NAME: ________________________________

Overview:
The concepts discussed in transition:
• What does it mean to be Indigenous in Australia?
• What is Indigenous culture?
Are key knowledge points that you will need to remember and be able to apply to representations throughout Unit 3. This homework is a beginning of a larger study designed to introduce the meaning of material and non-material culture, highlight national and international factors that have supported and/or limited awareness of Australian Indigenous culture over time and to challenge your beliefs and knowledge of Australian Indigenous culture.

VCAA Guidelines:
To successfully complete a unit of study the student must participate in 50 hours of coursework, attend the unit for at least 85% of scheduled classes and receive an S for each School Assessment Tasks (SAC) for that unit.

Homework tasks and classroom activities comprise the set 50 hours of coursework.

FEEDBACK COMMENTS:

Any queries or problems please email me: rentos.despina.d@edumail.vic.gov.au
SECTION A: READING & COMPREHENSION

Please read pp. 3-13 from the “old” sociology textbook and take notes under each heading into your sociology workbook or computer file. This is the beginning of your notes for the year. Nearly all of the homework given this year revolves around taking notes from the textbook and/or answering the questions from the textbook and/or working on a homework handout.

The information on pp. 3-13 will give you a brief introduction into Indigenous culture. In 2016, a revised edition of the textbook is being printed, although the definitions and meanings learned here will not change.

Pages 3 – 13 from VCE Sociology Units 3 & 4 by Fiona Gontier is attached at the back of this booklet.

SECTION B: REPRESENTATION ANALYSIS

Sociology refers to examples as “representations”, one of the key skills you will have to demonstrate this year is your ability to read a representation and respond to questions about it. It is a little different than straight comprehension, because the questions will increasingly direct you to incorporate theories and sociological viewpoints whilst using the representation as evidence.

For this section I want to see how well you are able to respond to the representation questions and see if you are able to incorporate any information you learned in Section A.

1. Read and annotate Andrew Bolt’s editorial.

2. Read and annotate Danie Mellor’s response

3. Answer the three questions at the end of this section

The artists needs colouring in
Andrew Bolt

The Blog of Andrew Bolt, Sunday, August 16, 2009

Yet another white who chooses to be black: THE winner of the 2009 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award has been announced and is set to be the most controversial in many years.

At a ceremony in Darwin last night, the $40,000 Telstra Award was given to Canberra artist Danie Mellor for his work From Rite to Ritual, a large drawing on paper done with crayon, pencil and glitter pen.
The work is a dramatic departure from recent winners, which have had a style more readily identifiable as Aboriginal art.

It’s not just the art but the artist that isn’t “readily identifiable as Aboriginal”. (For a clearer shot of the startlingly white Mellor, without the gloomy lighting, see below) Indeed, of all the racial identities open to him - “American”, Anglo-Australian, Irish and Aboriginal - Mellor seems to have chosen the most distant (when, of course, he need not have chosen any):

This raises the question of the point of such “Aboriginal” art prizes.

Are they racially segregated in order to preserve Aboriginal tradition? In which case, Mellor does not qualify.

Are they supposed to give a break to black artists who’d otherwise face discrimination? Mellor, again, would not qualify.

Are they meant to help artists who are badly in need of the cash? Once more, Mellor does not qualify.

If these prizes are for the likes of Mellor, what on earth is their (legitimate) purpose? Other than to enforce a preposterous and offensive “one-drop-of-blood” style of racism, I mean.

By way of contrast, this is a previous winner of the award, Dorothy Napangardi - the kind of artist elbowed aside now by a Mellor:

Napangardi was again an entrant in this year’s award, as was Mitjili Napanangka Gibson (below):
As was Walangkura Napanangka (below):

UPDATE – Danie Mellor responded to Andrew Bolt’s claims in a letter, there is no publication date for the letter but it is assumed to have been written on or soon after the 16th of August, 2009. It was included underneath Bolt’s original opinion piece, which was published online.

Artist Danie Mellor replies:

Hello, thanks everyone for writing in, and thanks Andrew for your introduction. (And I say that without a trace of irony.) It would be good to start with a couple of things you point out Andrew, and that is that I ‘elbowed other artists aside’ - actually, I made and then submitted the work; judging the winner is not something I have control over, and rightly so, as I am an entrant.

