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THE NATIONAL SORRY DAY STATEMENT

The following statement was endorsed by the staff and students of The Australian National University who signed their names in one of the six Sorry Day Books. The Sorry Day Books were handed over by representatives of the University to members of the local Aboriginal community and members of the stolen generation at a ceremony on the National Sorry Day, 26 May 1998.

By signing my name in this book, I record my deep regret for the injustices suffered by Indigenous Australians as a result of European settlement and, in particular, I offer my personal apology for the hurt and harm caused by the forced removal of children from their families and for the effect of government policy on the human dignity and spirit of Indigenous Australians.

I would like to record my desire for Reconciliation and for a better future for all our peoples. I make a commitment to a united Australia which respects this land of ours, values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and provides justice and equity for all.
AUTHORSHIP, AUTHORITY AND THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

On 18 September 1997, the official opening of 'The Painters of the Wagilag Sisters Story 1937-1997' at the National Gallery of Australia saw the outcome of a complex set of negotiations that took place over the preceding months and years between curators and artists, and artists and their custodians, across clan territories occupying the north-eastern half of Arnhem Land. The following texts and images trace part of the process of producing public knowledge, a knowledge that culminated in the events described below.

The opening is set in the distinctively brutalist architecture of the foyer of the National Gallery of Australia—in its form as distant from the experience of the Yolngu visitors as its function as a non-Aboriginal ceremonial space. None of the thirty Yolngu visitors had previously visited this place, a space for them perhaps more evocative of the grandiose public buildings of Darwin—the Casino or the Casuarina shopping mall—than the built environment of North-east Arnhem Land.

For the Yolngu the tiled and concrete foyer of the National Gallery must have appeared as a strikingly exotic and alien frame for the objects and images assembled in the galleries below. Even so, the gallery entrance was made familiar by the close proximity of the conceptual map of Central Arnhem Land represented by the two hundred burial poles of the Aboriginal Memorial. In the first gallery visible from the foyer the Aboriginal visitors could also find points of familiarity in other examples of their art, even some painted by the visitors themselves, as well as in familiar narratives painted by their close relatives.

On the previous day this space had been transformed as the site for the construction and singing of the galmak, the ground design modelled and constructed in sand and eucalyptus leaves which represents the ancestral home of the rainbow serpent at Garimala, a waterhole several hundred kilometers south of Yirrkala. This imposing form provided the focus for the performance of a ritual cleansing ceremony for the non-Aboriginal visitors to the opening, allowing outsiders to enter the sacred realm of the forms and images of the narrative of the Wagilag Sisters.
The sweeping implications of the production of this image of the galmak are captured in the straightforward poetics of the speech of Dula Ngurruwutthun, printed below. Spoken in Munyuku language, his words were certainly a response to his perception of the high status of the occasion. However, for most of the audience the language barrier emphasised the intercultural character of the event. Dula’s words were not so much in dialogue with other speakers as a performance in themselves, one event in a sequence that culminated in the opening. He addressed the audience of several hundred people on equal terms: ‘this is our way of showing appreciation for your acceptance of our culture, so through this, you will learn to understand and respect our culture...’ Of the non-Aboriginal participants in this event, it was the Governor General of Australia, Sir William Deane, who had been specifically nominated to open the exhibition by the elder statesmen of Arnhem Land. For the Yolngu he was identified as the most prominent non-Aboriginal authority prepared to argue for a greater recognition of the needs of Aboriginal Australia. He called for a ‘crusade for true reconciliation’, a phrase which has echoed ever since in the political debates around Native Title and the Wik case.

As the most senior ritual leader of the Yirritja moiety in East Arnhem Land, Dula revealed in his speech an assumption of good faith on the part of his non-Aboriginal hosts. His expectation was that this event would be closely connected to the objective of reconciliation, and that it was his responsibility to ensure that the role and actions of the Yolngu were properly understood in that context. Their display of ritual responsibilities was a demonstration of their expectation of reciprocity and a changing perception of the potential of such interactions between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Australians. For the Yolngu, responsibility lies on both sides.

The climax of the opening ceremony was the implanting by the Governor General of matawirr’, the lightning-tongue of the ancestral serpent, at the head of the ground design. This painted and feathered object was brought to Canberra in secret, and only revealed to the curators a short time before the event took place. After the exhibition, it was returned to Yirrkala for safe-keeping.

The orchestration of the speeches, songs, smoking business, and the implanting of the matawirr’ was devised to provide the appropriate form for the opening of the exhibition. Each participant (including the several non-Aboriginal speakers) was part of a sequence of events, which was, itself, the culmination of a larger sequence that had been in development for over the previous nine years. While the various events in this larger sequence were not pre-ordained, the extent to which they constituted a discourse between the Yolngu world and the non-Aboriginal institution of the Gallery was dependent
on the necessity of each event effecting a resolution or settlement through an appropriate demonstration of authority.

Such manifestations of 'public knowledge', involving the determination of the form and structure of the performance of ceremony, is a matter of daily discourse in Yolngu society. What was at stake in this instance—unprecedented in its scale and in the continuity of its historical scope—was the precise determination of the degree to which knowledge was to be demonstrated, revealed, or restricted within this discourse of authorship and authority. The settlement of each event was dependent on such demonstrations of responsibility, and it was necessary for the fine distinction between artist and custodian to be played out a hundred times in the approval of texts, the structure of their representation, the structure of the display, and the structure of events associated with the exhibition.

In suggesting this focus on the sequence of events, I find myself endorsing Strathern's critique of Sahlins, insofar as she proposes a way of recognising an indigenous 'ethnohistory', rather than imposing an interpretative structure: 'we might have to seek out the counterpart of our systematising endeavours in people's artefacts and performances, in the images they strive to convey, and thereby how they present the effects of social action to themselves.' How this view is relevant to my account of the developing negotiations that led to the opening ceremony, is illustrated by one episode which demonstrates how decisively the Yolngu
participants exercised their authority, and took control of the course of events.

On the 19th April, 1997 Sophie Creighton and I visited Gunyangara to meet Djalu Gurruwiwi and other members of the Galpu clan to seek final permissions for the inclusion of a painting by Djalu and the deceased artist Mithinari in the exhibition. By good fortune, Mithinari’s eldest son, Andy Waytjuku, a senior songman Alfred Gurrujtjiri and other members of the Galpu were at Gunyangara at the same time, and gathered around to study the catalogue that was presented to them. With permission, Sophie videotaped the interview. In describing the Galpu relationship to other clans and other parts of the story, and stimulated by the symbolism of the Mithinari painting (which depicts the ‘conference of snakes’, a key event in the ancestral narrative), Andy Waytjuku used the metaphor of ‘bridging’ to describe his perception of their role: ‘When you see Mandawuy [Mandawuy Yunupingu, the ceremonial leader as well as the lead singer for Yothu Yindi], he's bridging, building the bridges... We’ve got clapsticks. [but] he’s got all the new technology, all that, bridging this reconciliation to both worlds. Aboriginal society taking it up into white society, this one, [here he points at the image of the snake] this one, Wititj.’

At that moment, suddenly, the Yolngu took control of the situation. They suggested that they would sing the stories contained in the paintings, and that we would videotape the song cycle, and carry it back to Central Arnhem Land to Albert Djiwada, the senior member of the Liyagalawumirr. This symbolic exchange, facilitated by our intervention with the necessary technology, ultimately led to the Galpu playing a key diplomatic role in the complex negotiations that followed, and subsequently their being given the responsibility for the production of the galmak for the opening ceremony. Thus Strathern’s conception of an event as performative, as a virtual artefact, concerned with its effects and agency, seems particularly appropriate to this discussion. As she observes, ‘events are often seen in progression, one following another. An event as performance is known by its effect: it is understood in terms of what it contains, the forms that [it] conceals or reveals, registered in the actions of those who witness it.’ Here, in the months and years preceding the opening ceremony, is to be found an example of the distinctively Yolngu world view and cosmology that pervades every aspect of the installation of the exhibition, in both its performative and literal sense.

In the Eurocentric context of the art gallery, the authority of the individual artist is always given priority. However, for the Yolngu artist a complex of separate roles around the nexus between authorship and authority must be repeatedly renegotiated and publicly affirmed. As the agent of communally restricted knowledge, the artist gives expression to the narratives which are each artist’s ancestral inheritance,
simultaneously bringing alive the agency of the related ancestral beings and the significance of their places of origin.

For these events to take place at all, the artists and their custodians had to be content that the discussions held between themselves and the curators of the exhibition (Wally Caruana, Djon Mundine and myself) allowed for the proper recognition in all matters of detail in the form and structure of the exhibition.

On-the-ground experience, extended fieldwork, and multiple visits to Arnhem Land by the curators had provided the opportunity for negotiations between the artists and their custodians, between the clan groups involved, and through a sequence of preliminary diplomatic exchanges in such different forms as videotaped song cycles and summit meetings involving all the key participants.

The artists in the exhibition come predominantly from the five clans with landowning rights to the different elements of the Wagilag Sisters story—Gālpu, Rirratjingu, Marrakulu, Wagilag and Liyagalawumirr. Their clan territories form five-sixths of a circle from the Wessel Islands at the north-eastern tip of Arnhem Land to the Woolen River to the east of Ramingining.

Three weeks after the opening, Djon Mundine’s talk (at the ‘Same But Different: Exhibiting Indigenous Art’ Colloquium sponsored by the Centre for Cross-cultural Research and the National Gallery) described the centrality of one figure, the late Paddy Dhatangu, who, as the supreme Dhuwa moiety ritual leader, had been instrumental in the early development and approval of the exhibition. In his talk, Djon speaks with quiet passion and emotion about his long-term involvement with the project as art advisor at Ramingining, and indirectly through other projects as one of the most innovative curators of indigenous art in Australia.

Following Paddy’s death in 1993 it was the younger artists and custodians such as Albert Djiwada, Joe Djembungu, Trevor Djarrakaykay and, from the east, Djalu Gurruwiwi and Gawirrin Gumana, who assumed the various responsibilities for the events that were to take place in Canberra. Only in the last stages were other senior ritual leaders and songmen like Dula Ngurrwutthun, Alfred Gurritjiri and Andy Waytjuku more directly involved, contributing to the authoritative resolution of the final sequence of events. And finally, linguists such as Ronnie Barramala and Ngalawurr Mununggurr assisted in crucial explanatory and translation roles.

While it was the assembly of paintings and objects which conveyed the strength of this painting tradition to most of the visitors to the exhibition, extracts from three speeches reprinted here reveal the high order of significance the participants accorded to the events which took place during the culminating ceremony at the National Gallery of Australia.
Nigel Lendon is Reader in Visual Arts at the ANU Canberra School of Art. He was guest curator of the exhibition, together with Wally Caruana, Senior Curator of Aboriginal Art at the NGA and Djon Mundine, Senior Curator of Aboriginal Art at the National Museum of Australia, and with Albert Djiwada as senior indigenous consultant. Sophie Creighton is a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at the ANU and was employed by the National Gallery as a research assistant.

NOTES


2 Strathern, 'Artefacts of History ...', p. 28-29.
... and not to push each other aside'

Dula Ngurruwutthun, senior Yirritja ritual leader for North-east Arnhem land, and Andy Waytjuku, son of Mithinari, discuss the arrangements for the opening of the exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia.

Yo nhumalanggu dhiyaku wurrapandawu walalanggu, luku-nherranmina dhuwala gandawyun yukurra Galmak, bukmakku märr-ngamathinyara nhumalanggu milkugala, märr nhuma yurr bu dharangan nhaltjan nhuma yurr dhiyangu malay Balanday Yolngunha liya ga rom yurru nhuma dharangan.

Nhaltjan nganapurrngu nhumalanha dhiyanguyi rom dhu ngurinji ngathilinguyu Yirralkay ga Gutuy.


For you non-Aboriginal people, we have set our foundation, here lies the image of Galmak [home of the rainbow serpent]. Embedded in this are our religion, beliefs and values. This is our way of showing appreciation for your acceptance of our culture, so through this, you will learn to understand and respect our worldview, based on the past and coming from our roots.

We appreciate this opportunity to be able to share our culture with you, for this will only strengthen and empower all of us.

So there should be no misunderstanding between us Yolngu people and you Balanda. But to work together to have a better understanding, and not to push each other aside.

Speech by Dula Ngurruwutthun, the senior ritual leader of the Yirritja moiety in East Arnhem Land, translated from Munyuku language by Ngalawurr Mununggurr.
... a crusade for true reconciliation'

Sir William Deane is instructed in the implanting of 'matawirr', the lightning-tongue of the ancestral serpent, by Gawarrin Guinana.

The ancestral events depicted in the exhibition's paintings—involving Wititj the great Olive Python and the two sisters of the Wagilag clan—are dramatic and powerful. The creation story, of which those events form part, recounts the evolution and encounter between human and animal ancestors who explain and make sense of the world and its creative forces. Among other things, the story heralds the arrival of the first monsoon season and forms the basis both of one of the major ceremonial cycles of Arnhem Land, specifically of the inland freshwater country, and of cultural and fundamental religious beliefs and rules of conduct. Indeed, the pictorial narrative of the two Wagilag Sisters and their journey and their ordeals documents the foundation of the laws of social and ritual behaviour, in particular the rules relating to marriage, and inspires laws relating to authority, kinship, territory and custodial responsibility. It reaches from the ancient Dreamtime to govern the present and to influence and mould the future.

The exhibition has been put together over a period of seven years. It was only made possible by close co-operation and consultation between the curators, the artists and the tribal owners, elders and custodians. The fragility of the medium of eucalyptus bark has in the past militated against the display of many of the finest works of Aboriginal art. The effect of that and of the fact that some of the most important works in the exhibition have come from overseas is that this is the first time that anyone, including the present Aboriginal owners and custodians, has seen the works displayed in anything like their present scope and overall quality.

The exhibition provides a wonderful insight into the transmission of important cultural and artistic traditions from one generation to the next, preserving, renewing and adapting knowledge and
beliefs of the past while casting a light on their relevance to the present. It traces the development of a specific bark painting tradition or genre over six decades and four generations of artists. The first ceremonial leader and artist in the exhibition, Yilkari Kitani, was apparently born in 1891. He painted at a time when outside influences were minimal. The exhibition reflects the development of the artistic traditions of the peoples of Arnhem Land from the time of his work to the present day. In short, the exhibition is at least one of the most important exhibitions of Aboriginal art ever staged in this country. Its works, in their quality and their comprehensiveness, constitute a unique and coherent tour de force of our indigenous culture. Its assembly and its staging are a triumph of curatorial dedication, skill and achievement.

That being so, tonight is a time of celebration for us all. A celebration of artistic and curatorial achievement. A celebration of indigenous tradition and culture.

