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When he died in 1977 Grant Ngabidj was the last of the very old Gadjerong men, of the Kimberley country north-east of Wyndham. He began giving Bruce Shaw his life story in 1970, and this book is an edited transcript of the result. It is the first of six proposed volumes presenting thirty-two Kimberley life histories and reminiscences Shaw was given: the second volume, Banggaiyerri: the story of Jack Sullivan, was published in 1982.

Shaw describes the book as a life history, an autobiography, and an Aboriginal insight into their recent contact with Europeans (p.1). This is perhaps an adequate description for Aboriginal readers, but for Europeans it is much more. It is an assertion of the worth and permanence of traditional Kimberley values. It does not defy or condemn; on the contrary its calm pragmatism is striking, conveying its owner's conviction that people are not the pivot of creation, that things will endure beyond any passing generation of men.

Grant gives information in order to impart knowledge or values, and a reader expecting a straightforward account might be disappointed. In describing even a short journey for example, Grant is instructing his audience in geography, tides, botany, traditional ownership, pre-contact history, and aspects of bushcraft such as how to choose campsites or find easy walking. Visiting a camp becomes a lesson in totems and kinship and clan allegiances, a reference to the weather becomes a course in meteorology — see pp.61-8 for example. In particular Grant has much to say of the Law and its importance, and clearly this was central to his being, but his didactic purpose persists even in small things — where a European might say, for example, someone 'rode a mule', Grant says a man 'changed to a mule, saddled it up and rode it, galloping all the way from the Twenty Mile right to the Nine Mile' (p.43).

Despite their enormous impact Europeans were marginal to the real purposes of Grant's life and thoughts. He refers to the adoption by younger Aborigines of European marriage customs in this way: 'Mothers, daughters, they take them anyway. See, they are going a bit stupid now like dogs, true. A lot of blackfellers behaved well in the early days' (p.60). His upbringing was not traditional in the sense of being pre-European — it was interrupted by the massacre of almost all his clanspeople when he was about four, and by forced or voluntary labour for Europeans later. Yet Grant's essential problem with Europeans was in which ways their presence might be accommodated within existing value systems, and in which ways ignored as beyond the pale. For him neither God nor bullets nor the gospel of work break the links between men and places and traditions; despite its new disorder the world retains its old unity.

His values are also clear in how Grant tells his story. Natural phenomena or traditional law are explained in some detail, but killings are recounted briefly and economically, reflecting Grant's pragmatism and perhaps the relative inconsequence of human life: 'that blackfeller chucked one shovel spear, a big long one too.... It shot her like a rifle, knocked her out, took the heart and killed her, poor bugger. He was a bloody good shot' (p.104). Yet Grant has all the great skills of storytellers who cannot write. Bruce Shaw tells how effectively he used hand, eye and body movement and changes in pace and tone (pp.4-5), and even the printed narrative evokes a play, particularly in its ready use of direct speech and its skilfully drawn word pictures.
For Europeans the most obvious difficulty with such a narrative is in their knowing how adequately they understand it. Grant's comments on his name, for example, suggest how impossible it is to decide whether or not he has withheld information he considers truly valuable:

My proper name, given by my mother, is Wilmirr. I do not like to use it when dealing with white men. It comes from another dreaming, that of the pelican marrimarr . . . My father’s dream was the pelican too, but it all comes from my mother, for it is from her dream that you get your skin name. That is in the Law (p.32). Grant also told Bruce Shaw what was publishable. The term he used in assuring him was that there was ‘nothing it it’ (p.8).

How much is missing may never be discovered by Europeans: nonetheless a better question here is whether or not what is given has value because it preserves for Aborigines some part of their past and their being, or because it opens doors of understanding for Europeans. This is a problem which concerns Bruce Shaw greatly, as his lengthy introduction and a 1982 talk to the Australian Historical Association entitled ‘Writing the East Kimberley Series’, make clear. He recognises losses in transit but he has gone to considerable trouble to minimise these, in particular by striking what I think a very good balance between Grant’s mode and content and the need to make the narrative comprehensible to Europeans. Obviously he thinks the compromise works, and that the book is a fair representation of what Grant wanted to say.

What does it tell? Even for the most archive-bound historian some things are valuable. Details of contact which Europeans had reasons for suppressing emerge to enlarge our knowledge of what happened in the Kimberleys: the ‘killing days’ there, for example, continued until the 1940s. More importantly, no matter what is missing, Grant’s story offers non-Aboriginal readers a glimpse of the nature, strength and resilience of Aboriginal value systems, and that is knowledge vital for all Europeans to accept. Perhaps above all, Grant is using a trusted intermediary to pass to the future these tales of the days when men were able to perceive a unity in creation, and when a sense of order and continuity regulated their behaviour. He meant his gift of that knowledge for Aborigines, but Europeans might also take it gratefully as well.

BILL GAMMAGE
UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

All published by the Australian National University, North Australia Research Unit, Darwin.

These volumes are the results of conferences or work sponsored by the North Australia Research Unit (NARU) of the Australian National University. They reflect
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the recent interest in Aboriginal themes taken by the Unit, and as such are to be welcomed.

The volumes on service delivery to remote communities and outstations are collections of papers presented at a conference sponsored by NARU in December 1981. The range of topics they cover is broad, and papers of a length to fit in with conference time-slots sometimes cannot do justice to their subject. Editing could have been a bit more stringent. The papers presented are of varied quality: some are excellent, some anecdotal, and some trivial, some are comprehensive (such as the paper by Bryan and Reid on communications in Eastern Arnhem Land) others are skimpy. One disadvantage is that, even though most papers concern themselves with Arnhem Land settlements, they cover a wide range of topics (health, education, water, banks, stores, vehicle maintenance, communications, just to mention a few) and a number of communities, so that it is difficult to make any comparative judgements. The factors which are particular to one facility may not apply to another, and factors pertinent to one community may not be pertinent in another. A valuable overview is made by Bell in the volume on outstation service delivery.

Some of the papers present a statement from a departmental point of view, while others present very particular personal reactions to situations or communities. These are to be applauded, since there is very little of this sort of recording. Most reports on Aboriginal communities attempt a detached, or so-called objective, viewpoint. But any person who has worked in an Aboriginal community cannot fail to have been affected by the experience, whatever its flavour, and the reactions must surely affect the viewpoint presented, however objective a stance one might attempt.

Unfortunately, there are not many papers that try to present matters from an Aboriginal point of view, and very few that explain Aboriginal actions. Even to use the word 'remote', as pointed out by the Hon. P.A.E. Everingham in his Opening Address, reflects a rather particular ego-centric point of view; what is 'remote' to one community may be 'home' to another, and vice versa. The crucial point is not distance per se, but distance from desired facilities, goods, and the over-reaching decision-making powers of government departments and other agencies. 'Remoteness' could also be equated with 'unawareness' or 'insensibility' which is associated with the distances in question. This is amply reflected in Heatley's paper on the Kimberleys, in Snowdon's paper on 'remote control for remote communities', and in Sanders' paper on social security. The paper by Sanders on changing government positions regarding self-determination and self-management points out very well the woolly thinking on policies applied to areas where the predominant public is Aboriginal.

Problems for councils, and their management and funding, are outlined in papers by Oakes and Coburn. Yet there is no 'deep' understanding of the factors which are relevant; for a better account, see Thiele's volume.

Gerritsen presents two thought-provoking papers on outstations, although one should mention that he does not exhaust the range of factors which come into play in establishing them. In particular, he fails to mention the role of women, whose presence is crucial to the existence of outstation communities, if they are to reproduce themselves physically and socially. Further, men often use their wives' and mothers' affiliations to land to make their own residential choices, and the women must agree to these manoeuvres to legitimise them.

Wade-Marshall's paper outlines the position of women in Aboriginal communities, but this too needs to be placed in a wider context. Aboriginal men's public domain has widened considerably over the years; they find it relatively easy to muster support
from agencies outside the community. However, women's public domain has shrunk, relatively speaking; they do not have such easy access to resources outside the community. In this connection it is interesting to note that there is often an outcry whenever a woman is appointed to some position in Aboriginal affairs, the implication being that men will not deal with her. Not only does this assumption require deeper examination, it also ignores the fact that Aboriginal women are greatly disadvantaged by the appointment of men to positions of power.

Other papers examine the role of bank agencies, shops, and other aspects of a cash economy. Being in charge of a bank agency is a position of some power in an Aboriginal community, because it enables one to know who has what amounts of money. The same sorts of factors need to be examined in the context of shops in Aboriginal communities, and the control of resources and provisions. In contrast, Bagshaw's paper in the outstation volume makes allowances for the realm of Aboriginal politicking. More case studies of this sort are needed.

Walker's paper on water provision to communities also brings out some of the factors which are alluded to in other papers, but the resolution of which is left in the air. He believes that Aborigines desire benefits while disliking the demands generated to support the infrastructure that produces the benefit. Until they reconcile themselves to one or the other the clash will persist. Walker believes they will forego the benefit. Further he says that a community will not accept the social responsibility for maintaining a system, and so a 'boss' has to be appointed. This has implications for a culture-bound model of technology. The case of a handpump (pp.38-9) which turned out to be much cheaper than windmills or tanks, makes one reflect on the uneconomic side of living in 'remote' areas. If the user really had to pay for equipment and facilities, would people be more realistic in their demands of government agencies?

The volume on arts and crafts (which is also a collection of papers presented at a NARU conference of the same title, held in Darwin in August 1982, together with an exhibition of Aboriginal art at the Museum), while being more unified in theme, also suffers from a lack of editing. Questions posed in one paper may be answered in another.

There are many aspects of Aboriginal art examined, including papers by Gillespie and Chaloupka on the marketing of art which is not 'purchasable', that is, rock art, and the management of cultural tourism in national parks.

But once again, there are not many papers which look at art from an Aboriginal perspective. How do Aborigines view their art? Why do they choose to market it? It is not sufficient to say that they are awarded status for being artists, because one then has to ask what validity that status has in Aboriginal contexts, and if the status comes from having money or recognition in non-Aboriginal eyes, why is that important? Experience in some communities shows that it is the underdogs who turn to arts and crafts to make money, because all other avenues have been monopolised. Painters who get jobs tend to stop painting, or at least have very diminished output, and often painters cease painting when they get a pension. There may not be sufficient time to have both a job and to paint; but why should the choice be to have a job, rather than paint? A suggestion might be that painting does not provide one with as good a power-base as most jobs. One should then examine the role arts and crafts play within the dynamics of a settlement. Why, for example, are there no local entrepreneurs in the art market? It may be that there are very strong 'whitefella' aspects to the marketing of arts and crafts.

There is also no discussion as to whether Aborigines divide art into 'fine' and 'tourist' art. Or, if they do make distinctions about art, what types of distinctions
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they make. If Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal classifications do not coincide, then what value is there in making distinctions of the ‘fine’ and ‘tourist’ variety? To increase the values of individuals’ and museums’ collections?

The volume on the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC) election of 1981 is timely, given the $7 million given to the NAC in the last Federal Budget. The volume presents material on the problems associated with the conducting not only of an election, but also of an electioneering campaign in the Northern Territory. The material reveals some interesting information: that people with jobs that allowed them to travel had advantages over those that did not, especially since there are no travel allowances for candidates. There also seems to be a dichotomy between people who use an urban organisational network for support, and those who rely on ‘tribal’ networks. Both these factors have implications for the types of people who are elected to the NAC.

