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Cover: Quinkan figures from Pig Gallery, Laura Caves. Designed by R. E. Barwick, from photograph by Margaret Valadian. This site is described by P. J. Trezise in Rock art of south-east Cape York. Canberra, 1971.
Top: A view of Botany Bay (R. Cleveley, artist), from The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay. London, 1789.

Bottom: John Hunter’s sketch of a meeting with Port Jackson Aborigines, from his An historical journal of the transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island. London, 1793.

Courtesy of National Library of Australia.
The Instructions given in 1787 to Captain Arthur Phillip, the Governor-Designate of the intended penal colony in New South Wales, required him 'by every possible means to open an intercourse' with the Aborigines. He was ordered to begin barter with them, to estimate their numbers, and to report how association could be turned to the colony's advantage, but these practical aims were to be attained in a humanitarian way. He must 'conciliate their affections', enjoin everyone to 'live in amity and kindness with them', and punish all who should 'wantonly destroy them, or give them any unnecessary interruption in the exercise of their several occupations'.

Phillip, before leaving England, thought the instructions entirely possible of performance. He nagged the authorities about scores of matters, but took the racial problems in his stride.

I shall think it a great point if I can proceed in this business without having any dispute with the natives, a few of which I shall endeavour to persuade to settle near us, and who I mean to furnish with everything that can tend to civilize them, and to give them a high opinion of their new guests. He even nurtured the hope that he might 'cultivate an acquaintance with them, without their having an idea of our great superiority over them, that their confidence and friendship might be more firmly fixed'. Before as well as after the landing, he gave 'strict orders that the natives should not be offended, or molested on any account and advised that, wherever they were met with, they were to be treated with every mark of friendship'. He forbade anyone to fire at them with ball or shot, and made clear that he would regard the killing of an Aboriginal as seriously as the killing of a European. 'This', he wrote, 'appears to me not only just, but good policy'.

His appreciation of what he would encounter in New South Wales drew on the experience of Captain Cook and Joseph Banks, the only authorities. Cook had found it necessary to fire a gun at some Aborigines who sought to oppose his landing in Botany Bay in May, 1770,
and (according to Dr Hawkesworth) he subsequently found that
after the first contest at our landing they would never come near
enough to parley; nor did they touch a single article of all that we
had left at their huts, and the places they frequented, on purpose
for them to take away.

Banks, before a Committee of the Commons in 1779, had given his
immense authority to an opinion that ‘there would be little probability
of opposition’. He described the Aborigines as ‘naked, treacherous’ but
‘extremely cowardly’ and said that they ‘constantly retired from our
people when they made the least appearance of resistance’. To that
impressionistic picture Phillip added a romantic gloss. He developed a
theory that ‘the only means of warding off a conflict with the natives
was to place confidence in them’. From the moment of landing, that
was what he tried to do. The approach spoke volumes for the idealism,
and also for the muddled theory of human nature and society, which
characterized him.

The older Aborigines of Botany Bay in 1788 would have remem­
bered Cook’s visit in 1770 and the main events of the week that he
spent there. But that experience may have made the nine days’ won­
der between 18 and 26 January, 1788 seem more overwhelming. During
that period thirteen ships, eleven British and two French, entered the
bay. They arrived in four divisions — one ship on the first day, three on
the second, seven on the third, and two (the French squadron com­
manded by M. de La Pérouse) on the ninth. Any impulse among the
Aborigines to mass against the strangers must have been paralyzed by
the increasing size of the divisions over the first three days. The ships’
companies — seamen, soldiers and civilians, numbering 290 — would
have been visible, and the Aborigines may well have caught a hint too
of the convicts, 717 all told, crammed below the decks. Such numbers
must have been far greater than any they had ever seen. They could
only have likened them, in their characteristic similes, to the leaves
of a tree or to ants in a nest, and felt at a loss to act. After the arrival
of the third division there were three clear days on which they may
have taken some sort of measure of the prodigy before them. Then,
on 24 January, Phillip’s hurried preparations, at the first sight of the
French approach, to move the First Fleet from Botany Bay to Port
Jackson, could well have suggested to them that all the ships were
about to go and, like Endeavour, be seen no more. But the substitution
of the French for the British in Botany Bay, on 26 January, would
have dashed their hopes, and then added a new mystification for, with
their quick ear for language, they would soon have realised that they
were in touch with two different peoples speaking unlike tongues.
What they made of it all is of course unknown. One can but piece
together the rough outline of their reaction from exiguous entries in
the colonists’ journals, diaries, despatches and letters.
The records make much of the Aborigines' apparent hostility at first sight. As the ships entered Botany Bay, Lieutenant Phillip Gidley King, on *Supply*, saw 'several of ye natives running along, brandishing their spears'. David Blackburn, master of the same ship, noted the same thing: 'The Natives as we said in Came Down to the Edge of the Cliffs Making a Noise & Lifting up their Spears'. When *Scarborough* arrived next day, Private John Easty remarked on the 'great many Indians' who, naked and black, 'came down to the shore and shroutted att us and held up there weapons over their heads and shaked them at us'. The same thing happened at Port Jackson. To Daniel Southwell, the mate of *Sirius*, it seemed that

There was a something frantick in the manner of these petty veterans, their menacing gestures being occasionally interrupted by long considerings and excessive fits of laughter, in which there seemed to be more of agitation than of those pleasing emotions that usually excite risibility.

But the shaken spears did not necessarily indicate outright hostility, and the cries of *war-re, war-re*, which were presumed by the early colonists to mean 'go away', or 'bad, you are doing wrong', may have been (as Harrington later suspected) no more than a conventional response to anything startlingly new. Universally, the Aborigines used such gestures at all meetings of great significance; there was always something of ritual in them; and curiosity must have been at least equal to fear or anger.

At the first landing some Aborigines, according to King:

immediately got up and called to us in a menacing tone, and at the same time brandishing their spears or lances. However, the Governor showed them some beads, and order'd a man to fasten them to the stem of the canoe. We then made signs that we wanted water, when they pointed round the point on which they stood, and invited us to land there. On landing they directed us by pointing to a very fine stream of water. Governor Phillip then advanced towards them alone and unarmed, on which one of them advanced towards him, but would not come near enough to receive the beads which the Governor held out for him, but seemed very desirous of having them, and made signs for them to be laid on ye ground, which was done. He (ye native) came on with fear and trembling and took them up, and by degrees came so near as to receive looking-glasses &c. and seemed quite astonished at ye figure we cut in being clothed. I think it is very easy to conceive of ye ridiculous frame we must appear to these poor creature, who were perfectly naked. We soon after took leave of them and returned on board.

The man's first intent, under Aboriginal convention, would have been to discover Phillip's identity, the purpose of the visit — to find drinking water — having already been disclosed. In advancing alone Phillip did
the right thing. But he should then have named himself, and asked after the other's name, both of which he could have done without difficulty by using simple signs. To press goods on the man at once was also a mistake. Under Aboriginal custom they could not have been given or taken without consideration of return. Phillip's offer probably appeared at least two-edged. Later, the Aborigines must have concluded that Europeans were simply soft-headed because of their largesse with valuable things. The notions of forcing friendship, and of winning liking by prestation, were psychological and sociological nonsense. But at the time, to one officer, the report 'savoured much of fellow-feeling and humanity'.

Soon after daylight on the 19th, a fishing-party saw the same group of natives, who seemed 'much more confident than they were the night before'. But although three boats explored part of the bay no other natives were seen. On the 20th, there were two landings, one under Phillip, who was said to have found the natives 'very sociable and friendly', the other under Lieutenant King, who found them neither: they 'hollor'd and made signs for us to return to our boats'. One of Phillip's front teeth was missing and the fact gave him instant standing among the Aborigines, who practised tooth avulsion as an initiatory rite. The deference paid to him by the other colonists must also have impressed the watchers, who would have dined out on every detail of dress, deportment and conduct. King, with a notable lack of success, tried to emulate Phillip's calm unarmed advance, bearing gifts of beads and baize. The goods were taken, but then the Aborigines 'in a very vociferous manner desired us to be gone, and one of them threw a lance wide of us to show how far they could do execution'. King thought it wise to retreat. On the way to the boats, he again offered presents; this time the Aborigines refused them and, 'ten times more vociferous', threw spears directly at the party, which was in a minority of five to twelve. King now felt the risk too great; he had a gun — loaded with powder only — fired; and at the report the natives 'ran off with great precipitation'. When the party had re-embarked, Phillip joined them, and at once showed both the persistence which characterized him and a something in his bearing and address which impressed the Aborigines.

We relanded ... and ye same body of natives appeared, brandishing their lances and defying us. However, we rowed close in shore, and ye Governor disembarked with some presents, which one of them came and received. Thus peace was re-established, much to the satisfaction of all parties. That was the first true interaction. On both sides, it probably caused as much confusion as it removed.

The Aborigines were not sure for several days that the strange beings who came on shore were truly human. They were particularly astonished
by the hats, clothes and weapons, probably thinking them, as in the
case of other Aborigines in many parts of the continent, incredible
extensions of the body. They were also puzzled, by the hairless faces,
to decide the sex of the strangers. There was ‘a great shout of admira-
tion’ when one of the sailors was ordered to ‘undeceive them’ on the
question of sex, and another when the bashful King covered a woman’s
nakedness with a handkerchief. The Aborigines offered the Europeans
women, which were declined; the Europeans offered the Aborigines
wine, which they tasted and spat out. On the whole, the Aborigines
won the honours for hospitability; they singled out the man who had
flung the spear, and stood ‘pointing all their lances at him and looking
at us, intimating that they only waited our orders to kill him’; or so
King deluded himself. He probably puzzled the natives by making a
special point of giving the man a present! Had King given the order
to throw, he would have seen a marvellous exhibition either of spear-
dodging, at which the Aborigines were brilliantly adept, or of how not
to hit a man by the narrowest of margins. The parting was amicable
enough, and selective memories of the reports led to later impressions
of an ‘easy reception’ and ‘a kind of cautious friendship’.

But some stereotypes which the colonists had brought with them
were also vivified. ‘Those poor creatures’, under whose gaze King had
felt ridiculous, were to David Blackburn ‘to all appearances the Lowest
in Rank among the Human Race’; to Edward Home, ‘I think, the most
miserable of the human form under heaven’; to Southwell, ‘more like
monkies than warriors’; to Bowes, ‘altogether a most stupid insensible
set of beings’; and to the log-keeper of Fishburn, ‘... quite harmless,
only inclinable to thieving’. The same writer recorded that ‘it was with
difficulty that the Captain kept his hatt on his head’. But two seamen,
‘straggling into the woods without arms or anything to protect them-
selves, sailor like, met with some natives, men, women and children,
who were very very friendly...’. And David Collins, Phillip’s secretary
and Judge Advocate, was storing up the impressions that enabled him
to write: ‘how tractable these people are, when no insult or injury is
offered, and when proper means are employed to influence the sim-
plicity of their minds’.

While the ships were at Botany Bay, there were warning signs that
injury was being offered. The seine nets were cast:
no sooner were the fish out of the water than they began to lay hold
of them, as if they had a right to them, or that they were their own;
upon which the officer of the boat, I think very properly, restrained
them, giving, however, to each of them a part. They did not at first
seem very well pleased with this mode of procedure, but on observ-
ing with what justice the fish were distributed they appeared content.
A work-party cleared a path to a supply of fresh water: ‘the natives
were well pleased with our people until they began clearing the ground,
at which they were displeased and wanted them to be gone'. Saw-pits were about to be dug: 'they expressed a little anger at seeing us cut down the trees'. But the colonists attached little significance to such signs, and apparently did not connect them with a pattern of reaction that became noticeable within a few days of the transfer to Sydney Cove. The Aborigines now showed a progressive disinclination to come near the settlement, and their general behaviour became less predictable. That the colonists wondered why says much for their eyeless judgement of their own doings.

On his first visit to Sydney Cove on 21 January, Phillip had found the Aborigines more confident than those at Botany Bay. The fresh water in the cove, the best supply in Port Jackson, made it a natural gathering place, and one can scarcely doubt that members of the local band, having seen the transfer of the First Fleet on the 24th and 25th, would have watched from the bush, on the 26th, the landing, masting of colours, the firing of a *feu de joie*, and the preparations for encampment. Others, increasingly drawn by the spectacle and uproar, must have been agog at the relentless, baffling activity: scores of men felling the forest, hundreds marking out squares, mounds of goods piling up, endless traffic between ships and shore, martial parades, and boats exploring the harbour arms. Not even the scale of the visitation could have been clear until the nineteenth day, when the last of the convicts were herded ashore. The Aborigines had had no experiences by which to judge such things, or to see in them shapes of permanence. The realization that it *was* an invasion, and that the strangers meant to stay, could have come only slowly. When at last it came, the dismay must have been profound.

As the days went by, there would have been sharp eyes and ears on all that happened. It is quite clear from the records that, even at Botany Bay, the Aborigines had begun to categorize the strangers. Worgan’s *Journal* noted on the third day that they did not like the soldiers and made signs for us to take them away, before they would venture to come near us. One of them was bold enough to go up to a soldier and feel his gun, and felt the point of his bayonet, looked very serious and gave a significant 'HUM'!

White’s *Journal*, two days later, remarked that ‘from the first, they carefully avoided a soldier, or any person wearing a red coat, which they seemed to have marked as a fighting vesture’. Now, the four social groups — officers, soldiery, seamen and convicts — would have been plainly distinguishable, and such formations must have seemed bizarre and inexplicable. Darkness probably hid from the Aborigines the first orgiastic meeting of the male and female convicts on the night of 6 February 1788: Bowes’ *Journal* reports that ‘The men got to them very soon after they landed, and it is beyond my ability to give a just description of the scene of debauchery and riot that ensued during the
night’. But they may well have seen, though perhaps from a distance, something of other events that disfigured the first weeks of transplanted civilization — the drunkenness and fighting, the drumming of male-factors out of camp, the attempts by convicts to escape, the first flogging (29 January), and the first hanging (27 February). A place which ten convicts, including one woman, had tried to flee by 23 February can have had little attraction for those outside it. There is little mystery in the Aborigines’ apparent aversion.

Some of the early writers give the impression that, once the British had left Botany Bay, encounters with the Aborigines fell away abruptly. That was not actually the case. During the first six weeks only two Aborigines visited the settlement, but between 29 January and 29 February seventeen meetings were thought sufficiently important to be mentioned in journals. In two cases the Aborigines fled; in thirteen their conduct ranged between wariness and boldness; in two, conflict occurred; on 4 February some of them pelted a European seine-party with stones and, on the 19th, a group making a daring theft of iron tools near the settlement had to be ‘peppered with small shot’. At Botany Bay, the French also had troubles. From unknown causes, they were ‘often obliged to fire on the natives, for that they are become most dearing and troublesome’. M. de La Pérouse seems to have been at least as idealistic as Phillip, and his order as strict, but he did not share Phillip’s theory and therefore probably acted differently. Experience in the South Seas had made him suspicious of ‘the perfidious caresses’ of all savages. He thought the Aborigines ‘extremely mischeivous’, complained that ‘they even threw darts at us immediately after receiving our presents and caresses’, and felt compelled to build a protective stockade. Plainly, the policies of trust and mistrust were equally unsuccessful.

The Europeans’ inability to understand why they were shunned or attacked was obviously, though only in part, an expression of their total ignorance of Aboriginal life. They had no idea, it seems, that they were crowding at every place on to a confined estate whose every feature and object entailed proprietary rights and religious significances. Nor did they suspect for some time that they were upsetting a delicate balance between population and food supplies. For example, it took Lieutenant Bradley four months to feel he had sufficient proof that the Aborigines ‘seek other food besides fish’. Phillip never comprehended how they could support themselves in what seemed to him the sterile, foodless bush. The whole system of nomadic ecology was so woefully misunderstood that, even half a century after the landing, the explorer Grey could still find pleasure in describing it. The first colonists had no comprehension that Sydney Cove had vital importance for a whole band, which was necessarily driven to depend on other places for food and water, to the embarrassment of other groups. But the settlement
itself was a sufficient cause for the Aborigines to keep at a distance. In February, one convict was publicly hanged; twelve were given a total of 1,172 lashes; the numbers of sick increased; and from such spectacles they would have turned away with loathing or fear. There must also have been repellent external evidence of the tension, hatred, brawling and drunkenness that, in spite of ferocious discipline, were turning Sydney Cove into what Clark later described as a ‘whore’s camp’ — ‘I would call it by the name of Sodom’, he said, ‘for there is more sin committed in it than in any other part of the world’.

For such uncomprehended reasons the colonists, in the course of February, usually saw only very small numbers of Aborigines, whose behaviour seemed unpredictable. At the sight of Europeans, individuals or small parties hid or ran away, especially in the less frequented parts of the harbour; even near the settlement they showed wariness; none would come near at all if the soldiers were present, or unless guns were laid down. There were nevertheless some confident, even bold, encounters. The recorded meetings must have been but a fraction of the actual total, but those that are known to have occurred were less complete and frontal than had been the case at Botany Bay. Relations worsened during March, but the same mixed pattern continued through fewer encounters. Some Aborigines raided a fishing party; two convicts were wounded and a number were threatened; someone threw a spear at an officer and did not flee when a gun, loaded with ball, was fired. Even Phillip had a tiff, and was warned by a raised spear, during a visit to Broken Bay, where he showed the mixture of calm, courage and wrong-headedness that was to characterise most of his dealings with them.

Now too came the first complaint about European maltreatment: an Aboriginal man, pointing to marks or bruises, told Phillip as best he could of a beating he had received. There were nevertheless many meetings that were civil, friendly, or without incident.

In April and May the recorded meetings were fewer again and Hunter observed ‘the natives to decrease in their numbers considerably’, but did not realize that the winter-pattern of dispersal had begun by which the coastal clans spread out along the sea-board, though not inland. The differences between the ‘tree’ or ‘forest tribes’ inland from the coast and the ‘brush’ (i.e. heath) or ‘coastal’ peoples were not yet understood, nor was there any grasp of the contrasted marine-estuarine and woodland ecologies. It became evident, especially in May, that they were very short of food. When given it by the colonists, ‘they eat with an eagerness that convinced us they must have been very hungry’. But civil meetings continued. Some small groups came close to the settlement and, at Botany Bay, a European party slept tranquilly near a large gathering of men, women and children. However, a new element appeared: several instances were noted of open fear amongst the women, and of their menfolk’s refusing to let them go near the colo-
nists. Three convicts were murdered and one injured; a calf was wounded by a spear; some clothes were stolen. It was apparent that there was 'a pattern of growing irritation and hostility'.