And a celebration of learning and understanding. No one who visits this exhibition and is prepared to see, to listen and to learn will be unaffected by the images which it projects. These images reach back over the millennia—perhaps sixty of them—to the earliest days of the indigenous peoples of our land and to the ultimate origins of their ancestral religions, cultures and laws. On the other hand, no one of sensitivity who sees this exhibition and absorbs what it depicts and teaches can fail to be conscious of the wider overall history of dispossession and oppression of the indigenous people in so many other areas of our continent during the 200 years that have elapsed since the arrival of the first European migrants. And no caring Australian can fail to be saddened by the awful contrast between what has been in so many parts of our country and what might have been.

Those of us—both indigenous and non-indigenous—who are now joined together in a crusade for true reconciliation all know that we will not succeed until our nation has properly addressed and made significant progress towards resolving the current plight of the Aboriginal peoples in relation to practical things such as health, education, employment, and living conditions. And how could it be otherwise in a context where the gap between the average life expectancy of an Aborigine and that of a non-Aborigine is almost twenty years and actually widening and where Aborigines are dying from particular diseases at rates up to seven times or more than those of non-Aborigines? Clearly, we will not achieve reconciliation until we reach the stage where it can be seen that we are at least approaching the position where the life expectancy and future prospects of an Aboriginal baby are in the same realm of discourse as those of a non-Aboriginal one. But, equally clearly, we have no real prospect of reaching that stage until we also effectively address the terrible problems of the spirit as well as
those of the body—the present effects on the spirit and on the self-esteem of Australia's indigenous peoples of all that has been threatened, all that has happened, all that has been taken and all that has been destroyed during the two centuries and more that have passed since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

It is in that context that I see this exhibition as having an importance that transcends both its immediate impact and the ancestral regions of Central and East Arnhem Land. An exhibition such as this enables those Australians who directly view it to enter one of the ancient, and in a sense timeless, Aboriginal worlds of our continent. But it also has the potential to reach out, through and beyond those who directly view it, to influence national perceptions and national attitudes. And it not only projects the artistic achievements and the traditional beliefs of the Arnhem Land artists and their people. It is a wonderful manifestation of Aboriginal art and culture which has the potential to be a positive influence towards restoring and sustaining the spirit and self-esteem of the indigenous peoples of our country as a whole. Hopefully, the exhibition will directly and indirectly affect and influence non-indigenous and indigenous Australians generally in those ways. If it does, it will, of itself, represent a significant step along the difficult road towards true reconciliation between our nation and the indigenous peoples who constitute such an important part of it.

Extract from the address by Sir William Deane, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia.
NIGEL LENDON

‘Everything in life is interlocked...’


In my own practice one of the things that I have tried to avoid is to see Aboriginal art purely in religious terms, because people always, certainly in the art establishment, have then been able to ‘bag’ Aboriginal art, or put it in a particular context of, ‘This is a Dreamtime story’. People always ask, ‘What’s the Dreamtime story of this thing?’

However, in this case, with the study that is represented here—in the way that we have gathered together a number of artworks over at least four generations—we’ve tried to get people to look at things in more formal ways. It is interesting, however, that we still can’t get people like Giles Auty—who wrote very positive articles about the exhibition—they still can’t quite get away from the religious experience of it. Whereas in actual fact we are trying to get people to look at how interestingly the paintings are constructed, how their representation has evolved, how relationships between particular artists have evolved, and how these real human beings have expressed themselves.

Within Aboriginal society, such forms of self-expression, which of course represents in itself some form of group consensus, group expression is not only an ability that people carry; it is actually a responsibility. It is a responsibility that everyone has to bear in that sense. So like with Wally Bell, our friend here from the Ngunnawal people, who has come here to represent them today, the responsibility is always thrust upon you to do public things and to try to create positive images, to create intelligence, to be happy. It is a sign of mental health to do these things.

The thing about the Wagilag Sisters story, it is very interesting in many ways because it involves the two moieties, it has many
basic Aboriginal concepts in it. Although it is a Dhuwa story, like the Yin and Yang you can't have it without the involvement, the cooperation of the opposite moiety. So everything is locked together. Everything in life is interlocked, so that whatever you do there is a check and a balance on it, that you have to involve other people.

In one sense, although it is a Dhuwa ceremony, Yirritja people are allowed to sing in this ceremony. It is one of the few ceremonies where that can happen. Usually Dhuwa ceremonies are only sung by Dhuwa people. In this sense this has almost like a Christian feel to it: it talks about one people, it talks about people coming together, from many distant places, to take part in this. It is about how all things interrelate to each other.

The interesting thing in putting the show together, in many ways, is about how most of its ceremonial enactment is actually what is called secret-sacred. In white society, of course, this practically doesn't exist. You can get shots of Elle McPherson's honeymoon on TV or whatever—nothing is secret-sacred. In Yolngu society there are things that are particularly related to women, so women hold their own ceremony, where men and children aren't allowed to go to. The men hold their ceremony, where women and children aren't allowed to go to. They hold them both at the same time. So it has this thing of male and female seen equally.

In many ways it is an interesting thing that most of this whole story is re-enacted in an elaborate ceremonial cycle we could never hope to actually visualise. In fact, you could never visualise such an experience. However, in showing these paintings, we are able to reveal the public dimension of such things. This is a visual arts place; this is what Yolngu people are showing to you. We have alluded to how people want to share and show people the importance of their culture and how important it is to care for the land—how to care for the environment, how to care for the land, care for the country and look after things. So this exhibition is very important in that sense. If it does even have the spiritual feeling that Giles Auty received, if that can affect you in some way, I think that is quite a good thing. It is a really good thing.

I think the other thing that you see here, which is even more important—and it is in the catalogue—is that we don't only handle the religiousness, the sacred nature of it in this way. You will find we try to cover in the essays the idea of the development, the skills of these people in draftsmanship, their compositional form, their construction of these paintings, trying to show something that is secret-sacred without showing it—to show you the invisible, to hide the visible.

The other thing we have really stressed in this is to also make you realise that these artists are very real human beings. We are not some sort of noble savage. We are like Shylock—we do bleed. We are real human beings. So we do not want tokenisms, we want real land rights. We want things like
that. We want justice, we want physical things. We want real recognition. And we want constructive criticism of the art, not platitudes and tokenisms.

So we have tried to do that in the catalogue and in the way the exhibition is laid out, so that you'll actually see a body of work by a particular artist, you can see a body of work of father and son, father and daughter, grandfather and grandson, and so on down the ages. You can see people that are distant, at 500 miles distance between each other, painting the same subject in their own style.

Within the catalogue we have enabled Aboriginal voices to speak. Over half the essays written are by Aboriginal contributors, and by the artists themselves. It is not done in a tokenistic way. These people are very sophisticated people. In the case of the Yirrkala people, they most probably travel to more places in the world than any of us, and have shaken hands with more dignitaries and presidents than any of you ever will. So they are not unsophisticated people, they are not unaware of where their art goes, they are not unaware of what they are trying to get across and the message they are trying to get across.

That sort of theme, which I really love, is in the catalogue. So you actually read the autobiographical material—people talking about their own paintings, talking about their own experiences, talking about their use of colour, talking about the way they draw, about what they are trying to say.

I think that that sort of thing is really what is missing in previous discourses—the fact that these are very human people. They are very much alive today. They did play left forward for Milingimbi United. They do live very much in the here and now.

To that end we have had a large number of artists actually come to the exhibition. They were involved in the hang of the show and so on. We wanted people to be here to take part and also enjoy the event as much as we did. It is unfortunate that we could not have people here today, but that was because of circumstances beyond our control.

I can't stress too much the historical importance of how this has come together most probably for the first time. We have brought these artworks back from overseas, from all around the world, and it is interesting in fact where they have ended up, in places in Europe, the United States and various places in Australia—in very peculiar places, quite often, and sometimes rescued from garages and people's attics.

I only want to say one other thing, that my involvement with the Wagilag Sisters came about through my relationship with one man, Paddy Dhathangu, who I spent quite a considerable time with in Ramingining and has a core body of work within the exhibition. In the early 80s he completed a series of paintings, which we call single-subject paintings, around the Wagilag Sisters story.
At the time, he was the senior traditional owner of the Wagilag Sisters story, which means he was the senior singer, he was the senior organiser for things to do with the Wagilag Sisters rituals, the stories and the paintings. He happened to be our next-door neighbour, just by accident. He kept a house across the road from us and quite often came and visited. He was very used to talking to outside people, he was very used to talking in many ways. He travelled around the Territory during the Second World War; he had spoken to many Balanda people, many outside people.

He had a particular charm and a particular grace. And there were other people like him, and lots of people who come to this society talk about meeting special people, and that is why I called my catalogue essay ‘Meetings with Remarkable Men and Women’, as they are the people that were particularly remarkable people. Although they had never left the Northern Territory, even, they had a level of sophistication which was pretty astounding, and a human quality of relating to people that you could see why they could organise thousands of people into religious ceremonies from an area of something like about 10,000 square miles, and how they were able to maintain this religious practice and the culture they were making judgments and talking about.

So this person taught me lots of things. It was very difficult, actually, to take part in this exhibition, in many ways, because the whole thing was so personal to me. I didn’t know how I would ever actually put this exhibition on or take part in it; it just became too personal for me and I tried to stay away from it very much, because the memory is very painful.

Extract of a talk by Djon Mundine, Senior Curator of Aboriginal Art, National Museum of Australia, at the conference 'Same but Different: Exhibiting Indigenous Art'.
Aboriginal people in many parts of Australia have taught me to consider country to be a conscious entity. Place is one kind of embodiment of being, and the encounters of living things are recorded there. Signs are memories; they may become obscured, but not, perhaps, lost. We human beings construct the passages of our lives through our cultures and our actions. Different cultures, different actions: different traces. Contrasts between the concreteness of place and the elusive quality of the signatures of our lives are nowhere more vivid than on the frontiers where intercultural encounters produce dense and provocative material and imaginative traces.

In this paper I examine twinned processes: attempts by two different sets of people to socialize each other. I examine the frontier along the Daly River of the Northern Territory around the turn of the century. On the one hand, the Jesuit missionaries there were trying to bring Australian Aboriginal people into an agricultural and Christian way of life. On the other hand, Aboriginal people were attempting to socialize the missionaries and their teachings into their own social networks and cosmology. Much of this analysis is based on an analysis of the diaries the Jesuits kept while at the Daly River from 1886-1899. The over-arching frame is an exploration of a specific kind of place: that known as the frontier. By any measure this
is a site of violence, since one person's frontier is, almost by definition, someone else's home, and the encounter pits a struggle for dispossession against a struggle for survival. The Jesuit diaries enable us to engage with intercultural encounters precisely at those moments when people glimpse the incommensurability of their endeavours, when contradictory and mutually exclusive efforts confront failure, and when tragedy erupts.

The tension between presence and absence is integral to western frontier ideology as it has been put into practice in North Australia. On the one hand the conquerors imagine themselves in the midst of savage people and wild places, and they construct these images around a certain moody presence signalled by adjectives such as treacherous, awesome, fearsome, happy-go-lucky, pristine. On the other hand, the savage person and the wild place are defined by the absence of civilized man (the colonizer), and thus as living absences: tabula rasa and terra nullius. Colonizing practices of the frontier deploy power and knowledge in ways that create absence where before there was specific localized presence. The imagined absence that informs colonizing practices refracts into the land and into the people to become the experience of real absence.

THE BAD AND BEAUTIFUL DALY

In 1886 a group of Jesuit missionaries trekked out to what they thought was a wild place, specifically the Daly River of North Australia, to make contact with wild savages (Indigenous people). They intended to bring to the place the civilizing influence of the cultivated garden, and to the savage the civilizing influences of agricultural labour, Christian marriage, and salvation. Central to their thinking was the view that savages were open either to corruption or to salvation, and that once corrupted they were no longer suitable material for civilization. They were thus in search of a particular type: the pristine savage. They imagined this type as an absence—not only the absence of their European civilization, but an absence of all civilization: a veritable tabula rasa on which they would inscribe redemption through their own cultural/colonizing practices and through the spiritual authority of Jesus Christ.

The missionaries were to become completely disheartened. One of them went mad, others were found guilty of sexual relations with indigenous women and one was sent away in disgrace; many of their most promising converts died, and after starting afresh three times in fourteen years, the mission was closed precipitously because of a decision made overseas.

The Daly River, about 160 km south of Darwin, is inscribed in settler Australian frontier folklore as a place of massively conceived European ventures and monumental failures. According to Ernestine Hill, 'It was stark tragedy on the bad and beautiful Daly, where wily Nature
is ever working to the defeat of man.\(^3\) Home to 'wild blacks', site of massacres and mines, and host to a fair number of the entrepreneurial disasters so dear to Australians, the Daly is situated between the now densely settled city of Darwin and a large sparsely populated region of Aboriginal reserves.

The history of the lower reaches of the river is complex by any standard. Well before Europeans came, there was Macassan contact of some sort; the apparent introduction of the dugout canoe had almost certainly led to an intensification of social networks. From about the 1860s the Darwin hinterland was occupied by settlers from a variety of cultural origins; there were Macassan trepangers, other international traders, surveyors and administrators; there were small-scale miners, both European and Chinese, as well as large-scale mining ventures; there were telegraph operators and government drillers, agriculturalists, pastoralists, and buffalo shooters; there were Chinese traders, plantations, commercial fishermen, Chinese and European, and croc shooters; there were explorers, naturalists, police, drifters, and other adventurers with a variety of motivations; and of course there were missionaries. Aboriginal people had access not only to the standard tobacco, flour, sugar, and tea, but also to alcohol and opium. They had access not just to one set of international ideas and ideals, but to many sets, and they had ample opportunities to play the different groups off against each other, and to sample for themselves a range of ways of living.

This diversity makes for a frenzied and devastating history; in the first few decades of settlement, Aboriginal populations dropped by about 95%.\(^4\) The Aboriginal people along the Daly appear to have been similar to other Aboriginal people in their responses to white invasion. On the one hand they fought Europeans and Chinese, and on the other hand they attached themselves to them for protection, for political advantage, and as a source of tobacco and other exotic items.\(^5\) Little is known of the earliest years. Sowden notes that at Owston's sugar plantation 'the blackfellows give very little trouble now. They did at first—they stole all the stores, but they were punished for it.'\(^6\) Punishment was likely to have taken the form advocated by the proponents of extreme violence—an indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children.