Yet once again, there is no examination of how Aborigines viewed the election or what they thought of candidates, except in results tables. Aboriginal politics are not considered, nor the social field in which they operate. The election process could be seen variously as being perplexing, interesting, mystifying, or just another part of ‘whitefella’ business (note in this regard that there are no elections for the members of the Land Councils). Why is it necessary to have Aborigines representing Aborigines (consider the lack of success that Aboriginal candidates have had in NT Legislative Assembly elections, even though they were standing against non-Aboriginal candidates in predominantly Aboriginal electorates)? If there is no electoral roll, how are electorate sizes determined? What importance is there in maintaining equality of size versus maintaining the integrity of a cultural bloc? In other words, why does representation have to be based on geographical, rather than cultural notions? Why does an age barrier have to apply for voting: why are people of 18 to be considered adults, whereas in fact in Aboriginal communities maturity is based on other factors — the bearing of children, and initiation?

Further, the NAC has to be put into a wider world, if one is to understand its relevance. There are other organisations in the Northern Territory which have power and money, the most notable being the Land Councils and associations which derive money from mining royalties. How is the NAC placed relative to these?

The volume by Thiele is excellent. It is an account of the establishment, evolution and demise of the Yugul Cattle Company at Ngukurr. He outlines the history of the community and the role that missionaries and those who attached themselves to the mission played in the events prior to the formation of the company. He examines the social parameters operating in the community, and the influences these had on the development of the company, and the power wrestles that went on.

Until an examination of the economic role of Aboriginal settlements is undertaken, no sense is made of ‘developments’, or why part of the self-managing image is that of economically self-sufficient Aboriginal communities. This volume goes a long way towards explaining why so many of the schemes evolved for Aboriginal communities are doomed to failure. It is all the more pertinent since many Aboriginal communities are seeing cattle and/or buffalo projects as strategies to make their communities partially independent of government revenues. Thiele fully understands the predicament of such communities. Government departments ultimately control settlement finances, and so are the ultimate employer, not the Aboriginal company. Government tends to fund community projects, as though there were such an entity, in spite of the evidence of factions found in settlements. (There are echoes here of Gerritsen’s paper.) This, and the fact that there is ‘no institutionalized system of
political opposition in the Ngukurr Council (p.26), mean that a non-Aboriginal presence is necessary on settlements, not merely for the skills provided, but also because it provides the social mechanism for the community to function.

Thiele tries to understand the Aboriginal perceptions of what went on. He believes there is an inability of Aborigines at Ngukurr to take political and economic control as a community. He also believes that Aborigines suffer from misconceptions about non-Aboriginal economic ventures; they believe that they are all profitable. Understanding how Aborigines perceive money and business conduct in the non-Aboriginal sphere might make such schemes as the Yugul Cattle Company more realistic.

Thiele presents the crux of the problem as being that Aborigines have to decide their options, reconcile contradictions, and that they have to reconcile responsibilities with duties. Otherwise government funding of such projects will merely increase Aboriginal dependence on the non-Aboriginal economy, not only in economic terms, but also socially. The implications of this study can be applied in other spheres, and one can only ask, as many of us continue to do, why Aboriginal associations are given mining revenues, when settlement politics revolve around what faction is getting what proportion?

The meaning of 'Yugul' is not explained. It is the name of a language. In some parts of Australia one 'owns' languages, just as one 'owns' land. One can own a language even if one does not speak it. Are there implications for who might have owned this language and the role they subsequently played in the company?

Concerning presentation of the volumes, more attention could have been given to maps. Some of the places mentioned in the volume on the NAC (for example Lajamanu, Napperby, Oenpelli) do not appear on the map, while the only map included in Thiele's volume is to be found on the cover obscured by a photograph.

In the context of Aboriginal history, those papers which deal with case studies and those that deal with personal experiences will count for more than those which present a departmental point of view. Especially useful will be those papers that do not flinch from revealing possibly unflattering episodes in the realm of politics in the Aboriginal domain. The pity will be if accounts which present this sort of material are censored in the name of privacy, or to recreate history in a more favourable light.

SUE KESTEVEN

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF ABORIGINAL STUDIES


This volume is the second of a series of six, which will examine in detail the Aboriginal component in the contemporary Australian economy. The first volume covered tribal communities in rural areas, and subsequent volumes will cover smaller rural communities (e.g. cattle stations), urban Aborigines, specialised communities (e.g. mining settlements) and a final overview of the Aboriginal economy and its relationships with the total Australian economy. The present volume contains four case studies of Aboriginal non-metropolitan urban minority populations and an introductory chapter by E.K. Fisk, which summarises the trends apparent from the case studies.
Elspeth Young analyses demographic and socio-economic data from a survey organised by Charles Rowley of 183 urban, non-metropolitan Aboriginal households in New South Wales, which contained at least one member who had been interviewed in a similar survey in 1965. The results indicate that while housing conditions for this group have improved since 1965 real incomes have not. Compared with the non-Aboriginal population the non-metropolitan urban Aboriginal families have a younger age-structure and more dependants, higher occupancy rates per house, lower health status and lower formal educational achievements. These and other factors lead to higher rates of unemployment, concentration in lower status occupations and lower levels of income.

Jenny Bryant reports on a study of Aborigines living in the Murray River town of Robinvale in Victoria, where Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders form at least 13 percent of the town population of about 3000. Ms Bryant examines the reasons why Robinvale has become a centre of Aboriginal residence (mainly because of the availability of seasonal work in grape and citrus fruit industries nearby). She traces the progress of an ‘experiment in assimilation’ conducted in the late 1960s, when Aboriginal families living on the Murray River banks were moved into a transitional settlement at Manatunga and later into houses located in the town, and examines employment, incomes and expenditure of Aborigines in detail, including patterns of seasonal migration to opal fields, other fruit or vegetable growing areas, shearing and cane-cutting. The picture that emerges is of a relatively stable community still heavily dependent on government support in various forms, and facing difficult dilemmas in housing, employment, health and education. The re-vivified Aboriginal Co-operative is now playing a major role in community leadership, and it is to be hoped it will receive continuing support from within the community and outside to further the security and well-being of the Aboriginal community at Robinvale.

David Drakakis-Smith reports on Aborigines living in town camps around Alice Springs (about 40 percent of the town’s Aboriginal population, itself about 15 percent of the total), and dispels some of the myths perpetuated in the white consciousness about them. He shows, for example, that most of the camp sites were originally settled in the late 1940s, that many of the campers have been resident in Alice Springs for longer than most Europeans, and that many people of part-Aboriginal descent (as well as full-descent Aborigines) live in camps. He traces the gradual emergence of efforts to upgrade conditions in the camps, and the role of the Aboriginal Housing Panel and Tangerjirra, the campers’ council. His surveys reveal tenure and living conditions and economic status vary fairly markedly between camps. These results will provide a useful benchmark for future comparisons.

The fourth chapter, by Hans Dagmar, is a description of the ongoing process of urbanisation of Aborigines who make up about 21 percent of the total population in the town of Carnarvon, Western Australia. Economic activity in this area has been dominated by work in the pastoral industry but as opportunities here decline the tertiary sector has become the major employment source. For Aboriginal males the shift to tertiary employment in town has been hard to make because of a traditional attachment to station work, and because of the necessity to learn new skills suited to urban work. Dagmar analyses income and expenditure patterns and shows how small and fragile are the margins of economic survival for these Aboriginal communities in the white man’s economy.

Each of the four studies is thorough and illuminating. Together they present reiterated evidence of the lack of employment opportunities, scarcity of suitable housing, difficulties of health and education, racial prejudice and economic
exploitation which face Aboriginal communities in small towns. Current conditions of economic recession only aggravate an already disadvantaged position. This volume, and the rest of the series, will be required reading for all those interested in the contemporary Aboriginal condition.

MARION W. WARD


The present volume of essays, choreographed by Janice Reid into a related series of themes, is a refreshing addition to the growing literature on Aboriginal health. It should be read widely, particularly by those who have an involvement in health care delivery to Aborigines.

The first section reviews some of the contemporary health problems of Aborigines. Jack Waterford draws extensively on his experience whilst travelling with the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program team and many of the statistics he quotes are from the 1980 report prepared when the team had completed its survey of some 60,000 Aborigines in all parts of Australia. Waterford stresses the conclusion, reached by many who have been concerned with Aboriginal health in recent years, that a number of the diseases afflicting Aborigines, particularly those in the younger age-groups which have very high morbidity rates, will disappear only when there is a real change to Aboriginal living conditions.

Gillian Cowlishaw's chapter on family planning reviews extensively other reports on factors affecting reproductive performance, both for Aborigines and for peoples in other parts of the world. Unfortunately she does not relate these directly to her experience with Aboriginal communities except superficially. By contrast Annette Hamilton's study of child-health and child-care at Mimili, in north-western South Australia, highlights some of the factors in the physical environment and the complex of economic and social factors which form the background against which the development of the child must be viewed. She concludes that means must be found for improving the health of children if there is to be adequate Aboriginal development in the future.

A quite different problem is addressed by Maggie Brady and Rodney Morice. Many reports have appeared in the press about petrol-sniffing at various Aboriginal settlements but little attempt has been made to determine either the true extent, harmful effect or causes of this practice. Brady and Morice suggest that the history of the Yalata settlement is part of the explanation for excitement-seeking behaviour on the part of young people; they point to the failure so far of intervention strategies attempted at Yalata and elsewhere.

The second theme of the book is concerned with analysing information on traditional Aboriginal health systems. Betty Meehan gives a fascinating account of the food collecting and preparing activities of an outstation group living at the mouth of the Blythe River in Arnhem Land. She emphasises that the people who moved from Maningrida back to their own territory have benefited not only by having access to the rich variety of traditional foods, but are also healthier and happier because they now control their own well-being and can think rationally about the direction in which they wish to go in the future. The chapter on bush medicines by Neville Scarlett, Neville White and Janice Reid is complementary to that by Betty Meehan.
The main part of the chapter is a valuable analysis of the medicinal use of various plants in the area. They suggest that the introduction of modern drugs provided by health centres has resulted in a reduction in recourse to traditional herbal remedies, although in many instances people will try both as an insurance against failure.

Catherine Berndt's discussion of traditional concepts of sickness and health based on her own experiences in Arnhem Land is important for a better understanding of the way in which Aboriginal people think about disease and treatment. Traditional healers, at least in western Arnhem Land, were resorted to when ordinary remedies were believed to be of no avail. They derived their power from the spirit world and special men could have a large or small amount of such power: some women also had power though of a more limited kind. Yet new diseases, such as leprosy, tuberculosis, or influenza, introduced after contact with Europeans or Malays, were recognised as beyond the power of the traditional healer.

The need to view health against a wider community setting is argued forcibly by David Biernoff. He challenges the western psychiatric interpretation of aberrant behaviour and argues that only through an in-depth study of the culture of a particular community is it possible to understand what is aberrant behaviour in that context and to appreciate how the people in that community can cope with the 'deviant' individual.

The final theme of the book is the most important, but also the most disappointing. Medical strategies of change imply a discussion of new approaches to the problem of bringing the health status of Aborigines up to the levels of the rest of the community. The two chapters dealing with this theme are very different. Diane Bell, using her experience of the desert community at Warrabri discusses the important role which women played in the past in maintaining health and passing on instructions about health care. Now, with the aggregation into larger communities and the imposition of another value system, their role has been diminished. But Bell believes women still have an important function in trying to interpret the changes taking place at present and providing some cohesiveness to the social structure.

