BOOK REVIEWS


Clean Clad and Courteous, along with its companion volume of documents, marks a significant watershed in studies on Aboriginal history. Up until the publication of these books the history of Aboriginal education has been sorely neglected by educational historians and social historians alike. However, as the author so succinctly argues in the preface to the main volume, 'the school has largely gone unnoticed as a means used by white communities to deal with 'the Aboriginal problem' - yet schools have been used in the cause of pacification, christianisation and europeanisation to protect white interests'.

Thus an account which places education at the centre of Aboriginal history is long overdue. Together the books represent two decades of research. Research began when Fletcher was appointed historian to the NSW Department of Education and he 'began noticing evidence of discrimination against Aborigines in historical documents'. This cohered into an MA thesis in the late 1970s, and finally emerged as the more comprehensive account available in these two books.

As this suggests, the central themes of both books are initially established as how schooling has been a means of systematic discrimination against Aborigines and how schooling has acted to protect white interests. Curiously, however, it is the theme of discrimination which is developed - leaving the latter implied throughout. This theme is developed in the main volume (Clean, Clad and Courteous) through a discussion on four different patterns of policy formulation which are discernable in discrete periods across the past two hundred years.

The framework of the first pattern was established through the Native Institution in 1814, and continued through various Missions and policy recommendations to the 1860s. Essential elements of this pattern consisted of an attempt to europeanise through conversion to Christianity, the removal of children from parents to achieve this, and the dismal failure of these attempts.

During the 1870s a new pattern began to emerge. The essential elements of this new pattern were a desire by Aborigines for integration (evident in the enrolment of 'a significant number' of Aboriginal children in schools), and a desire by white communities for the segregation of Aborigines. By alternating chapters on the policy formulation process within the Department of Education and the Aborigines Protection Board, Fletcher illustrates how segregation was the path the government took. Across these chapters a great deal of attention is given to the formulation of Education Department policies around the turn of the twentieth century which excluded Aboriginal children from state schools on the demand of white communities (unless the children were 'clean, clad and courteous'), and which established a separate system of Aboriginal schooling.

By the 1930s another pattern began to emerge, largely (it is suggested) because of increasing numbers of Aborigines throughout the state in general, and the increasing number on reserves in particular. This new pattern involved the construction of a policy of education for assimilation, which was to be achieved mainly by dismantling the segregated

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1 Fletcher, Clean, Clad and Courteous, p.7.
system. For various reasons the government found implementing this policy to be fraught with difficulties. Consequently de-segregation was not actually achieved until the 1960s. After de-segregation was in place, however, increasing evidence that the 'regular' school system was failing Aboriginal children was brought to light. Hence in the 1980s another pattern emerged, this time through a range of new legislation, organisations and policy which sought to promote positive discrimination in education for Aborigines.

Throughout this substantial account the author provides overwhelming and continuing evidence of systematic discrimination against Aboriginal children - evidence such as the limited curriculum made available in the Aboriginal School system, the appointment of unqualified teachers, the sub-standard conditions of school buildings, the channelling of Aboriginal children into unskilled labour, the extreme under-representation of Aboriginal children in secondary and tertiary education, and (white) beliefs about the ineducability of Aborigines.

None of this is particularly new or startling to those involved with Aboriginal education. What is both new and valuable, however, is the careful collation of a vast range of official documents related to education which cover two centuries of Australian history, the development of a systematic argument about the history of Aboriginal education, and the contextualisation of this argument and evidence within broader social policy on Aborigines.

Both the argument and evidence are supplemented by the companion volume of documents. On its own this collection is a major feat of research. The author has drawn together and reproduced excerpts from 245 sources - including government reports, gazettes, journals, pamphlets, books, articles, personal correspondence, official memoranda, inspector's reports, newspapers, minutes of meetings, and parliamentary debates. A great deal of this material has never been published before, and will therefore provide an extremely useful resource for anyone interested in Aboriginal history. While the documents have been arranged to follow the structure of the main volume, the detailed commentary throughout each chapter is designed so that the book can stand alone.

There can be no doubt that these two volumes make a significant contribution to our collective understanding of Aboriginal history and that they will form an indispensable resource for teaching in the area. Together they illustrate the crucial role education was intended to play in the process of colonisation. Perhaps, however, we need to take up this challenge sooner rather than later. For this reader at least, on balance the strengths of the books are matched by several crucial limitations.

One significant limitation is the liberal paradigm which shapes the general argument. All in all the history of Aboriginal education is depicted as a move from policies of intense racial discrimination to more enlightened attitudes and policies (although the author never hesitates to point out that discrimination remains). In general terms this construes segregation as less desirable than assimilation; an argument that contemporary people involved in Aboriginal education might well dispute. Witness, for example, Pemulwuy College in Sydney.

More particularly the liberal paradigm is inadequate for meeting the tasks the author sets initially. Clean, Clad and Courteous begins with the two-pronged argument that education policies have been used to discriminate against Aborigines and to protect white interests. While Fletcher provides an insurmountable wall of evidence that education policies have discriminated against Aborigines, the simultaneous advantaging of non-Aboriginal people always remains implied. This obscures the extent to which shifts in policy may have resulted from ongoing attempts by non-Aboriginal people to construct and maintain their position of dominance. If this theme had been explicitly addressed then the
recent shifts towards 'positive discrimination', for example, would have been discussed quite differently. At the very least the author would have been forced to consider ways in which current policies might represent a continued attempt to empower non-Aboriginal people.

Another obvious limit is the remarkable way in which child removal policies are discussed and dealt with. When I began reading this book I was relieved that an educational historian was finally putting these policies at the centre of their account. But by the second chapter they had disappeared completely. This is primarily because, according to Fletcher, removal policies were evident only in the nineteenth century. How, I wondered in furious puzzlement, could the details and arguments so succinctly put forward by Peter Read and others on child removal throughout the twentieth century be simply left out?2

On rereading the book I discovered they are not left out. Rather, they are reconstituted in a way which defuses the intention of both the 1909 Act (and its amendments) and Protection Board policies, and the explicit function of Cootamundra Girls' and Kinchella Boys' Training Homes. The training homes, we are informed, were for 'orphans' (so presumably lay outside the scope of the book). Certainly the APB formulated apprenticing policy, but this is never traced through into its implementation phase. And the 1909 Act is obscured by more pressing concerns, such as why one Departmental Report was longer than other. Although each of these arms of the child removal policies can be neatly explained away, this is done in such a piecemeal fashion that I was left with the overwhelming impression that Fletcher simply did not want to include this in his argument. But perhaps he did not know how to is a more accurate explanation. To insert discussion on the twentieth century child removal policies and the role education played in facilitating them would have challenged the liberal paradigm itself.

Less obvious are several related but important limitations which result from the focus on government policies. At first glance this indicates that the issue of Aboriginal agency is raised and disposed of quite legitimately. This does not mean that the books are totally devoid of Aboriginal voices. In fact, Clean Clad and Courteous provides many tantalising glimpses of Aboriginal responses to various policies, particularly over the expulsion of their children from state schools. At this level it simply remains for future historians to explore these glimpses in more detail and to insert them into this existing account.

At a deeper level, however, it means the books share all the problems of histories which fail to incorporate Aboriginal agency. The most fundamental of these is the way in which Aborigines are inevitably constructed as passive within the historical text. In Clean Clad and Courteous this approach leads to a general picture of Aborigines as the passive victims of oppression. This is not to deny that Aboriginal people have been disempowered consistently and savagely since white invasion. Rather, it is to suggest that by focussing on government policies the struggle which is always at the heart of the colonising process is effectively silenced. By marginalising Aboriginal voices within these books Fletcher has, by default, marginalised not only the actual struggles Aboriginal people were involved in but the very issue of contestation.

Contestation, struggle and conflict are further silenced by the rather dubious assumption that enrolling a child in a school meant that Aboriginal people wanted to be 'integrated' into white communities. This is not only an unsubstantiated assumption but a dangerous one ... dangerous because it suggests that Aboriginal people wanted the same thing from schooling that white communities and government departments wanted.

Lessons from the history of education in New Zealand pointedly demonstrate the problems involved here. When the first missions were set up in New Zealand (1814

onwards), the missionaries intended to use schooling as a critical instrument in the process of christianising and thereby civilising Maori. Yet Maori only tolerated the presence of the missionaries and their schools because they either directly (by supplying themselves) or indirectly (by encouraging traders to come) provided Maori with muskets - which were used to enhance traditional patterns of *utu*. By the late 1820s and into the 1830s Maori shifted their attention to acquiring the knowledge that produced this technology. As missionaries were the main purveyors of European knowledge at the time, and as schools were the formal institution for transmitting this knowledge, missionary schools began to thrive. To put this more concisely, analysis which incorporates a closer scrutiny of what Maori wanted from schooling illustrates very clearly that the indigenous and colonising agenda were very different indeed. To assume they are one and the same grossly distorts the historical account we end up with.

Moreover, it could be argued that it is the conflict between these differing agendas - and the struggle for empowerment which they embody - which is the driving force between policy changes. This stands in stark contrast with the mutually reinforcing arguments found in *Clean, Clad and Courteous*. Here policy formulation is seen to result from the pressure put on the government by lobby groups, with the lobby group which forwards the most persuasive argument or uses the most effective strategies (etc.) having it's view implemented. Alongside this runs the argument that the government is a neutral vessel which simply represents the interests of the most effective lobby group of the day. The implication we are left to draw from this (pluralist theory of the state) is that Aborigines themselves are really to blame for all of these policies; if they were in some way better at making their voices heard then they could have captured and used this neutral government for their own interests.

Perhaps this is a little pedantic, for Fletcher makes it perfectly clear in the Preface and throughout the book that his focus is on government policy. But the theoretical implications nonetheless remain. Because Aboriginal agency is not systematically incorporated in the argument we are left with the subtle message that Aboriginal people are not only passive victims of oppression but are also tacit agents of their own oppression.

As such, *Clean Clad and Courteous* and its companion volume of documents represent both the heights and the limits of liberal history. The books are underscored by a keen sense of moral outrage which leads to a carefully articulated description of the ways in which education has been used to discriminate against Aborigines over the past two hundred years in New South Wales. Yet Aboriginal people and their views on education are silenced, and through this process are ultimately held responsible for their own oppression.

Clearly the books represent a significant start in linking education with Aboriginal history. Equally as clear is the fact that we still have a long way to go.

**LIST OF REFERENCES**


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3 The most accessible literature in this area is Binney 1969; Jackson 1975; Parr 1961.

Documentary history, oral account and a 60-year-old autobiography provide the ingredients for this account of an Aboriginal and Islander community in northern Cape York Peninsula. The book is essentially a summary historical study of Injinoo near Bamaga, with a current appraisal of this small community's future. The focus is upon the groups who once occupied the northern part of Cape York Peninsula, including Muralug (Prince of Wales Island), and whose descendants form the core of Injinoo community. Some brief opening anthropological interpretation is provided, and succeeding chapters trace the early exploration period, the shock of contact from the Jardine brothers at Somerset, the coastal lugger industry and later mission influence. There is an examination of the recent history of the community and its people, their political battles through the repressive period of Queensland government, and their current aspirations and actions. This takes up 151 pages of the book, with the final section of some 70 pages ('A story of love and destiny') devoted to a romantic account of the McLaren era, drawing upon present-day oral accounts from a McLaren descendant and Jack McLaren's well-known book 'My Crowded Solitude' (1926) for inspiration.

All of this represents something of a mixed offering, especially once the basic historical material is covered. There is an interesting account of the origins of the old Cowal Creek settlement (as Injinoo was formerly known) where local Aboriginal people formed their own settlement, with later input from the Anglican Church. With the government creation of the Bamaga complex in the 1950s they were incorporated into the government welfare system, and to some extent dominated by the arrival of considerable numbers of Torres Strait Islanders. Little thought was given in this period to the Aboriginal people whose traditional lands were being appropriated for immigrants (forced and voluntary) from the Torres Strait and elsewhere.

I found the analysis of current situations (Chapter 9) less satisfactory. The Deed of Grant in Trust tenure created by the old National Party government and given to Injinoo and other Aboriginal communities needs fuller explication, especially with regard to its central failure to recognise traditional tenure rights. These rights only received recognition with the passage of the Aboriginal Lands Act 1991. Curiously, there is no discussion of this significant recent legislation which was passed by the Queensland Parliament mid-1991, and which was the subject of considerable conflict and publicity throughout much of that year. The recent Labor government history needs much more critical attention than the paragraph or two provided.
The short anthropological summary at the beginning concentrates on the northern area, but offers some observations on social linkages further south, though curiously it does not draw upon the recent literature and research. There is much in the literature on Peninsula social organisation since Thomson and McConnell in the 1930s which is relevant here. Beckett's book on the Torres Strait, while dealing elsewhere in the region, would also seem an important reference on colonial domination in the area and is a perplexing omission. I have some difficulty with the description and location of some of the groups making up the current community, and I noted a couple of factual errors. The Lockhart River court decision regarding Farndale was by appeal to the full bench of the Supreme Court of Queensland, not the High Court (p.5). Robert Logan Jack was the government geologist, not a surveyor (p.70) and Lockhart River mission started in 1924, not 1923 (p.103). There are problems with page references for a number of the index items.

Part IV (A Story of Love and Destiny) sits oddly as a concluding section. For this reader the 70 page amalgam of a re-work of McLaren's story and local oral history strikes a discordant note with the authorial voice falling somewhere between McLaren's inimitable prose and an old fashioned romance novel. McLaren can be safely left to his own merits and the oral history would have been more effective if presented strictly in its own terms. The book seems to be aimed at the general reading public and perhaps the local community, rather than a specialised scholarly audience, and it is a useful starting point for anyone interested in this part of Aboriginal Australia.

Athol Chase
Griffith University


Bruce Shaw must be one of Australia's most prodigious collectors of Aboriginal oral history. He has published two major life stories of Aboriginal men of the Kimberleys, a collection and now the reminiscences of Waddi Boyoi and Johnny Walker. Most of Shaw's informants have died since he interviewed them in the 1970s, so we are privileged to read their narratives. And Shaw's painstaking transcription and careful checking and proofing sessions must be admired. This book provides further important evidence of Aboriginal culture and history. Along with Shaw's other collected accounts, a valuable bank of material on Kimberley history is now available, along with insights into Aboriginal analyses and ways of remembering.

Shaw's editing has already been subjected to various critiques - from too 'Europeanized' to too 'Aboriginal'. Rendering speech into writing will never result in a 'pure' form, but I find myself also dissatisfied, strung between two poles. On the one hand, the book is no speed-read, for its origins are spoken narrative in 'Aboriginal English' which do not lend themselves to the book medium. Poetry can be read slowly, but we are trained to read prose - especially English prose - differently. On the other hand, Shaw's rendition of the narratives into more readable English detracts from its beautiful rhythms, the vibrancy and revelatory tone of the spoken form. When Shaw provides an example of 'free translation' in his Appendix (p.172), one cannot help but 'hear' the speech as one reads, which is a far
more exciting experience. But I guess the dilemma is how many readers, Aboriginal or not, would persevere with this 'foreign' speech?

This collection is not comparable to the more sustained reminiscences of Grant Ngabidj or Jack Sullivan. Many themes were introduced by Boyoi and Johnny which were not followed up for clarification, so their difficulty is compounded. Nonetheless the stories are sometimes compelling, shocking, puzzling and contain many themes which analysts of Kimberley history should certainly examine. Myths are dispelled; new Aboriginal understandings of events are introduced. Forget those living-in-total-harmony-with-the-environment stereotypes, especially if humans are to be counted as part of the landscape. Tribal murders and sorcery are prominent themes in the first section, 'Bush Time'. Indeed murder, revenge killings, strange deaths and cannibalism make for some grisly reading and I was left wondering how lucky the narrators were to survive. Could it all have been exaggerated? Shaw admits his questions emphasised 'massacre stories', but he elicited more answers on murders carried out in the world of Aborigines than those across the colonial 'divide'. (p. 7) Here the informants are shaping the narrative they want to deliver, not the questioner. When the whites appear relatively permanently on the scene, in 'Station Time', we hear as we might expect of white men's poison and guns, but also of white men's suicides, their alcoholism and other deaths due to gruesome shooting, horse, dray and other accidents. Kangaroo hunts, consumption of animal guts, blood, flesh and male rituals are prominent as well as conflict 'over women', who are represented in all their 'otherness'. With black women relegated to a 'sweethearts and wives' chapter, Johnny and Waddi project a distinctively male world.

The men's understanding of events is clear and precise and it is specifically that of a non-literate people, from within an Aboriginal cosmology. The book contains some revealing vignettes: for example Waddi's stark description of being detained for murder but not being charged and the repetitive narratives of reporting deaths to white police which show this practice must have become one of the rituals of death. (p. 103) There is a mysterious explanation of the bombing of Wyndham, where Waddi understands that the church, the government and the Aborigines could have appeased the Japanese by giving them half of Ningbing station upon which to settle their soldiers. (p. 108) That narrative deserves some analysis by scholars for the light it sheds on black explanations of Australian colonialism. On more recent times, Johnny viewed cases of black men marrying white women as eminently newsworthy, although he had only heard of them from afar. Of his community in the early 1970s, he stated 'The biggest trouble is arguing over women, and grog.' (p. 151) The impact of grog is an important theme for both men, and fascinating in this light is Waddi's comment, influenced by his contact with Catholic missions: 'Father says the wine is Father's law, His blood, but I can't drink it.' (p.146)

Ann McGrath
History, University of NSW


Despite its more expansive sub-title, this book is an excellent ethnography of the Doomadgee mission settlement, based on fieldwork between 1978 and 1983. These were the
last years in which the settlement was administered by the Christian Brethren missionaries, since after 1983 staffing of the mission, including the school, was taken over by the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement. After a few years of preliminary work, the present settlement had been founded in 1936 on the Nicholson River, in cattle country about half way between Burketown and the Northern Territory border and some 100 kilometres from the coast.

