border control systems (Mignolo, 2006; Mitropoulos, 2008; Wilson & Weber, 2008).

Autonomous movement thus disorders colonial efforts to control the spatial order by disrupting its claims to determine who has the right to be in or move through a particular space at particular moments of time and under particular sets of rules or regulations.⁷ To speak of a crisis of the colonial matrix of power in this respect is to observe how autonomous movement represents a challenge not simply to national sovereignty and its subjectivity, but to colonial authority as a whole.

'Refugee' as containment strategy

In this respect, and as a means of aligning with those who continue to disorder colonial authority, the language of autonomous movement becomes a way of undermining the colonial power expressed in the concept of the 'refugee'. The 'refugee' is a juridical construct of the modern/colonial human rights discourse, a discourse designed to function within and at the behest of the colonial power (Mignolo, 2009a). As Hannah Arendt⁸ observed, the right to determine rights does not lie with abstract-universal principles but, rather, with concrete political orders which, in the modern/colonial order, take the form of the nation-state as basic unit of international law (Arendt, 1973, pp. 167-302; Schmitt, 2006, pp. 140-151). The international order was thus built on a relation between nation-states that placed the stateless beyond the protection of the law. Additionally, as de-colonial thinkers make clear, the abstract universalism of the 'human' in 'human rights' obscures an imperial logic; a presumption that the borders marking the threshold between human, subhuman, and inhuman are isomorphic to the identity and perspectives of bourgeois European Man (Mignolo, 2009b; Wynter, 2003).

In this way the juridical formation of the refugee is designed neither to challenge the colonial spatial order nor to rethink the political-economic order that gives rise to population movements. Rather, its purpose is to create a category and a suite of mobile techniques that are designed to defend this order against a principal condition of its existence: the dispensability of life (Mignolo, 2009a). The ideological inversion performed by the concept of the 'refugee' thus provides a humanitarian gloss to the task of delineating and containing, in both semantic and logistical terms, any movement that runs against the grain of the colonial spatial order.

This reading of the colonial spatial order and the category of 'refugee' as a containment strategy further contextualises the limits of communications strategies that fail to reflect critically upon the borders of nationalist identification. The attempt to code migration in terms of the value it brings to nations reinforces the authority of the spatial order of nation-states. More precisely, the appeal that Plan 2050 makes to migration as a nation-building resource is in fact a way of instrumentalising the movement of people who have been made dispensable within the colonial spatial order. It thus plays into, rather than challenges, the racial dynamics of the dispensability of life in the sense that movement is authorised with respect to the value it brings to the nation and not as a legitimate strategy of survival in and of itself. The power to decide the limits of useful migration, as well as the power to govern migrants according to the value they are expected to bring, remains with the sovereign figure of the colonial spatial order.

While this analysis points to serious limits in the appeal to national identification as means to address what is often misnamed as a 'refugee' or 'migration crisis', it also opens up the potential for a different politics of communications design, that is, one that looks to challenge the colonial spatial order by recoding (Fry, 2009, p. 81-4) autonomous movement as legitimate in and of itself. This alternative strategy would be one of shifting the terms of authority from that of a national sovereign who decides the worth of a migrant to a de-colonised conception of the dignity of life, that is, a refusal to treat racialised populations as dispensable to the order of nation-states. Such a project implies a radical re-ordering of the global spatial order.

Conclusion

The argument presented here has placed under question the extent to which a communications strategy grounded in an appeal to the Australian nation-state is in fact capable of producing the kind of ontological shifts that could dismantle the architecture, both figurative and literal, of the colonial spatial order. The lesson of the Plan 2050 experiment is that designers who attempt to engage the politics of the border – particularly those of us positioned on the privileged side of both the colonial difference and citizen/foreigner divide – must be willing to interrogate the prima facie value of communications designing that reinforce the borders of national identity. The critique being made here is not intended to diminish the urgent need for designers to address themselves in a serious way to the problems that Plan 2050 attempted to gather and re-frame. The challenges that loom with respect to climate change are massive and the question of how people in different situations across the globe will move to cope with this change, or more to the point, by what imperatives and designs such movements will be assisted, directed or refused, stands to determine the fate of vast numbers of people. In this respect an investigation of the coloniality of the nation-state reveals the extent to which it is as much a part of the problem as any possible solution.