Carried out periodically over large areas, such actions had the effect of drastically reducing Aboriginal populations and demoralising Aboriginal people for decades. The Coppermine massacres of 1884 are a classic example of the search and destroy method of settling country. Several Aboriginal men who were working with white men at the Coppermine near the Daly killed four white men. If, as seems likely, there was a European trigger to the initial violence, it is now obscure. As soon as the word got out, police and civilian volunteers armed themselves to track down and destroy the
murderers. According to Morice, Protector of Aborigines at the time, the 'general belief in the Territory was that they simply shot down every native they saw, women and children included'. Subsequently, diseases devastated local people. The Jesuits witnessed radical population decline, but seemed only to realise the implications of what they were seeing toward the end of their stay.

Such was the situation when the Jesuits arrived: there were European and Chinese settlers, market gardens, plantations, cattle stations, mines, massacres, and commercial fisheries. Their imagined wilderness was an illusion even by their own criteria. The Jesuit writings, and the perspicacious observations of the Norwegian naturalist Knut Dahl, provide an incomparable record of a thin slice of the intense social life on the Daly just before the turn of the century. Since that time the most acute observations have been those of the anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner who was there in the 1930s and 1950s. Aboriginal people were then clustered on farms run by settlers in harsh degrees of poverty; daily life was shot through with violence and degradation. Stanner wrote: 'The river seemed to me a barbarous frontier—more, a rotted frontier with a smell of old failure, vice, and decadence.' As I will discuss in greater detail, he found Aboriginal people in a state of desperate dependence, the authority of the old people in decline, bush tucker scarce, and many people in a state of spiritual crisis or despondency.

In recent years much of the land has been returned to Aboriginal people's control under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976. Stanner's pessimism regarding people's loss of cultural connections to land and law has been overridden by Indigenous bonds of connection. I came into contact with the region through my role in assisting Aboriginal groups in land disputes. At least two major disputes about land among Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory have their roots in the social dynamics of the missionary period at the Daly. I have searched all the Jesuit records available to me for information that might assist in understanding the complex history which underlies these disputes.

In 1998 the Daly retains its reputation as a frontier region. It is home to 'feral' whitefellows, pig shooters, weekend fishermen, and settler entrepreneurs. Although the Jesuits left in 1899, they returned in 1955 to establish a mission settlement called Nauiyu Nambiyu. The Port Keats mission, some 160 kilometres to the south west, was established in 1935. Both of these mission settlements remain in place today. Aboriginal people live in and travel between a number of settlements and outstations.

SETTLEMENT AND SOCIALITY

At the time of invasion Aboriginal people were organized into local groups interconnected within a regional sociality. Regional networks brought people into relationships through marriage,
reciprocity for subsistence organized through mutual foraging rights, and shared responsibilities in religious ritual. All the dimensions in which sociality was fostered came together in the context of land. Rituals were organized around seasonal abundance and celebrated sources of life; marriage, dispute management and religious law and authority were organized, celebrated and regenerated in ritual. In this section I discuss missionary endeavours taking land as the focal point. In the following section I will explore the religious encounter along this frontier of the soul. I do not pursue the issue of marriage. Suffice it to say that the missionaries opposed arranged marriages, and to the extent that they disrupted marriages, they also disrupted the authority of senior men and women. At the same time, their own surreptitious sexual exploits appear to have led local Aboriginal people to consider that the missionaries were trying to marry into the group. On the part of Aboriginal people, there would have been an expectation of reciprocity, while on the part of the Jesuits there was an expectation of submission. All were disappointed.

Many of the missionaries were Austrian; they came to a continent that was foreign to them, and then to a region of the continent that was supremely foreign. One of the most evocative lines from the diary is the description of the Daly River which, the diarist notes with distinct melancholy, looked nothing like the Danube. It had, he proclaimed, 'a soft, soapy taste, like an extract, as it were, of alligators.'

Their intention was to establish a centre to which people would come in order to settle permanently. They followed the model of missionization that had been developed in South America: that of developing self-sufficient agricultural settlements. Knut Dahl commented wryly on the Jesuits' goal of introducing agriculture to Daly River Aborigines:

Let us, the Jesuit argues, first of all persuade these savages to give up their roving life, let us teach them to cultivate the soil, and let us make them understand that their work in this way brings them greater happiness, makes them more care-free than their old life. Then possibly their progeny, the new tribes of settled agriculturalists, may be more susceptible to our religious propaganda.12

The missionaries complained regularly about the mobility of the people they were trying to convert: 'almost every day new listeners take the place of those who preceded them. [And] ... when they come back are as if they had never heard anything about Christianity.'13 Missionaries and Aborigines were operating in very different social and geographical worlds. Missionaries effectively inhabited one place—their mission. They made forays into the surrounding country, and some of them were far more mobile than others, but they almost invariably travelled with mission Aborigines. Their close relationships were always with the very
small group of people who, at any given time, formed the nucleus of the settlement. Aboriginal people, in contrast, lived in and through a far more complex set of geographical, social, and cultural worlds. They camped in many places and periodically visited many institutions of which the mission was only one, and probably a minor one. They were in and out of the mission at a great rate; they had their home countries, their regular ranges (countries where they had various types of rights), and a variety of settlement sites which included the mission, the Coppermines, the Chinese gardens, farms and cattle properties, railway sidings and more. Their social world included Chinese and European miners, Chinese traders, settlers, police, and travellers, as well as all the Aboriginal people of the region with whom they had ties of marriage, trade, and ceremony (including peoples from coast and inland, from north and south). There was an ongoing social and religious life that was totally external to the missions, and which the missionaries sought to stamp out.

The purpose of the mission, as stated, was twofold: to achieve independence from major external support (funds were always a problem), and to teach the Aborigines the meaning of property, labour, and submission to mission authority, by inducting them into an agricultural form of production. There is a pattern to the missionaries' endeavours. Time and again they drummed up a bit of enthusiasm, praised the Aboriginal people for their work, watched them slack off, completed the work themselves, and attributed the completed work to the Aborigines. This form of self-delusion led to some bitter remarks toward the end, but on the whole it seems to have been a successful strategy—not so much to encourage the Aborigines as to encourage the missionaries.

A series of entries shows Fr Kristen engaged in this process:

14/1/88 Charlie is given garden at Hunger Hill to look after. He wants to live there.
18/1/88 Charlie is given seeds to plant shortly thereafter: ‘Charlie has already sowed a part of his garden, he will finish it next week. It is a most commendable effort for this barbarian, unaccustomed to toil, and accustomed to unbridled freedom.’
27/1/88 Fr Kristen finished sowing Charlie's garden.

In addition to the agricultural program, Aboriginal mission people were also encouraged to build houses. Here again, Fr Kristen assisted:

11/2/88 Charlie has put up two huts at Hunger Hill, one for self and Zachary, another for Jacky and Albert.
14/2/88 Fr Kristen roofing Charlie's huts.
21/2/88 Fr Kristen built a fence around Charlie's hut.

At the end of the year Fr Kristen was still at it:

24/12/88 Fr Kristen helping Zachary & Billy to build their houses
26-7/12/88 Kristen putting roofs on native huts.
There is also the story of the missionaries’ attempts to establish their own gardens, which is itself remarkable. O’Kelly summed up the last few years, and they are typical:

In ‘92 a plague of caterpillars necessitated a double sowing of maize; in ‘93 a visitation of rats made it necessary to plant the African corn four times and reduced the harvest to six tons; in ‘94 the ravages of field mice meant that some fields had to be sown three times, and then reeds sprang up and ruined many acres; in ‘96 birds reduced the corn harvest to three tons ... ; in ‘97 intense heat defeated their irrigation and reduced an expected six ton crop of corn to two; in ‘98 the first flood devastated all crops and gardens and the same occurred in ‘99.7

These problems ignore all the human factors. Aboriginal people regularly took food from the gardens rather than storing it (often termed ‘theft’ by missionaries), and regularly destroyed gardens as an expression of anger directed toward the missionaries or toward each other.

The missionaries’ fluctuating ability to support Aboriginal people constitutes one of the most contradictory aspects of their endeavour. When they were flush with food they attempted to bring people in, impose Christian morality on them, and induce them to give up their own way of life in favour of an agricultural mode of subsistence. Thus, for part of almost every year of the whole fourteen years, Aboriginal people were thrown back on regional subsistence and social networks because the mission simply could not support them. A plaintive entry in the 1890 diary hints at the Jesuits’ frustration at their inability to accomplish their sedentarizing project:

They will not stay, however, unless they are supplied with food, they cannot get enough native food for themselves in this region which is largely destitute of it, ... we lack money and certainly will lack money in the future. [22/4/90]

From an Aboriginal perspective it would have been completely self-defeating to make a comprehensive social and subsistence commitment to the missionaries. Given that most Aboriginal people could not survive throughout the year with the missionaries, they had to sustain their relationships to other Aboriginal people and to other settlers. The mission was incorporated into Aboriginal social networks as one more centre where people could go for greater or shorter periods for a broad range of purposes, many of which undoubtedly were incommensurate with missionary purposes.

At the same time that the mission was being incorporated into Aboriginal networks, so too were the missionaries. They studied the local Malak Malak language in order to communicate their Christian message; more importantly, local knowledge enabled their own survival. Throughout the whole period the missionaries were dependent on local native foods. Their range restricted by their investment in and commitment to their settlement and their gardens, they
developed a form of settled hunting and gathering that had clearly detrimental effects on the environment. In 1892 the diarist notes the amount of native game obtained up till August of that year: they had shot 550 kangaroos, 600 geese, 30 pelicans, 30 ducks. The regular mention of cartloads or boatloads of yams and yilik (corms of the lotus lily, *Nelumbo nucifera*) indicate tons of food being brought in, and Fr Mackillop’s comment that lily seeds pickled in brine are quite tasty suggests that they were harvesting surpluses for storage.8

As table 1 shows in detail, year after year the reliance on bush tucker continued. The results were predictable: regular resource areas close to the mission were over-taxed and became sites of contention. Aboriginal people relied on these resource sites for their subsistence, and organized ceremonial events to take advantage of local abundance, only to find that there was no such abundance.

In the short term, the effects of settled hunting and gathering were noticeably destructive. In the long term the missionaries’ impacts were only a small part of a much larger set of colonizing practices. Today, feral pigs have turned over virtually every square inch of the rich Daly swamps, like Nanerain and Pangerain. The noxious weed *Mimosa pigra* is invading the water systems (and during part of the year vast portions of the region are covered with water); it favours ground from which the vegetation has been disturbed.19 Both pigs and *Mimosa pigra* are out of control. In 1998 the future of these homelands looks bleak.

**TAMING THE CROSS**

The missionaries vigorously opposed Indigenous religious practice. In their own accounts they express their theological and practical opposition to Indigenous religion. People were punished for participation in ceremony, and were not allowed to observe taboos or other markers of ritual status at the mission. The diaries are full of references to punishment, but rarely is the mode of punishment stated. Beatings and floggings were regular occurrences, and threats of the punishment of God were also indicated, as in this entry concerning the death of a senior man named Bede:

> Nine weeks ago Fr Conrath told this man not to go to the ‘Karamala’, which is a pagan festival, threatening him with the punishment of the Almighty God if he did go. ‘I shall go’, said the native, ‘let God punish me’. [3/8/98]

The quirky manuscript that Fr Kristen wrote while he was recovering from nervous exhaustion offers glimpses of how Aborigines perceived Christian teachings. He informs us that the Aborigines had formed a punitive view of the crucifixion:

> Of course Fr Conrath spoke mostly on divine mysteries under the cross, the great mysterious sign on the hill. Some Blacks
thought that cross was for hanging them up if they would not yield to his counsels."  

This interpretation of the cross seems certainly drawn from the floggings and other missionary actions. In addition, of course, random violence and all the punitive expeditions and dispersals by other settlers and police contributed to people's understandings of colonization. The quality of mercy was never conspicuous on the frontier; images of a punitive god were given flesh by people's own experiences.

Fr Kristen goes on to tell us that Aboriginal people were querying the social and theological implications of the Christian myth:

In the year 1893 after the usual Sunday instruction in New Uniyah, when I had read and explained the parable of Our Lord, if I remember well, it was the 7th Sunday after Pent. an old man ... came to me and inquired earnestly whether that Master Jesus was a Mallac [Malak], one of their own brown race?

The punitive character of the cross and the story of an Aboriginal Jesus, almost certainly were combined in another ritual which appeared to Fr Kristen to invert Christianity so violently as utterly to defile it. The ritual was called Tyaboi, and Fr Mackillop wrote:

I am about to make a strong assertion; but I believe it to be true. I believe they have human sacrifices, that from time to time one man, with his own knowledge and consent, is offered in sacrifice for the good of his people—offered to the evil spirit whom they so fear. This is the leading feature in the great religious and highly immoral ceremony, which they celebrate every few years. They call it Jaboi.

Mackillop is incorrect. There are absolutely no reports of human sacrifice among the Aboriginal people of Australia, nor are there, to my knowledge, any practices that could reasonably be misinterpreted as human sacrifice. Fr Mackillop's account of Tyaboi is so clearly an account of Christianity that I would suggest that the 'evil spirit' is likely to be God himself: the Father who killed his own son and who, through the missionaries, threatened to kill other men as well. In short, the evidence suggests that the missionaries introduced to the Aborigines of the Daly the concept of human sacrifice to a punitive God.

Fr Kristen recorded in the diary:

'Tyaboi' begins, and the fight of the devil with Christ for the blacks. Benbenyaga (blacks), Chinese garden, Chinese, Coppermines, all mixed up in it—so we have heard from a Christian boy sufficiently grown up to know ... [17/10/93].

On this evidence Tyaboi can be identified as a contact cult, incorporating that which is new and relatively unknown within an indigenous cosmology—to tame, socialize and gain control over that which is wild, unpredictable, and unmanageable. In colonizing contexts, contact cults have an unruly and imaginative capacity to mirror, mimic, transform, destabilize,
deconstruct, parody and politicize the colonizers and the worlds of ideas and material goods they drag along with them.²³

The purposes of Tyaboi would have included that of giving the new people, places and experiences of colonization a place in the indigenous cosmology. Fr Kristen tells us of the Chinese, the gardens, the Coppermines and the Aboriginal people. What he does not tell us, but what an anthropological reading assures us, is that the missionaries too would have been included in Tyaboi. The ritual would almost certainly have included long black robes, and mumbo jumbo in pidgin Malak Malak to mimic the missionaries’ attempts to preach in language. There would have been crosses and odd gestures mimicking communion and other Christian rituals and symbols. There would, in short, have been evidence which for Fr Kristen would have confirmed his fears that Satan was alive and well right there on the Daly.

In sum, Tyaboi seems to have been a ritual designed to tame the punitive practices of the cross, to socialize the missionaries within a regional Aboriginal cosmology, and to bring into being the reciprocities that the missionaries and all the other newcomers on the Daly so constantly refused. Fr Kristen’s discussion of the language of evil includes both his story of a man’s question about an Aboriginal Jesus and the term for the ‘evil spirit’ of indigenous cosmology: ‘Jin-man’. The term resonates with Chinaman, and although that may be an accident, it has a long and disruptive history, as we will see.