The prevailing tendency among the colonists was to attribute the less understandable aspects of Aboriginal conduct to 'the fickle, wavering disposition of all savages', a proposition which revealed all too clearly what was wrong with their view point. At the same time Aboriginal insouciance and indifference struck some as puzzling. 'This day two of the natives app’d in camp without testifying any mistrust or indeed curiosity ... the novelty of such a scene seem’d in a g’t measure to pass unnoticed by them'. A few 'passed close to the Sirius, without seeming to express, by their countenance or actions, either fear, curiosity or surprise'. Such experiences allowed no single opinion of the Aborigines either as persons or as social beings, to form. Where one colonist remarked '... a Quiet, Inoffensive People', and credited them with being 'total strangers to Personal Fear and have a Quick Sense of Injury', another would note but '... an appear(ance) of stifled apprehension, with now and then a forced laugh and a look of astonishment at all they saw'. No one could fathom their reluctance to become close friends. Even the thoughtful, observant Watkin Tench asked himself: was it possible that Captain Cook had done something in 1770 that now 'prevented the intercourse that would otherwise have taken place'? One fact seemed particularly baffling: 'there is something odd in their never being seen but in small (numbers) except by accident, tho’ there is every reason to suppose they are numerous' (although the same writer had seen ‘a body of near a hundred drawn up with an unexpec­ted degree of regularity, having something the app’ce of discipline’). The ‘something odd’ eventually led to uneasiness. Major Robert Ross, the officer commanding the marine companies, was 'by no means of the opinion' that the Aborigines were 'that harmless, inoffensive race they have in general been represented to be'.

When, on 30 May, two convicts were killed, Phillip's perplexity was such that he determined to force a confrontation — not with punitive intent but, so he said, to try to make the Aborigines who had been concerned aware of how highly he disapproved of any injury to them. But it is a little doubtful if that was his sole intent; some of the dead convicts' possessions were missing and, according to White, 'the governor was resolved, on whomsoever he found any of the tools or clothing, to shew them his displeasure, and, by every means in his power, endeavour to convince them of his motives for such a procedure'. Many colonists suspected at the time, and later all accepted, that the Aborigines 'must have been provoked and injured by the convicts'. In an incident a week before, when some articles had been stolen and recovered, a convict had knifed one Aboriginal man ('the proof could not be got — they were dismissed without coming before a criminal court')
and it was supposed that the killing of the convicts was a retaliation. One of the Governor's ideas had been to display drawings showing a European shooting an Aboriginal and then being hanged, and an Aboriginal spearing a European and then being hanged. As like as not, the Aborigines would have reasoned: shoot an Aboriginal and hang any European; spear a European and hang some other Aboriginal.

In two minds, and certainly with only a hazy notion of what he was going to do, Phillip put himself at the head of an armed party of eleven — nine redcoats and two convicts, in Aboriginal eyes the feared and the despised — and plunged into the bush. So clumsy an excursion was probably bound to fail, and fail it did. No one knew the country well; a large, arms-bearing party asked for evasion; and, without a word of the language, Phillip could not have made his meaning clear — anyway, not without risking worse misunderstanding. In the event, they all got lost; they met no natives at all on the first day, though they saw some fishing placidly on Botany Bay; and, on the second day, they blundered on two very large groups whose presence had been entirely unsuspected. It is not necessary to suppose that such large gatherings took place from hostile intent. The Aborigines were also affected by the 'rage for curiosity' which had all the colonists, including Phillip, in its grip, and there is much to suggest that they felt the fascination of the novel — and the horrible. The thunder of the ordnance on the King's birthday would in itself have been enough to bring all the Aborigines between Broken Bay and Port Hacking to the neighbourhood of Port Jackson.

The first group numbered about three hundred, and among them were some who 'at first seemed rather hostilely inclined, and made signs, with apparent tokens of anger, for us to return', though some individuals 'shewed little fear or distrust'. By coolness and restraint, Phillip was able to come to an amicable relation. But some of the credit also lay with the Aborigines; indeed, only the foresight of one of them saved the Governor from a surprise meeting with the second large group, not in view, but less than a mile away. His luck might not have held a second time. Had there been anything practicable in his plan, the meetings gave him a good opportunity to explain himself, but he seems to have made no attempt to do so, having seen nothing to connect either of the parties with the murders. He did not know that not far away was the head of another convict who had been killed sometime earlier. But the Aborigines he encountered must have known, and they may well have concluded from the whole episode that to kill convicts was not only of no account but might even induce Phillip to reward them. The fact of this murder was revealed three weeks later by a runaway convict who had returned, half starved, only to be hanged for theft. According to his story, the Aborigines did not use him ill, and even on one occasion fed him. But they would not have him with them, and towards the end of his adventure 'would have burned him'
had he not escaped.

A large group, again more than three hundred strong, was still between Port Jackson and Botany Bay a week later, but they ‘walked out of the track our people were in, & let them pass without showing any mischievous intention’. The knowledge of such gatherings disturbed the colonists, who began to take precautions. Parties of less than six armed men were forbidden to go into the bush and at least one ship kept its boats within the cove. Nevertheless, there were still several friendly encounters, and not until the end of the month did the undercurrent of anxiety show how strong it was. Towards midnight on 27 June, the voices of many Aborigines — some sentinels supposed from twenty to thirty — were heard from darkness near the women convicts’ tents. The voices (a sure sign that no attack was intended) ceased abruptly when the sentinels cried out, no doubt quaveringly, the midnight ‘all’s well’. Whether the report was true, or the product of nerves, was never settled. The continuing nervousness was exemplified by an incident six months later. A rumour that two thousand armed Aborigines were mustering a mile from Sydney town led to a momentary panic. A second report gave the number as four hundred. A military party, hurriedly organized, found that there had been but fifty, all of whom had fled when a working-party of convicts pointed spades in the manner of guns.

The hope of amity and trust between the races had obviously miscarried by the middle of 1788. Whether fewer meetings occurred as the year went on, whether writers bothered less to mention them, is perhaps not certain, but the number of recorded incidents grew and, with them, the Governor’s perplexity. On 9 July the Aborigines attempted what he called the only ‘unprovoked act of violence’ — the forcible seizure of a catch of fish after some had been shared; on the 22nd, they chased a convict party for two miles; on the 27th, they speared a convict and next day stoned a sailor. In August, September and October the story was much the same. During those months, several men were killed, and others wounded or threatened; one (a marine) disappeared; there was a daring raid on the hospital’s herd of goats, and a quarrel over a fish-catch; a spear was thrown at an officer taking a census, and one at Philip’s own party after returning from a walk to Broken Bay, where he had met nothing but friendliness and thoughtful kindness. It now seemed that the Aborigines near Sydney had ceased to discriminate between officers and men, soldiery and convicts, stragglers and formed parties, and had either lost some of their respect for firearms or would take advantage of any reluctance to use them.

A significant change took place in Phillip’s outlook at this stage. It is smoothed over in his own account, but emerges through his secretary’s. On the 24th (October) a party of natives, meeting a convict who had straggled from the settlement to a fence that some people were mak-
ing for the purpose of inclosing stock, threw several spears at him; but, fortunately, without doing him any injury. The governor, on being made acquainted with the circumstances, immediately went to the spot with an armed party, where some of them being heard among the bushes, they were fired at; it having now become absolutely necessary to compel them to keep at a greater distance from the settlement.

No talk now of conciliating their affections; or of living with them in amity and kindness; of confident friendship without display of force; of giving them a high opinion of their new guests: the turnabout was complete. Yet, a week afterwards, Phillip could still admit that 'it is not possible to punish them without punishing the innocent with the guilty ...'. Two months later, at the end of 1788, he made another turnabout, and the way in which his mentality veered is a question of primary interest for the historian of racial relations.

As the winter of 1788 approached, conditions in the settlement deteriorated. Fresh provisions grew scarce; the catches of fish fell off; and the cutting of building-timber over a large tract frightened the game away so that few kangaroos, which were the colonists’ only fresh meat, were caught. Sickness and scurvy increased, and deaths from all causes mounted to more than sixty. Every day ailing men foraged for foodstuffs and medicinal plants, and fishing parties went out almost every other day. The strain on food supplies provoked the Aborigines, and they must have been irritated too by the physical disturbance. Every week marines tramped to Botany Bay, and exploration parties went north and west. The local bands thus had both cause and occasion to keep at a distance, while making what retaliation they could. And, as if understandable causes of dismay were not enough, there were also events to play on their secular and superstitious fears. On 4 June, in celebration of the King's birthday, *Sirius* and *Supply* fired 21-gun salutes at sunrise, noon and sunset. On *Supply*, Blackburn noted in his journal that 'No cannon had ever been fired since our Arrival on the Coast', and wondered whether the Aborigines 'might take such a Terrible Noise as a Denunciation of War'. On 22 June, as the sun declined, the shock of an earthquake 'came from the South West like the wave of the sea Accompanyd by a Noise like a Distant Cannon. The Trees shook their Tops as if a Gale of Wind was Blowing'.

At about this time Watkin Tench, that 'candid and liberal mind', with many others was puzzling over the fact that intercourse with the Aborigines was 'neither frequent nor cordial'. He had at first suspected it to be due to their fear, jealousy or hatred. Then, as he wrote:

I confess that, in common with many others, I was inclined to attribute this conduct to a spirit of malignant levity. But a farther acquaintance with them, founded on several instances of their humanity and generosity ... has entirely reversed my opinion; and
led me to conclude, that the unprovoked outrages committed upon them, by unprincipled individuals among us, caused the evils we had experienced.

Phillip's outlook developed in much the same way. In the midst of the troubles of May 1788 he assured Lord Sydney that 'nothing less than the most absolute necessity' would ever make him fire on the Aborigines, though he tacitly admitted that he had come close to it. But he could not yield his thesis that confidence was the key. He harped on that theme until early 1790, by which time he had destroyed all Aboriginal confidence and may have lost his own. In 1788, being still unable, evidently, to grasp that two communities so constituted could not imaginably live together without friction, and being deeply committed to what Tench, with some irony, would later call, 'those speculative and laborious compositions on the advantages and superiority of a state of nature', he had necessarily to find a scapegoat. The convicts were ready-made for the role.

Perhaps Blackwood's Magazine went a little far (in 1827) in describing them as 'the most murderous, monstrous, debased, burglarious, brutified, larcenous, felonious and pickpocketous set of scoundrels that ever trod the earth', but they were a very hard lot, if not for being where they were, then for withstanding their fate with such desperate vitality. They were probably at the bottom of some, perhaps many, of the worst troubles; the records are not very explicit; understandably, because the marines declined to supervise the convicts and their supervisors had to be of their own kind. It seems certain, however, that they had much to do with the Aborigines openly, and the surreptitious traffic was probably constant. Illicit relations were easier by night than by day, and it was recorded that 'neither the fear of death or punishment prevents their going out in the night'. The most condign reprisals—in one case, 150 lashes and fettering for twelve months for a party which had 'daringly and flagrantly broken through every order which had been given to prevent their interfering with the natives'—had little effect. The documents are curiously silent about sexual traffic between Europeans and the 'sooty sirens', as one appreciative officer called them. But in a colony in which even the officers had convict concubines, and in which women were few (the sex ratio among the convicts in 1788 was three to one), the male convicts probably made persistent efforts to gratify their appetites through the native women. There was, as well, much purloining of Aboriginal fishing-gear, weapons and canoes by men desperate for food and without equipment of their own. But soldiery and seamen were probably also involved in such delicts. They certainly helped to irritate the natives by the 'rage for curiosity'—a mania for collecting artifacts. No amount of blame heaped on the convicts can sufficiently explain the general troubles. The Aborigines did not always attack them and, when they did, it could have been because such
miserable wretches were as convenient a target as they were, for Phillip and his officers, a convenient scapegoat.

Racial relations had thus passed through three phases by the last months of 1788 — the 'cautious friendship' of the first few days; the 'neither frequent nor cordial' intermezzo of the late summer and autumn; and the often open animosity of the winter and spring. In November, Phillip had to admit that the Aborigines 'now avoid us more than they did when we first landed'; rather oddly, in view of the October raid, he did not seem to connect that fact with his own conduct. A fourth phase now began. The Governor professed himself 'tired of this state of petty warfare and endless uncertainty', of 'inconsequent fraternization and inconsequent hostility', and of a stalemate in which 'not a native has come near the settlement for many months'. Having, in October, found it 'absolutely necessary' to force them away, he now saw it as 'absolutely necessary' to force them in. He decided to capture some by force. There were evidently two motives, one immediate, one more remote. Immediately, as Tench put it, kidnap would either inflame the rest to signal vengeance, in which case we should know the worst, and provide accordingly: or else it would induce an intercourse, by the report of which our prisoners would make of the mildness and indulgence with which we used them. And farther, it promised to unveil the cause of their mysterious conduct; by putting us in possession of their reasons for harassing and destroying our people.

Or, as Phillip phrased it somewhat later, it was absolutely necessary that we should attain their language or teach them ours, that the means of redress might be pointed out to them if they are injured, and to reconcile them by showing the many advantages they would enjoy by mixing with us.

More remotely (but perhaps nearer the bone), according to Tench again: intercourse with the natives, for the purpose of knowing whether or not the country possessed any resources, by which life might be prolonged, as well as on other accounts, becoming more and more desirable, the Governor resolved to capture two more of them.

That observation was made some nine months after the first capture, but perhaps the lapse of time had only uncovered the thought.

Arabanoo, the first prisoner, was taken at Manly Cove on 31 December, 1788. A second man escaped after a desperate struggle, and no doubt spread a tale of treachery. The captive (according to Tench's description, which may have idealised the man), was about thirty, not tall but robust, and with a face that suggested manliness, sensibility, and thoughtfulness rather than animation. His voice, at its best, was soft and musical. He behaved with cleanliness and decency, was quickly courteous to women, and gave an impression of gentleness and humanity. Children flocked to him. He showed gravity and steadiness, together
with dignity and independence, brooking no insult but giving none. Although peaceable and easily led, he often turned the tables, with humour, against those who teased him. Strong liquor repelled him: he turned away from it with disgust and abhorrence, as he did also from the sight of a convict being flogged. He had, or showed, less intelligence than other Aborigines the colonists came to know, but he endeared himself more: 'perhaps the only native who ever attached himself to us from choice; and who did not prefer a precarious subsistence among wilds and precipices, to the comforts of a civilized system'. The 'choice' came about when Phillip unfettered him, leaving him almost free of restraint, out of gratitude for help to native victims of a smallpox epidemic which, in the second quarter of 1789, brought about the deaths of perhaps half the Port Jackson Aborigines and unknown numbers elsewhere. For a while there were three natives in the settlement — Arabanoo, and a boy (Nanbaree) and girl (Abaroo) who had been found bereft. Arabanoo might then have escaped but did not try to do so. On 18 May, 1789 he died from the disease. Phillip thought his plan 'utterly defeated'. Arabanoo had had no real opportunity to talk with other Aborigines, so his capture and death can have taught them nothing, unless it were that friendly overtures could not be trusted. If it taught Phillip anything then it was not visible in his subsequent conduct.

At that time, Aborigines at any distance from Sydney, seeing the Europeans possibly for the first time, still 'showed every sign of welcome and friendship to the strangers'. But around the settlement 'the same suspicious dread of our approach, and the same scenes of vengeance on unfortunate stragglers, continued to prevail'. Even a Negro convict, who twice tried to thrust himself on the Aborigines, was repulsed. Within the settlement, conditions were worse and morale had slumped. Faction, jealousy and spite were at work. There had been a falling off in loyalty to Phillip. Many colonists now felt like John White, the sick, over-worked Surgeon General, that they were in a 'country' so forbidding and so hateful as only to merit execration and curses'. Phillip, moved now by the second rather than the first motive, ordered two more Aborigines to be made captive. That was done, much against the grain of the officer who had the duty, on 25 November, 1789.

One of the men, Colby, escaped after a week; the other, Benelong, five months afterwards. He was to become something of a personage in the colony, but that was later. According to Tench's account (which certainly did not idealize Benelong, or Baneelon as his name was first spelled) he showed himself, during his captivity and immediately afterwards, to be about as unlike Arabanoo in personality and character as well could be. He appeared a volatile egotist, mainly interested in love and war; a tease, a flirt and very soon a wine-bibber; a trickster and
eventually a bit of a turncoat. His captors cared for him as well as they could in what were now ‘desperate circumstances’ because of food shortage. Phillip at this time seems to have been divided between a rising fear of the Aborigines and a falling confidence in them. In February, 1790 he wrote that there was now little to be feared; that the Aborigines had never betrayed a confidence placed on them; on what evidence is not clear, that they had continuing confidence in ‘some of us’. He and his officers tried to hide from Benelong the facts of the famine in case, somehow, the knowledge leaked out to the surrounding Aborigines and led to an attack. Benelong nevertheless felt the pinch and it often made him ‘furious and melancholy’ although, on the whole, the enforced association seemed to please him. But he escaped by a trick on 3 May, 1790. Of stronger personality than Arabanoo, and quicker to learn, he had had excellent relations with many of the Europeans, including Phillip. He seems to have taken away with him a smattering of English, a love of liquor (possibly he invented the name ‘tumble-down’ by which the Aborigines knew it in the early years), an assortment of scrambled facts about Europeanism, and doubtless a fund of stories — including, probably, one about a white woman he had kissed. After the escape, Phillip still had thoughts of an attack in one corner of his mind: in June, he wrote that there was little risk of an attack on any building; ‘not that I think they want innate bravery — they certainly do not — but they are sensible of the great superiority of our arms’. Significant relations then apparently ceased for four months. Apart from the fear of other captures, want must have driven the Aborigines towards the outer fringes of their domains. Both garrison and convicts were starving: ‘the dread of perishing by famine stares us in the face’. A fifth phase of relations started in September and October 1790, by which time, incidentally, many of Phillip’s domestic difficulties were easing. A chance encounter at Manly Cove between some of his officers and perhaps two hundred Aborigines — among them Benelong, emaciated and at first difficult to recognize — brought the Governor hurrying to restore friendship. On that occasion his courage and magnanimity never showed to better advantage, and his ignorance of Aboriginal mentality and tendency to worse. He was speared in an incident, the accounts of which differ in important details, but there seems little doubt that the fault was mainly his. He ignored signs of equivocation before the attack took place; he indulged his ‘rage for curiosity’ at what was clearly the wrong time; he ignored a minatory gesture; he used precisely the wrong word to calm either an affronted or frightened native; and he reached for a weapon even though only with the intent of discarding it. In all these respects he was more his own victim than that of his assailant.