Footnotes

1 Some of the output of this project has been published on Memefest at <http://www.memefest.org/en/projects/2013/9/plan/>

2 "The border is not, then, simply an indisputable physical feature. Like the border of nations, it may appear fixed, but as a physical manifestation of complex social practices and conventions it is always susceptible to alteration and renegotiation. And, for the border of artifacts, as for political borders, gaining social recognition in times of radical changes is profoundly problematic." (Brown & Duguid 1994, p. 9)

3 The use of 'embrace' here is influenced by Peter Torpey's argument in *The Invention of the Passport*: "states must develop the capacity the 'embrace' their own citizens in order to extract from them the resources they need to reproduce themselves over time" (Torpey 2000, p. 2)

4 The "colonial matrix of power" describes four interrelated domains of power: control over the economy (capitalism); authority; race, gender and sexuality; and knowledge and subjectivity. (Mignolo, 2011, p. 8)

5 In *Against Innocence* Jackie Wang demonstrates the enduring relevance of Fanon's arguments through her analysis of the spatial logics of race, gender, and violence in the United States (Wang, 2012).

6 The parallel development of the White Australia policy and the Aboriginal reserve system in the later part of the nineteenth century is thus connected to contemporary policies of mandatory detention and state intervention into Aboriginal communities. Whereas unauthorised border crossings challenge the settler state at its external border, Indigenous people, as Deborah Bird Rose has put it, represent a challenge to this order precisely for

“staying at home” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388).

7 On the theme of colonial dis/order Fanon writes: “Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder” (Fanon, 1967, p. 27).

8 It should be noted that insofar as Arendt was a civic humanist she was concerned not so much by the logics of the state form as a whole but its subversion to the expression of a populist and ethnically homogenous nationalism. The Australian equivalent of the nationalist takeover was accomplished in 1901 with the transition from a white supremacist form of imperial administration to a white supremacist form of nationalist government. Although led by aspirational factions of the political class, a shared interest in the foundational myth of the “White Men’s countries” formed the basis of a successful and enduring international and cross-class collaboration (Lake & Reynolds, 2008). Anti-Chinese racism in particular formed an important pivot point for the populist movement. Over the same period state policies and white sentiment in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples moved towards the expectation of an inevitable if not imminent extinction. Australian federation can thus be read as an archetype of both Benedict Anderson’s theory of the colonial formation of nationalist movements and Carl Schmitt’s state-centric concept of popular democratic sovereignty (Anderson, 1991; Schmitt, 1988, p. 9).

References

- Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. (2015). *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Amnesty International (2013). Australia passes the parcel and closes the door to desperate boat arrivals. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/comments/32302/>
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Arendt, H. (1973). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2013). Asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat to be resettled in Papua New Guinea. *ABC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-07-19/manus-island-detention-centre-to-be-expanded-under-rudd27s-asy/4830778>
- Brown, J.S. & Duguid, P. (1994). Borderline Issues: Social and material aspects of design, *Human-Computer Interaction*, 9, 3-36.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *The Wretched of the Earth* (C. Farrington, Trans.). Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Farrell, P. (2014). Nauru riot blamed on ‘uncertainty’ about processing asylum claims. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/23/nauru-riot-blamed-uncertainty>
- Fry, T. (1999). *A New Design Philosophy: An Introduction to Defuturing*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press
- Fry, T. (2009). *Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics and New Practice*. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Fry, T. (2011). *Design as Politics*. London; New York: Berg.
- Fry, T. (2012). *Becoming Human by Design*. London; New York: Berg.
- Fry, T. (Ed.). (1993). *RUA/TV?: Heidegger and the televisual*. Sydney: Power Publications.
- Fry, T. & Kalantidou, E. (Eds.). (2013). *Futuring Port Hedland: Thinking the Urmadic City in the Age of Unsettlement*. Brisbane, Qld.: Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.
- Grewcock, M. (2009). *Border crimes: Australia’s war on illicit migrants*. Sydney: Institute of Criminology Press.
- Hage, G. (1998). *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, Pluto Press, Annandale, NSW.
- Kalantidou, E., & Fry, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Design in the Borderlands*. New York: Routledge.