THE END

The mission was brought to an abrupt and unexpected end in mid-1899 by a decision made by the European Superiors.²⁴ By 1899 the mission consisted of a large house, a church and school, dormitories, native houses, stables, a printery, granary, and steam engine for the irrigation system. There was a sawmill, wells, pipelines, sheds, stores, and forges. The mission had 2,000 goats, 150 cattle, 130 pigs, and 33 horses.²⁵ And then, over a period of a few days in July 1899, the Aborigines were dismissed, the buildings they had helped to construct were dismantled, and the livestock they had helped herd were sold off. I would guess that the irrigation was cut off to the gardens they had worked as their own. In short, the work of their lives was put up for sale. The former mission was purchased by a well-to-do cattle baron: gardens, irrigation, buildings, livestock—all the product of the labour of Aboriginal people (along with the missionaries) became the property of others.

Absence thus comes full circle, from terra nullius and tabula rasa, through a dialectic of ecological practices that devastated the land and failed to provide a living. The glimpses we have of the life of one of the senior Aboriginal men of the region, Daly, illuminate the exchanges, reciprocities, failures of reciprocity, and, from a
missionary perspective, the final expendability of Aboriginal people. Daly was one of the law men of the region. He had been arrested and tried for murder in conjunction with the Coppermine killings of 1884, and had been acquitted. A few years later he became one of the missionaries' great allies. Daly recruited people, built huts and planted gardens, and like the others he came and went. Although he had promised one of the missionaries to refrain from participating in his own religious rituals, he must have continued his participation, because the missionaries took a set against him. In January 1890 (wet season) he came to the mission very ill and seeking admission:

Daly is in a wretched state, we have judged it better not to admit him to the station because of his hard obstinacy and deceitful character, on the other hand we cannot reject him and expel him by force. He now lies sick out in the open, with his whole family, with no food except what his wife Jinny brings him every day. He has asked whether he is soon going to die. [10/1/90]

On the 13th of the month the issue was decided:

The wondrous Providence of God intervened to remove a great impediment to our work by taking Daly from this life. [13/1/90]

The missionaries refused him a Christian burial, so his own people were free to take his body back to his own country, to the swamp called Woenelen where he was buried in traditional fashion. The place today, like other swamps, is completely rooted up by pigs.

The secular press in Darwin was quick to label the mission a failure, implying that it had little impact on the Aboriginal people, and subsequent discussions tend to reinforce this position. And yet missionaries attempted to suppress initiation ceremonies for young women and men, they attempted to suppress other religious activity; they intervened in mortuary rites, they altered marriages, altered authority relations, and had a noticeable impact on the environments on which they depended. To sum this up as a failure to have an impact, or to assume that the impacts had only been superficial, is to set up the parameters of the frontier: presence disguised as absence. Denial of impact was also a denial of accountability and responsibility. The missionaries and everyone else could rest assured that their departure had no consequences because their presence had had no effects.

SPIRITUAL TRACKS

Yet some Aboriginal people took the Jesuit teachings seriously, seeking to engage with them on a spiritual/theological level. I now turn to this engagement. When Stanner got to the Daly in the early 1930s he encountered a people who were in a state of spiritual despondency. The story of how that came to happen occupied his mind and heart, and his best writings come from his attempt to understand the pain, anger, and emptiness that he felt his close friends were experiencing, as well as their exhilaration at encountering a new revitalising cult. My focus on the
missionaries leads me to emphasize their impacts, but it must be clear that the social conditions Stanner described were brought about by the broader regimes of frontier violence discussed previously. According to Stanner, in 1932 local Aboriginal people had a cultural myth that was in its heart an inversion of the Christian Father and Son. He noted that the two traditions (Christian and local Aboriginal) were 'remarkably parallel institutions about man and his whole situation'. He held the view that there was 'no historical connexion whatever'. I will suggest, of course, that there was an historical connection, and that the two parallel stories were not only about 'man' but also about the Jesuit presence and absence, and thus about local Aboriginal people's prior experience of colonizing Christianity.

In summary form, the myth tells of a great man, Angamunggi, who was killed by his son. The son was named Tjinimin; he seduced his sisters, and then speared his father, while Angamunggi was engaged in religious ritual. The father lived long enough to generate sources of life: permanent fresh water pools, where he left the spirits of the unborn. 'One patrilineal moiety called him "father's father", the other moiety called him "mother's father". Sometimes he was called by both moieties Yila Neki, the Father of Us All'.

Stanner proceeded to uncover a universal spiritual and moral content of this myth. I propose to look at it in its precisely local context. The name 'Tjinimin' seems clearly related to Fr Kristen's Jin-man, and may also be related to 'Chinaman'. As such, he is a cult hero, or an amalgam of cult heroes, and is connected to what we know of Tyaboi, although by Stanner's time Tyaboi was no longer part of the spiritual life of the Daly. The Father/Son myth tells of the son named Tjinimin who creates absence: it speaks of a failure to nurture, a failure to reciprocate, a failure to observe sexual rules. These characteristics clearly mark the missionary endeavours as they are likely to have been perceived by those Aboriginal people who cared enough to take them seriously.

Table 2 is an attempt to discern within a myth collected in the 1930s a temporally distant narrative of the 1886-1899 experience. The left-hand column repeats Stanner's account of the myth; the right-hand column, while lacking artistry, seeks an historical structure within the myth.

We can read this terrible myth of patricide as the missionaries' attack on indigenous religious law: 'Angamunggi sat ... at song and music during a festive gathering of all the clans'—he could have been Daly, or any of the Aboriginal people who worked so hard to keep their culture alive while accommodating invasion.

In his 1959 essay, Stanner tells us something of what had befallen this myth:

In the 1920s a widespread conviction had grown up on the Daly River that their own culture-hero, Angamunggi ... had deserted them. Before I had heard a word of Kunabibi
A religious movement referred to by some as the All-Mother] I had been told that Angamunggi had 'gone away'. Many evidences were cited that he no longer 'looked after' the people: the infertility of the women..., the spread of sickness, the dwindling of game among them.  

A cosmological absence had erupted on this barbarous frontier. An emptiness lurked in the country itself, and in the hearts and minds of its people. Stanner's words suggest that Daly River people had examined their current situation, as if in a looking glass, and had come to the theological conclusion that their life-giving Father (Angamunggi) had abandoned them. The evidence was the loss of life—human life, animal life, and life support systems, the signs of which already were visible in the Jesuit diaries. Life, one might say, was trickling out of the country, and the waters of life no longer seemed perennial.  

Anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt made a similar assessment in 1946 when they spent a few months on the Daly and collected some stories from a man named Matthew Melbyerk who had been with the mission when he was young. His account of 'The Allocation of Food by Jesus' describes the relationships pitilessly. It begins with an account of Jesus feeding his apostles apples (in never-ending abundance), after which they made and ate other foods:

So they returned to their garden. Later they grew wheat, and made flour. Then Jesus made a big damper. When it was ready, they all sat down at the long table and they ate of this damper until they were full. But they did not finish it: Jesus put it away, as he had done with the apple.

And the Father talked to Jesus: 'All of this is for white men—they will have iron, houses and everything.' Thus the Baijang [Father] put motorcars, aeroplanes, houses, horses and so on for all the white people; he also made rifles, guns, pannikins and knives; and Baijang spoke to Christ, 'That is the Dreaming for all of you lot.'

Jesus Christ was on the side of the white people—he gave all that food to them.

Adam had only native food, for Adam and Riva [Eve] were Aborigines. They had nothing when they left the garden owned by God.

Chinamen grew rice and made grass houses: white men saw these, and the Chinamen saw the iron houses: the white men saw the rice, and the Chinamen saw the flour: each bought from the other. Only the Aborigines had nothing.  

Australian Aboriginal people's stories of this type (generally classed under the label 'cargo cult') are only incidentally about material wealth, while in their heart they search for moral relationships between settlers and indigenous peoples. The story of Jesus's allocation of food vividly conveys a people's sense of looking at themselves as if from afar, objectifying themselves as a set of absences and losses. It also conveys with brutal force the failure of reciprocity: 'each bought from the other. Only the Aborigines had nothing.'
and civilized person was an attempt to fill an emptiness with culture; it resulted in the creation of emptiness.

The colonizer denies that his actions have enduring effects. Spiritual traces tell another story. Quite provocatively, Jin-man/Tjinimin seems to have been carried to other parts of Australia, probably through transformations and exchanges of Tyaboi and related rituals. It is possible that Fr Kristen's teachings were later to arise, transmogrified but still wildly appropriate, in other frontier situations. The anthropologists Petri and Petri-Odermann were in Western Australia in the 1960s, and they report the rise of a new cult centred on 'Jinimin-Jesus'. According to what they were told, Jinimin revealed himself to the Aborigines in the east. He had both black and white skin colour, but his message was for Aboriginal people: 'Jinimin had proclaimed that all the land had from the beginning belonged to the Aborigines and that in the future there would be no differences between Aborigines and other Australians—all would share equally in that land'.

Petri & Petri-Odermann call this ritual complex the Jinimin religion, and they report that Jinimin is said to have stated that Aborigines could only bring about this desired state of affairs by adhering to their own traditional Law. He was said to have revealed himself while people were singing song cycles of the Law known as Worgaia, also known as Gadjeri. This Law is the same as the 'All Mother' cult which Stanner encountered in the 1930s and which he describes so eloquently in his portrait of Durmugam. I hear this echo: Angamunggi can sing again, and the land can be restored.

Jinimin, I suggest, is a transformation of Tjinimin and Jin-man, metamorphosed through successive exchanges and performances. (Recall that Fr Kristen recorded the term Jin-man in his discussion that included questions about an Aboriginal Jesus.) I suggest further that while Western Australian revitalization cults have their roots in numerous missionary sites (the Daly Jesuits were not, of course, the only missionaries in Australia), the term Jinimin, signifying Jesus, clearly links the Daly of the 1890s with Western Australia in the 1960s through a path we cannot properly detect. Aboriginal people in Western Australia speak of restoration through Dreamtime action:

The return of the Dreamtime beings ... to their original territories took place expressly on the orders of Jinimin-Jesus (or Our Lord Himself). They march on the underground routes, using camels which carry their belongings including the cult objects. These Dreamtime Magi who travel underground—toward what devastated homes do they trek? And will they regenerate life, land, and law?

The missionaries offered a promise of life, and delivered a punitive god who demanded human sacrifices. They delivered a blow to Indigenous Law, along
with an objectifying awareness of loss and failure. From my western perspective, most of the signs of the passage of their lives are places where the waters of life are drying up—a wilderness of invading settlers, pigs, and weeds. But from an Aboriginal perspective it is possible that conquered space is not empty. Stories of Jinimin and the Dreaming speak of an imagination sharpened and expanded by the experience of the most barbarous of frontiers; they offer evidence of a continuing spiritual presence and an indigenous promise of life. 

DEBORAH BIRD ROSE

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A great man, Angamunggi, was treacherously killed by his son, who had committed incest Angamunggi's daughters. The girls were trusting and, we may presume, innocent. The son, Tjinimin, was filled with guile, malice and lust. Having seduced his sisters, he next speared his father, while Angamunggi sat unsuspectingly, surrounded by his many children, at song and music during a festive gathering of all the clans. The father, in agony and about to die, lingered on to perform a series of marvels [forming a sacred track]. At each resting place he tried unavailingly to staunch the flow of blood from the spear wound in his side [creating permanent fresh water pools, and leaving the spirits of the unborn within them].

...Now, Angamunggi ... is conceived of as man, an immense man of great powers ... One patrilineal moiety called him 'father's father', the other moiety called him 'mother's father'. Sometimes he was called by both moieties Yila Neki, the Father of Us All.

| A great man, Angamunggi, | Senior men (Daly, for example), |
| was treacherously killed by his son, who had committed incest Angamunggi's daughters. | were killed by the missionary figure who had had sex with Aboriginal women, including young women in their care. |
| The son, Tjinimin, was filled with guile, malice and lust. | The missionary figure (filled with guile, malice & lust) |
| Having seduced his sisters, he next speared his father, while Angamunggi sat unsuspectingly, surrounded by his many children, at song and music during a festive gathering of all the clans. | attacks senior Aboriginal men (explicitly defined as such) |
| The father, in agony and about to die, lingered on to perform a series of marvels [forming a sacred track]. At each resting place he tried unavailingly to staunch the flow of blood from the spear wound in his side [creating permanent fresh water pools, and leaving the spirits of the unborn within them]. | Senior Aboriginal men take on an attribute of the crucified Jesus (once thought perhaps to be a Malak Malak man), as well as the qualities of a culture hero. |
| ...Now, Angamunggi ... is conceived of as man, an immense man of great powers ... One patrilineal moiety called him 'father's father', the other moiety called him 'mother's father'. Sometimes he was called by both moieties Yila Neki, the Father of Us All. | Jesus and senior Aboriginal men explicitly brought into one embracing set of social imagery; defined as explicitly Aboriginal. |
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a special debt to a number of generous and open-minded Jesuits, particularly Fr Greg O’Kelly, historian and teacher, and Fr Tom Daly, Archivist at the Provincial Office, Melbourne. Britte Duelke has spent years living with and working with Daly River people, and my appreciation of Daly River culture was sharpened by conversations with her. Darrell Lewis assisted me throughout, and especially in the field portions of the research; Kimberley Reid brainstormed with me at a crucial moment; Robin Torrens offered valuable suggestions on an earlier draft. I thank all three, along with the anonymous referee with the red pen. Earlier drafts of this paper were presented to the European Association for Studies on Australia Conference in Copenhagen (1995) and to the NT Historical Society; many people gave me warm and provocative feedback for which I am grateful. Thanks to Jenny Green for the table of bush foods. The photographs at the beginning of the article and on the cover are reproduced by permission of the Australian Province of the Society of Jesus.

NOTES

1 Translated into English from the original Latin by P. Dalton, and held in the Archives of the Jesuit headquarters in Melbourne, Victoria.


5 The addictive quality of tobacco seems to have been seriously underestimated in analyses of black-white relationships. A good corrective to this view is P. Read & E.J. Japaljarri, The Price of Tobacco: The journey of the Warlimara to Wave Hill, 1928, Aboriginal History, 2 (2), 1978, 141-8. W. Stanner (‘Continuity and Change among the Aborigines’ (1958) in White Man Got No Dreaming: Essays 1938-73, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979, 41-66) is one of the few who gives credence to Aboriginal people’s own statements: ‘The evidence, and discussions with natives who had lived there as children [in the bush], satisfied me that the Aboriginal explanation is correct. They say that their appetites for tobacco and, to a lesser extent, for tea became so intense that neither man nor woman could bear to be without.’ (p.47)

6 Sowden, W., The Northern Territory As It Is, reprinted by the Government Printer of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 1882, p. 107.