The time and location are important, for although each situation had its particular features, Doomadgee was typical of a class of settlement founded by various denominational groups across northern Australia in the first three or four decades of the century. In the 1970s and 1980s these have passed from mission control. Many aspects of the settlement as described by Trigger will be familiar to those with experience of other missions; there is the physical development of the settlement complex with clearly defined domains for different groups, the missionaries, whose dedication and even self-sacrifice in the interests (as they see them) of the Aboriginal people are undoubtedly genuine, are at the same time endowed with opportunities for authoritarianism that would not be accepted in the wider community, even the dominance of certain individuals and the nature of faction and dispute take on a particular cast in these circumstances. All this is analysed skilfully and lucidly explained. The generous use of quotations from tapes supplies an effective sense of immediacy, though I found the suppression of personal names somewhat artificial and not really necessary on grounds of privacy, since all opinions are accorded respect.

Like any good modern ethnographer, Trigger deftly includes himself in the picture, at least in terms of his actions and options at Doomadgee. I would have liked a bit more on what lead him there. He also pays serious and fair attention to the missionaries. More importantly, he describes in some detail the historical circumstances of the whole Gulf region which lead members of several Aboriginal groups, especially some from the Northern Territory, to move eastwards and eventually settle on the mission. He has been lucky here to have the careful historical research of John Dymock and others to provide easy access into the sources.

For the historian of north Australia or of Aboriginal experience generally, the book gives a carefully researched account of a situation which was once relatively common, but has now passed. Although there are a few references to comparable studies, such as the Tonkinsons descriptions of Jigalong in Western Australia, the main comparative work is yet to be done. This, however, raises two further issues.

The first concerns the selection of the central concepts of analysis. These are fairly described in the final sentences of the book:

Through pursuing the theme of resistance and accommodation, I have sought to make clear the effects of the political and economic structures of colonialism on people in a region of northern Australia. The study is thus an ethnography that seeks to reveal the political implications inherent in the cultural processes of daily life. (p.225)

In fact, there is little detail on the economy of the mission in a simple sense, but the nature of authority and the operation of power are central to the discussion. There is some danger here of reductionism; everything is reduced to power relationships. For example, while Trigger is aware that the 'Christian ideology' of the missionaries and those Aborigines influenced by them can be treated in many ways,

[m]y discussion centres on whether Christianity operated historically to legitimate the domination of Aboriginal society, or provided a basis for forms of Aboriginal resistance. Considered thus, Christianity's primary sociological
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significance is located within the operation of settlement power relations.
(p.189)
Surely there has now been enough written about Aboriginal Christianity, especially in the north, for the interest of a wider focus to be apparent.

In my view, the concept of colonialism is something of a red herring in this context. For one thing, there is an ambiguity in the way it is used here that is not resolved. Is the colonial relationship between southern Australia and north Australian society and economy as a whole, including Aboriginal interests, or is it between 'white Australia' and Aboriginal society and economy, especially in the north? Outside the formal constitutional sense, the use of the term, colonialism, is necessarily metaphorical and, in the literature, covers a range of applications from Marx to Mannoni and many others. I think the book would be better without the word or, at least, with a very clear discussion of its exact meaning in this context.

A comparative approach raises a second issue which deserves further analysis. David Turner, in his Tradition and transformation, which describes several aspects of change among some groups at the Angurugu mission on Groote Eylandt, concluded that, in the long term, no separate identity could be maintained. Robert Tonkinson too, in his later work on Jigalong has admitted that he over-estimated the capacity of the Aborigines to maintain the integrity of their symbolic world. Trigger does not ask about the future of that sense of Aboriginal separateness over against the missionaries which loomed so large in the Doomadgee he knew. In many ways, the possibility of an option for maintaining a society and economy separate from others (black or white) is now the most pressing problem for many Aboriginal communities and it would be interesting to know how this question looks at Doomadgee - or looked in 1983.

While one may regret what is not here, in the end it is far more important to stress what is. All the residents of Doomadgee may count themselves fortunate to have got such a fair and sensitive observer as Trigger to record their communal life. The rest of us have the benefit of this admirably clear account of the concerns and attitudes of the various residents as a crucial moment of transition in the life of that community. Such ethnographies are all too rare.

C.C. Macknight
The Australian National University


It is rewarding to learn that previous editors of Aboriginal History sought copy from Pastor Albrecht, but unfortunately he was then too frail to write (p.282). Unfortunate, because he was a key figure in Central Australian affairs for almost half a century and, as this well written book amply demonstrates, he was widely respected by Aboriginal people. His approach to them all, male and female, Aranda, Loritja, Pintubi, Pitjantjatjara, Warlpiri and others, was not an intellectual one. Rather, it was 'more on the basis of a common humanity, attuning himself to the practical realities of their everyday lives' (p.226).
Frederick Wilhelm Albrecht was born in Poland in October 1894. The author fails to notice the symbolism, that it also was October 1894 when Carl Strehlow arrived to superintend the Finke River Mission, named Hermannsburg. Two years before Albrecht's death in 1984, the ownership of the Hermannsburg lease passed to five Aboriginal land trusts. Strehlow ruled Hermannsburg as a benevolent despot for twenty-eight years; Albrecht's somewhat milder autocracy covered a quarter century, although his influence in the Centre continued after his transfer to Alice Springs.

Both missionaries suffered from severe personal illness, also from the tyranny of both distance and penury, and from the petty persecutions to which 'Germans' were subjected during world wars. They were both theologians of their time, so their God was a severe one who brooked no pagan rites or false beliefs. It is testimony to Albrecht's intellectual honesty and sincerity in attempting to comprehend Aboriginal thought, that he came to admit his ethnocentric and philosophical bias (eg. p.249). This significant record of an ardent missionary experiencing spiritual confrontation on the colonial frontier offers valuable insights.

Hermannsburg under these men was arguably the most successful missionary enterprise in Australia. It certainly protected more Aborigines from persecution, or worse, than any mission. With hindsight, the price may seem high in terms of deprivations of civil rights and destruction of traditional culture. Segregated and locked sleeping quarters for children; elders barred from performing ceremonies and sacred objects desecrated, for example. Yet the very firmness of the system offered sanctuary and direction to societies disintegrating before harsh landtakers and their cattle. In context, Hermannsburg was a haven of peace and charity from the time of policeman-terrorist W.H. Willshire in the 1880s to the Coniston massacre and after.

Partly because Strehlow's son did so much to perpetuate his father's memory, Hermannsburg and its white painted village setting is identified with Carl Strehlow. Read the numerous Aboriginal tributes to Pastor Albrecht included within this carefully researched study, however, and analyse the extent of Albrecht's efforts on behalf of the material and spiritual welfare of the Aboriginal people across a wide swathe of the Centre, and his contribution becomes evident. His biography was overdue. Barbara Henson achieved the task with a light and sympathetic touch. Students of race relations should read it.

This is a good general account of Albrecht's life and activities. It may not satisfy specialists, however, because it touches on many salient issues in a chronological narrative form, rather than subjecting them to close analysis. The book depends upon the extensive Albrecht archive and related Lutheran sources, so that outside trends and cross-currents impinge less strongly than they might. Examples include some comparative appraisal of Australian missions between and after the world wars; the psychology and tensions within all small, isolated communities (p.73); the role of the wartime army in the Centre in promoting race relations (p.146); the probability that wartime demands may explain the slowness of Chinnery, Director of Native Affairs, in reaching decisions (p.137); Ted Strehlow appears frequently, but he merited deeper consideration - those unfamiliar with the context could not appreciate the nature of the 'running controversy', or 'the break-up of his first marriage', from those terse comments (pp.278-9).

Another facet of Australian history meriting further exploration was commonwealth government Aboriginal policy. To what extent was ministerial apathy due to anti-German or anti-religious sentiment? The sheer pettiness of government decisions concerning blanket supply (pp.33-4), water pipes (p.45), and the delivery of pipes to the wrong place (p.94) shocking examples. A serious outbreak of scurvy was ignored by authorities (p.46).
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Albrecht's supreme material achievement was to bring water to Hermannsburg from Kaporilja Springs, in the face of lack of funds, government and mission administration apathy, or expert advice that it was physically impossible. Visitors to Hermannsburg should look beyond the solid Strehlow buildings to the huge concrete water tank which so improved the quality of life, and to the flattened petrol drums from which buildings were constructed at little cost. These matters are treated carefully by the author.

Pastor Albrecht's career reflected changing attitudes to race relations and mission policy within the Australian community, but he was years ahead on many issues. He was concerned that later 'welfare' policies were designed by mission staff or white bureaucrats to create 'more activities which in the end would have to be run by European staff', while stifling Aboriginal initiatives (pp.217,268). As the basis for positive development he increasingly emphasised personal, individual contacts (p.258). He sensed that anthropologists of his time unduly emphasised preserving traditional culture, ignoring the reality of social and economic change (p.149); he considered that Daisy Bates did 'incalculable harm' (p.143).

It is not surprising that he encouraged the development of Albert Namatjira's talents. Neither is it contradictory that he proved unsympathetic to Albert during the later years of his success, because he was disrupting Hermannsburg social life.

One of Albrecht's major material and spiritual contributions was his outreach policy which took him on exhausting camel treks to distant places and resulted in the establishment of outposts where Aboriginal evangelists ministered to their own people (p.227). That Aboriginal pastors continued their ministry after his departure is testimony to his work. These men provided Barbara Henson with some of her most interesting oral evidence. Listen to Pastor Ungkwanaka as late as 1986 (p.107): people 'still think today they might be shot because station owners might get greedy of the country'. In old age Albrecht recalled only one occasion in Centralia 'where the Aborigines have been preferred before the bullocks' (p.268).

Students of Territory or missionary history, and of race relations, all would benefit from reading this book. Let humanitarian Albrecht have the last word, appropriately written to an historian, Mervyn Hartwig, in 1961. In requesting a copy of his thesis on the Coniston massacre for the Lutheran President General, he observed (p.251):

I also think that it may never see the public press as it is such a terrible indictment. Yet if we are to redeem our past sins in this country, it will be only if people's eyes are opened wide to facts as you have dug up.'

John Mulvaney
Australian Academy of the Humanities


These two additions to the rapidly growing list of Aboriginal autobiographies tell very different stories. Mabel Edmund, who is of Aboriginal, German and South Sea Islander descent, was born in 1930 and grew up in North Rockhampton's South Sea Islander community. She left school at thirteen and went to work on a cattle station, where she met
her future husband. After she got married she spent many years tending a market garden and raising her children in the Rockhampton area, but a new field of activity opened up for her in 1970 when she was elected as a shire councillor. She displayed her strength of will as a black woman and a Labor Party member in a council dominated by white National Party men, then went on to serve in various Aboriginal-controlled and government organisations. After her husband died she studied art, and is now a successful artist with paintings in galleries and private collections. Mabel Edmund's book was highly commended in the David Unaipon Award for first-time Aboriginal authors. Despite what Sally Morgan says on the cover, Mabel Edmund is not a gifted writer, though you get the feeling that she is probably an entertaining storyteller in person. However, her story is no less interesting for being told in a very plain style.

Bill Dodd was only born in 1965, so the broad outline of his life is much simpler than Mabel Edmund's. He grew up in the small country town of Mitchell, Queensland, where he developed a love of horses at an early age. After his father died he left school and became something of a larrikin. At the age of eighteen he had to abandon his ambition to work with horses when a diving accident left him a quadriplegic. Six months of rehabilitation were followed by six years in a nursing home before he finally returned to his family in Mitchell. He now moves about in a wheelchair and uses a splint on one finger to type. He has obviously become much more thoughtful since his accident, and though he still loves horses his ambition now is to write. He has got off to a good start with this book, which won the 1991 David Unaipon Award and is told in an engagingly humorous, blunt and colloquial style.

Ewan Morris
Australian Defence Force Academy


Let me begin by saying that Keeffe offers us a deeply sensitive and perceptive analysis of the difficulties Aboriginal Torres Strait Island people face in Australia in meeting the difficult challenge of developing a curriculum which allows access to and participation in the dominant society without forsaking a primary identity in Aboriginality (p. 60).

It is not a dilemma that is unique to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people either in Australia or in other parts of the world. In this year of indigenous people, it is important to remember that education remains a major instrument of neo-colonialist control, especially through its use in the curriculum of cultural colonialism.¹ We have heard much in recent years of the concept of 'the inclusive curriculum', i.e., a curriculum in which the whole variety of gender, culture, ethnic tradition and other differences between people is adequately and visibly presented and equally valued. It is also, or should be a curriculum which accepts, encourages and builds on those special skills which are preferred and culturally valued which individual students may bring to their schooling. It is not, however, a curriculum which seeks through 'including' these varieties of difference to

¹  Barlow 1990, p. 68.
change them so that they 'merge' into the dominant preferred 'culture' in the school with a view to graduating the student as thoroughly assimilated into some unified overarching 'Australian culture'. More than one approach to both multi-cultural and Aboriginal and Islander education has set just such assimilation as their end aim.

Keeffe has based his analysis on four key concepts which he defines in his introductory essay and on the further concept of 'Aboriginality' which he analyses at some length in the three essays which form the second part of the book. (I refer to Keeffe's chapters as essays for that is how he has conceived his book, as a series of essays in which he explores and analyses the issues involved in developing educational programs for and about Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders). His four key concepts are 'education', 'curriculum', 'power' and 'culture'.

It is important to read this introductory essay closely for in it Keeffe explains how his experience in teaching in Aboriginal and Islander community schools in urban Brisbane, Cape York and Central Australia, led him to a realisation that according to who used them and in what context, the meaning of these words and the concepts they invoked were truly problematic. As regards Aboriginal and Islander education and studies he concludes;

The realm of culture is a contested terrain and the curriculum is a significant site in this terrains. Aboriginal are locked in a dynamic struggle with groups in the dominant society and with themselves over the right to claim its ground. They are seeking a restructuring of this particular field of knowledge and control. The Aboriginal education and Aboriginal studies curriculum is part of a wider and more difficult tussle for power than can be seen in the centre of Australia and in the city' (p.10).

Examples of this tussle for power form the major context of a number of the following essays. First we hear the story of how a group of Pintubi teachers from Walungurru school in central Australia adapted their traditional art form to make a statement about Pintubi people's experience of education and about what they needed to do so as to regain control over their culture in and through their school's curriculum. This provides an opportunity to expand on the cultural content of such an empowering curriculum and to discuss the place of Central Australian art in schooling in that region.

The second essay explores the contesting concepts of 'Aboriginality' which emerged in a cultural awareness camp held for Aboriginal students outside Canberra. This exploration leads to an examination of the competing perceptions of 'Aboriginality as persistence' and 'Aboriginality as resistance'. Both are useful in categorising the approaches favoured by teachers in attempting to teach about Aborigines and Islanders today. Keeffe highlights the dangers of an 'Aboriginality as persistence' approach. He stresses that Aboriginal culture, both in Central and in urban Australia is interacting with both other Australian as well as other Aboriginal cultures and is in this sense active and evolving. Thus, Aboriginal culture neither in the Centre nor in the city should be seen 'as a residual but pure extract from a traditional essence' (p.60).

On the other hand 'neither should Aboriginality in the city be written off as simply a twisting of old themes into new forms to suit changing political and economic circumstances' (p.61). For every Aboriginal and Islander group, its own form of Aboriginality lies at the heart of its culture and its education.

The second group of essays in Keeffe's book provides his essential content. In these he explores more fully the theme of Aboriginality as introduced in his second essay, and sets out to contrast the various perceptions of Aboriginality, the use of the concept in education and the relationship between Aboriginality and ethnicity. This latter embodies a critique of those Australian social scientists who seem to equate Aboriginality with ethnicity.
The remaining essays continue to illustrate the theme of the curriculum and culture as contested sites. Part 3, under the title of 'Yanangu culture and the curriculum', in two essays discusses curriculum approaches to bilingual/bicultural education in Central Australia, and tells us how the Pintubi teachers at Wajungurrurra school went about developing a curriculum which would reflect and contain their Yanangu Aboriginality. Part 4 looks at the place of Aboriginal history both in Australian history and in the Australian history curriculum. The effectiveness of pre-entry ('bridging') programmes for Aboriginal and Islander students seeking post-school education is savagely criticised:

At a broader political and educational level, the case study suggests that an emphasis on autonomy at the group level has placed limits on individual Aboriginal access to further education, postponing and retarding any chance of educational equality, social autonomy or economic self-determination' (p.166).