The deeper motive of the attack remains a mystery. Historians tend to regard the assault simply as the act of a frightened man. That seems
improbable. There were at least six major grievances which could have been expressed in the attack. They would have been held (1) by the man who struggled free when Arabanoo was captured; (2) by relatives and friends of Arabanoo, grieving over his death; (3) by Colby, his relatives and friends; (4) by Benelong, his relatives and friends; (5) by men with a marriage claim on Abaroo, the nubile girl held in the settlement; and (6) by relatives and friends of Nanbaree, the young boy held in the settlement. Any one or all would have been a sufficient motive for a public remonstrance against Phillip. The actions of his attacker, one Wileemarin, up to the time the spear was thrown, were consistent with a remonstrance that need not necessarily have led to a direct assault. Perhaps Phillip's worst mistake was to shout words intended to mean 'bad! bad!', which was more an accusation than an appeal or warning. And had he stood still, instead of advancing, Wileemarin might not have thrown. To his credit, he allowed no retaliation, and harboured no resentment.

The wound, from which he recovered slowly, was the penultimate irony of his policy. Perhaps the ultimate irony was that when, mainly through Benelong, in early October, 1790, numbers of Aborigines began to come freely to the settlement and, at long last, it could be said that 'from this time our intercourse with the natives, though partially interrupted, was never broken off', other Aborigines from Rose Hill, farther west, now came to Sydney to express 'great dissatisfaction at the number of white men who had settled in their former territories'. The western bands, seeing the treasures being lavished on the now-mendicant Benelong and his friends as part of the price of peace, no doubt drew conclusions which, had Phillip known of them, must have surprised and disappointed him. That was the start of a chain-reaction which, as settlement expanded, and even ahead of it, forced one tribe after another into some sort of dependency on Europeans.

At the end of 1790 Phillip's policy came to its sixth phase. His huntsman, a convict named M'Entire, was speared at Botany Bay and died slowly and miserably. The man was widely known to be detested by the Aborigines, having long 'been suspected by us of having in his excursions shot or injured them'. The murder put Phillip in a great passion: 'I am fully persuaded that they were unprovoked and the barbarity of their conduct admits of no extenuation'. He ordered out a punitive party. At first he determined that he would have ten Aborigines shot and their lopped heads brought back, together with two captives. The attack was to be made by surprise and force: no duplicity, no signs of amity, no response to friendly advances, 'for such conduct would not only present treachery but give them reason to distrust every future mark of peace and friendship on our part'. Women and children were not to be harmed, nor any huts burned. The two men taken were to be hanged 'in the presence of as many of their country-
men as can be collected after having explained the cause of such a punishment'. Here indeed was a change from the man who, earlier, had said that he could not bear the thought of 'punishing the innocent with the guilty'. But he asked for suggestions from the officer ordered to command the force, and instantly fell in with part of a proposed modification: to capture six, execute some, and later send back the others to spread the lesson. Phillip then gave his final order:

... if six cannot be taken, let this number be shot. Should you however find it practicable to take so many, I will hang two and send the rest to Norfolk Island for a period, which will cause their countrymen to believe that we have despatched them secretly.

The dutiful men went out, carrying axes and bags for the heads. On a first occasion, fifty-two strong, they failed to take any Aborigines, though they saw some. Much to their embarrassment they met Colby, whom Phillip had tried to bribe — and, in desperation, incapacitate by stuffing him with food! — to stay away from Botany Bay so that he could not warn the Aborigines of the impending raid. A second sortie, ten days later, collapsed in tragi-comic circumstances, and the whole idea was called off.

Had the punitive expedition succeeded, it must have greatly damaged Phillip's reputation. Possibly it might have led to his indictment or recall: there were men in the colony, who, from various motives, might have capitalized it as others were to try to do in a somewhat similar case in South Australia in 1840. In the upshot it cost him the respect of at least one officer, who was revolted by the affair and kept it on his conscience. A modern historian has wondered why, since 'it was such a very abstract sin'. Doubtless Lieutenant Dawes had no taste for murder. Phillip could not have made it appear even judicial murder. He did not intend to hold a trial; he wanted to hang some natives; and any would do. There were other curious aspects of the incident. The Governor brushed aside the known character of M'Entire, a tremendous villain who, knowing that he was dying, was heard to 'accuse himself of the commission of crimes of the deepest dye, accompanied with such expressions of despair as are too terrible to repeat'; although he denied any particularly wicked offences against the Aborigines, no one believed him. Moreover, Phillip nagged Benelong, who was known to have a particular loathing of M'Entire, to go with Colby in search of the murderers; and at one stage he expected Colby — 'Botany Bay' Colby, as he was called — to act against his own kin, the Botany Bay band.

After this revealing affair, Phillip's stay as Governor lasted a further two years. Over that time, according to an historian, 'the native question sank into unimportance', which means that no one bothered any more about it. The Aborigines commingled freely with the colonists, and it was recorded that 'a great many have taken up their abode entirely among us', so that 'every gentleman's house was now become a resting
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or sleeping place for some every night; whenever they were pressed for hunger, they had recourse immediately to our quarters'. Whether the Governor imagined that his policy had now succeeded remains uncertain, for he did not say, but there is evidence that the status of the Aborigines was already in transition, and one may trace to this period the beginnings of the scorn and dislike of them, and the indifference to their fate, which were to become so strongly characteristic of Australian mentality. Thomas Watling, an artist-convict who arrived at Port Jackson just as Phillip was preparing to leave it, compared the prisoners' lot with the indulgence shown to the Aborigines, and commented bitterly: 'this may be philosophy, according to the calculation of our rigid dictators; but I think it is the falsest species of it that I have ever known or heard of'; and of course he was right.

The Governor had brought the harbour clans into close continuous touch with all classes of the European populace, in accordance with his idea that 'every means shall be used to reconcile them to live amongst us' but, as far as the record allows one to judge, saw nothing wrong with the outcome and, to all appearances, washed his hands of it. To the officers the Aborigines were

an amusement and an alleviation of the post's tedium. To the convicts they were inferior even to themselves. They tried to take their own wrongs out on the black man or to make what profit they could out of him.

The well-intentioned hope of preventing contact with the convicts lest 'the women be abused and the natives disgusted' thus perished. Few of the other good things that Phillip had hoped would come from close association really eventuated, except that many Aborigines picked up enough English to make themselves understood; indeed, their linguistic facility began to be noticed in the first few days at Botany Bay. In 1792 George Thompson recorded in his Journal:

they are very quick in learning to speak English, and will repeat any sentence after you immediately, particularly any tune. When in their canoes, they keep constantly singing while they paddle along. They have the French tune of Malbrook very perfect; I have heard a dozen or twenty singing it together.

A few colonists learned a little of the Port Jackson dialects, but the officers who seem to have had the gift of tongues, or a lasting interest in Aboriginal culture, did not stay in the colony, so that their knowledge had little effect; so little, indeed that thirty years later a missionary complained that 'no one has yet attempted to study the language'. That was at a time when it was still official policy to 'ease the natives into a civilized community' and, west of the Blue Mountains, at Bathurst, where the calamity of Port Jackson was being repeated, the first Christian service ended with 'a very excellent, appropriate sermon, strongly impressing the justice, good policy and expediency of civiliz-
ing the aborigines or black natives of the country, and settling them in townships'. For many years after the 1790s no significant use was made of Aboriginal knowledge of the best routes through the country, of tracts suitable for settlement, or of useful natural products. The disrupted bands certainly learned nothing of 'the advantages they will reap from cultivating the land', and racial violence became more or less constant.

At Phillip's departure there were already present both the elements, and the conditions for the persistence, of two realities which continued without material change, except for the worse, over the next 150 years. One was a pattern of racial relations, the other a structure of racial equities. They were the products of a process — meeting, sporadic violence, a general struggle, and the imposition of terms by the stronger — which always appeared wherever settlement went. After a true economy formed, in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the pattern contracted: one side or the other plunged straight into the general struggle. The colonists' 'mania' — the word is their own — for stock and land soon disclosed as axiomatic that 'a hunting and pastoral economy cannot co-exist within the same bounds'. Consequently, Aboriginal society survived only outside the pastoral bounds. Within them, the racial pattern — dominance and subjugation — became a rule of practice, and the structure of equities — the Europeans' maximal, the Aborigines' minimal — became if not open rule of law, then its tacit convention.

During the five years under study there were two societies interacting in a single field. An ethnocentric approach, either in anthropology or historiography, to the facts of a two-sided racial struggle, must be regarded as insufficient. One cannot accept as intellectually adequate the judgments that dismiss the Aborigines as 'a melancholy footnote to Australian history' or are content, after some remarks on the sadness of it all, to say that history made of them 'a codicil to the Australian story'. To point out too that 'the aboriginal race has always possessed enthusiastic friends, but the friends have never agreed upon a consistent and practical policy for the black man's preservation' transfers, a little too blandly, an onus to where it does not belong. The primary axiom of settlement, or at least of development — that Aboriginal and European society could not or must not be allowed to co-exist — allowed little, if any, room for such a policy, even had it been practicable, which may well be doubted. It seems to follow that one cannot make full human sense of the development of European life in Australia without reference to the structure of racial relations and the persistent indifference to the fate of the Aborigines; in short, without an analysis of the Australian conscience. Part of such a study would be the apologetic element in the writing of Australian history, an element that sticks out like a foot from a shallow grave.
One cannot dismiss the fact that three realities co-existed with the unfolding of 'the Australian story'. Racial conflict persisted wherever any Aborigines survived; many Aborigines made continuous efforts to adapt themselves to new conditions of life; and, among a few Europeans, an interest in the subjugated race never wholly died. The relevance of those facts may have been unappreciated or denied; they may have been passed over in the writing of history; but, without them, there could have been no ground or spring for the renascent humanitarianism of the 1930s. In other words, there was more than an accidental correspondence between the ruin of Aboriginal, and the making of European, life in Australia. There was, in fact, a functional concomitance. The interdependence was more clear at some times than at others. It was particularly clear in the decades of the nineteenth century in which material development and the spoliation of the native life were most intense. The vilification of the Aborigines reached its pitch precisely over that period. Few national histories can have afforded a more blazing, and odious, rationalization of ugly deeds. The social historian does not have to depend on an art of discovering obscure correlations to document the facts. In the 1870s, Anthony Trollope probably spoke for a majority of Australians. 'Their doom', he said of the Aborigines, 'is to be exterminated; and the sooner that their doom be accomplished, — so that there be no cruelty, — the better will it be for civilization'. In the next decade, Percy Russell wrote —

Her shield unsullied by a single crime,
Her wealth of gold and still more golden fleece,
Forth stands Australia, in her birth sublime,
The only nation from the womb of Peace.

Phillip's period is interesting because it produced the materials whose decay-products made the ground fertile for such rank growths. The vision of primitive man was already trifocal — romantic, realistic and sardonic. As might perhaps have been expected, the collapsed romanticism turned into violence, the realism into indifference, and the sardonicism into contempt. The ensemble of violence, indifference and contempt suited the mood and needs of a transplanted people. What makes the case for a relational history, within a field containing two peoples, is the continuous working of a single influence with two victims — a sightlessness towards Aboriginal life, and an eyelessness towards the moral foundation of Australian development. Let us call it simply the fact of indifference. It denotes a whole syndrome of psychosocial qualities, which were as much an enabling cause or condition of Aboriginal ruin as they were of the shaping of European mentality and life in Australia. One cannot readily call to mind any important issue or problem, as the outcome of which Australian life became what it became, in which there was more than a derisory regard for Aboriginal concerns. That fact, if true, supports the thesis that the destruction of
Aboriginal society was not the consequence of European development, but its price, which is a very different thing. The intuition of that fact was the maggot in Trollope's justification of the worst, and the demon in Russell's mythologizing of the best, in Australian history. The year 1791 is a natural starting-point for a study of the consequences, among a people of British moral traditions, and among their victims, of a moral indifference which expressed socially, and inter-racially, the main postulate of settlement. The disposal of land, the development of law and order, the distribution of political power, the recognition of human rights, and the administration of justice must all have taken a different course, had it not been for the suffocation of conscience. And a number of chickens would not now be coming home to roost.

Phillip has been eulogized, in many ways no doubt rightly, as 'an ideal founder for any new colony', but only in respect of his management of European affairs in New South Wales, not in his dealings with the Aborigines. In that field, and by the test, not of what he said or may have wished, but of what he did and what it led to, Phillip emerges badly. One is hard put at times even to recognize the man said to have been 'endowed with common sense, kindliness, breadth of vision, firmness and sincerity'. He was undoubtedly courageous, kindly, and of good intent. But many of his transactions with the Aborigines lacked common sense; his vision of them was so warped by presupposition that he misunderstood their character as persons and social beings about as badly as he did the two-sided racial situation; and his 'sincerity' was all too soon overborne by considerations of 'good policy' — indeed, he appeared to forget all about them during the last two years of his stay. Apparently at no time did he see himself as a possible architect of their ruin, which in fact he was. But he seems to have been as impercipient towards the European society taking shape at Sydney. On his departure in 1792, he believed the colony to be 'approaching that state in which I have so long and anxiously wished to see it' whereas, within a month, it began to disintegrate under tensions he had helped to construct. By that time also he had induced the Aborigines in large numbers to become mendicants on the settlement. At the very doorstep of Government House there was 'a rendezvous for the blacks, where the soldiers joined them, singing and dancing in the evening', and no doubt sharing stronger pleasures as well. Nothing survives in the records to suggest that he saw anything amiss. Historians seem disposed to attribute all that was good in early Australian foundations to his courage, determination and prudence, and all that was bad to the conditions, including the human material, that limited him, but 'no historian would dare to speculate whether the pioneer's high reputation would have survived had he been forced to remain and face the problems of the next five years'. Among these problems were the degradation of many, and the alienation of most of the Aborigines within several days'
march of Sydney. Given the fact and the constitution of the settlement, the upshot for the Aborigines of course would have been much the same, probably worse, under another Governor. Little as it is, that is perhaps all that can be said. One of his naval captains thought that 'God Almighty made Phillip on purpose for the place, for never did man know better what to do, or with more determination see it done'. On the other hand Lord Howe, the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet, had hinted to Lord Sydney at the time of Phillip's appointment that he was scarcely the man 'for a service of this complicated nature'. In any study of Australian history in which Aboriginal affairs are put in the forefront, Lord Howe's judgment has much to recommend it.

Much has been said, and said rightly, in Phillip's defence. There was no hint of general principle in his Instructions concerning the Aborigines. At the most, he could find a modus vivendi. He experimented with the two notions — assimilation and expulsion — which have always polarised Australian thought. But, while making proper allowance for the ideas and standards of his time, including his notions of the human and social nature of Aboriginal man, one must observe that his methods were very untactical, on occasions slightly crazy. Most of his troubles had been with the bands south of the harbour: to raid the bands north of the harbour was an odd thing to do. It is hard to understand his reasoning that force and trickery would 'take away that fear and prejudice which they have continued to show ever since our first misunderstanding with them'. One naturally wonders why it never occurred to him to use go-betweens: he had several suitable officers of high intellectual capacity who had shown much interest in Aboriginal life. It would be charitable to assume that accumulating burdens and failing health proved too much for a man who has been described by a modern historian as two men in one: a man who 'with grace, dignity, industry and great self-control had won the battle for survival' and the man who 'had once wanted to hand over murderers and sodomites to be eaten by cannibals'. In New South Wales he had to be the arbiter of a more terrible external duality, which no one has yet found a way to bridge.

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Resistance to an outside force, group or influence is a normal technique in the direction of human affairs. C.D. Rowley has characterized Aboriginal resistance to European invasion as 'normal reactions by members of any minority with a comparable history'.

When Europeans invaded Australia the Aborigines were at first tentative in their response, but later they made definite overtures of friendship, based on mutual reciprocity, particularly to itinerant European invaders who were not intending to occupy Aboriginal land. When this was abused, the Aborigines resisted, usually by attacking the European camps. Where European invaders settled permanently, some Aborigines demanded payment for occupation. Where payment was not forthcoming Aborigines used guerilla methods to remove the invader.

When the Aborigines were dispossessed and placed in institutions they employed the resistance techniques of a defeated people to preserve their dignity and identity. They relied upon non-cooperation, silence, lying and ingratitude as well as acts of small scale defiance and affronts to middle class mores in order to outrage their captors. Kevin Gilbert has since pointed out that their treatment in defeat and captivity can be compared with the treatment of people in concentration camps.

The dispossession of the Aboriginal people in south eastern Australia was followed not by the disappearance of Aboriginal groups but by the development of separate part-Aboriginal communities, for the spirit of survival and adaptation in Aboriginal society is as strong as in any other. These communities have fought for recognition despite attempts to legislate them out of existence. They have either been isolated from 'white' society because they have been considered too Aboriginal, or they have been denied Aboriginal legal status because they have been considered too European. Above all they have been considered incapable of self-determination.

This article explores the emergence and development of one part-Aboriginal community in south eastern Australia in the nineteenth century, the Cape Barren Islanders. It focuses upon their relations with the 'authorities' and 'outsiders' who made periodic attempts to change their identity and economy. The Islanders' resistance to these efforts is examined and their techniques for survival investigated.

The emergence of the part-Aboriginal community in Bass Strait in

The Bass Strait Islands.

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the nineteenth century was the result of interaction between Tasmanian Aborigines visiting the coastline of northern Tasmania in search of seasonal food resources and Europeans visiting Bass Strait in search of seal. Physical isolation allowed the community to develop a distinctive culture and lifestyle in much the same way that traditional Aboriginal society in Tasmania developed a separate but similar culture from Aboriginal society on mainland Australia after Bass Strait was flooded ten thousand years ago. Sealing from 1798 to 1820 initiated the community and mutton-birding from 1820 sustained it.

In pre-European times the Aborigines in Tasmania consisted of nine tribes each containing from five to twelve bands. With an average of nine bands, the population of each tribe comprised between 350 and four hundred people. The smallest tribe had about 250 and the largest seven hundred, so that the total population was probably about four thousand. Like most hunter-gatherer societies, the Aboriginal Tasmanians had an extensive system of reciprocal visiting rights for seasonal food sources, so that each tribe could take advantage of the ‘maximum range of ecological zones’.