Myrna Tonkinson deals also with a desert community now concentrated at Jigalong in Western Australia. Her analysis is pragmatic, as is the behaviour of the people she observed. They make use of the medical care provided by the white medical staff but they also use the traditional healers and/or home remedies, depending on the type of illness and also the circumstances at the time. She concludes that the Aborigines at Jigalong attempt to utilise fully all the medical resources available to them. Further, she urges that there is a need, not only for an improvement in social conditions, but also for the white doctors and nurses to improve their communication with their Aboriginal patients and to understand the basic ideas and values of the society to which their patients belong.

*Body, Land and Spirit* is a book which, as I remarked at the beginning of this review, should be read by everyone who is concerned about, or involved in, the delivery of health care to Aborigines; but there are some important omissions. The various contributors, with one exception, project their anthropological training onto the problem of health in Aboriginal communities. The communities where they have gained their experience are in the remoter and more traditional parts of the country. There is nothing at all about the health of Aborigines who work on rural properties or who live in the fringe communities of country towns or in the centres and suburbs of our large cities. Another gap is in the absence of any assessment of the work of one of the Aboriginal Medical Services. Some of these have been operating for ten years and it is time we began to take stock objectively of the impact they have made on the health of the communities they serve.
Finally, throughout the book there is implied criticism of white medical staff and the imposition of the values of western medicine on people with quite different values. Nearly all the contributors stress the need for improvement in the social fabric of Aboriginal life, including the physical environment of Aboriginal communities. Many white doctors and nurses are well aware that their work is mainly palliative and that improved social conditions would eliminate many of the diseases with which they now try to cope. However, as in the wider community, they will still be needed for their palliative remedies. These services can be applied with understanding and sympathy and, as Myrna Tonkinson has shown, Aborigines will make use of these services when they perceive that they need them. If this book helps to increase understanding and sympathy it will indeed have performed a valuable service.

R.L. KIRK

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY


All but one of the contributions to this volume published to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the journal Mankind deal with aspects of the history of Australian anthropology. The exception is a paper by Hinton and McCall on the recent expansion in the publication of anthropological journals in Australia. Of the five historical papers, three deal directly with the study of Aborigines. Ronald Berndt provides a personal account of the changing face of Aboriginal studies from the 1930s to the early 1970s. He has elsewhere provided other views of the development of Aboriginal studies as one centrally involved in the process; later historians will undoubtedly find his views useful in assessing the history of Aboriginal studies in the light of other documentary sources. Newton presents a text of an interview with Arthur Capell concerning his research into aspects of Aboriginal linguistics. Unfortunately Newton, though providing a few notes, could have made more of his task as editor. Most of his notes are brief, the text is anecdotal and no attempt is made to provide a proper account of Capell's role in the development of the study of Aboriginal linguistics. McCarthy's paper on anthropology in Museums is competent; it is a pity that he did not present a more detailed personal account of the subject as he has been a central figure in the development of museum anthropology in Australia. No doubt he has fascinating tales to tell.

The two remaining papers in the volume consist of an introductory article by McCall and a longer piece on anthropology in Australia by Annette Hamilton. Both articles lack depth. Hamilton's paper is disappointing in its judgements on the nature of anthropology and the work of anthropologists which appear to be based on very little evidence. McCall's article contains a number of errors in the spelling of names. Both authors neglect the extremely interesting work of Mulvaney on the history of anthropology in Australia, particularly his general overviews, his detailed work on A.W. Howitt and his preliminary comments on W.B. Spencer.

It is a pity that this celebration of the publication of a major anthropological journal in Australia has been so poorly served, especially by younger Australian anthropologists. The history of Australian anthropology, the development of Aboriginal studies which was pioneered by anthropologists, and the institutional
roles of anthropology in Australia are fascinating subjects. But it will require more solid research and a better appreciation of the past than is exhibited in this volume before such a history can be achieved.

JAMES URRY

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Carmel Schrire's publication *The Alligator Rivers: prehistory and ecology in Western Arnhem Land* marks the first major monograph to appear on the archaeology of the East Alligator River region, which is one of the most intensively investigated in Australian prehistoric research. The research for the work was principally carried out between 1964 and 1967 as part of a doctoral thesis, which Schrire has updated with the addition of new chapters extending the historical and environmental background, and included her present views of the interpretation of the archaeological evidence from the original work.

The first three chapters serve as general introduction, covering landform, ecology, early ethnographic contact, the background to her earlier research, methods and techniques. These chapters are a very usable summary and serve as a good introduction to the archaeology of the area. The main body of the monograph is devoted to reports on five sites excavated in the 1960s: Paribari (Padypadiy), Malangangerr, Nawamoyn and Jimeri (Tymede) I and II. Although these detailed and well illustrated reports will provide prehistorians with much easier access to the finds from important sites, their specialised nature will probably be of limited interest to the more general reader. The concluding chapter discusses the evidence for environmental change; the nature of the early and late stone industries; the relation of the Arnhem Land sites to those of Australia, New Guinea and Asia; and finally the implications of Schrire's results for some current theories on the origins and identity of Early Australians.

The two pieces of research which contribute to this volume, separated by over twelve years, present in Schrire's words an 'uneasy marriage', as both her interests and the intellectual climate in which the research was carried out have changed in the intervening years. Schrire's initial 'culture history' approach to her research, which aimed at the selection of sites with substantial stratigraphic depth, was successful in investigating sites which at their time of excavation proved the earliest dated in Australia and produced the world's oldest examples of edge-ground axes. More importantly, it established a series of major questions about Western Arnhem Land prehistory which are again addressed in this work.

These questions centre on the interpretation of the variation between two groups of sites which, although contemporary and separated by less than twenty kilometres, have very different remains. The 'plain' sites (Paribari, Malangangerr and Nawamoyn), as Schrire calls them, are on the edge of the flood plains of the East Alligator River. The second group, the 'plateau' sites (Jimeri I & II) are in a valley of the Arnhem Land escarpment. During the period of occupation, the plains, (which were up to three hundred kilometres from the sea) have changed from a woodland to an estuarine, to a fresh water environment. The material remains in the 'plain' sites reflect these changes, along with the broader two phase technological sequence which is also evident in the 'plateau' sites.
The changes in Schrire's interpretation of the differences between her 'plain' sites and 'plateau' sites have reflected the changes in the focus of prehistoric research in Australia. Initially the dichotomy between the two groups of sites was emphasised and seen as the product of two distinct cultural groups, which exploited the 'plateau' and 'plain' environments with separate economies, exchanging resources between them. This view was modified in 1969 in a paper with Nicolas Peterson, suggesting that the variation between these sites was a result of the differences in economy and technology of a single cultural group moving between the 'plain' and 'plateau' in response to seasonal change. Although Schrire believes that the seasonal use of 'plateau' and 'plain' resources is still valid as a general model, she argues that it does not explain the complex intra and intersite variation in both areas. The rapid and extensive environmental changes which have occurred over the last 6,000 years in the region, are seen as playing a greater role in determining the resource exploitation patterns documented in the sites, and in explaining the variation in the appearance of new resources in the record. Evidence of the present Aboriginal exploitation of the region also confirms Schrire's less deterministic interpretation of the evidence.

There are, however, at least two areas in which her interpretations can be questioned: the suggestion of recent environmental change in the upper levels of the 'plain' sites, and the equation of essentially technological variables with population 'identity'.

Schrire shows some inconsistency in interpreting the later appearance of fresh water mussel shells in the upper levels of middens in the 'plain' sites. In discussing this appearance at Paribari (p.52) she concludes that it indicates a 'real dietary change'. This accords well with the suggestion that the change from estuarine to the freshwater conditions seen in the region today may have been very recent. In the conclusion (p.234) she argues, however, that fresh water species would have been available for the last 6,000 years and that preservational factors have destroyed their presence in the lower levels. Subsequently, she argues that the recent introduction of the buffalo is responsible for the destruction of estuarine mangroves in the area and the present freshwater conditions. This is an unconventional view of the damage caused by buffalo which are generally seen as having the opposite effect. By cutting swim channels into the freshwater swamps, buffalo allow tidally affected rivers to back-up into the swamps increasing their salinity. Schrire's suggestion that this is not occurring in the East Alligator river region requires much more supportive evidence than is provided in this publication.

Schrire's continued interest in 'culture history' is evident in her discussion on the 'identity' of the early Arnhem Landers. The suggestion that these people were a population of 'gracile' Homo sapiens who entered Greater Australia some 20,000 years after the arrival of their more robust predecessors, were the makers of the Core Tool and Scraper Industry and probably stemmed originally from China and Japan, should be approached with some caution. Although she argues that the difference in industries between the 'plateau' and 'plain' sites can not be seen as reflecting any of the present cultural or population divisions and did not do so in the past, Schrire seems to suggest that such connections can be made on a much larger scale.

The evidence upon which this is made is tenuous on at least two grounds. Firstly, it is questionable whether the paleoanthropological evidence demonstrates the existence of two 'totally distinct' groups as clearly as the above suggestion maintains. The earliest published evidence for 'gracile' Homo sapiens in Australia are the Lake Mungo remains dated between 25 and 30,000 years BP. No comparable populations
have yet been found in Arnhem Land sites. Secondly, although the Mungo remains are associated with a Core Tool and Scraper industry, similar to that which Schrire identifies in the Arnhem Land sites, the southern industry is not associated with edge-ground axes. These do not appear in southern Australia for a further 10-15,000 years. The Arnhem Land axes, which are one of the major pieces of evidence for a technological connection between Australia and the earlier axe making industries of Asia, do not therefore support connections between distinct early populations and industries in Australia itself. Although the evidence certainly suggests long standing cultural links between Australia, New Guinea and Asia, the connection of specific populations with specific technologies is extremely doubtful over such large spans of space and time.

This work is complex to review, as it maintains a claim as both an historical document, through the publication of the site reports and as a contemporary work via Schrire's recent research. From an historical perspective the publication of the site reports can be seen as the more valuable part of the publication. Its success as a contemporary work, by necessity, depends largely on the initial research design.

Schrire's work in the East Alligator region was aimed at establishing the antiquity of occupation, and providing a cultural sequence. This can now be seen as limited in its ability to answer the more detailed questions which her early work helped to frame. The desirability of updating the original thesis for publication has been diminished by these limits, which have reduced the ability of this work to add new information and the scope of its re-interpretation. For example, the sites excavated are not representative of all the archaeological sites in the region, only of those with deep deposits. Investigation of other site types, combined with further environmental research, would be necessary for Schrire to fully investigate the region in terms of her new interest in human ecology. Schrire has also presented the original analysis of the stone industries without the extensive revision which new approaches to stone industries over the last decade would have facilitated. Both these tasks would be a major undertaking and were not possible in the year which was available for the preparation of this work. Given these limitations, it may be argued that it would have been more in keeping with the now historic nature of Schrire's original PhD work, for it to have been published in its own right as an important pioneering piece of research.

BARRY CUNDY

Early Man in North Queensland. By Andree Rosenfeld, David Horton and John Winter. Terra Australis 6, Department of Prehistory, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 1981, Pp. xi + 95. p.b. $9.00.

Its slightly punning title may promise more than this report of an archaeological excavation actually delivers. The sub-title, 'Art and archaeology in the Laura region', narrows down the focus somewhat and when one starts reading the close-up study of Early Man Shelter near Laura in Northern Queensland is revealed. The shelter is simply one of hundreds discovered in the last two decades by Captain Percy Trezise, amateur painter, genial Svengali of Aboriginal transitional art, indefatigable conservationist and pilot extraordinary. In 1974 Rosenfeld and her colleagues carried out excavations and analysis of not just the artefactual material but the rock-art of Early Man Shelter and the surrounding area. In the shelter a combination
of painted and pecked symbols clearly continued below the observable floor of the
cave. In contrast to the rock-art of many other regions of the world one of the major
problems in Australia has been to discover evidence for the reliable absolute dating of
such art. Thus at Early Man the comparatively rare chance was given to date in
absolute terms the rock-art and relate it to changes not only in stylistical terms but the
contemporary material culture of the prehistoric occupants of the shelter.

