
In this, the second edition of a monograph first published in 1983, the original text is unaltered except for minor corrections, but Diane Bell has added a short foreword and a 27-page epilogue. I reviewed the original text in Aboriginal History (vol. 8) and stand by what I wrote then: 'Her book ... represents a major contribution to our knowledge of past and present Aboriginal societies and demonstrates the significance of women in every aspect of community existence.' Since its publication a number of women have engaged in research into various aspects of the lives of Aboriginal women and have written MA or PhD theses of considerable importance. They have produced articles in books and journals, but no monographs. An outstanding collection about South Australian Aboriginal women edited by Peggy Brock was published in 1989 under the title Women, rites and sites: Aboriginal women's cultural knowledge.

In her foreword to the new edition Bell explains that she had decided not to alter the original text (except for minor corrections) because this had historical relevance in reflecting some of the values of the early 1980s both in anthropology and in her own development. In her epilogue she describes some of the changes in anthropological theory particularly where the study of women's society is concerned. Much of the epilogue is a discussion of the development during the last ten years of feminist anthropological theory, a discussion which would be helpful for any woman embarking on fieldwork today.

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Isobel White
Australian National University


Living Aboriginal History of Victoria publishes personal experiences and recollections of some 57 members of the Victorian Aboriginal community, and as such it is the first major publication of its kind in Victoria, and complements the handful of booklets that have been produced by the Aboriginal History Programme from 1983 until 1988. Accessing Victorian Aboriginal experiences has never been easy in Victoria. Information has had to be gleaned from published histories, general ethnographic compilations, government enquiries and Aboriginal testimonies at coronial inquests.
A major difficulty the managers of this project were always going to have was determining subject and content: which members of the community would be included and what aspects of their personal interviews would be excluded from the text. Obviously a wealth of detail has had to be excluded, and many interviewees were omitted. Perhaps the solution is to hope that further publications may result from this project. Another difficulty with the publication is that we are only given fragments of the interviews held with each person, consequently we only gain glimpses of people, and we are not presented with the richness of detail that would have accompanied a volume that contained fewer entries with greater detail.

Despite these limitations I found the Victorian people selected confirmed the dynamic nature of contemporary Aboriginal culture as it is experienced in Victoria. The personal narratives are complemented by a large collection of historic and contemporary photographs and there is no doubt the book has become an important community resource since its publication. This is ensured by the fact that members have been selected from every major community in Victoria and by the fact that the selection includes community members who are prominent in community service, the arts, politics, education, and administration. The publication also achieves an admirable age and gender balance.

The entries in Living Aboriginal History of Victoria are varied and wide and this is one of the book's strengths as it means that it is a mine of information. The communities at Cummeragunga, Ebenezer, Framlingham, Lake Condah, and Lake Tyers are represented. The book successfully demonstrates how contemporary Victorian Aboriginal people are continuing to practice 'traditional' arts and crafts such as basket weaving, emu egg carving, boomerang making and throwing, medicinal uses of plants, hunting and gathering of native animals and plants. Through the entries we gain personal insights into what it means to be a Koori in Victoria in the 1990s; we learn about the impact of government policies, such as assimilation and child removal and adoption, and we learn about the social conditions that Victorian Aboriginal people have lived through.

On a personal note, the last person in the book is the late Willy Alberts. I had the pleasure of working with Willy Alberts at the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre. By turning to his recollections on page 200, I am able to recall many good times and shared experiences. This ability to access people's thoughts and memories and their opinions and values is this book's major strength.

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Ian D. Clark
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

As its title indicates this book is a practical guide to visiting rock engraving sites in the Sydney region. Its format, slim, light and very readable is clearly designed towards ease of use in the field by anyone with an interest in seeing Aboriginal art in its natural setting.

The main body of the book consists of brief descriptions of 23 selected rock art sites which are of reasonably easy access from a public road. A rather sketchy map delimits the region concerned and locates the sites. Each site description refers the reader to its principal features and points of interest, its preservation, visibility and to further reading and, importantly, to the natural setting of the site. A one-to-five star ranking system alerts the visitor to quality in terms of a site's interest, particularly its condition of preservation, visibility or setting. There are small scale site plans intended as an aid in locating and identifying the engravings rather than as formal site records. These are particularly valuable for visitors not familiar with such material - a foreign art style with the added problem of low visibility can be very difficult to perceive until some familiarity is achieved - and even then it is easy to overlook poorly preserved images, or to distinguish between worn engraving or natural rock features. Over 70 black and white photographs and 16 colour plates further introduce the visitor to the visual experiences of site, setting and engraved motifs.

I have not had the opportunity to test the directions to the rock art - but they appear clear and are provided by two authors fully familiar with the sites. The authors provide comment on ease of walking as well as distance. The majority of the 23 sites are managed for visitation by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW, or are now in urban surroundings where visiting cannot be controlled. For a few sites that are not managed or are on private property detailed directions are not given, and the reader is referred to National Parks for information on access.

A first chapter introduces the reader in clear straightforward language to some basic archaeological knowledge about Aboriginal rock art and about the visibility of rock art in different light conditions etc. The fragility of what appears a timeless heritage on solid rock is dealt with, and the authors place great emphasis on the need for responsible practice on site visits and appropriate ways to approach and photograph the sites.

The book is more, however, than a simple practical guide. The authors stress not only the practicalities of finding and seeing engravings but they emphasise the importance of the experience of seeing Aboriginal art. They direct the reader to the features of its setting, the sight and sounds of the bush. They enjoin the reader to take time to sit and absorb their surroundings: 'Try to imagine the Aborigines living in the landscape ... Imagine a small group of the first Australians on the rock. Then, and only then, turn your attention to the engravings again ...' (p. 13). The importance of such an experiential response is further underlined by the inclusion of the poems of David Campbell, inspired by his love for the Sydney bush and its Aboriginal heritage. While each one of us would surely express our intuitions differently, the emphasis on the individuality of our experiences and its colouring of the rationale of intellectual understandings are emphasised by the juxtaposition of poetry with academic presentation. The work underscores the transient nature of the cultural meanings of imagery and its power to transcend the distance of time to link us in the present with a sensed but unknowable past.

Andrée Rosenfeld
Australian National University
One possible destination of a recorded historical interview with an Aboriginal person is the Oral History Unit of the National Library of Australia. Here the recording will be digitally remastered for the Tape Archive. If the interview has been commissioned by the Unit, a copy will go to a professional transcriber for a verbatim transcription which will then be sent to the interviewee for checking. The auditing copy, available (after permission) to the historian, descendant or friend will be made available in the listening room. The casual auditor is more likely to use the transcription.

Another possible destination of the original recording - depending on who has recorded the interview - will be the community office of the suburb, station or settlement where the recording was made. The literacy worker may make extracts for use in the school, the tape may be played from time to the family until the speaker dies, whereupon it may be heard no more. If the recording was made in the city, the tape probably will join the gathering list of community resource material for adult education, school use and the general interest of community and family.

Between the historian and the family are hundreds of thousands of Australians wanting to hear the experiences of Aboriginal Australia. These two fine books, the latest productions of the Institute for Aboriginal Development's busy publishing team, utilise two of the many forms which are available for the presentation of oral history, which now range from commercial cassette to the CD Rom, from verbatim transcription to a free translation. The presentation of the Kochs is new and experimental while Lester's is an older and more familiar form. Both books deal, more or less, with Central Australia. Grace and Harold Koch's *Kaytetye Country* starts from great-grandparent memories and finishes with droving and mining. Yami Lester's book starts with droving and mining and finishes with the Royal Commission into British Nuclear Tests and the Uluru Handback.

A previous IAD oral history publication was Peter and Jay Read's *Long Time Olden Time: Aboriginal Views of Northern Territory History*. This project, recorded in 1975-6, was eventually published in 1992 in cassette and book form, sold together or separately. The Reads, (that is, Jay Read and I) began with the assumption that Northern Territory Aboriginal English was sufficiently understandable for readers not to need a Standard English rendition. The Kochs decided that a Standard English version would enhance understanding, while the costs of production of cassettes (especially the cassette holder and the cardboard information insert) made the IAD reluctant to risk a second venture of a cassette/book package. Therefore this production is a book alone. The reviewer is too familiar with 'pastoral' Aboriginal English to adjudicate the necessity of the Standard English version here; but he always wondered what one would look like. Now we all know, and the result will be invaluable for teachers of linguistic as well as historical skills. Other stories in the book were told, and reproduced here, in Kaytetye. These Harold Koch has translated by numbered sentences.

The Standard English version will leave readers able to understand the stories more readily, but they will also appreciate the nuances and subtleties of Aboriginal non-standard English. Koch's translations are always informative, but inevitably lack the directness of the original. On one occasion 'Poor buggers' disappears from the Standard English version.
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(probably this was an oversight). 'Nothing for - no happen that one' becomes 'That didn't happen' which will remind readers of the difficult transition from the spoken form to a written form in any language. Sometimes Harold Koch's rendition adds an explanatory note:

All them white fellers they don't got nice little lady
becomes
these whitefellers didn't have a nice little lady to do their work for them

Sometimes a shade of meaning is lost in the transition: 'nickie-nickie tobacco', with its connotations of inferior quality, is rendered merely as 'tobacco'. Though the meaning is less clear, one can admire the original cadences of

And he go around again, that old feller, he took-me-bout. Go back longa
Thankwe.

compared to

He was going along another time he told me, going back to Thankwe.

In the following, two different meanings of 'turnout' (rig, team/argument) are mixed together:

And something bin going wrong with this girl turnout now is rendered by
Harold Koch as
Then something went wrong and there was a bit of a turnout over women.

The text is printed in double columns, which is fine for the shorter stories, but the greater length of the Aboriginal English forces the texts of the longer stories one or two pages apart. It might have been better to insert spaces at intervals in the Standard English text to let the Aboriginal Non-standard catch up. The double column footnoting seems to have been too much for the IAD's software system, for some notes appear on different pages to their numbers, and sometimes do not appear at all.

The breadth of the stories is impressive, as is the gender balance (the Reads' book is somewhat deficient in both). Grace Koch has collated the material as three major sections: 'The Dreamtime' (for example, Arelpe - the Moon), 'Stories Our Ancestors Told Us' (for example, the Barrow Creek Massacre of 1874) and 'Our Own Stories' (for example, Birth in the Bush). There are useful historical notes, and the book is both a careful and valuable local history. I hope that it will be used nationally by teachers and students of oral, local, and Aboriginal histories as well as those interested in Australian dialects.

Yami Lester was born to a White father and an Aboriginal mother. His first language was Yankunytjatjara. He is blind (possibly the loss of sight was caused by atomic testing) and it is not clear how the book was written. The anthropologist Dan Vachon is thanked for 'helping Yami write down his story', but there is no indication of what form that help took. The text is chatty but tied to historical events. This is a representative sample:

There was another important thing happening in the early 1970s, when I was at IAD. I had heard about these people called the Gurindji, and how in August 1966 they walked off Wave Hill Station and went to Wattie Creek. I know there were other times when Aboriginal people in places like Western Australia had walked off the stations before that. But I think that the beginning of what everybody started calling 'Land Rights' happened with the Gurindji.

Lester's story is in a sense a continuation of the Central Australian Aboriginal experience from the 1940s to the present. Lester was different from the others: 'I lost my sight and my life changed for ever. If I had my eyes, I would probably still be a stockman. Because I haven't, I became a stirrer.' No doubt he was right. Charles Perkins said something similar: 'If I hadn't played soccer I wouldn't have gone to university. Simple as
that.' Because Lester was different, he spent a number of years at the Royal Institute for the Blind in Adelaide, learnt how to read Braille and how to make brooms. He began courtroom interpreting before a magistrate in 1967, and joined the Adelaide Branch of the Aboriginal Advancement League. In 1969 Rev. Jim Downing invited him to Alice Springs to work for the Institute For Aboriginal Development. A few years later he returned to South Australia as Manager of the newly created Mimili Station (the old Everard Park) now under Aboriginal control, where he had worked as a drover twenty years before. A couple of years later he returned to the IAD as Director, and began a series of cross-cultural workshops for non-Aborigines.

Today Yami Lester is not opposed to all mining, nor to non-Aboriginal advisers. He's been to London with the Royal Commission, he's sat down with Land Councils, he's negotiated with BHP. He co-ordinated the celebrations following the Uluru handback. He still works for various Aboriginal organisations and he's shaken hands with Nelson Mandela. Yami Lester looks outward, the Kochs' Kaytetye people look inwards. Similar experiences might have awaited Kaytetye individuals, had they, like Perkins and Lester, been different. How much Aboriginal talent has never been seen by White people! How much leadership, linguistic skill, intellectual endeavour, spirituality - and fun - have been re-directed into and around the Kaytetye, Pitjantjatjara, Arrernte, Warlpiri and Yankunytjatjara peoples of Central Australia! These are qualities about which non-Aborigines knew and know little, because they wouldn't allow them to emerge outside Aboriginal society. We're all the losers.

Peter Read
Australian National University


Stephen Muecke's book examines textual representations, social rituals and speech events as aspects of Aboriginal culture. To do this, he covers a wide range of topics, through series of loosely related chapters. In examining these varied themes, he draws upon a range of theoretical approaches ranging from discourse theory to textual analysis and on the findings of disciplines such as linguistics and anthropology.

In the Introduction Muecke outlines the cultural gap which has existed between the indigenous inhabitants of Australia and colonists from the time of European settlement. The new colonists imposed their understanding of the ways in which life should be lived in Australia, relating their experiences and perceptions back to Britain. However, in spite of the cultural gulf and the European dominance, Australian Aborigines had a profound influence on the ways in which the colonists came to view their world. Muecke sees an obvious example of this in the adoption of Aboriginal place names by white settlers. Muecke sees the two cultural systems which have existed in Australia since 1788 as generating different, but mutually influencing, texts. Text, he defines as 'materials which have been worked upon by people to make them meaningful, and to be regularly treated as if they were' (p.4). This is an extremely broad view of text, and essentially it is not the one which prevails in the book. The text written about is language text, sometimes as a broad cultural activity, sometimes as a particular instantiation of this activity.
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In the first chapter, Muecke examines the ways in which Aboriginality has been constructed in (European) discourse and argues that these ways of talking have limited ways of knowing what Aborigines are. Three primary, intertwined discourses about Aborigines are identified. The anthropological approach focuses on the otherness of Aborigines, but excludes dialogue with the Other, so that Aboriginal perspectives do not enter the official discourse. The romantic approach sees Aborigines as a doomed people who are condemned largely by their own natures. They become a mythologised people, who helpless and child-like, must be helped on the basis of love and concern. The racist approach designates Aborigines as something other than the ideal. In the discourse they appear as children, animals, and inanimate objects. This construction of Aboriginal identity has been outlined in more detail by Fesl (1988). The linguistic correlates of these approaches, although sketchily demonstrated are interesting and are similar to those elaborated for majority-minority discourses by van Dijk (van Dijk 1987; van Dijk and Smitherton-Donaldson 1988) and others. For example, Aborigines enter into white Australian discourse as third person plural pronouns, as patients rather than agents, as objects rather than subjects. Van Dijk (1987) argues that these devices reduce the power available to the minority discussed in the discourse and marginalise them as effective actors.

Chapter 2: 'Body, Inscription, Epistemology: Knowing Aboriginal Texts' examines the ways in which Aboriginal stories enter into literature. The Aboriginal text is seen as one of controlled performance and repetition. Western literature has approached these texts in a variety of ways such as paraphrasing, rewriting and adaptation. In chapter 3 'History as Texts: 'Pigeon' and the bushranger' Muecke moves on to examine the ways in which cultures create discourse about events, and he contrasts Western notions of historical, fictional and conversational texts as encoders of various levels of 'truth' with Aboriginal understandings of truth in text. Using a series of Western and Aboriginal reports of the same event, the capture of Sandawarra, Muecke establishes a series of oppositions in the texts such as the role of gaze versus words in the organisation of text. The chapter is a good illustration of different cultural approaches to story and indicates with insight the difficulties which underlie understanding of texts across cultures.