Ecologically the tribes fell into three groups: the maritime group (the North West, the South West and the South East peoples) which had an extensive coast and limited hinterland; the eastern and northern group (the Oyster Bay, North East and North peoples) which had both an extensive coastline and hinterland; and the midland group (the Big River, the North Midlands and the Ben Lomond peoples) which had little or no coastline. By agreement, all three groups gained coastal and inland access to each other’s territory. In pre-European times only the South East and South West peoples did not visit the north coast of Tasmania for the exploitation of seasonal food sources. European sealers first came to Bass Strait in 1798 in search of seal skins for the European market. The fur seal was then abundant along the coast of Tasmania and the southern shores of Australia. Bass Strait, with its rocky islands, temperate climate and plentiful supplies of fish, provided a perfect environment for them. The sealing season lasted from November to

3 Jones (1974:328) defines the tribe in Tasmania as:

That agglomeration of bands which lived in contiguous regions, spoke the same language or dialect, shared the same cultural traits, usually intermarried, had a similar pattern of seasonal movement, habitually met together for economic and other reasons, the pattern of whose peaceful relations were within the agglomeration and of whose enmities and military adventures were directed outside it. Such a tribe had a territory, consisting of the sum of the land owned by its constituent bands. Movements outside this territory, and of alien bands into it, were carefully sanctioned and had reciprocal economic advantages to the bands concerned. Trespass was usually a challenge to or punished by war. The borders of a territory ranged from a sharp, well-defined line associated with a prominent geographical feature to a broad transition zone usually found between two friendly tribes. Extraterritorial movement often took place along well-marked ‘roads’ that, in their configuration relative to the shape of the country and to the tribal boundaries, tended to give maximum access with minimum trespass.

4 Jones 1974.
5 Jones 1974.
6 Plomley 1966:1006.

29.
May with ships arriving from all parts of the world. At first the ships visited the islands taking as many seal as possible, but later they deposited groups of men on the islands for the season, returning to collect them the following May. The number of European men who came each year was never more than a few hundred and the very precariousness of the lifestyle frequently drove them to the coast of Van Diemen's Land for repairs and sustenance. 7

They landed first at Cape Portland in about 1804 and later along the whole north coast of Tasmania from Cape Grim in the west to Georges Rocks in the east. Their visits coincided with the Aborigines' summer pilgrimage to the coast for mutton-bird, seal, birds and their eggs and shellfish.

The sealers' visits were not unwelcome to the North East people for they made no attempt to settle and were prepared to barter seal and kangaroo carcase, mutton-bird and later dogs for Aboriginal women. At first the women were bartered for the duration of the sealing season but after 1808 when the number of fur seal began to decline and the Sydney and foreign-based companies began to move to other areas, some sealers remained to operate independently in the Strait and Aboriginal women were taken to the Bass Strait islands to become their 'wives'. To maintain a supply of women for the sealers, the North East people began to raid neighbouring tribes more frequently. This led to increased inter-tribal rivalry. At the same time the North East people were convinced that the sealers could be incorporated into their own system of mutual obligation and exchange.

Every November the North East people gathered at strategic points along the north east coast such as Waterhouse Point, Cape Portland and Georges Rocks in anticipation of the sealers' arrival. After their appearance, usually in a whale boat containing four to six men, a dance was held, a conference would take place and an arrangement made for a number of women to accompany the sealers for the season. Some women came from the host band, others had been abducted from other bands. A 'sealing woman', Bullrer, from Cape Portland, told G.A. Robinson in 1830 that the North East people had taken women from the North Midlands tribe and sold them to the sealers for dogs, mutton-bird and flour. 8 On other occasions sealers made arrangements to take

7 Hainsworth; Cumpston 1970, 1972; Micco.
8 Robinson, 20 October 1830 (Plomley 1966:254). George Augustus Robinson (1788-1866) was appointed by Lieutenant-Governor Arthur in March 1829 to 'effect an intercourse' with the Tasmanian Aborigines. After nine months at the Aboriginal ration station on Bruny Island, he set out in January 1830 to contact the Aborigines along the west coast of Tasmania. Between September 1830 and September 1831 he was in north-eastern and eastern Tasmania and on the islands of Bass Strait seeking information about the sealers. From October 1831 to August 1833 he was in central Tasmania searching for the Big River and Oyster Bay Aborigines. From February to November 1832 he was in north-western Tasmania; from December 1832 to October 1833 round Macquarie Harbour; and from December 1833 to August 1834 in the north-west again.

At first Robinson concentrated on establishing friendly relations with the Aborigines,
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women for short periods for specific tasks. When the sealer George Briggs visited the north east coast in January 1816, he was able to ‘hire’ six Aboriginal women to catch seal at Georges Rocks for two days. Sometimes Aboriginal men accompanied sealing parties and Mannalargenna, the leader from Georges Bay who spent a great deal of his time in the north east, may have made more than one voyage with the sealers.

It is not known when the economic value of Aboriginal women in catching seal was first recognised by the sealers. But once this economic value had been understood, contact intensified and brought change both to the economy and society of the North East people. First the seasonal pattern of migration was changed. The North East people were now encouraged to remain on the coast for the whole summer rather than move inland for kangaroo as had been the traditional pattern. In winter they went in search of other bands and tribes along the coast to abduct their women. The second change was the increased power and influence of individual leaders. Mannalargenna, for example, who came from Georges Bay, spent many years with a band from St Patrick’s Head. He led many raids for women on other bands, negotiated with sealers and quickly saw the value of European dogs to the Aboriginal economy and gift exchange system. Mannalargenna was able to exploit the sealers to the advantage of his own group. The final change was the increasing economic potential of the women. Their skills at first made them chattels in the barter system devised by the Aboriginal men and the sealers, but later proved a useful means with which to bargain for their independence.

An example of the type of relations that developed between the North East people and the sealers was noted by James Kelly during his voyage around Tasmania in 1815 and 1816. With Kelly was the sealer George Briggs, who had at least two Aboriginal wives and several children on Cape Barren Island. In January 1816, Kelly and his crew landed at Ringarooma Point. There they fell in with a band of the

but during the second expedition he began persuading them to come into captivity, promising them a place where they could live unmolested by the settlers and be fed and clothed. Those agreeing to join him were sent to Bass Strait, first to Swan Island in November 1830, then to Gun Carriage Island in March 1831 and to Flinders Island the following December. A permanent establishment began at Wybalenna on the western side of Flinders Island in January 1833. Over 230 Aborigines were taken to the Aboriginal Establishment; the forty-four remaining were removed to Oyster Cove, twenty miles south of Hobart, in October 1847. The last of these, Truganini, died in May 1867 (Plomley 1966: Introduction; Anon. 1967).

Robinson was commandant at the Establishment from October 1835 to February 1839, when he left to become Chief Protector of the Aborigines in Victoria. He held this post until 1849 and returned to England in 1852. Robinson’s manuscript journals, now in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, provide extensive information about the Aborigines in Tasmania and Victoria. The Tasmanian journals for 1829-1834 were published by N.J.B. Plomley in 1966.

9 Bowden 1964:38-42.
11 For an opposing view, see McMahon 1976: 44-49
North East people, numbering two hundred and led by Mannalargenna, one of whose daughters Briggs had taken to Cape Barren Island. Through her Briggs had obligations to the rest of the band.

Mannalargenna had two daughters with the sealers: Teekoolterme, who was eventually taken to Kangaroo Island, and Wobberrettee or Wapperty who at this stage was with Briggs although she had previously been abducted by the sealer John Thomas. She finally had a child to the Maori sealer, Myetye. Her descendants survive among the Cape Barren Island part-Aboriginal community.

Mannalargenna tried to elicit Briggs' assistance to fight a neighbouring band at Eddystone Point with whom the bushranger Michael Howe and his band had made an alliance. Having no wish to become entangled with Howe, Briggs promised Mannalargenna he would seek help from other sealers at Cape Barren Island. The leader agreed to this. As Briggs and his companions departed, the leader asked after his daughter. Briggs replied that she was very well. Mannalargenna said, 'I know, I see her fires every day from Cape Barren'.

Briggs and his companions departed, but avoided Cape Barren Island and the adjacent north east coast and sailed instead for Georges Rocks on the east coast. In breaking his obligations to Mannalargenna, Briggs recognised that he faced future conflict.

A few days later Briggs and Kelly fell in with the opposing band led by Tolobunganah near Georges Rocks. Michael Howe and his party had departed. Tolobunganah, who knew Briggs well, agreed to 'hire' him six women for two days to catch seal on Georges Rocks. In that time they killed fifty-four seal. Using other seal killed earlier, Kelly and Briggs traded 122 Carcases to Tolobunganah for 246 Kangaroo skins.

By 1820 the sealers were abducting Aboriginal women, partly because they were reluctant to barter valuable seal carcase, partly because of the general Aboriginal population decline and partly because they had begun to establish permanent villages on the Bass Strait islands where they needed women for economic and sexual purposes on a long term basis. Bullrer, an Aboriginal woman from Cape Portland, told Robinson in 1830 that she had been abducted by the sealer James Munro when she could only crawl.

By 1829 the society and economy of the North East people had been so disrupted by interaction with the sealing community and by increased hostility with neighbouring bands and tribes, that only thirty survivors remained. Although the sealers can be accused of destroying the North

12 Bowden 1964:36
14 Bowden 1964:38.
15 Bowden 1964.
16 Bowden 1964:40-42.
17 Robinson, 11 October 1830 (Plomley 1966:246).
East tribe through the barter of women and the creation of hostility toward the 'official' settler society, it can also be argued that the sealers saved the Aboriginal Tasmanians from extinction because their economic activity helped to create an alternative to the Aboriginal Establishment organised by Robinson on Flinders Island in the 1830s.

With the decline of sealing in Bass Strait after 1820, the community in Bass Strait began to place increasing emphasis upon mutton-birding. Before European contact the Aboriginal bands from northern Tasmania had gathered along the coastline every November to collect mutton-bird eggs. In February they had returned to eat the young birds. Mutton-birding had been more important to their traditional economy than sealing, as it was seasonally more reliable and exploited by all ages and both sexes.

One of the first sealers to recognise the economic potential of mutton-birding was James Munro, who had taken up residence at Preservation Island at the eastern end of Bass Strait in about 1819. By 1826 he had several huts, crops of wheat and potatoes and some livestock and employed fourteen Aboriginal women and thirteen European men in mutton-birding. Munro sold the feathers in Launceston for down, used the oil and fat for fuel and salted the carcase for storage against starvation in winter. He had achieved a degree of permanency in 1825 when he secured appointment as constable for the Straits area. He became the acknowledged voice for the community.

The Aboriginal women on Preservation Island had adapted their traditional technology to increase the catch. Their digging sticks, originally used to force the birds from their burrows, had been extended into spits, so that several birds could be carried at once by stringing them by their beaks. As the industry became more sophisticated over the next sixty years, both Aboriginal and European skills were used to maximise production. By 1830 'birding' had given the community a new economic security.

By 1830 there were seventy-four Aboriginal women living with sealers in Bass Strait. Twenty-eight came from the North East people, twenty-one from the North West and the remainder from the Ben Lomond, South East, Oyster Bay and North tribes.

In the same year Robinson was authorised to remove Aboriginal women from those sealers who had more than one wife. Robinson regarded all Europeans in the Straits as fugitives from the law and all Aboriginal women associated with them as slaves. He was convinced that if he could remove the women, the sealers would leave the Straits. With this in mind, in March 1831 he fixed upon one of their centres of

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18 Plomley 1966:1014.

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residence, Gun Carriage Island, as the temporary headquarters of the Aboriginal Establishment. At that stage there were at least six sealers on the Island with nine Aboriginal women and their part-Aboriginal children. They lived in a 'village' of huts, gardens and livestock. Although most of the women had lived on the island since childhood, only four of the sealers had been there before 1820.21

The mode of exchange of women between the sealers, and the treatment they received, was a source of constant irritation and outrage for Robinson. He lost no time in removing most of the Aboriginal women and evicting the sealers, who went to Preservation Island. James Munro, however, took the sealers' case to Lieutenant-Governor Arthur in Hobart and extracted the promise that those sealers who had only one Aboriginal woman could have them returned. In June, Robinson had to return six women to the sealers.22 But by then Gun Carriage Island had proved unsuitable for an Aboriginal Establishment and, at the end of 1831, it was removed to Flinders Island.

At least seventeen Aboriginal women were removed from the sealers and sent to the Establishment between 1830 and 1837.23 Robinson had hoped the 'sealing women' would assist in teaching the more recently captured Aborigines from the west coast some of the skills of European civilisation. Their better health, familiarity with European customs and readiness to dispense with some of the more 'distasteful' traditional ceremonial led him to believe that they could form the vanguard of the peasant society he had planned for Flinders Island. But the sealing women were critical of his Aboriginal Establishment and resisted both his authority and that of the Aboriginal men.

In August 1837 Robinson organised marriages for four sealing women because they had refused to cohabit with the Aboriginal men.24 Within a week, however, the women had left their husbands for the bush, warning that they would not return until they could live with whom they chose. When Robinson refused to supply them with rations they robbed the camp at night.25 By the end of 1837 the sealing women had emerged as a significant dissident group. By 1838 Robinson recognised that his program of 'civilisation by tuition' had only a limited chance of success.26

The sealing community in Bass Strait consisted in 1837 of forty people scattered on Gun Carriage, Preservation, Clarke, Woody and Swan islands. Several South Australian women had been brought to the islands before 1831, and the son of a settler from Oyster Bay, George

22 Robinson, 19 March and 6 June 1831 (Plomley 1966:325, 360).
24 Robinson, Flinders Island Journal, 10 August 1837, Robinson Papers v.11.
25 Journal, 17 August 1837, Robinson Papers v. 11.
26 Robinson to Colonial Secretary, 4 July 1838, Robinson Papers v. 24.
Meredith Jr., had raided the southern coast of Australia for women in 1835, to replace those who joined Robinson. Thus a number of Victorian Aboriginal women had joined the community. Until his departure for Port Phillip in 1839, Robinson used his authority to refuse the sealers the right to depasture sheep, destroy game or exploit mutton-bird. Yet he purchased mutton-bird from them when stores failed to arrive from Hobart.27

After Robinson's departure, succeeding commandants at the Aboriginal Establishment took a more pragmatic view of the sealing community and, until the Establishment's removal to Oyster Cove in 1847, a degree of interaction took place. Some Aborigines from the Establishment accompanied the sealers on sealing and mutton-bird expeditions. One sealer, John Smith, was a coxswain for the Establishment and another, Thomas Tucker, occasionally taught the children. At least two Aboriginal men tried to abscond from the Establishment with the sealers and at least one Aboriginal woman resident bore a child to a sealer. Two Aboriginal women from the community joined the Establishment when their sealer 'husbands' died, but one, Wapperty, left her child with the community.28

In March 1847 the then commandant, Henry Jeanneret, invited three sealers from Gun Carriage Island — Thomas Beedon, Richard Maynard and John Dobson — to attend a meeting in the chapel at the Establishment where he publicly charged the catechist with neglect of the Aboriginal children.29 By using the sealers as witnesses, Jeanneret accorded the community a respectability and status the colonial government had for years sought to deny. At that time another member of the Straits community, John Thomas, was sheltering at the Establishment after his farm at Clarke Island had been appropriated by a European from the Australian mainland.30

Interaction ceased in October of 1847 when the Aboriginal Establishment was removed to Oyster Cove, twenty miles from Hobart. The ostensible reasons for this removal were expense and humanity but a more significant influence was the fear that too much interaction with the Straits community would 'contaminate' the remaining 'fullbloods'. Miscegenation might increase the numbers at the Establishment, which would mean an even greater burden upon government. It was now recognised that the Aborigines had some claim upon the public purse in compensation for dispossession, although this claim was a strictly

27 Plomley 1966:1009; An Act to require sealers and others to depart the Straits, 6 Will IV, no. 18, 1836; Robinson, Journal, 30 August 1836, Robinson Papers v. 24; Colonial Secretary to Robinson, 25 February 1839, Robinson Papers v. 50.

28 Plomley 1966:1020; Plomley 1971:28; see also Jeanneret to Colonial Secretary, 21 February, 31 March and 20 May 1843, Tasmanian State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office (TSA CSO 8/157/1169).

29 Jeanneret 1854:34-35.

30 Jeanneret 1854:35.
limited one. Miscegenation was also condemned on the ground that it would produce an inferior person who would comprise all that was ‘weak’ in both black and white.\(^{31}\)

The removal of the ‘fullblood’ Aboriginal Tasmanians to Oyster Cove sealed their fate because they had fewer means to resist their institutionalised environment. Had they remained at Flinders Island these Aborigines could have increased their number by interaction with the Straits community, which had adapted to the realities of the Bass Strait environment, and provided a positive alternative to the artificial society at the Aboriginal Establishment.

In 1847 the Straits community consisted of thirteen families totalling about fifty people. On Gun Carriage Island there was Thomas Beedon who lived with a woman from Cape Portland, Emerenna (Bet Smith), also known as Woreterneemmerunertattayenne, and their four children; Thomas Tucker who lived with an Indian woman, Maria Bengally; and David Kelly with his part-Aboriginal son.\(^{32}\) Also on Gun Carriage Island were John Riddle and his children.\(^{33}\) On Woody Island lived James Everett and Wotecowidyder (Wot, Wotty or Harriet), also from Cape Portland, and their four children. Richard Maynard also lived there with an Aboriginal Tasmanian, Margaret or Pollerwottelter-kunne, from Piper River, by whom he had two children, and the Aboriginal Australian woman, Elizabeth, by whom he had four children. An earlier inhabitant, Andrew Armstrong, and his Aboriginal Australian wife, Jane Foster, and two of their children had recently left the island for the west coast of Tasmania to engage in sealing, but later returned to Clarke Island.\(^{34}\) On Long Island lived Edward Mansell and Julia (Black Judy) from St Patrick’s Head and their child. On Tin Kettle Island lived John Smith and his three children by Sarah (Mother Brown) or Pleenperrenner from Cape Portland.\(^{35}\) On Cape Barren Island lived John Thomas and Nimerana or Teekoolterme, a daughter of Mannalar-genna, and at least three children, as well as Robert Rew and his part-Aboriginal wife, Frances Anderson. On Preservation Island was the Aboriginal Australian, Margery, who had lived with James Munro until his death in 1845, and two of her children. On Hunter Island lived William Proctor and the part-Aboriginal Tasmanian, Mary Ann Brown, and two of their children.\(^{36}\) There were other families on Kangaroo Island but those associated with the Furneaux Group remained in sufficient contact to form the ‘Islander’ community as they became known. Three other European men entered this community in the

\(^{31}\) Strzelecki 1845:344-346.
\(^{32}\) See genealogical table no. 4, Everett family, in enclosure Bladon to Premier of Tasmania, 30 September 1911, Bladon Papers; Report of the Surveyor-General on the Islands in Bass Strait 1849, (TSA LSD 24/66).
\(^{33}\) Plomley 1966:1015.
\(^{34}\) Mollison 1977, notes on Armstrong family.
\(^{35}\) Sarah had died in July 1846.
\(^{36}\) Mollison 1977, notes on Proctor family; see also Tindale 1953:10-15.
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succeeding twenty years — William Richard Brown, John Summers and George Burgess. After that the Islanders married within their own community, forming the basis of the present-day grouping.37

The community in the 1840s was seen by the outside world in sharply differing ways. Some observers found the elders ‘hale, rubicon fellows, hearty and joyous’, and the children ‘sharp and intelligent’. Others found them ‘barbarous’, ‘literally half-savage and half-civilised; half black and half white’.38 Having survived eviction and harassment, they now began to seek recognition as a separate community.