In 1964 Professor Richard Wright had excavated a large rock shelter which he
named after the Laura township, though it is now known as Mushroom Rock Shelter. Here
unfortunately the site's rich painted rock art could not be related to its
obviously long period of human occupation. Trezise's discovery in 1972 of Early Man
Shelter with its engravings, suggestive again of considerable antiquity, was reason
enough for detailed investigation of the site's art and archaeology.

Since many, nay most, readers of Aboriginal History will not be too interested in
the minutiae of artefactual analysis, that this is presented in a clearly illustrated but
somewhat abbreviated form will not be a matter of lasting concern. Briefly, insofar as
definite stone 'artefact types' (= prehistory-speak for distinctive tool forms which
may or may not have been so regarded by their makers) go, there seems to have been
an earlier tradition of larger implements with roughly worked cutting edges associated
with edge-ground axes. There was a more recent 'industry' of identifiable small flake
implements. This technological change some dozen radio-carbon estimations indicate,
occurred about 5000 years ago during the shelter's 15,500 year history. This industrial
change, part of what seems to have been nearly an Australia-wide phenomenon, was
also noted at Mushroom Rock. It may possibly be associated with a stylistic change
from pecked linear designs to those produced by shallow pounding or executed in
paint. Although clearly the most recent phase of Early Man's art history (the painted
figures of birds and stylised humans) is unfortunately here restricted to a single figure
taken from a photogrammetric survey (published by Clouten originally in Australian
Institute of Aboriginal Studies Newsletter 7 (1977) pp.54-59), Rosenfeld's discussion
of the so far uniquely datable earlier art of Early Man, will I think, remain the report's
lasting interest. Thus, because of the dated archaeological layers covering the
extensive pecked frieze of what are termed pits, grids, rounded enclosures and
tridents (the latter being called 'bird tracks' by other workers, which raises an
interesting point to which I wish to return by way of conclusion) has a minimum age
of some 13,000 years.

In a detailed comparative study of other examples of engraved rock art in the
general region — which occasionally include indisputable human figures, particularly
on exposures in the Laura River bed — Rosenfeld makes some important comments
on what has until recently been almost accepted doctrine as to the presumed earliest
stages in the development of prehistoric 'art' in Australia. More than ten years ago
Robert Edwards propounded the view that over much of Southern and Central
Australia there was a common archaic style marked by what certainly seemed
unequivocably to be macropod and bird tracks but including also non-figurative and
mainly curvilinear motifs — what more recently Lesley Maynard has referred to as the
'Panaramitee Style'.

That Rosenfeld's detailed regional survey should have produced significant
variations from what is now beginning to be regarded as a much over-simplified picture
is hardly surprising. One does not have to have a background in Old World rock art
studies, as Rosenfeld has, to consider this only to be expected in the context of the
growing evidence for variation in prehistoric Aboriginal culture throughout time. To
comment — though in view of chronological difficulties it remains unproven — that the
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figurative Laura River complex and the 'non-figurative' (non-figurative I wonder to whom?) engravings may well be contemporary, seems to me eminent art historical good sense.

Good sense too, but a view that many interested in Aboriginal History may find at first unpalatable, is the almost throw-away comment offered by Rosenfeld in the opening pages of this study. In a sentence which is well-worth quoting in full she states:

The question of the extent to which aspects of traditional life are known, practised and valued among the Aboriginal people of the Laura area has important implications well beyond the bounds of archaeology, for current politics and for the further survival of the Aboriginal people themselves as a viable cultural group (p.2).

Rosenfeld goes on to suggest that Percy Trezise's pioneering work in conjunction with Dick Roughsey to collect contemporary traditions associated with the Laura area, while clearly demonstrating the resilience of Aboriginal culture in the face of introduced cultural and sometimes clearly dominating elements, does not necessarily assist the problems of unravelling meaning in its prehistoric art. There is for example growing evidence from not only Queensland but the north-west of Western Australia that contemporary Aboriginal interpretations of prehistoric rock-art sites differ significantly even from those first recorded by European observers.

While this in no way denies the valid claims of Aboriginal society in the twentieth century AD to be guardian over the still extant remains of Aboriginal society in the twentieth century BC, it does (at least in this reviewer's mind) make something of a nonsense of the attitudes of some younger — European — and obviously well-intentioned archaeologists who refuse to publish the results of their prehistoric rock art studies in deference to contemporary Aboriginal groups, groups who in certain cases have quite obviously not even been aware of the existence of such sites.

Equally, to use such terms as Rosenfeld does in her survey as 'figurative' and 'non-figurative' in the context of prehistoric symbols (such as the Laura 'tridents') may be just as partial — in both senses of the word. But then it is a measure of the value of such still-all-too rare detailed rock art studies as Early Man in North Queensland that they should raise such far from parochial and controversial problems.

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The Handbook of Australian languages provides case studies of particular languages, presented with the intention of being as useful as possible to 'European and Aboriginal school teachers . . . and specialists in other fields such as anthropology and ethnomusicology' (p.5) as well as to professional linguists. The first two volumes contain nine grammatical descriptions (each mentioned below); there is a third and final volume to come.

Both editors have long been concerned to see Australian languages as fully recorded and as widely appreciated as possible; and both have recently and independently published books introducing the languages' general characteristics, each at a different level of specialisation (Dixon 1980, Blake 1981). The handbook is a complementary enterprise.
In echoing the title of Franz Boas's key contribution to American linguistics (part I:1911), the editors pay homage to an ancestral presence and at the same time provoke comparison. Like Boas's, this Handbook promises 'sketch grammars' (p.5). For Boas in America at the beginning of the century, sketches were a principal 'step in the progress of our knowledge of American languages'. They were short partly through the deliberate exclusion of certain types of material, (e.g. vocabulary, because 'many vocabularies had been collected'; phonetic details and questions of historical development, as belonging 'to the next step' [1911:v]). Dixon and Blake make no such linguistically-based claims for the strategic aptness of their Handbook's normally shorter 'sketch-length' grammars, assuming that where possible more comprehensive ones are preferable, and will follow. The Handbook of Australian languages is modestly offered as a convenient publishing outlet for grammars that are 'too brief for monographs and too long for most journals' (p.5). The standardised format for contributions aims simply to ensure the similar presentation of comparable material and roughly comparable overall coverage. This includes background information on the language and its speakers, accounts of its phonology, morphology and syntax, a few pages of illustrative text where possible and either a 500-word vocabulary selected in accordance with a standard list, or, if limited, all the vocabulary known to the writer.

Each of the first two volumes contains different amounts of equally useful kinds of preliminary information. In the very considerable introduction to volume 1, which recapitulates in condensed form some of the themes of the editors' recent general books (Dixon 1980, Blake 1981), attention is drawn to the way in which 'languages are dying all over Australia'. The Handbook's timeliness as a publishing stratagem is partly predicated on a correlation between the length of a grammar and the state of health of the language being described: the series is envisaged particularly as an 'avenue of publication for grammars of dying languages' as well as for 'sketch grammars of living languages' pending fuller studies (p.5). The nine sketches under review lend support to the association of moribund languages with short grammars. Only one (Haviland's 153-page Guugu Yimidhirr) is of a language with an impressive number of speakers (600). The other languages described have at best a handful, except for Watjarri (Douglas) with about 50 a decade ago.

But in fact languages must be not merely dying but dead (or, to get at the reality behind the metaphor, everyone in a position to transmit them must have died) before scarcity of information can determine in any absolute way the length of a description (Crowley's 21-page 'Yaygir'). Even then, woefully inadequate information can be space-consuming to assess. Crowley and Dixon's 'Tasmanian', an object lesson in how to approach poor evidence, could only have benefited from ampler illustration of their procedures. Whenever any kind of fieldwork is possible, the constraints on a grammar's length are far more complex. Questions of time, money and skill apart, its length will depend most of all on the extent to which speakers or rememberers and linguists can fire and sustain each other's interests in the project.

Breen says that none of the five people on whose information his 'Margany and Gunya' is based 'found the task of answering questions about a long-disused and half forgotten language congenial'. The reverse is often the case. People who feel that their language will be lost for all time when they die are often particularly interested in opportunities to create a record of it. Haas's Tunica (1940), which forms the final volume of the Handbook of American Indian languages, grew from the surfacing memories of a single person who had been spoken to by his mother, but had preferred to reply in French. In Australia most of the few lengthy and detailed grammars so
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far written have resulted from close collaborations between a linguist and a limited number of elderly people with knowledge of the language.

If I labour the point, it is not because Dixon and Blake are unaware of it (Dixon’s own description of Yidiny [1977] is one such grammar); but because their Handbook will not be received just as a welcome experiment in publishing methods, but as a substantive contribution to the study of Australian languages and a model for further work. It would be a pity if the shortness of its sketches were to encourage linguists working on ‘dying’ language to lower their expectations, or lead them to suppose that working in communities where languages’ transmission is more secure will of itself bring more substantial results. An interestingly greater variety of types of linguistic study and methods of fieldwork may be attempted there. Yet it may be more rather than less difficult to find common interests with the community in achieving the undertaking.

This Handbook contributes to ‘progress in our knowledge’ of Australian languages (to use Boas’s phrase) in part because of its non-programmatic nature. The format is flexible enough not to inhibit explanatory discussion of the idiosyncracies of particular languages (startling phonology in Crowley’s ‘Mpakwithi dialect of Anguthimri’); or the presentation of subsidiary information, such as appendices on earlier writings, or related dialects (Blake’s Pitta-Pitta). There is scope for authors to pursue their enthusiasms (suggestive historical speculation in Dixon’s ‘Warrgamay’); and to relay those of speakers (Buchanan’s in story-telling and songs in Eades’ ‘Gumbaynggir’). The Handbook of Australian languages deserves not to end with the third volume, but to become a continuing series; a handbook so named not only by way of a pious gesture, but for its function as a cumulatively more representative concise guide to Australia’s oldest languages.

To close on a matter of presentation of interest to anyone concerned with Aboriginal history: it would be good to see the consistent provision of typeable equivalents to linguistic symbols for ‘dying’ and ‘dead’ as well as ‘living’ languages. Others besides professionally-equipped linguists need to be able to make written references as easily to Aborigines’ linguistic past as to their present.

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This work by Judith Wright describes the pastoral invasion of central Queensland. It covers the period between Leichhardt’s explorations in 1844 and the end of the century. Wright introduces the subject with a long exposition which outlines the pastoral expansion into south-eastern Australia generally to about 1850. This introduction occupies three chapters, and is a useful commentary on what follows.
Since, though, this is one of the few areas and periods in Australia for which reasonable descriptions of race relations in the pastoral industry already exist, it seems a little long.

The next three chapters describe the early pastoral expansion north of the Dawson, and concern in part the exploits of the curious Frederick Walker, one time leader of the Native Police. In this section of the book, a sub-theme emerges: the physical destruction of the country. The cessation of the Aborigines' annual burning, the effects of over-grazing, and the general ignorance of the long-term damage caused by pastoralism changed the country utterly in two generations. Prickly-pear, spear-grass, lancewood and rosewood invaded the Eucalyptus forests. Dense scrub impeded men and animals in 1880 in a manner unimagined in the first, optimistic years of the pastoral invasion.

