Two Ends Sarah Pirrie

irretrievable picture of the past, which threatens to vanish in every present, which does not recognise it in itself
Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*[1]

Every weapon has two ends
Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*[2]

Skirting the coastal beaches of Darwin Harbour are the marks of a tropical macro-tidal system dominated by mangroves and offshore coral and sponge communities. Familiar to any beachcomber, this line of beach wrack is a changeable yet specific collection of littoral sediment and marine debris. Following this cursive line, our eyes are brought down from the horizon to the ground, to an assemblage of living and non-living relations.

In the artist's studio, imaging impressions and illustrations are overlaid, copied and overlaid again. Material thinking is wrack thinking. Moving self-consciously between the trace and the drawing, where pressed marks of found materials and hand-drawn gouache illustrations of entanglements combine what is given and what is received.
Material thinking also comes from above, over a duration of decades. The Landsat database of aerial and drone photogrammetry forms composite images, recording colour and movement in the growth and decline of Mangroves[3]. Both are inventions, as pictures often are, staged to draw comparisons and discoveries as material histories are revealed. Wrack readings are always between the lines; the translations are about what story you tell and who is telling the story.

Asserting diffractive and interlinear readings, the beach wrackline becomes a report card, cladistic sieve and prophetic eye. Centred around the increasingly familiar observation of detonator cord fragments on Darwin's beaches, two conceptual arcs appear: the similitude and differentiation of forms once colour is background, and the wrackline as citation, where a *compositionalist* may filter and separate, finding characteristics which invite ecosocial readings

As a biomass, mangroves are a significant component of Northern Territory coastlines. Leaves, branches, stems, above-ground and below-ground roots are disembodied parts that once held a function and purpose within mangrove tree canopies and forests. P*rotector forests*, mangroves, are home to fish nurseries and barriers to sea inundation[4]. Mangroves have been given the mantle of an "ecosystem service" as forest biomass[5]. Their morphological characteristics have become "eco-environmental service functions" for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)[6]. Governments generate research through "Voluntary Offsets" and agree to conduct countless papers, reports, evaluations and assessments to *account* for mangroves. They are measured for their carbon stock and sequestration, coastal protective services to people, and dwellings. This contemporary context sits alongside invested interests in the local fisheries Industry and biodiversity maintenance. As natural capital, they are measured through tree biomass as leaf, branch, stem, above-ground and below-ground roots[7].

On the Darwin Harbour, beach wrackline assemblages are laminated into the sand after high tide, leaving divots and impressions when removed. Depending on the season, these wracklines may be filled with wet cyclonic debris or beaded with calcareous fragments. The wracklines' cursive assemblages are created by waves that move forms with each other, spreading out, reaching around, embracing and entangling. Materially, the wrack is between places, temporal to the eternal push and pull of the tides. The rhythms and order enhance the perception of things as leaves, branches, root structures, flowers and seeds combine with aluminium cans, firework casings and plastics, including detonator cords.

If the tide, as chronicler displays in an order of occurrence, the wrackline as citation or collector summons events of the past into the present to exist again, to recall, with a sudden recognition. *Two Ends* refers to the analogous morphology of fragmentary organic and anthropogenic objects found on the coastal wrackline. Each item is an event with two ends. A broken branch with its past to present growth; a barnacled fragment of polystyrene undergoing a process of materialisation to dematerialisation. Even the detonator cord holds both, trigger and the destination. Two-ended objects have the power to disrupt and transform our present when reading the wrackline. Their wrack entanglements, disquiet citations that recognise the gap between causes and consequences.

1. Benjamin, W., Bullock, M. P., Jennings, M. W., & Eiland, H. (1996). Selected writings. Belknap Press.
2. Elaine Scarry, 1985, The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, Oxford University Press
3. Bishop-Taylor, R., Nanson, R., Sagar, S., & Lymburner, L. (2021). Mapping Australia's dynamic coastline at mean sea level using three decades of Landsat imagery. *Remote sensing of environment, 267*, 112734. doi: 10.1016/j.rse.2021.112734
4. Duke, N., & Schmitt, K. (2015). Mangroves: Unusual forests at the seas edge *Tropical Forestory Handbook* (pp. pp 1-24). Berlin, Heidelburg: Springer.
5. Aranha, J. (2021). *Applications of Remote Sensing Data in Mapping of Forest Growing Stock and Biomass*. Basel, Switzerland: MDPI- Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.
6. ABS. (2022, August). *National Ocean Account, Experimental Estimates*: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
7. Brocklehurst, P., & Edmeandes, B. F. (2013). *The Mangrove Communities of Darwin Harbour Biomass Update*. Northern Territory: Land Resource Division, Northern Territory Government.