- Lake, M. & Reynolds, H. (2008). *Drawing the global colour line: white men's countries and the international challenge of racial equality*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Publishing.
- Mignolo, W. (2000). *Local histories/global designs: coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border thinking*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Mignolo, W. (2006). Citizenship, Knowledge, and the Limits of Humanity. *American Literary History*, 18(2), 312-331.
- Mignolo, W. (2009a). Dispensable and bare lives: coloniality and the hidden political/economic agenda of modernity. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 7(2), 69-88.
- Mignolo, W. (Producer). (2009b). Who Speaks for the 'Human' in Human Rights? Human Rights in Latin American and Iberian Cultures. Retrieved from http://hispanicissues.umn.edu/assets/pdf/MIGNOLO_HRLAIC.pdf
- Mignolo, W. (2011). *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, W., Fry, T. & Kalantidou, E. (2014). An exchange: questions from Tony Fry and Eleni Kalantidou and answers from Walter Mignolo. In E. Kalantidou & T. Fry (Eds.), *Design in the Borderlands* (pp. 173-188). New York: Routledge.
- Mitropoulos, A. (2006). Autonomy, Recognition, Movement. *The Commoner* 11, 5-14.
- Mitropoulos, A. (2008). The materialisation of race in multicultural. *Darkmatter*, 2. Retrieved from <http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2008/02/23/the-materialisation-of-race-in-multiculture/#respond>
- Mitropoulos, A. (2012). *Contract and Contagion: From Biopolitics to Oikonomia*. Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions.
- Mitropoulos, A. (2014). The performative economy of the racial speculative, paper presented to the Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Conference, Brisbane, Queensland, 4-5 December 2014, <http://s0metim3s.com/2015/02/26/terrorism-race-speculation/>.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. (2007) (Ed.). *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. (2012), Bodies that matter: performing white possession on the beach, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 35(4), 57-72.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. (2015). *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Univ Of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Schmitt, C. (1988). *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (E. Kennedy, Trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Schmitt, C. (2006). *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (G. L. Ulmen, Trans.). New York: Telos Press.
- Torpey, J. (2000). *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- UNHCR. (2013). UNHCR troubled by new Australia-PNG asylum agreement. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/51f2560d9.html>
- Wang, J. (2012). Against Innocence: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Safety. *LIES: A journal of materialist feminism*, 1.
- Willis, A.M. (1993), *Illusions of Identity: the Art of Nation*, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger,
- Willis, A.M. (2007). Ontological designing – laying the ground. In A.M. Willis (Ed.), *Design Philosophy Papers: Collection Three* (80–98). Ravensbourne: Team D/E/S.
- Wilson, D. & Weber, L. (2008). Surveillance, Risk and Preemption on the Australian Border. *Surveillance & Society*, 5(2), 124-141.
- Winograd, T. & Flores, F. (1987). *Understanding computers and cognition: a new foundation for design*. Sydney:

Addison-Wesley.

Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409.

Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument. *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 3(3), 257-337.

About the author

Matthew Kiem is a designer, researcher, educator, and activist. His PhD project is provisionally titled 'The Coloniality of Design' and examines the meaning and consequences of ontological designing in light of decolonial thinking, with particular interest in the colonial problematics of the Australian context. Matthew has been a sessional lecturer/tutor in design studies programs at UNSW and UTS since 2009. His research is informed and tested by his recent work with the xBorder collective in their campaign against the mandatory detention of undocumented migrants.

Email: mnkiem@gmail.com