There is little to quarrel with in Keeffe's depiction of the educational dilemma that faces Aborigines and Islanders who seek to obtain the advantages education seems to offer them without paying the price of acculturation for it. My only complaint would be at what he has omitted - a guide to curriculum review and renewal in Aboriginal studies. His original research brief under the research fellowship on which his book is based was 'to investigate strategies for curriculum development in Aboriginal studies and Aboriginal education' (p.3). The focus of his essays, as I have detailed then has been on the curriculum and culture in Aboriginal and Islander education. He has dealt with some of the issues involved in presenting and embodying Aboriginality in the curriculum, and it is evident that he has addressed the tasks involved in developing Aboriginal studies in the curriculum (see Chapter 9). It seems a pity then that he should choose to publish elsewhere² 'a guide to curriculum review and renewal in Aboriginal Australian studies' (Note 2, p.15). This is especially to be regretted given the emphasis placed under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Program released by the Commonwealth Government in 1989 on Aboriginal studies in all Australian schools. The findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody have renewed this emphasis, as has the recently appointed Commission for Reconciliation.

Teachers and our State and Territory education systems continue to need direction on how to develop in their schools' Aboriginal studies programs so as to meet the demand that they adequately present contemporary and historic Aboriginality, with reference to its local forms, whilst at the same time leading students to a respect for the contribution Aboriginal people have made to the evolution of Australia as a country and as a nation. Without a study of approaches to the development of Aboriginal studies in the curriculum the book remains a significant, but incomplete, study of the present status of knowledge in the fields of curriculum development in Aboriginal education and Aboriginal studies.

LIST OF REFERENCES


Alex Barlow
Australian Info International

² Keeffe & Schmider 1988.
BOOK REVIEWS


The Handbook of Australian Languages is an outstanding series of works on Aboriginal languages. Each volume contains four major descriptions of individual languages, following a well established and thorough descriptive pattern, and each includes a vocabulary and texts where possible. The series is an invaluable guide, anyone interested in the field of Australian linguistics is bound to use the series constantly.

The present volume continues the tradition of occasionally including languages for which the bulk of our information comes from last century: Barry Blake has written a grammar of Woiwurrung, the Melbourne language. This is a thorough and competent study, based on all the available sources. The historical introduction is excellent, written with insight and understanding. One minor blemish is that (p.55) John Dunmore Lang appears as 'James Dunmore Lang'.

It is a pity that the spelling of the main sources has not been included in the vocabulary except where the interpretation was particularly uncertain. This means that not all the information, obviously collated with great care and expertise, is made available to the reader. Inclusion of this information would have given justification to the phonemic transcription that is given. Just to quote one example: in the absence of further data the reader is left puzzled as to why the well-known toy throwing-stick witj-witj or with-with, attested also from the other Kulin languages, is transcribed as wuywayit. Presumably the spelling of the sources was not included because of the constraints of the format. The reviewer, for ever an optimist, would like to think that if the work could have been lengthier more information could have been extracted from the data by further comparison with closely related Kulin languages. For instance the ending -eit which is used by Thomas as a quotation form (p.75) could be compared with the Wembawemba potential -itj. This interpretation is in keeping with the sentence from a psalm (from Thomas's work quoted p.78) where 'wooranderroneit' is used in the sense of 'I would lift up'. In Wembawemba the -itj form appears in a very similar context with the verb wawa 'to follow' in a hymn recorded by the reviewer:

| Yandang  | wawitj | kirkunditj |
| I       | would follow | God (lit. 'the one belonging to Heaven') |
| Yandang  | wawitj | wathipuk |
| I       | would follow | Son-his |
| Yandang  | wawitj | nja! |
| I       | would follow | indeed! |

The interpretation of Thomas's -eit as -itj / ith is strengthened further by the fact that word-final -itj / ith is written as -eit elsewhere in the Woiwurrung data, e.g. guritch, 'sister's husband' (p 85 and 112) appears also as kooreit, 'brother in law' (p. 85 and p. 113) - and surely these cannot be two separate words. Because of the complexities of spelling and particularly because of the utter confusion between u and a in the source material there are many other words which are duplicated; for instance the word budji which means 'inside' and buth, butj 'stomach' are one and the same. The corresponding word wutjup in Wembawemba and Werkaya has precisely those two meanings.

The information we have on the related languages in a number of cases enables us to see that Woiwurrung followed similar grammatical rules. Thus mirruk 'his eye' is the normal third person possessive form of mir 'eye' in Wembawemba and Werkaya, and the retroflex nasal rn is part of the system of morphophonemic changes connected with
possessive suffixes and not part of the stem, as is shown by parallel examples: *lar* 'camp', *larnuk* 'his camp'; *kar* 'leg', *karnuk* 'his leg'. The same seems to have applied in Woiwurrung. Similarly *babanhu* 'female' presumably reflects rules (attested from Wembawemba and Werkaya) regarding the use of a laminal nasal before the third person possessive marker: *babanhu* is therefore not a separate word, but the third person possessive form of *aban* 'mother'. *burruiñ * -duth* 'night-time' (69) means 'at night'; it does not contain an unknown suffix -duth but it is *burruiñ -dh-uth*, the locative form in -uth (presumably pronounced *atha / adha*) with the common Kulin insertion of a stop after the final nasal as in *yirram-b-uth* 'tomorrow'.

In Werkaya there is a 'particularising' suffix -i which is commonly used at the end of the first member of compounds, especially in compounds denoting body parts. The examples given by Blake (p.79) could be explained in the same way.

On p. 80 we read

A scan of the vocabulary reveals that quite a number of words contain two meaningful parts. Unfortunately however, it has not been possible in most cases to ascertain the status of some of these parts (compounding element or suffix) or to determine their meaning.

There is no question that this statement is sadly true and it is not likely that we will ever be able to analyse some of these complex words. Two examples are chosen to illustrate the point:

- *djinang-aluk* shoes
  - foot- ?

and

- *dharrang-aluk* trousers
  - thigh- ?

In the Kulin languages possessive words follow the pattern

Stem+ Case marker + possessive marker

These words are therefore readily analysable from the available Woiwurrung data:

- *djinang-al-uk* belonging to his (anybody's) feet, i.e. shoes
  - foot- GEN his

and

- *dharrang-al-uk* belonging to his (anybody's) thighs, i.e. trousers
  - thigh- GEN his

One of the compound words in the vocabulary that can be be partly analysed is *pimbial* 'rainbow' which must contain the word *bial* 'redgum'. There are a number of words which are partly analysable in that they contain the 'having' suffix -bil, well attested in other Kulin languages as-wil. This applies for instance to *wigabil* 'old', and to *wañdharrabil* 'crooked'; it applies to some of the adjectives denoting colours and to *burrabil* 'wet', which I suspect contains a misreading of *n* for *m*, not by Blake but by his sources, and should be *barna-bil* 'water-having'. This group of words also includes what was obviously a recently coined word, *wurrkadabil* 'coat' which is simply another spelling of *wurrgartabil* 'black', presumably because men's overcoats were usually that colour. *wykoon in wykoon primpum* 'widower' is equivalent to Wembawemba *wiken* 'dead' and the compound therefore means 'dead wife (his)'. The most interesting of the many other at least partly analysable compounds is *Dirrn-galk* 'Milky Way', *dharranggalk* 'comet' which must contain the word *galk* 'bone', 'tree'. There is a possibility that the first part of the word is connected with *dhirrarranyun, dharranhu* and *tardarding* 'white', and that the compound means 'white tree'. The presence of the word *galk* might make one speculate about the idea behind the Central Australian *Urumbula* myth, the vision of the Milky Way as a giant tree.
which grew right up into the sky. Perhaps something of the kind was known to Woiwurrung people too.

Clearly, had there been space for a major monograph rather than a section of the Handbook much, much more could have been made of the analysis of Woiwurrung. However, in order to make an analysis of all the data with complete certainty one would have to have intimate knowledge of the language and hands-on experience of learning it. We are about ninety years too late for that, and we must be grateful to Barry Blake for what he has achieved with the difficult and scattered materials available.

The other contributors to this volume of the Handbook have had the opportunity for hands-on experience, though R.M.W. Dixon got to Mbabaram speakers well past the eleventh hour. The best preserved language is Panyjima from the Pilbara region of WA, studied by Alan Dench, and intimate knowledge and understanding are a hallmark of this work. The reviewer had recently for the first time listened to her limited data from south-eastern coastal WA, a long way from Panyjima, and had endless trouble trying to distinguish between alveolar and retroflex consonants. Here, right near the beginning of Dench's work lay the answer: he was able to work out the environments in which backing and fronting of these consonants occurred both in Panyjima and a number of other WA languages. He does not simply give a list of phonemes but shows important phonetic insights. Perhaps in a later edition he might give us a translation for the tantalising sample sentences 1-3. Because of the work he has done with other languages in the area, notably Martuthunira, Dench has a real understanding of what is going on in Panyjima, and this is evident throughout. The language is particularly interesting as it is nominative-accusative, double case-marking is a conspicuous characteristic, and the verbal derivational system shows features unusual outside the Ngayarda language group, such as a collective. Dench includes a study of Paathupathu, a special form of the language used in speaking to certain kinsmen and in initiation situations. This study has important implications for understanding what was felt to be the core structure of Panyjima, and for understanding how avoidance styles can function in general.

The study of Djabugay from far North Queensland by Elizabeth Patz is a fascinating piece of work. Djabugay was recorded by Hale in the early 1960s, when there were still a number of fluent elderly speakers. Later the language almost became extinct. It was kept alive and revitalised by a determined and far-sighted speaker, Roy Banning, and is now being taught in local schools. The present work is based on the material recorded by Hale, supplemented with recordings made with Roy Banning by H. Cassels and by Elizabeth Patz herself. In conformity with the wishes of Djabugay people she has used the orthography that was developed by M. Quinn and R. Banning in their school program for the language. Elizabeth Patz is known for her work on a neighbouring language to the north-west, Kuku Yalandji. She has used her wide knowledge to great advantage not only in the recognition of cognates, but also in the understanding of the features that are unique to Djabugay such as the absence of inchoatives formed from nouns and the absence of causative transitive verbs formed from nominals.

The fourth language described in this volume, Mbabaram, was once spoken in the rainforests of far north Queensland. Tindale considered the rainforest people to be genetically different and 'Tasmanoid' and thought the languages in the area were different from other Australian languages. In 1964 R.M.W. Dixon went to investigate the situation. He found that one of the rainforest languages, Mbabaram and a related and extinct language Agwamin did indeed appear different from other Australian languages. Mbabaram was only partially remembered by two elderly speakers and he was only able to record some 300 words. He recognised that the 'different' appearance of Mbabaram was due to profound
phonological changes. His early publications on Mbabaram in 1966 showed this. They were read avidly at the time by the reviewer, but they were highly theoretical and hard to understand. The present work does more than make amends for this: it is a model of just how much a brilliant and experienced linguist can draw even from very limited data.

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Although we have virtually no national data on the health status of Australia's Aboriginal population, the available data demonstrate conclusively the gap between the health of Aboriginal people and that of the non-Aboriginal population. Teachers and students, researchers and commentators, have had access, over the years, to such epidemiological data as are available, particularly through the work of the Aboriginal Health Unit of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Much has been written about Aboriginal health, but the literature has been diffused throughout various journals and book chapters. What has been missing has been books which provide systematic and comprehensive descriptions and analyses of the Aboriginal health field as a whole.

In 1991 two books were published which sought to fill this gap: Aboriginal Health and Society: The Traditional and Contemporary Aboriginal Struggle for Better Health by Sherry Saggers and Dennis Gray; and The Health of Aboriginal Australia, edited by Janice Reid and Peggy Trompf (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1991). Although their contents overlap, these books have different focuses and fill different needs. The former seeks to provide a coherent, political economy-based argument about Aboriginal health. The latter contains far more material and is the work of a number of authors each concentrating on her or his own chapter's theme. Reid and Trompf have made considerable efforts to present an Aboriginal viewpoint (although most of the contributors are non-Aboriginal people); Saggers and Gray have explicitly written from a non-Aboriginal perspective for a non-Aboriginal readership. Both are excellent books and are already being used as key resources for people keen to better understand and to communicate about contemporary issues in Aboriginal health.

Aboriginal Health and Society, the subject of this review, was written (Saggers and Gray tell us) as a text book on Aboriginal health 'for undergraduates and graduates in both health and social science-related courses' (p.ix). The book takes an overtly political economy perspective. In seven chapters, it sets out a range of orientations to studying Aboriginal health, describes traditional patterns of health and disease, discusses historical factors (particularly colonisation and its consequences), contemporary Aboriginal mortality and morbidity, mainstream and Aboriginal-controlled health policy and services, and concludes with an integrating chapter on the political economy of health and illness generally and Aboriginal health particularly.

Given these contents, one would expect the book's sub-title to be 'The Political Economy of Aboriginal Health', not 'The Traditional and Contemporary Aboriginal Struggle for Better Health'. Indeed, readers expecting the book to focus on Aboriginal
people's own struggles to improve Aboriginal health will be disappointed. Although the significance of that struggle is not denied by the authors, the approach that they have taken to political economy means that Aboriginal people's own roles and experiences in creating change receive less emphasis than the need for change in power relations in Australian society generally, and internationally.

The book is valuable for its comprehensiveness and consistent theoretical basis. The individual chapters are written in stand-alone form thus enhancing the book's usefulness for reference purposes. Its data and sources cover the period to 1989 (although one June 1990 statistic has found its way in [page 176] and the authors cite their own 1991 chapter in Reid and Trompf).

The political economy focus is the book's organising theme. In the main, the authors differentiate clearly their presentations of factual, descriptive information from their interpretations. The final chapter draws together the material presented earlier, provides an overview of political economy concepts and presents the book's conclusions: first, that the poor health of Aboriginal people reflects their relative powerlessness and poverty and, secondly, that action needs to focus on the link between health, illness and capitalism and the relationships between capitalism and medical practice.

For this reviewer, the main weakness in the book is one of structure, rather than content. The book is littered with sociological jargon the meaning of which will be unknown to many readers. The concepts represented by these terms, such as 'political economy' and 'structural determinism', are key concepts essential to the book's arguments. However, in the main they are either left undefined or defined and discussed only in the final chapter. A different organisation, one in which the reader is introduced to the sociological constructs far earlier in the book, would make its contents more understandable and its central theme more convincing.

A second concern is the authors' references to Aboriginal organisations, especially the Aboriginal community-controlled health services. Either the authors are ambivalent about the role of these crucial elements in Aboriginal health or they were unable to devote sufficient space to this area. Few readers will be convinced, through Saggers and Gray's presentation, of the importance of the Aboriginal health services in achieving Aboriginal people's health and broader social goals. This reflects, I suggest, the book's efforts (which I support) to argue in two directions simultaneously, namely the need to redress the unequal power relations which exist between the dominant Australian society and Aboriginal people on the one hand, and the need for Aboriginal perceptions to shape the definition of Aboriginal health problems and to determine the nature of service delivery aimed at enhancing the health of Aboriginal people.

In conclusion, readers seeking a wide-ranging presentation of information on the nature and causes of Aboriginal health and illness and policies and priorities in this area, along with discussions of policy options for change, will find this book valuable. Those who already hold a 'new public health' or political economy of health orientation are likely to applaud Saggers and Gray's interpretations and proffered solutions. Readers unfamiliar with this orientation, or even opposed to it, will be challenged by this book to give more weight to the importance of power relationships as a key determinant of the health of Aboriginal people.

David McDonald
Australian Institute of Criminology

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This book, as the preface from Altman and Taylor indicates, is a collection of papers drawn from a workshop by the same name as the book and held in Canberra in 1990. Any book of such a length and with eighteen contributors is obviously not capable of considering any one subject in-depth. However what the book lacks as an in-depth study is irrelevant to its practical purposes. Anyone wanting such coverage should consult the 'Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry Report' of the Review Committee chaired by Altman.

The workshop drew together over 60 people from all areas of interest in Aboriginal art but particularly people with practical experience in the industry. The papers presented include contributions from artists, Aboriginal Art Centre staff, retailers, small scale manufacturers, a government policy maker, educators, anthropologists and people involved in copyright procedures. The result of the combination of practical experience and diversity of perspectives is a book which gives not just a quick dip into the diversity of the Aboriginal Arts Industry, but also a collection of anecdotal comment and experiential details which will be of use to a wide ranging audience. There is also information here of value to all persons involved in any area of creative endeavour from visual arts to writing, and from production to marketing. Altman's introductory paper informs what has happened in the Aboriginal Arts Industry since the 'Report of the Review Committee', outlines general features of the industry, highlights the pivotal role of local publicly funded art centres and contrasts those centres marketing fine art from those marketing tourist art. He also provides us with the information that in 1987-88 as much as 45% of production was bought by overseas visitors, while only 5% was exported, meaning of course that 50% was sold to the home market in Australia.

Areas discussed in the other papers include the contrast between the tourist and fine arts markets, the need for relating together types of production and appropriate markets. Advice is given on the details and meanings of copyright and the legal processes of protecting and financially developing created works. Advice is also given on the need for sound financial marketing and management support at all levels from that of the individual artist to that of the large commercial wholesale and retail art businesses.

Several writers describe a range of the different practices and practical issues at the large Aboriginal Art Centres while others speaking from an entirely different viewpoint present issues that are concerned with personal or cultural relevance of the artistic production and the difficulties involved on occasion with resolving differences between cultural (meaning religious) and economic values in the production and sale of some items.

Altogether this book can make a useful and practical contribution to the work of any person involved in the Aboriginal Arts Industry but additionally will be of practical assistance also to others involved in other artistic endeavour than Aboriginal art.