7 Quoted in A. Markus, From the Barrel of a Gun: The oppression of the Aborigines, 1860-1900, Victorian Historical Association, Melbourne, 1974, p.18. Morice was subsequently removed from his job because of his attempts actually to protect Aborigines.


linguistic research by Ian Green, Mark Harvey and Nick Reid all are contributing to the written record of the region.


Dahl, In Savage Australia, p. 36. Dahl expected that the missionaries would fail in Australia, and although he attributes the failure primarily to mysterious forces within the Aboriginal people, he noted that cultivation was not enabling a more carefree life (p. 37).


At the time of their last census, the missionaries claimed 219 Christian natives, 39 of whom were at the station, and 180 of whom were in the bush. These figures can be contrasted with other census reports, and while it is clear that the numbers fluctuated enormously in relation to the numbers of settlers in the region (more settlers, more Aborigines). H. Brown reports an estimate of 1000 Aboriginal people in the vicinity of the Coppermines in 1905 (Reports (Geological and General) Resulting from the Explorations made by the Government Geologist and Staff during 1905, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1906, p. 38).


The hill is immediately adjacent to the first site at Uniya.


Kristen, A., Aboriginal Language, Ms., 1899, p. 197.

Kristen, Aboriginal Language, p.198.


O’Kelly (‘The Jesuit Mission Stations ...’, p. 63) writes that by 1899 many factors were converging, and only a large natural reversal was needed to ensure the end of the whole Jesuit mission in the north’. The 1899 flood was just such a large natural reversal.

Forrest, The Spirit of the Daly, p. 33.

This is discussed in R. Alford, ‘The Douglas/Daly Region: A historical overview to 1900’, Report prepared for the National Trust of Australia, Northern Territory, 1989, p. 52.

See Stanner, ‘Continuity and Change ...’ and Stanner, ‘Durumugam ...’.

Stanner, ‘Continuity and Change ...’, p. 56.

Stanner, ‘Continuity and Change ...’, pp. 55-56.
36 SIGNS OF LIFE ON A BARBAROUS FRONTIER

3 Stanner, 'Durmugam ...', p. 84.

3 Stanner's analysis lays the ground for his discussion of the introduction of the 'All-Mother' religious movement from the Victoria River valley. Swain (A Place for Strangers) takes up all these issues in great detail.

3 He had been one of Stanner's main informants as well, and Stanner (Stanner, 'Durmugam ...', p. 88) described him as 'the most intelligent and detached Aboriginal I have known'. If my identification is correct, he was a young man when the mission was there. Fr Kristen spoke well of a young man named Matthew who is probably the same person.


37 Petri & Petri-Odermann, 'Stability and Change ...', p. 266.


39 Swain (A Place for Strangers) provides extensive discussion of paths of portions of the cult and its relation to other cults.


41 Lack of entries in the early years represents the hastiness of the diary entries rather than a lack of reliance on bush tucker.
Australian anthropologists such as Ronald Berndt were keen to present themselves as being on the side of the underdogs, in Berndt's words, by representing 'the virtually inarticulate Aborigines.' This implies not only a traditional mediating role but also an advocacy role for anthropologists. At first glance, for those familiar with the history of Australian anthropology, this seems plausible. However, there is little to show of the advocacy Berndt suggests. J.A. Barnes observed, in 1988, that improvements in the position of Aborigines were not due to anthropological pressure. Also, anthropologists rarely made public comments on the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Australia's then colonial territories of Papua, New Guinea, and Nauru. Nevertheless there is a view, often expressed by anthropologists, that they were (and are) distrusted (if not disliked) by government, as if there was a natural antinomy between administrative interests and academic interests. Sometimes the colonial administrator was anxious about the motives of the anthropologist and concerned that the anthropologist would bring some aspect of colonial administration to public notice. However, an examination of anthropological texts does not reveal this antinomy between anthropologists and government. Secondly, the view that government distrusted anthropologists is a modern invention that masks the relationship anthropologists need(ed) to develop with government and its agents if they are to conduct and, more importantly, continue their research.

Such an appraisal, of course, runs the risk of appearing to elide the ambiguous situation in which anthropologists were often situated. On the one hand, anthropologists were dependent on government(s) for resources and for access to the people studied. On the other hand, anthropologists were disposed towards a sympathetic presentation of a native point of view and social structure. Such a view set up anthropology as a discipline which spoke for native peoples. The British anthropologist Reo Fortune, for instance, stated that the anthropologist...
was the 'friend of the native' who did not 'betray' them to the colonial administration. He observed that the anthropologist was in a somewhat delicate position regarding native society. His conclusions,

may differ so radically from the established practice of his hosts and befrienders of Mission and Government in dealing with that society that he knows beforehand that they will be received with a conservatism that may amount to rejection. This would be bad enough in itself if it were all ... The anthropologist makes public information of facts which native reticence would else have kept private and unknown to Mission and Administration.\(^8\)

It is this position—advocacy and speaking for native peoples—that created the ambiguities and ambivalences found in anthropological writing and public comment. Such insider knowledge inadvertently produces a moral dimension to the positioning of anthropologists which is seemingly denied others who worked in native affairs. This will emerge in the following discussion.

The relationship between anthropologists and (colonial) government enhanced a tendency within anthropological scholarly writing to present a social reality that appears as if native peoples were insulated from the changes brought by settler, mission, and government.\(^8\) Anthropologists tended to express the contemporary social reality elsewhere: in private correspondence, diaries, and confidential reports.\(^8\) Matters to do with the effects of dispossessory occupation was, in the Australian context, reflected in a contempt for ethnography based on 'acculturated' Aborigines.\(^8\) In fact it can be argued that the ethnography produced in the three decades after 1926 when the Chair of Anthropology at the University of Sydney was established hardly deals with culture contact or social change. This paper, however, is not concerned with an analysis of private and public discourses but the broader question of academic and civil freedom, of how the academy deals with public dissent that threatens the viability of a research program or perhaps the institution itself.\(^12\)

Issues of academic and civil freedom are not solely the domain of Australian anthropology. Funding bodies often reflect, albeit covertly, the national interest. There are a number of American examples that are relevant. During and after the Pacific War, the American military employed anthropologists to undertake research in Micronesia: Glen Alcalay found it 'troubling that anthropologists ... did not raise more of an objection concerning their role in aiding the colonial project in Micronesia'.\(^13\) Glenn Petersen, in a paper delivered to the American Association of Anthropologists, articulated similar views.\(^14\) Project Camelot, initiated in 1964, likewise presented ethical and moral dilemmas for anthropologists. Camelot was a project sponsored by the United States Department of Defence to study areas of insurgency and potential revolution in the
Third World, and to ascertain ways to offset such developments. Kathleen Gough, one of the main critics of Camelot, argued that anthropology had served government, empire, and capitalism, a criticism frequently levelled at the discipline.\textsuperscript{15}

Australian academics, in the period under discussion, were closely associated with government and were generally uncritical of government Aboriginal policy and practice.\textsuperscript{16} International criticism over the treatment of Aborigines enhanced the need for government and the academy together to maintain silence, or restore silence. I have previously examined why Australian academics were so supine when it came to public criticism of the treatment of Aborigines by examining the treatment of Ralph Piddington by the Australian National Research Council (ANRC) for his public criticism of the treatment and conditions of Aborigines in north-west Western Australia.\textsuperscript{17} My conclusion was that the overriding explanation was the close association between government and academia. This reluctance is partly explained by their dependence upon governments, both state and federal, for research funds, and in the case of the ANRC obtaining permission for research workers to work in remote parts of Australia, particularly north-west Australia, and its colonial territories.

This historical relationship has created ethical difficulties for anthropologists, funding bodies, academic institutions, and government. There was (and still is) something inherently tricky about being an anthropologist. To maintain and sustain the discipline, anthropologists needed to assess their political circumstances, obligations, opportunities, and risks.

The ANRC was formed in 1919 to be Australia's primary link with the International Research Council and other international scientific institutions. Its membership, limited to leading scientists, made it an influential body with government. It was a key body in promoting the formation of a chair of anthropology which it did through the Pan Pacific Congress in 1923, and in representations to government. The Congress was a significant moment in the formation of a chair. Elkin argued that 'the initial success arose from the standing of the Pacific Science Congress, the status of the [ANRC], and the calibre of the individual scientists concerned.'\textsuperscript{18} Nevertheless, for Elkin the Australian anatomist and diffusionist Grafton Elliot Smith was 'the key figure' in the establishment of the chair.\textsuperscript{19} It was he who was 'consulted by the Rockefeller Foundation about ... a Chair in the University of Sydney and about the field work which was proposed in connection with it.'\textsuperscript{20}

The Rockefeller Foundation was interested in having discussions with the commonwealth government and scientists with respect to the possibility of carrying on 'investigations of the Australian
Aborigines'; in the words of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation:

Our position is that if the Australian Universities either individually or collectively have or wish to develop plans for studies of aboriginal peoples, and if they need financial assistance in carrying out these plans and care to approach the Rockefeller Foundation with respect to such assistance, we are prepared to sympathetically consider such proposals ....

As to the scope of the studies, this will depend upon the resources, the personnel and the plans of the Australian Universities ...

The types of studies ... might include not only such items as are regularly thought of as falling under the general subject of anthropology, but also those which would include what might be called immunology and comparative physiology on the one hand and ethnology, social customs, and organisation on the other.21

The Foundation agreed to make appropriations to the ANRC for anthropological research for an amount not exceeding $US250,000 a year for five years, 'the amount contributed by the Foundation to be determined by the amount contributed for similar purposes from other sources'.22 There were no funds forthcoming from local or international funding bodies other than the commonwealth and state governments.

At its meeting of 30 July 1926 the ANRC accepted the offer from the Rockefeller Foundation, and appointed an Advisory Committee on Anthropology which would make recommendations for anthropological research. The organization of field research would be in the hands of the Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney and the committee, which included representatives of the states, commonwealth and the ANRC.23 With the exception of the initial meetings, the committee met in Sydney; this had the effect of increasing the power of the chair and those Sydney-based members who attended. By the end of the 1920s the chair was increasingly influential in the choice of researcher and field site.24 The geographic scope of research under the auspices of the committee included Australia, its territories, and Melanesia.25

John Mulvaney argues, rightly, that Ralph Piddington's treatment by the ANRC was possibly the 'first of several blatant denials of academic (and civil) freedom to anthropologists. Such cases involved a government instrumentality acting in concert with the often sympathetic collaboration of the relevant timid or politicised academic establishment'.26 It is this 'often sympathetic collaboration' with government that I want to examine in this paper by focusing on the treatment of Ralph Piddington and Paul Kirchhoff by the ANRC.27 Secondly, I want briefly to discuss a postwar example—Peter Worsley. Here the Australian government refused Worsley entry to Papua New Guinea because it believed that Worsley's presence would be detrimental to the good order of government. What characterizes the actions of the academic
hierarchy in these cases is its unquestioning acceptance of the situation as stated by the relevant government instrumentality. Piddington, Kirchhoff, and Worsley were victims of the academy's timidity and complicity, and its sympathetic collaboration with government to stifle academic and civil freedom.

Piddington was not the only anthropologist to draw attention to the plight of Aborigines, nor were Piddington, Kirchhoff, and Worsley the only anthropologists to be victimized or hindered by the academic hierarchy because of their publicly expressed views and opinions, or membership of the communist party. Donald Thomson, a Melbourne biologist and anthropologist, by his criticism of missionaries in Cape York Peninsula, drew the disapproval of the ANRC, and later A.P. Elkin, professor of anthropology from 1934 until 1956. Thomson did not, after his initial funding in 1928, receive any further funding from the ANRC. When Donald Thomson wrote a number of articles for the Melbourne Herald (December 1946) and the Sydney Morning Herald (January 1947) critical of the treatment of Aborigines in the Northern Territory, Elkin came to the defence of the government and accused Thomson of exaggeration. Elkin, through his association with mission bodies, encouraged them to write to the editors of these papers criticizing and questioning Thomson's knowledge.

Between August 1944 and March 1946 Ronald and Catherine Berndt undertook a survey of the conditions and welfare of Aboriginal pastoral workers employed on Vestey's pastoral stations in the Northern Territory. Appalled and outraged by what they saw, these two young anthropologists kept both E.W.P. Chinnery, Director of Natives Affairs in the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Advisor on Aborigines, and Elkin informed of not only what they saw but how they proposed the situation could be improved. At the end of 1946 they produced a report with the expectation that it would be published. Elkin, however, advised them against publication unless they removed the names of the pastoral company and the pastoral stations. He maintained this position until his death in 1979: it was not until 1987 that a version of the report was published.

Olive Pink publicly drew attention to the 'white man's misuse of the Aboriginal population', in her address to the ANZAAS conference of 1935. She argued that the 'men who knew most' about conditions in central Australia, the anthropologists, missionaries, and administrators, worked together to 'camouflage the true, deplorable, state of affairs there' and 'kept... silent about the true situation of the Aborigines'. As a result she made herself unpopular with Elkin and the ANRC. She returned to the field but her work was marginalized and her funding ceased after 1936.
Olive Pink was in her mid-forties when she accepted an invitation from Raymond Firth, acting Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, to enrol as a non-matriculated student in anthropology. Pink had returned from a trip to central Australia during which she had seen first-hand some of the appalling abuses of Aborigines. This trip had increased her interest in anthropology and 'suggested to her that the needs of and interests of Aborigines might be advanced if anthropologists were able to work among them'. She was moved enough to resign from her government position and pursue anthropology full-time. Pink, from this time, was an advocate for Aboriginal people and she fought for the improvement of their conditions and treatment throughout her life. She was critical of anthropologists, missionaries, and government officials who in turn created difficulties for Pink. Marcus argues, convincingly, that Pink's marginalization was due primarily to the contrary position she took with regard to knowledges produced by male anthropologists: 'Pink's interests in the real state of Aboriginal Australians, in their economic and sexual exploitation, in their poverty, health, and deaths, ran counter to the notions of pure science being purveyed in her university seminars'. Yet she was unable to further her anthropological studies because she lacked formal qualifications and this was used against her when she continued to challenge the 'true situation' in central Australia. Cheater contends that Pink discovered 'that an emotional attachment to the Aborigines could not be combined with the scientific study of the Aborigines. When the "men of science" forced her to choose between academic recognition and what she saw as a betrayal of a confidence [to her Aboriginal informants], Olive rejected anthropology'.