At chapter 7, the narrative turns to the second theme of the book — an account of the career of the squatter Albert Wright. He first managed 'Avon Downs' Station, in Jangga country (inland from Mackay), and after 1868, 'Nulalbin' Station, in Wadja country, (inland and south-east of Rockhampton). His fortunes and misfortunes are followed until his death by pneumonia in 1890, the onset of which was hastened by years of financial strain and hard physical labour. Albert (for so Judith Wright calls him instead of the more objective Wright), followed the career of a typical Queensland nineteenth century pastoralist. He was a self-made man, who drove himself (at cost to himself and his family) desperately hard. Despite his labours, he died in debt, and today none of his descendants own land in the region. From this point the description of Albert's wrestles with his creditors, cattle disease and the seasons largely takes the place of the narrative of his relations with the Aboriginal station and bush people of 'Nulalbin'. The detailed treatment of Albert comes a little unexpectedly, since it appears in the first half of the book that race relations is to be the theme of the rest.

The shift in focus from a general survey to a description of the life of a single individual runs the risk of too close an identification with his interests. It is in the description of Albert's 'Nulalbin' years that this work resembles somewhat Margaret Kiddle's powerful *Men of Yesterday*. At several points this danger is manifest. Two Aboriginal stockmen are referred to as 'blackboys'. An Aboriginal, Tony, who stayed behind at a pub in Rockhampton, is described as a 'deserter'. These are minor slips. Wright does not attempt to justify Albert's actions, but sometimes her commentary on some of them seems a little bland:

But on Avon Downs Fred [the manger] was in trouble. The cattle were so wild that horsemen could not get near them, and the Janggawere driving them off into the scrubs and spearing some. He had too few stockmen to hope to get a good draft for the autumn and finish his branding. Albert, as the senior partner, must write and ask for more visits from the Native Police.

Wright's difficulty is that her principal source for this period is Albert's diary, which deals with a vast number of subjects besides Aborigines. Wright's comments on daily relations between Albert and the Wadja are (evidently like Albert's) numerous, but not very informative. This lack of local records is often a problem for historians of race-relations. What can be said if there are no local sources? One answer lies in the use of source material elsewhere in Australia, where the pastoral invasion occurred so late that Aboriginal oral accounts have survived. Such records indicate that frequently the first decade after the white occupation was a ferment. There was constant and urgent debate among Aborigines over whether, and on what terms, there should be participation in station life. It appears that many older people, after
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debate, stayed in the bush, and obtained the valued European possessions through their kinfolk. Some younger people who stayed or worked at the stations had a different set of problems, philosophical as well as physical, to which there were no certain answers. At such periods all was change, whether perceived by the pastoralists or not. I would like to know a little more about the Wadja in, say, the 1870s. How had society changed? How did the community see the pastoralists? At what point, if at all, did the Wadja believe that their lives had changed irrevocably? Any such discussion must of course be speculative, but it is worth the trying, and a very close reading of all the available local sources can often throw up a surprising number of hints from which inferences can be made. Though the actual description of how the sway of the pastoralists in Australia came to be established is still very far from complete, in my view the historian of race relations can no longer be content with its narrative alone. Any study will be the more penetrating by the attempted analysis of the changes in organisation and perception of both sides, not just one side, of the frontier.

In the task which Wright sets herself, she succeeds admirably. Her spare, unadorned prose is a model of good writing. She allows herself no polemical passages. Readers have to work for themselves to follow her argument, and it is only in the closing chapters, and even then only by implication, that the separate themes are united. The cry for the dead is not only for the Aborigines, but for the country too, both brought to destruction by the greed and stupidity of the pastoralists. For at the end of the century, millions of acres stood empty, alienated not only legally but morally. The aching sense of loss of something precious is made more poignant by the knowledge that the agents of destruction were for the most part squatters who ultimately failed to hold the country they had won at such terrible cost.

Wright concludes with the melancholy reflection, made the more powerful by the lack of such reflection earlier, that through the continuing operation of repressive legislation, ‘perhaps none of the descendants of the Wadja, if any remain, have seen the country that once was theirs’. This final paragraph is a reminder to those who argue (quite correctly) that Aboriginality was not and is not fixed, but lives and changes. That Aborigines now, or in the future may, identify as Wadja and live within the traditional boundaries, cannot change the central fact of the destruction of one particular kind of Aboriginality, which once existed, and now is extinguished forever.

PETER READ


This is a sombre book, but worth reading for those who wish to understand the continuing poor state of race relations in Queensland. It tells how the population of the Jiman Aborigines of the Upper Dawson River declined within twenty years, from several hundreds living in well-watered country to a poor remnant. A Nest of Hornets serves as a companion volume to Judith Wright’s The Cry for the Dead, with which it shares many characters and incidents, though seen from a different viewpoint. Wright tells of the virtual disappearance of the Wadja Aborigines, Gordon Reid tells an even more violent story of the near extermination of their neighbours, the Jiman.
These accounts and Reynolds' book *The Other Side of the Frontier* (1981) should lay to rest once and for all the tendency among previous historians to suggest that the Aborigines gave up their lands and livelihood with little resistance. Reid reveals that on the Dawson River neither side was peaceable nor without a degree of violence and cruelty. Moreover, to use today's jargon, there was an escalation of violence and cruelty. The Jiman had suffered from 'dispersal', a euphemism for getting rid of Aborigines by fair means or foul. Not only had they suffered murder by gun and by poison, but in addition the women had suffered sexual abuse. Using the method of divide and rule the government (still from Sydney until 1859) had set up the Native Police Force, recruiting Aborigines from distant areas. There was mutual hostility and fear between these recruits and the local Aborigines, feelings which were encouraged by the European officers, whom Reid reveals as unscrupulous and often unreliable. Some of the most flagrant acts of cruelty, including rape, were perpetrated by the Aboriginal members of this force.

White settlement began in Jiman country in 1847 after Leichhardt's return from exploring the district, with good reports of its potentialities. The first contacts were friendly, but conflict arose as the squatters occupied more and more land. The Jiman could pursue three courses: they could become servants and beggars on the stations; they could retire to the less fertile margins of their land, not yet occupied by the settlers; or they could resist the invasion and kill some of the newcomers in the hope of scaring all of them away. They used all three of these options, with those who were employed on the stations combining with those who had retired to the margins when attacks were made on the settlers. The answer of the settlers was not to retire but to employ more and more violence, by arming themselves more heavily and combining with the Native Police in wholesale killing of all Aborigines whether responsible or not, wiping out peaceful groups of men, women and children.

A brief resume is in order here of the events at Hornet Bank on the night of 27 October 1857. This station was founded by Andrew Scott in 1853 and in 1854 he made John Fraser his manager. John Fraser died in 1856 and the management passed to his oldest son William, who in turn left his next oldest brother in charge while he was occupied in a carrier business. On the night in question the station homestead was occupied by the widowed Mrs Fraser, eight of her children and a tutor; two shepherds slept in an outbuilding. At dawn a group of Aboriginal men — estimated to number a hundred — descended on the homestead and slaughtered three of the sons and the tutor, then raped and killed Mrs Fraser and two of her daughters, aged 19 and 11, and killed two younger children. As the two shepherds emerged from their hut they too were murdered. One son, Sylvester, aged 14, had fallen under his bed after being hit with a club and escaped to give the alarm. It is not surprising that he and his oldest brother William swore vengeance and were active in the indiscriminate retribution that followed. (William alone was credited with taking one hundred Aboriginal lives.) The surrounding settlers formed vigilante bands and together with a troop of Native Police systematically shot all the Aborigines they could track down for many miles in all directions. Though some of these had in their possession goods pillaged from Hornet Bank, others had had nothing to do with the affair. Reynolds (*Other side of the frontier* p.100) reckons that in Queensland ten Aborigines were slain for every European killed by Aborigines. Here the toll of vengeance was even greater.

It is not entirely clear why Hornet Bank was chosen for this planned and organised massacre by the Jiman. Possible reasons are that it was an isolated station, and that it was unprepared for such an attack. The most likely reason is that the Fraser brothers had imperilled their own lives, and those of the rest of their family, by their ill-treatment of Aboriginal women.
Reid has an interesting suggestion for the reason why Aboriginal retaliation met such violent retribution in the Queensland of the nineteenth century. He explains that the Aborigines had a system of justice in which the related group of a murdered man itself exacted a strictly controlled vengeance by taking a life for a life (even though the life taken need not be that of the actual murderer). The Europeans were accustomed to a quite different system in which punishment was operated by the state. On the frontier, without their customary legal system, Europeans followed the Aboriginal system and exacted their own revenge, but without the restraints that kept Aboriginal retribution within strict limits. This seems to me a tenable hypothesis, but alternatively, while reading the shocking story of the Hornet Bank massacre and its consequences, one could come to believe that the Queensland settlers were willing to tolerate the loss of a few of their fellows because this gave them an excuse to pursue their ultimate aim of wiping the Aborigines off the face of the earth — an aim they almost achieved. It should be noted, however, that this harsh judgment does not apply to all the settlers, for a small minority put high value on the lives of Aborigines and, despite the opinion of their neighbours, continued to treat them as fellow human beings.

Reid presents a meticulous and interesting account of the Hornet Bank massacre and its sequel. However, I found the details hard to follow, because of the multiplicity of names of settlers and their stations, impossible to keep in mind unless the reader is a Mastermind winner. This difficulty is compounded by the lack of an index. A list of the settlers and their stations, with their distance and direction from Hornet Bank, would have been of great assistance in following the actions of the characters.

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Historians of Aboriginal Australians cannot avoid the need to know about the total situation within which their particular concerns are set. However the standard histories of the continent, of which there are now so many, are remarkably silent on those parts of Australia where most Aborigines live. Even for non-Aboriginal matters, the neglect by historians of the third of the country lying in the tropics is very striking.

It is against such a background that this straightforward, general history of the Northern Territory is so much to be welcomed. It does not pretend to be original in detail, but it draws together and reports other specialised research work, including several papers by Dr Powell himself. There is a lot to get through in some 300 pages of text, but the coverage of what is reasonably knowable is remarkably complete. It ranges from a sketch of the geological and prehistoric past, through Dutch exploration, British settlements, the South Australian occupation, the Commonwealth administration earlier this century, an excellent chapter on World War II, and recent events up to 1981. The many illustrations are carefully chosen to help the text.
Dr Powell has a gift for pithy summary and his style is splendidly readable. His publishers have provided for a system of referencing that does not disturb the flow of the text, yet is easy to use, precise, and totally appropriate to the nature of the book. With such scattered and diverse sources, it is inevitable that recourse will often be made to secondary discussions of them, but the range of references to unpublished theses, oral accounts and official publications is most impressive.

In the present state of Northern Territory history and for those wanting to use the book to set the context of their particular concerns, there is much to be said for the essentially narrative structure of the work and the frequent reference to external factors impinging on the Territory, whether they be the worries of London politicians, the wars of Europe or the political uncertainties of the American beef market. Yet I would have preferred a little more attention being given to the texture of life in the Territory and to an analysis of the ideas in Territorians' heads. ‘Tropical fatigue’, the call of ‘the Never-Never’ and the unquenchable enthusiasm for ‘northern development’ require subtle untangling — and perhaps a different sort of book.