It’s possibly a little enthusiastic, Andrew to post pictures without acknowledging the photographer, or the web site or other source.

In response to denying other aspects of my heritage (95% according to one entry!), I am quite open about the fact my family comes from many different cultures, so I am not particularly sure of how to answer that accusation. I have worked almost every day of my adult life, rarely (not in the last 7 years) take holidays, end enjoy every minute of being productively active. I worked hard through university - I
had help, and I also worked up to three jobs for a time there to support myself, the same as many other students. I graduated from a degree, a Masters, and a PhD, and now lecture in art theory and history and the University of Sydney.

I don’t scream and shout about my Aboriginal ancestry, nor do I jump up and down and demand your respect or my advantage because of it, and hysteria is definitely not my style. I prefer to work, mostly in the background, and achieve positive outcomes for me and other people - there’s no poor me, and to characterise me as a victim is really a little short sighted. I am immensely privileged to have Aboriginal ancestry, and it is active in the sense that I maintain my family ties with relations in a very real way.

It’s a fundamental error (usually a non-Indigenous one) to mistake colour being a qualifier of Aboriginality (it’s a little 1950’s to be honest). Aboriginality or Indigeneity is actually one of the more complex personal challenges for someone in my position at this time and in our country, and it’s one I am happy to be involved with.

In my mind it’s more important to share knowledge and cultural and historical perspectives than it is to become a shrinking violet and hide, simply because someone has a go at your position. It would be far easier to walk away from criticism and even attitudes that talk of racial stereotyping and band wagons and government grants etc - who wouldn’t want a life free of that sort of challenge? It would be relatively easy to apply the skills I have in another area or career that is entirely free of this particular type of tension. I’d prefer to stick around and work with certain issues though, and speaking very publicly about a shared history, and my place in that is a potentially very uncomfortable space to be in given the responses that do surface from time to time, but it’s something I choose work with.

(Mr Bolt is certainly contentious in the eyes of many, but as yet I am not sure he’s backed away from what he believes in, and I’m certain many of you who follow his writing and agree with his views would expect no less. Sometimes going along with what people expect of you just doesn’t help progress in any field.)

People are interested, obviously, as many of you are writing in, and hopefully this will have helped explain the position and direction I choose to pursue. (BTW, I am competent in media other than crayon and glitter pens - ie oil and water colour, and have won national awards for drawing and ceramics. Google has some sites).

Regards, Danie

Extended Reading (optional, but fascinating to read):
Andrew Bolt followed up this blog post with an article written for the Herald Sun and syndicated online.

It is titled “The New Tribe of White Blacks” and was published August 21, 2009.
SECTION B: REPRESENTATION ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. Describe Andrew Bolt’s understanding of Indigenous Culture.

2. Explain Danie Mellor’s understanding of Indigenous Culture.

3. Discuss one reason for why Australians would have such different understandings of Indigenous culture (use the representation as evidence if you can).
Area of Study 1
Australian Indigenous culture

On completion of this unit, the student should be able to analyse and evaluate changes in public awareness and perception of Australian Indigenous culture.

This area of study aims to critically examine both the historical suppression, and increasing public awareness, of Australian Indigenous culture. This requires some knowledge of the past and its influence on subsequent generations, as well as knowledge about contemporary factors that support and/or limit the increasing awareness of Australian Indigenous culture. An awareness of both Indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives and responses is integral to this area of study.
Area of Study 1
Australian Indigenous culture

KEY KNOWLEDGE

This knowledge includes:

- the meaning of culture and its major components: non-material culture and material culture
- the sociological imagination and its connection to the study of culture:
  - the meaning of sociological imagination
  - the distinction between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism
- a range of historical and contemporary representations of Australian Indigenous culture that could be interpreted as ethnocentric and/or culturally relativistic representations
- implications of different ways of representing Australian Indigenous culture for building awareness and perception of the culture
- the historical suppression of Australian Indigenous culture through protection, segregation, assimilation and integration policies, and Australian Indigenous responses to this suppression
- national and international factors that have supported and/or limited the increasing public awareness and perception of Australian Indigenous culture, including reconciliation, the Redfern Park speech, government policy and subsequent contested public discourse (NT Intervention 2007 and onwards), the Apology (2008) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Note: A range of examples from both Victorian Koorie culture and wider Australian Indigenous culture should be examined.