Chapter 4: 'From structuralism to post-structuralism - reading oral narrative' begins with a brief survey of the structuralist approach to the interpretation of narrative and then examines the ways in which such an approach is inadequate for a genuine understanding of narrative texts. In particular, Muecke criticises structuralism's lack of sensitivity to the conditions of the production of the narrative, and Aboriginal concepts of custodianship of stories, different conceptions of time and historicity. For Muecke, narrative has a content and ideology which is related through the structure, but also through the social understanding of narrative text. This idea is taken up again in chapter 5: 'Literature and politics - The repressive hypothesis' examines Aboriginal expression in terms of Foucault's (1988) repressive hypothesis which sees expression as growing out of repression, Muecke sees this nexus as an inadequate understanding of the genus of Aboriginal texts. By exploring two autobiographies, My Place and Wandering Girl, he examines the various motivations for the production of text and concludes that there are a range of determinations which give rise to particular types of texts. In both of the sections Muecke produces some interesting and valid criticisms. However, he fails to give his criticisms the solid base of evidence which is needed to produce a convincing case. A reader who shares Muecke's views will agree with the critique. A reader who does not will not find any substance to challenge her/his position.
Chapter 6: 'Aboriginal English and Aboriginal Law' is perhaps the most disappointing of the chapters. Muecke writes superficially about his translation of the text of the Australian Law Reform Commission's discussion paper on Aboriginal law (ALCR 1981). Muecke sees his translated document as a combination of three discourses: legislative, referential and Aboriginal. However, there is little real discussion of the three discourses, and the role of language in the creation of discourses is almost entirely ignored. The introductory material on approaches to discourse which occupy most of the chapter lead the reader to expect a rather rich synthesis of textual and discourse analysis which does not eventuate and the discussion of the discursive practices in the translation are treated, often simplistically, in only six of the chapter's twenty-six pages. The most obvious lack in this chapter is an analysis of how the three discursive practices are combined to create a document and how they interact in the text.

Chapter 7: 'Appropriation or Post-colonial Renaissance' examines the ways in which Aboriginal culture has begun to take part in the Australian cultural and industrial context. Muecke seeks to trace this primarily through the story of Jimmy Pike and the use of his designs in the fashion industry. The chapter sets up an opposition between appropriation and renaissance - an opposition for which there is neither a resolution, nor a critique of the validity of using such an opposition in discussing the question. The chapter seems to be pervaded with uncertainty - uncertainty about how stories such as Jimmy Pike's are to be interpreted; uncertainty about what significance they have for an understanding of Aboriginality; uncertainty about whether or not Muecke can actually provide a voice in the debate. The same theme is taken up from a different perspective in chapter 8: 'Margin or Mainstream'. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of a Yothu Yindi film clip and examines the rhetorical in terms of pan-Aboriginality, bridge building and economic and cultural achievement. Muecke goes on to demonstrate that the opposition between margin and mainstream is not a useful concept. The distinction between the two is much more complex and margin and mainstream interpenetrate in innumerable ways. In this chapter, the same uncertainties abound and the overall impression of this discussion is one of extreme tentativeness and some confusion.

Chapter 9: 'Dialogue with a Post-graduate Student Wanting to Study Aboriginal Culture' is stilted, polemic monologue with occasional interruptions from the hypothetical student. Its purpose in this book is difficult to determine - it is not really advice, nor is it reflection on the discipline of cultural studies. It is most usually a rambling stream of consciousness on postmodernist approaches to a random collection of topics. It is a most off-putting and self-indulgent end to the book.

In general, the book does not often get past the surface and there is little in the way of penetrating analysis. The critiques of disciplines such as linguistics and anthropology show this lack of depth, and frequently claim views of these disciplines which would be quite foreign to their practitioners. In particular, Muecke does not seem to be aware of developments in areas such as discourse, pragmatics and sociolinguistics in the past decade. For example, linguistics is criticised on page 92 for producing normative documents about standard languages. This may be what the popular mind conceives linguistics to be, but it does not represent any genuine contemporary approach in the discipline. The critique of the role of linguistics in Aboriginal discourses is unhelpful for a linguist because the treatment of linguistics lacks both insight and a firm enough grasp of the subject for a truly useful understanding. This is a disappointment, because a critique of the role of linguistics, and other disciplines, in the study of Australian Aboriginality would be both timely and appropriate in this context. Muecke at the same time uses linguistics as a tool of analysis. However, he does not demonstrate a complete, or adequate,
understanding of the tool. Many of his interpretations of linguistic data are naive. For a
linguist this makes the claims of the book difficult to accept as they appear to be based on
misunderstood premises - the non-linguist should be wary of the interpretation of the
'linguistic' evidence used.

The most significant problem with the book is the presence of assertions in the text
which are not supported by adequate evidence, but which must be accepted by the reader,
if the reader is to accept the argument of the book. Muecke's argument about Aboriginal
iconography as a writing system is a typical example. Muecke claims that Aboriginal
'meanings as pictured in designs' (p. 6) constitute a non-phonetic writing system akin to
Chinese. There is here no real consideration of the differences in relationship between
spoken and written forms of the languages, nor of the level of the phenomenon encoded by
the symbol systems, nor of the accepted and acceptable ways for decoding the symbol
system. Moreover, it does not appear to be helpful to view Aboriginal semiotic systems as
writing. In much of the literature about oral and literate cultures we can find evidence of
the construction of oral cultures as somehow lacking, while literate cultures are more
favourably constructed. (Walton 1993). What is needed is not to force Aboriginal
iconography into a model of writing. What is needed is a re-evaluation of 'non-literate'
iconographies themselves. Aboriginal iconographies are indisputably rich and structurally
consistent semiotic systems which allow for paradigmatic and syntagmatic variation in
ways similar to writing systems, but to assume that the system equates with a writing
system is to transport the system into a new cultural domain and to obscure the value
which Aboriginal semiotic systems have in their cultural context.

In conclusion, this is a book which does not meet the expectations it raises for the
reader. The various concepts outlined in the title 'textual space', 'Aboriginality' and 'cultural
studies' do not appear to have been developed in any way. The discussion is so filled with
post-modern uncertainty that the readers state of knowledge is the same before reading as it
is after reading. For those readers who share Muecke's ideas about Aboriginality, this may
not be a problem, but for those who wish to learn something from this book, there is too
little substance. There is nothing to sway opinion. Readers seeking elucidation will not find
it in this book, although readers seeking confirmation probably will.

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T. Liddicoat
Australian National University
ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1994 18:2


This short booklet presents the text of John Summons' play, which has been touring schools in Sydney, followed by questions for discussion by school students. The play does not actually depict the 1838 Myall Creek Massacre, nor does it present any Aboriginal perspectives; rather, it looks at the reactions of a variety of White characters to the massacre. The play is written in simple language which is not intended to be 'authentic' but which does use some of the language of 1838 ('savages', 'gins') in order to illustrate White attitudes towards Aboriginal people. It is very effective in its presentation of the views of White men of different class and religious backgrounds, from convict labourers to Governor Gipps. However, because it is so short it would ideally be used in conjunction with further research by students into the massacre and its background.

The questions at the end of the book are grouped into several study units designed for use by students of English, drama, history and Aboriginal studies. Most of the questions allow students to make up their own minds about the issues raised by the play, though some (such as 'In view of the nature and ferocity of the massacre at Myall Creek, who were the savages?') clearly point them in a particular direction. There are other problems - a suggestion to 'Consider the Rodney King case in the USA' will probably seem puzzling in a few years, and a reference to the Weraerai people as a 'nation state' stretches the meaning of that term to a ridiculous extent. The omission of Henry Reynolds' books from the suggested reading list is also a serious oversight. Finally, though the play and the questions do make clear that Aboriginal people fought against the White invasion, the absence of Aboriginal characters and the continual emphasis on 'massacres' may give students the impression that Aboriginal people were passive victims. However, none of these problems is great enough to prevent this play from being a useful resource for teaching about the history of Black-White relations in Australia.

Ewan Morris
University of Sydney


This excellent volume aims to complement earlier Cambridge volumes entitled Language in the USA and Language in the British Isles and to '... provide a comprehensive account of the present linguistic situation in Australia, primarily from a sociolinguistic point of view.' (p. xvii). In this it largely succeeds, though there is a certain unevenness in this success. This review will concentrate on aspects more directly relevant to the indigenous people of Australia and their languages.

Romaine's introduction presents a brief historical and policy overview covering Aboriginal and Islander languages, migrant languages and English and compares Australia with other major English-speaking countries in the world. I would take issue with Romaine's statement (p.7) that '... the early [Northern Territory] programs of bilingual education ... taught Aboriginal languages only as an aid to the acquisition of English.' This may have been their primary policy justification at the administrative and funding level (though even this became more true a little later) but it is equally true that many of those
BOOK REVIEWS

actually working in these programs in Aboriginal communities were (and are) strongly committed to Aboriginal language maintenance - even though, two decades on, we might now believe that they did not always go about it in the most appropriate ways.

The first section of the book deals with Aboriginal and Islander languages and includes a variety of papers 'traditional' indigenous languages: a useful overview of indigenous languages by Walsh; a very significant outline by Peter Sutton of the social and geographical variation in Aboriginal society and language in western Cape York; a study by Bavin and Shopen of language change and child language in Warlpiri; a sketch of Kalaw Kawaw Ya (Torres Strait) by Ford and Ober; and a valuable and insightful challenge to much current thinking on language maintenance - particularly as it applies to domain separation - by McConvell. Quite appropriately Aboriginal English is included here in the form of broad linguistic descriptions by Kaldor and Malcolm and by Koch and a much more socio-culturally and pragmatically oriented paper on communicative strategies by Eades. With the notable exception of the Sutton, Eades and McConvell papers, the material in this section on indigenous languages is disappointingly centred more on formal linguistic matters than on the 'sociolinguistic point of view', treating social and communicative matters rather briefly, if at all.

The second section covers pidgins and creoles (most of them also Aboriginal and Islander languages) with an overview by Mühlhäusler, a historical study of Kriol by J. Harris and sketches of Kanaka English (Mühlhäusler), Torres Strait creole (Shnukal) and Kriol (Sandefur) - a range of different creoles giving them proportionately much greater representation than that given in the volume to the diverse range of 'traditional' indigenous languages still spoken in various parts of the continent.

The third section is much more sociologically oriented and deals with 'immigrant' or 'community' languages other than English. There is again a good range of the numerically more significant languages covered in individual papers following a succinct overview by Clyne. These languages include Dutch, German, Greek, Italian and Serbo-Croatian. This focus on Indo-European languages perhaps reflects the weighting of existing research but gives a skewed picture of the community language situation in Australia, in which languages such as Chinese, Arabic and Vietnamese are included even amongst those most commonly used in the home as pointed out by Clyne (p.217).

Australian English is the subject of the fourth section, which includes summary results of a study of regional lexical variation (Bryant) and of socially determined phonological variation, including the impact of immigrant groups on language change (Horvath), finishing with an overview of the study of sex/gender differences in Australian English (Pauwels).

The final section on policy and social issues unfortunately does not include a dedicated study of policy as it relates to Aboriginal and Islander languages but restricts itself to national language policy and 'migrant' languages (Ozolins), English in the form of the plain English movement (Eagleson) and social class differences in vocabulary knowledge (Corson). The only coverage of the important area of Aboriginal and Islander language policy is in Romaine's brief introduction to the book and in very brief references elsewhere.

By and large this volume contains a valuable range of papers, most of them presented in terms fairly accessible to the educated general reader. Most of the papers are succinct presentations of material presented in fuller form elsewhere, but nowhere else brought together to present an overall picture. The volume provides fascinating insights into the language situation in Australia, especially from a sociolinguistic point of view, and it outlines developments in linguistic and sociolinguistic research in Australia. It could have done with a little strengthening in terms of socio-pragmatic aspects of 'traditional'
indigenous languages and in terms of policy relating to Aboriginal and Islander people and their languages. On the other hand, Romaine has achieved a significant degree of balance coupled with breadth of coverage in portraying a multilingual and multicultural nation/continent from a sociolinguistic point of view.

Graham McKay
Edith Cowan University


Captain Collet Barker was destined for an illustrious career. An able administrator with an enlightened attitudes to the Aborigines, he was the commandant of convict garrisons at Raffles Bay, near present-day Darwin, and at King George's Sound, in south-west Western Australia, between the years 1828 and 1831. Barker's strength of character, his administrative skills and his ability to establish and maintain harmonious relations with the local Aborigines soon came to the attention of the colonial authorities. He was recalled to Sydney where the Governor of New South Wales, Ralph Darling, intended to appoint him as the first Government Resident in New Zealand, his talents making him eminently qualified, in Darling's opinion, to restore 'Confidence between the Natives at New Zealand and the European Settlers'. He returned to Sydney from King George's Sound in 1831 by ship but, en route, he was ordered to examine the eastern shore of Gulf St. Vincent in South Australia. Barker and his men spent more than a week examining the coastal plains - the future site of the city of Adelaide - and the nearby Mount Lofty Ranges. On April 30, they reached the mouth of the River Murray, discovered by Captain Sturt the previous year. Determined to take some bearings from a high sandhill on the opposite side, Barker stripped off his clothes, tied his compass to his head and swam across the river. He was never seen again. His companions later learned that Narrinjeri tribesmen, mistaking him for one of the white sealers who for years had been harassing them and kidnapping their women, speared Barker to death and threw his body into the surf.

After his death, the journals that Barker kept at Raffles Bay and King George's Sound languished, unidentified, in the Colonial Secretary's Office for nearly a century until they passed into the collections of the Mitchell Library in Sydney and, eventually, to the NSW Archives Authority. Despite Barker's almost illegible hand-writing, the journals have been utilised by a number of researchers in recent decades as a rich source of ethnographic and historical data. Commandant of Solitude, a complete edited transcription of Barker's journals, is a cooperative effort between John Mulvaney and Neville Green. Mulvaney, the principal editor, contributed the introductory chapters and historical commentary, as well as detailed and informative footnotes and two comprehensive indexes. The book is excellently produced and handsomely illustrated with more than 30 colour and monochrome plates, as well as several clear, concise maps and historical charts. The dust-jacket features George French Angas' sombre 1845 painting of the Murray mouth, the scene of Barker's death, and

other plates include reproductions of paintings and sketches by early British and French artists of Raffles Bay and King George's Sound and the Aboriginal inhabitants of both areas.

Apart from his journals and some official correspondence, Barker left behind no personal letters. No portrait of him is known to exist and apart from stirring eulogies by Capt. Sturt, a fellow officer of the 39th Foot Regiment, and other dignitaries, there are few contemporary references to him. Biographical research in England by Mulvaney and Green has revealed something of Barker's family background and his military career, but, as the editors acknowledge, little is known of the man himself. He was born in Middlesex in 1784 into a well-educated and well-connected English family with a strong Nonconformist background. In 1806 he joined the 39th Foot Regiment and he later served throughout the bloody Peninsular campaigns until Napoleon's defeat, rising to the rank of lieutenant. He fought in the American War of Independence and then served in Ireland fighting the 'Whiteboy' insurrectionists until 1828 when his regiment was posted to New South Wales and Barker himself was promoted to captain.

Barker remained in Sydney for less than a month before he was appointed the commandant of the Fort Wellington garrison at Raffles Bay. This settlement, established in 1827, was one of several ill-fated attempts between 1824 and 1869 to establish British footholds on the northern coast of Australia, intended principally to deter possible French or Dutch annexation. When Barker arrived there in September 1828, the garrison numbered about 30 soldiers and 40 convicts, plus several wives and children. The garrison was beset with many difficulties, including insecure supply lines and poor communication with colonial authorities in Sydney and London, as well as the physical hardships of the northern frontier: tropical storms, disease, continuing food shortages, mosquitoes, snakes and crocodiles. Barker's journal paints a vivid picture of the struggle for survival, documenting his efforts to maintain discipline among the soldiers and the convicts, the continuing losses of the garrison's valuable livestock to disease, dingoes and the bush, the thefts of food by the convicts and the fruitless search for Private Cook, who evidently cracked under the strain and wandered off into the bush, never to be seen again. Barker's journal shows him to be a determined and self-reliant man, one who bore the isolation, hardship and the pressures of command without complaint, a compassionate but firm commandant, with a genuine concern for the well-being of the soldiers and convicts.