John Rudder
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
BOOK REVIEWS


Desert Crafts appears to be designed for the dual purpose of servicing the tourist market, and beyond that to popularise the craft produced by the Anangu people and sold through the Maruku Craft Centre. The Anangu are defined as being the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyanyatjara but as also including the Matutjara and Ngaatjatjara. The book divided into three sections, gives in the first part, a quickly and easily digested introduction to the people and their desert environment, a brief skim over some of the mythology of Uluru and Katajuta and an outline of the process by which the Anangu have regained ownership of their land. While this latter is brief it gives enough detail to indicate that this was not easily achieved.

Part two outlines the development of the craft industry in this desert region as it relates to the Maruku Centre. It skims quickly from early attempts by individuals to make an income by selling carvings by the roadside to the development of the Amata Craft centre and subsequently the process of the development of the Maruku Centre, Maruku Arts and Crafts, based at Uluru. We are then taken on a craft buying trip with Maruku staff and introduced to some of the realities and discomforts of the work involved and the processes by which the various artefacts are gathered and brought to the Centre.

The third section describes the production processes by which the separate items are made and emphasises the authenticity of artifacts and the artistic creativity of the small carvings produced. It closes with very brief references to the desert crafts from other sources giving a courtesy nod to the work of Winifred Hilliard and others who have developed various craft industries among the Pitjantjatjara, and includes an even briefer reference to paintings from Papunya and Yuendumu, largely dismissing the relevance of the latter with the comment that 'Maruku has curbed the dotty fever from becoming an epidemic, preferring to quietly encourage the maintenance of valuable traditional woodworking skills, even in the face of pressures from the tourist market'.

Throughout, the narrative is enlivened by delightful anecdotes and combines with the wide selection of coloured photographs to present a glowing representation of the Anangu, their artistic skills and creativity, their authenticity as hunters and gatherers and their humanity. They become a people without spot or wrinkle and fitting representations of the image of the noble savage.

With all the positive aspects of this book yet I find myself disturbed by it. Many things are larger than life, particularly the Anangu and this is graphically reflected in the larger-than-normal-text type face used for quotations from them. In contrast, some things are smaller than life and this conflict between reality and unreality is expressed throughout.

The visual presentation of the book itself is one uncomfortable example of this. The combination of highly magnified details of the textures of pokerwork, carved design and other close up photographs are combined with small scale photos that one would like to be able to see more clearly. The overall effect is an awkward sense of attraction and repulsion in some ways a true but apparently inadvertent representation of the desert itself. The book is designed for both quick skimming and more thoughtful consideration and these two design features are in conflict with each other. To see the large, one has to look past the small and to see the small one has to look past the large.

Overall the book will achieve what it set out to do. Its intention is not to provide an exhaustive coverage and this should not be expected, though in the general discussion I did not find any major ethnographic errors. It provides a useful introduction to the Anangu and it will serve its obvious purpose which is to popularise Anangu craft and increase cash flow.
for them. It will also make the world aware of the work being done by the two people who manage the Maruku crafts. One wonders however of the future with all this activity. The desert is a big place but already in some areas all the quandong trees have been turned into little wooden creatures and there are no replacements. Will the river red gum, the bean tree and the spearbush also become more scarce and will Desert Crafts and Maruku by their very effectiveness in popularising the industry be simultaneously contributing to its demise? Is it time for Maruku to look to the future, do some environmental impact studies, and start carefully encouraging some other art forms that are a little less 'authentic' and a little more kind to the fragile desert environment?

John Rudder
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies


This work presents a collection of extracts from interviews with Aboriginal people from all over the Northern Territory, taped in 1976-77, and recorded mostly by the authors. The Northern Territory Department of Education, which commissioned the recordings, declined to make use of them; but rather than let them continue to languish in obscurity, Peter and Jay Read have done a service to posterity by selecting over eighty extracts of interviews, and presenting them in both book and audio cassette form. The book contains verbatim transcripts of the selected pieces, and copies of the original recordings of virtually all these selections are presented in a box of three cassettes, which is separately packaged, and may be purchased separately also.

The majority of material to read and hear comprises interview questions and their often detailed responses, from a wide range of speakers. There has been very little compromise with this speech in the transcripts, which are as close to being completely verbatim as the transcribers could manage. The point of note here, of course, is that for people not very familiar with the speech of outback Aboriginal people, sometimes the language forms used by the speakers can be very difficult to comprehend. The dilemma for presenters of any oral history material recorded with speakers for whom 'standard' English is not a first language is that any attempt to re-present the written form in a 'standard' language is to intercede yet another element of control between the speaker and the audience. The verbatim transcripts will be the vehicle through which most of the audience for this work will come to initially comprehend the ideas, stories and views of the informants. But for virtually any oral history recording of informal speech, no matter what language is used, transcripts are a representation in non-verbal language of something that was spoken, not written, and are always, to a greater or lesser degree, only a reflection of that inimically human activity of personal communication. Consequently, the tape recordings are a vital element of the work. Without them, readers have only the transcribers' understanding of what was being said that day out bush; even though the transcripts have been very thoroughly and skilfully worked. But through the recordings, the listener has the means to appreciate much sense and feeling.
that is beyond cold print: one can reach past the conventions of the written form in direct access to the informant.

However, readers will come across a number of difficulties. The verbatim transcript is sparse on translation or interpretation of the informants' speech, with only occasional insertion of words within square brackets to amplify sense. The compilers were clearly motivated by a desire to minimise 'editorial interference', and concerned that full translations would not represent 'a wholly Aboriginal view'. Whilst commendable motivation, this view begs the question of just how 'wholly' transcripts can reflect the reality of speech forms from a non-literate linguistic environment anyway. Furthermore, the language forms used are usually different enough from those familiar to many for whom the book and cassettes are intended, to often challenge comprehension. Probably the fullest appreciation of the material would come from reading and listening at the same time, but unfortunately, much of the sound has been indifferently recorded, has high levels of ambient noise, and is not without some minor editing errors - bits missing or repeated, and sometimes brutal cuts and joins. For the 'average' reader who is not accustomed to following audible speech with transcription and text, a tape player with a good pause button and headphones are recommended. But given the richly expressive way these informants speak, most book owners with the tapes will not be deterred by the little extra concentration needed. To hear Dinny Japaljarri speaking in the extract from which the title is drawn makes the printed words seem bland, and the provision of verbatim transcripts is more than ample for the listener's perception of words, if not always grasp of meaning. The authors and publishers are to be commended for not letting the superficial audio difficulties prevent broad access to this valuable body of records.

Indeed, the Reads have gone to considerable lengths to assist the reader/listener, both in the task of comprehending the language, and in appreciating the context of the events and ideas dealt with by informants. Comparisons between translations and transcripts usually throw up many examples of where transcripts beg outright misunderstanding by the general English readership, but the book's prefatory pages include a succinct note on the language of the stories, which is compulsory reading for anyone not wholly familiar with it. Whether all this information can be sufficiently remembered by readers as they become involved in the rich tapestry of events that follow is a moot point.

A selection of the memories of any group of individuals is only going to provide a sometimes arbitrarily scattered series of relatively minute reflections of the broad sweep of events, but the Reads have been able to arrange the material with usually brief introductory comments for the extracts, and bridging accounts of some of the major events which provide the basis for the selection and arrangement of material. This makes the whole work a very coherent presentation. The editorial text often provides general interpretation of the stories, or aspects of them, so possible misunderstandings are minimised. Most importantly, a particularly useful chronology of events in Northern Territory history since 1820 is provided, which includes details of the establishment of key places and legislative changes, against which the events recorded in the book and cassettes are placed in context. There are also several small-scale sketch maps which help appreciation of the basic facts of some stories, and a large-scale Territory map showing most of the locations mentioned. Also included are often excellent black and white photos of most of the speakers, some of the places and activities mentioned, and some fascinating archival images.

Of course, this editorial work of the collectors goes well into the realm of authorship, and is an inevitable structure between voices and audience. The authors often refer to other publications where closer analysis and description, with support from a wide range of sources, is available on particular aspects occurring in this work; although some of these
are also rich in oral history quotations, in *Long Time, Olden Time* the written text is basically contextual, and the primary value of the combined book/tapes publication is its voice.

The oral history material is arranged into two broad groupings: firstly, conflict; and secondly, living with whites. Apart from a concentration of material about the killing times, also provided are Aboriginal views of the process of adaptation to change and involvement in the conqueror's economy, and war against the Japanese. The author/editors explain that they resisted any temptation to re-work or expand the material beyond the way it was prepared for publication in 1978, and that the outcome reflects their pre-occupations in the seventies. Much of their vision at that time is still apt, but one aspect of selection that does impinge noticeably on the work's scope is that few of the informants were women. In any oral testimony there is always a distinct and very interesting difference in style and manner between genders, which was highlighted for me in listening to the few inclusions from women in the tapes. More importantly, however, there are few indications in this work of the effects that European domination and dispossession have had on Aboriginal women which are quite different from that experienced by men, for example on both their traditional and modern roles and identity in relation to children, marriage and work, education and health care.

Nevertheless, many of the speakers, some of whom could remember specific massacres, have since died, and we are indebted to the collectors for having preserved their voices and memories, of these events in particular. Even today in the nineties, there is clearly insufficient appreciation in Australia generally of the degree and detail of how the new arrivals practiced the near genocidal appropriation of the land of the first inhabitants, let alone the long saga of difficult, though often brave and humorous process of adaptation. Despite the naturally selective nature of collected oral history extracts, and the compact style of the brief editorial text, this work provides a rich insight into the texture of human interaction which goes well beyond journalistic actuality, whilst placing the informal recollections within their historical context. It is more than a useful historical text for study: oral history crosses lines in the publishing world, and affords both information and enlightenment in the context of a direct experience of informants which holds interest for its own sake.

**LIST OF REFERENCES**


Francis Good


Very little is written about the great contribution Aborigines have given to the early days of the cattle industry in Australia. At first the Aborigines were inexperienced but they soon developed great skills at station work. Initially they were attracted to stockwork in order to

1 For example, Rose 1991.

2 For example, see Hamilton 1975.
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get European food. Many of them were forced to accept such employment because their hunting and gathering lifestyle was disrupted. These people found themselves in a very tough world. But many Aborigines developed a liking for the work. It was exciting work and close to nature and the land.

Cattle management required mustering (sometimes wild herds), calving, weaning, branding, earmarking, dehorning and castrating calves, dipping and inoculation, and droving.

'Unbranded' is a very easy to read, often light-hearted novel. Herb Wharton relates his story without any vindictiveness or malice but the reader can read between the lines that life in the bush was sometimes unjust and often harsh.

This is the story of three bushmen, Sandy is a white man; Binda, a murri; Mulga is related on his mother's side to Bindi, and on his Irish father's side to Sandy.

Their saga tells how Sandy achieves his life-long ambition of owning a cattle empire; how Bindi successfully assists his people attain their tribal lands and how Mulga, who noticed many things, particularly the quirks in human nature, set about putting his thoughts down on paper.

Woven into this fine tapestry of bush experiences is the theme of their enduring friendship which covers forty years in the Mulga country of the far west.

I found this book to be enjoyable, light reading but for all its gentleness, it really 'packed a punch' in that it improved my meagre knowledge of bush life and heightened my awareness of the valuable contributions Aborigines have made in settling this country. This book should be found in every school library and the libraries of other places of learning. It helps to fill a gap in the 200 years history of white settlement.

Pearl Duncan
Queensland University of Technology


This book represents the most comprehensive work published so far by the Arandic Languages Dictionaries Program of the Institute for Aboriginal Development, which since the mid eighties has produced a series of wordlists on Central Australian languages belonging to the Arandic family. This project has been partially funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

The book has an attractive cover reproducing a detail of a batik from Mary Akermarr's 'Wild Orange Dreaming'. The acknowledgements list, among others, the names of 72 Alyawarr contributors, grouped according to the community of their residence. These communities can be identified on a map, given in the Introduction, of the Alyawarr region, which is centred on the Sandover River some 200 kilometers north-east of Alice Springs. Other topics covered in the Introduction include a guide to pronunciation, rules for spelling and hyphenation, charts explaining the system of kinship-related 'skin names', a description of the layout of dictionary entries, and a short bibliography. At the back of the book are tables of the numerous pronouns and word endings. Also near the end of the book is an English to Alyawarr Finder, consisting of a 70-page wordlist arranged alphabetically by the English terms.
The core of the book is a 242-page alphabetical listing of the Alyawarr vocabulary. Headwords are in bold typeface, followed by an indication of their part of speech (noun, verb, pronoun, etc.). Verbs are given in the present tense form. Different senses of the word are numbered. Each sense is illustrated with an Alyawarr sentence, which is followed by its English translation. To illustrate I reproduce an entry:

**arrkerneyel v.i.**

1. try something out. Artwar ampwel nek amerr ikweren nharrkerneyel. *The old man over there is trying out his spear thrower.* 2. taste something. Arrkernenharey anmer anwekantherr. *Taste the bush potato for us.*

Words or phrases derived from the headword are listed in the same entry. Thus under **inteng** 'rotten, stinking, sour' are listed: **intengerreyel** 'go rotten'; **inteng-inteng 1.** 'plants with strong smell'. 2. 'stink bug'; **inteng-aperte** 'smelly, foul'. Where there is a difference in pronunciation between the far eastern (Lake Nash) dialect and the other (western) dialect, words are followed by (LN) or (W) respectively. Attention is called to words that sound almost the same as the headword. Thus under the entry for **aleny** 'tongue' we find: *Sounds similar to arleny 'dry'.*

Natural species are identified by their scientific term where possible. Thus **inap** is rendered as 'porcupine, echidna, anteater (*Tachyglossus aculeatus)*, and is accompanied by a sketch. The numerous illustrations aid greatly in recognising plants, animals, artefacts, and poses (such as 'stand with hand holding the other above the wrist (behind back)' (p. 82).

The headwords include the grammatical suffixes of the language. Suffixes are alphabetised with the other headwords, but indicated by a preceding plus sign; e.g. **+el** ending instrumental (shows what he action is done with).

Here, as generally, the superscript distinguishes between headwords that are pronounced and spelled in the same manner.

Some technical comments can be made of the writing system (which, we are told was finalised by decisions made at a meeting of literate Alyawarr speakers (p. xiv). But first a word about stress. Nothing is said about stress in this book. Apparently the first vowel that follows a consonant is the one that is stressed, i.e. pronounced loudest. The interested language learner would have been helped if this general rule had been provided in the Introduction.

Final vowels are not generally written. Thus 'water' is spelled **kwaty**, whereas in Arrernte it is spelled **kwatye**. There are linguistic justifications for this practice. For example, final vowels are predictable (every word potentially ends in one) and there is never a choice as to which vowel occurs at the end of a word. It is always **e** unless the vowel needs to bear stress, in which case it is **a**. In this book a stressed final vowel is written and spelled as **a**, in for instance **ika** 'shell'. The analysis here appears to represent the views of Gavan Breen.1

Hyphens are used to separate (a) the two parts of a reduplicated word such as **kwaty-kwaty** 'watery', (b) some compound words, such as **apwert-arlkwenh**, a type of grass that literally translates 'stone-ate', (c) "long" suffixes and enclitics (those containing two or more non-adjacent consonants), except when they follow short word stems. Enclitics are words that are pronounced as part of the preceding word. Their meaning is less integrated with the word stem than is that of suffixes. Hence a case could be made for separating all enclitics by a hyphen. As for compound words, it seems odd that derived verbs in **-erre-** or **-irre-** are hyphenated, since they are clearly compounds. In fact **irre-** is listed as a separate

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1 Breen n.d.
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...and there is variation between compounded and non-compounded forms. Thus we find (p. 162) in the same sentence pwerep ayeng irreyel-'frightened I become' and ayengan apwereperreyel- 'I -EMPHATIC frightened-become'. An alternative representation of the latter would be ayeng-an apwereperreyel-, with hyphens separating off the enclitic -an and dividing the compound verb.

The combined policy on hyphenation and (not) writing final vowels leads to some awkward consequences in the writing system. In the first place, the reader needs to mentally insert a vowel e between consonants separated by a hyphen, such as kwaty-kwaty, kanty-they 'by the tail' (p. 229), ilek-penhe 'why'. Secondly, suffixes are analysed as beginning with a vowel. Hence 'in the water', which is spelled kwatyel, is analysed as kwaty-el 'water-LOCATIVE'. But this analysis is not applied consistently. Longer suffixes that occur on nouns are given as beginning with a consonant. Thus 'into the water' is kwaty-warl and 'without water' is kwaty-weny (spelled without the e that occurs between the consonants separated by a hyphen). On the other hand verbal suffixes are given with initial vowels, e.g. etyeke, -emer. Short noun stems, those which end in a stressed vowel a, such as rwa 'fire', are said (p. xv) to have their suffixes begin with a vowel e, before which the final a of the stem is dropped. Thus 'in the fire' and 'without fire' are rwele and rwenye, analysed as r(a)-el and r(a)-eweny respectively.

