PIGEON THE OUTLAW: HISTORY AS TEXTS

Stephen Muecke, Alan Rumsey and Banjo Wirrunmarra

INTRODUCTION

The substantive point of this article is to put into print some versions of the story of Jandamarra, also called Pigeon, a famous Aboriginal ‘outlaw’ of the Kimberley district of Western Australia (see Map), who in the 1890s worked as a police tracker, then turned against the police, releasing all their prisoners and fleeing to the Kimberley ranges. He and his followers evaded search patrols for over two years, during which time he led several raids upon Kimberley cattle stations, capturing rifles and ammunition which he is said to have planned to use in an all-out campaign to oust European settlers from the area. He was finally shot down in 1897.

The story of Pigeon occupies a significantly central place in representations of the history of Aboriginal-European contact in the Kimberleys. Among Aboriginal communities in that area the story is a living part of local history, and while most Aboriginal people in the region will at least have heard of the story, the main rights to it are recognised as residing with the Bunuba people, especially with such key figures as Banjo Wirrunmarra. Accordingly, the Fitzroy Valley Bunuba community has recently been incorporated into a production company for the purpose of producing a feature film about Pigeon. European versions of the story include a novel by Ion Idriess (1952) and academic-historical accounts by Howard Pederson (1980, 1984). Aboriginal writer Colin Johnson has made significant use of the story in a novel (Johnson 1979).

While it is clear that in and through these rewritings of his story Pigeon’s actions become the site of ideological contestation (e.g., his representations as ‘tragic hero’ or ‘revolutionary

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Banjo Wirrunmarra comes from Ngalarra country in the northwestern part of Bunuba territory near Winjana Gorge. He has worked as a stockman at Fairfield and other Kimberley cattle stations, and was the founder of Pandanus Park, an Aboriginal market garden/settlement on the Fitzroy River. He is widely known as a senior custodian of Bunuba traditions, including the Pigeon story.

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1 This article is a joint effort in that it is the product of at least three distinct sets of dialogues: between Banjo and Stephen, Banjo and Alan, and finally between Stephen and Alan. Banjo is not to be held directly responsible for anything beyond what he says in texts 1 and 2, which were transcribed (and annotated) by Alan and Stephen respectively. As for the rest, Stephen is mainly responsible for the parts concerning the problem of ‘history’, and Alan for the parts concerning ways of transcribing oral texts. For their having prodded us into thinking more clearly about the latter, we gratefully acknowledge Bill McGregor’s comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Banjo Wirrunmarra

The Kimberley District of Western Australia
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hero'), our aim is not to provide an interpretation of the history of the texts to be reproduced here. Nor is our aim that of laying claim to finally reproducing the authentic and original accounts, even though Banjo Wirrunmarra's name would tend to authorise the texts in this way, central as he is to the sites of Aboriginal (Bunuba) repetitions of the story.

Rather, our methodological aims are to make some general statements concerning 'history as texts' and to outline and justify a particular technique for transcribing oral traditions from tape recordings. These two aims are interrelated in that the method of transcription is one which we believe to be especially suitable for representing some important textual features of Aboriginal oral history in written versions. If we say more about transcription conventions than is necessary for enabling readers to follow the texts, this is because we also want to make the method available to people who might want to use it for transcribing other texts.

HISTORY AS TEXTS.

History for westerners exists in at least two dimensions. In one dimension it is a sequence of objects that precede the present — a positivism in which the universal ordering function of terms like 'precede' and 'present' is generally assumed without theoretical justification. In the other dimension, history is, as Morphy and Morphy (1984) have put it, 'the incorporation or conceptualisation of the past in the present and as such is part of human consciousness and provides a framework for future action' (loc. cit: 459; cf. Bloch 1977). This latter view allows, with the notion of 'incorporation', for an understanding of history as a process of constant reconstruction of its texts according to changing professional protocols. In this sense, there would be a third dimension for the existence of history, and that would be history defined as the activities of history departments, including their principles, professional codes, and politics ('framework for future action').

