OBITUARY:
OODGEROO OF THE TRIBE NOONUCCAL

John Collins

Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal, Custodian of the Land Minjerribah (formerly known by her Anglicised name of Kath Walker), died on 16 September 1993.

Minjerribah is the Noonuccal word for the great sand island which fringes Moreton Bay opposite the city of Brisbane. The Noonuccal-Nughie tribes occupied both North and South Stradbroke islands and fished the waters of the bay, which was known to them as Quandamooka. Visitors from many countries sailed into the bay in the early days, and when Kathleen Jane Mary Ruska was born on 3 November 1920 there was plenty of variety in her blood line.

Her father was the caretaker of the local aged and infirm asylum on the island but he also maintained traditional ways. The young Kathie (one of seven children) knew the bay, its beach and forested dunes:

Children of nature we were then
No clocks hurrying crowds to toil.1

Schooling at the local primary school had to be endured rather than enjoyed but, at 13, like so many other Aboriginal girls of her age, she was drafted into domestic service in Brisbane. This meant that she had to live in a white world; that she had to obey the orders of the women and to keep clear of the men. She managed to do this until the Second World War, when she joined the Women's Army.

She became a telephonist and was on the way to accumulating skills that would see her move out of the cramped 'no highway' that was the lot of her people, until illness forced her back into domestic service. She married, had a son and settled into suburban Brisbane, but the marriage was not to last. Now with two young boys, Dennis and Vivian, Kath (as I shall call her) might have been overcome with the burdens of single parenthood in a very hostile society. Instead, she enrolled in a repatriation stenographic course and joined the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). As she said many times, she was political by genes as well as by upbringing and the only political party she could find in post-war Australia that did not have White Australia as a major plank of policy was the CPA. She stayed a member and benefited greatly, but left when they wanted to write her speeches.

She had already begun to write verses and was attracted to the Realist Writers' Group that formed in Brisbane in 1954.2 Kath Walker's first volume of poems, We are Going, was published in 1964 in Brisbane and the following year in New York. The reaction was varied; nevertheless, immediate reprintings followed to keep up with demand. This was the first publication of poetry written by an Australian Aboriginal person, and Kath Walker immediately became a public figure. Language had now become a weapon and some critics responded with malicious comments: 'She wasn't a full black, so it was the white blood

John Collins was formerly a teacher at the Universities of Melbourne and the South Pacific and managing director of Jacaranda Wiley Press (publishers of Oodgeroo's books). This is an edited version of an article originally written for 'Race and Class', 33/4 (1994).

1  'Then and now' in Walker 1964.
2  On the Realist Writers' Group see Syson 1993.
that was writing'; 'someone ghosted the work, if not wrote it'. This doubt as to genesis
hurt Kath then and remained with her for most of her life. In the foreword to her second
volume, *The Dawn is at Hand* (1966), Kath hit back at critics who called her poems bitter
'as though even atrocities were not mentioned to nice people' and who sought to quash
protests against social injustice by accusing their author of being a communist.

The decade of the 1960s saw Kath travelling the length and breadth of the continent as
a leader of the movement which eventually forced the Liberal-Country Party government to
hold the 1967 referendum. As the decade drew to a close, Kath, worn out and penniless after
her years of exertion and battle, retired to her 'sitting-down' place on Stradbroke Island
(Moongalba), but not for long. Various literary awards came her way and, in 1969, she
made her first of many ventures overseas as the Australian delegate to the World Council of
Churches Consultation on Racism which was held in London. Seven years earlier, at a
council meeting of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres
Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) she had made her feelings about racism well known in a poem
written especially for the meeting, the 'Aboriginal Charter of Rights':

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We want hope, not racialism,
Brotherhood, not ostracism,
Black advance, not white ascendance;
Make us equals, not dependants ...
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In 1979, in a speech given at the Australian National University in Canberra, after her
widespread travels in the previous ten years (Fiji, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Ghana and
the US), she said:

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As I have travelled throughout the world, I have often thought that one could
judge a society by the way it treats its racial minorities. Where a minority
was forced to live in squalor, I have seen a squalid society. Where a minority
was riddled with disease, I have seen a sick society. Where a minority was
without hope, I saw a nation without hope.
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Kath was now quite conscious of the world's misery but that did not prevent her from
criticising the apathy of white Australia.