KEY SKILLS

These skills include the ability to:

- explain the meaning of culture and its major components
- define the sociological imagination and explain its connection to the study of culture
- analyse representations of Australian Indigenous culture
- evaluate the implications of ethnocentrism and cultural relativist representations of Australian Indigenous culture for raising awareness of that culture
- apply relevant national and international factors to analysis of representations of Australian Indigenous culture
- construct an overview of the historical suppression of Australian Indigenous culture
- explain and apply sociological concepts
- source and evaluate relevant evidence
- use a range of evidence to support observations and analysis
- critically reflect on own and others' approaches to understanding the social world
- synthesise evidence to draw conclusions (VCAA 2011b).
Introduction to the study of VCE Sociology

Sociology is the study of society. It investigates human behaviour and social interaction in order to understand how societies are organised, develop and change. There is no single sociological perspective; rather, there are several theories ("schools of thought") that offer different ways of understanding human society. Sociologists use these theories and frameworks in a complementary way to objectively examine social issues and explain concepts.

In VCE Sociology students are encouraged to question their assumptions and reflect on their understandings and ideas about social relations. Understanding society from a sociological perspective involves the use of what the sociologist Charles Wright Mills (1916-1962) in 1969 described as a 'sociological imagination' (McLellis 2010, p. 8). Mills used this phrase to alert us to the need to think about society in a different way. People tend to see the world from their subjective view of themselves and their immediate social circle. Sociology, he argues, should focus attention on the wider 'public social forces that affect the private lives of individuals' (Macklin 2010, p.7).

Sociology draws on scientific method in the exploration of social relationships and the outcomes of social activities. The scientific method is a systematic process applied to research questions and problems in an attempt to achieve objective observation, collection and analysis of data. Sociologists work to develop a reliable and valid body of knowledge based on research. In doing so, they adhere to various ethical codes of conduct. The primary goal of research ethics is to protect the wellbeing of the groups and individuals who work with sociologists. There are many different ways that information for analysis can be collected, such as case studies, surveys and participant observation. It is important, however, that as evidence is gathered, the Australian Sociological Association's guidelines for conducting research are applied to ensure participant wellbeing.

Australian Indigenous culture

Australia's Indigenous cultures are the oldest living in the world. It is believed that Indigenous peoples have been in what is now known as Australia for at least 60,000 years (ABS 2011), although many Indigenous people believe that Indigenous peoples have lived here since time immemorial. Indigenous peoples come from a range of diverse Aboriginal nations, many with their own
Terra nullius. When the British first colonised Australia they did so without seeking the consent of the Indigenous peoples, claiming the land was owned by no-one (terra nullius). This was untrue as Indigenous people had a complex system of land ownership and management by different clans and nations. By declaring the land to be ‘terra nullius’ the British were able to claim that they had ‘discovered’ it. Under international law ‘terra nullius’ land could be taken by anyone who could use it productively. The only other way for a nation to ‘legally’ take control of another nation is through agreement (a treaty or cession) or through war (conquest).

Languages and traditions, who have historically lived on mainland Australia, Tasmania and on many of the surrounding offshore islands. Torres Strait Islander peoples come from the islands of the Torres Strait, between the tip of Cape York in Queensland and Papua New Guinea (HREOC 2011).

Today Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in a variety of settings. Most live in urban areas, while some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live on the fringes of towns and cities, or within remote communities in rural Australia.

MAP 3.01: Number of Indigenous Australians and percentages of total Indigenous population (Source: ABS)

From 1788, the British espoused Australia to be a colony of settlement, not of conquest. Indigenous peoples' lands were taken over by British colonists on the premise that the land belonged to no-one - ‘terra nullius’ means ‘land of no-one’ in Latin.