An alternative policy, which I have used for Kaytetye, an adjacent language with an identical system of sounds,2 is to treat all words as ending in the vowel e, and suffixes where possible as beginning with a consonant, whether or not hyphens are used to separate off suffixes. Then the words above would be analysed as follows:

'water' \(\rightarrow\) rwe
'fire' \(\rightarrow\) rwe-le
kwaty-kwaty \(\rightarrow\) kwaty-le rwe-le
kwaty-warl \(\rightarrow\) kwaty-warl
kwaty-weny \(\rightarrow\) kwaty-wenye rwenye

Here all the formal bits have a consistent spelling. The only inconsistency with pronunciation is that the final e when it is stressed (here only in rwe) is to be pronounced as a.

The intricacies of Arandic phonology and the orthography that best represents it have been the subject discussion among linguists and literate speakers for a considerable number of years. The policy represented here is not definitive. It is envisaged that 'as more people become literate it is probable that speakers of Alyawarr will refine the spelling system as it appears in this dictionary' (xvi).

To the reader who is neither a linguist nor a speaker (or learner) of Alyawarr this book will primarily be of interest for the copious information about Alyawarr culture, environment, and worldview that can be gleaned from the perusal of this dictionary. These insights can be gained both from observing the categorisation that is revealed by the words and from the illustratory sentences, each of which provides a little window into the word of the Alyawarr.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Breen, G. n.d., The syllable in Arrernte phonology. (unpublished paper)

H. Koch
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2 See the texts in Koch & Koch 1993.
Aratjara: Art of the First Australians. Traditional and contemporary works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Exhibition held in Düsseldorf, April-July, 1993, and to be held in London, Humbleback, Louisiana, and Melbourne.

Ulrich Krempel's 'Preliminary Remarks' indicate that 'the purpose and intention' of the Aratjara exhibition is to gain 'an understanding of OTHER PEOPLE'S ways of seeing and thinking.' As the catalogue of the same name was the only way in which viewers of the exhibition could discover the names of the artists, tables of works or any other details about the background of the artists, does the catalogue succeed in giving 'an understanding' as suggested?

The catalogue is, as with a number of similar catalogues in recent years, in reality a sizeable book of 379 pages. The sub-title, 'Art of the First Australians', is probably essential as an explanation for almost all readers, particularly as the major viewing and purchasing audiences have been European. It is available in German, French and English: this review is of the latter edition.

There can be little doubt that photographic reproductions of the art-works, artists at work, country of the artists and occasionally historically significant items will be the initial reason for purchase. The majority are beautifully clear photographs with conventional limited captions. (The 'Exhibition Register' notes pp. 331-52 gave expanded details). There are occasional minor problems with the latter, the captions on pp. 246 and 280 being intermingled, and incorrect or variant spellings of people's names occurring on pp. 256-61. Despite such flaws, the book is worthy of purchase for the illustrations alone.

Readers are presented with a wide range of writing styles and interests; contributions range from 3 to 18 pages in length, each page being in two columns and totally approximately 700 words. Not all pages are numbered, and some articles which draw on other research do not have accompanying reference notes. However the 'Editor's Comments', a 'Glossary' and other information near the end of the book (pp. 353-64) provide useful guides for the more interested readers. The list of authors (p. 378) incorrectly describes Dick Kimber as a 'journalist', but is otherwise adequate.

Before commencing a brief review of the contributions, it is worth reiterating that the exhibition and catalogue were prepared with primarily European viewers and readers in mind. Most people who purchased the book would not have been to Australia, and would have had little idea of the way of Aboriginal cultures and arts.

Bernhard Luthi provides the major introductory article (pp. 15-31). As an artist who worked hard to overcome many difficulties in having his concept of the exhibition accepted, and who has direct experience of the arts in Europe, North America and Australia, he is aware of '[the] practice of marginalising contemporary art which is not part of our immediate [Western] cultural sphere'. His writing, which traces the European history of artistic interest in indigenous peoples, is 'characterised by personal careers'. He attacks the prejudices which have for so long prevailed and his perception is that 'Australian society - and particularly - the Australian government - [has] engaged in a conspiracy of silence'. In cultural terms Australia was a nonexistent continent [without art] - and it has remained so to this day!'

This bleak, condemnatory view of a non-existent continent with non-existent art jolts the general Australian reader and, presumably, Australian artists too.
Luthi's article is followed by Jean-Hubert Martin's thoughtful contribution, 'A Delayed Communication' (pp. 32-5). The difficulty the Aboriginal art-works pose for comprehension above-and-beyond 'the visual impact and the formal quality' are considered. In essence, though, he and, indeed, directly or indirectly all of the writers, support Luthi's view that marginalisation is no longer acceptable.

[There] are creators all over the world today producing fascinating works. Let us give them a chance to display them, to express themselves and to talk about them. Don't let's wait for them to die before allowing their works into the museums. We need to substitute a dialogue - or the word of the artist - for the delirium of Western interpretation and excessive verbalising.

Ulrich Krempel complements this message (pp. 37-40), suggesting that 'a few slow steps into the context of Aboriginal art are necessary if we are to truly grasp intention, content and technique'.

These 'few slow steps' are variously developed in the ensuing articles. Gary Lee, 'a member of the Larrakia (Larrakeah) people' of Darwin and Cox Peninsula, brilliantly illustrates 'the history of non-appreciation' in Australia (pp. 41-8). He examines the works on display in government buildings in Darwin, clearly telling how Larrakia culture has been totally ignored, and suggests that the evidence that does not illustrates 'the government's exploitation of Aboriginal culture'. Galarrwuy Yunupingu takes a very different approach (pp. 64-6) but, as he points out, it took the famous 1963 Bark Petition to the Federal Parliament to show that the Yirrkala people 'were not people who could be painted out of the picture or left at the edge of history'. Banduk Marika, in 'Yirrkala Today', develops from the Yunupingu comment, and, after telling of the positive aspects in the arts and general culture, appeals to all people 'to love their land'.

Two of the other Aboriginal contributors, Les Griggs (pp. 82-3) and Gordon Barnett (pp. 85-91) indicate how they have almost had to jackhammer away at barriers to be able to express their Aboriginal identity, while Djon Mundine (pp. 76-8) tells of his craft-adviser, mediator and educational roles. Ownership, control, the right to develop in a dynamic way using modern media - these are the themes of Gary Lee's further strong article on the Kimberley country and arts (pp. 197-204). He perceives a continuum of Aboriginal culture in the numerous developing interests and concludes on a positive note:

While an analysis of art from the Kimberley region brings into question such issues as commercialisation and the problematic balance of old and new ways, it also shows that besides analysing, one can do, and Kimberley Aborigines are doing all, in music, literature and painting, of what is happening in different levels in different parts of Australia.

Lin Onus, in a lucid presentation covering the entirety of southern Australia (pp. 289-96), discuss the 'political and artistic situation of Aboriginal people in those areas of Australia where the impact of colonisation was first felt'. The overwhelming perception is of a 'renewed sense of identity and spirit' through rediscovery of peoples' artistic origins, and the ability to apply such knowledge both in the present and into the future.

Diane Moon gives a brief, factual account of Maningrida, showing how the artistic traditions are 'open to change' (pp. 79-81). This concept, or observation, is well-developed in an extremely well-researched article by Judith Ryan (pp. 49-63). The author emphasises the 'contemporary' nature of works that are available, no matter what the background of the Aboriginal artists. In a wide-ranging study she rightly observes of the creations:

They are not fossilized relics of a changeless world, but art - that is, part of a living process - and project a dynamic, changing aesthetic.
Henrietta Fourmile (pp. 73-5) shows how 'the patriarchal obsessions of white Australia' marginalised Aboriginal women artists, but indicates how acceptance and recognition developed during the 1980s-1990s.

Linday Wilson's 'The Islands Of The Torres Strait' (pp. 95-102), Mark Hollingsworth's 'Cape York Peninsula and Northern Queensland' (pp. 109-115), and Paul Tacon's Arnhem Land study (pp. 127-134) are all important, readable, academic contributions. They complement the earlier-mentioned Kimberley study by Gary Lee, and in their totality give an erudite coverage of the entirety of northern Australia. As Tacon observes, the Aborigines have retained contact with their lands and cultures, despite many pressures, and they 'emphasise that their is a living tradition that changes with circumstance'. Once again, there is a clear statement that the cultures are dynamic, respecting their ancestral pasts, yet adapting to the present on their terms.

The final geographical settings to be considered are the desert regions of Australia - in part already lucidly referred to by Judith Ryan. Kimber attempts a different, less academic, approach than the above-mentioned authors, and presents something of a 'mixed bag' (pp. 221-39). Editorial advice indicated that the toa art of the Diyari as well as all central and Western Desert arts and some social aspects should be commented upon, including - in a direct way - the life and art of Albert Namatjira, Subsections, Cutstations, Ground Paintings, Women's Art, and the art of Papunya, Yuendumu, Lajarnanu and Balgo. The author uses 'comfortable' European perceptions early in his article, but then lets the mythological trails carry readers westerly. Along his route, with a pause at Alice Springs, he repeats some well-known points, postulates some ideas on article developments, uses his own knowledge and experiences fairly extensively, acknowledges the significance of art-advisors of integrity, and is a little anti-intellectual. A disappointing aspect is that the map and article were the only ones in the book for which the gallery-proofs were not available for a final check; this has resulted in over 100 errors in spelling and punctuation. Some of these are simple, such as the almost constant misspelling of Killalpaninna, Diyari and occurred, but others - such as dep for den, winked for oriented and chair instead of chain - make nonsense of the original intent.

Finally, from this reviewer's perspective, the most interesting article of all is 'Jardiwarnpa Jukurrpa' as told by Darby Jampijinpa Ross (pp. 280-83). It is probably the most difficult of all for any European who has not been to Australia to comprehend, and, indeed, one really needs to have met Darby Jampijinpa and to have travelled the country with him to appreciate his story. This being the likely case, and Australia being Luthi's 'nonexistent continent', it is impossible not to argue with Jean-Hubert Martin's observation. Here is a genuinely interested French student of Aboriginal art, who in many ways represents all Europeans, all residents of North America, and probably most in Australia:

One can more or less imagine what 'Dreaming' is ..., but it is difficult to go much further than that. Following Aboriginal explanations one can recognise and name the various elements in these paintings. The thought structure, the references and the speech - which reach us distorted by translation - still remain an enigma despite the valiant attempt to explain them in the ensuing texts. (p. 32)

As a series of texts, then, the book fails - probably to the surprise of some of the contributors. Perhaps this was inevitable, given the marginalisation of Aboriginal arts for such a long time: the works dazzle, the words fail. Perhaps nationalism erects too many barriers. And perhaps it requires a degree of immersion in Aboriginal lands and cultures to
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gegin to scratch the surface of understanding. And then again, perhaps the perception of future is too pessimistic, and Darby Jampijinpa is worth listening to again.

I'm just telling this story straight. True, true, true. He came to the snake cave. The name of the place is Ngama. Where is this dog Kungarra-pungu staying? He staying at the snake cave Ngama.

I'm just telling you the story. Law, Aboriginal law. (p. 281).

R.G. (Dick) Kimber


This handsome book obviously deserves a place on the shelf beside its predecessor in any reference library concerned with Australia. The problem with reviewing it is to stop reading it. Following the first volume which covered the period up to 1945, this one includes entries on people whose main activity in the Northern Territory lay before 1978, including quite a few omitted from the earlier volume. Since many of the subjects are vividly remembered or even still living, there are many good 'Territory stories' - in several senses of the phrase. In practice, a fairly light editorial hand on the style of the individual authors combined with some respect for the standard requirements of a biographical dictionary makes a good recipe for lively reading. For a visitor wanting the feel of Territory history and unwilling to embark on a conventional narrative account, this would be an excellent alternative. This history is significantly different form that of the rest of Australia, and it shows in these lives.

One aspect of this difference is in the proportion of the population of Aboriginal descent and there has been a real effort to reflect this in the selection of subjects. On my count, there are seventeen entries for Aborigines and one for a Torres Strait Islander, to say nothing of the Chinese, Germans and a host of others from the most surprising backgrounds. Any count, however, has to be a bit arbitrary since something is told of the life of many more individuals than those who are accorded their own entry. What is very striking is the number of non-Aboriginal people whose lives were significantly affected by relations with Aborigines, either as policeman, settlement superintendent or missionary, or by marriage, dependence for labour or child care. Given the obvious impact of Europeans and their ideas on Aboriginal lives, it is useful to be reminded that the influence was not all one way. Nowhere in Australia has the line between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal been entirely clear and that applies, above all, in the Northern Territory.

A particularly helpful category of entry is that of people, such as Sir Paul Hasluck or the artist Ian Fairweather, who only had an involvement with the Territory for a brief period or in one aspect of their career. They were still a part of the scene.

In any such collaborative enterprise it is possible to see some unevenness in treatment, regret some omissions or even pick up the odd slip, but some of these details can be attended to by a continuing programme of publication. What we have to date is a major contribution and there is ample scope to continue the project which has produced the two volumes so far.

Among much else, this second volume contains the best entry in a biographical dictionary I have yet read; R.G. Kimber's four and half pages on T.G.H. Strehlow is a
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masterpiece of objectivity, sensitivity and insight. Anyone interested in the study of the Aborigines must read this, as well as anyone who can appreciate a moving human story. And for the funniest entry, there is the same author's account of W.D. Hunter - but I won't spoil your laugh.

C.C. Macknight
Australian National University


This is the most comprehensive document ever written on Australian Aboriginal petrol sniffing. It is the result of extensive research involving the analysis of far-ranging medical data, an in-depth review of the literature on the world-wide use of volatile substances, and long-term anthropological fieldwork in a number of Aboriginal communities. The exhaustive bibliography is in itself an excellent research tool, and the synthetic presentation of data in the form of figures, tables and maps makes the findings easy to consult and to compare. In addition, this book offers a sensitive understanding of Aboriginal community life.

Brady's unstated goal is to provide new information for the development of alternative strategies to deal with petrol sniffing. In order to do so, she adopts a perspective that stands in contrast to the common approaches to substance abuse in which Aboriginal are envisaged as the helpless victims of external factors. The originality of Brady's approach is to analyse petrol sniffing from an inside or emic point of view, by listening, observing, and reconstituting the words and attitudes of the users, their relatives, community members and health workers. She is thereby able to explore the possibilities of social control that Aboriginal communities have over this practice. In doing so, she furnishes the reader with a variety of original and at times unexpected findings and hypothesis. Brady's theoretical perspective, inspired by N.E. Zinberg's model (Drug, Set and Setting. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984), distinguishes three interrelated determinants in drug use that she considers in the following order: the substance itself; the attitudes and personality of the users or 'set'; the socio-cultural environment and its influence on use or 'setting'.

The book begins with a survey of drug abuse among Australian Aboriginal people (Chapter 1) - petrol is used mainly in remote communities of Western Arnhem Land, Central Australia and the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia - and of petrol sniffing by minority groups and indigenous populations abroad (Chapter 2). The pathological effects of petrol sniffing as well as the different treatments employed, both overseas and in Australia, are discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4. The users' motivations are presented and discussed through accounts of interviews with sniffers, ex-sniffers and family members in Chapter 5. The author reveals a consistency between the need to express one's independence through petrol sniffing and an Aboriginal cultural emphasis on individual autonomy, emphasis that may prevent parents from interfering directly with the self-destructive behaviour of their children. One of Brady's most original findings is the discovery that young people, notably those in Central Australia, engage in
petrol sniffing with the intention to lose weight and to refuse their mother's food. In
Arnhem Land, this oppositional attitude takes the form of membership in 'hard' gangs.

In Chapter 6, Brady documents different attempts at local control and offers a cultural
interpretation of their failure or success. Such attempts typically involve conflicts between
the necessity of action at the community level and family loyalties sustained by the
Aboriginal social organisation, as illustrated by the problems confronting community
appointed wardens who have to face the anger or even retaliation of sniffers' kin; much as
the body is the individual's 'business', caring for children is the parents' 'business'. As a
consequence of this, people in positions of community decision-making are reluctant to
take responsibility for other people's children. Similarly, and also because the forcible
removal of children evokes painful memories, parents are highly suspicious of welfare
officers. Instead, they would rather seek the intervention of the police (in certain cases by
means of special by-laws). On the other hand, the incarceration of petrol sniffers involved
in minor criminal offences does not seem to have a long term rehabilitative impact.

Chapter 7 examines the history of petrol sniffing and the anomalies of its distribution.
According to the author, the spread of this phenomenon since the mid 1970s, relates,
among other things, to the development of settlements through missions and government
policies, and the decrease of child mortality. These historical and demographic changes
resulted in a dramatic increase of peer group size along with greater opportunities for
meeting through schooling and during big sport events; at the same time, Aboriginal
people have become more dependent on the white system to solve their problems. The final
chapter documents and discusses Australian and overseas interventions and proposes an
extremely original explanation for the absence of petrol sniffing in particular regions of
Australia. Indeed, this book can also be read as an excellent detective story in which the
detective-author tracks the reasons for which petrol sniffing is prevalent in certain localities
and not in others, in spite of the fact that these different types of communities are not only
spatially close to each other, but also entertain close kinship relations, share rituals and
engage in social activities entailing regular visits of their respective members to each
other. As in any good thriller, the final answer, offered as an hypothesis, is revealed only at
the end: 'the most compelling explanation for the distribution of the practice is the
historical and social context of the cattle industry' (p. 192).