In 1938 when she decided to withdraw from anthropology Elkin supported depositing her records of Walbiri secret life for safe-custody. Elkin informed the ANRC that her reason for 'desiring to do this is that she will not break any faith with the Aborigines who entrusted the information to her'. He did not think the discipline would lose anything because 'the matter stored consists mainly of linguistic records of myths and descriptions of certain rites, but mainly the former, and such tabulation is not Miss Pink's strong point. The general principles of the secret life as far as she was able to obtain have been written up by her in her report which she presented to me'.

From then on Pink no longer worked as an anthropologist, nor did she publish any of her earlier research. Pink herself offered an explanation for not publishing her research:

anthropology in the hands of administrators, patrol officers, cadets and missionaries, is being used to dominate and enslave [Aborigines] further...to turn them from proudly independent landowners into regimented serfs...or encouraged derelicts
and diseased 'hanger's on'... on Mission
reserves, or on camps (useful as brothels) -
near white mining camps and settlements
and at station homesteads.4°

I. 'IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUS ANIMUS'

Ralph Piddington was an anthropological
researcher with the ANRC at La Grange
Bay, north-west Western Australia in 1930
and 1931. Soon after his return to Sydney,
in January 1932, he was interviewed by a
Sydney weekly, *The World*. In the
interview, entitled 'Aborigines On Cattle
Stations Are In Slavery', he cited specific
cases of gross racial discrimination and
violence. *The World* commented that 'his
observations reveal slavery of natives,
trafficking in lubras, and the murdering
and flogging of aborigines by white men—
similarly disclosed by Francis Birtles in his
statements to *The World* regarding
conditions in the Northern Territory.' The
response from the department of Home
Affairs that Birtles's allegations of ill-
treatment were not 'sufficiently definite to
warrant official inquiries show that the
Department knows nothing of affairs in
the northern parts of the Commonwealth',
said Mr Piddington. 'In fact, any inquiry
would be fruitless unless it was conducted
by persons who understand the native
mentality and are known and trusted by
the natives. It is difficult to obtain definite
evidence because so many white men are
implicated and the natives are suspicious
of anyone whom they do not know, nor
have white men in general given them any
reason for confidence.'4° He added that

abuses at La Grange Bay were typical of the
state of affairs in Western Australia.

Piddington had previously raised these
matters with A.O. Neville, Chief Protector
of Aborigines in Western Australia, as well
as bringing to his notice the provision of
alcohol to Aborigines and the
misappropriation of government rations
designated for aged and infirm
Aborigines. Neville's response was to have
them investigated by the very people who
Piddington claimed were either involved
or had previously ignored abuses. When
Piddington's published allegations finally
reached Neville, Neville claimed they were
'exaggerated' and 'misleading', and
countered by accusing Piddington of
drunkenness, singing the 'Internationale'
and waving the Red Flag, abducting an
Aboriginal woman, and removing
Aboriginal men from a government
reserve without permission. The ANRC
Executive Committee was quick to
support Neville.4° They 'deplored' the
action of Piddington:

The Executive Committee is in entire
agreement with you [Neville] that any such
statements that Mr Piddington desired to
make public, should first have been
submitted to your Department. The
Executive considers that Mr Piddington's
actions constitute a grave abuse of the
hospitality extended to him in Western
Australia.4°

To Piddington they wrote that had they
'thad those reports [from Neville] before it
at the time you applied to the Rockefeller
Foundation for your present fellowship
[PhD], such support as the Council then gave your application would have been withheld. There was little attempt to investigate the ‘truth’ of Piddington’s allegations. Rather there was an immediate reprimand, and the discussion focused on his behaviour rather than the substance of his criticism. Despite Piddington’s clear statement that he had brought these matters to Neville’s attention the ANRC assured Neville that there would not be a recurrence of such incidents.

Those researchers who could have supported his observations, such as A.P. Elkin and Gerhardt Laves, an American linguist who had also worked at La Grange Bay, were used to undermine Piddington’s credibility. Elkin wrote to Ernest Mitchell, Chief Protector of Aborigines at La Grange, that he ‘knew the situation in the west’ but Piddington had ‘pushed into the press with his criticism a little too soon, before having reported to the Research Council, and apparently before having satisfied the Western Australia authorities that he had consulted them.’ In the following year Alexander Gibson, honorary secretary of the ANRC, pointed out to the Rockefeller Foundation that Elkin had spent ‘the greater part of two years in the North-West ... among ... the same people and the same type of people with whom so much friction has occurred in the case of [Piddington],’ and that Laves had worked with Piddington. Neither supported Piddington’s observations. Gibson acknowledged that Elkin, by then chair of the committee for anthropology, was ‘not very favourable to including Piddington again in the team of anthropological workers.’

The Rockefeller Foundation, on the other hand, took a different position. It recognized that those who ‘would prefer charges’ against Piddington ‘would appear to be officials who might have been irked by Mr Piddington’s criticism. Support for such a possibility would seem to be indicated by the length of time that intervened between Piddington’s misconduct in Western Australia and the forwarding of charges to you [by Neville].’ On the same day the Rockefeller Foundation reassured Piddington that ‘since your work ... has been satisfactory, your position with us is not altered by any information that we have received to date.’ This contrasts with Donald Fisher’s claim that the Rockefeller Foundation exercised considerable control over British research institutions that it funded. In Australia the Rockefeller Foundation expressed no desire to dictate ‘policy to the ANRC’ and had no interest in Piddington’s behaviour nor his political opinions.

Gibson wrote to Douglas Copland, Fellowship Adviser to the Rockefeller Foundation for the Social Sciences in Australia and New Zealand, that although the Rockefeller Foundation authorities ‘would be glad if we employ’ Piddington again, it ‘would not be possible to send him to Western Australia’ if he returned to
Soon after, Copland informed Gibson that Piddington had been offered continued work in London 'devoting himself specifically to the study of African problems and languages in preparation for his field research Fellowship.' Gibson was relieved: 'the whole position has been one of great difficulty, and the problem will be more or less solved by the departure of Piddington for fresh fields, in a new continent.'

Piddington, while he was not forced out of Australia, was because of his actions unable to find work at the University of Sydney which had the only Department of Anthropology in Australia. He completed his PhD and remained at the London School of Economics. In 1938, he was appointed lecturer-in-charge in anthropology and keeper of the Anthropology Museum at the University of Aberdeen. He returned to Australia in 1944 to work with the Australian Army's Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs. In 1945 he was second-in-command to Colonel J.K. Murray at the School of Civil Affairs, Duntroon (later the Australian School of Pacific Administration), which was responsible for training officers to work in the Australian territories of Papua and New Guinea. He returned to Britain in 1948 to take up the appointment of Reader in Social Anthropology in the University of Edinburgh. In 1949 he was appointed foundation Professor of Anthropology at the University of New Zealand (Auckland), a position he held until his retirement in 1972.

II. AN 'UNDISIRABLE PERSON TO ENTER THE BRITISH DOMINIONS'

Paul Kirchhoff studied Protestant theology and comparative religion at Berlin and Freiburg, and psychology and ethnology at Leipzig, where he developed an interest in the native cultures of the Americas. Until 1929 he served as a staff member of the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde. He then worked under the linguist and ethnographer Edward Sapir at the University of Chicago between 1929 and 30. At the end of 1931 he joined the International Institute of African Languages and Culture. From there he unsuccessfully applied for entry to South Africa to conduct research into 'social change and social stratification and its function.' He was advised by Malinowski to apply for a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship from the ANRC.

Raymond Firth wrote to Malinowski that he was proposing Kirchhoff as a 'possible candidate for a research fellowship before the ANRC Anthropological Committee next meeting June 20th.' He advised Malinowski to get Kirchhoff to submit an application 'after the type of thing I sent a copy of to Camilla [Wedgwood]. Firth thought there may be problems over Kirchhoff's (alleged) Communism':

I'm not broadcasting it, but I can't keep entirely silent on his African episode. I have told [T.G.H.] Osborn [Professor of Botany, University of Sydney] ... who is a decent person. It is important I think to have Kirchhoff backed in this case by English names. This is Osborn's suggestion ... but I
imagine the effect [on] a righteous God-fearing British committee of the bundle of persons you cite behind a man whom the colonial office says is unacceptable—for Haddon or Marett or Elliot Smith...to write and say that he is a clean living person ... I can't leave the ANRC entirely in the dark ... I hope that this will suit the circumstances. Well backed by British of unquestioned purity.

Kirchhoff wanted to research the effects of 'western influence on native civilization' in an ex-German colony, preferably in Japanese Micronesia, although the negotiations with the ANRC was with a view to Kirchhoff proceeding to an island [Nauru] in the Pacific under the administration of the Commonwealth of Australia.

On September 2, 1932, the ANRC decided to offer him a fellowship and advised him by cable. Ten days later 'an officer called from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's office, with a cable from the British Government' in which it was claimed Kirchhoff was a 'notorious communist' and an 'undesirable person to enter British dominions' who had already been refused entry to South Africa to do anthropological work. Soon after, the official provided them with a 'confidential document' which showed Kirchhoff and his wife had used anthropology as a 'cloak for communistic activities in England'; in return Henry Chapman, treasurer of the ANRC, provided all the ANRC's files on Kirchhoff to the Attorney-General's office. The Australian government, acting on behalf of the British government, suggested that the ANRC 'might decide' to withdraw its offer to Kirchhoff to which Chapman and George Julius, president of the ANRC, acquiesced. Kirchhoff was notified that the offer was withdrawn.

Julius and Chapman were subjected to considerable pressure by the Australian government: 'A message has been received from Canberra urging that the ANRC make every effort to prevent the Australian Government being forced to exclude Dr Kirchhoff and his wife from Australia.' They explained to the Executive that 'an application has been made, or is again to be made by the German Government for the return of the Mandated Territory [New Guinea], and that it was not desirable that the British Government should bar Kirchhoff from coming to Australia', and the British Government 'would be just as embarrassed if Kirchhoff went back to Germany and said I am not to land in Australia.'

To ensure that Kirchhoff did not attempt to enter Australia the ANRC cabled both Malinowski and Seligman seeking their assurances that he would not come. Sir David Orme Masson, ex-president of the ANRC and Malinowski's father-in-law, also wrote to him at the request of the ANRC, 'pointing out that the Kirchhoff matter was not to be given publicity'. The ANRC insisted that Malinowski, Seligman, and Firth not divulge the reason for the
withdrawal of their offer to Kirchhoff. Malinowski and Seligman agreed they would not tell Kirchhoff, and they assured the ANRC that he would ‘waive any claim of a fellowship’. Masson was ‘pretty sure our London friends and Kirchhoff himself will keep quiet about it’, although the ‘London’ anthropologists were inclined to ‘view leniently all sorts of erratic social and political theories’.€9

The Executive expressed their unhappiness with Firth for withholding information regarding Kirchhoff’s barring from South Africa, and his ‘communist activities’. Julius stated that the ANRC ‘should have been informed of all the facts of that kind. It puts us in a very difficult position’. It was further reported by Chapman that Firth considered ‘an injustice had been done to Kirchhoff but such sentiments had ‘to go by the board when it is a question of embarrassing the British Government’. Firth, because he was ‘not bound by any of the promises of confidence [Chapman] gave the Attorney-General’, was not told of the deliberations of the Executive.70

Malinowski, uneasy about the explanation from the ANRC, wondered if Firth knew the reasons, other than the potential embarrassment of the British government, why Kirchhoff was refused entry to Australia; in fact he ‘would be grateful’ if Firth devoted his ‘energies to find out what the accusations against Kirchhoff have been and by what means they reached Australia. It would be extremely valuable in clearing up his character or else convicting him of his guilt in my eyes.’ Unfortunately Firth could not enlighten him.

Privately Seligman and Malinowski were concerned about Kirchhoff’s treatment. Seligman, who had ‘seen a good deal’ of Kirchhoff, and from discussion with colleagues, concluded in a letter to Gibson that ‘a number of us, including myself, ... are not prepared to accept as valid the reasons alleged for refusing him a visa for the African colonies’.72 Malinowski thought the ‘whole affair’ was a mistake either on the part of the ‘secret police service or else some personal grudge of some important person’. He was ‘absolutely convinced’ that Kirchhoff was ‘completely innocent’ of anything but ‘what he admits he has done, and that is nothing more than writing one or two articles to a perfectly open and official student paper and sympathising with the communist cause in an amateurish, no doubt silly manner and that was years ago’. He thought most ‘young people with spirit’ have passed through a stage where they have seen themselves as revolutionaries or communists. There was a distinction between this, which was ‘completely innocent and irrelevant’, and ‘underhand plotting’. The persecution of people, like Kirchhoff, for ‘silly or uncongenial opinions, openly published, by the weighty machine of secret service and punitive measures’, was ‘nothing short of criminal’. Nonetheless, if he suspected Kirchhoff of the ‘underhand plotting’ he ‘would naturally wash my hands of him’.
Malinowski was dissatisfied with the way the ANRC had behaved. Because of his close association with the Rockefeller Foundation he felt he could influence their decisions with regard to continued funding of the ANRC. He wrote to Firth, 

I know that the Rockefeller Foundation are keenly interested in Kirchhoff. He has been now again granted a sum of money to study with me here to tide him over the next session and to allow him to publish some of his material collected in America. I certainly shall not shield the ANRC against the displeasure of the Rockefeller Foundation, if they have acted without due pressure from other quarters. For your Research Council living now on the Rockefeller Foundation, could have considered that this man was working for two years in the United States under direct supervision of Professor Edmond [sic] Day, now Director of the Social Science Department, Rockefeller Foundation. Since the Rockefeller Foundation exercises a very careful supervision of their students it is hardly likely that they should have for two years harboured a dangerous and criminal person, so dangerous and criminal that he cannot be sent on a coral atoll, inhabited perhaps by a few hundred Kanakas.

There was no public protest from London and Kirchhoff, who faced the prospect of returning to Germany, stayed quiet. When his Rockefeller Foundation fellowship ended Kirchhoff moved to Ireland; from there he wrote to Malinowski about the changing situation in Germany and how he could not envisage himself returning. He hoped for work in the United States probably at Harvard University. In this Malinowski encouraged him as he realize that Kirchhoff would no longer obtain work in Britain or its dominions and territories. In 1939 he was stripped of his German citizenship; he took out Mexican citizenship in 1941. He was employed by the Museo Nacional de Antropologia, and in 1955 he was a co-founder of the Escuela Nacional de Antropologia e Historia and at the same time held a professorial chair in the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, a position he held until his retirement in 1965.