As linguists, we propose to adopt the second of these points of view in conjunction with what has been called the 'text of history', for two main reasons (cf. Barthes 1982). The first is that we feel that in one important sense the construction of history — whether spoken or written — is a textual activity. What historians do is construct accounts: they form the raw material of events into textual shapes — forms which do not stand in any privileged or transparent relation to the events in question. The second reason concerns the relocation of the spoken word and the development of 'oral history' in Australia and elsewhere.

Until recently, Aboriginal people have generally not been represented as speaking subjects in the literature of Aboriginal history, anthropology, or even biography.3 This situation has changed considerably during the last decade. Aboriginal History has flourished as an academic field, partly due to changes in the political position of Aboriginal people, and partly because 'oral history' has now become respectable among the world community of academic historians. Since the founding of this journal in 1977, articles have regularly been published in which Aboriginal people, as authors, co-authors, or collaborators, speak in the first person about history as they have experienced it, both as actors in the narrated events and as interlocutors in earlier oral text productions.

3 For example, even Stanner 1960 — which was one of the first published works in this genre, and is still one of the most sensitive — includes only a handful of quoted utterances by the man whose life story is being told.
Strictly speaking, no such publication is itself an instance of oral history, since the medium is print rather than talk. To the extent that we are willing to call such productions oral history, this is presumably because they start from spoken accounts as their primary sources. These spoken accounts are generally recorded on tape, transcribed, and — if in some distinctively Aboriginal form of English — subjected to various lexico-grammatical transformations and other editing procedures before being reproduced in print. For instance, Bruce Shaw says of his collaboration with Jack Sullivan that 'Editing, transforming the narratives from the spoken to the written word, was relatively extensive', so as to place them into 'standard colloquial English' (Shaw and Sullivan 1979:97, cf. Shaw 1984).

It is obvious that a similar editing procedure has been followed in, e.g., Bell (1978), Shaw and McDonald (1978), Shaw and Sullivan (1983), Morphy and Morphy (1984).

Generally, it is only when reproducing 'traditional' Aboriginal-language accounts that authors present verbatim (phonemic) transcripts of what was said. These are usually accompanied by inter-linear glosses, and often by 'free translations' too — the latter in standard or colloquial English (see, e.g., Merlan 1978, Heath 1980).

The effect of these transformations is that, although Aboriginal people are represented in the edited English 'translations' as speaking in the first person, they are made to do so in a voice which is not their own, and much of the meaning of the original oral performance is lost or altered. We believe this situation may be improved upon by using a system of transcription something like the one which has been developed by Dennis Tedlock and his Amerindianist colleagues over the past fifteen years, as expounded in Tedlock (1983). A similar system was developed independently by Stephen Muecke for the representation of Australian Aboriginal English narratives (Muecke 1982; cf Roe and Muecke 1983, Benterrak et al 1984). The scheme which we propose here draws upon both systems, incorporating what we see as the most useful features of each for publishing Aboriginal oral accounts.

**A METHOD OF TRANSCRIPTION.**

In common with Tedlock, our aim is to render the oral text in such a way that it can easily be re-presented or performed in something like its original oral-dramatic form. The conventions which we (and Tedlock) propose for this are — in the main — ones which have

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4 This phrase has been put in quotation marks here because the canons of standard historiographic practice would seem to require written or otherwise 'objectified' speech as 'sources', which are 'primary' because they are understood to provide a kind of 'hard evidence' against which the 'secondary' productions of any particular historian may be 'tested' in order to assess their validity. It is of course possible to treat particular transcripts (or electronic recordings) of particular oral performances in this way, but that sort of objectification has no basis in Aboriginal tradition.

5 This is not to gainsay the considerable strengths of the works cited in the previous two paragraphs. Shaw and Sullivan (1983) in particular goes a long way toward the enfranchisement of Jack Sullivan as a speaking subject, Keesing (1983) notwithstanding. We accept the arguments of Shaw (1984) against Keesing's plea for a more literary 'translation' of Aboriginal English, but favour an approach which is even less compromising than his in its faithfulness to the oral texts. Cf. the remarks by an Aboriginal working party for the Bicentennial History Project: 'When the cues, the repetitions, the language, the distinctively Aboriginal evocations of our experience are removed from the recitals of our people, the truth is lost to us' ('A Black View of History, Culture'. The Age 13/2/81.)