Colonial takeover was based on the assumption that British culture was superior to all others, and that the Europeans could define the world in their terms. Prior to the arrival of the British there were between 600 and 700 Aboriginal tribal groups and 250 Aboriginal languages spoken throughout the land (Creative Spirits 2011). Many Indigenous peoples were killed or driven
from their traditional lands by European colonists. Many lives were also lost from introduced diseases that Aboriginal people had no resistance to, such as smallpox, influenza and measles. The new government and its colonists thought the Indigenous people should speak English, obey British laws and live a British way of life. Many tribal groups had to live together on missions and reserves and were forbidden to practise their cultures and speak their languages. As a result, many cultural traditions and languages have been lost forever.

It wasn’t until 1992 that Indigenous Australians were recognised as the traditional owners of tracts of land by the High Court of Australia. Eddie Mabo of the Meriam people took the Queensland Government to court because it refused to grant his people ownership of Mer Island in the Torres Strait. The High Court granted the Meriam people the right to native title of the land (Broome 2010).

Today, despite years of discrimination, violence, oppression and dispossession, Australian Indigenous people continue to keep their cultural heritage alive by passing their knowledge, arts, rituals and performances from one generation to another, speaking, teaching and reviving languages, protecting cultural materials, sacred and significant sites, and objects (Keeler & Couzens 2010).

Further useful information about Victorian Koorie Culture can be found at the following websites:

- Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)
  Mission Voices - Hear our stories
  www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/living_culture/default.htm

- Culture Victoria - Indigenous Culture - Our Story

- Culture Victoria - Indigenous Culture - The Koori Heritage Trust Collections and History

- Department of Planning and Community Development, Aboriginal Cultural Development in Victoria

- Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Education, Culture Victoria: Indigenous Culture in Victoria
  www.fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/View.aspx?id=b556f1b-9e22-43df-b8f6-a48aa22f3978&Source=%252fpages%252fResults.aspx%253fs%252dkoorie%252bculture
The meaning of culture and its major components

When sociologists use the term 'culture' it refers to the entire way of life of a group or society. This includes the learned ideas, values, knowledge, rules and customs shared by members of a collective (such as those based on ethnicity, gender or age). There are two interrelated aspects of human culture: material culture and non-material culture.

**MATERIAL CULTURE**

Material culture refers to all the physical objects, artefacts, resources and spaces of a society which are passed onto subsequent generations. These include the physical objects produced by society that influence and reflect the various ways that people live. It includes arts, crafts, clothing, homes, schools, technology, tools and cities.

Vicki Couzens (Keeler & Couzens 2010, p. 1) describes the value and meaning of creating artworks and artefacts for Victorian Koorie culture as follows:

"a means of continuing culture and transmitting knowledge and stories. Learning to make traditional crafts and using traditional designs keeps knowledge strong, transmits that knowledge and reinforces identity. Making art can also be a healing process. Using designs and markings from your cultural group in your art, making a cloak and trying it on, making a basket the way your grandmother taught you, all these things can heal you and make you stronger."

The image opposite is an example of material culture in the form of a painting about a ceremony representing hunting. It was painted by Victorian Koorie artist and clan leader, William Barak, in the 1800s.

"This painting (in brown ochre and charcoal) features a ceremony which depicts hunting, with wallaby and emu. William Barak was ngurunggaeta (a clan leader) of the Wolwurung (Wurundjeri).

"Diplomat, artist, story-teller and leader, William Barak worked all his life to protect the rights and culture of his people, and to bridge the gap between settlers and the land's original custodians. Barak was educated at the Yarra Mission School in Narrm (Melbourne), and was a tracker in the Native Police as his father had been, before becoming ngurunggaeta. Energetic, charismatic and mild mannered, he spent much of his life at Coranderrk Reserve, a self-sufficient Aboriginal farming community in Healesville, Victoria. Barak campaigned to protect Coranderrk, worked to improve cross-cultural understanding and created many unique artworks and artefacts, leaving a rich cultural legacy for future generations." (State Library of Victoria, Ergo 2011).
In 2011, William Barak was nominated for the inaugural Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll. The Honour Roll, which is the first of its kind in Australia, will acknowledge Indigenous Victorians who have “had significant influence that has instigated change for the betterment of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in a particular field; or made lasting contributions that have benefited the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community across Victoria, Australia or internationally” (Liberal Victoria 2011, p.1).