On her return from Lagos to Sydney in 1976, her flight was hijacked at Dubai. She
survived three days of murder and mayhem by compiling a life report card! As she said
later, she only gave herself three out of ten for tolerance and determined that, if she
survived, she would try to improve. She was, in fact, extraordinarily tolerant of the
everyday failings of humans. She knew that she had her own quota and, in particular,
worried about her sons who, in her words, 'grew up behind my back while I was out
hustling politicians'.

In the meantime, she had established a very strong relationship with another Australian
poet, Judith Wright. It had been Judith who, as reader for Jacaranda Press, had been
enthusiastic about Kath's first collection. In 1976 they were together in the film *Shadow
Sister*. Judith dedicated and presented to Kath her poem 'Two Dreamtimes', in which she
tried to sum up this strange 'white Australia'.

In the late 1980s, partly due to the Hawke Labor government's failure to enact land
rights legislation and partly in protest at the celebrations of the white bicentennial, Kath
Walker decided to do three things: first, she returned the imperial honour (an MBE) that was
given to her in 1970; second, she decided that she and her second son would be part of the
bicentennial celebrations; and third, she decided to change her name. Many Aboriginal

3 Walker 1964.
4 Walker 1981.
5 In Walker 1990.
OODGEROO OF THE TRIBE NOONUCCAL

groups were violently opposed to her participation in the World Expo at Brisbane, where Oodgeroo and her son, Kabul, scripted and directed *The Rainbow Serpent Theatre* which entranced thousands of Expo visitors as it told some of the Dreamtime stories. Many of her literary friends thought she had made a stupid mistake with the name change. I doubt if any of the reactions worried her in the slightest.

Oodgeroo had now been honoured with doctorates from three universities (I'm sure they do it to get some mileage out of it for themselves,' she said to me as we waited once for an academic procession to begin). She had been to both China*6* and the USSR, had acted in an award-winning film (*The Fringe Dwellers*), had had a volume of her paintings published,*7* and, after teaching thousands of children and young adults at her sitting-down place (Moongalba), had involved herself in an educational project at the University of New South Wales.

But this world of achievement was to be shattered when her artist son, Kabul, sickened and died of AIDS. Kabul (previously known as Vivian) had shared many of his mother's artistic gifts. He was an accomplished dancer and painter and, in the last few years, had become his mother's closest critic and confidante. With Kabul's death Oodgeroo was tested as never before. In public she had always remained strong, resilient and ready at all times to be provocative, with a piercing wit and a menacing intellect. But the loss of her son was almost too much to bear, and less than three years later she had succumbed to cancer. On 20 September 1993 she was buried beside Kabul at Moongalba.

Oodgeroo had fought a long and often bitter fight against the apathy of comfortable middle-class Australia. She had paid a heavy price in personal terms, but she had won many battles. One battle that she never managed to finish was the battle between her two selves: the girl who was born on Stradbroke, who strode the land as if she owned it, who became an elder of the Noonuccal tribe and a teller of Dreamtime tales; and the activist and agitator in the white man's world. This divide between the two laws and two starkly different views of the world is rarely bridged. Oodgeroo's experience in countries other than Australia enabled her to create bridges and linkages.

She would often say, 'I feel as if they all want part of me'. That was the price she paid for the power that had come out of the poems and the podium. At the same time, she knew how important had been the associations with people like Kathie and Bob Cochrane whom she had met in the early days of the Queensland Aboriginal Advancement League; like James Devaney of the Realist Writers' Group; like the Cilentos and Stephen Murray-Smith, as well as Faith Bandler and other members of FCAATSI. But she realised that, with the publication of her first collection of poems, she had become the property of two publics whose wishes would very rarely be similar.