6 Stephen first saw examples of Tedlock's work in 1984.
long been in use for the printing of poetry and plays — western genres with which Aboriginal oral narrative has far more in common than it does with written prose.

The most basic collocational unit which is evident from the sound of those narratives (as opposed to their grammar) is not the clause or the sentence, but what Tedlock calls the line: a stretch of speech which is bounded on both ends by silence. Tedlock represents every such 'line' in one line of print beginning at the left margin of the page. Where the spoken line is too long to fit into one line of print, it is continued in an indented one(s). Here we will adopt Tedlock's procedure, with one difference, as per Muecke (1982:187-8). In our scheme, not every pause will be considered to terminate a line. This is because some pauses (a fairly small minority of them) in our tape recordings can clearly be distinguished as hesitations. These sound very different from deliberate pauses because after the pause, the voice begins at the same pitch at which it left off, and continues the pre-pause contour rather than starting a new one. In our scheme, unlike Tedlock's, these hesitation pauses will be considered to fall within the line. All other pauses will be taken as boundary markers between lines. Pauses within the line will be represented by hyphens.

As in Tedlock's scheme, we indicate prosodic prominence by capitalisation, e.g.: '... and he told him to GET OUT of it.' (When the word 'I' is prominent, this will be shown by boldface.) Another prosodic feature which figures in the Aboriginal texts (and in oral performance generally) is the 'stylistic' use of over-lengthening. We indicate this by repeating letters in proportion to audible length, e.g., if the 'o' in 'long' is held to three times its normal length, we would write it 'loomong'.

Other paralinguistic or prosodic information (including specification of extra long pauses) is occasionally provided in parentheses, as per standard practice for indicating 'stage
directions', e.g., (in a soft voice), (points west), (closes eyes) etc.

Where there is a change of speaker, the new speaker is identified by initials at the left margin, followed by a colon. The speakers so identified in the texts below are Banjo Wirrunmarra, Alan Rumsey, and Stephen Muecke. Contra the practice of most writers of 'oral history', but in common with Tedlock (1983:285-343), we think it is important to represent something of the fundamentally dialogic ground of oral texts, fully acknowledging in this case that they are the product of interaction between non-Aboriginal, academic investigators and an Aboriginal 'informant' of considerable skill and experience, both in that role and as a 'story man'.

For spelling Wirrunmarra's English, we have kept as close as possible to standard English orthography. Wirrunmarra's English in these texts is not the stabilised Kriol of Sandefur (1979), but a more-or-less idiosyncratic lect which is generally close enough to Australian colloquial English to be intelligible to English speakers who have no familiarity with Kriol. Where this is not the case, the Aboriginal forms in question are glossed in footnotes.

The above conventions provide what we think is a good compromise between richness of prosodic and contextual detail, and simplicity. Much more phonetic and choreographic detail could have been included, but this would have made the transcripts too complex to be performable in real time and/or readily intelligible to non-linguists. The system which we are advocating here is one which we hope will not only make texts such as the following ones readily available to a non-academic audience, but will facilitate the transcription and publication of them by literate speakers of Aboriginal English with little or no special training in linguistics.

An added advantage of presenting just these audible features is that it then becomes possible to translate (non-English) Aboriginal language texts in such a way as to preserve some of their most important aural features in the English renditions. For line breaks, line-level prosodic prominence, stylistic vowel lengthening, and many paralinguistic features of Aboriginal-language texts (unlike their segmental-phonological and word-level supra-segmental features) have functional values which are largely preserved when these features are incorporated directly into the English-language scripts. Furthermore, the uses of these features in Aboriginal English are almost identical to their uses in 'traditional' Aboriginal languages. This is well exemplified by the first text below. It starts out in the Ungarinyin Language (see Rumsey (1982) re Ungarinyin grammar; Blake (1981) for orthography), for each line of which we have provided an English translation which carries over the prosodic features notated as per the discussion above. After line 40, the tape recorder was switched off. A few minutes later, it was switched on again, and Wirrunmarra picked up the story where he had left off — now in a variety of Aboriginal English. Note the similarity in average line length, in the uses of prosodic prominence, and in what gets put into a single line.