In February 1848 Thomas Beedon, a resident of Gun Carriage Island, applied to the Van Diemen’s Land government for the lease of Badger Island, but was refused on the ground that the island could be needed for the construction of a lighthouse. The government was not anxious to legitimise a community which had long evaded regulation.39 But the Bass Strait islands were beginning to attract other settlers, so in the following year the government decided that the Surveyor-General should make an official visit, to make recommendations on future occupation.

He found the Islander community scattered throughout the Fumeaux Group. They ran pigs and goats and grew wheat and potatoes to supplement catches of kangaroo, seal and mutton-bird, they visited each other’s establishments, sometimes for months at a time, to exploit seasonal food resources and they pursued a lifestyle based on elements from both traditional Aboriginal and nineteenth century European society. The Surveyor-General found the Islanders...

kind and gentle; and upon the whole I consider them a primitive and amiable people, and believe that the greatest harmony prevails amongst them. The men are excellent boatmen and possess a capital description of whaleboat... every encouragement should be given to a class of men most invaluable as Pilots, and whose kindness was evinced by their treatment of the shipwrecked survivors of the Governor Phillip.40

He recommended that a nominal rent of one shilling a year be paid by the Islanders for occupation of their existing places, on the understanding that the Crown possessed the right of resumption at six months notice. The government, too recognised that ‘the occupation of the Islands by acknowledged Tenants is better by far than having them occupied without leave or licence’.41

Two years later the community applied to Lieutenant-Governor Denison for the appointment of a missionary-catechist to educate their

37 Mollison 1977; Tindale.
38 J. Milligan to R.C. Gunn, 17 November 1844, Gunn Papers; J.B. 1845:188; see also Stokes 1846.
40 Ibid.
41 Colonial Secretary to Denison, 7 January 1850 (TSA CSO 24/93/3033).
children. They suggested that by virtue of their Aboriginality the salary of such a person should be paid from the Land Fund which also maintained the Aboriginal Station at Oyster Cove. The Lieutenant-Governor refused their application on the ground that they 'could not fairly be termed Aborigines', despite the fact that at least seven 'full-blood' Aboriginal Tasmanians were in the community. In his view there was only one official Aboriginal community in Van Diemen's Land — the Aboriginal Station at Oyster Cove. But he suggested that Bishop Nixon might take an interest in the Islanders' welfare.42

The geographical remoteness of the Islander community proved an attraction to the Anglican Church in Tasmania. In contrast to the inhabitants of the Aboriginal Station at Oyster Cove, the Islanders in their comparative isolation appeared sober and industrious, sheltered from the 'pernicious influences' of the 'lower orders' of white society. The newly established missionary society for the diocese of Tasmania wrote of the Islanders: 'The young men are prepossessing in their manners and address, and of athletic frame: the girls are modest in their demeanour, and can make themselves useful in domestic affairs'. The society considered that these people should have some claim on any projected missionary enterprise.43

In September 1854 Bishop Nixon paid his first visit to the Islanders, accompanying Surveyor-General Power. At Gun Carriage Island, still the centre of the community, he baptised some children and married Edward Mansell and the Aboriginal Tasmanian Judy Thomas, who had lived together for twenty-five years. Lucy Beedon, aged twenty-five, the part-Aboriginal daughter of Thomas Beedon and Emerenna, had become the teacher. She had received a good education in Launceston and was already involved in the business interests of the community.44 Like the surveyor-general in 1849, the bishop was impressed with the Islanders' air of 'quiet domestic union' and apparent innocence of drunkenness and theft. The Islanders, however, took the opportunity to protest the harassment they received from Europeans illegally occupying nearby islands, who interfered with their mutton-birding.45

This visit persuaded the government to lease other islands to the community. Between 1855 and 1860 the Maynards and George Everett's family moved to Cape Barren Island, and the Beedons to Badger Island. By 1861 the Waste Lands Amendment Act made available for lease islands or parts of islands for periods up to fourteen years and in 1865 the community received permission to lease areas up to 550 acres. The rapidly increasing numbers of the community severely tested their

42 Tasmanian Church Chronicle, 6 March 1852.
43 Ibid.
44 Anon. (TSA M/M no. 79).
45 Nixon; Report of Surveyor-General Power, September/October 1854... (TSA LSD 1/51/35).
established decision-making processes, which depended upon reciprocal arrangements. It was no longer possible for John Riddle to depasture his sheep on Thomas Beedon’s lease on Gun Carriage Island in the dry season, in exchange for Beedon’s ‘birding’ on Riddle’s rookery. Some of the older members of the community, such as Margery Munro, were left destitute on Preservation Island. The long-established seasonal visiting patterns had survived, but with greater concentration upon family groups, and a general congregation at the end of the mutton-bird season. Thus the Islanders had their ‘private’ and ‘public’ seasons of the year.

The outside world was almost completely excluded from their proceedings. They operated their leases according to their needs, often incurring the wrath of the Lands Department which found their non-cooperation infuriating. One officer wrote in 1861:

I ... hardly think ... any of the Straits inhabitants can be relied upon as I have most conflicting accounts given me by them of different matters. In fact they seem reluctant to give any information — they are evidently a most indolent, shiftless race of beings.  

But they were concerned to educate their children. When Thomas Beedon died in 1862, his daughter Lucy found her business responsibilities precluded her from continuing to teach, so she invited Archdeacon Thomas Reibey and Reverend George Fereday to the islands to discuss the appointment of a teacher, after agreeing that the Islanders would raise a portion of the salary. Reibey photographed the Islanders and reported to the Tasmanian Parliament, but was unable to produce a teacher. Lucy Beedon later appointed two teachers from Melbourne. Concerned that the Islanders should not become alienated from the Anglican Church, Reibey launched an appeal to raise £500 for a missionary boat to make regular visits to the Islands. At the same time Fereday agreed to act as the Islanders’ agent on the Tasmanian mainland.

But in 1866, following a misunderstanding over the renewal of licence fees, some Islanders lost the opportunity to renew their leases of the major mutton-bird islands. Taking advantage of this, a recently arrived outsider purchased four 40-acre blocks on Chappell Island, which contained the largest mutton-bird rookery in Bass Strait, as grazing land for his sheep. The Surveyor-General dismissed the Islanders’ protests that sheep disturbed the rookeries even though they were removed during the mutton-bird season.

In desperation the Islanders pursued the only avenue available to them as a part-Aboriginal community — they petitioned Governor Du

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46 John Thomas to the Surveyor-General, September 1861 (TSA LSD 1/51/52).
47 Reibey 1862.
48 Reibey 1863.
49 Surveyor-General to Colonial Secretary, 17 February 1868 (TSA LSD 1/51/32).
50 George Everett to Surveyor-General, 30 November 1869 (TSA LSD 1/51/32); Lord.
Cane for exclusive rights to mutton-birding on Chappell Island and requested that an island be granted to them, to serve as the focal point of their life and identity.51

In August 1871 the Governor held a meeting with the Islanders at Goose Island. Du Cane sympathised with their grievances and pressed their claims upon the government.52 The government, reluctant to grant land in Bass Strait, offered the Islanders (under the Waste Lands Act of 1870) five to twenty-five acre blocks for homestead and agricultural land, on the western end of Cape Barren Island. It also gazetted Chappell and Big Dog Islands as mutton-bird rookeries under the Game Preservation Act.53 The government had thus accepted the Islanders as a separate community and had protected the major rookeries from further incursion. But it had denied the Islanders ownership of land and exclusive rights to the rookeries by virtue of their Aboriginal descent.

Cape Barren Island, at the western end of Bass Strait and part of the Fumeaux Group, is about twenty-three miles long and seventeen miles wide. It is separated from its larger neighbour, Flinders Island, by Franklin Sound. Named for its barren appearance by Tobias Fumeaux in 1774, it has granite peaks and low-lying scrub. The land, though ‘quite unfit for cultivation’, can graze sheep and cattle.54 With few trees to afford protection against the westerly gales, dependence is placed upon coves to provide shelter, particularly the area known as the ‘Corner’ on the western side of the island. Its immediate marine environment abounded at that time in crayfish and seal. The area between Thunder and Lightning Bay and Ned’s Point had been inhabited at various times by the Islanders from about 1810. Apart from white families at Apple Orchard Point on the northern side and at Puncheon Head opposite Vansittart or Gun Carriage Island, it had attracted few ‘outsiders’, although there were 143 European settlers in the Fumeaux group in 1872.55

By the end of 1872 seven Islander families consisting of thirty-two adults and fifty-two children had settled on Cape Barren Island. They extended geographically from the George Everett family at Thunder and Lightning Bay in the south, then John Smith and family at Long Beach, young John Maynard and Thomas and James Mansell at the ‘Corner’, Thomas Rew at Rooke’s River and William Brown at Munro Bay. The approximately two-mile distance between each household was overcome by constant visiting, meetings and expeditions. With old John Maynard on Long Island, the Beedons at Badger Island and old Edward Mansell at Passage Island, the community had become closer

51 Church News, April 1871.
52 Memo from DuCane to Ministers, 14 August 1871 (TSA CSD 7/45/833).
53 Hobart Town Gazette, 30 April 1872; Burbury.
54 Brownrigg 1872:79.
physically than at any period since the 1820s. The appointment of a schoolmaster, Henry Collis, who taught at Badger Island in the winter and at Long Beach in the summer, had given the community a recognition and stability never previously experienced.

The community had retained many traditions from its Aboriginal and European founders. Most families spent the summer on Cape Barren Island and, at the end of the mutton-bird season in May, travelled to Badger Island for the winter. In July many collected shells for stringing and in November there was a further congregation for ‘egging’. It was still common for a number of families to visit each other until ‘the neck of the flour bag became a little long’. The celebratory gatherings at the end of the mutton-bird season were as important as the season itself, for the Islanders drew no distinction between work and leisure. Singing was as important as mutton-birding, curing kangaroo and seal skin as important as sharing the flour bag.

The women continued the traditions of their mothers, such as stringing shell necklaces. At certain times of the year a range of shells the Aboriginal Tasmanian women had traditionally used for stringing were washed ashore. The young women combed the beaches, selecting with great care the types of shell needed for the painstaking process of stringing. In the evenings they would string the shells into delicate, intricate patterns. One present-day resident recalls that as a child she had to string for several hours each evening, taking months to complete one necklace. For this woman, stringing is still an important aspect of her existence.

With the concentration of the community in one area, Canon Brownrigg of Launceston began regular missionary visits to conduct baptisms and marriages and to inspect the schools. From the start, Brownrigg wanted the leasehold land on Cape Barren Island converted to a reserve and for the next fourteen years, through his articles in the Launceston Examiner and Church News, he pursued his view that the Islanders needed ‘guidance’ in order to acquire ‘civilised’ habits. This was reinforced by the visit of Bishop Bromby in 1876. In his view the Islanders were a godless community, addicted to drunkenness and sloth. He had no doubt that their Aboriginal ancestry was responsible for this ‘moral weakness’ which was further manifested by the fact that they did not cultivate the land. He wanted a settled community which would relinquish the pursuit of mutton-bird, properly attend to the

57 DuCane to Ministers (TSA CSD 7/45/833).
58 Launceston Examiner, 8 March 1885.
soil and receive tuition in the 'sober virtues' of respectable white society.60

The Islanders wanted protection from harassment in the mutton-bird industry and from the threatened loss of land for debt. Some Islanders had not paid leasehold rent because they considered the land theirs by occupation or by virtue of their Aboriginal ancestry.61 So, for different reasons, the Islanders and the Anglican Church sought to have the leasehold area of Cape Barren Island legally associated with the Islanders.

In February 1881 the Administrator of the Colony of Tasmania withdrew from lease 3,500 acres of land on the western end of Cape Barren Island, from Thunder and Lightning Bay to Munro Bay, together with a further five hundred acres of Crown Land.62 The government intended the land for the exclusive use of the Islanders but did not wish to name them nor officially extend to them any rights or privileges by virtue of their Aboriginality. The Islanders had lost the right to lease land in favour of right of occupation but had no control over the land and no security of tenure. The proclamation represented a confused if well-intentioned attempt to protect them but it fell short of their needs.

At first the Islanders thought they had been granted land and set about planning a township. But when they learned that they had no security of tenure and that the government could revoke the proclamation at any time, some families departed for Flinders Island. Only Brownrigg's assurances that revocation was unlikely brought some back. By 1884 some families at the 'Corner' had built cottages, launched boats and erected fencing. Brownrigg was optimistic that the means had been established for the eventual transformation into agriculturalists.63 He did not understand that the Islanders' relationship to the land rested on their Aboriginal heritage, their pursuit of mutton-birding and their descent from a sealing community. Agriculture had never been a significant part of their existence.

To the outside world the Islanders were now a separate community whose lifestyle placed them beyond government assistance. If the Islanders were to achieve continuing recognition, it would only take place through the 'protectionist-development' policies of the Anglican church.

In 1889 the Right Reverend H.H. Montgomery arrived in Hobart as the fourth bishop of Tasmania. He was deeply committed to help the 'unfortunate sable people of the earth' in their struggle to receive the

60 Launceston Examiner, 6 February 1876; Murray-Smith 1973:184-185; Rowley 1970:100.
61 Collis to Chairman of the Board of Education, 1 August 1881 (TSA CSD 15/6/168).
62 Hobart Town Gazette, 15 March 1881.
63 Launceston Examiner, 8 March 1884.
Christian faith and learn the rudiments of European civilisation.\textsuperscript{64} He attacked the 'problem of the half-castes' with the enthusiasm of someone who was able to lose himself entirely in the joys of the unfamiliar. He noted that, unlike their 'full-blood' counterparts at Flinders Island sixty years before, the Islanders were increasing in numbers. Since they already lived in an isolated environment and were seeking assistance for a new schoolteacher, he believed it possible to undertake a programme of instruction in the principles of Christianity and agriculture.\textsuperscript{65}

Montgomery persuaded the Minister for Education to appoint to the community a 'missionary schoolteacher' who would exemplify Christian standards of behaviour, instruct the children and their parents in horticulture and agriculture and combine the functions of postmaster and governmental representative. The island would take on the air of a training institution with the habits of the Islanders under constant scrutiny.

The missionary schoolteacher appointed was Edward Stephens, then aged forty-seven. He arrived with his family at the 'Corner' in August 1890. He found a community of 110 people, consisting of thirty adults and eighty children, who earned a livelihood from mutton-birding, piloting stores, sealing, whaling, fishing, itinerant labouring and snaring animals. For four months of the year, from February to May, the community was absent mutton-birding. In July some of the women were shelling at Thunder and Lightning Bay and in November many of the men visited the rookeries for mutton-bird eggs. Most families contained about ten people, housed in wooden cottages of two to four rooms surrounded by small gardens, with goats, pigs, poultry, some sheep and a few horses.\textsuperscript{66} With no shop, church, school, police station or post office, the jetty was the focal point for the community. Having been without a schoolteacher for some time, the Islanders hailed Stephens' arrival with enthusiasm.

Stephens had known Aborigines since his childhood in South Australia. He had turned to missionary work because he wanted to control his desire for alcohol. During eight years on the island, Stephens operated a repressive system of law and order in conformity with the reserve system then developing in other parts of Australia. The Islanders were at first impressed by his concern for their welfare but as they became aware of his own failings and his determination to control their lives, they withdrew their friendship and retreated into non-cooperation. Finally they were forced to resist in more positive fashion to protect themselves.

Six months after Stephens' arrival, Montgomery paid his first visit.

\textsuperscript{64} Hart 1963:49.
\textsuperscript{65} Church News, December 1891:563.
\textsuperscript{66} Entry for 9 July 1899, Register of Services ... (TSA NS 373/11).
He listened to the Islanders' requests for more favourable mutton-bird regulations and their pleas for landownership, baptised a number of their children, inspected the new school, decided to build a church and to consecrate a cemetery and departed a week later, promising to present their grievances to the Premier.67

Montgomery had quite different ideas for their advancement. Rather than pressing their claim for communal ownership of land, he recommended to the Premier that each Islander family be allocated a block of land near the school under the watchful eye of the schoolmaster and that if horticulture were not undertaken, then the lease should be withdrawn. Instead of pressing for the communal lease of mutton-bird rookeries he recommended the introduction of a family licence system where the Islanders would compete rather than cooperate during the mutton-bird season.68 For Montgomery was determined that the spirit of private ownership and individual achievement should replace the Aboriginal communalism which he considered had been responsible for their moral decline. He was now confident that:

kept from drink, encouraged to become farmers by judicious grants, prevented from intermarrying too much, these islands would be a happy region, famed for its salubrity and out of reach of the greater temptations.69

On his second visit in 1892 Montgomery was deceived by Stephens into believing that the Islanders had made 'steady progress' towards 'civilisation'. In an address written by Stephens and signed by the Islanders, he was told they observed the Sabbath, regarded the schoolteacher and his family with reverence and respect and manifested gratitude for Montgomery's interest in their welfare.70 But Stephens was again wrestling with his craving for alcohol and a few weeks earlier had written in his diary: 'This has been the most horrible year I can ever remember. I have not touched a drop of intoxicating liquor the whole year'.71

Stephens' difficulties were exacerbated in June 1892 with the appointment of a constable to supervise the new mutton-bird regulations. Stephens insisted that this second white official should attend Sunday services as well as refraining from drink and the use of bad language. The constable, who displayed his own eccentricities of character, eventually manifested his wrath by firing shots at the schoolhouse where Stephens was conducting Sunday service.72

By 1894, tensions at the Corner had become so intolerable that some

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68 Church News, December 1891:563.
69 Church News, August 1891:444-445.
70 The Inhabitants of Cape Barren Island to Montgomery, 5 February 1892, Montgomery Papers.
71 E.W. Stephens, Diary, November 1891 (ML MSS 1248/2).
72 Diary, 11 September 1892.
Five 'half-castes', Cape Barren Island Reserve, 1891.
Courtesy of Tasmanian State Archives.
Bottom: Cape Barren schoolchildren with the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Harry Barron, January 1911.
Courtesy of Tasmanian State Archives.
Islanders departed for Flinders Island while others kept their children from the school. The climax came in October 1895 when the ketch G.V.H. was wrecked off the west coast of the island with the loss of three lives. Stephens accused the Islanders of displaying false lights to cause the ship to founder, intending to loot its cargo.