Two generations after Oodgeroo now look at an Australia which is still to come to terms with its inheritance. On the black side there is new hope and with it a new urgency. Because pioneers like Oodgeroo sounded the call and made significant contacts in other places, there is now more strength and direction in the movement. On the white side, through a less blinkered education system, young Australians are beginning to understand that there is more to the cultural and economic system than their elders believed. Oodgeroo believed quite firmly that the forcing of change and the redressing of injustice in the land

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6 Walker 1988.
7 Beier 1986.
will depend as much on an enlightened young white population as on an educated and activist black one.

Her first volume, *We are Going*, was originally entitled *All One Race*. That was the title of a poem that clearly sums up Oodgeroo's world view:

I'm international, never mind place,
I'm for humanity, all one race.8

**LIST OF REFERENCES**

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8 Walker 1964.
OBITUARY FOR NORMAN BARNETT ("TINNY") TINDALE
Born Perth, October 12, 1900
Died Palo Alto, California, November 19, 1993, aged 93

Philip Jones

On his first major field trip after being appointed assistant entomologist at the South Australian Museum in 1918, Norman Tindale sketched the tribal Aboriginal boundaries in the Groote Eylandt and Roper River area of the Northern Territory. His map was edited before publication and the boundaries removed on the basis that Aborigines were wanderers with no fixed attachments to land.

Tindale's reaction was to dedicate his research efforts for the next two decades towards proving that Aboriginal groups did relate territorially to distinct regions that could be successfully mapped. His tribal map of Australia, first published in 1940 and revised in 1974 together with his encyclopaedia of Aboriginal tribal groups, was radical in its fundamental implication that Australia was not terra nullius - decades before the Mabo judgement made it a national issue.

Over the next 70 years, Tindale played a crucial role in confronting this entrenched stereotype about Aboriginal people - that their nomadic lifestyle indicated a lack of enduring territorial relationships with the land. Tindale's daily work at the South Australian Museum brought a constant reminder of the public's perception of Aboriginal people during these decades; it is hardly surprising that his commitment to the tribal paradigm grew in response. This was so even as the applied anthropology of his academic colleagues in eastern Australia was suggesting that the complexity of Aboriginal social and territorial relationships was hardly amenable to Tindale's ambitiously broad categorisation. Despite this, Tindale's carefully sourced data and his commitment to bibliographic methods means that researchers may dismantle and test most of his conclusions, a course rarely open with the work of other ethnographers.

Tindale was also a pioneer Australian archaeologist. He was one of the first to successfully challenge the orthodoxy of the 1920s, that Aboriginal occupation of Australia had been relatively brief. His excavation of a 5000-year old Aboriginal rock shelter at Devon Downs on the Murray River in 1929 was a pivotal event. Before that project, Australian archaeology did not exist as a discipline, largely because it was assumed that Aboriginal people were relatively recent arrivals. Tindale's meticulous excavation established not only that Aboriginal people had lived for several millennia in the Murray valley, but demonstrated that their strategies for subsistence had altered in response to environmental change. He showed how stone tools, animal bones and cultural remains could be used to piece together a previously untold story about Australia's past. His foresight in preserving charcoal samples against the predicted development of C14 dating has received scant recognition. Nevertheless, critics of Tindale's construction of an Australian cultural chronology based on his Devon Downs, Tartanga and even Noola Rockshelter excavations and his examination of 'Kartan' implements, acknowledge the precision of his work and the quality of his data.

Like several dominant figures in South Australian anthropology, Tindale's empirically-based research interests arose from his training in the natural sciences, particularly geology and biology. He completed a Bachelor's degree in Science at the University of Adelaide in

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1933. Tindale’s commitment to ‘boundedness’ in space (tribes) and in time (cultural chronologies) may be traced to this natural science paradigm and its concern with cataloguing and filling gaps in the record. At a time when anthropology had tended to contract into university departments, redefining itself in the process, Tindale reinvigorated the profession within the South Australian Museum, uniquely blending empirical investigation with social enquiry.