11 Cf., e.g., Shaw and Sullivan 1979:97, who apologise for the fact that 'parts of the narrative are responses to questions', and delete the questions from the published 'narrative'.

12 It is no accident that Tedlock's system of notation is useful in just this way, for the 'translation of style' from American Indian languages into English was just the purpose for which Tedlock developed the system.
THE TEXTS.

The following two texts about Pigeon were recorded seven years apart — the first by Alan Rumsey in 1984, the second by Stephen Muecke in 1977.

We have chosen to present both of these texts in order to provide an example of the nature and extent of the continuity of an Aboriginal oral tradition, as held by a particular story-teller. You can see how some details in the narrated events — e.g. the topographic ones discussed in footnote 26 — are reproduced exactly even after seven years, and others, such as the number of funnels on the Koombana, are slightly altered. An advantage of the system of transcription we are using here is that it also gives you some idea of the enduring particularity of Wirrunmarra's craftsmanship as a shaper of oral history. We will here refrain from detailed comparison of his version of the story with other accounts (but cf. Muecke 1983a), since our aim is not to add to or improve upon Pederson's admirable work of compilation (1980, 1984) but rather to let Wirrunmarra (whom Pederson (1984:14, footnote 7) describes as 'custodian of the Pigeon story') speak as directly as possible to our readers. Where extra background information may be required in order to follow what he is saying, this will be given in footnotes rather than in a concluding section, in order to let BW have the last word.


As told in Ungarinyin
anggalu policemana
warraj amanga
Jandamarra
biyinggerri
5 brrru gugudu burrinyirri
burrarda bundumangerri, joli
 bundumindanirri
Limalwurru-gu
AR: Limalwuru
10 BW: e e
di-yu NGARD amanga
yali ngawurr ongondu
amara
and malngarri-nangga
15 amara, aga
yone nyindi di winjangun
arrungu di larrug uma
umara amara
di umanga
20 arri cleaner-gu buluba
angga, malyan

English Translation
the policeman came
he picked him up
Jandamarra
the two of them went
they chased blackfellas
they chained up the lot of
 them and brought them back
to Lillamaloora13
Lillamaloora
yes
then he ASKED him
'I want to kill some kangaroo for them'
he said
and the white man said 'o.k.

you know where the rifle is,
hanging up there
take it', he said
so he took it
he looked around for rifle
 cleaner, 'there's none'

13 This is the name of an old police station near where the Lennard River breaks through the Napier Range (see map). Its stone ruins can still be seen. Note that in line 48, after Wirrunmarra has switched to English, he uses the anglicised version of the name.
amara
winingara werri
wumen
25 ngawurr on mindi-nga
jinda *policeman*
galumun-nangga-gurde di
NYADAGA WULUN
gugdu biji nyindi
30 waga
ngawurr anjawu budmaranangga
   (long pause)
di-yu NGAWURR oni
di andu yu
andumindanina:
35 Windjana Gorge
darag andumindani
mindi-yu andiyilani
   burrardangarri
   right
40 FINISH
   (tape off for a few minutes)
When you ready
AR: oh, you ready?
BW: you ready?
AR: um
45 BW: right
what he done when he shot that man
ah, the place
Lillamaloora
he WENT
50 he was on that cave
in Windjana
AR: Jandamarra jirri (Ungarinyin: 'Jandamarra, that one')
BW: Jandamarra
that Pigeon Hole
55 old Grandfather Blythe came with a . . .? calf
weaners
water'm in Windjana Gorge
when he stoop down and getta water
in Gorge
60 and he told him to GET OUT of it
old Blythe take his, take his TIME to get out of the water
they was that many CATTLE there
anyhow he fired a shot and he KNOCK his THUMB off
old fella jump up
PIGEON THE OUTLAW