At Fort Wellington, previous commandants had feared the Aborigines and generally shunned contact with them; in one incident early in 1828 an Aboriginal camp had been attacked, resulting in the deaths of a woman and a child. Barker, in contrast, actively sought the Aborigines out. With perseverance and a sensitivity rare among his contemporaries, and despite language barriers, he established friendly relations with the local clans. He freely handed out fishhooks, axes and other gifts and provided food and a place to sleep to any Aborigines who came in to the settlement. He recorded the names of 42 Aboriginal men and the 'class division' that he believed each man belonged to, and he also recorded vocabulary and local place-names. Scattered throughout the journal are many interesting observations of subsistence techniques, material culture, ritual activities and other aspects of Aboriginal life. There is, for example, Barker's description of his Aboriginal friend, Wellington, repairing the handle of his stone axe with vegetable gum, as well as what is probably the earliest reference to that remarkable musical instrument, the didgeridoo.

Of particular historical and ethnographic significance are Barker's observations of the visiting Macassan trepang-fishing fleet. His journal provides a wealth of information on the Macassans and on their relations with the local Aborigines. In the appendices are Barker's detailed records of all the 37 praus that visited Raffles Bay during the 1829 trepang season,
listing each prau's commander and owner, the size of its crew and its date of departure from its home port. Barker welcomed the Macassans to Fort Wellington, hoping to promote trading links that would be of benefit to the future development of the northern frontier. However, Barker also made clear to the Macassan commanders that his primary concern was maintaining friendly relations with the local tribes and that he would not tolerate any mistreatment of the Aborigines by the visitors.

When Fort Wellington was ordered to be abandoned in August 1829, Barker assumed command of the King George's Sound garrison. He took up duties there in December and remained as commandant until March 1831 when the settlement was absorbed into the administrative district of Perth. Barker's predecessors had established good relations with the local Mineng clans and by the time he arrived, many of the Aborigines spoke a quite serviceable pidgin-English. Whereas at Raffles Bay, linguistic difficulties continually frustrated Barker in his attempts to communicate with the Aborigines, at King George's Sound Barker's skills as an ethnographer flourished and his journal entries constitute a veritable mine of information on traditional Aboriginal lifestyles in the south-western corner of the continent. There are, for example, references to the use of the stone fish-traps that still survive today at Oyster Harbour, hunting techniques, seasonal movements, burial and mourning practices and 'clever-men', as well as many other aspects of Aboriginal culture.

Barker was certainly ahead of his times in the sensitivity and respect he showed for Aboriginal customs. At Raffles Bay he had quickly become aware of the principles of reciprocity that governed most aspects of Aboriginal life and this carried through in his dealings with the Mineng people:

Wannewar brought me a fish he had speared but which I would not accept, having no equivalent to give him.

When Barker was invited to attend a burial ceremony he sat down next to the corpse with his Aboriginal friends and 'mingled' his tears with theirs. When he became aware, in November 1830, of the taboo relating to using the name of a recently deceased individual, he issued an order to all his men to avoid causing offence to the Aborigines in that way. Barker's journal presents a picture of King George's Sound as one corner of early colonial Australia where Aborigines and Europeans lived together in an atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation, albeit briefly. His entries provide fascinating glimpses of the interactions between the races; of the Aborigines watching the first crop of potatoes being harvested and 'giving a shout of joy & admiration at the turning of every root with a good produce', of Aboriginal men helping the soldiers to hunt down dingoes that were harassing the sheep, and of bottle-glass replacing quartz flakes on the men's taap knives. But there are also other entries that hint at the darker side of culture-contact; references to sickness and deaths among Aboriginal groups far beyond the garrison, apparently the result of introduced diseases, and an alarming level of feuding and pay-back killings.

Barker developed close friendships with several Mineng men. Foremost among them was Mokare, whose clan's territory included the area where the garrison was established. Mokare's portrait was painted by de Sainson during Dumont d'Urville's visit in 1826 and there are numerous other references to him in the historical sources relating to the early settlement of the Albany area. Indeed, Mulvaney suggests that Mokare was perhaps one of the most interesting and complex characters known in any detail from any part of Australia during the first 50 years of white settlement. An intelligent, inquisitive and amiable man, Mokare was Barker's main source of information on local customs and his guide on several expeditions into the surrounding bush. Barker's journal records tantalising fragments of the long discussions he had with Mokare about mythology, the spirit world, the ownership of
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land and resources and other topics. Barker's curiosity about the Aboriginal world was perhaps matched by Mokare's interest in the European world:

13 February [1830] ... Mokare very inquisitive about different things. What materials shirts are made of? What trowsers, etc? What was glass? ... Enquired the age of Ships, how long they would last before they broke up, or died, as he called it. How it was managed to build them on the water & in what way the carpenters continued to make a beginning, which seemed to puzzle him not a little.

On another occasion:

Mokare asked this evening ... what was the Government, arising from my having told Mills some piece of furniture was Government property. No little difficulty in explaining the term.

Commandant of Solitude presents a picture of Collet Barker as an efficient, dutiful and courageous commandant with an enquiring and observant mind and a keen interest in most aspects of natural history. His tolerant and enlightened attitude towards the Aborigines, his interest in their culture and his concern for their welfare quickly earned him the respect and affection of the local people at both Raffles Bay and King George's Sound. Had Barker lived to take up his appointment as the Resident in New Zealand, the first step along the career path towards a governorship, his tact and sensitivity in dealing with indigenous people may well have altered the future course of race relations in that country. It was indeed a tragedy, as Mulvaney points out, that the Aborigines of the lower Murray River chose as a pay-back victim 'one of the most humane friends' that Aboriginal people had encountered in a responsible post since 1788. The publication of this book ensures that Barker will be remembered as a man blessed with a degree of understanding and humanity exceptional for his times, rather than as just another obscure explorer who met a lonely death at the hands of the Aborigines.

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Amalie Dietrich was a nineteenth century German naturalist who spent almost ten years in Queensland collecting specimens for the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg. During that time she collated significant collections of Australian snakes, birds, spiders and plants as well as acquiring ethnological and anthropological specimens. Her work was honoured in the scientific community of the day and two species of plants and two wasps were named in
her honour. Following her death, her fame spread to a much wider German audience through the biographical work *Amalie Dietrich: Ein Leben* which was written by Dietrich's daughter Charitas Bischoff and was published in 1909. Dietrich has since become familiar to many Australians as the subject of an article in *The Bulletin* entitled 'Angel of Black Death' which focussed on Dietrich's role in the frequently grisly business which was European anthropology in the nineteenth century.

Ray Sumner's biography of Dietrich is divided into three parts; the first deals with Dietrich's early life in Germany and the years of her marriage; the second part gives an account of her travels in Australia and the third - and most ground-breaking - section explores the relationship between Dietrich and her daughter and the subsequent creation of Amalie Dietrich the semi-fictional heroine.

Amalie Dietrich was born in 1821 in Siebenlehn, Saxony; the daughter of a leather worker. She learnt plant and herb lore from her mother and married Wilhelm Dietrich, a local pharmacist, in 1846. Sumner suggests that the two would have shared a common understanding of and interest in natural remedies and plants. Amalie's existing botanical knowledge, coupled with what she learnt from Wilhelm, made her a valuable assistant in his work when he gave up pharmacy in order to become a professional naturalist. In 1848 her daughter Charitas was born.

Amalie worked extremely hard collecting and selling specimens for her husband and Amalie's mother helped with the domestic chores. In 1861 Amalie left Wilhelm after she discovered Wilhelm's infidelity with the woman hired to maintain the house after the death of Amalie's mother. She eventually returned and embarked upon a selling trip to Holland during which she fell seriously ill. Upon her recovery and return to Germany she found that Wilhelm had taken a position as tutor to the sons of a local nobleman and did not wish Amalie to accompany him.

Left alone with a child to support, Amalie continued to work independently as a naturalist. Her demonstrable expertise as a collector lead to her employment in 1862 by J.C. Godeffroy, the sixth generation Huguenot refugee and famous merchant and shipbuilder. Known in Germany as the 'King of the South Seas', Godeffroy decided in the 1860s to expand his considerable private collection of colonial curios into a museum and scientific institution. In 1863, leaving behind her 15 year old daughter, Dietrich left Hamburg on the clipper ship La Rochelle equipped with all that she would need for the collection and packaging of natural specimens.

This brings the reader to the second part of Sumner's account of Dietrich's life. For almost ten years Dietrich worked in the newly independent colony of Queensland. Her work took her far from the relative 'civilisation' of Brisbane to small settlements to the north such as Rockhampton, Mackay and Bowen. Amalie enjoyed the challenges and freedom which her unusual occupation brought her. Her pleasure in her tasks increased as she became increasingly assured of Godeffroy's confidence in her and of his support for her work.

Godeffroy was so pleased, in fact, that he offered to send Amalie an assistant. Max Thenau from Hamburg joined her in late 1866 to help with her Rockhampton materials and she 'also engaged a local assistant at this time' (p.37). The presence of an assistant or two and the companionship Dietrich enjoyed with a German family in Bowen illustrate one of the most interesting points made by this book. Amalie Dietrich was not always the lone intrepid explorer as she appears in the biography penned by her daughter. Less romantic, but no less remarkable for her day, in this account we see Dietrich as a capable, industrious and resourceful scientist working alone or with assistance, forming valuable friendships and essentially 'running her own show' on the Queensland coast.
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In spite of giving her name to two types of wasps and two species of plants, it is an incident which took place in Mackay that has brought Amalie Dietrich to the public's attention in recent years. She has been identified as the collector who on one, or more, occasion requested that an Aborigine be shot so that she could have the skin. Such a request so infuriated the Archers, a leading family of the district, that her stay in the area was brief (pp.44-45). Amidst sensationalism and controversy, the admiration which many feel for Dietrich as a female pioneer of science makes the knowledge of this 'dreadful request' difficult to accept. However, the facts as presented in this meticulously researched book indicate that such a request was indeed made. The very important observation is also made that during the nineteenth century many scientists were no less guilty than many settlers in their treatment of Aborigines as being somehow less than human.

The most valuable and fascinating aspect of A Woman in the Wilderness is - in my opinion - the way in which it 'de-mythicises' Amalie Dietrich through scholarship and research. Having read this book, it becomes clear that almost all previous accounts of Dietrich's life and work rely heavily on the biography written by Charitas Bischoff. Through careful research, this work exposes the errors of times and places, the borrowings from other works on Australia, the romantic symbolism and the outright fictions found in Bischoff's book.

In addition to this, reasons for these anomalies are suggested through an examination of the relationship between Bischoff and her mother. Dietrich's work enabled her to afford an excellent education for her daughter. Bischoff married well and was, apparently, somewhat embarrassed by her mother following her return from Australia. It was due particularly to the distaste which Charitas' husband Pastor Christian Bischoff felt towards Amalie's lowly manners that Dietrich and the Bischoffs were estranged for over 10 years. They were reconciled, however, and Dietrich died at the Bischoff home in Rendsburg in 1891.

Christian Bischoff died in 1891 leaving Charitas a widow with three small children. It may have been the resultant financial difficulties that acted as a catalyst for Bischoff's book, coupled with her longstanding love of literature and writing, and her complicated feelings towards her mother. The result was published in 1909 and was the best seller Bischoff had hoped it would be.

Bischoff's book has been the standard work on Dietrich ever since its publication. The partially fictionalised Dietrich it presents has become an exemplar for groups ranging from radical feminists to National Socialists to Communists, but as Sumner states 'it has little to do with Amalie Dietrich the scientific collector' (p.92). A Woman in the Wilderness, conversely, has everything to do with Dietrich the scientific collector, and has, in addition, rather a lot to do with Dietrich and Bischoff as people, which is even more interesting.

Vivien Courto
Australian National University

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This is a short book with a big title which evokes images of Roderick Flanagan's 'Black War' in Eastern Australia (as conceptualised in his *Empire* articles in 1853-54, and revived by historians in the last two decades), Governor Arthur's campaign in Van Diemen's Land, and wars of indigenous resistance throughout the colonial world. Historians of the Northern Territory and Aboriginal missions know, of course, that the title comes from sensational newspaper headlines in the south in relation to three separate killings of eight non-Aboriginal men by the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land in 1932-33 and the punitive attitudes of the Darwin administration. This account puts the episode in historical perspective at the same time emphasising its importance in awakening Australian consciousness to Aboriginal rights.

The author, Mickey Dewar, taught for two years at Milingimbi Bilingual School so that she experienced mission life at first hand, she had the opportunity of discussing events and personalities with a key participant, Mr Fred Gray, to whom she dedicates the book, and also Ms Connie Bush MBE, an Aboriginal member of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) mission on Groote Eylandt. The narrative which unfolds is well told and convincing.

The crux of the story is the 'success' of the Peace Expedition of 1934 whereby a party of CMS missionaries, seeking to avoid a punitive expedition, persuaded the persons known to be responsible for the killings to accompany them to Darwin to offer their explanations. What followed was a travesty of justice on the scale of the recent Guildford bombing trials in Britain; the Aborigines who came in good faith were arrested and exposed to police harassment both before and after the trial. They knew little of European law and they could not speak English.

If there is a weakness in Dewar's account it is that, except for Gray, most of the leading characters are cardboard figures, the missionaries being little more than denominational stereotypes in which the Methodists are mainly 'good guys' and the Anglicans are largely cast as 'bad guys'. With only Dewar's narrative as guide one is left feeling the contempt and even hatred for the Reverend Alfred John Dyer which many newspaper readers must have felt in the 'thirties, yet this is not the rounded character presented by John Harris in *One Blood* (Sutherland, 1990). As Harris describes Dyer, even if he seems fanatical with his solitary vigils and direct communication with his God, and naive in his faith in British justice and providential intimations, he was the same man who Connie Bush (in Harris) testified would throw his arm round the shoulders of a leper and drink from the same cup. Dyer also had a vision of an Arnhem Land State which in some ways anticipated the Arnhem Land Land Trust.

The strict paternalism of the CMS mission including thrashings for relatively minor offences may come as a shock to some readers but sixty years ago a god-fearing husband could thrash his wife and children for disobedience without raising much comment. In earlier times that father of missions, the Reverend Samuel Marsden, who probably never flogged an Aborigine, thought nothing of applying his stockwhip to the shoulders of the recalcitrant wife of a settler who 'could not manage her' - to good effect, according to Marsden's grandson, the Reverend James Hassall. Bible discipline still ruled a hundred years later but it was not applied on racial lines. Even in those earlier German missions where ears were clipped (i.e. cut) for lying, it was the missionaries' children whose ears were pared down and not the indigenes who suffered.
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The Aboriginal characters in Dewar's narrative are also shadowy figures but at least the Yolngu people come across with their own proud identity. They were, after all, the first Aborigines to have contact with foreign visitors, the Macassans, a contact which had been made seasonally for at least 300 years, and this experience enabled them to deal more effectively with outsiders on their own terms. The book helps us to understand why the killings took place and why the unfortunate trial had far reaching implications for Aboriginal people everywhere. Dyer, despite his bitter feeling of betrayal, must have taken comfort in what he believed to be his inspired instructions opened for him at Esther 4:14: 'If you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will arise from another quarter ...' Relief and deliverance may have come but the sacrifice was made by Aborigines not by Dyer; and most of the country outside Darwin saw Dyer as Judas.