In retaliation the Islanders accused Stephens of adultery and attempted murder, of appearing before the children in a "beastly state of intoxication", and locking their children out of the school. Driven to the limits of endurance, Stephens fired shots at two Islanders entering the boat harbour and, it was reported, threatened to "shoot all the half-castes or any other caste be damned if he wouldn't".

Stephens was summoned to Hobart to explain himself. There Montgomery learnt for the first time how Stephens had become the butt of the Islanders' mockery, a common pattern of Aboriginal defensive behaviour. For a moment Montgomery faltered, and then determined that Stephens' work must continue. Reprimanded for drunkenness, Stephens was sent back to the island.

But the Islanders had had enough. If he was not replaced, they informed the Director of Education, all the children would be removed from the school. In September 1896 they accused Stephens of threatening them with a pistol. He accused them of incest and adultery. In Hobart Montgomery explained his disillusionment to the Minister for Education:

All that Stephens says about the Half-castes is just what I believe to be true. They are not improving except in some families. When they have tired of one man and they know he knows too much about them, they will try to get rid of him.

By the time the Director had admonished the Islanders for their ingratitude, Stephens had suffered a nervous collapse and surrendered his position to his son, Charles. During his convalescence, Stephens wrote of his difficulties with the Islanders:

As liars I do think the men are peerless. I will give one instance at my own expense. It went the round of the islands, and was believed to be a fact, that Bishop Montgomery, on one of his visits, found me sitting on the roof of the water closet; and I had only my nightshirt on, and was singing the national anthem! He asked me what I was doing and I told him "I was showing my loyalty to the Queen". He said, "Oh, come down and come inside and we will make a
night of it". And we did so. They said they knew I was a drunkard but the Bishop was a "bloody sight worse!"

He concluded that if such stories were commonly believed, then the life of a civil servant was "an ever-increasing torment from which there was no escape, but by resignation or suicide", 7 9

Stephens had no understanding of the Islanders' need to pursue their lifestyle on their terms. He saw their defensive behaviour as another example of their perversity and lack of intelligence, also manifested by the failure of any one of them to announce his conversion to 'civilised society' or even to wish to become a catechist. 8 0

The Islanders considered Stephens' retirement their victory. In 1897 they formed an Islander Association which initiated petitions to government concerning mutton-birding and land tenure and attempted to establish a newspaper and a health benefit organisation. 8 1 But neither Montgomery nor Charles Stephens could tolerate any display of Islander independence and saw the existence of the Association as a threat to their authority. In 1898 Montgomery took the Chief Inspector of Education to the island and in the following year, the Minister for Justice. A meeting called with the latter attracted only four Islanders. 8 2

The presence of such authority figures had driven many into the scrub, for they had been threatened with the loss of their leasehold land on the ground that it had not been cultivated. 8 3

To further undermine the Islander Association, Montgomery recommended to the Commissioner of Police in August 1899 that a committee of inquiry should investigate the condition of the 'reserve' and the mutton-bird industry and that a police magistrate should visit the island to hear some cases that had been outstanding for years. He wrote:

I believe the terror of the proceedings in the eyes of these natives would be such that the evils now existing would be checked. At present I believe every known sin short of murder is rife here, and no evidence can be obtained.... Nothing would do more than the stern hand of the law at this time. 8 4

Montgomery now believed it had been a mistake to concentrate the "half-castes" into a township which had brought its own special evils. They had developed a 'settled hatred' for himself, the schoolmaster and the constable, and had expressed a wish not to become 'like white people'. 8 5

By October 1899 Islander resistance to Charles Stephens reached its

81 Charles E. Stephens to Montgomery, 28 November 1899, Montgomery Papers.
82 Entry for 12 August 1899, Register of Services ... (TSA NS 373/11).
84 Montgomery to Police Commissioner, 26 August 1899, Montgomery Papers.
85 Ibid.
peak. "They will give the Government more trouble than the Boers are giving Great Britain", he wrote in despair. He decided to concentrate on Bible history in the school curriculum, in the hope that they would be terrorised into submission. He now believed that the second and third generation 'half-castes' were of weaker character than the first and needed more rigid instruction. But the Islanders could still make life very difficult:

They actually stand on the bank out of my sight, with a clock and check my time of going into school with theirs, then they lie in the sun until it is time for the children to go home, when they look at the clock to see if it is exactly to the minute. If a little before, they would get up a petition saying that the teacher was overtaxing the brains of the scholars.

In May 1900 the report of the Committee of Inquiry recommended an annual licencing fee for mutton-birding and proposed that the land originally withdrawn from lease in 1881 be thrown open to Islander selection with fourteen years to pay. Those Islanders not wishing to cultivate the land could lease a homestead block of five acres at the rental of one pound a year, the remainder of the land could then be leased to outsiders. Fortunately only the mutton-bird licensing system was enacted. But with the land ownership issue unresolved, the Islanders found their occupation of the 'reserve' was as insecure as at any time since 1881. This insecurity was exacerbated in 1902 when Chappell Island was leased for grazing in the 'off season'. The Islanders were constantly aware of covetous settlers seeking to alienate their land.

Montgomery departed Tasmania after a final visit to the Islanders in August 1901, no more aware of the Islanders' needs as a separate community than upon his arrival twelve years before. His successor, Bishop Mercer, hardly bothered about their existence. In Hobart the view was taken that since Montgomery had failed to earn their gratitude, it was unlikely that anyone else would. In 1902 a debate in the Tasmanian Parliament on the future of the Island lapsed for want of a quorum.

The attempt by church and state to bring 'civilization' to Aboriginal communities in eastern Australia between 1880 and 1900 was part of the campaign for egalitarian conformity which swept the Australian colonies at this time. The fortunes of these communities, of which the Cape Barren Islanders are an example, oscillated between regulation and indifference. If they did not conform to accepted 'standards of

86 Charles E. Stephens to Montgomery, 28 November 1899, Montgomery Papers.
87 Ibid.
88 Charles E. Stephens to Montgomery, 29 May 1900, Montgomery Papers.
89 Launceston Examiner, 27 August 1902.
90 T. Reibey to E.W. Stephens, 3 October 1902, Stephens Papers.
civilization' they became outcasts in their own country. There was no opportunity for self-determination.

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Top left: Koonki (Nadu-dagali), from Horne and Aiston’s *Savage life in central Australia*. London, 1924.

Top right: Ben Murray.

The early 1920s were a critical period in the history of the Lake Eyre region. The first world war had brought the closing of the Lutheran mission at Killalpaninna, which had been a home for most of the Diyari and also for many Waŋgapuru, Ǧamani, Biladaba and Ḏari people, as well as some Arabana. The Aborigines were no longer set apart as much as they had been at Killalpaninna, but had regrouped around the one town in the area, Marree, and on various pastoral station camps, particularly Muloorina (where there was a considerable amount of fighting as a result of the influx of newcomers), as well as Mungeranie and Cowarie. Even Aborigines whose original territories were further north did not on the whole return to stations north of Mt Gason on the Birdsville Track, because — as is shown by the first story of Billy Rib-bone — the area held too many bad memories of the past. Marree society was literally split in half by the railway line: whites on the west side, Afghans on the east, and Aborigines on the outskirts of Afghantown. But this society was easy-going and there was considerable social intercourse between the various groups, and mutual respect (see story 3). A similar situation prevailed at Mungeranie, where the policeman George Aiston had an Aboriginal friend, Gottlieb Merrick, as a frequent house-guest.

Apart from the closing of the mission, the other major source of change was the post-war influenza epidemic, which took a heavy toll of Aboriginal lives and caused a further break-down in traditional culture. Only the old men kept up the traditional ways and knew the old myths (story 3), and despite discouragement from the young they also retained their old-style eating habits, with some adaptations (as in story 2).

George Aiston and Dr George A. Horne probably knew more than anybody else about the Aborigines in the Lake Eyre region at that time. Aiston, through his position as police officer at Mungeranie and personal interest, was constantly in touch with Aborigines. Horne, a Melbourne doctor and amateur ethnologist, became friendly with Aiston when visiting the area. He too had first-hand experience, and did most of the actual writing of their joint work, *Savage Life in Central Australia*, published in 1924. The title is misleading, as there is no emphasis on 'savagery' in its modern connotation. Moreover, unlike most writers of those days, Horne and Aiston appreciated and acknowledged the help given them by the Aborigines: 'old Koonki and Peter Pinnaru taught us what nowhere else could be learnt'.

Notes:
* Fieldwork over the years has been financed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and the Australian Research Grants Committee.
Distribution of language groups, Lake Eyre region.
‘Koonki’ is the Diyari word for ‘witch doctor’. Horne and Aiston used this term to refer to a distinguished old Simpson Desert Waŋgaŋuru man whose traditional name they rendered as ‘Nuttaicullie’ (Ndaju-dagali—‘side-spearing’), but he was generally known to people around Marree as ‘Rib-bone Billy’.

This article will describe some of the background of his life, and his terrible death, which occurred a few years after the publication of Horne and Aiston’s book, probably about 1928. This is Aboriginal history viewed from ‘the other side’ by the koonki’s own distant relatives, speakers of Waŋgaŋuru.

The languages of the Lake Eyre Basin are: Arabana (on the west side); the closely related Waŋgaŋuru (in the Simpson Desert and on the lower Diamantina); Guyani (on the south side of Lake Eyre); Diyari, and the closely related Diŋari (on the east side); Njamani, Kararjuru and Yaŋuyandi (to the north-east); and Yawarawarga (to the east-north-east). The traditional distribution of these language groups (sometimes described as ‘tribal’ territories) is shown on the map.

Apart from some scanty word-lists very little has been published on these languages. Only Diyari is relatively well-known, as it was used by the missionaries at Killalpaninna, but the great work of the missionary Reuther (thirteen volumes, mainly on Diyari language and traditions), compiled in 1901, is still unpublished. In recent years detailed studies of Diŋari and Diŋari have been carried out by Peter Austin; studies of Njamani by J. G. Breen and Peter Austin; of Yawarawarga by J. G. Breen; and studies of Arabana-Waŋgaŋuru, Guyani and Yaŋuyandi by Luise Hercus. This work is still in progress.

Sources of information on the languages and traditions of the area are fast disappearing. There are still a few speakers of Arabana, mainly living at Marree. But only three people now know Diyari well, and only single speakers, all very frail and elderly, know Guyani, Yaŋuyandi and Njamani. Diŋari is extinct, although Ben Murray, aged eighty-four and of Afghan descent, a speaker of Diŋari and Waŋgaŋuru, can still today remember some Diŋari learned from his maternal grandmother.

These tales of Ndaju-dagali are among numerous stories that were recorded by the few remaining Waŋgaŋuru, mainly by Mick McLean Iriŋji2 (c.1888-1976), the last man to be brought up in the Simpson Desert before white contact. He belonged to the same group of rain-makers as Ndaju-dagali, whom he called ‘father’. Much of the background information came from Mick McLean, but the tales of Ndaju-dagali transcribed here are exactly as told by Ben Murray, who was the old man’s

1 Aiston was never fluent in any of the Aboriginal languages of the area, and thus some unwitting jokes have crept into his book. For example, the dignified old Diyari man Mawili is always referred to as ‘Mowilliedicha’, even in the caption to a photograph. An obscene nickname has simply been added to the normal name, so that the term means ‘Mawili the homosexual’.

favourite ‘nephew’.

The Wapgarjuru text is accompanied by an interlinear gloss. The English translation that follows is as close to the original as possible; some words and phrases have had to be added for clarity, and these have been put in brackets. The phonemes of Arabana-Wapgarjuru and the abbreviations used in the gloss are listed in appendices following the texts.

**Story 1: The Massacre**

The massacre described here by Ben Murray, who heard it from ḅjadu-dagalj himself, is but one of several that took place in the Birdsville area in the 1880s and 1890s. A number of groups were involved, particularly the Wapgarjuru, who were gradually coming out of the desert. The massacres were often the end result of punitive expeditions undertaken to avenge cattle-stealing, as in this case and the tragic large-scale massacre at Koonchera Point, described by Mick McLean in ‘The end of the Mindiri people’. According to his other epic account, ‘The end of the Wardamba people’, a major massacre at Nappamanna Station, near Pandie, was the result of the murder of a white man guilty of rape. The massacres of the Mindiri and the Wardamba involved a huge number of Aborigines who had come together for important corroborrees. Yet another major massacre took place in the vicinity of Cooninghera water-hole (half-way between Birdsville and Durrie on the Diamantina), again as the result of the murder of a white man who had committed rape — this time it was a station cook, whose head was found in a camp oven. The events described by Ben Murray are only one small part of a great tragedy.

Yet apart from these memoirs recorded by surviving Wapgarjuru the massacres are generally unknown. Only Farwell’s *Land of Mirage* mentions them and he notes that: ‘No official enquiries were ever held into these massacres, which appeared to have been the common morality of the day’.

The location and date of the present story are not certain: it probably occurred in the Clifton Hills area in the 1890s. The text is in Wapgarjuru, with an admixture of a few Arabana words.

1. maŋabaga - na ḅjadu-daga - li - na
   old man - EMPH side-spear - HAB - PROP
   ‘he spears you in your ribs’ —

2. ganapa - naŋa yuwu - gari - ri buluga - na bidga -
   there - from men - they - ERG bullock - EMPH kill -
   nga yuda gari - ri wadni - nga - ru madu - gi
   PRES now they - ERG cook - SP - NAR cooked - EMPH

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TALES OF ỊADI-DAGALI

igi - ligu, warida yuga - lugu warida danga - lugu.
take - PURP, far go - PURP far stay - PURP.

3. gari - ri waibala - ru - na wimba nani - ra
they - ERG white men - ERG EMPH track see - PUNC
maidja gari - ri nani - ligu indjara gari - ri wadni -
not they - ERG see - HIST where they - ERG cook -
gana. PERF.

4. gari - ri wadni - ụmu duguja 'gaga baga - ọda - paru,
they - ERG cook - CONT pit POS A dig - ŠP - PURP,
maga maba - lugu, buluga - na gudni - ligu duguju -غا
fire make - HIST, bullock put - HIST pit - LOC
mamb - lugu - na djirganga - li - yanda,
bury - HIST - EMPH nice - EMPH - EMPH.

5. wimba nayi idnj - nda wimba - na ugeha wadni -
track here lie - PRES track - EMPH him follow -
ọda-ru, mayi! wadlu - na aradja - li dadna - lugu
ŠP - NAR, hay! ground - LOC right - EMPH leave - HIST
buluga - gari diga - ọda guda - rugu wimba darba -
cattle - mob return - PRES water - ALL pad trample -
arba - ọda 'gana.
- PRES him.

leave - HIST thus burn - CONT S - CONT.

7. mayi! wani - na gari diga - na gilda - lug
Hey! early they return - PRES pull out - PURP
'ugana, djirganga - li - yanda namb - lugu : adam
him, nice - EMPH EMPH bury - HIST : empty
gari wimba nani - ga 'mine - gu gari njinda - na
ey track see - PAST 'what - for they tree
gudi - ga?
drag - PAST?

8. So they started the bullock, others dragging boughs
behind.
wimba badi - na - ọda, biirimbara - ru daga -
track nothing - make - PRES, war spear - INST spear -
lugu buluga - na bilbiri - na biđa - ọda - 'gana.
HIST bullock shoulder - LOC kill - PRES him.

9. dirga - ọda gudni - ọda, yuda namb - ọda - na, yuda
oven - LOC put - PRES now bury - ŠP
now wadni - ọda buluga - na bundju nuga - na.
cook - PRES bullock meat much.

10. ọgàjì! danga - lugu 'ani diga - ọda wadna -
off side stay - HIST 'we return - PRES take away -
ABORIGINAL HISTORY 1977 1:1

lugu 'gana.
PURP him.

11. bundju gari - na gilda - ṇa mađu - gi. mayi
meat they pull out - PRES cooked - EMPH hey
'dirga-na namba - ću wadlu gadara yiğl namba - ḏa.
'pit bury - IMP earth fresh bring bury - PRES.

12. yangu - will gudni - ligu, maga maba - ọđa baŋra
break - like put - HIST, fire make - PRES in the middle
make out they've been camping there -
buluga - gari diga - ọrna gari wimba - na gari - guna -
cattle - mob return - CONT sure track - LOC they - POS -
ŋa arada-gi diga - lugu dirga - ọña.
LOC above return - HIST oven - LOC.

13. gari yuga - ọđa ˌnaŋi - wa - lugu
they go - PRES see - TR - PURP
'At! They've been camping here, black-fellow' camp here.
They must have killed the bullock, but where did they
kill?' Couldn't see, couldn't even see blood ...

14. malga gubmari njugu ˌnaŋi - ligu, malga wimba ˌnaŋi - ọđa
not blood also see - HIST, not track see - PRES
'indjaŋa gari - ri biŋa - ḏa!?' malga gari - ligu - du
'where they - ERG kill - PAST?' not find - HIST - EMPH
gari - na waŋa - ọña wa walda - ọña yuga - ọrna
them - ACC morning - LOC and noon - LOC go - CONT
warida widji - ọđa - gi bundju wanba - ọña.
distant become - PRES - EMPH meat carry - PRES.

15. waŋununda gari warida yuga - gana.
other mob far go - PERF.

16. nigị buka nuba - maŋa denga - ọrna, mayi! guya - na
here two spouse - with stay - CONT, oh! girl
malga - gi wanda - ọña yadjalga - na windawa - ọđa -
ot - EMPH follow - PAST lignum - LOC hide - SP -
lugu, mudlu arada - gi danga - ọña.
PURP, sandhill above - EMPH sit - PRES.

17. gari yuga - na - ọña yaguda 'guna dímba - lugu 'mayi!
they go - NP - LOC bag - hers check - HIST 'hey!
bundju nigị!!
meat here!!

18. 'This is the one mate, she's got a bullock chunk of meat
here! That's one of them that killed it, give her a
bullet.'

19. biŋa - ru 'gana mayi aŋali baidi - lugu gadna - ru.
kill - NAR her oh! finally split - HIST stone - INST.36

20. ụga - ọña - li danga - ọrna yadjalga - na madabuja -
he - EMPH - EMPH stay - CONT lignum - LOC old man
TALES OF ₦ADU-DAGALI

na, uga yadjaiga - na dang - nura, uga - ru gawi -
he lignum - LOC stay - CONT, he - ERG hear -
ra magide bari - nga 'aja - lda 'andune bida - dara.
PUNC rifle crack - PRES true - ALT mine - kill - IMM.