65 all the cattle rush
to the bank
he take'mn to the open
and THEN
that was that — JANDamarra

70 he wasn't a friend of anybody now\(^{14}\)
he was on his own
he was a outlaw
and AGAIN
he shot, the young policeman

75 my father
he was runnin' over, what?
one mile
in the plain
Plum plain

80 shot him in the fingers
AR: your father?
BW: my r'own\(^{15}\)
and he got into the spring there
Ninety Two Spring he bin get in there

85 BROAD DAYLIGHT
he had 'nother shot
in the YARD
the old fella still run along
the kid got onto the HORSE

90 go down to Fitzroy Crossin'
tell the police THERE
his BOSS got shot
so he went tooo Oscar Range
when he got into Oscar Range

95 he shot the manager
Doug Waley
one MORNIN'
and he went from there
to King Leopold

100 he had many fight with the Aborigine people up there
they couldn't KILL him
'cause he was a OUTLAW
Jandamarra

\(^{14}\) Here and elsewhere, Wirrunmarra uses the word 'now' to mean 'at this point in the narrated event' rather than 'at the time of this speech event'. This is a standard feature of Kriol and Kimberley Aboriginal English.

\(^{15}\) 'r'own' is the equivalent of standard English 'own' as in 'my own'. It is common in Kimberley and Top End Aboriginal English, and probably has arisen from a re-segmentation in the analogic base provided by the phrases 'her own', 'their own', 'our own', 'your own', etc.
and he went ‘round again
105 go back to Windjana
stay around there and he came back to Tunnel\textsuperscript{16}
he bin LIVE around there
and
Pilmer\textsuperscript{17} got on to him AGAIN
110 so HE shot one police boy in town
so Pilmer got upset
he wanted to FIGHT him
but MANY police
and the stock
115 bin chasing up Jandamarra
but that wasn’t good enough
but he was lettin’ them go
he didn’t want to take the life of man
but YET
120 Minko Mick
he sailed all the way from
Roebourne
with Koombana\textsuperscript{18}
see Koombana was a four-funnel
125 big ship
he landed in Derby
so they got a mail coaches
mail coach bin take him from Derby to Meda
and he got on that other one again take him to Kimberley Down
130 and he got on that ‘nother one took him to Fairfield
and he — got on to horse
ride over to Tunnel
put on his — belt
he walked down there
135 he nearly shot one old fella
two kid was giggling there
and he shot the — ground for ‘em
they roll down
and Minko Mick said ‘there, right

\textsuperscript{16} The reference here is to Tunnel Creek (see map), a cave where Pigeon hid out. This is the same place which in Idriess 1952 is called the ‘Cave of Bats’.

\textsuperscript{17} Pilmer was the constable at Fitzroy Crossing.

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. the \textit{Weekend Australian} (April 13-14, 1985, p.3): ‘High Tech Search for the Cursed Koombana’, which reports that the Koombana was built in Glasgow in 1908 and lost at sea somewhere between Port Hedland and Broome in 1912. She is described as having been the ‘pride of the Adelaide Steamship Company’s passenger fleet’ and as having had a ‘distinctive tall funnel’.
you can have this belt' he just put one slug in
and he follow the river up
and he found him in the
behind the boab tree
he was up into the hill
somebody else fire a shot from 'nother end
he turn around
and Minko Mick
straightaway
he shot him in the THUMB
his THUMB
and there was, his LIFE was in the thumb
and that's — he beat him there
he was a — a wit doctor19
AR: witch doctor
BW: um — Minko Mick
AR: um — he KNEW that
BW: yeah he knew that
AR: about that THUMB
BW: that's it
AR: yeah
BW: that's all the story — Rumsey
AR: yeah?
why did that — ah — Pigeon — how did he know how to — put his life
into his THUMB like that?
where did he learn all that stuff?
BW: well only you and I say this
murlal jirri20 ('he was incestuous')
AR: um
BW: ngawi-nangga ('his father's sister')
lala-nangga ('his sister')
walma-nangga ('his wife's mother')
gugudu inyi ('he chased after')
AR: he went with every kind of relation
BW: yeah well that's it