The illustrations are of good quality and those relating to the Peace Expedition add further poignancy to the story. The bibliography is impressive except that the Archival section is not organised for quick reference. It would have been more convenient for readers to list manuscript sources under authors, followed by the archival abbreviation and file numbers.

Niel Gunson
Australian National University

'My heart is breaking' A joint guide to records about Aboriginal people in the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Australian Archives. Victorian Regional Office. Compiled by I. Macfarlane and M. Deverall. Australian Archives and the Public Record Office of Victoria, Canberra, 1993, pp.xi + 191. $11.95.

'My heart is breaking', published in 1993, is a joint guide to records about Aboriginal people in the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Victorian Regional Office of the Australian Archives. The book contains two sections: the first is a guide to the records at these two repositories, the second entitled 'glimpses from the past' presents excerpts from some of the these records.

As a guide to the holdings of the Public Record Office this publication adds little to its 1984 publication, other than presenting relevant records that can be consulted in the Victorian Regional Office of the Australian Archives. The Australian Archives section presents a useful index of Aboriginal case files and reveals the potential value of these records for people researching family history.

There is little difference between 'My heart is breaking' and the Public Record Office's earlier resource guide published in 1984, other than the fact that it presents the Australian Archives' records as well. I believe a major limitation of this new guide is that it does not publish a full description of the records. A complete listing has existed since 1982 and although it is possible to gain access to this more detailed guide when visiting the Public Record Office, it would have been more valuable if it had been published.

As it stands approximately two thirds of 'My heart is breaking' is devoted to part 2 'Glimpses from the past', which provides readers with useful glimpses of the kinds of information that can be found in these records. For my part I would have preferred this section to have been scaled down or, better still, rearranged so that the examples given were
placed throughout the fuller description of the records to provide a break from pages of itemised description.

Ian D. Clark
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies


Nancy Cato's highly successful *Mister Maloga* was first published in 1976 by the University of Queensland Press, and in 1993 a revised edition was published. *Mister Maloga* is a history of Daniel Matthews and his efforts at establishing a Christian mission at his Maloga station to the region's Aboriginal survivors from 1874 until his death in 1902. His station was on the New South Wales side of the Murray River some 20 km upstream from Echuca. Maloga was apparently a Yorta Yorta word meaning sandhill.

The Matthews family arrived in Victoria in the early 1850s, a time when there was mass immigration to southern Australia, and much of it in part a response to the lure of 'gold fever'. In my case almost all my forebears arrived in Victoria in the 1850s, and became farmers, miners, agricultural labourers, and carriers. Cato describes this period particularly well, and from my own research into genealogy I found her ability to provide insights into the social climate of this time very satisfying.

Daniel Matthews, like James Dawson at Camperdown in western Victoria, stands out amongst his contemporaries for his passionate interest in Aboriginal justice. In 1873 he published a pamphlet entitled *An appeal on behalf of the Australian Aborigines* in which he argued that as the Aborigines had been dispossessed, and had a moral claim on the government, they should be given large grants of land.

Cato has had the benefit of very rich source material, for Daniel Matthews was fastidious at keeping a diary: he did this for nearly thirty years. Entries from this diary are liberally included in Cato's text, but as someone with a keen interest in this period, I would welcome the publication of Matthews' diary. Janet Matthews, Daniel's wife, also kept a diary and has written her memoirs, and these also merit consideration for publication.

Ian D. Clark
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies


These women have a number of experiences in common. Their achievements are in spite of great difficulties. Some had happy childhoods with loving mothers, but of the thirty-four women whose stories are told seven were taken away from their families as small children.
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The missions and welfare agencies seemed to have no inkling that this was extremely cruel and yet it was perpetrated up to the nineteen-sixties by otherwise respectable and kindly-seeming citizens. These children were put into orphanages, often told that their parents had died. Only recently have many of them been allowed to see their original birth certificates and some have been happily re-united with their families. The policy was supposed to be 'for their own good', but it has meant that, because they had not been brought up in a loving family, they find it hard to recreate for themselves stable marriages where children are loved but at the same time disciplined.

It is amazing to discover how many and various are the occupations in which the women have succeeded - not only as nurses, teachers, health educators, administrators, but also as well-known entertainers, singers, dancers, film stars, film-makers, writers. I felt that the author might have included one or two more women who were important in their own communities as ritual leaders and upholders of the old Law, even though they might be little known to the world outside. There is one such woman: Mantatjara Wilson, a Pitjantjatjara woman has been drawn in to oppose the non-Aboriginal world and she says 'It is as though Australia took poison ... It has already been poisoned.'

Poisoned or not, the other women have followed the old precept 'if you can't beat em, join em', and have achieved success in the non-Aboriginal world and together they make an inspiring collection of biographies. The photography is wonderful and each photograph interprets the character of the subject.

Isobel White
The Australian National University


This tape is a recording of material broadcast in the ABC's Wednesday night series Songs and Stories of Australia. Rhoda Roberts, the story teller, is a descendant of the Bundjalung people of the Lismore area, N.S.W. Her father was the late Pastor Frank Roberts, and her great uncle Lyle Roberts and great great uncle have passed on information on the Bundjalung language and culture in earlier years. Rhoda is an experienced broadcaster, and has been presenter of Vox Populi on SBC TV. The stories she tells on this tape are interspersed with music from the group 'Gamilaroi' who were recorded in a special Songs & Stories of Australia concert in Sydney in January 1991.

The stories, mostly from the Bundjalung area, which she defines as including south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales, are traditional stories, many with a clear moral to them. Rhoda Roberts varies her voice in mimicking an old man's conversation in one, and an old woman telling the story in another, and the stories have appropriate background noises, of birds in many, and water and wind in others. She includes some words and a few short phrases of Bundjalung in her story telling. At the beginning of each side of the tape she makes introductory comments on the context of traditional story telling, and the purposes it served, to entertain, to instruct, and at times to help the listeners cope with their own emotions and growth. She emphasises the importance of gesture and mime in traditional story telling, and reminds her listeners that there are other stories she
cannot tell publicly - stories specifically for women and girls (and presumably others for men and boys).

As a linguist, and with exposure to the language from past speakers and from older sources, I could be critical of the narrator's version of many of the words and phrases, and of the spellings of a few words on the tape's box, but this would be to ignore the overall picture one gains from the tape. Many of the stories are familiar to me in various versions, and her telling of them is faithful to the core content of these stories, and is at times very moving. Her pronunciation of some Bundjalung words suggests she (or her teachers) learnt many of them from print rather than from active use, which is not surprising. Like English, the language can be spoken quickly with considerable slurring and abbreviation; the few remaining first language speakers of the language (if any remain now) use it minimally, and it is not heard enough for most people to learn it well.

I also know that those Roberts refers to as the northern Bundjalung, i.e. those from south-east Queensland, are at present adamant that they do not use, and have never used, the name Bundjalung for themselves on their language. While there is absolutely no doubt that the language once spoken around Beaudesert (Qld) and the Gold Coast (many words are still used there now), is a dialect of the same language as Bundjalung, there is evidence of some differences in cultural practices to back up the preference of the northerners not to be called Bundjalung. They use the name Yugambeh, just as Aboriginal people from Woodenbong refer to their dialect as Githabal or Gidabal and also reject the name Bundjalung. The differences between adjacent dialects was not great, and at the extreme ends of the dialect chain the differences were not impossible to bridge after some 'tuning in' and learning of some different vocabulary for common items.

I also have slight personal regrets that the musical interludes played by the Gamilaroi group are of music not typical of the area, nor even of the Gamilaroi area to the west of the Bundjalung. Didjeridus, used by this group, were not traditionally used in this part of Australia, however the selections are excellently played and recorded. There is a considerable corpus of songs recorded from Bundjalung and Githabal people. However the quality of some archival material is not high, although the ABC did a good job in 'cleaning up' some of it for a series in the 1985 school broadcasts on Bundjalung and Githabal language and culture. Songs need their own translation and commentary, which the didjeridu interludes on this tape do not need.

It hardly fair of me, however, to highlight such academic quibbles. The purpose of such a tape is to allow a wider audience than academic specialists in linguistics and ethnomusicology to gain some knowledge and appreciation for the traditional story telling art of Aborigines, for their traditional insights into human nature, and for their use of stories to teach respect, to teach that it is wise to take advice from older and more experienced people, to help young people through the emotions and changes of adolescence, and to teach love of and care for the land.

There are twelve stories on the tape, which runs for 67 minutes in all. Roberts explicitly states that one story is from south-western NSW, and one from the 'northern Bundjalung' (i.e. the Yugambeh) on their hero and expert boomerang thrower Jabirn or Javreen, (the bora ring at Burleigh Heads, Qld, beside the Gold Coast highway) is associated with Javreen.) The stories include ones on the origin of the Clarence River, the creation of the Bundjalung people (including the northern group - sometimes called the story of the Three Brothers), the origins of the waratah and the leader dolphin, how the emu lost its wings (it succumbed to peer pressure and stupidly cut them off), and how Australia got separated from India (the sacred spring), how the sun was made (from an emu egg yolk thrown into the blue sky by the pelican who was jealous of the size of emu eggs)
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and others. The tender and touching story of the bulrush and the waterlily (lovers whose happiness was destroyed by a water spirit who loved the girl and made her into a water lily, and later took pity on the languishing young man) and the story of the origin of the moon and the rainbow (two young girls changed and put in the sky by Javreen) are from the Gold Coast area. The other specific love story, that of Waratah, immediately follows that of the bulrush and the waterlily.

In listening to the story on Gwando the Dolphin I could not but speculate whether there was influence on the version Roberts's grandmother told her grandchildren from the grandmother's understanding of the English word school in school of dolphins/fish, which Roberts indicates the children laughed about, and tried to correct her on. Gwando becomes the teacher (or leader) of a school of dolphins. However it is very likely the play on meanings of the word school is at most a minor addition to what clearly fits in the genre of the traditional 'how it came to be' stories.

For those interested in the genre of stories from Australia, as well as those specifically interested in Aboriginal stories or stories from this particular geographical area, I recommend this tape. It is well presented and Rhoda Roberts varies her presentation of the stories, and helps the reader realise the point of each of the stories she tells.

Margaret C. Sharpe
University of New England


Just a glance at the chapter titles reveals that Dingo makes us human is not a conventional ethnography. This study of an Aboriginal community in northern Australia is self-consciously different, its structure defined largely by a framing theme of autonomy-within-interdependence, which is well captured in the following quote:

a great deal of social and cultural life acquires its spice as people manage the tension between producing and reproducing the ties that bind while yet sustaining and manipulating the flexibility that prevents bonds from becoming shackles. (p.106)

Deborah Rose is an experienced and highly competent anthropologist, whose study abounds with evidence of well thought out, as well as deeply felt, perspectives and insights into the lives of the Yarralin people. Rose acknowledges the influence of Gregory Bateson and Stanley Diamond on her thinking and, in writing about Aboriginal religion and worldview, she shares with many other scholars a large debt to W.E.H. Stanner. Her work also shows the influence of the approach taken by Fred Myers in his monograph, Pintupi country, Pintupi self (1986). That the author is mindful of postmodernist critiques is indicated by the prominence she accords to Aboriginal voices and by her sensitivity to the authorial role in the reporting and interpretation of 'facts'; mercifully, her writing is largely free of the obfuscatory jargon that infects much postmodernist prose. Rose comes across to the reader as direct and honest as her construction of the text is meant to suggest. Her writing is rarely dogmatic and she is always willing to concede imperfect knowledge or understanding where relevant, as for example in her references to aspects of 'men's business'. Her perspective is unashamedly intellectualist in its fundamental orientation, and
while this may be problematic for scholars of a strongly materialist persuasion, it cannot be said that she divorces meaning from power or fails to ground her presentation in historical process. The opening chapter, for example, provides a strong historical account of frontier violence, and subsequent oppression, depopulation, exclusion and racism - and also describes Aboriginal resistance, both overt and covert. Rose uses a range of pertinent historical sources, and her choice of quotations from them aptly conveys attitudes on both sides of the frontier and subsequent patterns of race relations. Her data on Aboriginal constructions of history (Ch. 11), featuring such figures as Captain Cook and Ned Kelly, are fascinating, and the author's analyses of these stories are consistently enlightening, even if not always convincing.

No doubt in part as a result of her work on land claims in the Northern Territory, Rose's accounts both of territorial organisation and the importance to the Yarralin people of land rights are impressive. Her intensive research into cultural ecological matters is reflected in fine-grained accounts of people's relationships with their environment - the time spent out in the bush, learning from the Yarralin people, men and women, comes through strongly, and her writing reflects a deep feeling for Aboriginal connections to the land. Noteworthy, too, are the author's clear and well illustrated descriptions of social categories and how they relate to descent 'lines' and other elements of personal identity. In Chapter 10, which is about interpersonal relationships, she provides a rich and insightful account of how and why Yarralin people 'test' each other via 'frequent, persistent and imaginative' demands in a range of everyday interaction. I found her use of the term 'symmetry' to be inconsistent, but this chapter should resonate strongly with anyone who has lived in a remote Aboriginal community.

One aspect of the book's unorthodox nature is the absence of much concern either to present an integrated picture of daily life in the settlement or to contextualise the data via comparative reference to the anthropological literature on Aboriginal Australia. There is no attempt, therefore, to establish what is unique about aspects of the Yarralin people's culture, since the author's concerns impel her to emphasise aspects of a shared humanity. While recognising much that is compatible with their own data and interests, scholars of Aboriginal Australia may find this frustrating, yet it is clearly part of Rose's aim to construct an atypical monograph. A reasonably extensive bibliography indicates that she is well grounded in the literature on Aboriginal Australia; however, her references encompass much broader and more general humanistic concerns, and Rose is more intent on addressing these issues than in locating Yarralin and its people within the social anthropology of Aboriginal Australia.

In general, the book is well written and coherently structured, enabling the author to focus on a number of different issues without impeding the flow of her major arguments. The approach is generally effective in conveying the richness of her data and the complexities of Aboriginal worldview. However, there are many places where she is writing in a more 'academic' mode and where the prose is so cryptic and the meaning so densely packed that it risks being poorly understood or remaining opaque to the non-specialist reader. The concluding chapter, perhaps the least convincing part of the book, contains passages where her otherwise fairly lucid prose unravels, degenerating at times into a kind of New Age gibberish (see the first paragraph on p.229 for a piece of communicative static so awful that Bateson would turn in his grave). This chapter begins badly, with Rose's assertion that Aboriginal people understand living systems 'scientifically'. They may well have evolved such understandings through 'observations and hypotheses developed and tested through time' (p. 218), yet for the people who live the culture, theirs is not a 'scientific' understanding - the Dreaming is not a hypothesis to be
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tested, however much, as Rose rightly notes, it requires people to make connections in an
effort towards intellectual closure. Here, too, the author's penchant for reification gets the
better of her, especially in the section entitled 'Systems at work'. In that same discussion,
however, there is much of value, and her important theme about the simultaneous
singularity, multiplicity and wholeness of the Aboriginal cosmic order echoes some of the
insights of Burridge's *Encountering Aborigines* (1973). Nevertheless, the singularity-
autonomy aspect of this theme is far less convincing than the rest of the equation. Although
she also talks of cooperation, Rose characterises a country and its people as bounded like a
closed system (p. 222), when the reverse is much closer to social reality: strong cultural
values and practices foster interdependence rather than independence at this level. On a
related point, Rose, whose use of the term 'autonomy' is ambiguous at the best of times,
asserts that the Dreaming beings were autonomous (p. 222). This is certainly not true of the
Western Desert region, where cultural stress on boundary permeability and
interdependence derives from Dreaming models: myths, songlines and dances are replete
with meetings, rituals, feasting, and the exchange of women and gifts between groups of
creative beings who instituted and named a host of collective activities that structure
human social life beyond the level of the family and band.