Any general history has problems weaving disparate threads together and in any Australian history, still more that of the Territory, there is the challenge of integrating the experience of Aborigines and other non-European groups into the overall account. Here, these groups are given, if not the attention they might deserve to meet the interests of some readers, at least as much as reasonably possible given the state of current research. Again and again, the Aboriginal view is remembered, as in the account of Stuart's journeys, and occasional individuals, such as Neinmil at Port Essington, flit briefly across the stage. Where his sources allow, Dr Powell sees beyond the generality of Aborigines to the local group involved in some issue. It is very hard to do more. Even when the will is there, it is not easy to shift the focus away from the well-documented concerns of government. Occasionally Dr Powell seems happier with the official line than imagining alternative possibilities. For example, I doubt that many readers of this journal will be convinced by his defence of the attempt to frustrate the Kenbi land claim. Yet he does so much better than most historians (and others) in his discussion of such issues that it seems churlish to cavil.

Indeed, it is just the fairly orthodox ‘good sense’ of the book as a whole which make it so valuable at this stage of understanding the Territory's history. Those wishing to promote revisionist views can be confident that they have here an accurate account of what they have to overturn. Those working on issues of detail can see how their conclusions confirm or conflict with orthodoxy.

People already interested in the Northern Territory will need no recommendation to buy this book, and it will clearly serve as the standard work on its subject for some time to come. It should also be read by those primarily concerned with other parts of Australia. Northern Territory history is not just a variation of the story elsewhere on the continent, but is, in many ways, more diverse. It also raises very clearly the problem of how to define success and failure. It is very hard to maintain a simple Whig confidence here, which is one reason why history is so important in the north. Perhaps that is a lesson for both ‘black’ and ‘white’.

C.C. MACKNIGHT
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Although there were a number of missionaries from the British Isles working in the Australian colonies in the nineteenth century it is an interesting comment on the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic tradition that so many missionaries to the Aborigines came from continental Europe. German Gossner and Basle trained men pioneered Aboriginal missions in Queensland, Moravians worked in Victoria and Queensland, and German Lutherans in South Australia. Among the Catholics, Italian Passionists worked in Queensland, Austrian Jesuits in South Australia and Spanish Benedictines in Western Australia. George Russo has written a masterly biography of Rosendo Salvado (1814-1900), the real founder of the Benedictine monastery and mission at New Norcia. The narrative, though sometimes verbose, is eminently readable and the volume should be regarded as a companion to Salvado's own account, Memorie Storiche dell'Australia (Rome 1851), translated into English by Father E.J. Stormon in 1977.

The first half of Russo's book is a biographical portrait of Salvado set in the political, social and religious context of Western Australia and Europe while the second half concentrates on the Aboriginal mission detailing Salvado's policy and instancing his successes and failures. While Russo's research has been thorough and he has aimed at an impartial account, one feels that he has allowed his own view of twentieth century Catholicism to guide his hand. He seems to play down the nobility of Salvado's ancestry (made much of by earlier biographers) and gives inadequate indication of the intensity of feeling and the seriousness of the rift between the Benedictines and Bishop Brady so graphically portrayed by Professor Garrad in his article on 'New Norcia and the Great Schism of Perth' (Journal of Religious History, VIII [1974-5]:49-74). Yet these two matters need to be explored in order to understand fully Salvado and his place in the story of Catholic missions to the Aborigines.

Russo is one of the few writers who does not use the word noble in relation to Salvado's family. Indeed it is not clear where Russo places Salvado's parents in the social hierarchy. It is as if he hoped his readers would assume an affluent middle class background understandable to most Australians. Yet it was Salvado's patrician background, his membership of the universal noblesse, which enabled him to be so successful in Western Australia. With the courtliness of an ancient Celtic saint and the devotion and musical talents of a self-effacing Albert Schweitzer, Salvado was warmly received by Perth society, was accepted by the leading pastoral families, and had the friendship of at least two governors one of whom was a Catholic 'gentleman' like himself. Salvado and his colleague Bishop Serra, who was a Spanish knight, could deal with officials and had entree to circles denied to Methodist missionaries or peasant Irish priests. This separated the Spaniards from the majority of missionaries of the nineteenth century.

The cleavage between the Spanish Benedictines and Bishop Brady highlighted the differences between a cultured cosmopolitan order and an insular priesthood smarting under discrimination. Irishmen did not make good or willing missionaries to the Aborigines. If Brady had a vision for the work, the Irish priests he appointed failed, and he himself was pessimistic. Similarly in South Australia the Jesuits were unable to persuade their Irish priests to undertake a mission and Austrian Jesuits had to be brought in. It was as if Irishmen felt insecure in the presence of a people who seemed to be placed in a social position inferior to themselves. Discrimination seemed to breed discrimination.
The code of the nobleman emphasised the connection between status and responsibility. It did not recognise the artificial class barriers so important to the middle and lower orders. Salvado applied that code to his Aboriginal parishioners, treating everyone with equal respect.

Russo seems to infer that the Aborigines of the Victoria Plains were 'superior' to those of other parts but this can be taken as a reflection of bias. If Europeans were well disposed they started off with the assumptions that the local Aborigines had the right potential and they tended to get the response they were looking for. The other attitude, which still persists in many rural centres, is that Aborigines elsewhere might be successful at what they take up but that the local Aborigines are always an exception, intellectually inferior and incapable of social advancement. Salvado and his colleagues did not doubt the capabilities and potentials of those brought into 'civilisation'.

Perhaps the most pathetic episode in the story of the New Norcia mission is the history of the two Aboriginal novices Francis Conaci and John Dirimera who accompanied Salvado to Rome and spent over five years in Europe. Conaci died in Rome and Dirimera died shortly after returning to Western Australia in 1855. Russo seems to think their deaths inevitable. Yet reading between the lines one gets the impression that the rapport between the Bishop and his students was so great that he failed to see that they were doing things for him rather than because of a straight out vocational choice. They told him what they believed he wanted to hear. It is likely that if they had returned to Australia with him in 1852 they would have lived.

Too much can be made of the 'uniqueness' of the Benedictine experiment. It was certainly the most successful mission in Western Australia in the nineteenth century and it was also successful in the general Australian context, but it held this position largely because it did not lose all its Aboriginal population to big towns as happened in many of the early east coast missions. Nor was Salvado unique in his hope that Aborigines could become small landed proprietors. This was also a view held by the Protestant missionaries such as L.E. Threlkeld of Lake Macquarie. That Aborigines should work with livestock was encouraged by other missions. Indeed when Salvado was accused of making New Norcia 'a sheep and cattle mission' and the Benedictines were portrayed as shepherds of sheep rather than shepherds of souls (pp.237-8) in the 1870s, these charges were but an echo of similar charges against earlier Protestant missionaries in the east.

In the last analysis it was not policies which were important but the quality of the relationship between men. It was the missionary who could overcome his squeamish dislike of insect larvae or eat damper made with masticated flour who won respect and held an Aboriginal community together. Such men as Salvado rarely recognise the rarity of their own quality; they expect others to behave and think as themselves, particularly those sharing the same vocation. But Salvado at least understood this problem. He emerges as a complex and rounded character equally at home at the colonial soiree displaying his musical gifts for his own charity or travelling for days with an orphan child on his shoulders. But when Dr Parry, the Anglican Bishop of Perth, told him that he was proposing a mission on similar lines in October 1878, Salvado was not impressed: 'Where could he get the humble, hard-working and dedicated men necessary for such an enterprise?' (p.218). A monastic order where patrician and peasant were made equal provided that hope.

NIEL GUNSON AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The integrating theme of this valuable and timely book is reflected in its subtitle: Aboriginal reactions to European invasion and oppression were rarely those of passivefatalists but of a people with an abiding sense of injustice. Their anger impelled them into conflict, first in the form of guerilla warfare and since then in more subtle but equally determined ways. In their continuing quest for justice, the Aborigines have employed successfully many and varied strategies of resistance in the assertion of their human rights and their distinctive identity. The author deals authoritatively with both historical and contemporary developments and is highly successful in conveying the complexity of factors contributing to the present woeful status of Aborigines in Australian society and the contemporary political realities that perpetuate inequality and injustice. This book for the most part achieves a nice balance between indignation and objectivity in its tone, and I recommend it highly as a text for high school and tertiary courses with Aborigines as their subject matter.

Interpretive summaries are provided of a wide range of subjects: policy development and change, health, economy and employment, legal constraints, media influences, and the changing content of children's literature. These are interspersed with more detailed case-study material; for instance, there are excellent accounts of the Queensland government's takeover of Aurukun and Mornington Island (Ch.5), enlivened by the author's personal experience of a heavy-handed state bureaucracy in action, and of the Noonkenbah dispute in Western Australia in illustration of the growing political consciousness of Aborigines (Ch.9). The overview chapters are greatly enhanced by the inclusion of relevant statistics, which underline the major points made concerning differences between Aborigines and other Australians in health and housing levels, numbers in prison, income and educational levels, and recent demographic trends. Most of these statistics relate to the late 1970s and are thus reasonably up to date; furthermore, the author's interpretations of them are consistently insightful as she documents the nature and extent of the Aborigines' severely disadvantaged position in the wider society. Her tone throughout is nevertheless positive, in the sense that she depicts Aborigines as actively engaged in resistance and refusing to accept without opposition the indignities that have been heaped upon them since their country was invaded in 1788.

The book's considerable strengths easily outweigh its weaknesses, a few of which deserve comment. The weakest chapter is the first, in which the author attempts the difficult task of depicting 'traditional' society in all its complexities and regional variations, in only eleven pages. This account lacks both accuracy and balance. The clan is not 'the fundamental unit' in the organisation of society, since large areas of the continent had no such form of grouping; ritual knowledge was not 'limited to certain men of high degree'; social control was predicated much less on 'supernatural punishment or reward' than on self-regulation achieved via strongly inculcated feelings of shame and embarrassment plus the threat of physical punishment; apart from avoidance and joking relationships, few behaviour patterns were 'tightly laid down', for as the author notes on the following pages, 'individuals enjoyed considerable social freedom'; the terms 'estate' and 'range' in reference to local organisation were coined by W.E.H. Stanner, who should be cited; it is meaningless to speak of Aboriginal languages as 'well-structured' (name one 'poorly-structured' language?); and the description of the Aborigines as 'semi-nomadic' is less accurate than depicting them as nomadic but with strong territorial anchorages.

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To omit discussion of important but more negative aspects of traditional societies (such as sexual inequalities and conflict, both interpersonal and intergroup) is to distort the picture. Hopefully in the next edition the author will rewrite this chapter, making it a more accurate and balanced portrait of 'traditional' life. She should also correct the map and put such places as Oenpelli, Amata, and Myall Creek in their right places, as well as showing Pilbara the region rather than Pilbara the station, since the former is what is being discussed in the text.

In the final section of Ch.2, dealing with events after Federation, I was surprised to see that there was no mention of the appalling activities of the Aborigines Protection Board in New South Wales. In discussing the policies of the 1970s (Ch.5), the author overlooks the great significance and far-reaching consequences of the incorporations policy of the Federal Labor Government. This was the corner-stone of its self-determination policy, based in part at least on Professor Rowley’s suggestion that only through incorporation could an effective socio-economic carapace be provided for Aborigines, ‘whose autonomy has been shattered without the compensation of full participation in the settler society’ (The Remote Aborigines, 1972:128). Today there are more than 830 incorporated Aboriginal bodies, which supply the power base and support facilities for almost all the major Aboriginal activists and spokespersons at both state and national levels. On the role of the Aboriginal Legal Services, one great success, particularly in remote areas, has been to make Aborigines aware of the limitations of police powers while at the same time learning about their basic rights under law. True, policemen are still feared by many, but the Aboriginal perception of the policeman as God is a thing of the past.