**NON-MATERIAL CULTURE**

Non-material culture refers to the non-physical creations and ideas of a society, such as knowledge, values, beliefs, languages, symbols and social norms, which are transmitted across generations. When analysing non-material culture, sociologists refer to several processes that a society uses to shape or control its members. Although there is variation across cultures, most have the following: values, symbols, language and norms.

**Values**

Values are abstract ideas about what a society believes to be good, right, desirable and beautiful. They act as a broad guideline for acceptable behaviour and as a basis on which social action is judged. Key values within Australian society include democracy, freedom of speech and a ‘fair go’. It is important to note, however, that whilst many people within Australian society adhere to these values and behave accordingly, this is not always the case.

For many Australian Indigenous people, values were (and sometimes still are) derived from the ‘Dreaming’. The Dreaming tells the journey of the actions of ancestral beings who created the natural world. The Dreaming is connected to a period of sacred, eternal time in Australia when ancestral spirits created all the people, animals and plants that were to live in the country and laid down the laws, customs and codes of conduct their lives were to follow. Traditionally, Indigenous Australian children learnt about the Dreaming, which outlined the values about how to interact with the land, kinship (family) and community. This was done through observing customs, ceremonies and song cycles (Reconciliation Australia 2011).
Symbols

Human beings transform elements of the world around them into symbols. A symbol is anything that acquires a particular meaning recognised by the people sharing a culture. A word, sound, graffiti, a sculpture, a gesture or flag are all examples of symbols.

IMAGE 3.02: Aboriginal flag

Harold Thomas, a Luritja man from Central Australia, designed the Aboriginal flag. It was created as a symbol of unity and national identity for Aboriginal people during the land rights movement of the early 1970s. Indigenous activist Gary Foley took the flag to the east coast where it was promoted and eventually recognised as the official flag of the Australian Aboriginal people.

The flag was first flown at Victoria Square in Adelaide on National Aborigines Day, 12 July 1971. The flag was chosen as the official flag for the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and was first flown there in 1972. In 1995, the Australian Government proclaimed the flag to be an official 'Flag of Australia' under section 5 of the Flags Act 1953. In 1997, Harold Thomas was legally recognised as the author of the artistic work under the Copyright Act 1968.

The symbolic meaning of the flag colours, as stated by Thomas, are:

- Black represents the Aboriginal people of Australia
- Red represents the red earth, the red ochre and a spiritual relation to the land
- Yellow represents the sun, the giver of life and protector.

Source: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
Language

The ability to communicate through the spoken and written word is a unique and important feature of human cultural groups. Without this ability human culture could not exist. Language uses symbols to communicate packages of information to the receiver. The written and spoken exchange of language is critical to the sharing of knowledge, beliefs, emotions, norms and all the other important elements of culture.

Language is particularly important in understanding Indigenous Australian heritage, as much of their history is an oral history. Hundreds of languages and dialects existed (although many are now extinct), and language meaning, as well as geographic location, is used today to identify different groups (Australian Government 2011).

It is estimated that there were over 250 Indigenous Australian languages in the 1700s. Some of these are spoken today, but most have become extinct or are in danger of disappearing. According to the 2006 census, one in eight Australian Indigenous people said that an Indigenous language was their primary household language (Australian Government 2011).

It has been estimated that up to 80% of Australian Indigenous people speak Aboriginal or Koorie English (a dialect of standard Australian English) as their primary language (VDEECD 2011). There are approximately 38 Indigenous languages within Victoria today, many of which are further divided according to clan groups and their traditional lands (VCAA 2006c, p.5).