21. mida - lugu gari a'jali yuga - na, warida widji -
wait - HIST they at last go - NP, distant become -
ngi; uga wanga - da yiwa - lugu, yuga - nga - yiwa -
PRES; he rise - SP - TR - HIST, go - SP - TR -
na guya nagi - ligu mudlu arada gumbira warbi -
NP girl see - PURP sandhill on top dead lie -
nanga - nura.
CONT S - CONT.

22. mayi, namba - da ganangaga, namba - da - yiwa - na,
oh, bury - PRES there, bury - SP - TR - PRES,
nadaru widji - ligu wandi - la - na gari - ginda, behind become - HIST follow - ALT - NP mob - DAT,
naja wandi - la - nga gari - na.
men follow - ALT - PRES they - ACC.

23. 'ayi, ilana biga - dara, anda namuru - gi, ilana gari -
dias, thus kill - IMM, I bereft - EMPH, thus they -
ri bida - gana. mayi, yuda gari - ri bida - lugu
ERG kill - PERF. oh! now they - ERG kill - HIST
nuru - igi, wadlu nuru - nga igi' ilana yanda.
other - even, country other - LOC even thus speak.

24. gari yuga - nga gala guru - rugu
they go - PRES creek other - ALL
but might have been the same owner
faja guru - rugu dang - iwa - lugu, 'mayi ani bida -
creek other - ALL stay - TR - PURP, 'oh! we kill -
ra 'gana bundju bang - gi, malga wimba - na gudni -
PUNC that meat big - EMPH, not track put -
ligu, warawa - nga - ga.'
HIST, cover up - SP - PAST,'

25. gari - ri nagi - nga wadlu - baju - na - gi
they - ERG see - PRES country - plain - LOC - EMPH
wagununde - na gari - ri bundju - bufu nagi - nga,
other - ACC they - ERG meat - having see - PRES.
malga gari yuga - nura warige - rugu, yada dang -
not they go - CONT far - ALL, close stay -
nga, bardja nga gari - nga gumbira - ma - lugu
PRES. all they - ACC dead - make - HIST
Translation

Story 1. The Massacre

1. That old man Nādu-dağali — his name means that he spears you in the ribs —
2. A whole lot of people from up there killed a bullock and cooked it (they were planning) to take it away ready cooked, and to go a long way off (with the pieces of cooked meat) and to stay away.
3. The white-fellows wouldn’t see the track and they wouldn’t find out where they had cooked it.
4. They cooked it in a very deep pit that they had dug, they made a fire and they covered it up really well.
5. It was right on a cattle-pad, and the (other) cattle followed that pad, yes, they left that ground looking all right and those cattle went back on that pad to the water, and they trampled all over the pad (on top of the fire pit).
6. They left the bullock cooking.
Very early in the morning they came back and pulled it out and then covered it all up again nicely so that (the white-fellows) would just see the bare tracks and wonder 'Why did they pull fire-wood around'.

(So this is how they did it): Some started the bullock and others dragged boughs behind it wiping out its track. They speared it with a big war-spear in the shoulder and killed it.

They buried it in the fire-pit and cooked all that big lot of meat.

They stayed well away on the lee-side saying 'we'll come back and pull him out'.

They pulled out the cooked meat saying 'cover up this pit, get some fresh soil and cover it up quickly'.

They made a rough wind-break and made a fire in the middle, to make out that they'd been camping there. The other cattle came back again on their usual track over the top of the (buried) fire-pit.

The white-fellows came past looking around (and said in English) 'They've been camping here, — blackfellows' camp here. They must have killed the bullock, but where did they kill'm?' They couldn't see, couldn't even see blood...

They did not see any blood nor the track (of the particular bullock that was killed) 'where did they kill it?' They never found (one group of) these people who travelled morn and noon and went on and on walking till they had gone far, far away from that place still carrying some meat with them.

Another group only went a certain distance (they reckoned that was far enough).

But one young couple (Nadu-dagali and his wife) remained quite close, oh, the young woman did not follow her husband quickly into the lignum swamp to hide, she just stayed sitting on top of a sandhill.

(The white-fellows) as they came looked into her bag, 'hey, there's meat in here!'

(They said in English) 'This is the one, mate, she's got a bullock chunk of meat here! That's one of them that killed it, give her a bullet!'4

They killed her, they ripped her open with a bullet.

He stayed down in the lignum, old man Nadu-dagali he stayed there and heard the crack of the rifle 'It's true what's happened to me, they've just killed my wife'.

He waited until they went away at last and until they had moved a long way off. Then he got up (out of the lignum), he quickly went up to see that young woman lying there dead on top of the sandhill.

Bullets are usually called by any name for pebble or stone, but the term guldji 'round stone' had become standardised with this meaning in Wangajuru, and gadma 'stone' in Arabana.
22. Oh yes, he buried her there, he buried her quickly and left, he got onto the track (of the others), he followed these people (the group that hadn’t gone very far) and he said:

23. ‘Alas, they killed her just like that, I’m bereaved! They killed her just like that! Those (white-fellows) are ready to kill anyone anywhere!’ That’s how he spoke to them.

24. So they went on to a different creek, but it might still have belonged to the same owner, they went to stay overnight by this other creek saying ‘we did kill that big hunk of meat, but we left no track, we covered it all up’.

25. The white-fellows caught sight of those people out in the open plain (near the creek), they saw that there was meat there. Those people hadn’t gone far enough, they were still quite close really. The white-fellows killed them all (twenty of them) as many as all my fingers and all my toes.

26. The white-fellows chased them around (on the plain) to find out ‘yes, there’s meat here’. They shot them all, even the pitiful little babies.

27. But he (Nyadu-dagali) dropped out of sight, he crouched in the debris that floodwaters sweep (against the butts of trees in creek-beds).

28. He heard them being shot, he heard them crying out. Ultimately he was able to come out quickly to have a look: ‘It’s true, even after they had gone on to the far side (of the last creek) they are all dead now’.

29. The other people (those who had gone far away in the first place) finally all went right away, and so did he.

30. Then they left that country altogether.

Story 2. The Cat

Ben Murray here tells of one of his own adventures with his ‘uncle’ Nyadu-dagali, showing how much the old man liked the traditional ways, and adapted them to new situations.

Some years after arriving from the north, Nyadu-dagali, now usually called ‘Rib-bone Billy’, married again. His second wife was also a Wanganuru, named Rosie Midlandu Buyiga ‘Smoke-face’. She had no children. He never regarded his humpy on the outskirts of Maree completely as home, but spent much of his time travelling to ceremonies and living in the bush: ‘poor Rosie was often all on her own, but others helped her get her rations’.

1. Wayi-galgu - ru anj yuga - jugu Yuldjuru, Bidjiwaru; Clayton - El we go - HIST Hulduru, Peacockarina;
   malga yuga - jugu waFugadi yaqida - rugu gari - ri
   not go - HIST emu - yard - ALL they - ERS

62.
TALES OF ṢADU-DAGALI

bidia - lugu 'Emu Camp'
name - HIST

2. malga garu - guda yuga - na, ayi, muyu wangali yuga -
not there - ALL go - PRES, eh, sun rising go -
lugu Nangu - Milgi - rigu, mayi nananja danga -
HIST 'Cooper Elbow' - All, yes right there stay -
libana - du, guda - ildjildji awađa.
ANC - EMPH, water - soakage there.

Charlie Bosworth a son of old man Bosworth, a white fellow,
had that country then, along with Peachawarimma and Mulcor-
ina.

3. yuga - lugu gaļa - na awađa.
go - HIST creek - LOC there.

4. 'gadi - gaļ! gadi - du awađa!' 'indjaliga?'
meat - piece, meat - EMPH there! 'whereabouts?'

5. gayi djaļba - yl arada, badara - na! madia - nari
there tree - VOC on top, box tree - LOC! dog - EMPH
yigi!' get!

6. uda garu madia - ru 'gana bida - na, uga - ru
now there dog - ERG him beat - PRES, he - ERG
njuļu madia - na biđa - ra, this wild puseycat,
do - dog beat - PUNC,
also

7. uga - ru bida - lugu djęla - ru, bida - nga uga - ru
he - ERG kill - HIST stick - INST, kill - PRES he - ERG
oat - dung - bury - HAB bury - HAB.
andiga yani - nga:
me - say - PRES:

8. 'gadi nayi nurg' adu dańi - na, nurgu adu danį - ra
meat this good I ERG eat - NP, good I ERG eat - PRES
warada gadi gadjiwiri, ayi nurgu adu dańi - na - na.
that meat huge, eh' good I ERG eat - NP - LOC.
bindi - daşga - ra, uda gudna glide - nga - ru.
peg - stick - PUNC, now guts pull out - Šb - NAR.

9. 'mayi, maga maba - ru wađu - guba - yl' yani - ligu
' Bh! fire make - IMP child - small - VOC' say - HIST
'maga gadjiwiri maba - ru, nayi gadi weđni - na - na,
'fire great' make - IPV, this meat cook - NP - LOC,
anda iļiyen - guda gadi wangidi - ra waya - nga.
I such - ALL meat desire - CAUS want - PRES.
I call 'm uncle', mother called him 'brother'.

10. 'uda yuga - lugu garu ware - lugu - lgi, adu 'gana
'now go - PURP there cover - PURP - EMPH, I ERG him
1. **maña-maña - nura - igi.**

   **singe** - **CONT** - **EMPH.**

2. **uga - ru mani - liigu 'mayi maga uda - gi, uda garu he - ERG seen - HIST 'eh, fire ready, now there biri - ma - nga 'gana'. biri - ma - lug 'alali. open - make - PRES it'. open - make - HIST finally. dugulu - ma - nga maga - nga uga - ru gudni wadlu hole - make - PRES fire - LOC he - ERG put soil waru - nga njugu - na uga - ru gadi gudni - nga. uda warm - LOC also he - ERG meat put - PRES. now garu wadnu - liigu alali. there cook - HIST finally.


6. **uda uga - ru mani njugu gadi dani - nga, malga ilan - now he - ERG fat also meat eat - PRES, not much - guda gudni - nga, nařawa - na bandu - nana, bagu - ALL put - PRES, salty salt lake - from, bare - li dani - nga. EMPH eat - PRES.

7. **dani, mayi, bandža awađal! 'bunba awađa' anda - eat , go on, big this one!' 'stinking this' I - du yani - nura. EMPH say - CONY.

8. **'dani mayi, gadi nanga - widji - na! 'malg' anda 'eat go on, meat alive - become - NP!' 'not I waya - nga awađa dani - liigu. want - PRES this eat - PURP.'**
TALES OF NADU-DAGALI

18. 'gadi nurgu nayl, gua-gula - ya!' 'gawa - lira,
meat good this, nephew - VOC!' 'vomit - POT,
maig'anda waya - nda gani - ligu njugul!
not I wish - PRES eat - PURP also!'

Translation

Story 2. The Cat

1. We went from Clayton Station to Yuldjuruna waterhole (on the Clayton Creek) and then to Peachawarinna Bore, we didn’t go on to the place they call ‘Emu Yard’ or ‘Emu Camp’.6

2. We didn’t go there, no, at sunrise we went to Naigu-Milgi ‘Cooper Elbow’, we used to stay right there, where there is a soakage. Charlie Bosworth,6 son of old man Bosworth, a white fellow, had that country then, along with Peachawarinna and Muloorina.

3. We walked about in the bed of the Cooper there.

4. ‘There’s game here!’ (the old man said). ‘Whereabouts?’

5. ‘Up there in the box tree. Set the dog on it’.

6. The dog got the better of the cat, but then it was getting the better of the dog, this wild pussycat!

7. He killed it with a stick, he killed this cat, this animal that buries its dung, and then he said to me:

8. ‘This is good meat that I’m going to eat, I’ll eat this large7 lot of meat! Ah, it will be good for me to eat! I’ll peg the belly together again8 after I’ve pulled the guts out!’

9. ‘Go on child, make a fire!’ he said ‘Make a great big fire for cooking this meat. This is just the sort of meat I’m longing for’. — I called him ‘uncle’ because my mother called him ‘brother’.

10. ‘Go over there and cover up the fire while I burn the fur off’!

11. Then he had a look. ‘Ah, the fire is ready, open it up!’ He opened it up finally and made a hole (in the middle of the fire) and he put the

5 Emu Camp was to the east of the ‘Cooper Elbow’ on the old road to Old Kalamura. Ben Murray stressed the fact here that he and his uncle Nadu-dagali turned off from that track to camp slightly further up the Cooper.

6 This means that the story related here by Ben Murray took place shortly before 1906. Ben Murray himself was born in 1893. ‘Old Man’ Harry Bosworth took up the holding on the Clayton, as well as Muloorina, in 1885 and his sons took over from him. By 1906 Clayton had passed to the two French brothers Guillaume and Baptiste de Pierres for whom both Ben Murray and his brother Ern worked (for two shillings a week) for some time before going to the mission school at Killalpaninna. See also Bonython 1971:173.

7 A cat really was a relatively large animal from the point of view of a Simpson Desert Waijgaguru such as ‘Rib-bone Billy’. There are no kangaroos in the desert, and the main sources of meat were the numerous small marsupials, particularly kangaroo-rats and rabbit-eared bandicoots. Feral cats generally grow to a much larger size than their domestic ancestors.

8 This was the standard cooking practice of the Wangaguru ‘to keep the juices in’; see also Horne and Aiston 1924:75.
meat in there and into the warm soil. And so at last he cooked it.
12. He was resting under a tree, he was lying there for the time being, waiting hungrily till he could fill himself up (with this meat), he would not eat any other food but stayed there full of hunger waiting while the meat was cooking.
13. He waited there for a long time, he waited and waited, and then at last he pulled it out and left it to cool.
14. He broke off an arm to try out what it tasted like, and then he reduced it to smaller by cutting it exactly in half from the head down, so that it would cool quicker.
15. He ate the meat with all the fat too, he didn’t put anything with it, none of that salty stuff from the salt-lake, he ate it just as it was.
16. ‘Go on, have a bit, it’s big enough!’ (he said). ‘It smells horrible!’ I kept saying.
17. ‘Go on and have some, this meat really makes you feel alive!’ ‘I don’t want to eat this thing!’
18. ‘It’s good meat, nephew!’ ‘I’d be sick, I don’t want to join you in eating this!’

Story 3. Making Rain

There are numerous descriptions of rain-making in anthropological literature; there is even an account of a rain-making ceremony carried out by Nyadu-dagali himself.9 Ben Murray’s account is nevertheless of particular interest as it shows how he as a small boy was involved in the ceremony. It also shows that the interest displayed by white people in rain-making was in these circumstances appreciated and was not felt to be patronising. ‘Rib-bone Billy’ knew he had earned his reward.
TALES OF ỊNA-DAGALI

'bayilgu', 'balanketi' bu na - Igi - di mina-yi - na bag, blanket, humpy - EMPH - EMPH what-EMPH
ganaga 'damu' gudni - ligu yagida - na;
there dam put - HIST yard - LOC;

5. ganaga - da gari bagni - ligu guda - yi - du,
there - EMPH they make - HIST water - VOC - EMPH,
ganaga gari wanga - na
there they sing - PRES

6. yuwu bargulu bula bigi - na ga - nda wandada - ra
men two both paint - NEW - REF down-feather - CAUS
garidji - ligu guda - rugu, bula yuga - lugu bandu -
DESCEND - HIST water - ALL, two go - HIST salt lake -
rugu, 'damu' - rugu. burga - lugu guda - na.
ALL, dam - ALL. wade - HIST water - LOC.

7. wanga - da - nari gari - du wanga - nanga - nura
sing - PRES - EMPH they - EMPH sing - CONT S - CONT

ganaga.
there.

They've been singing away, then them two come up, they
have feathers in their hands.
gunda - da gari - guma - damuna.
show - PRES they - POS - secret.

8. ilina - na - na anda manabudu, andida gari - ri
thus - LOC I ignorant, me DAT they - ERG
yurunga - ma - na wahe - re - ma - na, mayi
knowing - make - PRES skill - CAUS - make - PRES, ah
gurawa - du gari - ri bagni.
rain - EMPH they - ERG make.

9. wanga - lugu gari, andida gari yani - nga : 'mayi!
sing - HIST they, me DAT they say - PRES: 'Come on!
agari yuga - na! njiba wadna, njiba -
This way go - PRES-EXCL! clothes take off, clothes -
balu aja warbi - nanga - lugu yaraba, gari ganaga
bare truly lie - CONT S - PURP on top, they there
bunda - nanga - da guldji - di.
brueak - CONT S - PRES stone - EMPH.
I lay on top of that nest and they smashed this stone
on my guts.

10. bulba - ma - na aladi 'guna, wanga - wanga - da
powder - make - PRES finally POS A, sing - sing - PRES
gari bida - lugu - gi - di. anda durga - na
they hit - HIST - EMPH - EMPH. I get up - PRES
baju - na yuga - na njiba - baju - lgi ani baju -
plain - LOC go - PRES clothes - BARE - EMPH we plain-
rugu wanga - lugu, garga - lugu bu - na.
ALL rise - HIST, stand - HIST plain - LOC.

67.
11. uga - ru - na wirinja - (ŋa) mina - ya njuɖu yigi -
ke - ERG nest - LOC what - EXCL also bring -
ra gananaŋa gudni - ligu. gudıji - dija - gi idni -
PUNC there put - HIST. stone - piece - EMPH lie -
yura. adu maŋa - na bargulu banga - yira.
CONT. I ERG hand - LOC two hold - PUNC.
They told me to throw them up, and showed me 'Look they've become two little clouds!'

12. I had to get up on his neck. djiligiri - na dagga - da
neck - LOC sit - PRES
anda yaraba. mayi, yuwu gari yuga - na gadia, gari
I' on top. oh, men they go - PRES crowd, they
yuga - gura gudi - bufu, bucket - bufu, ana gari - ri
go - CONT water - having bucket - having, me they - ERG
duŋa - yira.
sprinkle - PUNC.

13. mayala, mayi anda madali - ra waya - ɳɗa!
stop, oh I cold - CAUS want - PRES!
(but nobody took any notice)
bilba - ru guda yaraba andida, dawi - gura andida.
pour - NAR water on top me, throw - CONT me.

14. ude gari ganda - da, mayi wirinja - du gananaŋa
now they stop - PRES, oh nest - EMPH there
manĩ - ga madabuda gari - ri gananaŋa gudni - ligu
take - PAST old men they - ERG there put - HIST
bangi - nana - qa guda yugari - qa.
side - from - LOC water fresh - LOC.
They only took that part where the pieces of rain-stone were.
waŋuŋuŋa guraŋa balgu guda - na dawi - garidji -
rest cloud body water - LOC throw - go down -
na, diga - lugu - ɬgi.
PRES, return - HIST - EMPH.