Quibbles aside, the author has succeeded admirably in demonstrating her central thesis on the nature of Aboriginal reactions to their loss of land and autonomy. The struggles have been long and hard and are certainly not over. The author is realistic in her assessment that the future of the Aborigines as a viable minority depends on the willingness of other Australians to cede them some real power and a measure of true control over resources. The recent failure of the strongly united New South Wales Aborigines to prevent the passage of a watered-down Land Rights bill in the state parliament, despite prolonged, varied and well publicised protests, reveals the raw facts of continuing Aboriginal powerlessness. This reality makes the author’s final suggestion one of major importance: that ‘white’ Australians must be brought to an awareness that the Aboriginal struggle is in fact their struggle as well. All Australians should battle against ‘... the fierce pursuit of economic growth which reduces people to mere instruments of production; it resists monstrous economic forces and impersonal bureaucracies and seeks instead a more individually responsible lifestyle, with greater conservation and increased local autonomy’ (p.229). Let us hope that this book gets the large readership it deserves.

ROBERT TONKINSON

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY


‘This history’, writes Richard Broome, ‘is an attempt by an Australian of European descent to help set the record straight’ (p.6). Except when he deals with recent years, his main sources are numerous works of historians, anthropologists and others who published during the 1970s. Although he makes good use of well known authors,
especially Charles Rowley, and draws effectively on Aboriginal writers like Margaret Tucker, Jimmie Barker and Dick Roughsey, his most valuable contribution lies in communicating to a wide readership research findings which might otherwise have remained hidden in specialist monographs and journals.

Broome begins by looking at ‘Traditional Life’ as part of the background to black-white conflict. As he says (p.11), it is impossible to convey the complexities of Aboriginal society in a brief space; but he might have devoted a few lines to something like fire technology to combat the general reader's over-simple perception of a 'hunter-gatherer' economy. The ten chapters that follow are arranged thematically along a loose chronology, beginning with the response of the Gamaraigal people to the British invaders and ending with the issues of the 1970s — land rights, mining and Aboriginal self-determination. Matters discussed along the way include cultural resistance, reserves and missions, and Aboriginal workers in the northern cattle industry. He selects well and writes persuasively about, for example, the bureaucratic attack on Coranderrk and Cumeroogunga reserves, racism in 'the grubby capital of the Northern Territory' between the wars, and the visit of the 'Freedom Riders' to Walgett and Moree in the mid-1960s.

The best parts of the book deal with the last hundred years or so. Broome is less confident on the earlier period, and less accurate: Governor Gawler's egregious speech to the Kaurna is dated before Adelaide was founded (though the endnote gets it right), and Yagan, the Swan River patriot, is translated to Victoria ten years after he died, which is especially unfortunate as nineteenth century Western Australia is otherwise hard done by. Here Broome is a victim of a dubious source. His explanations are occasionally confusing, as when he suggests (p.26) that the view of the Aborigines as 'noble savages' was nonsense, having a few pages earlier congratulated Cook for glimpsing 'the underlying nobility' of Aboriginal traditional culture and quoted Cook's comments of 1770 which are so often used to sum up 'noble savagery'. And to say — Blainey-like — that 'The Gamaraigal must have thought they were confronted by barbarians' (p.22) may be an arresting use of paradox, but how much does it really tell us about Aboriginal responses? Here readers will need to refer to Henry Reynolds' The Other Side of the Frontier, which appeared after Broome went to press and might have added a new dimension to his subtitle Black Response to White Dominance. But this is not a criticism: in a field expanding as quickly as Aboriginal history, any author of a general book must expect to be partially out of date by the time his or her work is published, let alone reviewed. Certainly Broome's book is good enough to warrant before too long a revised edition.

Broome treads warily over delicate issues. After summarising views about when the Aborigines first settled Australia, he concludes 'There is no doubt that they were the original inhabitants of a previously silent continent' (p.10). He writes with sensitivity about the plight of dormitory children in missions, 'left halfway between the Aboriginal and European world' (p.106), about Aboriginality and about the internalisation of 'white' views. He makes a determined effort to be fair: paternalism, he writes, became the blot on the humanitarianism of the missionaries — but not all missionaries were paternalistic; and in any case, 'Was it any wonder that Father Seraphim Sanz, Spanish Benedictine missionary at Kalumburu for over 30 years, who had a Father in heaven, a Holy Father in Rome, and a Father Abbot in New Norcia, should say to a group of middle-aged Aborigines at Kalumburu in 1977: “good morning boys and girls” ' (p.105). Some might say Broome is over-generous. He is unequivocal, however, about other perpetrators of racism and exploitation, who are in any case generally quite adept at condemning themselves — like the mining
company official who suggested that 'every Aboriginal reserve should have a mine next door' (p.189).

Broome concludes by identifying grounds for optimism about race relations in Australia. The fact that such a book as his could be written and that many people are likely to read it gives some cause for hope that he might be right.

S.G. FOSTER AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY


This volume consists of papers given at the fifth symposium of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 1981. Like most such collections, it is rather a mixed bag. The theme is topical, and inevitably some contributions are already somewhat dated. It is however a useful collection of different kinds of approaches to these thorny issues. The editor, in his foreword, sees as 'one of the most insistent challenges in today's Australian scene: the need to understand what land means to Aborigines'. If there is a consistent theme, it is this one, of the difference between the Aboriginal view of land, and the European attitude. In general, although not exclusively, the geographical focus is on Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The first paper, by R.M. Berndt, presents an outline of traditional Aboriginal land ownership, stressing the sacred quality of all land, and the inalienable and non-transferable nature of Aboriginal land ownership. He distinguishes between the primarily religious ownership of small tracts of land (Stanner's 'estates') by local descent groups, and the primarily resource-utilising ownership of wider tracts of land (Stanner's 'ranges') by co-operating members of several local descent groups. Berndt indicates the relevance of the latter charter of belonging in areas where much traditional knowledge has been lost.

L.R. Hiatt's paper on 'Traditional concepts of Aboriginal land' develops a similar argument, with a case study from the Blyth River in Arnhem Land. He contrasts the inalienable ritual rights to an estate with the magnanimity of owners with respect to the resources of the estate. He discusses the 'ethic of generosity' involved here, adaptive for hunter-gatherers, but in contrast to the bourgeois morality which encourages acquisitiveness and the retention of valuable items.

Priscilla Girrabul, of the Gunbalanya Community, Oenpelli, presents an Aboriginal view of the changes brought by Europeans, contrasting traditional times and culture with the current situation. While admitting that Aborigines have adopted much of European culture, especially material items, she puts before us the problems created by its imposition, and especially the impact of mining companies. Sue Kesteven has appended a biographical note and commentary on Girrabul's paper, drawing attention to the independent and equal role of women vis-à-vis men in matters of land in traditional Aboriginal society. A further biographical and historical note is added by Catherine Berndt.

In her own contribution, 'Aboriginal women, resources and family life', Catherine Berndt also argues that Aboriginal women had an interdependent role with men in respect to land matters, and that their knowledge and understanding of their country in its widest sense was equally detailed and precise, if complementary. She urges Aboriginal women to speak out more on their own behalf, especially in the face of
resource development (in the European sense — from an Aboriginal point of view she suggests 'undevelopment' would be more correct), not at the expense of Aboriginal men, but in conjunction with them, as sanctioned by their traditional partnership.

Wesley Lanhupuy stresses how the very concepts in notions such as 'lands and resources' are alien to Aboriginal people; he argues strongly for self-determination, with a slowing-down of development to allow Aboriginal people to establish this. He also touches on the 'mixed blessing' of Aboriginal involvement with academics, but finishes on a positive note with a quotation from Stanner.

Bolton provides an admittedly superficial overview of white historians' approaches to Aboriginal history with some mention of the constitutional historical basis for the legal status of land rights.

For me, the most interesting paper was John von Sturmer's 'Aborigines in the uranium industry: towards self-management in the Alligator River region?' This is a forthright and fascinating attempt to get behind the rhetoric and the dry academic debate to the real impact of mining in the Alligator River region, in social, economic and political terms. He asks, what is self-management? What are the real effects of the injection of mining moneys into these communities: should mining companies become welfare enablers? He also considers the effect of the importation of sheer numbers of largely ignorant non-academic Europeans into the area. He discusses the negative effects of what are assumed to be compensation moneys and less tangible bestowals on Aboriginal communities and individuals, and the relationship between decision-making and its implementation in terms of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relationships. Von Sturmer argues that real analysis is needed following on an honest description of the situation, rather than the usual glossy optimism. This paper, despite its 'hard words', is a constructive step in that direction.

Basil Sansom's contribution argues that there is a continent-wide 'Aboriginal commonality', rooted in Aboriginal ways of 'doing business'. This is an important argument, since, as he points out (especially in connection with Lauriston Sharp), there has been a tendency to distinguish traditionally-oriented Aboriginal groups from those less traditionally oriented, with the latter being seen as somehow not 'real' Aborigines. Sansom sees this commonality expressed in social and economic modes which may have a modern content but which derive from traditional forms. Certainly we can discern the Stanner 'range' in the 'lines', 'runs', and 'beats' of the various hinterland communities described. Sansom also makes the relevant point that this commonality generates no wider political structure because it is, of its very nature, socially small-scale.

Peter Baume's 'Government perspective' is rather like a commercial for an obsolete car model (or even car dealer — 'honest brokers', no less). I found this paper of interest, however, because it discusses the so-called 'Comalco model', and in totally approbatory terms. The Comalco model is an arrangement whereby mining companies liaise (more or less) directly with Aboriginal communities about sites of significance to them. Rather than specify sites and their exact locations, general areas of sensitivity are indicated which are then avoided by the developers. There are however drawbacks to this approach. Firstly, the Aborigines are utterly dependent on the good will and integrity (and efficiency, including control over sub-contractors) of the developers. If sites are subsequently damaged, the lack of prior specific identification precludes any kind of redress or comeback. It also means that any subsequent exploration in the same area means the process has to be repeated, as no data base accrues; it certainly mitigates against extensive forward planning policies.
While other approaches also have serious attendant problems, it seems rather naive and ostrich-like to see the Comalco model as a preferred solution.

Charles Perkins argues that Aboriginal people should achieve 'independence and self-sufficiency through self-management of a greater share of Australia's wealth and resources'. He describes several current initiatives towards this end, particularly the Aboriginal Development Commission and concludes that leadership in all areas must come from the Aboriginal people themselves.

H.M. Morgan, President of the Mining Industry of Australia, gives us what is largely another commercial, and his defences of the industry are probably largely true. He argues however from a basic capitalist premise which is not necessarily accepted by all concerned; 'the NT Land Rights Act . . . represents an unreasonable impediment to exploration in the Northern Territory'.

Colin Tatz in 'The recovery and discovery of rights: an overview of Aborigines, politics and the law' sees the issues under consideration as basically political, yet little real political analysis of the Aboriginal situation has been carried out. Like von Sturmer, he points out that 'consultation' is not the same as genuine participation in the decision-making process. In formal terms, Aborigines have had until recently little real power, but new politico-legal institutions, particularly incorporated associations, and recourse to civil legal processes, may be improving the situation.

H.C. Coombs, 'On the question of government', discusses briefly the principle of Commonwealth responsibility in Aboriginal land matters, but recognises the necessity for regional and local management and responsibility, which is connected with Aboriginal initiatives for self-determination.