A major problem with the presentation is that Rose renders Yarralin voices in Kriol
throughout but provides no interlinear translation, so the statements of her major
informants, old men whose Kriol is far from fluent, will be experienced by most readers as
fractured and confusing rather than subtle and knowing. Thus when Rose attempts to
portray these men as intellectual giants by making explicit comparisons of the kind on page
190, where she states that Hobbles Danayarri exceeds Karl Marx in the eloquence of his
political analysis (p. 190), the result is embarrassing - the gap between Rose's exegesis and
the Hobbles quote is virtually unbridgeable, and it does more of a disservice to Hobbles
than to Marx. Her subsequent claim (p. 197) that 'his narratives point to a theory and
practice of otherness, of generating structures which empower, rather than diminish,
people' strikes me as over-interpretation. Contrast the Kriol statements with the final quote
of the book, in English, by her friend Daly when he took her to see where bulldozers had
desecrated a site in 1986: "'We'll run out of history,' he said, 'because *kartiya* [Europeans]
fuck the Law up and [they're] knocking all the power out of this country.'" This powerful
and moving statement about domination, ruination and loss is doubtless no more insightful
than those of Hobbles and others, but its rendering in English makes its impact immediate
and memorable.

Fortunately, these shortcomings are not such as to detract badly from the significant
contribution that this book makes to the literature; *Dingo makes us human* has things of
compelling importance to say to specialist and non-specialist readers alike.

Robert Tonkinson
The University of Western Australia

In 1916, Ernest Scott proclaimed that his Short History of Australia 'begins with a blank space on the map, and ends with the record of a new name on the map, that of Anzac.'1 Nearly 80 years later, Creating a Nation, a new general history of Australia from 1788, begins with an Aboriginal woman giving birth in a continent full of diverse and complex Aboriginal societies. It ends, not with an established 'fact' such as the record of a new name on the map, but with a possibility: an Australian republic in which all can share in government and all can receive a fair share of the national income. In between lies an interpretation of Australian history which attempts to show how the Australian nation was created by people from a variety of gender, ethnic and class positions.

Although Creating a Nation is clearly the product of much collaboration and consultation aimed at producing a unified approach, each chapter is the work of an individual author. Marian Quartly deals with the period to 1860, Patricia Grimshaw's chapters cover the period 1860-1912, Marilyn Lake takes the story forward to the present, and Ann McGrath writes on Aboriginal history from 1788 onwards. In the Introduction, Marilyn Lake outlines the overall approach of the book, which she says 'starts from the premise that gender is integral to the processes that comprise the history of Australia - that political and economic as well as social and cultural history are constituted in gendered terms' (p. 4). This is an explicitly feminist history, then, and the book's treatment of gender as a crucial factor in shaping Australian history is its greatest strength.

As Lake says in the Introduction, 'The creation of nations has traditionally been seen as men's business' (p. 1). The Australian nation is generally depicted in historical narratives as having been created through activities which were largely restricted to White men: going to war, working for wages and involvement in parliamentary politics, for example. This book, by contrast, adopts a much broader definition of creation, one which embraces women's role in giving birth to the nation's people and in sustaining the nation through unpaid domestic labour. It is also a book which is centrally concerned with the ideological creation of the nation, since nations can no longer be taken as 'natural' entities.2 Instead, the authors believe the 'nation state was welded, with more or less force, into a unity', but one made up of people with many different backgrounds and interests. The tension between the assertion of difference and 'the assimilationist drive of the nation state' is one of the book's major themes (pp. 2-3).

The nation is just one of the supposedly natural categories which feminists have called into question, and Creating a Nation reflects this questioning approach. 'The meaning of femininity is never fixed and always contested,' writes Lake. It has changed historically in conjunction with changes in other domains such as the organisation of work and sexuality .... Just as the meaning of womanhood has been constantly in flux, so, too, has the meaning of manhood .... Feminist scholarship has drawn attention to the sexual specificity of men, who have for so long been able to disguise themselves in history books as sexless, neutral, historical subjects - as squatters, convicts, workers, politicians, Australians .... Recognition of the interdependence of femininity and masculinity and of the way in which they shape and are shaped by all

1 Scott 1936, p.v.
social relationships and processes has led to the identification of gender as a central category of historical analysis (p. 4).

Thus, feminist history goes beyond simply including women in the story, although this is important in itself. It looks at society as a whole, identifying ways in which male power has operated historically. It does not take the categories 'male' and 'female' as given, but rather analyses the ways in which femininity and masculinity have been socially constructed in relation to each other. Historians have taken similar approaches to the study of class and ethnicity. Thus, E.P. Thompson's analysis of class as a phenomenon whose character depends on historical context and on relationships within and between classes was used as a model for Bain Attwood's investigation of the creation of Aboriginality. Such approaches make us aware that the categories of historical analysis are more fluid than they were often assumed to be, and this makes the job of historians more difficult as they must come to terms with historical subjects whose identities are multiple and dynamic. Feminist historians have generally been well aware that gender relations are intersected by class, ethnic and other relations, but working out the details and consequences of these intersections remains one of the major challenges for feminist theory and practice. The authors of Creating a Nation deserve applause for taking on this challenge in their interpretation of Australian history.

Because the authors see the Aboriginal experience as very different from that of non-Aboriginal people, Creating a Nation devotes three chapters specifically to Aboriginal history. However, aspects of Aboriginal history also arise periodically in the other chapters. The three separate chapters, written by Ann McGrath, take up almost one-fifth of the pages of text. The first chapter, 'Birthplaces', is largely a description of the Aboriginal society which the British settlers encountered in the Sydney region in 1788, and from the start we are made aware that our knowledge of this society comes from British observers. McGrath informs us that we know about the Aboriginal woman Warreweer's experience of giving birth, with which the chapter begins, from the observations of several British women 'mediated through Lieutenant David Collins's journal' (p. 7). This seems to me an appropriately subtle way of raising the problems of sources and interpretations, too often missing from general histories such as this. Though these problems surface only occasionally in the rest of the text, it is encouraging to read, for example, an admission that it is 'difficult to judge the exercise of power in Aboriginal society' since such judgements rely on culturally based criteria and on the evidence of British men concerned to assert the superiority of their own society. Furthermore, the power balance varied from place to place across the continent (p. 17).

Despite these reservations, McGrath depicts a relatively egalitarian Aboriginal society in which status was determined by gender, age and land associations and labour organised according to gender, age and family responsibilities. Women had 'a great deal of autonomy' and were valued as reproducers of people and producers of food, but men enjoyed greater ritual prestige, male elders probably 'held ultimate authority' and women 'often came off worst' from violence between men and women (pp. 17-20), British society, by contrast, was extremely hierarchical, with division of labour and status determined by gender, class and rank. In the British middle class ideal (though often not in practice) women performed domestic labour while men provided for and protected women, thus allowing women little independence. McGrath's other chapters tell the story of the clash between these two social systems, and of the imposition of the British system on Aboriginal people.

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In chapter 6, entitled 'Sex, Violence and Theft: 1830-1910', McGrath is chiefly concerned with gender and ethnic relations in the context of colonialism. Aboriginal men, she argues, lost the basis of their status and their economic role when they lost their land, and were therefore forced to work for Whites where possible. White society constituted Aboriginal men as labourers (often unpaid), but also as potential threats, particularly to White women. For Aboriginal women, according to McGrath, the impact of colonialism was just as dramatic, but more ambiguous. They maintained their role in keeping families together as men became itinerant labourers. At the same time, women themselves often worked as domestic labourers, and sometimes as prostitutes. Where Aboriginal men were represented as dangerous, Aboriginal women were stereotyped as sexually available. The frequency of sexual relations between Aboriginal women and White men, however, gave Aboriginal women an important role as intermediaries.

What tend to get lost somewhat in McGrath's concentration on colonialism are the internal dynamics of Aboriginal societies. What of gender relations between Aboriginal men and women, and of the negotiation of new relationships within Aboriginal communities to which she alludes (p.150)? I think there are several reasons for her focus on the impact of colonialism. First, the internal workings of Aboriginal societies are a sensitive subject for non-Aboriginal people to write about. Second, there is a lack of information about what was going on inside Aboriginal communities. The increasing involvement of Aboriginal people in writing history may help overcome both of these problems. Third, it is more difficult to generalise about relationships within Aboriginal communities than about the relationships of Aboriginal people to colonial institutions and practices. Lastly, and most importantly, McGrath makes a convincing case that for Aboriginal people it was colonialism which shaped their lives most decisively. 'No matter what power struggles occurred between Aboriginal men and women,' she argues, 'these paled in comparison with the impact of outside forces on their family and private lives' (p. 296). Elsewhere in Creating a Nation, sexuality, reproduction and marriage are seen as issues of gender relations for non-Aboriginal women. But McGrath shows that for Aboriginal women it was such factors as missionary and government interference in marriage and government policies which broke up Aboriginal families, particularly through the forced removal of children, which were most responsible for their relative powerlessness in these areas.

McGrath's handling of her topic is, on the whole, excellent. Given the constraints mentioned above and the limited space available she does an admirable job of combining a coherent general survey of Aboriginal history with stories of particular people and places. Her discussion of Aboriginal people as workers, still an unjustly neglected topic in Australian history, is particularly impressive, as is her succinct yet comprehensive treatment of violence between Aborigines and Whites. Above all, she displays a keen understanding of the impact of changing racial ideologies on the lives of Aboriginal people.

The question which I find most difficult to answer in relation to Creating a Nation is whether the authors were right to separate the Aboriginal story from the rest of Australian history. Perhaps there is no correct answer to this question. Certainly it is true that 'the Aboriginal experience of British colonisation and Australian nation building' has been 'very distinctive' (p.5). Writing about this experience in separate chapters is a way of acknowledging its distinctiveness, and also of avoiding the practical problems involved in integrating such a distinctive history with the story of the colonisers. However, I would like to put the case for a more integrated approach.
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The importance of a book like this is that it takes the work which has been done over the past twenty years or so in such areas as women's history and Aboriginal history and makes it part of the more general narrative of Australian history. In so doing it 'challenges the conventional view of Australia's past as a creation of white men of British descent' as the cover blurb puts it, but it should also change our understanding of the history of 'white men of British descent' themselves. In the case of Aboriginal history, I believe this requires a recognition that for the past 200 years Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have existed not separately but in relationship with each other. Therefore, it is impossible to understand the history of one group without understanding the impact on that group of relations with the other.

For example, the fear and uncertainty which marked the colonial frontier must surely have psychologically affected Whites as much as Aborigines. An awareness of this helps to explain not only the continuing depth of White hostility towards Aborigines but also the insecurity of White society more generally (expressed, for example, in the fear of foreign invasion). There are also examples of the impact on Aboriginal people of interaction with non-Aboriginal society other than those which are most frequently cited. One such is the use by Aboriginal land rights movements of rhetoric about land as the basis of economic self-sufficiency, which is similar to and probably influenced by the rhetoric employed by non-Aboriginal closer settlement and 'back to the land' movements.

Looking at Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies together also allows illuminating links to be drawn, for example, between attitudes of dominant groups towards the less powerful. Thus, the exclusion of both women and Aboriginal people from the Anzac legend, in which going to war was the ultimate expression of citizenship, can be linked in terms of the exclusion of Aborigines and women from political and economic power. Likewise, it is important to look at attitudes towards Aboriginal people in the context of attitudes towards other minority ethnic groups (it is one of the weaknesses of Creating a Nation that while relations between Aborigines and Whites are extensively examined, ethnic relations more generally are rather neglected). By comparing attitudes towards different ethnic groups the broad outlines of dominant racial ideologies can be more easily delineated, while at the same time it becomes clearer what is specific about the experience of each group.

When Aboriginal history is separated from the rest of Australian history these kinds of links and influences become less apparent. A general history of Australia which treated Aboriginal history as part of the central narrative without rendering Aborigines invisible, including them only sporadically and tokenistically, or including them through a conservative 'we're all Australians' approach would be very valuable. Far from erasing the distinctiveness of their experience it could instead highlight the particularity of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal experiences, just as Creating a Nation highlights throughout the particularity of women's and men's experiences.

Creating a Nation makes an important contribution to the writing of Australian history, and I hope it will inspire future writers of general histories of Australia to try new approaches and incorporate new types of history. Creating a Nation does not make earlier general histories obsolete; indeed, since it is largely written in response to these earlier histories it could be productively read in conjunction with them. Furthermore, since it is mostly thematic and interpretive rather than narrative in approach, those who are new to the study of Australian history will need to refer to more conventional narrative histories for additional information about people and events mentioned in passing. Unfortunately, Creating a Nation itself is less than helpful in directing readers to other sources on Australian history. Its endnotes are disappointingly sparse; there is no indication, for
example, of where the information for McGrath's excellent discussion of Aboriginal labour history came from. The endnotes aside, though, the book is easy to use and has a good index. It is well-written, and sprinkled with interesting vignettes about the experiences of particular people which help to bring history to life.

No doubt conservatives, if they bother to read Creating a Nation at all, will dismiss it as another example of 'the black armband school of history'. As I write the conservative backlash is being reflected in attempts to remove the word 'invasion' from sections of the draft New South Wales primary school syllabus which deal with the arrival of the British in Australia. In the face of such a backlash, and of the use of Australian history by the major protagonists on both sides of the republican debate to project a conservative, undifferentiated 'Australian identity', books such as this are more necessary than ever.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Saunders, Kay and Evans, Raymond 1992, 'Introduction' in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds), Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation, Sydney, pp. xvii-xxiv.

Ewan Morris
University of Sydney


The primary aim of Aboriginal Australia is, in the words of its editors, to offer a 'realistic and favourable' representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Its goal is to challenge non-Aboriginal Australians to examine their own understandings about indigenous Australians; in particular to reflect in a critical way upon those popular stereotypes which have prevented Europeans from actually seeing the uniqueness, the diversity and the survivability of Aboriginal culture - to redress, in other words, a fundamental and persisting failure, not just of will, but of vision.

In the terms which the book has set itself, i.e. to provide an Introductory Reader in Aboriginal Studies for (particularly) non-Aboriginal readers, Aboriginal Australia is a splendid success. It has four immediate virtues for which all of the contributors (mainly academics associated with the University of South Australia and the South Australian Museum) and more especially the editors deserve our admiration.

First, the book has an exemplary structure. After three more general chapters which look at ways in which Aboriginality has been - historically and contemporaneously - imagined and constructed by Europeans, each of the succeeding chapters examines in
detail an aspect of the life of indigenous Australians in pre-contact, colonial and post-colonial conditions. The aspects addressed include: demography, the law, spirituality, family structures, environment, language, health, education, art, economics and politics. In other words, the book is deliberately and ideally structured for educational purposes. It begins with some challenging critical reflections (two from Eleanor Bourke, one from Steve Hemming) on the way that our knowledge of what constitutes Aboriginality derives from an almost exclusively European vision and epistemology and then proceeds to build on that re-orientation of vision by showing us the detailed reality of indigenous existence from indigenous perspectives. This is not only a sound pedagogical strategy (important for a book to be used in the Open Learning TV program in Aboriginal Studies) but it also provides in the book as a whole a judicious balance of comprehensiveness and philosophical enquiry on the one hand and selective and focussed information and analysis on the other.

Second, while the perspective(s) adopted by the contributors to the book are universally indigenous ones, *Aboriginal Australia* delivers fairly and ethically on its claim to be an 'Introductory' Reader. It maintains an impressive academic and ethical rigour throughout. It presents those coming to the matter of Aboriginal Studies for the first time with the basic data they need within a framework of vision that is committed, certainly, but never slanted, intolerant or closed. Thus if the reader wants a basic introduction to Aboriginal spirituality and cosmology (Bill Edwards), or the - to European eyes - sometimes bewildering intricacy of kinship and family patterns (Colin Bourke and Bill Edwards), or the evolving attempts at political self-determination and economic autonomy (David Roberts), or the essence of the Mabo decision and its political implications (chapters by Edwards and Roberts), or the historical and contemporary condition of Aboriginal health and ill-health (Jenny Burden), then they will find it achieved here in clear, uncluttered and authoritative exposition.