Brady convincingly brings to bear a number of historical, economic and cultural
influences in accounting for the absence of petrol sniffing in communities developed on
ranch stations. In spite of very harsh working conditions, Aboriginals employed in the
pastoral industry, through continuous contact with their land, were able to maintain
cultural values and activities considered by them to be essential: ceremonial life, visits to
sacred sites, gathering of bush foods, etc. At the same time, Aboriginal labour and skills
were indispensable to pastoralists and as such were highly valued. Moreover, in these areas,
camp life and disputes remained largely in Aboriginal hands, Western interference through
government officers and schooling being minimal or delayed for a long time. As a result,
such persons could benefit simultaneously from their own culture and from that of Western
society, the two appearing in a more complementary than conflictual light, as was
commonly the case in mission and government settlements.

However, in spite of a considerable body of evidence, Brady seems unwilling to
integrate the various elements of her argument into a unitary perspective: '[...] in some
intangible way, she concludes, in these populations self-esteem and male identity have
remained intact, so that young people have not yet sought to express their personal
autonomy through the act of petrol sniffing (emphasis added)' (p. 190). This reluctance to
come to grasp with the implications of her insightful hypothesis, appears to be related to
an initial methodological choice to put aside socio-political considerations, a position that is largely maintained throughout the study. It is this, perhaps, that prevents Brady from taking advantage of her own outstanding fieldwork data in order to fully develop the implications of her final hypothesis, as though an overly historicopolitical point of view would interfere with her overall emic perspective. It is worth briefly questioning this assumption, for although doing so implies a reframing of certain of her statements, it also confirms the validity of the underlying aim of her approach, namely, to place Aboriginal youth problems within Aboriginal hands. This reframing consists, essentially, in recognising the degree to which the ability of young people, notably young males, to achieve autonomy in a constructive rather than self-destructive fashion, is dependant upon the re-empowerment of adult community members.

In Aboriginal societies, men gained most of their prestige from their involvement in ritual life, this being one of the main conditions allowing them to collectively take responsibility for young males, and in doing so to participate in their transition from childhood to adulthood. Once immersed in a dominant culture that has little respect for their Law and ceremonial practives, the status of Aboriginal men quickly degraded. Caring for young males tends to remain in the hands of Aboriginal women while men's fathering roles are undermined and neglected. In the absence of positive male models, young men's achievement of autonomy is highly problematic. In this light, it is not very surprising that petrol sniffers are predominantly male, and that in their attempt to assert their autonomy they tend to demonstrate their masculinity by either endorsing the hyper-masculine style of 'hard' gangs or, as fatness is culturally related to feminity and being mothered, by trying to lose weight. Now, within this overall development, Aboriginal men within the pastoral industry occupied a fairly exceptional position. By contrast with communities having arisen from missionary or government administered settlements and in which petrol sniffing typically occurs, communities linked with cattle stations, in which petrol sniffing is absent, are also those, as Brady observes, in which a prestigious male identity remained intact. In these cases, a commitment to the rules of Western society did not entail men being disinvested of their valued masculine identity; on the contrary, they not only preserved that associated with their Aboriginality, but also gained the stockman's image of virility. In this light, it is worth noting that in the only well-documented case of a community's success in overcoming petrol sniffing, the male elders have been involved in decision-making regarding their own affairs for a number of years, ever since they became the first Aboriginals to own and run a cattle station.

This overall perspective, in which the confirmation of adult men in their status of decision makers is held to be a precondition for young males achieving personal autonomy in a positive manner, sheds new light on the use of funding in communities as reproved by Brady: priorities are principally given to adult projects, such as the acquisition of vehicles or the development of road facilities. According to her, these projects, rather than meeting the needs of youth, will first of all benefit older men by increasing their involvement in ceremonial activities, and therefore their prestige. Sniffing thus appears as one of the few ways left for youths to assert themselves. However, the latter's self-destructive behaviour obviously related to their difficulty in becoming autonomous in a society where parents and grand-parents have become dependent on welfare policies. From this point of view, one might suggest that prestige acquired by Aboriginal elders, far from being an obstacle for the achievement of adulthood by young males, may well be, in that it provides positive male models, one of its important conditions. This indeed would appear to have been the case for Aboriginal stockmen. A sense of pride and self-esteem acquired by relatives and community members have facilitated their ability to assume a position of responsibility for and
authority over their young people; reciprocally, it also favoured their being accepted as such by the youths themselves. It should be noted that stress is being placed here not on 'traditions' as such - as for example in the phrase 'tradition-oriented communities' - but rather on the context in which Aboriginals determine what is valuable for themselves: the elimination of any designedly exogenous, non-Aboriginal precondition in the definition of what is or is not 'truly' Aboriginal. In this respect, Brady's suggestion that Aboriginal communities make insufficient use of their 'cultural resources' (pp. 179-180) may be inappropriate. On the whole, the more Aboriginal adults are able to overcome the dispossession of social roles that they have undergone, the more they are able to assume their parental responsibilities and to participate in culturally suitable corporate actions concerning youth issues.

General speaking, in missions and government settlements, the responsibility for children has been taken over by representatives of the dominant non-Aboriginal culture as the virtual competitors of the children's own relatives. Adults may then feel that they have nothing to offer their youths other than what their culture allows them to tolerate from younger children: behaviour that is bossy and may even be harmful to themselves. The fear of not showing enough love combined with the Aboriginal equivalence, documented by Brady, between love and generosity, makes adults very vulnerable to their youths' blackmail: if you don't give me what I ask for (food, money, etc.), it means that you don't love me and I will go sniffing. This could explain the author's observation that 'while individuals adults often spend freely on material items for their young kin [demonstration of love ...], when it comes to the allocation of larger amounts of community funds, young people are rarely catered for [resisting an impingement upon their parental prerogatives]' (p. 178). Any attempt at community action concerning youth that does not directly and constantly involve parents (asking for their help and advice), is not only culturally unacceptable, but also perpetuates the dispossession of their parental role. Undermining such attempts - for example when youth workers, even Aboriginal ones, appear to compete with parents' prerogatives - represents the only effective power left to Aboriginals for asserting their precedence with regard to their children. Unfortunately, the author does not make a direct link between this widespread attitude in communities with petrol sniffing problems and the fact that in the neighbouring ones without these problems, parents, because they have kept a sense of value of themselves, can exert their authority without fear of losing their children's love and respect.

In connection with this last point, it should be mentioned that Brady's inference that 'setting aside family loyalties' and 'kin-based sentiment' (p. 174) is necessary for overcoming petrol sniffing, is not convincingly demonstrated. Her own data, in accordance with other current anthropological research, shows that Aboriginal social organisation is largely founded upon kin loyalties, the latter remaining a key factor of Aboriginal identity that must be respected in order for Aboriginal social control to be developed. In this respect, the case of indigenous communities overseas is a telling one: 'One of the most effective approaches to petrol sniffing among some native American populations has been intense parental involvement in monitored alternative activities, together with parent 'patrols' (p. 174). One may argue that it is precisely because these initiatives involve parents, and in doing so, comply with family loyalties, that they have been successful. From this perspective, one possible off-shoot of Brady's work might well be an analysis of the mechanisms underlying the convergence of family loyalties that enable effective corporate action to be undertaken.

In conclusion and ironically enough, Brady's analysis of the distribution of petrol sniffing allows us to reconsider in an entirely new light the socio-political factors that she
herself purposely sets aside: the maintenance of an active, economic and culturally significant contact with the land may well have played an essential protective role. Inversely, the disruption of such contact, even when only partial or temporary, seems to have represented a significant factor in the development of harmful behaviour specific to Aboriginal youth such as petrol sniffing. The re-empowerment of Aboriginal people is in itself a healing process; as this study shows, it has also been an effective preventive measure against self-destructive behaviour.

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This exhibition is perhaps the most public current example of Aboriginal history and merits review in its own right, as well as for its catalogue. The editors would be pleased to receive further comment on this exhibition, or reviews of other exhibitions, films, television programmes and the like dealing with Aboriginal history.

This splendid exhibition displays 183 breastplates, ranging in date of inscription - and presumably manufacture and donation - from 1816 to 1930. An early nineteenth century military gorget illustrates the possible origin of the concept of the breastplates and a considerable number of photographs of Aboriginal people includes some showing breastplates being worn. The Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales is to be congratulated on such a good idea for an exhibition. I am told that, when it was shown in the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, the effect was rather crowded, but no such criticism can be made of the spacious accommodation at the National Library of Australia in September and October, 1993. Later venues are to be the Queensland Museum, the Wollongong City Gallery and the Western Australian Museum. As for other major exhibitions in recent times, a substantial catalogue is available (ISBN 7310 0261 X). Although Tania Cleary, the collections manager of the Historic Houses Trust, has been responsible for both the exhibition and the catalogue, the differences between them provide a good starting point for discussion.

The first achievement of both the exhibition and the catalogue is to establish the breastplate as a category of object. In one sense, the use of breastplates to identify, dignify and reward particular Aborigines is widely known and they appear in several well-known images, such as the various portraits of Bungaree, but what is new is their number and range in time and space. While there is a certain sense of immediacy in the display of the objects themselves, they remain, for the most part, rather unimpressive as specimens of craft or art. A far stronger impression is created, to my mind at least, by the series of crisp photographs in the catalogue and, even more, by the standardised and studiously objective information provided for each specimen. Here is the raw data of artefact description; transcription of inscriptions, careful measurement, description of present condition, current location and details of provenance and publication. By contrast, the exhibition captions provide only the barest information. The catalogue, however, invites further research and makes a start itself. There is a supplementary list of breastplates not in the exhibition - it would have been helpful to assign these numbers for future reference - and a list of
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breastplates known from the literature. The makers of the breastplates are briefly discussed and there is a first attempt to map distribution, though more could be done on this. Similarly, the sub-categories of breastplates for chiefs, kings, queens, royal couples, royalty, rewards, in recognition of service and unspecified recognition can only be seen as a preliminary effort to put the material into some order. I suspect that other features, such as date or location, would prove more meaningful, and such analysis is quite possible on the basis of the data in the catalogue.

There is a disjunction here between the effect created by the display focussing on the breastplates themselves - a sense of all but tangible contact with a world long gone - and the more distanced effect of the dispassionate provision of data ripe for analysis. The catalogue is certainly very much more than just a record of the exhibition.

In one respect it is less. The exhibition contains many more historical photographs of Aboriginal people, both as individuals and as groups, and often with no particular reference to the subject of breastplates. These extra photographs, which range widely in time and place, have only basic captions. While there is a great deal of particular interest in these images, the overall effect is to create a sense of Aboriginal presence. Since the overwhelming majority of people shown must now have died, by the mere effluxion of time if for no other cause, there is a further and very general impression of loss.

This impression clearly affected the interpretation many, perhaps most, visitors put on the history of Aboriginal experience as shown in the exhibition. As the result of another piece of good curatorial practice, these interpretations can be sampled from the comments in a book which solicits the public's reactions. The theme of pignancy is often picked up and there is an overwhelming assumption that there has somehow been something tragic, or at least to be regretted, about this history. There is talk of reparation and Mabo. Insofar as one can divine the self-identity of the writers, non-Aborigines are perhaps even more given to such reflections that Aborigines are. There is a widespread willingness to infer meaning from looking into the eyes of individuals in the photographs.

The impression created by the catalogue, on the other hand, is significantly different. As well as what one might call the technical material, there are several short essays. Tania Cleary gives a brisk summary of the breastplates' history and distribution, as well as a helpful cautionary page on the breastplates and nineteenth century photography. A good deal of historical source material is reproduced as relevant to particular items. Much more challenging - or provoking - are four other pieces. Ysola Best tells the story of her great-great-grandfather, Bilin Bilin, or 'Jackey Jackey - King of the Logan and Pimpama' as one can just make out on his breastplate in the photograph which graces the exhibition poster and the cover of the catalogue. Phil Gordon gives an Aboriginal view of the phenomenon of breastplates and how they have been studied and valued. Paul Behrendt emphasises the incomprehension between colonisers and colonised, but this is challenged, at least in this instance, by the republication of Edward Ogilvie's remarkable letter to the Sydney Morning Herald in 1842 describing his friendly relations with people in the Clarence River valley. Here, at least, was no incomprehension, for Ogilvie's friend, Toolbillibam, was 'much delighted at finding me speaking his own language'.

In these essays lies the basis for a reading of the breastplates quite at odds with that suggested by the exhibition. Perhaps they can be seen not as symbols of incomprehension and dispossession - though there was clearly plenty of both - but rather as the expression of attempts at recognition, signs of mutual interdependence and even pledges of friendship and gratitude. That is all from the white side. On the other, Gordon comments, 'they are symbols of Aboriginal survival and of cultural vitality and as such are emblems of the past
that form an important part of the material culture of my people in the future'. I cannot refrain from quoting Best's conclusion:

The term 'King' is a foreign concept to Aboriginal Australia. However if one could go back in time and interview those individuals to whom Bilin Bilin was well-known, would they not say he protected his country and his family? Did he not set in place strategies to ensure that the orphaned Logan River people would not become an extinct race of people but would survive and continue to fight for their land and their rights? Will people call him a 'king' or could it be that he is a majestic eagle whose spiritual presence continues to influence his descendants to care for and protect their own country.

Of course none of this will influence the ideologues and politicians, both black and white, who know what they want to see, but the great merit of this exhibition and catalogue is the opening of a variety of interpretations. That is a considerable service to the study of the history of Aboriginal experience.

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Perhaps it is now time to ask whether we should be grateful for any book concerned in some way or another with the history of Aboriginal experience. I do not wish to suggest that this is a bad book; it does deliver 'an overview of the reaction of government authorities to Aborigines in the Northern Territory' during the South Australian period. Within the limits it sets for itself, it is a clearly written and competently argued historical account, supported by a proper apparatus. (An index is an important omission.) It is very pleasantly produced, reasonably priced and has a range of interesting illustrations.

My concern is that there is no challenge in the book. It tells a story with which any conceivable reader is now fairly familiar, at least in outline. The South Australian government, in the second half of the nineteenth century, did not have much of an Aboriginal policy and relations between colonised and colonisers in the Northern Territory were dominated by the racism, prejudice and perceived - probably wrongly perceived - economic interests of the latter. By any standards one may speak of oppression and exploitation; the level of violence was excessive, even by the standards of the time and place. The specialist reader will be familiar with the details of all this from a very considerable literature and, most recently, Gordon Reid's A Picnic with the Natives which covers almost exactly the same ground. There is, of course, much to be said for more than one account of any topic and it is a nice exercise in historical interpretation as to why Reid plays down the level of Aboriginal resistance, while Austin plays it up.

My disappointment with the book stems from a section at the end of the Introduction which is worth quoting:

This study is incomplete, for it is the work of a non-Aboriginal male, is based on White, mainly official, sources of information and is essentially about attitudes of non-Aboriginal people and the policies - for want of a better
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word - they applied to Aborigines. Only when the work is complemented by studies written by Aboriginal men and women, drawing on Aboriginal oral accounts and providing Aboriginal interpretations, will something resembling balance be possible.

Such unreflective positivism simply will not pass muster in the 1990s. Consider, to begin with, the implications of 'incomplete', 'complemented' and 'balance'. More disturbing because of what it reveals about the intellectual framework within which the book places itself, is the concern about the author's gender and, especially, the construction of Aboriginality. (There is a curious passage on p. 44 which states that 'only in ... "colonial Australia" [in Rowley's use of the phrase] ... has the Aboriginal community, as such, survived'.

Perhaps it is unfair to look for much sophistication in what is an unpretentious and straightforward little book, but it is exactly this sort of pragmatism, in another context, that is criticised in the book. The best history being written about Aboriginal experience, and about those non-Aborigines associated with that experience, is now more reflective, more adventurous in its categories and more challenging to the reader.

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How is it that the common law, which first dispossessed the indigenous people of the lands settled by the British, has become the instrument by which the same people have been able to enforce their title to land against the crown in the crown's own courts?

One explanation is to be found in McNeil's Common Law Aboriginal Title which analyses the common law doctrine on native title. He gives a blue print for indigenous people who have the resources to argue for native title based on possession. He provides arguments to those citizens who wish to live in more just societies. He should be read by those advising governments who are unable to understand that there are titles to land in Australia, and throughout the former British empire, which were not granted by, and which pre-existed the advent of, the crown as paramount lord.

History and precedent

McNeil's book is a meticulously researched piece of historical scholarship but it is not only history. He distinguishes between historical and legal analysis in determining what effect the advent of the crown's sovereignty had on indigenous interests in land. His purpose is to unravel the doctrinal principles of the common law which can be discerned behind ad hoc events throughout the empire. The principles he reveals show that the common law does recognise and protect the interests of indigenous people.