The editor also provides a concluding chapter entitled 'Mining ventures: alliances and oppositions'. After some general introductory comments on the kinds of alliances Aborigines may form with various kinds of Europeans (anthropologists surprisingly come out best), Berndt discusses the situation which obtained in Western Australia in 1981. He discusses, using specific examples, the kinds of problems, both practical and ethical in nature, which confront individual consultants, Aboriginal communities, and more structured organisations. No doubt Berndt himself would be pleased to recognise that much of this discussion is now out of date, following a change of State Government, a change of Federal Government, and a current State Government inquiry exploring how best to institute a land-rights programme in Western Australia, a course to which the new government has firmly committed itself.

SANDRA BOWDLER UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Tasmanians. By Sandra Bowdler; People of the Murray River. By Anne Bickford; People of the Lakes. By Marjorie Sullivan; People of the Sydney Coast. By F.D. McCarthy. Methuen (Our People Series) North Ryde, Sydney, 1982. p.b. $2.95 each.

These books are intended for use in schools by young children. They consist of specific studies of Aboriginal groups in various parts of Australia, concentrating on aspects of traditional life.

Each book covers a number of themes, but these vary in emphasis and detail. The themes include details on material culture, hunting, art and beliefs. Some volumes deal with the Aboriginal past, the impact of Europeans and the conditions of Aborigines today.
The section on Aboriginal relations with the land was good in all four books, especially in the *People of the Lakes* volume where the condition of the land today is compared to how it existed long ago when the climate was different. Details on clothes and forms of shelter are included in all the books, apart from that on the Lakes people, which has a section on families which the other volumes lack. Sections on hunting and food are included in each but vary in length and detail. They tell of how food was obtained and cooked as well of the different kinds of foods exploited. These themes are well represented in all the books, but are especially interesting in the *Murray River* and *Sydney Coast* books. The *Murray River* book has an interesting discussion of traps, nets and dams. The arts discussed are music, stories, and rock engravings and paintings. The *Murray River* book includes a short story. I thought that this was a good idea; the other books could have contained similar stories. The *Tasmanians* has very little on art and some commentary on Tasmanian rock engravings would have been of interest. The sections on discovering the past are well done and are very useful because they present details on how information is gathered and what evidence is used to produce the accounts of past Aboriginal societies.

The sections on Aboriginal people today are rather brief in all four books, apart from that on the *Murray River*. The *Tasmanians* could have included more details in its section on the impact of the Europeans. I would have liked more said about Truganini who is mentioned in the time chart, but her significance is not explained anywhere in the text.

The information is set out in small, simple paragraphs under the heading of each theme, with informative pictures and diagrams illustrating the topic. Included at the back of the book are questions in a ‘things to do’ section, while the text leaves room for class discussion. The activities sections are very interesting, easy to follow and should be of use in class lessons as the materials they suggest are widely available.

KATHERINE URRY

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

A REJOINDER AND A REPLY TO OUR REVIEW OF WARD McNALLY'S *ABORIGINES ARTEFACTS AND ANGUISH*.

Our editorial policy is not to publish correspondence relating to reviews, nor do we encourage debate on them. The following letter is included here following Editorial Board consideration of the author’s request. A reply from the reviewer is also published.

I seek space to reply to Professor Ronald M. Berndt’s review of my book *Aborigines Artefacts and Anguish*, published in the latest issue of your journal.

Professor Berndt accuses me of self-righteousness because of an appendage I wrote to a letter to me from the late Professor T.G.H. Strehlow, the subject of my book.

I reject this charge and contend the appendage was valid.

Professor Berndt also appears to think that my dedication should have had some relationship with my subject, but I see no reason for that belief. I dedicated the book to the memory of a man who helped me at a vital time of my life. When I desperately needed hope, direction.

That seems appropriate to me!

Professor Berndt alleges I left out matters vital to the character study offered and I reject that also. What I did within the wordage available to me was to show the late Professor Strehlow torn between loyalties and, in some instances, deceit. Professor Berndt seems upset because I pointed up aspects of the late Professor Strehlow’s private life that showed him as extremely difficult to
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get along with as well as hurtful to certain people who had every right to expect better from him.

That simply measured the man's character, showing the good against the bad and that, in my
view, is essential in any honest biography.

Professor Berndt refers to the questions I submitted to him, but makes no mention of the
letters, some stretching to eight typed foolscap pages he wrote to me. Nor does he mention that he
offered me some serious criticisms of aspects of my subject's life but asked me not to quote him in
my book, or that I respected his confidentiality.

He also says there was more to the Philipp Scherer map episode than I revealed, but I point out
that I had the advantage of seeing the unfinished map and of talking with Scherer. Short of
involving my publisher, Scherer and myself in possible libel suits I reported the facts as honestly as
possible.

Professor Berndt makes no mention of the bitter criticisms I heard and he knows about of the
late Professor Strehlow from Aborigines. Nor does he refer to the Foreword to my book, written
by Professor D. Stranks, Vice Chancellor of the Adelaide University, and a man who had years of
close association with my subject.

Professor Stranks paid tribute in the Foreword to the balanced view I offered readers of my
subject. Further and finally, I could point Professor Berndt to academics, some as deeply involved
in Aboriginal affairs as he is, who have gone on record with praise for my book.

WARD McNALLY

My comments in this respect are brief. I have re-read my original review, and glanced through
Ward McNally's book again. I see no need to change or modify any of my remarks.

It is true that the late Professor Strehlow was occasionally a difficult man; but often, too, he
had good reason for feeling disgruntled about the trend of events which touched him directly.
However, the picture McNally has drawn of Strehlow is, in my view, not a sufficiently well
balanced one: a number of the scenes are either incomplete or overdrawn, or not considered in
perspective.

I mentioned in my review that McNally had been in correspondence with me. I supplied him
with some information on the points he raised. My reason for doing so was to 'set the record
straight' and to clarify some specific situations to the best of my knowledge. I may perhaps have
been naive in doing this. However, I did insist on confidentiality, and I should have mentioned in
my review that McNally respected that injunction. (My remarks at that time, incidentally, were not
typed on foolscap but on A4.) To say that I 'offered . . . some serious criticisms of aspects of
[Strehlow's] life' provides an impression which differed from my intention. The fact of the matter
is that I did comment, in some detail, on a range of critical issues which McNally raised with me in
correspondence. I attempted to give a fair assessment of these. As I said in my review, 'inherently,
there were differences of opinion between us . . .' (that is, between Strehlow and myself). There is
no doubt that I could have been more critical of certain actions on the part of Strehlow. However,
in my view, within the scope of McNally's book, it would have been inappropriate to have been so.

McNally notes that I did not deal in my review with 'the bitter criticisms' made by Aborigines
in regard to Strehlow during the latter part of his life. I would certainly not have done so in a
review of that kind. It would have required much more space than was available to me. Moreover,
it would have raised a number of points not directly relevant to the biography, and would have
served no useful purpose in that context.

Suffice it to say that Strehlow was deeply concerned, right up to his death, with and about
traditional Aranda life. He saw it being eroded. To him this was a tragedy which couldn't be
resolved. In my view, Strehlow was mistaken in this respect and did not appreciate sufficiently
the great changes which had and have taken place in Aranda society, as well as in Aboriginal
attitudes generally. I think there is a great deal that could be said about this matter.

McNally is quite unrealistic in expecting me to regard his book favourably. I honestly consider
that what he has written is only a part of the Strehlow story. I do not consider that it does
Strehlow justice – in respect of the 'good' as well as the 'bad' aspects of his long and significant
career as a scholar and a student of Aranda traditional society and culture. How other academics
may regard McNally’s book is their own affair. I think a different sort of book is needed to do justice to Ted Strehlow as a person, and to the work to which he devoted so much of his time and energy. But perhaps only a multi-faceted volume could do that — one compiled by a number of different people writing or speaking from different perspectives. It would not be an easy book to read, or to assemble; but it could bring together viewpoints and materials, and substantively based assessments, which will not be available in the same way to prospective Strehlow-biographers in a hundred or even fifty years’ time.

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BOOK NOTES
(Inclusion here does not preclude review in future issues.)


The first of a series of transcripts of original documents edited by Gerry Langevad for the Archaeology Branch. This volume on Aboriginal history for the Kilcoy area is to be followed by two collecting material on the early missionaries and the pastoralists.

In the series Queensland Ethnohistory Sources, also edited by Gerry Langevad, volume 1 (2), September 1983, is devoted to The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 1803-1810. Copies of these publications may be obtained from the Archaeology Branch, Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Advancement, GPO Box 2210, Brisbane, Qld 4001.


A collection of papers on Aboriginal history in Gippsland, and the series of conflicts (massacres) during the contact period in eastern Victoria.


The first publication resulting from a major Aboriginal history project — recording the genealogies of families from Point McLeay, SA. This volume includes photographs, documents and reminiscences of individuals named in the genealogical tables covering over a thousand descendants (to the sixth and seventh generations) of Isabella Mutyuli, who was born on the Coorong about 1856. This and future volumes will be available from the Aboriginal Research Centre, University of Adelaide, North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5001.

* The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 3 (1) 1983, Pp.242. Special Issue: The Metis since 1870. Edited by Antoine S. Lussier. (Subscriptions, 2 issues a year, Can. $16 individuals, $25 libraries, Department of Native Studies, Brandon University, 1229 Lorne Ave., Brandon, Manitoba, Canada R7A OV3).

Articles outlining the history of official policy and recognition of land rights of the ‘hybrid’ Indian-European population known as Metis have considerable relevance.
for Australian researchers. Each issue of this journal provides up to date coverage of
current policy, legislation and political developments in Indian affairs, and a section
devoted to research and teaching in Native Studies programmes at many Canadian
universities.

*An Australian creole in the Northern Territory: A description of Ngukurr-Bamyili
dialects. By J. Sandefur, Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Branch,

This is a description of the Aboriginal creole English spoken in the Northern
Territory and neighbouring areas. It is a non-technical account especially designed for
European workers in the area. The volume covers sounds, orthography, noun phrases,
verb phrases and prepositional phrases and their parts, and simple sentences. Available
from Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aboriginal Branch, PO, Berrimah,
NT 5788.

*Junggubuyu myths and ethnographic texts. By J. Heath. Australian Institute of

This is the first of a number of volumes that the author expects to be publishing on
one of the Aboriginal languages spoken in eastern Arnhem Land.

*Papers in Australian linguistics No.13: contributions to Australian linguistics. Edited

This volume contains articles on aspects of Eastern Ngumbin Languages
(McConvell), Flinders' Island languages (Sutton), Njiyamba, a language of Central
Western New South Wales (Donaldson), Bagandji (Hercus), languages of North Central
New South Wales (Austin, Williams and Wurm), Norman Pama (Black), Northern Cape
York languages (Crowley), Kaititj (Koch), Pungupungu and Wadyiginy (Tryon),
Anthropology and Botany (Chase and Von Sturmer), Ethnobotany (Sutton).

*Ngadjumaja: an Aboriginal language of south-east Western Australia. By C.G. von
Brandenstein. Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Gesellschaft zur Pege der Geisteswissen-
schaften, Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck. 1980.
Pp.vi, 165.

This volume contains a sketch grammar with texts and wordlists of a little known
Australian language from Western Australia.

(Work Papers of SIL-AAB, Series B, No.5) Pp.74. plus six cassettes.

This is a non-technical beginning language learning course for those wishing to learn
Kriol, the Aboriginal creole English of the Northern Territory and neighbouring areas.
There are 35 lessons in the course with easy to follow exercises. The lessons and
exercises are recorded on six cassettes.

*A learner's guide to Yukunytjatjara. By C. Goddard. Institute for Aboriginal

A booklet designed to help workers in the north-west border areas of South
Australia to learn this Western Desert language. Because of its size it only introduces
the main grammatical facts and most common vocabulary. No exercises are included.