Tindale’s commitment to data-gathering was not an end in itself, but represented an attempt to build a picture of Aboriginal life within the frame of the Australian environment. This commitment was exemplified by his central role during the Board for Anthropological Research expeditions to remote Central Australia locations, organised from Adelaide during the 1930s. He was responsible for purchasing and documenting artefacts, making sound, cinematic and photographic records of daily life and ceremonies, recording sociological data, as well as collecting natural science specimens.

Despite this empirical emphasis, Tindale published widely in the field of Aboriginal art, he pioneered the practice (later used by Mountford and Berndt) of supplying Aboriginal people in Central Australia with brown paper and their choice of crayons, documenting the results carefully. He was one of the first anthropologists to articulate the fact that the art of the concentric circle represented a cryptic and endlessly flexible reference to place, the artist’s own mythological locus.

Tindale’s first passion was entomology, indulged as a boyhood hobby in the countryside surrounding Tokyo, after his father, an accountant with the Salvation Army mission in Japan, had taken his family there to live from 1907 until 1915. Through these butterfly-collingcursions he was first introduced to the fieldwork methods of natural science collecting, later an integral part of his anthropological expedition routine. In Tokyo itself he gained his first experience of museums and the life behind their static exhibits.

On his family’s return to Australia in 1915, Tindale gained a job with the Adelaide Public Library as a cadet, biding his time until a position at the South Australian Museum became available. A few months after taking up his position at the Museum Tindale lost the sight of one eye in an explosion caused while assisting his father with photographic processing. He later recalled the Museum Entomologist, Arthur Lea, telling him, 'Tindale, you’ll never make a blind entomologist, but you might make a blind anthropologist!' Tindale nevertheless forged an international reputation during his lifetime for his work on the *Hepialidae* moths.

Because Groote Eylandt was still almost unknown by naturalists or anthropologists, prior to Tindale's 1921-1922 expedition the museum director sent him to Melbourne to learn the rudiments of anthropology from Walter Baldwin Spencer. Spencer taught Tindale the Geographic I method of language transcription, the basis for Tindale's later collection of parallel vocabularies across Australia. Apart from studious attention to Spencer's gift of his 1912 edition of 'Notes and Queries on Anthropology', Tindale followed one aspect of Spencer's advice for the next 70 years: to write a daily journal, no matter whether the events of the following day proved the previous day's record invalid. Tindale's systematic journal-keeping became legendary during his lifetime. These journals, bequeathed by Tindale to the South Australian Museum, join with his genealogical records, crayon drawings and maps, films, photographs, sound recordings and artefacts in constituting a unique, interlocking archive of data about the Aboriginal people of Australia.

Tindale and other Adelaide members of the Board for Anthropological Research were often criticised for their brief forays into Central Australia during the 1930s, in contrast to Elkin’s students with their intensive periods of fieldwork. By this time though, Tindale had already served his fieldwork apprenticeship; the Groote Eylandt expedition saw him living...
in the field with Aboriginal people for a total period of twenty months. During 1933 Tindale and the physical anthropologist Cecil Hackett spent three months accompanying Pitjantjatjara and Yangkanjatjara people through the Mann Ranges. Both experiences left Tindale with enduring respect for Aboriginal people's intimate knowledge of local environments.

Thanks to his mastery of 'street Japanese' during his Tokyo childhood, Tindale's career was interrupted by World War II - he was posted to the Pentagon in Washington as an intelligence officer with the Japanese code-breaking unit. Assigned the rank of Wing Commander, he was flown to the crash sites of Japanese bombers in the Pacific region, with a brief to decode and translate any data which could identify the Japanese sources of vital parts of weaponry. Tindale used these forays to make additional journal entries about Pacific ethnography.

One day in the Pentagon during this period he encountered the South Australian nuclear scientist Mark Oliphant, with mutual surprise. The two had been cadets at the Adelaide Public Library in 1916, before Tindale's employment at the Museum. Both were working on different aspects of the Manhattan Project. At the end of the war, when Tindale was seconded to examine the effects of Allied bombing in Japan, he stood on the ruins of his father's Tokyo home, remembering his Japanese childhood friends and the insects and butterflies they had collected together.