History and the common law have a complex relationship. The doctrine of precedent appears to be an application of historical method: a search for past decisions which covers facts similar to those of the present case and binds the court to reach the same decision.¹ If

¹ Cross 1968, pp. 23-32; see also Butterfield 1944, pp. 47-68.
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a precedent is relevant, cannot be distinguished on the facts and is decided by a court of sufficient status, it binds a later court. Legal analysis however diverges from historical method. As Maitland observed:

A lawyer finds on his table a case about rights of common which sends him to the Statute of Merton. But is it really the law of 1236 that he wants to know? No, it is the ultimate result of the interpretation set on the statute by the judges of twenty generations. The more modern the decision the more valuable for his purpose. That process by which old principles and old phrases are charged with new content, is from the lawyer's point of view an evolution of the true intent and meaning of the old law; from the historians point of view it is almost of necessity a process of perversion and misunderstanding.2

It is surprising to read lawyers who over 80 years later manage to write: 'The historical approach which emphasises fidelity to precedent ... jostles with the reformist approach where rules are utilised by the application of twentieth century concepts of justice and equality to produce a particular result.'3

Under the classical version of the doctrine the common law never changed. If a superior court decided not to follow an earlier precedent that precedent never was the law.4 In contemporary common law the courts have freed themselves from that fiction and openly acknowledge a failure to follow a precedent. Their justification will be an opinion that following a precedent will fail to satisfy social congruence or system consistency and that the values which underlie the doctrine, including protecting a justified reliance on previous decisions, are no better served by following a precedent than overruling it.5

It is not surprising that the decision of the High Court in Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)6 ('the Murray Island land rights case') to approach the rights of indigenous Australians on a doctrinal, rather than a historical basis, has been attacked as revolutionary by those interest groups who fear that profits, which previously they had negotiated with state governments to channel to themselves, may now go to indigenous Australians.

What is surprising is the attack on the High Court by lawyers who are familiar with the doctrine of precedent.7

Aboriginal rights in the conquerors' courts

McNeil's thesis is that, if common law doctrine is applied consistently, indigenous people in occupation of lands when British sovereignty was proclaimed, have a freehold title. The occupation of land carries with it a legal presumption of possession. Possession carries a presumption of seisin. Seisin presumes a freehold estate.

McNeil's argument unfolds slowly through a detailed analysis of occupation, possession and seisin in English law following the Norman conquest. The principle that the crown is the paramount lord and owns all the land in England, the doctrine of tenures, is a legal fiction which is recognised by the limitations imposed on its use. It explained the relationship between the crown and those subjects whose ownership of land predated the conquest. He then turns to the acquisition of sovereignty by the crown over lands abroad, to

2 Maitland 1911, pp. 490-1.
3 Lumb 'The Mabo Case', p. 5.
5 Eisenberg 1988, pp. 104-5.
6 (1992) ALR 1.

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McNeil argues that the occupiers of land at the advent of the Crown's sovereignty have two ways of proving title: by interests under their own customary law; or, by exclusive occupation which gave a common law title through possession. The focus of his thesis is on title by possession. The doctrine of tenures does not dispossess the holders of such titles. The crown's interest hovers over the land giving the crown paramount lordship but not possession. The existence of a fee simple held by indigenous people is confirmed by the prohibition on English settlers obtaining title to the land by direct negotiation. An Australian example is Governor Bourke's repudiation of Batman's purchase in 1835. The governor's action was approved by the Secretary of State for Colonies who was anxious for Aboriginal people to be protected and their rights defended.

McNeil outlines Canadian and United States of America law where aboriginal title is not recognised as giving a fee simple but a lesser possessory title. Finally he turns to Australia. He notes the remarkable fact that the issue of indigenous land titles was not litigated in Australia for almost two centuries until Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd ('the Gove land rights case') in 1968-1971. He states that Blackburn J was unsympathetic to the recognition of common law Aboriginal title. He was only willing to recognise its existence where it had been recognised by the crown and to deny the plaintiff's claim. The plaintiffs lost on every point of law and fact.

McNeil argues that Australian judges deciding the question of the content of Aboriginal title are not bound by precedent in the same way as Canadian and Americans judges are and that they are able to decide it on a doctrinal basis. The decision in the Murray Island lands rights case has supervened. It follows North American precedents in finding that native title is less than fee simple and susceptible to extinguishment by the crown. The decision was on the basis that the Meriam people had interests in land under their own customary law, the second basis for native title noted by McNeil.

The plaintiffs in the Murray Island land rights case also relied on their exclusive possession giving rise to a fee simple. McNeil's work played a significant role in the development of this argument. Toohey J noted his judgement owed much to McNeil. Deane and Gaudron JJ have described his work as a 'landmark'. Dawson J, in a dissenting judgement, was less complimentary describing McNeil's analysis as 'a theory'. The other judges concluded that the plaintiffs had title under their own law and only briefly considered what rights exclusive possession conferred. They stated that there were considerable difficulties with it.

With the benefit of hindsight provided by this case the major criticism to be made of McNeil's work is his concentration on possessory title and his view that native title based on customary law is limited. A customary law title is, in his view, only a judicial response to the fact of occupation. His preferred approach is one based on the proof of the people's occupation of traditional lands. He cites the Gove land rights case but this decision must now be doubted as authority. However, a title based on possession may be more attractive to indigenous people as it does not require details of customary law to be revealed and

8 (1971) 17 FLR 141.
9 (1992) 107 ALR 1 at 162.
10 ib., at 174.
11 ib., at 128.
12 ib., at 41, Brennan J with whom Mason CJ and McHugh concurred.
considered or expose the autonomy of indigenous legal systems to the same level of control through the courts.

McNeil refers to features of the common law which may become familiar again to Australians. The idea that a tribunal should inquire into any clog on the root title of the crown as paramount lord is not novel. The inquest of office, performed by the coroner, and informations of intrusion, in the Court of Exchequer, were used to resolve uncertainties about the king's title to an area of land. He notes that the proof of customary title has not presented difficulties in jurisdictions where courts have a practice of accepting such evidence. The difficulties for indigenous people giving evidence in such proceedings cannot be ignored.13 Hearings under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 have, through the intransigence of the Northern Territory government, become as formal and as hostile as a common law adversary trial. It is possible, with modification to procedures and the assistance of social scientists and interpreters, to accommodate testimony about customary interests in land in adversarial hearings.14

A not so common law?

Much of the legal criticism of the Murray Island land rights case has been answered in advance by McNeil's work.

Lumb is the most extensively published critic. He has attacked the decision to recognise native title as part of an Australian common law as based too much on policy and departing too far from precedent. The court disturbed a legal understanding which had existed for over 150 years and in doing so fractured the skeleton of precedent.15 Another article shows that he has used the term 'understanding' advisedly as, in it, he concedes that there was no precedent binding on the High Court.16 McNeil shows that the decision has maintained the unity, at the time of reception, of the common law throughout the Empire. On his analysis the Murray Island land rights case is not revolutionary and the High Court's finding of a title less than a fee simple, is conservative. McNeil also demonstrates that the common law which was received from England was a common law and not a unique law for each colony. Lumb criticises the High Court for using precedents from other common law jurisdictions to fashion 'new doctrine'.17 Australia would be the only former British territory which had no doctrine of native title if the High Court had decided otherwise. Lumb's view is the one which fractures the skeleton of precedent by fracturing the skeleton of the common law itself.

Lumb claims that the High Court overturned Blackstone's doctrine that, in a settled colony, only titles to land recognised by the crown existed. He states this law was almost etched in pillars of stone in Australia as a result of the Privy Council decision in Cooper v Stuart.18 This ignores the limits which the common law placed on its fiction, the doctrine of tenures, and a decision which McNeil cites and is referred to by a number of the judges

13 Williams 1989, pp. 158-9 refers to the problems of communications and difficulties Yolgnu elders had in understanding the procedures of a common law trial including their role as witnesses, the purpose of cross examination and their relationship with the judge.
15 Lumb 'The Mabo Case', p. 5; Moens 1993, pp. 58-61.
16 ibid., p. 5. This absence of binding authority is noted by Deane and Gaudron JJ in their judgement. They state four cases have been decided in Australia. In all but one, and arguably in it as well, the comments were not part of the reason for deciding (ratio decidendi) but were additional comments (obiter dicta). The described these comments as mere assertions. No party sought to argue that Aboriginal people had any entitlements. Aboriginal people had not been heard nor did the courts appear to consider their entitlements. (1992) 107 ALR 1 at 78.
17 Lumb 'Native Title to Land', p. 86; Lumb 'The Mabo Case', p. 11.
18 (1889) 14 App Cas 286.
in the Murray Island land rights case. Barwick CJ in Administration of Papua New Guinea v Daera Guba referred to the traditional result of acquisition of territory by settlement: the crown acquired the ultimate title to land subject to the usufructuary title of the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{19} The Murray Island land rights case says nothing more than this. Barwick CJ is not generally described as a reformist applying twentieth century concepts of justice and equality.\textsuperscript{20} There were no pillars of stone. Lumb does not deal with McNeil's point that while a colony is classified as settled as matter of law, as a basis for receiving the common law, it must in the end have a factual basis. New South Wales was regarded as settled but the factual basis cannot be other than that Australia was not terra nullius. Brennan J supports McNeil's view noting that the first time terra nullius was put to the test in the Gove land rights case it failed.\textsuperscript{21}

The High Court also fell into error, according to Lumb, in failing to distinguish between Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people. It did not follow Re Southern Rhodesia\textsuperscript{22} where a distinction was made between societies which had reached different stages of development. Strangely Lumb does not state in his article published abroad the reasons for decision in that case although he refers to it at some length in the one published in Australia.\textsuperscript{23} Readers of McNeil's book will be aware of the implications of following that decision. The High Court is unlikely to describe Aboriginal people as 'so low in the scale of social organization that their usages and conceptions of rights and duties are not to be reconciled with the institutions or the legal ideas of a civilized society.'\textsuperscript{24} This, as McNeil points out, is contrary to the finding in the Gove land rights case that Yolngu society was based on a system of laws which provided a stable order of society.\textsuperscript{25} Lumb must have forgotten this part of that decision, which he otherwise appears to approve of, when he wrote '[t]he problem of the Australian Aborigines is that their groupings did not amount to an organised society ...'\textsuperscript{26} and '[s]pecifically, in relation to Australia there would be grave problems in determining whether a systems of customs varying from tribe to tribe and clan to clan constituted law in the sense of a body of ascertained rules which could be applied by the courts.'\textsuperscript{27}

Lumb suggests that the High Court was wrong to extend the decision relating to the occupation of land by Torres Strait Islanders to land occupied by Aboriginal people on the basis that Torres Strait Islanders had gardens and Aboriginal people did not.\textsuperscript{28} Lumb is of the view that the claims of groups which had gardened would be more sustainable in terms of native title than those who moved over a very large area of land.\textsuperscript{29} Blackstone appears to support the distinction in native title between agricultural societies and others. But as McNeil observes Blackstone went on to consider the American colonies where this distinction had no practical effect. It is extraordinary to suggest that such a distinction

\textsuperscript{19} (1972-3) 130 CLR 353 at 397.
\textsuperscript{20} Lumb 'The Mabo Case', p. 5.
\textsuperscript{21} (1992) 107 ALR 1 at 26.
\textsuperscript{22} [1919] AC 211 at 233-34.
\textsuperscript{23} Lumb 'The Mabo Case', pp. 4-6.
\textsuperscript{24} [1919] AC 211 at 233-34. This decision was explicitly rejected by Brennan J as a 'discriminatory denigration of indigenous inhabitants, their social organisation and customs ... [T]he basis of the decision is false in fact and unacceptable in our society ...'; (1992) 107 ALR 1 at 27.
\textsuperscript{25} (1971) 17 FLR 141. Toohey J observed Blackburn J refused to apply the Re Southern Rhodesia test, (1992) 107 ALR 1 at 145.
\textsuperscript{26} Lumb 'The Mabo Case', p. 8.
\textsuperscript{27} id., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{28} id., p. 5 ; Lumb 'Native Title to Land', p. 5.
\textsuperscript{29} Lumb 'The Mabo Case', p. 5.
should be revived. It ignores decided English cases to which McNeil refers. In Red House Farms Ltd v Catchpole the English Court of Appeal unanimously decided that hunting, in that case shooting, over marshy ground gave adverse possession against the lawful owner of that ground. It also ignores that the waste lands of a manor, forests and moors used for hunting and other lands not cultivated were never regarded by the common law as unowned.

The final points which Lumb makes, that the High Court should not concern itself with the equality of Australians before the law and that the fact that some parliaments have legislated on land rights now makes judicial decisions in the area a trespass into the preserve of executive government, are not addressed by McNeil directly. Nor could they be. They are too novel to have been anticipated and are, therefore, beyond the scope of this review.

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In two, uniquely comprehensive, field studies in Australia in 1938-39 and 1952-54, Joseph Birsell studied the human biology of some 5000 Australian Aborigines in great detail. He collected a truly massive series of data on serological, dental, non-metrical and metrical features of individual men and women from most parts of the continent. In addition, he accumulated a wealth of material on genealogies, marriage, infanticide, sibships, fertility, sex ratios and survivorships; and he measured a considerable number of crania from various regions of Australia. As he accurately states in his Resume: 'As a result of more than 50 years of close collaboration with Dr N.B. Tindale, Ethnologist, South Australian Museum,'
Adelaide, the evolutionary population structure of these hunter-gatherers has been more completely defined than that of any other population at any economic level' (p. xvii).

Starting with his PhD thesis in 1941, Birdsell produced an ongoing series of classic studies, progressively expanding his analysis and interpretation of the vast store of data he had generated. His modelling and hypothesis proposing a trihybrid origin for the Australian Aborigines, coming in as a succession of waves of Barrineans, Murrayians and Carpentarians, respectively, has been the central concept emerging from what became a lifelong commitment.

The present book is a major re-study and analysis of his data and conclusions but it is primarily concerned with examining, in great detail, the microevolutionary patterns in the indigenous Australian Aboriginal population. The text is subdivided into 6 parts. Part A includes 'Introduction and Methodology'; Parts B to E deal with serology, dentition, morphological variation and metrical features, respectively; Part F is 'Analysis Involving Regional Trends, Time, Ecology and Language'.

In Part A, Birdsell sets out the rationale behind his study: The data reveal: '... populations showing microgeographical variation among adjacent demes in an extensive spatial matrix', and this provides '... a test of the hypothesis of Sewall Wright that a large population containing many small demic units is expected to show rapid evolution' (p. 3). The methodology for the study is gradient analysis.

In this first section of his book, Birdsell clearly describes population structure in pre-contact Australian Aborigines (family, band, tribe), he details his tribal samples (which he equates with demes), and then outlines microevolutionary forces (mutation, selection, gene flow, intergenerational drift and founder effect), the Australian environment and, briefly, the prehistory of Australia (especially his trihybrid theory of occupation).

In the main section of the book, Parts B to E, Birdsell produces tables, mostly for each sex separately (a few are pooled), of mean values or frequencies for each feature he studied, and for each he includes the numbers of individuals in the sample. In all, his study describes some 150 features in a sample of almost 3000 individuals, grouped into over 60 tribes (demes), and also in a number of pooled samples. For the relatively small areas his field work on living individuals did not cover, he utilises data from Sharp, Warner and the University of Adelaide Expeditions. To supplement his serological data, he draws on many studies including, Simmons et al., Campbell et al., Gay, and Voss and Kirk; similarly, for crania he used data from Hrdlicka, Howells and others.

The parameters Birdsell examined are all defined but some of the measurements and observations are idiosyncratic and their assessment subjective; the adjustments to comparative data he makes (e.g. cranial - living) are often questionable. The detail of his study can be illustrated by some of the unusual features he measures; these include: circumaruncular hairs, nasal cartilage anomaly, ear slant, and thumb extension. In addition to the tables and definitions, for each feature (usually of pooled sexes) he produces a map of Australia with contour lines (isophenes) for a gradient analysis of clines. The tables and figures, plus an analysis and discussion of each feature - in which he often finds evidence of his three originating populations, especially the Barrineans, comprise the major part, 400 pages, of the book.

In the final Part of his book, Birdsell starts by outlining Sewall Wright's concept that: '... in numerically small populations, chance changes might trigger new directions which become incorporated in the long-term adaptive trend' resulting in: '... an adaptive landscape consisting of a considerable number of peaks of heightened fitness separated by lower saddles of reduced fitness' (p. 433). Birdsell shows that the Australian population is similarly structured to Wright's model and provides a test of his 'shifting balance'
hypothesis. The gradient analyses of clines that Birdsell produces for his 1952-54 Western Australian series samples, clearly show the landscapes Sewall Wright predicts, and Birdsell’s analyses of the maps reveal that there is: ‘... a great deal of regional differentiation that shows no particular cohesive patterns’ (p. 434).

Using a series of environmental features (geographic and climatic), Birdsell next outlines his concept of ‘refuge areas’ in the north-east, forested tablelands of Queensland; the extreme south-east corner of the continent; and the top north-eastern area, Cape York. In these postulated refuges, he discerns the clearest evidence of his three, successive, colonising populations of Australia, the Barrineans, Murrayians and Carpentarians. Examining hypothetical inland and a coastal transects of tribal samples down through the eastern part of the continent, Birdsell concludes: ‘... in terms of continuous variation in space: three polar populations can be identified of the eastern coastal transect but that in the interior transect, which had no refuge area, but two are evident in the data’ (p. 437).

In addition, Birdsell describes examples of founder effect and time scale from his data ($R^2$), a fitness estimate (tawny hair), and a transient polymorphism (nasal cartilage anomaly). He also uses dyadic pairs to compare inter- and intra-phyletic language differences with cumulative serological, dental, morphological and metrical features. Birdsell examines ecological and social relations in the Kimberleys, and compares his results with those of the Endler computer simulations. On the important question of ‘Gene flow and Migration versus Adaptive Change’, Birdsell examines four environmental zones and concludes, for example for the south-west refuge area, that: ‘While local adaptive changes are no doubt present, they have been overshadowed by attributes characterizing the incoming Carpentarian populations from the north.’ (p. 451). His final concluding point is that the Australian Aboriginal population: ‘... which has expanded from a few hundred to perhaps 100,000 or more may be judged to have manifest interdemic selection over a period of perhaps 10,000 years.’ (p.453).