The Indigenous languages of Victoria can be grouped as follows and some are shown on Map 3.02 overleaf:

- **Kulin Languages:**
  - *Western Kulin* (North Western Victoria) Wembawemba (Swan Hill and Lake Boga) BaribaBeraba (Gunbower area) Madhmachi (Barraanald area) LadyJalijji (Mildura area) Wadiwadi (Swan Hill) Wadiwadi (Piangil) Wergaya (Wimmera) Tjapwurrung/Djajawurrung
  - (Grampians) Djadjawurrung (Loddon Valley) Yardwadjaili (Upper Glenelg River)
  - *Eastern Kulin* (Melbourne and surrounds) Thagungwurrung/
  - Daungwurrung (Goulburn Valley - southern) WoIwurrung (Yarra Valley) Boonwurrung (Coastal Melbourne and Westernport)
  - Wathawurrung (Geelong-Barwon Valley area)
- **Gulidjan or Colac Language** (Lake Colac area)
- **Gunditjmara/Warrnambool Language** (Warrnambool - Portland area)
  - Dhauwurd Wurrung Kirrae Wurrung Djagurd Wurrung
  - Bunganditj (Mt Gambier area)
- Yorta Yorta and Yabula Yabula/Bangerang (Murray Goulburn area)
- Dhudhuroa (High Country/Victorian Alps)
- Pallanganmiddang (Kiewa Valley area)
- Ganai/Kurnai (Gippsland area) Brataualung (Corner Inlet area)
  Krauatungalung (Lake Tyers area) Brbralung (Mitchell River)
  Tatungalung (Gippsland Lakes) Bralakaulung (Latrobe River).

(VCAA 2010b, p.8)

MAP 3.02: Indigenous languages of Victoria (Source: ABS)

**Norms**

Social norms are the shared rules which exist in every culture that act as a guide for a wide range of behaviour. Norms specify what is considered to be appropriate behaviour in each social situation. They vary from situations where complete conformity is expected (e.g. to wear clothing in public), to occasions where there is freedom of choice (e.g. the style of clothing worn).

Social norms prescribe how people should behave in given situations and are the key to social control. Norms become a common practice amongst people sharing a culture. It is often the departure from a norm that alerts others to inappropriate social behaviour, rather than the norm itself. Most Australians, for example, would not be aware of the specific details of every criminal law within their state or territory, however, most would quickly identify when a criminal act has occurred.
Three key categories of social norms are: folkways, mores and laws. Sociologist, William Sumner (1840-1910), introduced the concept 'folkways' in 1907. Folkways refer to the learned behavior of a cultural group that provides a traditional code of conduct. They outline normal patterns of everyday behavior and often reflect personal taste. If individuals do not act according to a folkway, they are generally considered to be selfish or unusual, rather than criminal or bad. This type of social behavior is shaped and influenced through imitation and mild social pressure, but is not formally enforced. Examples of folkways for broader Australian society include maintaining eye contact with people you are having a conversation with and playing or watching sport on weekends. Among many Indigenous Australian cultural groups, kinship (family expectations) governs much of everyday behavior (folkways). For example, by adulthood individuals are aware of exactly how to behave to all other people around them as well as in relation to specific land areas. Kinship obligations concern meeting the obligations of one’s clan (immediate family) and are specified by Aboriginal lore (sometimes known as the 'Dreaming') (Australian Government 2011). Mores (pronounced 'more-rayz') are social values that are seen as being central and significant to the functioning of society and social life. Traditional values influence mores about how responsible citizens should behave. Theft, for example, is a violation of the more of respect for private property and is therefore considered a serious matter. It disregards the social value of property ownership and the notion of community trust. An example of an Australian Indigenous more concerns sacred sites. Sacred sites are an essential part of many Indigenous peoples’ beliefs. Some Indigenous Australians believe that their ancestral spirits still guard these areas. They feel that they protect them and have the power to harm any person that disturbs, destroys or disregards them. It is not acceptable to visit some sacred sites. It is believed by some that people can become sick from visiting those types of sacred sites (Working with ATS! Communities 2011). Laws are a formal body of rules enacted (established) by the state and supported (maintained and enforced) by the power of the state (political authority of a society). Some societies have formal documents which outline specific laws, such as statute laws created by parliament. In some cultures the law is handed down orally which is referred to as 'customary' or 'common' law. In whichever form, law often applies to those behaviors seen as critically important to society. The term 'law' is a British concept that was first imposed upon Australian Indigenous people during the period of colonisation. It was expected that they would abide by this new legal system. The term 'lore' refers to the customs and stories that most traditional Indigenous Australians learned from the Dreamtime. Indigenous lore was passed across generations through songs, stories and dance. It provided rules for all areas of traditional life including how to interact with the land, kinship and community.