19 'wit doctor' is probably a re-etymologised version of the English 'witch doctor' (cf. Rumsey 1983). In
the following line, A.R., who had not noticed this usage before, seeks confirmation that B.W. has in
fact said 'witch doctor'. But instead of giving it, B.W. apparently understands A.R. to be asking 'Which
doctor?' He responds by repeating the man's name, 'Minko Mick', and then goes on to use the term
'wit doctor', in lines 177, 277.

20 Here BW switches the Ungarinyin language — which he knows to be the one AR understands best — in
order to explain how Pigeon gained special powers by breaking the Aboriginal 'law'. Cf. lines 101-2:
'they couldn't KILL him / 'cause he was a OUTLAW', which set up an interesting relationship between
Jandamarra/Pigeon's positions vis à vis the Aboriginal 'law' and the European one.
175 AR: and that's
BW: SO the life was come OON and OON and OON
so — that way he was sort of a WIT doctor
but he was a OUTLAW
because he had his life in his thumb
180 AR: ah yeah
BW: and when they finish — SHOT him there
and they cut that THUMB there
they can see that little HEART was there
AR: ah yeah
185 BW: I don't know HOW they PUT it there
AR: yeah
but you reckon that murlal
BW: um
AR: made him,
190 BW: yowe
TOO CLOSE
murlal too close\(^21\)
AR: and — why did all the Aborigines wanna shoot Pigeon too?
BW: well they didn't understand him
195 why he done it because
way back
Pilmer and Billy Richardson\(^22\) was SHOOTING PEOPLE
THOUSANDS and THOUSANDS of people, they start from
from
eastern state right down
to north
right up — to west
AR: yeah
BW: they were killin'm THOOUUSANDS and THOOUUSANDS of BLACKFELLAS
200 AR: yeah?
BW: but he heard that and some of his people bin get killed too
some of OUR people bin get killed
AR: yeah
BW: so only one man
210 he had a feeling for his own people
AR: yeah?

\(^{21}\) In other words, the women whom Pigeon 'chased' were not only of the wrong classificatory kin categories, they were also among his 'close' relatives within those categories, which means they were doubly proscribed for sex or marriage (cf Rumsey 1981:183,190-1).

\(^{22}\) Richardson is the 'policeman', 'the white man' referred to lines 1-32 above. It seems interesting that he is never referred to by name there, but only after we have shifted from Aboriginal-language narrative to an English-language 'interview' situation.
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BW: that Pilmer
and Richardson
THEY done it

215 but — SO he had to pay back for that
AR: well at first he was WORKING for that Richardson
BW: yeah with Billy Richardson he was WORKIN' for him AFTERWARD
because he bin shooting people first
him and — Pilmer

220 and after all when Pigeon
get a bit OLDER
come back and work with the POLICE
PATROLLING

so

225 he got a chance then
AR: was he just waiting for that chance the whole time or,
BW: (overlap with end of line above above) MMAYBE
AR: what made him change his mind?
BW: but — somehow that thing bin come, we, I don't know

230 AR: yeah
BW: I can't follow up
AR: do you know of any other people working with Pigeon or was
he all by himself?
BW: he had his mate, they call him name Captain

235 AR: Captain
oh yeah
BW: blackfella
and he's the fella
he had — he had a thought

240 'oh — police bin kill'm people'
but they always be talk about
'why these black— blackfellas get shot'
AR: yeah
BW: 'by one man

245 thousands of people
WHY?'
AR: yeah
BW: everyone lookin' at
their own people droppin' down with one — slug

250 AR: yeah
BW: one man standin' up there loading gun just like— somebody
blind or— dumb sittin' up
AR: yeah
BW: and they all get shot

255 so
I think Pigeon had a feeling
after that
and he bin keep PICTURING, you know?
and maybe