Tindale's family came from Taratap Station near Mt Gambier and there his mother had played as a child during the 1870s with a Tangane boy of the Coorong Aborigines, Clarence Long Milerum. Years later, visiting the region for his anthropological research, Tindale met Milerum and a long friendship developed. As an old man Milerum worked with Tindale during the 30s, making basketry and weapons and explaining his culture and traditions to museum visitors. Tindale's great unfinished project was Milerum's biography. This was intended, like the Berndts' study of the Lower Murray Yaraldi (published by M.U.P. in 1993), to give an insight into the pre-European culture of the Tangane people of the Coorong through the eyes of a friend and principal informant.

Tindale's familiarity with the Aborigines of the Coorong and Lower Murray assisted him with an important research project, extended today by Aboriginal people working at the South Australian Museum. Tindale's aim, working with the American physical anthropologist Joseph Birdsell, was to build a genealogical and sociological profile of the Aboriginal population as it mingled with the European population across Australia. Through the Aboriginal Family History Project Tindale's name has become familiar to new generations of Aboriginal people.

Tindale's friendship with Birdsell, begun during his visit to the United States in 1936 on a Carnegie Fellowship, endured beyond his retirement from the South Australian Museum in 1965 until his death, and it contributed largely to his decision to take up a teaching position at the University of Colorado. Both men kept in constant contact until recently; Birdsell died on 5 March, 1994, just months after Tindale. Birdsell and Tindale shared common views of the prehistoric origins of Australian Aborigines. Like Tindale, Birdsell bequeathed his research library to the South Australian Museum and, recently announced, made an extremely generous bequest to the institution, establishing the Norman B. Tindale Memorial Research Fund, to be used for the purposes of 'research into Pleistocene man in Australia'.

Tindale continued to live in the United States after his retirement and the death of his wife of 45 years, Dorothy May, in 1969. She had accompanied him, together with the Birdsells, across Australia on the 1938-39 Harvard-Adelaide expedition. In 1970 Tindale married an old family friend, Muriel Nevin (who survives him, together with his son and
daughter from his first marriage). Apart from occasional research trips to Australia and butterfly collecting trips elsewhere in North America, they continued to live in Muriel's Palo Alto home, a small wooden house bursting at the seams with his research materials, library, and butterfly specimens. An adjacent shed provided more storage space and a workbench for constructing his neat wooden butterfly boxes.

While Tindale relished the relative seclusion of his retirement in the United States, he was never aloof from family or friends. A boyish sense of humour, a readiness to engage with researchers on their own terms, and an enthusiasm for new information sustained him through accidents and episodes of ill health from his mid-80s.

He impressed all visitors during his later years with the same qualities recorded by earlier colleagues - an indefatigable commitment to making an enduring record of Aboriginal life before the transformations wrought by European contact. His career's output of several books and more than 200 scientific papers on anthropology and entomology were used by him as working texts for future papers; he did not preserve bookshelf copies of any of his publications. By 1989 he knew that he would not complete his Milerum book, nor several other projects. Unfazed, he scaled his work program back and supplied data for Aboriginal place names to the South Australian Department of Lands. Another source of pleasure was his contact with Canberra and AIATSIS-based linguists during the 1980s, eager to draw upon the numerous Aboriginal vocabularies which he had recorded during his fieldwork. Tindale was never happier nor more animated than when confirming a new detail and putting it on the record for others to use.

Tindale was honoured during the latter part of his career with an honorary doctorate from the University of Colorado in 1969. The impetus for this was provided by Professor John Greenway, who later presented Tindale with a remarkable volume of more than 50 testimonial letters from his international colleagues. Australian recognition for Tindale's career was more halting than it would have been had he remained in this country; he received the Verco Medal and the John Lewis Medal from South Australia's Royal Society and Royal Geographical Society during the early 1970s, and an honorary doctorate from A.N.U. in 1980. During 1993 Tindale received unofficial confirmation of the award of the Companion of the Order of Australia; this was awarded posthumously.