III. 'A PERSON WHO MIGHT IMPEDE OR DISTORT OUR WORK'

The Research School of Pacific Studies in the Australian National University (ANU) was to be a place of international standard research on the Pacific. Part of its charter was to attract and recruit postgraduate scholars from overseas. In 1951 Peter Worsley, a returned serviceman and Cambridge graduate, was awarded a PhD scholarship in the ANU. His intention, supported by S.F. Nadel, Professor of Anthropology in the ANU, was to conduct fieldwork in the highlands of New Guinea. However, the university was informed that Worsley would not be granted a permit to enter PNG. His membership of the Communist Party was sufficient to make him a risk to the good order of the territory. Peter Worsley had earlier been banned from entering Britain's East African territories. It is likely this was unknown to the ANU at the time although
it was most certainly conveyed to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) by British intelligence.\textsuperscript{77}

Peter Worsley arrived in Australia on 3 November 1951. It was planned that Worsley and his wife would sail to New Guinea in June 1952. On May 5 1952 the University forwarded to the Department of Territories individual applications to enter the joint Territory and on 26 May received a reply saying the issue of permits had not been approved. At the ANU’s Council meeting of 27 June 1952 the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Douglas Copland, reported that Worsley had ‘not been told the grounds on which the Minister’s decision was taken officially but the Minister had granted the Vice-Chancellor a confidential interview.’ The Minister authorized Copland to give this information to Worsley in confidence, which he did. Worsley, not satisfied, sought from Territories official confirmation of the reasons for refusal and was informed only that the decision had been made personally by the Minister, Paul Hasluck. He asked if Hasluck could inform him of ‘the grounds upon which this decision was made’. Hasluck replied:

\begin{quote}
This decision was made in conformity with our established policy in regard to admission of Australians into the Territory and was only reached after full and careful consideration of the information placed before me. It is unlikely that the decision should be varied.\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

A month later the ANU Students’ Association wrote to the Minister:

\begin{quote}
The students of the Australian National University condemn the unexplained action of the Minister ... in refusing permission to a student of anthropology of this university to proceed to New Guinea to undertake fieldwork essential for the completion of his PhD degree. It is the opinion of the student body that this action, so long as the Minister refuses to give reasons for it, constitutes an arbitrary interference with, and definite threat to academic freedom and liberty of enquiry, and cannot fail to have detrimental effect upon the work of the University.\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

Hasluck replied that academic freedom had nothing to do with the case: he had ‘exercised the powers and discharged the responsibility placed upon me in exactly the same way as I should have done in the case of an applicant from any other calling ... In case there is any misunderstanding I should like to add that the grounds for refusal ... had nothing to do with any question related to the applicant’s personal character or personal habits.’\textsuperscript{80} The Students’ Association found Hasluck’s reply unsatisfactory. They were dismayed that Hasluck acted on the basis of unspecified information withheld from public scrutiny: they urged the Minister to ‘reveal the content and sources of his “information” ... in order to put an end to the growing fear in this University and elsewhere that both personal and academic freedom are under attack.’\textsuperscript{81}

Concerned that it may have acted too hastily in accepting Hasluck’s decision, the
Council wanted to ensure that there was not a 'question of principle [academic freedom] involved'. Copland assured them that there was not. But because the Students' Association had made the issue public Copland sought Council's support for the following statement:

It was true that a Scholar of the National University had been refused a permit to enter New Guinea ... It is understood that this refusal was on the grounds that would have applied to any citizen of Australia whatever his occupation or circumstances. As a member of the Australian community the Scholar was subject to the same administration and legal conditions as any other citizen. The fact that he was to pursue work in New Guinea as part of his course for a degree in the National University did not give him any standing other than the standing that any other citizen would have.

The Council approved of the Vice-Chancellor's statement. It was not considered that his membership of the communist party led to different treatment. The issue of academic freedom was elided:

It may be argued that this is an infringement of academic freedom. This argument cannot be sustained. A member of the University staff in respect of security regulations is in no different position to that of an ordinary citizen.

Hasluck, after questioning in Parliament, explained his decision:

[A] system requiring people to obtain permits ... has been in operation for more than twenty years. During that period ... two principles have been applied. First we have always tried to keep out of the territory ... persons who, because of lack of means or weakness of character, might constitute in the territory something of the nature of a class of poor whites ... The existence of such a class would be an embarrassment to us. Action in this case was not taken under that heading ... Secondly, we have always refused to admit certain people to the territory because we do not wish to have in the territory persons who, by their activities, might impede or distort our work, or in other ways prevent Australia from discharging fully its responsibilities to the native peoples under trusteeship. The gentleman in question, by reason of his political affiliations, definitely comes within that class of person. All powers with any responsibility for the administration of dependent territories and colonial areas have realised in the last two or three years that a great deal of mischief can be done and much harm done to native peoples by persons holding certain views who go to such territories with the express purpose of trying to distort and misrepresent the work that is being done for the advancement of native peoples. In this case certain information was placed before me. In view of that I felt I was completely justified in refusing to issue a permit [to Worsley] in order to avoid the risk of damage being done to our work in New Guinea. In fact, I should have been lacking a sense of responsibility if I had issued a permit.

He added that the previous Labor Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, had set down a process for dealing with security matters, 'strictly adhered to constantly by this Government, [which] distinctly provides
that the source of information in such matters shall not be discussed in public or made the subject of statements in this House.'

The ANU was keen to point out that it was not interested in the political affiliations of its staff nor had it been 'influenced by reports that have been received in a very few cases from official sources on the political views of applicants.' Although the government had 'not at any time sought to interfere in appointments, or to exercise control over the university' the University thought it unwise given the circumstances when so much attention is being given to so-called subversive activities, and when there is a certain amount of nervousness in the community ... to establish a special position for itself.' The University was prepared in matters to do with security to acquiesce to government requirements. Much of the argument in support of the government's action to deny Worsley entry to Papua New Guinea was justified on two points. Firstly, that the government had the power to refuse entry; and secondly, that members of the University could not 'demand special privileges not accorded other citizens'. It was in this way that the University could situate Worsley's case as outside matters of academic (and civil) freedom. Initially it did not consider it to be an issue of academic let alone civil freedom despite statements by the Student's Association to the contrary.84

The Board of Graduate Studies, after discussion, had 'decided to ask Professor Nadel to recommend to the Board plans for Worsley's future'; it was subsequently decided to seek permission for Worsley to carry out anthropological research at the Groote Eylandt Mission Reserve in the Northern Territory. Worsley was, after some delay, granted permission to enter the reserve. This, in part, reflects a differing perception of Aboriginal people in contrast to Papuans and New Guineans, international pressure, and a differing colonial enterprise. Nevertheless, Worsley, in 1992, stated that the intelligence services 'finally achieved their objective: forcing me out of anthropology. When I was told that I would never get an anthropological post, I decided I would have to turn to sociology.'85

Worsley was not the last ANU scholar to be refused entry, nor the only scholar concerned about past communist affiliations. Jeremy Beckett, for example, a scholar from University College, London, was likewise refused entry to PNG in the mid-fifties.86 Others, such as Oskar Spate, who was appointed to the chair in geography, was anxious lest his membership of the party when he was at Cambridge be used against him should he seek entry to PNG. It had already been used against him by Richard Casey who had blocked his projected appointment as First Commissioner of the South Pacific Commission.87 Hasluck assured Spate that he would not be refused entry, and in the same year that Worsley was refused entry, Spate was part of a group from the ANU that investigated economic and other
matters associated with the territory. Max Gluckman, a visiting professor of anthropology at the ANU, was refused entry in mid-1960 because of his communist party affiliations.88

CONCLUSION

The parallels between Kirchhoff and Worsley are many: British intelligence informing the Australian government agency, the sympathetic collaboration between the academy and the government, and the uncritical acceptance of what were allegations by a security organization.89 In the case of Kirchhoff, the issue of national security was paramount in the eyes of the academic body. Where issues of security, or more precisely membership of the Communist Party, were alleged by a security service, the academic body elided the problem of academic freedom. The ANU finally recognized that their treatment of Worsley was an issue of academic freedom.90 It therefore addressed the problem of academic and civil freedom, but in the process it accepted without question information placed before it, albeit in an around-about way, by the ASIO which denied such freedoms.

Piddington's alleged communism did not cause the same concern with either the government or the security services. There seems little doubt that the Executive Committee of the ANRC was anti-communist which is reflected in Piddington's strenuous denial of any association with the Communist Party or communists. Raymond Firth wrote that Piddington was 'what was called rather "wild" at times. The "Red Flag"/Internationale incident was such a wild prank. He and some friends got a bot [sic] drunk and wanted to annoy the good bourgeoisie: it was comic, not serious. But it marred the seriousness of his allegations.'91 Firth was well aware that Kirchhoff's communism was sufficient to cause problems with the Executive Committee and attempted to keep this knowledge from them.

Worsley, Kirchhoff, and Piddington reveal how a timid or politicized academic establishment acted in concert with a government instrumentality to stifle academic and civil freedom. The ANRC acted in concert with the government to stifle the civil rights of Kirchhoff, and in like manner it acted in concert with Neville to deny Piddington academic and civil freedom. In both instances they did not reflect on, nor interrogate, the evidence provided by the government authority; rather the information against both Kirchhoff and Piddington was uncritically accepted, and acted upon. In like manner the ANU, largely because it was dependent upon the commonwealth government for funding, was reluctant to create a situation where it would publicly support Worsley.

In contrast to the intolerant and censorious nature of Australian academic culture was an international academic
culture represented by the Rockefeller Foundation. It was tolerant of diversity, encouraged free and critical research, and was not concerned with personal behaviour and the self-interest of public servants. The Rockefeller Foundation showed that they were not concerned with the political affiliations or personal opinions of either Piddington or Kirchhoff. Both continued to be funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Nevertheless, neither was able to work in Australia or its territories, while other anthropologists who remained silent continued to find employment and advancement in Australia.

Other scholars who were likewise subjected to scrutiny by the security service but did not make it public received support from the university. Here the academy could work with the government in maintaining a fiction of academic freedom, and the government was saved the embarrassment of having to defend itself against charges of interference.

The cases of Piddington and Pink, in particular, expose the ethical and political difficulties of working in the field. Pink found a solution by removing herself from the academy; Thomson, alone in Melbourne, continued his work outside mainstream anthropology (almost in defiance of Elkin and the Sydney department). Ronald and Catherine Berndt, while critical of Elkin's working behind the scenes, opted for a similar solution. They recognized that public silence enabled them to continue their research. The relationship between the academy and government was one of mostly sympathetic collaboration to silence public dissent that threatened the viability of a research program or of the institution itself.

**AFTERWORD**

The many, and at times, conflicting aims of anthropology—scientific knowledge, advancement, advocacy, institutional self-preservation (to mention only a few)—continue to beleaguer anthropologists to the present day.

The position of Aborigines being 'virtually inarticulate' has dramatically changed in the past three decades. The relationship between anthropologists and Aborigines has altered to such an extent that anthropologists require permission from Aboriginal organizations to conduct research. As well, as we have seen in Australia, anthropologists have difficulty positioning themselves in relation to Aboriginal people. This is particularly so over issues such as the Hindmarsh Island Bridge and 'secret women's business', which has highlighted the issue of advocacy as well as ethical and political difficulties. Anthropologists have been in sometimes heated disagreement over the authenticity of Ngarranjeri women's cultural practices and beliefs. Those anthropologists who found themselves in disagreement with the arguments accepted by the Royal Commission, have
had their reputations, if not their careers, severely retarded.\textsuperscript{97} Land rights, and recently Native Title, have become critical issues, and anthropologists now work for different interest groups.\textsuperscript{98} Indigenous organizations employ anthropologists, as do mining and pastoral companies, and government.\textsuperscript{99}

It seems to me that on one level the critical questions for anthropologists now are for whom they work? and to whom they are ethically responsible?\textsuperscript{100} But this simplifies what are difficult questions. Nonetheless, if anthropologists accept as central that information obtained from indigenous peoples is not used in ways detrimental to the interests of those people, then the indigenous people with whom anthropologists work must have confidence in the commitment to this ethical tenet by anthropologists.\textsuperscript{101} Not all anthropologists think this consideration overrides what they see as public interest, and it is here that this paper has relevance. Thus what was for Ronald Berndt a simple issue of advocacy on the side of indigenous peoples is no more. Relations between anthropologists, Aborigines, and government are complex and difficult, and ethical and political considerations continue to be paramount. ~

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NOTES

\textsuperscript{1} Ronald M. Berndt, 'Practical Anthropology in Aboriginal Australia: some personal comments', \textit{Anthropological Forum}, vol. 5 (2), 1983-4, pp. 161-175.


\textsuperscript{3} This view of Barnes is probably a bit harsh. For example C.D. Rowley, writing in 1973, states that there were some notable exceptions with regard to public dissent, such as Stanner in 1964 who protested 'against the latest political moves to take from the northern Aborigines the few remaining rights they had to walk over, and use natural water in, the tribal country held under lease by pastoral companies'. Rowley, 'From Humbug to Politics: Aboriginal affairs and the Academy project'. \textit{Oceania}, vol. 43 (3), 1973-p. 182.

\textsuperscript{4} There are some notable examples, not least Ron Crocombe of the ANU’s New Guinea Research Unit, who was a critic in the 1960s
of embedded racism in Papua New Guinea. Also Reo Fortune in Papua, 1927-28.

4 See for example, Murray’s letters to the Minister with regard to Fortune and the practice of magic on Tewara, Papua. AA: A518/1, A806/1/5.

5 For example, S.D. Porteus who conducted psychological investigation among Aborigines in north-west Western Australia guaranteed the government that any material they had filmed ‘would not in any way reflect upon the handling of the natives’ in that state. Porteus to Neville, 20 November. Western Australia, State Archives of Western Australia, ACC 993, item 133/28.

6 The argument that functionalism committed the anthropologist to a view which questioned any piecemeal civilizing of colonized peoples is unresolved in the Australian context. During Elkin’s period as Professor of Anthropology (1934-1956) at the University of Sydney it is apparent that functionalism as practised by Malinowski and his disciples had short shrift in Australian Aboriginal anthropology. Elkin did not think Malinowski had much contribution to make to Australian Aboriginal anthropology. See Geoffrey Gray, "Mr Neville did all in [his] power to assist me": A.P. Elkin, A.O. Neville and anthropological research in northwest western Australia’, *Oceania*, vol 68 (1). 1997, p. 30. Radcliffe-Brown believed that anthropological knowledge was beneficial to colonial administrators but his emphasis in applied anthropology was rarely argued in the Australian Aboriginal context. See also Cora Thomas, ‘From “Australian Aborigines” to “White Australians”: Elkin, Hasluck and the origins of assimilation’, MA thesis. Monash University, 1994.


10 For example Elkin’s report to the Australian Board of Missions (ABM) on Ernest Gribble and his running of the Forrest River Mission. Elkin was so sensitive about this that he was anxious, some fifteen years after he made the report, that it be made public. ABM Papers, Mitchell Library.