In reviewing this book it is unfortunately necessary to comment on the excessively poor proof-reading, for example, in the first 100 pages I noted ten typographical errors and, in the final 5 pages, nine errors. It must also be remarked that the index is rather limited and the references selective and sometimes lacking.

*Microevolutionary Patterns in Aboriginal Australia* is a book which will permanently remain the classic study of the human biology of the Australian Aborigines. The time has passed when the sort of samples available to Birdsell would be available. Because of this, and the nature of some measurements and their assessment, it might not be possible for future researchers to add to his data bank but it is to be hoped that the raw data will become available from a suitable repository for further study and analyses. Although his trihybrid theory will remain controversial, human biologists and anthropologists world-wide and, especially, the Aboriginal population of Australia, will for ever be in debt to Joseph Birdsell for his skill, dedication and foresight in assembling and analysing this vast collection of irreplacable information.

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BOOK REVIEWS


In the 'Foreword' to Bain's book, Isobel White writes (p. ix):

Among the thinkers and writers about Australian Aboriginal society there seldom appears one who comes to grips with beliefs and thought. ... Margaret Bain, an almost unknown writer but one who has lived with Aborigines for many years, has dared to enter this difficult and controversial field. ... Ever since I first began to exchange ideas with Margaret Bain, I realised I was in the presence of a profound and original thinker, one who could illuminate many problems in the relationship between Aboriginal and European Australians.

The possibility of miscommunication increases with cultural distance of the interlocutors. Differences in language use and construction of discourse can account for some of this. Differences in the 'meaning' of body language and gesture can shed light on other aspects. Differences in social and cultural norms (what is said, what is assumed) are known to be important. However Bain argues that deeper differences in total world view, and in handling abstractions that occur between traditional Aborigines (specifically the Pitjantjatjara of Finke) and whites is the root cause of the most frustrating breakdowns in communication, frustrating to both sides. While her findings are disconcerting, she has produced a coherent and far-reaching theory which accounts for the Aboriginal-white miscommunication. Other explanations are piecemeal by comparison.

My acquaintance with Margaret Bain goes back over thirty years, when we met at a linguistics course. She impressed me then, and has impressed others since, as an outstandingly genuine person, not self-aggrandising, and not looking for the 'easy answer' to any problem. Her 1971 paper 'Aboriginal concept - "being" rather than "doing" ' was widely accepted and quoted as an clear perception of differences in Aboriginal and white societies.

Margaret Bain's initial training was in science. Many times in the development of scientific understanding of nature, a theory which has seemed adequate in the light of the data available to a particular generation has needed to be refined and patched as more data comes to hand, until the whole patchwork becomes too complex. Then, after this stage is reached, a new, more all-embracing theory is put forward, providing a far simpler explanation of the phenomena, and accounting for all the data.

Bain's book puts forward such a thesis. Like the most recent Quantum Electrodynamics theory in physics, it is disturbing and perhaps will not seem to make sense to some, although others, including some urban Aborigines, immediately recognise it as accounting for the problems that arise. The same problems appear to be present in some other cross cultural situations where westerners are in contact with certain traditional cultures.

To read the book adequately requires some reasonable knowledge of more fields than most specialists in any one of these fields have, and an ability to hold a number of variables in mind at the same time, so that it cannot be classed in its entirety as 'an easy read'. Nevertheless there are many real life examples of communication breakdown or communication problems written into the book to illustrate - and substantiate - her ideas, and these are easy to absorb.

Bain makes a distinction, which many linguists (and others) will be familiar with, between competence (or capacity) and performance. What Aborigines (and whites) are

capable of is not at issue in her book, and she notes that with extensive and in-depth interaction with whites Aborigines do learn to function in the white system. (While Bain emphasises also that she is comparing two systems, not grading one against the other, it is a fact of life that it is the Aborigines who are likely to be disadvantaged in a society dominated by whites, rather than the reverse.) What she attempts to analyse and account for are the performance problems, what happens in the real day-to-day and year-to-year interactions of Aborigines and their communities with whites and their society.

Bain suggests that the problems in cross-cultural communication between Aborigines and whites have been brought into sharper focus since the moves (in the sixties and later) to give Aborigines a more genuine 'say' in their own future in the world. Prior to that there were boss-employee relationships, manager-community relationships, missionary-'flock' relationships, but not too many real attempts for Aborigines and whites to relate as equal negotiators. Such attempts to do so have often produced such comments as those she quotes in her book: 'White man never tell Aborigine everything', 'White people are liars', 'white people are like children', and (from the other side) 'You can work with Aborigines all your life. They can teach you a lot; then something happens and you find you don't know them. You can't get to know a black.'

Bain attributes the problems to the different world views of Aborigines and whites, and the different degrees of abstraction used in both societies, not to any basic difference in logical processes. Both groups, in her experience as in the experience of others (a number of whom she quotes), use the same logical processes. It is the underlying assumptions and the degree(s) of abstraction that differ.

The book is organised in eleven chapters. The author recounts a number of examples of communication breakdown, focussing on 'economic encounters', discusses authoritative western views on Aboriginal concepts of Aboriginal ritual, the 'Dreaming', magic and symbolisation and her response to these, then in six chapters introduces and substantiates her two explanatory tools, contrasting degrees of abstraction and contrasting concepts of process. This section includes a chapter on the place and the people (the place being Aputula or Finke, once a railway stop), and two chapters giving empirical support for the proposed explanatory tools, one on language and one from a questionnaire (not of her design nor specifically for investigation of the problems she addresses) and responses to it. Chapter 9 applies these tools to account for the Aboriginal-white encounter, chapter 10 looks at conclusions and consequences, and chapter 11 at questions of self-determination and self-management by Aboriginal communities.

On the basis of her analysis of Aboriginal ritual, of Dreamtime concepts, and handling of hypothesis (if clauses and sentences), Bain argues that the community under study habitually did not proceed beyond what she calls 'the first degree of abstraction'. First degree of abstraction, she states, retains a link with perceived reality. Members of the community could discuss a situation that had occurred, and could (for example) discuss what could have happened had conditions been different (if the road had not been wet, they wouldn't have crashed), or what could happen given a concrete condition (if you are thirsty here, you can dig in the sand and find a soak), but could not engage in discussion of hypothetical scenarios at the next level of abstraction, e.g. if the Government supplies more funds, what sort of housing would you like to have? or if I come back next week I'll take you to Alice Springs. Such hypothetical questions and statements were seen as firm promises (the Government will give more funds, what sort of housing would you like to have?, and when I come back next week, I'll take you to Alice Springs), with consequent anger and disappointment when such things did not happen.
In her chapter on language, Bain finds no bar in the language to the handling of hypothetical ifs. In fact white speakers of Pitjanatjara could use the language effectively in this way - but the only people who understood them in the sense intended were other white speakers of the language. It was as though there was an agreement not to use the language in this way, rather than any inherent problem in the language itself. One small point in Bain's description which could be cavilled at is her reference to English use of the subjunctive. The vestigial English subjunctive is not used by many of us or very often; it is perhaps more prevalent where Bain currently lives. However with or without the subjunctive, white native speakers of English understand *If I come back next week I'll take you to town* makes no firm commitment about coming back next week, even though it promises the ride contingent on such a return.

As noted above, the book draws on a number of disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, cognitive science, logic, and thus most readers will find at least one section of the book hard to absorb. Bain often takes a particular point of theory or recognised fact, and works from it to establish another point by logic and inference, then she brings in empirical evidence. In the writings of other scholars, she clearly separates what she accepts from what she does not, and if it is relevant to her thesis, justifies her views with evidence or logic. If the section she does not accept is not (in her opinion) pertinent to the point she wishes to make, she leaves it to one side, separating it from what she wishes to build on or discuss. Some readers, myself included, may find at times there are more variables to handle than they can easily hold in consciousness at any one time.

Central to the Aboriginal world view, as Bain sees it, is that the model for the world is the relationships and interactions between kin. This contrasts markedly with what she sees as the prevailing western view of cause and effect in the natural and social world, of nature as inanimate and separate from people, and of dealings between people that include what she calls transactions as well as kin-based interactions. Some transactions in white society are quantifiable: in the developed west the price for an item in an economic transaction is not affected by any kin relationships between the buyer and seller, whereas an Aboriginal store worker was expected to be partial by his kin to be partial to them. Other transactions in white society are determined by need, not relationship: yet when Bain made the effort to help an injured stranger when she was too tired to go on a night excursion with her Aboriginal 'brother', he was incensed.

In white society one's kin are a small subset of the people one interacts with, and in general, economic transactions are neutral to any relationship. In a store the price of an item to the buyer is not affected in general by friendship or kin relationship between buyer and seller (or if so not to an extent to erode the profit margin). Or if A does B a good turn, or comes to B's rescue in an emergency, B need not expect that this sets a precedent for A to do more for B. In contrast, the Aboriginal world is made up entirely of kin, and certain kin have a right to expect other kin to be partial to them whenever the opportunity is there. If A and B are in certain relationships and A has money or provisions, B has a claim on a share. Even the outsider who has been accepted into the system has pressure to 'share' vehicle, petrol, money, food, etc.

In the Aboriginal world view described by Bain (and many other scholars), not only people, but every animal, plant and thing in the natural world is classed in kin terms. One's homeland is 'mother', certain animals and rocks are 'brother' or other relations. (I recall an elderly town dwelling Aboriginal man in Lismore, NSW claiming the Nimbin Rock as *nanahng nganyah* 'my sister'.) Ceremonies are worked as interactions between mutually dependent kin (kangaroo and emu for example). Kin accomplish things by interaction, and people 'look after the land' by engaging in these ritual interactions, without which the
fabric (like the fabric of a family) will not hold together or function well. As Bain presents it, this is in marked contrast to the western idea of caring for the land. However, such new-old views of the world as the panentheism propounded by such scientists and scientific philosophers as Charles Birch and Matthew Fox may suggest that the Aboriginal world view (where all is kin and interaction) preserves a truth which has been lost sight of in the dichotomy materialistic science makes, and which has been ascendant for so long in the west.

There is little doubt in my mind, and in the minds of many others with long experience in or contact with Aboriginal communities, particularly in 'remote' areas, that the problems of miscommunication Bain addresses are real, and cannot be accounted for merely from the white person's lack of facility with the Aboriginal language (whether a traditional language, or a creole or a form of English) and the Aboriginal person's lack of expertise in 'white' English. Among these who have heard her ideas propounded are a number of urban Aboriginal people, some of them tertiary educated, who without hesitation have seen her theories as highly relevant in accounting for the communication breakdowns between whites and Aboriginal individuals and communities, not always from 'remote' areas. A colleague considers her thesis accounts well for intercultural communication problems of westerners with Samoans. In my experience, interacting with people in the Philippines, in situations where my grasp of the other person's language, or theirs of mine is similarly imperfect, the same problems do not present themselves so strongly. The impression Bain has gained is that these problems are most marked in the interaction between traditional fisher-gather-hunter (or hunter-gatherer) peoples and those from an agricultural or technological culture. Perhaps this is because their life styles have more need for planning with contingencies in mind.

Readers who have endeavoured to interact at more than a superficial level with remote area Aborigines will recognise the issues Bain is grappling with in this book, and will perhaps feel her thesis is the most adequate explanation to date to account for the cross-cultural miscommunications. It should be emphasised that there is no firm dividing line between traditional Aborigines and whites on these issues, and some of what Bain describes will be pertinent in analysing interactions in and between different socio-cultural groups in the mainstream society. Young idealists may well reject her thesis out of hand; however if any one of them can come up with a better explanation of why the problems are there, Margaret Bain would be among the first to welcome their findings.

A possible contribution to the cross-cultural miscommunication Bain describes is yet another factor which perhaps is not addressed overtly in this book. In my experience in interaction not only with Aborigines but with white people of working class background, certain general principles are often not overtly stated, but illustrated by real life examples only. The over-arching mental concept seems present, but never verbalised. However in my experience in Aboriginal communities, unverbalised concepts are not at a high level of abstraction, and retain firm links with the concrete. In working class white society this avoidance of verbalisation of concepts is often linked with an avoidance of 'big words', by which is meant the more abstract words of Graeco-Latin origin. David Corson's book *The Lexical Bar* is one which deals with this issue. While certain concepts may at times not be verbalised in working class society, working class people can and do work at a higher level of abstraction than Bain's first degree. However, just as the avoidance of 'big words' among many working class people is a deliberate choice, Bain hints that the avoidance of the second degree of abstraction appears a deliberate choice in traditional Aboriginal society. This may *contribute* to the miscommunication Bain addresses, but it clearly does not account for the totality of it.
BOOK REVIEWS

I recommend Bain's book as a significant contribution in the field of cross-cultural communication, and her thesis deserves careful consideration for what it might contribute, not only in Australia in communication between whites and Aborigines, but in other cultural and linguistic areas.

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The Go-Betweens is an essential reference for anyone at all interested in the history of the Northern Territory. Jeremy Long, himself a patrol officer in the 1950s-1960s, tells clearly and well the story of 'Patrol Officers in Aboriginal Affairs Administration in the Northern Territory 1936-1974'. It is most fortunate that the work was accomplished whilst most of the patrol officers were still alive: their records, photographs and reminiscences not only contributed to the account, but hopefully will allow correction of misconceptions in some of the recent 'politically correct' publications.

A brief Introduction traces the history of Protectors of Aborigines from 1837, before outlining the development of the NT patrol officers' service. The chapter headings then indicate the progressive development of the philosophy behind administration, the various duties, and the experiences and responses of the officers. Illustrative of these chapters are: 'A False Start In Arnhem Land, 1934-36', 'Patrol Officer Strehlow In The Centre, 1936-39', 'Adventures In Arnhem Land 1949-51', and 'From Native Affairs To Welfare 1951-54'.

Difficulties on the field are touched upon, and well-illustrated with photographs that anyone with an eye for detail can appreciate. Furthermore, though, the insensitivity of distant administraive 'desk wallahs' and per-pushers is indicated in extracts from the correspondence.

Much of the material deals with frontier history a century after it had been experienced elsewhere in Australia - travel to remote Arnhem Land and desert regions; encounters with Aborigines who had never previously directly experienced the impact of the wider society (and vice versa for the patrol officers); investigations of ill-treatment of Aborigines by a wide range of exploitative 'white' people; patrols to check on reports of murders; and other such aspects. The image might have been romantic and glamorous, but the reality was, in the main, hard work. Interestingly, despite their often quite remarkable experiences, the patrol officers did not receive publicity even remotely comparable to the mounted police. Ion L. Idriess elevated the police work to legendary status, which is often enough entirely reasonable, but with the exception of Kyle-Little's Whispering Wind (1957), occasional references in Bill Harvey's various books of the 1950s-1960s, and Lockwood's The Lizard Eaters (1964), very little is readily available on the exploits of the patrol officers.
The changing Federal Government perspectives, as worked out by Northern Territory administrations, are well presented over time. And, as the author states:

Though the title of 'patrol officer' was an anachronism by the late 1960's, the need for people trained for work with Aboriginal people did not diminish. Half of those who took the ... training course did so after 1966; they were being trained for work that was changing but not disappearing' (p. 169).

In that the last patrol officers' training course was held in 1974, the date is an appropriate cut-off point for the study, although it is recognised that many of the officers continued to work for the various Aboriginal organisations created thereafter.

Although *The Go-Betweens* is an excellent book, I do have some quibbles with it. The Introduction rightly refers to South Australia, employing significance on development of Protectors' roles and concerns, but does not at all pursue this, relying instead on the situation which prevailed in Victoria (oddly never referred to as other than the 'Port Phillip Protectorate'). As South Australia had responsibility for the Northern Territory to 1911, and formally provided many members of the work-force until the mid-1970s, this State's role is worthy of further investigation. Similarly, although reference to Papua-New Guinea is important to mention in the Introduction, the impression is given (p. xii) that the patrol-officer responsibilities established by Hubert Murray were of the 1920s-1930s era. In fact, the Kiap Army officers of World War I, having taken over from the previous German administration, put into practice that which is described during 1915, (as is indicated in the relevant volume of the official War history edited by C.E.W. Bean).

'Sins of omission' can hardly be said to have occurred in the main text, and all officers are listed in appendices, thus allowing further follow-up by any future researchers. Similarly, much as the focus is of necessity the patrol officers themselves and their administrative associates, other people of varying significance are mentioned - people like Dr Charles Duguid, Professor A.P. Elkin, and Miss Olive Pink. An important point is that, throughout the text, the integrity and concerns of the patrol officers, and occasionally of the wider NT population, are given due, but not exaggerated, regard (e.g. see pp. 82-3).

There are ample opportunities for further research - the reminiscences of Aborigines about their times of service, the role of women, and other aspects, all to some extent considered by the author. One would hope, too, that Jeremy Long soon follows up this book with a number of volumes giving the actual patrol accounts, many of which are interesting and readable historical documents, presently either rare or unpublished.

In conclusion, Dr Jeremy Long's book illuminates a previously little known, yet most interesting, period of human endeavour in the Northern Territory. It is highly recommended as a purchase to all interested in Aboriginal and other Australian people's relationships, and to historians and general readers alike.

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