Tindale remained an Honorary Associate of the South Australian Museum until his death, an association which spanned more than seven decades. During this time all his former colleagues left the scene and he observed the gap between museum and academic anthropology develop, widen, but then, encouragingly, begin to close. His letters to the Museum were like those from someone who has stayed away in the field too long: they were always completed with the touching postscript, 'Please give greetings to all those who remember me'. The South Australian Museum Board's 1993 decision to name a gallery in his honour may have meant most to him - a 'museum man' to the last.
OBITUARY:

DR CATHERINE HELEN BERNDT, 1918-1994

Bob and Myrna Tonkinson

Dr Catherine Berndt died on May 12, 1994 at her home in Perth. Catherine Helen Webb was born in Auckland, New Zealand, of Scots, English, Irish and Maori ancestry - though she did not learn of her Maori ancestry until 1986. She was delighted to discover that she was a descendant of the Pokai family, whose ancestors are believed to have reached New Zealand in the Tainui canoe. Catherine became a devotee of anthropology while a young student in her New Zealand homeland and over a fifty year period made a major contribution to her discipline, becoming a world authority on Aboriginal Australia and enjoying a distinguished international reputation.

Catherine Berndt's academic credentials were impeccable: a B.A. from Victoria University College, Wellington in 1939; an M.A. with first class honours from the University of Sydney in 1949; a Ph.D from the London School of Economics in 1955; an honorary doctorate from The University of Western Australia in 1983; and in addition to several major anthropological prizes, national recognition for her contribution to anthropology with the award of the Order of Australia in 1987.

Catherine attributed her abiding interest in anthropology to several sources: growing up in a bicultural society, hearing missionaries preach about far-off places and people, and reading the many anthropology books her father brought home. All these factors stimulated a keen interest in cultural differences and the challenge of explaining them. Her upbringing had emphasised the basic equality of the sexes along with the need for reform, and her mother strongly supported her ambition to become an anthropologist, so her later work with Aboriginal women was no doubt stimulated by these background influences.

In 1940, Catherine went to study anthropology in Sydney under Professor A.P. Elkin, where she met fellow student Ronald M. Berndt, and soon realised the extent of their common interests and strong motivation to forge careers in anthropology. They married in 1941, and thus began one of the most productive professional partnerships in the history of anthropology. In careers spanning a half century, involving years of fieldwork in several different locations in Australia, as well as a highly productive period on the frontier in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, the Berndts became leading figures in their profession. Almost all their fieldwork was conducted as a team, and they discussed their ideas and shared insights as a matter of course. Regardless of whether the resulting publications appeared under single or joint authorship (and there were plenty of both), everything they produced bore the imprint of what had clearly been, at some level, their collaborative endeavour. Catherine worked predominantly among women, while Ron focused his research on men, and both were formidably energetic and effective researchers, as the massive body of data gathered by them indicates. Catherine likened their together-but-separate research strategy to what she has always proposed as the fundamental principle of gender relationships in Aboriginal Australia: independence of the sexes within an overarching societal framework of interdependence.

Professor Bob and Dr Myrna Tonkinson teach Anthropology at the University of Western Australia.
Fieldwork for Catherine began with a period of joint research in a remote Western Desert community at Ooldea, South Australia, in the early 1940s. Later fieldwork with descendants of the Narrinyeri people in the lower River Murray area and in a survey of communities elsewhere in South Australia, led to an intensification in her strong interest in the study of Aboriginal women and in processes of change and transformation in Aboriginal societies. Later research in northern Australia led to her first international single-authored publication, a major study of women's religious activity, *Women's Changing Ceremonies in Northern Australia* (1950). This was the first issue of what was to become a famous monograph series, *Cahiers de l'Homme*. In his laudatory introduction, Claude Levi-Strauss, praised Catherine for her landmark work, which he saw as an important contribution to the sociology of religion, bringing to European anthropologists a vibrant, accessible account of women's religious activities set in a context of sociocultural change. Levi-Strauss praised her work not only for its theoretical strengths but also for breaking the European stereotype of Aboriginal Australians as imprisoned in static and rigid institutional forms.