The third impressive virtue of *Aboriginal Australia* is its thematic unity. Despite the majority of its chapters being devoted to single issues, a sense of focus is maintained through the recurrence in almost every site of analysis of two or three central themes. The diversity that underlies the supravening notion of Aboriginal communal and cultural life, for example, arises in chapter after chapter, nowhere more excellently illustrated than in Rob Amery and Colin Bourke's account of the number and variation in Aboriginal languages (270 at the point of contact) and dialects (over 600) and in Franchesca Alberts and Christopher Anderson's vigorous analysis of Aboriginal art and its constant adaptability to environment and new materials and media. The other recurring themes which come through most strongly are: the sheer durability or survivability of Aboriginal culture in the face of the European onslaught; the essentiality of land and the implications of the rupture of the bond between community and land (Colin Bourke & Helen Cox, and Bill Edwards); the incapacity of the Europeans to see, to actually envision what was there before them in the language and the life of the people (Olga Gostin and Elwin Chong); and the whole matter of ownership and control - not just of materio-spiritual entities such as the land itself - but of knowledge and the imagery and (mis)representation of Aboriginality, including its institutionalisation through education (Steve Hemming and Howard Groome).

Finally - the fourth manifest virtue of *Aboriginal Australia* - the book is well-written. The style is clear and accessible, the tone committed and passionate but never strident or accusatory. The importance of tone and style of address cannot be overestimated for a book with the aims and the wide potential readership that this one has (general readers here and overseas, as well as tertiary and secondary students, most of whom will be non-Aboriginal). The trick with such texts is to strike the right balance between provoking one's
readers - to reflection and self-analysis - and inviting them to share a different and potentially liberating 'other' vision. Indeed, as a non-Aboriginal reader, my own reaction to reading *Aboriginal Australia* precisely reflected this tension. I was, on the one hand, 'provoked' by the singular experienced of finding myself represented as the exotic other, but on the other I felt also constantly the subject of invitation. I was, in effect, being invited to take off my European glasses, to look around the land that I lived in - and to see.

John Clanchy
Australian National University


Peggy Brock is already known to many readers of Aboriginal History through her work on Poonindie Mission *Aboriginal History* 14, and through her book *Yura and Udnyu; a history of the Adnyamathanha of the North Flinders Ranges*, Adelaide 1985. The present volume revisits some of the same ground as these earlier publications: it is basically a history of three mission stations, Poonindie on Eyre Peninsula, Koonibba near Ceduna, and Nepabunna in the North Flinders Ranges. The emphasis of the present work however is different, it mainly serves to show what devastatingly dull and isolated places these missions were, truly ghetto-like in the way they removed Aboriginal people from the normal life of other Australians. The negative aspects of mission life are emphasised in the early chapters of the work. Thus we read regarding Koonibba p.82: 'the training and socialising of young children was being undermined by the mission school', and 'the mission made inroads into the camps'. It is however clear that in general the missionaries were operating amid a society that was in disarray and that their 'inroads' had many positive aspects. The criticisms are modified later on in the work (p.163): 'Some children's homes and dormitories might seem like prisons but for most adults a major fear was being banned rather than being retained on the institution'.

The history of Poonindie is of particular importance as it illustrates graphically the sense of home that the missions did manage to give, and consequently the great loss felt by Aboriginal people when a mission station to which they have had allegiance is closed, and particularly if they are dispersed and forced to live with people from another area.

As always Peggy Brock's work is both meticulous and broadly based: it is derived from research in public archives and missionary records as well as from personal letters and recollections of individuals. The work contains a number of short biographies and brief family histories. They are summaries of facts rather than oral history accounts and they therefore lack the spontaneity of personal narrative. These biographical sections will nevertheless be greatly appreciated by Aboriginal people, and especially by those who are writing up their own family histories. What emerges from these accounts is that on the whole life in outback towns was even harsher than on the missions. The general impression in the end is that the missions, however narrow-minded, did their utmost to give young people a good education. This applies quite particularly to Koonibba, and many eminent Aboriginal people were able to build on this early education to achieve success in later life.

L.A. Hercus
Australian National University
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This book was first published in 1975 as a polemic against Australian racism, and against an alleged failure of academics to recognise the historical roots of that racism. It has now been resurrected, with a new polemical preface, this time directed against so-called 'accommodationist' interpretations of the relations between white Australians and ethnic minority groups. In 1975, the target may have been well chosen; and there may have been valid historiographic and political reasons for publishing such a detailed recitation of violent actions and derogatory remarks by white colonial Queenslanders against Aboriginal, Melanesian and Chinese peoples. But for the purposes that Evans, Saunders and Cronin have declared in their 1993 preface, the book simply misses the mark.

For the intervening second edition of 1988, Evans and Saunders wrote a preface which located the book within the political and historiographic concerns of the early 1970s, admitting to its 'stridency of style' and its 'passionate intent'. Such remarks scarcely constitute a justification for re-publication, particularly while contemporaneous works - such as Rowley's trilogy and Reece's Aborigines and Colonists - remain out of print. But at least they explain something about the book and the context in which it was conceived. The 1993 preface, on the other hand, is little more than special pleading for a return to the good old days of academic radicalism, when the battle lines were clearly drawn and the enemy was easily identified; when good historians and true knew what needed to be said on behalf of the oppressed and what needed to be left out.

Prefaces and bibliographies aside, the text of all three editions remains the same. In the preface to the second edition, Evans and Saunders explained that the book was reproduced 'in its original form to stand as a durable artefact - as a conscientious product of its time'. For the new edition, they have changed tactics, fortifying themselves within their conflict model of Australian 'race relations' and defiantly declaring: 'We are ... sticking to our interpretative guns'. More than this, they argue that the history of interactions between white Australians, Aborigines, Melanesians and Chinese should, properly, be devoted to the issues of 'exclusion, exploitation and extermination'; other themes, insofar as they may be mentioned at all, must never be allowed to occupy the centre stage of academic analysis.

Much of the 1993 preface is devoted to criticising the work of 'accommodationist' historians who, by emphasising the agency of Aborigines, have supposedly 'marginalize[d] or den[ied] the ubiquity of force, conflict and violence' in the colonial encounter. Prime villains here are Ann McGrath and Marie Fels, with Bob Reece, Bain Attwood and Gordon Reid cast in subsidiary roles. Evans, Saunders and Cronin appear to be under the misapprehension that these writers constitute some sort of distinct 'school'; so much so that they cite a disagreement between McGrath and Reid as if it were evidence of weaknesses in their respective arguments. More importantly they seem unable to grasp the fact that the 'accommodationist' historians have revealed something of the complexity of interactions between Europeans and non-Europeans in Australia. By their denunciations of such writings, Evans et. al. appear to wish to strip away that complexity, to entrench a simpler, dualistic model of coloniser and colonised, victor and vanquished.

In their 1993 preface, they maintain that the book does give due recognition to the active engagement of Aborigines, Melanesians and Chinese with the colonial power.
Certainly, there are references to Aboriginal resistance, Melanesian violence and Chinese strikes; but these are always depicted in simple oppositional terms, as if the motives of the resisters and strikers can be read off as self-evident, as merely the inverse of those attributed to the dominant whites. This unreflective usage of the concept of resistance, for example, has led Evans to apply the terms to any instance of Aboriginal activity which could be considered inimical to the interests of white settlers. Such a usage does nothing to illuminate the dynamics of the colonial encounter, and merely perpetuates a simplistic interpretation in terms of a convenient and conventional dichotomy. So attached are Evans and his co-authors to this loose concept of resistance that they take to task Fels and Reid for their denial 'that stock raidings by Aborigines represent clear examples of frontier resistance'. Surely, 'stock raidings' are clear examples of nothing but attempts to kill or harass sheep and cattle. A thousand different plausible motives could be suggested, only some of which would fall within any normal definition of 'resistance'.

The new introduction is at least stimulating and thought-provoking. After it, the book itself comes as an anticlimax. Page after tedious page recounts massacres and bashings, denigration and abuse: all strangely decontextualised snippets pasted together into a pastiche which purports to be an analysis of colonial racism. Little attempt is made to interrogate the allegedly 'racist' utterances of colonial Queenslanders for the significances and meanings they may once have had. Instead, the reader is conducted into a crudely contrived chamber of horrors, in which the nastiness of Queenslanders from the past is hung up for display. At the end of the book, a short section entitled 'Racism in colonial Queensland' by Raymond Evans raises the analytical standard somewhat. But even here, the analysis is pedestrian, as Evans attempts a critique of racism without any critique of the concept of race itself.

Moreover, Evans' Saunders' and Cronin's adherence to a simple, dualistic model of conflict, between Aborigines or Melanesians or Chinese on the one hand and Europeans on the other, places them uncomfortably close to the very racial theorists of the late nineteenth century whose works they decry. The impression that consistently convey is of two 'racial' entities in collision, from which one emerges triumphant, the other virtually obliterated. The late nineteenth century theorists, of course, celebrated the victors; Evans et al. commiserate with the vanquished. Yet there is an intellectual continuity between the two. Both imagine history as the violent collision of 'races'.

Had the new introduction been published alone, perhaps with modifications as a journal article, it would have made interesting and provocative reading. To re-publish the entire book is excessive; for more than anything else it illustrates just how limp yesterday's polemics can look. As a counter to more recent historical scholarship, the book has little to offer. Evans, Saunders and Cronin may well be 'sticking to [their] interpretative guns'. But their book reveals that at the end of the barrel there is merely a cork with a string tied on.

Born in 1899 in rural New South Wales, he died in Miami, Florida 73 years later after leading an exemplary life as the one of the most renowned and sought after circus artists and vaudeville performers of his era. Con Colleano was raised as a circus child in a family with 10 siblings of convict and Aboriginal descent. His feats of skill and daring along with those of his sister Winnie are recognised by the Circus Hall of Fame in Sarasota, Florida. Only one other Australian has been accorded that honour. This book tells of his life in an enchanting fashion which enticed me to lay aside Peter Corris and read the Wizard of Wire in one late winter's night sitting warmed by the pot-bellied stove.

The narrative leads one into the story of the Sullivan family by way of a description of the bush shows and the role of Aboriginal people in that early entertainment industry. Then focus shifts to Julia and Con Sullivan and their many talented children who performed as the Colleano Circus. The family circus travelled across outback New South Wales from time to time being cut off by flood waters requiring the performers to live for weeks on rabbits. It was under these Australian circumstances that the family developed routines which led to performances in Sydney and then on to the international big top.

Con was a striking figure who perfected the forward somersault which he presented to the circus public in New York under most dramatic circumstances to be rewarded by a standing ovation and a lifetime of recognition as the greatest wirewalker of his times. For those of you who have never tried it, I advise you not to. Stick with a simple backward somersault as it is far easier, you can see the wire to position your feet before landing. When going forward you have to land on a wire you cannot see. The wire is under considerable tension and a near miss brings injury at the least, and death or a crippling injury is always a possibility.

The author, Mark StLeon is to be recommended for this excellent book. StLeon is an Australian circus family and perhaps it is fitting that the Colleano story should be told by circus voices, as it is in the circus where origins are not everything, but your skills and contribution to that way of life are everything. Is it then fair to ask questions of this book, such as how would the story have differed if it had been written from an Aboriginal perspective as black voices are not featured? After all, Aboriginal people know about the Colleano family. My first inkling of this great performer was at Collarenabri when sitting under a pepper tree Con's name was mentioned and his feats were recalled. What a revelation and story waiting to be told! His name was stored away in my mind and some years later I acquired a postage stamp-sized photograph of Con which to this day is on my bulletin board. Thankfully StLeon with a wealth of circus lore, without academic pretensions of writing Aboriginal history, and a number of publications to his credit including Spangles & Sawdust: The circus in Australia, took up the challenge and pleasure of piecing the story together. For me the book brings on a lingering sadness for that glorious era of the circus and its free spirits, now commemorated at the Baraboo winter quarters of Barnum & Bailey only spitting distance from my childhood home. Knowing that Australian Aboriginal society made a substantial contribution to the international circus industry leads one to wonder what other quiet Black achievers lie hidden, their stories untold.

Brian Egloff
University of Canberra
ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1994 18:2


This important work, brought to completion with the help of John Stanton, must be considered the crowning achievement of the great partnership of R.M. and C. Berndt. The fieldwork was begun by Ronald Berndt in 1939, and continued by him and Catherine in 1942 and 1943. It was therefore amongst their earliest joint enterprises and sadly this publication was to be their last.

The period of the forties and fifties was a critical time for traditional Aboriginal cultures, as some of the most brilliant Aboriginal elders were still alive: and even in an area of early European settlement such as the lower Murray there were such people who carried in their memory detailed knowledge that had been handed down to them, knowledge of 'a world that was' before Europeans came. In the case of the Yaraldi of the lower Murray there was a particularly fortunate turn of events in that Albert Karloan (b. 1864), the last fully initiated Yaraldi man, became a friend of the Berndts. He had been keenly interested in traditions since his early youth and therefore represented a closer link with the past than might have been expected from someone born so long after European settlement. There was also the famous Pinkie Mack (b. 1869), an outstanding singer, Mark Wilson and other knowledgeable people, who were eager to help.

The Berndts intended to write up their findings long ago, but never got a chance on account of their many other commitments. As the reviewer knows only too well there are difficulties in working on materials after a long interval. There is danger of being caught in a time-warp: one goes back to thinking in terms of the days of long ago, without taking note of recent developments in one's discipline. One can also arrive at an opposite view, one can be glad that the work was not completed long ago, because in the light of increased knowledge things can be seen in a broader perspective. This latter situation is what has clearly happened to the Berndts. Their work in many other parts of Australia has made them aware of the uniqueness of Yaraldi culture. This is one of the most important aspects of the book. Because of the strong survival of traditions in the Western Desert and because of pan-Aboriginality the great diversity of Aboriginal culture is sometimes lost from sight. This appears in ways of making a living - Yaraldi people lived in an environment of relative plenty. They had developed a sophisticated system of justice and a council, and the position of women approached equality.

The wealth and depth of information in this book is unbelievable, with details on kinship, genealogies, food gathering and hunting techniques, the life cycle from birth to death, ceremony and song, rules and justice, and the importance of miwi, spiritual power. There are maps of clan-territories and placenames. There is a detailed account of a number of important myths, particularly that of Ngurunderi. It might have been easier to follow the path of these myths if there had been special maps or possibly also some illustrations showing major sites. On other topics the illustrations in the book are superb. Even on very old photos the majority of the people are identified, which adds immensely to the significance of the photos from the historical and personal angle.

There are many valuable diagrams, mainly drawn by Albert Karloan himself or based on his information. These range from details of cutting up meat and fish, from the manufacture of nets and implements to the movement of some stars in the Milky Way.

The appendix contains 163 texts in Yaraldi. This is the only part of the work where there are problems, and clearly no linguist has been consulted. Anyone looking at these texts, which are most important and unique in content, would not realise that the Yaraldi
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language had several whole series of sounds which are not represented, such as retroflex and dental consonants. No distinctions is made between the two r-sounds. You could not guess that these texts are in a complex language with an intricate system of verbal suffixes, nominal cases and possessive markers. There would have been excellent phonological and grammatical information dating back to the days of Meyer (1840), then Taplin, and more recently Yallop and Grimwade (1975). The glosses correspond to the general meaning but not to the actual words, thus mimin, mimini and miminil are all translated as 'woman' without regard to case, similarly kon, koni and konild are all translated as 'man'. In other instances suffixes are detached from both nouns and verbs and are treated as separate words. This is a pity in view of the fact that we still have much to learn about Yaraldi and Albert Karloan was evidently a completely fluent speaker.

A World that was is a truly remarkable book, one that will be studied and appreciated for years to come. It will be welcomed not only by anthropologists but by all interested in Australian traditions, and particularly by people of Narrinyeri descent who maintain links with their culture. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the Berndts and to John Stanton.