260 that’s how that thing been comin’ to him
and so when he got a chance
so HE had to do it
AR: when he was— when Pigeon was hiding out did he have any woman with him
or— just Captain?23

265 BW: he had himself, noobody else
he— he done his own battle
AR: yeah
BW: he didn’t want to bring anybody in
see, he was goin’ to try

270 do it as a THEY done it
same thing well he wanted to do the same thing
give it back to them
one man one man
so he’s no friend there

275 AR: yeah
BW: but I— where— I don’t understand
why this— wit doctor went up there
this is the thing that I don’t understand
AR: yeah

280 BW: and he bin take a life of BLACK man and BLACK man been get shot by
WHITE people WHY couldn’t he leave ALONE?
AR: yeah
BW: that was the story that I understand, you know
AR: if he LEFT it alone what do you think would have happened?

285 BW: well he had ta been a
king of Australia
and everything would have been come back — right way
AR: you reckon?
BW: I reckon

290 AR: all right
BW: he ’ant to been big fella
go on
(grins) might be we been talkin’ toooo faar?

23 Idriess 1952 portrays Pigeon as having been accompanied by his mother and a young wife ‘Cangam-vara’ (a most unlikely-looking word for Kimberley Aboriginal languages).
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TEXT 2: PIGEON STORY, AS TOLD TO STEPHEN MUECKE BY BANJO WIRRUNMARRA, 1977

1 BW: now
PIGEON
Pigeon START OFF
him bin

5 I talk to you
with the Pidgin English, pidgin\(^{24}\)
white man tongue pidgin
he bin start off got
breakin' in HORSES

10 him bin SHEarer
shearin' sheep
with a BLADE
not a machine
'cos those days they had a blade (SM: yeah)
so he bin work on that one
shearin' blade
he bin work Quanbun Noonkenbah
Liveringa then he went back to Kimberley Down\(^{25}\)

20 he work there
an' he went back to p'lice camp
then he start p'trol
he went for p'trol
look around some BLACKFELLAS inna bush

25 he tracking (long pause)
what they done?
they killed two white man
in Mount Broome
then p'lice went up to find him

30 so they pick-im-up
Pigeon the outlaw
they take-im in
up on the range
then Pigeon walk up

35 an' he got a MOB
an' he bring them back
SOME was there
right one
that bin kill the white man

\(^{24}\) The narrator distinguishes Pigeon's name from that of the variety of Aboriginal English.

\(^{25}\) Names of Kimberley stations.
but he didn’t know who he was
take him to Windjana Gorge
tie them there
an’ Pigeon
they turn around tell’im Pigeon ‘alright you wanna get a — kangaroo
for us?
we can’t jus’ sittin’ down here starve hungry on the chain
you bin bring us
so you mus’ FEED us’
so
Pigeon turn around and see boss
the boss (…?) ‘I wanna get a — kangaroo for these prisoners’
‘Alright you know where the rifle’
so he went up and get the rifle
‘stead of he go for -KANGAROO he shot his boss
in Windjana
Lillamaloora
that was a p’lice station
(softly) anyhow
he went there
got the mob
take-im off from chain
an’
he bin
go in the hill
everyone followed him up there
but he the one done all the FIGHTING
an’ this OTHERS didn’t understand him
(softly) they never have-im fight
anyhow
he went across to Ninety Two
he shot one white man there
then he went to Oscar
Oscar Range
station
he shot one white man there
early mornin’
then he went down to Plum Plain
he see MOB comin-up gotta horse
stockboys and the p’liceman they ALL come
look for Pigeon
then he take off
from that big plain
Plum Plain
they chased him
PIGEON THE OUTLAW

85 when he got into the HILL country
he look back he knock that hats off the p'liceman
take his hat off
(knocks table) one bullet
he ask that p'liceman he says

90 ‘You want you life or you wanta dead?’
p'liceman said ‘No I wanta life’
‘You go back’
so
he just taste ‘im but if he wanted-im he hadda kill-im then