As a result of her research in a number of different Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, and her numerous publications, Catherine Berndt became an internationally respected authority on religion and on the role of women. Her writings have contributed much, also, to the understanding of marriage, the family and socialisation in both Australia and Melanesia. Catherine also pursued another of her major interests: oral literature as manifested in mythology and stories. Her Ph.D topic, 'Myth in Action', was based on her fieldwork in Papua New Guinea (about which she and Ron wrote a fascinating account that appears in a recent volume of early fieldworkers in the highlands, edited by Terry Hays and entitled *Ethnographic Presents*). Catherine wrote widely on, and contributed significantly to, the anthropology of myth; she also played a large part in developing oral literature as a field of study in Australia. Two important works, both co-authored with Ron, are *The Barbarians* (1971) and *The Speaking Land: Myth and Story in Aboriginal Australia* (1989). Catherine was particularly interested in children's literature, and her accurate translations of traditional stories appeared in several beautifully illustrated publications, aimed at Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children alike. Winning a Children's Book Award for one such publication was a source of great pride and satisfaction to her.

Both Catherine and Ron Berndt wrote a great deal about 'traditional' Aboriginal Australia, and their textbook *The World of the First Australians*, after numerous editions, remains the major anthropological reference work on Aboriginal Australia. They had an equally strong interest in social change and in depicting the realities of poverty, racism and continuing oppression as they affected Aboriginal people in contemporary Australian society. Many of their publications, such as *From Black to White in South Australia* (1951) - a title that Catherine could never abide - and *End of an Era* (1987) dealt with these topics, and in them one of Catherine's particular concerns was to document the impact of change on Aboriginal women and children.

When the Berndts moved to Perth in 1956, they began the task of establishing anthropology there, and eventually Ronald Berndt became Foundation Professor of Anthropology at The University of Western Australia in 1963. The rapid growth of the subject at UWA was facilitated significantly by Catherine's efforts, first as Visiting Tutor and later as Visiting Lecturer, and she was an important influence on a generation of students there. Like many of her female contemporaries, Catherine never held a tenured, full-time position. To this degree, her professional life was lived in the shadow of her husband, and the true extent of her massive contribution to Aboriginal studies has probably been somewhat hidden. What is clear, however, is that the unstinting labours of the
Berndts, whose lives were truly devoted to anthropology and to each other, were an inextricably intertwined endeavour.

The death of Ronald Berndt severed that remarkable partnership and left Catherine profoundly bereft, but from the outset, she vowed that what would keep her going was the large number of unfinished projects she had promised Ron she would complete. It was a very difficult battle, as her health deteriorated, but her determination to go on working was only blunted, and never extinguished. One of her greatest regrets was that she was unable to continue to visit Balgo, Elcho Island and other places in Arnhem Land to see her many cherished friends. However, Catherine did work on, and one of her major achievements was to bring to fruition a commitment she and Ron had made to Aboriginal people decades earlier. The Yaraldi volume was a huge project that had occupied her and Ron for several years prior to his death in 1990. It resulted in *A World That Was: The Yaraldi of the Murray River and the Lakes, South Australia* (1993). This magnificent volume was based on fieldwork done by her and Ron a half century earlier. A richly detailed account of a fascinating society and culture as they functioned in the last decades of the 19th century, this book is undoubtedly the last of its kind in Aboriginal Studies. Its publication gave Catherine a great sense of satisfaction in having finally fulfilled the promise to make this wonderful material available, not only to the descendants of the Narrinyeri people, but to all Australians.

As many people have remarked, using the title of one of the many books written by the Berndts, Catherine's death really marks the end of an era, and it is difficult to imagine the anthropological scene in Western Australia - and in the nation as a whole - without two of its leading players. If there is a hereafter, then Ron and Catherine are again united after but a brief hiatus, and we can be assured that much is being planned - and the work is continuing.