LIST OF REFERENCES


L.A. Hercus
Australian National University, Canberra


Some linguists, particularly during the last decade, were apt to make comments trivialising work on dictionaries of Aboriginal languages: they regarded such work as mechanical data-collecting which could be done by amateurs, and was somehow equivalent to stamp-collecting. We know such opinions to be false, but if ever we wanted a brilliant practical demonstration of quite how false they are, this dictionary is it.

Barry Alpher is a highly regarded scholar in the field of Aboriginal languages and his main interest for a long time has been Yir-Yiront, a language from the western side of Cape York Peninsula. The number of speakers is diminishing fast, and they are mainly centred on Kowanyama, formerly Mitchell River Mission. His original analysis of the language was begun in 1966 and was completed as a thesis in 1973, but this was never published. Alpher has continued work on the language since then, collecting and analysing many texts, which form an important corpus in the archives of the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. The present work gives us the first comprehensive view of the language. The introduction contains what Alpher modestly calls a 'sketch' of the language; it is in fact a brief but excellent, clear and readable study of the grammar of Yir-Yiront. For those who, like the reviewer, are not familiar with Cape York languages, it
might have been interesting if a section on phonotactics had been included. The introduction furthermore contains unique ethnographic material, including a detailed account of the kinship system. There are also some important selected domain lists: plants, birds and quantity terms. There are about 200 botanical terms, reliably identified from specimens, and about 100 birds names. Clearly no effort has been spared in attaining a superb degree of thoroughness and accuracy.

The dictionary itself is far from being a simple list of words. Each item is shown in its context by a variety of sample sentences. This means that we have a record of the idiomatic phrases and standard expressions that are characteristic of Yir-Yiront. The most important aspect of the dictionary from the point of view of most linguists however is the etymological information, given for words that have known cognates in other Aboriginal languages. Alpher points out which words are Pama-Nyungan and which are derived from Proto-Paman, ie. which are shared by other Cape York languages, and which are Pama-maric, ie. shared by Paman and some of the Maric languages of Queensland. This is a major contribution to comparative studies: anyone interested in the history of Pama-Nyungan languages will find the etymological data indispensable. The reviewer has heard several colleagues commenting that they have already benefited from Alphers comparative information. The reviewer too has learnt much, but cannot resist wanting to make a few obscure minor additions, as for instance:

The word *kow* 'nose' (p. 204), derived from Proto-Paman *kuuwu has cognates far away in the south along the Murray River: Yota-Yota has *kowo* for 'nose', Yita-Yita has *kap*, and Yaralde from the Murray mouth has *kope*.

*kathn* 'yam stick', from Proto-Paman *katjin has cognates in the Thura-Yura languages of South Australia, eg. Kuyani *katha*, Adnyamathanha *atha*, Kaurna 'katta'.

The word *kaampa* 'to cook' is even more widespread than indicated: it occurs further afield than the Centralian and Western languages, in languages as far apart as Wanyi from the Nicholson River and the Thura-Yura languages of South Australia. Others too will no doubt want to make similar minor additions, but this is simply because the present work is so fascinating and is part of a developing field of study.

The Yir-Yiront dictionary is unquestionably a book of major importance, a model of what a dictionary can be. There is only one thing wrong with it, and that is the high price: this puts it out of the reach of the average person at Kowanyama and the average student. Unfortunately this is inevitable as it is a large, beautifully produced work on acid-free paper, and it really will endure.

L.A. Hercus
Australian National University, Canberra


This review looks at two biographical books - one, Wayne Coolwell's *My Kind of People* and the other Evelyn Crawford's *Over my Tracks*. Both are books intended for a popular readership.
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Coolwell’s book is a record of interviews with Aboriginal people who have succeeded in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal terms. People such as football players, journalists and artists talk about their lives and their understanding of what their Aboriginality means to them. These understandings present differently in people’s lives. For Mark Ella, Aboriginality is a matter of personal pride but not of public politics. Gordon Bennett discovered his Aboriginality as an adult and uses his art as a political tool to rewrite Australia’s racial history. Ernie Dingo consciously focuses his comedy routines on racist and negative assumptions about Aboriginal people in order to confront his audience with these assumptions.

Evelyn Crawford’s autobiography tells her story of growing up in western NSW. Born about 1920, (her birth entered in the station stock book with the calves and foals), she spent the early part of her life as a stockworker, then settled on the banks of the river at Brewarrina to raise her nine children while her husband travelled back and forth as a drover. After his death she worked in education. Her book gives a view of the possibilities of life for western NSW Aboriginal people; the relative freedom of stockwork and life on the riverbank, contrasted to the destructive pressures of the Protection Board, especially that of mission life. I was conscious of the much more restricted life of Jimmie Barker, who spent most of his adult life as a mission inmate in the same area, or the lives of others on missions such as Erambie further east. Evelyn’s life was at times extraordinarily difficult; she describes droving a plant of horses up into western Queensland accompanied only by her two year old daughter slung in a saddlebag beside her; rowing alone across the river to Brewarrina hospital while in labour for the birth of most of her children. The difficulties, because of her independence, become for the reader heroic and exhilarating rather than tragic, as do the lives of many mission inmates. Evelyn’s account of growing up in south western Queensland and north west NSW shows some differences from the rest of NSW. Here the opportunity for skilled stockwork that did not require a formal education combined with the relative population sizes of black and white produced a quite positive life for many Aboriginal people, and allowed as late as the 1920s the passing on of much traditional education. However the shadow of bureaucratic control was not absent from Evelyn’s life. One of the most remarkable passages in the book describes the flight from Brewarrina mission of a group of fair skinned children to the possible safety of relatives in south west Queensland. The parents believed with good reason that the children were likely to be taken away to institutions; so when Evelyn’s parents left the Mission the children were smuggled out and followed the Crawford parents, by travelling through the bush. One was reminded of stories of escapes in occupied Europe. It is a most graphic instance of the ‘alternative history’ experienced by Aboriginal people in Australia.

Coolwell’s book is lightweight; its style is personal and informal. Crawford’s book gives the reader the chance to know something of the life of a courageous and independent woman. However the significance of the books is something beyond any individual virtues they might have. Both books are for the popular market, where in most part the readers are operating as far as the history of Aboriginal people in an information vacuum. There is almost no understanding of the indigenous history of south-eastern Australia, and only an unlocalised and a historical perception of indigenous culture. Even now, most schools do not provide any meaningful Aboriginal history. For many people their understanding of recent Aboriginal history has come from biographies - from Ruby Langford Ginibi, Jimmie Barker, Sally Morgan, Glenys Ward and many others, some of which have had small and local sales, others national and international exposure. This historical ignorance is expressed in a stereotyped understanding of Aboriginality. As a teacher of Aboriginal studies at a tertiary level I am aware of this level of stereotype at which most of my
students operated in their understanding of Aboriginal society. For them, Aboriginal people were either victims, objects of compassion or scorn, or traditional people, objects of curiosity or possibly veneration. (They were amazed when I told them that Stan Grant, media presenter and one of the subjects in Coolwell's book, was a Wiradjuri man. He did not fit their stereotype of a 'real Aborigine'). It is an enlightening thought to consider that it would be difficult to imagine such a book as Coolwell's being published on any other ethnic group in Australia, implying as it does that it is 'normal' to be successful and Aboriginal. (Although possibly a book on something like 'women business executives' would be a parallel exercise.)

Crawford's book provides a personal understanding of that 'alternative history' that Aboriginal Australians have experienced, through the life of a person the reader would find both sympathetic and credible. For the immediate future, such books provide an understanding for the general public of Aboriginal history, an understanding that they are unlikely to find elsewhere.

Jay Arthur
Australian National University


Mabo: A legal publishing revolution?

In Australia university law reviews are still a relatively unknown American import. Their slow growth started two decades after Fred Rodell explained why he did 'not care to contribute further to the qualitatively moribund while quantitatively mushroom-like literature of the law.'1 The Australian first nations have made relatively few appearances on their pages. A check under the entry 'Australian Aborigines' in the Index to Legal Periodicals, which indexes 620, or most, legal journals published in the English language, shows 66 entries between 1981 and the end of 1993. Before 1993 only 21 articles appear under this entry for Australian university law reviews. The frequency varies from peaks of 4 articles in 1992 and 1985 to troughs of none in 1982 and 1984. As recently as 1988 there was twice the number of articles published in university law reviews under this entry in the United States of America than in Australia. This may not reflect the depth of American concern for indigenous peoples as indicate the present size of Rodell's fungus.

In 1993 everything changed utterly. Two law reviews, on whose pages indigenous peoples rarely appeared, the University of Queensland Law Journal and the Sydney Law Review, produced special editions dealing with a single subject matter, Mabo v Queensland (No 2) 'the Murray Islands Land Rights case',2 containing 23 articles in all. Another law review, the University of New South Wales Law Journal, also published a special issue

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1 Rodell 1991: 100-105. The article was first published in (1936-7) 23 Virginia Law Review 38.
2 (1992) 66 ALJR 408.
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dealing generally with issues of significance to indigenous peoples. Four of its 9 articles dealt with the case. The total of 27 articles published on this one case in these three reviews in 1993 is 6 more than the 21 indexed between 1981 and 1992, of which only one was on the Murray Islands Land Rights case.

By 1993 this case was a marketable commodity. Both reviews were transformed from the motley of their everyday covers. They appeared as paper back collections in glossy and colourful wrappers in the same bookshops as their literary cousins: Meanjin and Southerly.

A tale of two titles

The second thing a reader notices are the two titles. The Law Book Co, a commercial legal publisher, has chosen a title which prosaically but accurately describes the contents. The University of Queensland Press, an academic and a non-legal publisher, has chosen the startling phrase, 'a judicial revolution', which catches the consumer's attention and also prejudges the issues.

Nettheim, on the back cover of University of Queensland Press book congratulated the editors of it for 'producing the first book "off the rank"'. The book also encapsulates other metaphors from the taxi industry: the ethical values of the 'cab rank principle', used by the common law, permeate it. Redgum pointed out to non-indigenous Australians the problems with taxis:

Down at the port there's a sick black mum
Rings for a taxi but the taxi won't come.³

Not everyone can afford the fare to attract the 'cab rank rule'. The taxi rank in Alice Springs and the adjacent Eagar's lawn, on which Aboriginal people wait under the frequent harassment of the Northern Territory police, show that, as an indigenous person even if you have the fare, it is not always easy to get a place in the queue. Unless you have a recognised right to be vindicated the drivers of the common law's taxis have no interest in you. The academic writers in this volume appear to extend their sympathy to those who previously had their rights carried in those taxis now that they will queue and share with indigenous peoples. Did the same social forces which keep Aboriginal people off Eagar's lawn also keep indigenous peoples out of the pages of university law reviews?

The articles in the two law reviews published in Sydney are generally sympathetic to the decision and less willing to foresee difficult problems with its results. The general absence of indigenous peoples from the pages of law reviews makes it uncertain whether this reflects a wider difference in the legal culture between the south eastern capitals and the cities which are closer to the resources frontier.

Mabo: a judicial revolution?

The academic writers of a number of the articles in Mabo: A judicial revolution challenge the power of the High Court to reach the result it did in the Murray Island Land Rights case.

R.D. Lumb gives the flavour to the title of the book.⁴ His argument that the decision is revolutionary has been answered by Nettheim.⁵ Lumb, in his concluding section, echoes Sir Harry Gibbs in the Foreword in describing the decision as 'the high point of judicial activism'. He criticises the High Court for relying on international standards, unless they are incorporated into domestic law by legislation, and the judge's understanding of the

³ Schumann: 53.
⁴ Lumb, during the period the case was before the High Court had argued against any finding of the kind which resulted, Lumb 1988: 273-284.
aspirations of the Australian people'. Nettheim makes the point that this understates the extent to which the decision was made on the careful evaluation of precedent in the common law tradition. The international standard used by the High Court has been imported into domestic law by the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975. Even if it had not been, international standards have been imported into the common law before. It is true that the judges did not inform themselves on the aspirations of the Australian people on native title. There is no evidence that judges did so when the customs of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes and Normans were culled to form the common law or when they made law in the centuries which followed. Judges act every day on their understanding of the values of the 'reasonable person' in the community with no additional evidence of those values. To deny the judges this methodology towards the end of the common law's first millennium is revolutionary. In the final paragraph Lumb uses one of the standard arguments of the common law for doing nothing. It is known from its other metaphorical form as the 'floodgates argument'. However he refers to the possible extension of the principles from land to other aspects of the customary law of the indigenous Australians as opening up a 'Pandora's box.' This seems to be an offensive way to speak of the laws of the first Australians whose society was described by Blackburn J as 'a government of laws, and not of men.'

Moëns, while being careful to say that he does not question the moral justification for the Murray Islands Land Rights case, concludes that the court engaged in a 'revisionist view of the applicable common law and constitutes an example of political, as opposed to judicial, policy-making.' He is concerned that this will have 'profound negative implications' for the judiciary and the rule of law. The High Court failed to respond cautiously to changes in community values and attitudes and, in reversing long standing precedents, retrospectively altered legal relationships established by those precedents. He states 'the majority arrogated to themselves the role of leaders, with responsibility for discarding common law rules that are not in accord with international mores'. Moëns fails to anticipate the perspectives, drawn from legal theory, of Detmold in Essays on the Mabo decision which are impliedly critical of his views.

Moëns does not explain how one distinguishes between a political and a judicial policy. This is a long and unresolved issue in the common law. In the late eighteenth century the rationalist tradition, which gave judges greater freedom and more scope to reason from political principles, generated tension with the formalist tradition which restricted the criteria to be used by judges in making law. Legal theorists still debate the issue. Dworkin's theories support Moëns on the wider point about judges and political decision making but Dworkin acknowledges that judges are entitled to take into account political policies which relate to the protection of the rights of individuals. The Murray Island Land Rights case fits into this category. Moëns fails to recognise that requiring judges to decide cases in his way does not remove political considerations but effectively requires them to make decisions which reflect the political values of yesterday. He also fails to recognise the extent to which the common law has been affected by international mores in the past. The common law's greatest treasure, the privilege against self-incrimination, is not a home grown product but an import from a European ius commune.

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6 Nettheim 1993: 18.
11 Hall 1972: 399; see also Devlin 1976: 1.
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adopted by common law judges in the face of the opposition of the crown.12 In terms of altering legal relationships the decision only affected land grants since 1975 and the Native Title Act 1993 has removed from individuals and placed on governments any adverse consequences.

O'Hair searches for a 'golden thread' in an economic analysis of the decision. It eludes him in a confused legal and historical argument that indigenous peoples were enemy aliens. While a war of conquest appears to have been fought in many parts of Australia it is difficult to see on what basis he argues that the Meriam people were treated as enemies or aliens after the annexation of their islands in 1879. A more convincing analysis of historical legal material leads Nettheim in Essays on the Mabo decision to conclude that there is some potential to argue that indigenous peoples in Australia were seen as domestic dependent nations. O'Hair arrives at the simplistic conclusion that the native title recognised by the High Court is inferior as it is not a fee simple and cannot be sold to individuals: 'Why should people on Meriam Island (sic) not be able to sell up and get out, simply because of the colour of their skin?' He ignores much that is well known: that in the 1990s a fee simple in Australia does not confer many rights, that equating indigenous ownership in accordance with indigenous law with a bare fee simple may in itself be inherently discriminatory in failing to recognise the greater interests held under customary law and a large body of literature on the use of individual rights to deny the group rights of first nations.

Stephenson sees the decision as challenging the doctrine of tenures and thereby introducing a new element into the dimensions of Australian land law. The doctrine of tenures is the basis of the feudal land law the British brought to Australia: all land is held ultimately as a result of a crown grant from the sovereign as paramount lord. She notes that Toohey J found that there was another basis for the claim succeeding, the presumption from occupation at the time of the accession of sovereignty of a fee simple. The significance of this to the doctrine of tenures is not recognised by her although it is mentioned by Pearson in his article. Toohey J in arriving at that conclusion relied on the work of McNeil, Common law native title.13 McNeil argues that in England the doctrine of tenures was recognised as a legal fiction. Land owners under the Anglo-Saxon kings continued to own land under the Norman kings without a new grant. This is confirmed by the existence of a number of legal processes for determining what title the crown had to land which recognised the fiction underlying the doctrine. The doctrine in England accommodated land titles which existed before the Norman conquest.14 The doctrine in Australia also now accommodates land titles which preceded the British conquest.