95 anyhow he let-im go
he went to Brooking Gorge
corner of Brook or Leopold
an’ he went tooo
(long pause followed by brief inaudible section)

100 he went to King Leopold
he get a mob of blackfella there big tribe
they start fight there
they take-it-away one woman from there
young girl

105 they couldn’t fight-im
they couldn’t foller-im
went back to Windjana
he bin fight for SIX YEARS
and ah

110 governor or government went up there and said
he went up he get up he’s there Pigeon ‘You there?’, ‘Yes
I’m here’
‘Ah’
well we all friend now you’ll have to come down’

115 so Pigeon didn’t take a risk
so he knock his hat
said ‘you better go off’
said ‘ah I don’t want to (almost inaudible) . . .’
knock his hat off this government bloke whatever he was

120 anyhow he went back again
so (laugh)
(. . .?) stay there too long
anyhow they follered-im up — so LAS’ he felt himself

125 he was
he was losing hope
they can put a bullet right across here
shootin-im in here
nothing can come out
not even water
not even a drop of blood
(softly) nothin' doin'
no matter how many shot he used to take here nothing doin'
THAT didn't put him back
anyhow
135 one
maban blackfella witdoctor
come from ROEBOURNE
they used to call'im ah Minko Mick
he got onto the boat
in
Roebourne
or Onslow
boat call — er name ah
Koombana
140 three funnel
come right up to Derby landed
anyhow blackfella got onto — mail coaches
they take-im to Meda and from Meda to Kimberley Downs and from Kimberley
Downs to Fairfield26
145 then he ride across with horse
horseback
went to Tunnel
he SLEEP one night there
he didn't go fast
150 but next mornin'
they stirred'im Pigeon up
so he got up
to start shooting — but this bloke seen his life
soo
155 witdoctor told them boys
'Alright
I know' he said
'I take jus' one bullet in my rifle' he said 'I'll kill'im an' you fellas can go an' pick 'im up

26 Compare lines 135-52 here with lines 120-32 in text 1. It seems that one form for the 'correct rendering' of an Aboriginal history of Pigeon is the enunciation of series of correctly ordered place names for the movements of the main participants of the events, in this case Pigeon and Minko Mick. The two narratives from BW separated by seven years maintain this correct ordering. Also, when historical accounts are collectively constructed by Aborigines, a (perhaps the) major task is to establish the names of places and the right sequence of movements among them. This textual and rhetorical feature is in marked contrast to 'Western' historical texts, which instead are periodised around linear time intervals, dates. Obviously, neither historical form relates directly to Truth, but they represent the work of authority in the text and the codification of appropriate knowledges. In this connection, note also the appearance of a place name at the end of this story as an important datum about this particular text production and/or its producer. Pandanus Park is a market garden-cum-Aboriginal settlement along the Fitzroy River, of which BW is identified as the founder. This text was recorded there.
PIGEON THE OUTLAW

165 cut his HEAD off
so this Pigeon went up ah
Minko Mick
followed the river up
he got into the boab tree

170 he look up
upwards
Pigeon was right on top in the cliff
so he FIRE ONE shot he knock him in his thumb27 — so he fell down an' he sing out
‘I shoot‘im, you can go in and pick‘im up whenever you want

175 very fright they said ‘NO we can’t run up to pick‘im up’
‘NO — you go in an’ see‘im’
‘he’s finished’
‘alright’
oh well they didn’t argue with‘im all them fellas run up there

180 and see
sure enough Pigeon laying there
smashed up
‘is thumb
(pause for tape change)
so when Minko Mick — went up there he looked ‘is — thumb he found

185 a little
little heart28
like a fish
in his thumb here (shows thumb)
that where he shot

190 an’ that was the end of the old Pigeon story
SM: Oh good
BW: it’s from Banjo
Pandanus Park

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27 In other Aboriginal accounts, Pigeon’s ‘Achilles’ heel’ is variously hand, foot, or thumb.

28 A common practice for Aboriginal ‘doctors’ was (or is) to appear to remove small pieces of quartz, etc. from sick people. ‘Little heart’ may relate to this practice.
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