11 Gillian Cowlishaw in an important paper argued that Australian Aboriginal anthropology was based on notions of cultural and social authenticity and blood—those Aborigines not of the ‘full-blood’ were of less interest culturally and socially, see G. Cowlishaw, ‘Colour, Culture and the Aboriginalists’, *Man (NS)*, vol. 22, pp. 221-237, 1987. See also Julie Marcus, ‘Racism, Terror and the Production of Australian Autobiographies’, in Judith Okely and Helen Callaway, *Anthropology and Autobiography*, London: Routledge. 1992. I would like to thank Deborah Rose for bringing this article to my attention.

12 There is a present-day example of the close collaboration between anthropologists and government which is deserving of closer examination: the Hindmarsh Island Royal Commission and its aftermath.


Gerald D. Berreman, 'Is Anthropology Alive? social responsibility in social anthropology', Gutorm Gjeesing, The Social Responsibility of the Social Scientist; Kathleen Gough, 'New Proposals for Anthropologists', in Berreman & Gjeesing, Social Responsibilities Symposium, Current Anthropology, vol. 9 (5), 1968, pp. 391-435; Talal Asad (ed.), Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter, London: Ithaca Press. 1973. These debates led to the development of ethical guidelines for anthropologists in the USA and elsewhere, such as Australia. In 1970 it was revealed that the Defence Department, despite having abandoned Camelot in the late 1960s, had contracted a number of universities to collect intelligence in Northern Thailand in order to crush insurgent forces. Australia was involved in this through the Tribal Research Centre, established on the advice of W.B. Geddes, then Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. See L.R. Hiatt, 'Editorial', Mankind, vol 7 (1), 1969, pp. 1-2.

See for example, Gray, 'Mr Neville ...', pp. 27-36.


A. P. Elkin, 'Anthropology in Australia: one chapter', Mankind, vol. 6 (6), 1936, pp. 230-1.

Elkin's emphasis. The diffusionists Elliot Smith and J.W. Perry, both of London University College, supervised Elkin's PhD thesis in 1926-27.


Elliot Smith to Prime Minister, 2 September 1924. AA: A518, N806/1/1, Part I.

Embée to Masson, 27 May 1926. 155/4/1/1, Elkin Papers (EP), University of Sydney Archives.

The first committee consisted of Radcliffe-Brown (Chairman), Masson (ANRC), A.H. Burkitt (Anatomy, University of Sydney), S. A. Smith (Physiology, University of Sydney), Frederick Wood Jones (University of Adelaide), Baldwin Spencer (University of Melbourne), and Nicholson (University of Queensland), J.G. McLaren (Commonwealth), Herbert Longman (Queensland), R.H. Pulleine (South Australia), T.T. Flynn (Tasmania), A.O. Neville (Western Australia). Spencer also
represented Victoria. In November 1927 the name was changed to the Committee on Anthropological Research and Fellowships in Anthropology and Biology.

See Gray, Mr Neville ..., pp. 28-29. Also after Spencer's death the Professor of Anthropology was, until the appointment of Ian Hogbin in 1936, the only anthropologist on the committee.

See ANRC Papers, ANL Ms 482.

D.J. Mulvaney, 'Australian Anthropology since Darwin: models, foundations and funding', a paper presented to the Canada-Australia Workshop on Science and Technology, University of Victoria, British Columbia, 5-7 July 1990.

Kirchhoff is frequently misspelled as Kirchoff in the correspondence; I have decided to make the spelling of his name—Kirchhoff—consistent throughout the paper.

Peterson, although sanitizing the language of the period, outlines the story in Donald Thomson in Arnhem Land compiled and introduced by Nicolas Peterson. Melbourne: Currey O'Neil. 1983. See also 155/4/1/1, EP for correspondence on Thomson's fieldwork in Cape York.

Elkin set out the form the letter should take. See for example Elkin to G.S. Brown, nd; V.W. Coombes to Elkin, 14 January 1944. 76/1/12/263. EP. Elkin was a member of the ABM Council, and the National Missionary Council.

For a fuller explanation see Ronald Berndt & Catherine Berndt, End of an Era, 1987, pp. xiv-xv; Geoffrey Gray, "It is not possible for conditions to remain as they are at present": The Berndts and the Australian Investment Agency survey, 1944-6', paper presented to Social Science Faculty, Deakin University, September 1992.

Olive Pink, 'Camouflage', Mankind, vol. 2(1), 1936. This is an abstract of her paper. Its full text was never published.


Julie Marcus, 'The Beauty, Simplicity and Honour of Truth: Olive Pink in the 1940s', in Julie Marcus (ed.), First in their Field. Women and Australian anthropology. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. 1993. p.123. In Elkin's Papers (38/1/10/3) there are numerous letters from Pink expressing her distrust and resentment of T.G.H. Strehlow and W.E.H. Stanner. Strehlow, son of the Lutheran missionary Carl Strehlow, was the acknowledged authority on the Aranda (among whom Pink first worked); Stanner had worked further north in the Daly River region. Pink found both of them too complacent and compliant with government and those in authority.

It should be noted that Pink generally got on well with Elkin, although privately Elkin was critical of her. See correspondence in 38/1/10/3, EP. For further discussion of Olive Pink, see Christine Cheater, 'Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy', Mankind, vol. 17 (3), 1987. pp. 185-197; Gillian Cowlishaw, 'Olive Pink and the Hunter Gatherers', The Olive Pink Society Bulletin, vol. 1 (1), 1989. pp. 14-6. I draw heavily on their work.

Firth had replaced A.B. Radcliffe-Brown in September 1932, who left Sydney to take up a position in the University of Chicago.

Marcus, Yours Truly, p. 6.

Marcus, Yours Truly, p. 8.


Elkin to Walkom, 10 August 1938. 156/4/1/14, EP.
Undated letter to her nieces, entitled 'My reasons for not publishing my research', quoted in Cheater, 'Olive Pink ...

The World, 14 January 1932.

Alex Gibson, hon. secretary, ANRC, to A.O. Neville, 7 April 1933. ANL, Ms 482.

Gibson to Neville, 21 October 1932. ANL, Ms 482.

Gibson to Piddington, 23 December 1933. ANL, Ms 482.

Neville states in a memo to his Minister regarding Piddington's allegations that in Woodland's report there was a letter from Laves 'offering to support Spurling in the event of trouble following Piddington's charges'. Memo, 25 August 1933. State Archive Western Australia, ACC 993, 133/30.

Elkin to Ernest Mitchell, 5 October 1933. 167/4/2/50, EP.

Gibson to Stacy May (Rockefeller Foundation), 4 July 1934, ANL, Ms 482.

Gibson to Elkin, 6 September 1934. 156/4/1/12, EP.

May to Gibson, 30 April 1934. ANL, Ms 482.

May to Piddington, 30 April 1934. ANL, Ms 482.


May to Gibson, 30 April 1934. ANL, Ms 482.

Gibson to Copland, 2 October 1934. Ms 482.

Copland to Gibson, 19 November 1934. Ms 482.

Gibson to Copland, 10 December 1934. Ms 482.


Kirchhoff's research proposal, ANL, Ms 482.

Firth to Malinowski, 1 June 1932. Bronislaw Malinowski Papers, Correspondence 1869—(1914-1939). Ms. GR. No. 19, Series 1. Firth expected to take up a position as lecturer at the London School of Economics in September 1932.

Presumably a copy of the 'confidential document'. ANL, Ms 482. This document carries a date of 11 August 1932. It would seem that the British informed the Australian government when they heard that Kirchhoff was applying for anthropological work with 'an anthropological group'. It was not, however, until Kirchhoff made a formal application that this information was used.

The British government didn't deport him 'on the understanding that anthropological work would be found for him outside the British Empire'. Frank Cain, The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia, 1983. p. 241.

Copy of Attorney-General's statement, Ms 482.

Chapman to Masson, 13 September 1932. Ms 482.

Chapman to Masson, 23 September 1932. ANL, Ms 482.

Minutes, Executive Committee, ANRC. Ms 482.

Masson to Chapman, 3 October; Chapman to Masson, 8 October 1932. 1932. ANL, Ms 482.

Masson to Chapman, 16 October 1932. ANL, Ms 482.

Masson to Chapman, 16 October 1932. He also added that he personally disliked 'most of the
-isms and [I] rather think tolerance can be carried too far—and has in the past.'

Minutes, Executive Committee, ANRC. Ms 482. One member, G.A. Waterhouse, stated that 'the sooner we get rid of him [Firth] the better.' Raymond Firth states that Chapman 'came to see me [and] made it quite clear that the British government had made the request to the Australian government that K's grant be disallowed, and that the ANRC would feel bound to comply with the Australian government wish to accede to the request. About why this request had been made we were then not clear, but later the allegation of communism emerged'. Firth to author, 15 April 1998.

Malinowski to Firth, 29 September 1932. Malinowski Papers.

Seligman to Gibson, 27 September 1932. ANL, Ms 482.

Malinowski to Firth, 29 September 1932. Malinowski Papers.

Kirchhoff to Malinowski, 3 March 1933; 25 January 1934. Malinowski Papers. I would like to thank Professor Walter Veit, German Studies, Monash University, for translating the relevant sections of these letters.


See Frank Cain, The Origins of Political Surveillance, for a discussion of the relationship between British and Australian Security in the interwar years.

Hasluck to Worsley, 13 June 1952. ANU file 6.4.1.49. It is interesting to note that in A Time for Building, Australian administration in Papua and New Guinea, 1951-1963, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press (1976), he makes no mention of Worsley or the issues of entry for those suspected of political subversion, other than Max Gluckman and the use of ASIO in the territory from c. 1960.

ANU file, 6.4.1.49.

Hasluck to ANU Students' Association, 8 July 1952. ANU file 6.4.1.49.

ANU Students' Association to Hasluck, 14 July 1952; Hasluck to ANU Students' Association, 24 July 1952. ANU file 6.4.1.49.

From Minutes of Council, 27 June 1952. ANU file 6.4.1.49.

See Council Memo, 'Note on Academic Freedom'. ANU file 6.4.1.49.

The Students' Association urged the Minister to 'reveal the content and sources of his “information” ... in order to put an end to the growing fear in this University and elsewhere that both personal and academic freedom are under attack.' ANU Students' Association to Hasluck, 14 July 1952. ANU file 6.4.1.49.

Peter Worlsey, 'Foreword', Foerstal and Gillian, Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy, p. ix.


S.G. Foster and Margaret M. Varghese, The Making of the Australian National University, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996, p. 122. Stanner was proposed as Spate's replacement but was first investigated by Richard Casey: '[I] am having him checked out first by Spry [ASIO]'. Casey to Copland, 11 September 1952. Quoted in Foster and Varghese, p. 430.

Hasluck, A Time for Building, pp. 403-405.

See David McKnight, Australia's Spies and their Secrets, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992; Frank Cain, The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation: an unofficial

90 See Foster and Varghese, The Making of the ANU, pp. 113-126 for a discussion the ANU and academic freedom.

91 Firth to the author, 20 February 1993.

92 Foster and Varghese, The Making of the ANU, pp. 120-126.

93 See Foster and Varghese, The Making of the ANU, pp. 113-126 for discussion of these matters.

94 See Barnes, Taking stock ...'


97 An academic journal, so I have been informed, rejected a paper on Hindmarsh because of its anxiety about objectivity.


99 American anthropologists, for example, developed a code of ethics in 1971; it was nearly the end of the decade when Australian anthropologists developed a similar code. These offer a guide to anthropologists.

100 The Australian Anthropological Society Code of Ethics (n.d.) states, inter alia, ‘Members should not knowingly or avoidably allow information gained on a basis of trust and cooperation of those studied to be used against their legitimate interests by hostile third parties’. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1995. Here is outlined a range of ethical issues facing anthropologists working in Native Title.
my first dream of home
from Loughborough U
involves two poets arguing
over a lunch-time stew
remember those post-binge
mid-seventies Glebe mornings—
lantana & sandstone, bits
of Harbour out the window
& the light, intense & blue?
I crawl downstairs & there’s
Martin chopping garlic to
vague, patrician interjections—
"mate, isn’t garlic something
one can over do?"

Martin pauses, mock pedantic—
"Aristotle, Galen, Hippocrates
& all the authorities agree,
garlic, de natura
is not subject to degree!"
then, as if it’s worried him
for years, David Campbell DSO, DFC,
takes another swig of whisky
looks up & says “I see. I see.”

LASSÙ IN CIELO is reproduced, with
permission, from John Forbes’s last
collection of poems, Damaged Glamour.
As a keen but disinterested student of literary reputation, John, I think, would have been amused by some of the tributes that have flowed since his passing which hint that death makes his oeuvre neater and more easily assessed. I can hear him laughing now and I am sure he would have enjoyed being mentioned in the Senate by his school friend Senator Mick Forshaw. With his death Australian poetry lost its most brilliant exponent, a man of immense intelligence, a hard critic—chiefly of his own work. But his wide circle of friends lost much more than that.

I first met John while working at a tinsel factory. Neither of us were very conscientious workers and we spent most of our time reading poems to one another. I remember that John was enthusiastic about my poems and gave me an inordinate amount of encouragement but this was typical of him. When he met writers whose work interested him or in which he saw the glimmer of possibilities, he would become their champion and later in his career, particularly when he read manuscripts for Angus and Robertson, many young writers benefitted from his breadth of vision.

Apart from the beauties of his writing John’s greatest talent was for friendship. He was a brilliant talker with a capacity for discussing a vast range of topics and he was almost devoid of condescension, a great conversation stopper. I saw this in action when he and I hitch-hiked to Mildura on our way to the 1982 Adelaide Festival. John had the capacity to subtly refocus himself (quite legitimately) to suit whoever was giving us a lift at the time, he could be furniture mover, souvenir salesman, postgraduate student, sometimes even poet—depending on what the occasion demanded and drivers who perhaps had picked us up for someone to talk to so they didn’t fall asleep amid the boredom of the Hay plains at night, were well rewarded.

In 1982, John’s great friend Ken Searle, painted a picture of John, Ken and myself rowing down the Murray River. John is sitting in the back of the boat wearing a terry towelling hat and looking a little sunburnt. This image of him captures his guileless charm. He looks a bit like a schoolboy and memory tells me he is reading a book, though this is probably erroneous. This is how I remember him, sitting in El Bahsas Coffee Shop in Newtown, dressed in a blue T-shirt and black jeans (a style of dress he adopted years ago to save himself the petty decision of what to wear each morning—‘and besides’, I hear him add ‘they look great’) reading anything from Shelby Foote to an account by Elvis Presley’s hairdresser (the Flaubert of trash) of the King’s desert vision of Stalin and (always) smoking a Camel.