Forbes continues the criticisms made by Gibbs. In addition he sees significance in the fact that individual Meriam people owned gardens which distinguishes the facts from any which could be found on the mainland. But the common law itself has precedents which show that there were valid collective rights in the gardens of the cradle of the common law, the Inns of Court, which permitted access to them by non-barristers.15 Puri and Mulqueeny deal with some of the contents of Lumb's Pandora's box. Puri considers whether the courts will recognise indigenous laws about cultural property, which he calls 'folklore'. Mulqueeny considers whether the courts can now recognise customary laws in

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12 MacNair 1990: 66; see also Helmholz 1990: 962-963.
15 Grant v Kearney (1823) 12 Price 773 where a claim to perambulate the Liberty of the Rolls was found to give a right to walk through the kitchen gardens of Lincoln's Inn.
criminal procedures. Both are inconclusive and suggest that material originally cut for different purposes was restitched.

Brennan, Pearson, Reynolds and Keon-Cohen are supportive of the decision. Their articles are sandwiched between those which seek to identify problems with the decision or the way in which it fractures existing legal structures. They are used by the editors to create a pattern of alternating views in the book but it does not amount to a dialogue. Brennan gives a clear account of the decision and its consequences. Logically his article should start the book but it follows the article by Lumb. Pearson contrasts the difference of emphasis in the judgements of Brennan J. and Dean and Gaudron J.J. In Brennan J.'s analysis governments dispossessed indigenous Australians and a moral obligation is now seen to rest on government. Deane and Gaudron J.J. accuse the common law itself and consequently impose an obligation on judges as law makers to address the resulting injustice. Reynolds sets out an argument from historical documents that the reservation in favour of Aboriginal people on pastoral leases may have preserved native title. This is such a useful argument that the Native Title Act 1993 has attempted to preclude or limit its effect. Keon-Cohen demonstrates how the laws of evidence will have to change to respond to the hearsay contained in statements about personal rights and customs in an oral culture. As the common law has its roots in custom there are echoes of its own origin and the already existing exceptions to the hearsay rule based on necessity.

Essays on the Mabo decision

Less respectful of seniority this book opens with a clinical exposition of the judgements by Phillips to provide a background to the articles which follow. Sharpe is one of the few people to write of the findings of Moynihan J. in the Supreme Court of Queensland. She describes his cultural bound and social evolutionist perception in which the gardeners of Murray Island are seen as more advanced than the Yolngu in the Gove Land Rights case. She also shows how he excluded from consideration the religious dimension of the Meriam people with the land and dismissed their synthesis of the law of Malo with Christianity and reduced their connection to the land to an economic one. She believes, consequently, that they were fortunate that the judge discerned some resemblances to his concepts, based on the common law, of title to land.

This leads naturally into Detmold's argument that it is the essential nature of the law to show difference and where it does not tyranny may develop. The High Court in rejecting the concept of terra nullius rejected the fundamental denial of difference - the existence of the other. He argues that the High Court failed. The history of the common law has been of recognising the differences between factual situations as the law develops. The High Court stumbled when the majority recognised differences in how indigenous and non-indigenous people receive title to land but recognised no differences on how that title is extinguished. Detmold does not explain how so many decisions about indigenous peoples fail to show difference. He appears to believe that any limits to the recognition of difference have not been crossed here. Consequently he does not have to wrestle with where those limits are so that justifiable community welfare and public interests can be preferred to other rights recognised by the law.

Bartlett maintains the theme of common law process but claims the decision as another triumph for it. He describes it as a millennium of human experience which responds in a pragmatic way to the disputes it resolves, particularly in protecting people from interference with their property. He notes the irony that critics of this decision have

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16 Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd, (1971) 17 FLR 141.
previously praised the common law for these very qualities. These qualities, in his opinion, explain its prevalence and longevity. He applies the classic common law declaratory theory to show that decisions like the Gove Land Rights case\textsuperscript{17} were bad and therefore never were the law. He praises the decision for its potential to be an effective compromise between indigenous peoples and developers wishing to exploit the resources the indigenous peoples now own. It is difficult to accept his triumphalist version of the common law. Mansell's comment that the decision is late but welcome poses the problem Bartlett skates over. Detmold's concern about the extinguishment of native title without compensation is also left unanswered. If the common law has the values Bartlett claims how did it go so wrong for so long in Australia and why does it still refuse to restrict the crown's ability to extinguish native title or require the crown to pay compensation?

Mansell seeks to analyse the reach of the decision in conferring resources and a land base on the first nations as part of their struggle for independence. This theme has potential significance. Hocking, in her first article, notes the significant implication behind native title of a pre-existing indigenous legal order. While the High Court did not disturb the sovereignty which descends from the British claim to Australia she argues that Australia must fall into a category of settled state of an implied cession of sovereignty from a previous and indigenous sovereign. The implication of this is that the subsequent sovereignty and titles to land derive from that previously existing sovereignty. Here there is an argument left ajar for Mansell's aspirations. Hocking's analysis of the common law is less triumphalist than Bartlett's. She appears to be willing to concede that the High Court could have mis-stated the law again in this case.

Nettheim returns to the subject of sovereignty in his treatment of the decision in the context of the political rights of indigenous people. He notes the refusal of the High Court to treat the question as one which is justiciable - capable of being ruled upon by a court - if the sovereignty of the first nations would displace that sovereignty derived from Britain. He turns his attention to a lesser form of internal sovereignty found in the common law of the United States which gives the first nations the status of domestic dependent nations. He notes the inconsistent decisions in the Supreme Court of NSW\textsuperscript{18} and infers a potential within the common law of Australia for a similar status to be recognised. He predicts that there will be further pressure on state and territory governments to relax their control over indigenous communities with developments in international law further strengthening the claims of the first nations to self-determination.

A number of the articles raise a question left unresolved by the High Court: whether the Crown owes a fiduciary duty to the indigenous people over whom it acquires sovereignty. Brennan observes the majorities' reluctance to embrace the position Toohey J. took following the Supreme Court of Canada in Guerin v The Queen\textsuperscript{19} although the High Court had left the question open in Northern Land Council v The Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{20} He believes that the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 has the potential to be effective as any principle of fiduciary duty in the future. Certainly the legal protection of either can only be removed by the commonwealth parliament legislating.

This position is adopted by Hanks in his article about the difficulties in legislation reversing such decisions, and one which became more significant in the negotiation of the Native Title Act 1993. Some of those developments are dealt with by Hocking in her

\textsuperscript{17} Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd, (1971) 17 FLR 141.
\textsuperscript{18} R v Murrell (1836) Legge 72 and Bonjon, 1844 8 British Parliamentary Papers, 'Papers relative to the Aborigines, Australian Colonies' 146.
\textsuperscript{20} (1987) 61 ALJR 616.
second article in a postscript: the framing of the Native Title Act 1993 as a special measure under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. It is indeed a very special measure. As that term is generally understood it means something which advantages the people at which it is directed. Part of the Act appears to extinguish native title to land and resources. It invites litigation that such extinguishment cannot be a special measure.

Blowse returns to the question of fiduciary duty. He refers to the distinction in the common law between the concept of a trust, the breach of which is justiciable, and the concept of a higher political trust, belonging to the prerogative of the Crown, which is not justiciable. He notes how Toohey J. distinguished the application in Australia of the decisions dealing with the Crown's duty in this second sense. Claims based on breach of fiduciary duty may be made across a wide spectrum of interests. However using common law techniques for distinguishing cases to escape their binding nature as precedent is an imprecise art, in which judges frequently fudge, producing uncertain results.21

Gray and Hocking deal with the effect of the decision on various kinds of interests in land. Hocking's article covers some aspects of the framing of the Native Title Bill and Premier Gosse's demands that all titles to land granted since 1788 be validated. It is a useful reminder a year later, as the sections of the Act are cited by bureaucrats as unalterable law, that the law, even statute law, is fluid. The category 1-4 acts used in the Act to achieve Gosse's wishes conceal what even now parliamentary counsel cannot put into plain English. To do so would too explicitly describe the 'conflagration of oppression and conflict which ... spread across the continent to dispossess, degrade and devastate the Aboriginal people and leave a national legacy of unutterable shame.'22

LIST OF REFERENCES


Neil Andrews
University of Canberra

22 Mabo v Queensland (No 2) (1992) 66 ALJR 408, Deane and Gaudron J.J. at 449.

This is a collection of a number of papers presented at a conference held by the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in May 1991. They are accounts from the perspective of law, anthropology, history and politics of the varying impact of colonialism on the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific. They deal with colonies and independent states in which the indigenous people are minorities or majorities. For those interested in the history of the indigenous peoples of Australia they provide comparisons with what might have been, is, could be or will be the results of the fatal impact.

The first article by Garth Nettheim provides the unifying theme of self determination for much of what follows. He notes that the original contact was frequently shaped by international law the significance of which faded in the late nineteenth century but which has re-emerged in the late twentieth century. He discusses the draft Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, the reluctance of nation states in the region to acknowledge the indigenous nations submerged within them and the hope that indigenous peoples have for international treaties where national treaties have failed.

A sequence of comparative articles by Paul McHugh, Sid Herring and Mary Ellen Turpel shows the differences in the political processes used by settler governments in New Zealand, the United States of America and in Canada to govern indigenous peoples. The last two articles show that in a federal political system there are already separate sovereignties. A federal system like Australia's could adapt to take into account the political aspirations of its indigenous peoples. Gerald McBeath returns to these states and shows that the present political structure of Australia is the one least hospitable to self-government. It lacks the judicial recognition of limited indigenous sovereignty in the domestic dependent nations of the USA or the guarantees of indigenous rights contained in the constitution of Canada. Ken Coates compares the struggle in Australia and Canada for land and cultural rights as the industrial frontier moves closer. Christine Stafford traces the continuation of a colonial mentality in the criminal justice systems of these two states.

Kenneth Maddock's article lacks the broader focus of the others but is of particular relevance to Australia. He argues that the term 'sacred site' was developed by anthropologists who introduced western ideas of the sacred into popular and legal discourse from where it has now been adopted by the indigenous peoples themselves. He observes that Durkheim relied on the work of Spencer and Gillen and Howitt to develop the concept of the sacred. From that source it appears in the writing of Australian anthropologists with its use spreading in the 1960s. It appeared in legislation in the 1970s. He notes that the legislation imports Durkheim's concept of the sacred by, inter alia, imposing penalties for entering, remaining on or damaging a sacred site. The effect is to make them forbidden, set apart and hedged about with prohibitions. This however is the effect of any criminal law seeking to protect a legal interest or a property right but that does not necessarily give that interest or right the quality of the sacred.

Maddock does not support his argument with evidence showing the adoption of the concept again by Aboriginal people. He admits that information about the processes to prove that a site is sacred is unsatisfactory as he is not aware of any court case. This is a curious remark. It confirms that there is an absence of evidence that Aboriginal people are adopting the concept from legislation. However most legal processes occur outside court rooms. Courts only hear disputes parties cannot otherwise resolve. A court is often not the place to look for such a process. His explanation discounts, without adequate
consideration, two other explanations. If the concept is used by Aboriginal people it may reflect the continuation of beliefs observed by Spencer, Gillen and Howitt. Or it may not be used by Aboriginal people with the same meaning that it has in the statute. The lexical conflation of secret and sacred has been documented amongst the Arrernte since Spencer and Gillen with little motivation for the speakers to distinguish the meaning of these words.1

Maddock also asserts that beliefs about a sacred site may fluctuate over time and that profane interests may be pursued by designating a place a sacred site. Both of these statements may be true but it is unfortunate that he did not feel constrained to point out the substantial continuity of beliefs over a number of generations as, for example, with the sites recorded by Spencer and Gillen in Alice Springs or to give an example of a profane interest disguised as a religious interest. These comments appear to be made in the context of the Jawoyn claims about the significance of the sickness country. The Jawoyn's claims were vindicated by the Resources Assessment Commission in its report in May 1991.2

LIST OF REFERENCES


Neil Andrews
University of Canberra


This volume brings together articles by a number of indigenous politicians, writers and academics and other writers. It is compiled at a time of growing realisation that the customs of the indigenous peoples of Australia can be a source of law. It is divided into three parts on land, law and culture but the division is not sustained as the underlying theme of the rights of the indigenous peoples of Australia to self determination runs through all three.

This is the substance of Mick Dodson's article in which he identifies self determination by indigenous peoples as their basic right as peoples. He notes that such claims are uniformly opposed by states which hold them captive, including Australia. This opposition is built on the state's fear of its demise as its sovereignty is rooted in the dispossession of others. He believes that self determination can be pursued incrementally and in this context discusses the Eva Valley statement and the Aboriginal peace plan which was put to the prime minister, Mr Keating, in 1993 as well as the Native Title Act 1993.

Noel Pearson also seeks to examine why the Mabo decision which affected such a small part of Australia should have touched something so deep in the Australian

1 Harkins 1993: 161, 166.
unconscious. He describes the experience of the indigenous people who negotiated with the Australian government when the *Native Title Act* was being drafted. Peter Poynton examines some of these issues in more detail in his article on *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)*, the Murray Island land rights case. H.A. Amankwah sees that decision as bringing the common law more into line with international law and considers the implications that this may raise for self-determination.

Getano Lui Jr and Peter Yu describe how colonialism despoiled the Torres Strait and Kimberley regions. Lui argues for a full measure of self government similar to other island dependencies of Australia as Norfolk, Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) islands. Yu shows how a federal system involving the government of Western Australia continues the process of colonialism. He calls for a new arrangement in the public government of the region starting with the devolution of the power of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Commission similar to that in the Torres Strait. Paul Coe offers a different view of ATSIC. He describes the regional council structure of ATSIC as a fresh denial of self determination as its crosses traditional boundaries and treats Aboriginal peoples as an ethnic group but not as separate and distinct societies within Australia. He is critical of the Keating Government's negotiations with ATSIC over native title. By not sitting in its proper place on the government's side of the table in these negotiations ATSIC displaced independent Aboriginal peoples from their place.

The book concludes with the section on culture in which self determination again links the writers' views. John Collins writes of the work of Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Marcia Langton examines the politics of representation in Aboriginal art and film and John Scott considers Aboriginal theatre. Finally Mandawuy Yunupingu writes of his Yolngu education which included the struggle to explain that which is important and sacred in Yolngu law to prevent Nabalco mining bauxite at Nhulunbuy and how that struggle to explain continues today.

Neil Andrew; University of Canberra
BOOK NOTES


This booklet discusses Canadian constitutional changes with regard to indigenous people, and it shows the relevance of these changes to the Australian situation.


This work discusses mining leases on Aboriginal land and stresses the need for consideration and negotiation.


This work powerfully conveys the message that Aboriginal languages were for a long time not just ignored, but actively discouraged. The work shows how many people were moved from mission to mission to live among others who spoke quite different languages and how this had devastating effects. It is an interesting work, but there is some inconsistency in the spelling of names of languages, and there are many minor errors, particularly in the bibliography.


This handsome book contains well-written biographical and artistic notes on contemporary Aboriginal painters, both traditional and modern and samples of their work; some of the illustrations are quite stunning. The work is ideal as an introduction to modern Aboriginal art.


This outstanding biography of F.W. Albrecht was reviewed by J. Mulvaney in Aboriginal History vol. 17. 1993 pp. 151-153. Anyone interested in Central Australia will be delighted that it has now appeared as a paperback, as this will make it the work more accessible.


This beautifully produced and illustrated work covers a number of interesting health-related and spiritual aspects of life in Arnhem Land.