15. Where Murteen Khan's store now is, out in the open.
They go to the store, Mr Arnold was storekeeper then,
and Mr Duggan. They said:

16. 'Well, Bill, you been make'm rain?'
'Yes, he jump along might be two day.'
'Well when he comes you get a bag o' flour, sugar and
half'a bag of tea.'
'He come all right' - he was sure.'

17. aŋa - gu ganda - na - qa Mr Arnold ʊga yani - na -
true - EMPH pour - NP - LOC Mr Arnold he say - NP -
na ɭa waŋuŋuŋa - nda unba diga - ɳɗa, mayi
LOC man other - DAT you return - PRES, oh,
TALES OF NADU-DAGALI

madabuđa - nđa yani - ligu Nду - daga - li - nđa
old man - DAT say - PURP Side - spear - HAB - DAT
uga - na yuga - na djaɓa mani - nđa - diga - lugu
he go - NP food take - SP - return - PURP.

18. uda gari yuga - nana, uga - ru banda - gi - di -
now they go - IMM, he - ERG big - EMPH - EMPH -
y mani - ligu
ENCL get - RIST
150 pounds of flour in a bag
gadayabu - qa gudni - ligu nura - rugu dïga - nđa
head - LOC put - HIST camp - ALL return - PRES
pleased as punch!

19. 'mayi, nayi - du. uga maiju - mayi adu manda - na
'Hey, here - EMPH it food - I ERG get SP - PRES
gurawaʃa badni - nar - du, aŋa. yaŋa dïga - nđa
rain - make - PLUP - EMPH, yes. again return - PRES
aru - na yaŋa yuga - bi.
we again go - HORT.

20. 'mïna 'ndu manda - dïga - lugu? 'dïdi - balga -
what you get SP - return - PURP? 'tea - leaf -
naŋ!
EMPH

21. And they went back and got this and tobacco and matches,
mostly tobacco, those long old-fashioned sticks Eureka
and IXL, give'm a couple of each. He was very happy.

22. madabuđa diyare yuga - na? gari - ri bidia - libana
old man where go - PRES? they - ERG name - ANC
aradja - li yuwu - ru - du Nду - daga -
right - EMPH ADV people - ERG - EMPH Side - spear -
yïwa - li. yulda - bufu awada gïla - nđa
TR - HAB. gear - having he come out - PRES
waduŋunda mafili - dïga - nđa šadu - daga - yïwa -
others. other side return - PRES side - spear - TR -
ne. PROP.

23. But he wasn't really like that, he was a good old fellow.

Translation

Story 3. Making Rain

1. Ndu-dagali was a rain-maker. He came down (to near the Herrgott
Spring) to make the rain come. (He said): 'Take a heap of feathers
(matted together) like kurdaitcha shoes, and put them onto the
ground, make a nest'.
2. He put a rain-stone on the nest.
3. He chanted there for a long time; groups of men came and then went to bring back with them a host of others.
4. They put all that stuff, tents, tarpaulins, bags and blankets (to make a temporary) humpy, they put it there where the dam is, in the yard (near the Herrgott Spring).
5. They made rain there, they sang there.
6. Then two men freshly painted themselves (and decorated themselves) with down feathers they went down to the water, to the little lake, to that dam and they waded about in the water.
7. They sang, yes they sang there continually. (Ben says in English) They've been singing away (the main group) then them two come up, they have feathers in their hands. They showed the rain-makers' secret object.
8. I don't know anything (although) they told me about it and taught me. Well, they were making rain.
9. They sang, and they said to me: 'Come on, come over here! Take your clothes off and lie completely naked on top (of the nest)!’ They broke up the rain-stone (Ben says in English) I lay on top of this nest and they smashed this stone on my guts.
10. They smashed it to a powder in the end, and they sang and sang as they struck it. I got up out into the open, I went with no clothes on, we all went up into the open and stood on the open plain.
11. He got something I don't know what else and put it into the nest, and a piece of rain-stone lay there. I held two little pieces in my hands. They told me to throw them up and showed me ‘Look, they've become two little clouds!’
12. I had to get up on his neck, I sat on (Njadu-dagalj's) neck. And then a whole crowd of men came walking along carrying water, carrying buckets. They showered me with water.
13. ‘Stop, I'm cold’ — but they took no notice. They poured water over the top of me, they went on throwing water over me.
14. Then it was all over, oh that nest — the old men took it and put it in some water that had been placed at the side, in some fresh water. They only took that part where the pieces of rain-stone were. They went down (to the dam) to throw the rest (of the nest) into the water, that was (to become) a cloud-mass. Then they went back home.
15. Where Murteen Khan’s store now is, out in the open (is where they were camped). They went to the store (on the other side of the railway line) Mr Arnold was store-keeper then, and Mr Duggan. They (the store-people) said:
16. ‘Well, Bill, you been make’m rain?’
‘Yes, he jump along might be two day’.
‘Well, when he comes you get a bag of flour, sugar and half a bag of tea’.
‘He come all right’ — he was sure.

17. When it was well and truly pouring Mr Arnold was saying to some other (Aboriginal) man: ‘Go back and tell that old man, tell Yadu-dagalí he should come and fetch his food’.

18. They went back, and he collected a huge quantity — there were 150 pounds of flour in a bag. He put it on his head and carried it back to his camp, pleased as punch.

19. ‘Hey, here is the food I got from making rain! Oh yes! Let’s go back (he said to the other man, his friend Manili) let’s both of us go back’.

20. ‘What are you going to get from there?’
‘Tea-leaf’.

21. And they went back and got this and tobacco and matches, mostly tobacco, those old-fashioned sticks Eureka and IXL, give’m a couple of each. He was happy.

22. (But some people used to say) ‘Whereabouts is this old man going? They were right when they named him the Rib-spearer long ago. He’s come out carrying all his equipment (spears, boomerangs, etc). The other people went back on the other side ‘he’s the rib-spearer’.

23. (Final comment in English from Ben): But he wasn’t really like that, he was a good old fellow.

Story 4. The death of Yadu-dagalí

The Mt Gason bore (sunk in 1903) is one of the hottest, the water comes out boiling. It is just like the bore which is still running at Mirra Mitta, ‘Rat Place’, about 25 miles to the south; this is a desolate spot, where the air is permeated by steam and sulphur. One has to walk about 500 yards down along the bore-drain at Mirra Mitta before the water is cool enough to be touched and it is the same at Mt Gason. There was once a station at Mt Gason, with stone buildings, but these are now in ruins. Quite a few people were camped there in the late twenties, and Billy Hughes, a half-caste, was in charge at the station. Yadu-dagalí decided to stay there for a while, and made his camp below the station on the other side of the bore drain.

‘Koonki’ Yadu-dagalí was often given the alternative name ‘Koonkoo’ by Aiston. ‘Koonkoo’ is in fact a totally different word meaning ‘blind’ in Waŋgajuru. The word for blind very often implies ‘old’ in Aboriginal languages, and like the majority of elderly Aborigines, Yadu-dagalí had

10 By this stage Marree Aboriginal people, particularly the younger generation, were no longer used to anyone carrying traditional equipment about with him. This lack of understanding was one of the reasons why ‘Rib-bone Billy’ did not stay on at Marree in his later years when his sight was failing, but went off to Mungeranie and Mt Gason.
Top: Ruins of Mt Gason Station.
Bottom: Simpson Desert near Lake Poolowanna, Njadj-Djagali’s home country.
TALES OF YADU-DAGALI

Lost his sight almost completely. On this occasion he was going to see Billy Hughes and to get some tobacco from the station store.
Translation

Story 4. The death of Ńadu-dagali

1. He became blind, the old man; he used to stay here, at Mt Gason, when he had become blind.
2. He went but he didn’t turn — there was the bore-head and here was the long bore-drain, full of fiercely boiling water.
3. It goes up from the bore here, that’s the track that the other people were using, the people who belonged to that place. He didn’t go from the house this way, oh no, he went over there (on that far side) he wanted to jump across like a young fellow.
4. He didn’t come in this direction (past the bore-head), he went back on the other side.
5. He didn’t manage to jump across, he fell backwards into the boiling water. He was scalded.
6. He moved, he tried to jump out indeed! but he fell again, this time forward, and he was burnt all over.
7. He cried out and people rushed to pull him out.
8. They came in vain (it was too late). He died on the spot having been completely scalded. Only his head was unhurt. Poor old Rib-bone!

11. The last Guyani speaker, Mrs Alice Oldfield, is about one hundred years of age and remembers Rib-bone Billy well. During a recent conversation (September 1977) she added a further detail to the story of his death: apparently he had dropped his tobacco tin and tried to retrieve it. It is by no means an easy feat to jump over a bore-drain, and the one at Mt Gason was particularly slippery. According to Mick McLean, even an unfortunate dingo pursued by dogs failed to jump across, fell, and died there.

APPENDIX I

The Phonemes of Arabana-Wangguru

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>labial</th>
<th>interdental</th>
<th>alveolar</th>
<th>retroflex</th>
<th>palatal</th>
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Certain nasals and laterals in Arabana-Waggaguru have pre-stopped allophones: -bm- corresponds to -m- at the beginning of the second syllable, -dn- to -n-, -dn- to -n-, -dl- to -l-, and -dl- to -l-. In order to make the spelling approximate as closely as possible to the pronunciation these pre-stopped consonants have been included in the orthography.

For simplicity the cluster -ndj- has been written as -ndj-.

**APPENDIX 2**

**List of Abbreviations**

- ACC: accusative case
- ALL: allative case
- ALT: altruistic-emotive aspect
- ANC: ancient, distant past
- CAUS: causative case
- CONT: continuous participle, -ṭura
- CONST S: continuous stem-forming suffix
- DAT: dative case
- EL: elative case
- EMPH: emphatic enclitic particles
  - The emphatic particle -na, much favoured by Ben Murray, has not been glossed after the first few occurrences.
- EMPH ADV: The instrumental case is used in Diyari and in Arabana-Waggaguru with adjectives to indicate that they are used in an adverbial function. The instrumental case marker in Arabana-Waggaguru is -ru ri, in Diyari it is -li. Ben Murray, who is also a fluent Diyari speaker, has introduced this Diyari usage of -li: -li in Arabana-Waggaguru is simply an emphatic particle. There are one or two other minor slips caused by the influence of Diyari, such as the use of ya 'and'. For Diyari, see Peter Austin, A grammar of the Diyari language, MS.
- ERG: ergative case
- EXCL: exclamatory form
- HAB: habitual participle
- HIST: historic past, used generally in an account of a series of events. In form this tense is identical with the purposive
- HORT: hortative suffix -bi
- IMM: immediate past tense
- IMP: imperative
- INST: instrumental case
- LOC: locative case
- Nar: narrative past tense
- NEW: 'newly completed' aspectual marker
- NP: non-past
- PAST: past tense
- PERF: perfective aspect
- PLUP: pluperfect-explicatory past
- POS: possessive suffix
- POS A: possessive form used in lieu of accusative
- POT: potential mood
- PRES: present tense
- PROP: proper noun marking suffix -na
- PUNC: punctiliar present (in transitive verbs only)
- PURP: purposive
- REF: reflexive
- REL: relative past
- Sp: speed form, implying action performed hastily or before departing
- Tr: transitory aspect
- VOC: vocative
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76.
THE TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS AND THE PEARLING INDUSTRY: A CASE OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM*

Jeremy Beckett

The Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's Melanesian minority. Currently numbering some ten thousand, they are today found throughout the continent, but their homes are a score of islands that lie between Cape York and the southern coast of New Guinea. The Islanders' first known contacts with Europeans occurred early in the seventeenth century, but they did not have to come to terms with a permanent white presence until the middle of the nineteenth. This was not the catastrophe for them that it was for so many mainland Aborigines. The Europeans came mainly to exploit the region's marine resources, and so had no occasion to displace indigenous communities or encroach upon traditional means of livelihood. They did, however, need labour while Islanders wanted the goods which could be got by working. This exchange relationship provides the key to an understanding of post-contact Torres Strait society, and of that society's relationship with the rest of Australia.

Although meshed into the mainland economy for more than a century, Torres Strait has remained an enclave of underdevelopment with its own distinctive structure. This had been due less to geographical isolation or cultural backwardness than to the nature of the marine industry and the place of the Islanders in it. The industry, which is to say pearling and trepanging, has always been marginal, able to survive only through access to cheap labour. Lacking any alternative, Islanders have worked for small wages; but this they could only do as long as they could supplement their earnings with sea food and garden produce. They were thus anchored to their communities, which became part of the industry's support structure.

Torres Strait is part of Queensland, and the state government's 'native affairs' agency has been a powerful political force there. Until recently, however, its activities consisted largely of maintaining and regulating the arrangement just described, and the indigenous communities which lay back of it. In relation to the rest of Australia, the

* The writer first worked in Torres Strait from 1958 to 1961 as a Research Scholar of the Australian National University, returning in 1967 and 1976 with assistance from Sydney University. Paul Alexander, Delmos Jones, Bruce Kapferer, Bob Reece and Kerry Levis have helped at various stages in the writing of this paper.

1 The term underdevelopment can be taken here in the simple sense of the term, although it is used with Gunder Frank's writing in mind.

2 The agency has gone under many names: the Chief Protector's Department; Aboriginals' Department; Sub-Department of Native Affairs; Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, and now Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement.
policy did perpetuate the Islanders' status as a distinct and culturally inferior minority and confined them to a little niche in the labour force where they neither competed nor combined with white workers.

Since the mid-1960s the marine industry has been in a depression from which it seems unlikely to recover. Meanwhile, a burgeoning mainland economy has drawn Islanders out of their isolation into the general labour force, while those left behind exist mainly on welfare payments and employment in government relief programs. Their plight is a familiar one throughout the world, and its social repercussions have been far-reaching. This paper, however, will focus on the period when pearling was still the mainstay of Torres Strait.

*Internal colonialism* seems an appropriate way to characterize the history of Torres Strait; and indeed Rowley has already drawn comparisons between 'colonial Australia' and pre-independence New Guinea. But the notion has been applied to like situations elsewhere, in Central and South America, in South Africa and even in the British Isles, so that a general formulation is in order.4

Colonialism, whether internal or external, places two territories on a footing of inequality in terms of power, economic exchange and status. These three 'dimensions' are always inter-related, but in a variable way. The metropolitan government usually has responsibility for 'colonial administration', while the exploitation of labour and resources is usually the province of private commercial enterprise. Colonial government usually protects and facilitates these interests, but it would be naive to imagine that it exists only for this purpose. If colonialism is primarily an economic phenomenon, it does not follow that every colony will be run for profit; some may be run at a loss as part of a wider strategy. How far the metropolitan society participates in the making of colonial policy and shares in the fruits of economic exploitation, is another important set of variables. In terms of status, the metropolitan and colonial societies are ranked. The distinction is sharper when there is racial or ethnic difference, but is also apparent in attitudes towards the ne'er-do-wells and adventurers who become settlers, and their creole offspring. It may cut across emerging class divisions; however, colonial elites are not just the outcome of these two intersecting principles, but of the whole colonial matrix.

It was the pre-capitalistic societies of the world that proved most vulnerable to expansionist capitalism, hence the common association of colonialism with ethnic or racial difference. Colonialism tends to incorporate such differences, but varies in its response to the indigenous mode of production, mainly according to whether it is oriented to the settlement of population, the extraction of natural resources or the exploitation of labour. Harold Wolpe, in a discussion of internal colonial-


4 See, for example, Gonzalez Casanova 1965; Stavenhagen 1965; Hechter 1974.
A CASE OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM

ism in South Africa, shows how the ‘normal’ tendency of capitalism to destroy other modes of production may be checked by a counter tendency to preserve them when they can be harnessed to the industrial wagon. Thus, it is the Bantu homelands that provide for the reproduction of labour, supporting the women and children, and the men when they are not in employment; while industry supports only its actual workers. The South African government’s apartheid policy, then, may be said to maintain the articulation of the two modes of production.

Hartwig has proposed that this model should be applied to Australia. But for Wolpe internal colonialism occurs when capitalism develops predominantly by means of its relationship with non-capitalistic modes of production. Certain Australian industries such as pearling and cattle raising have developed in this way, but the economy as a whole has not. Consequently, unless we regard Australian capitalism as monolithic, we cannot see government policy simply as a service for local industries without reference to other interest groups. In fact we know little about the processes through which Australia’s policies towards its indigenous peoples have been formed. For much of the time the big interest groups and the electorate at large have been uninformed and largely unconcerned. Legislators have variously evinced racism, humanitarianism and combinations of the two; sometimes preoccupied with the public purse, sometimes with Australia’s standing in the international arena. The cattlemen and pearlers have had their lobbies, but they have often found it easier to modify policy by applying pressure at the local level. Career administrators, mediating between the parties and often the best informed, have been a major influence. Queensland, particularly, has been noted for its forceful administrators, one of whom, J. W. Bleakley, was called to advise other Australian governments during the 1930s.

In all the discussion of internal colonialism little has been said about its implications for the development of a proletariat. Tribesmen and peasants do not immediately embrace the routines, rigours and scaled incentives of the industrial world: their tendency to withdraw when their immediate needs are met is notorious. Glossing Marx, Taussig writes:

the transition to the capitalist mode of production is only completed when direct force and external economic conditions, although still used, are only employed exceptionally. An entirely new set of conditions and habits have to be developed among the working class, to

6 Wolpe 1975.
6 Hartwig 1976.
7 Wolpe 1975:244. In a footnote (1975:252) he writes:
I leave open whether the notion of ‘internal colonialism’ has any proper application in conditions of racial discrimination where, however, the internal relations within the society are overwhelmingly capitalist in nature, that is, where non-capitalist modes of production, if they exist at all, are marginal. This is the issue taken up in Hartwig 1976.
the point where common sense regards the new conditions as natural.\(^8\) This conversion process must to some degree be inhibited under internal colonialism, for the individual has repeatedly to choose between wage labour and subsistence production; between use and exchange value.

The account that follows will be organized around the articulation of the subsistence and capitalistic modes of production in Torres Strait, and the role of government in regulating this arrangement. I shall be looking at the region as a whole, with its seventeen indigenous communities centred on the commercial and administrative settlement at Thursday Island (see map); but focusing on one community, Badu, which more than any other committed itself to the pearling industry.

Sydney-based trepang boats were reported in Torres Strait as early as 1846,\(^9\) but from 1868\(^10\) until recently pearl-shell has been the staple of the industry, with golden-lip mother-of-pearl and trochus as the most important varieties.\(^11\) Both have been luxury products for alluring but fickle overseas markets. Trepang, otherwise known as bêche-de-mer, went as a culinary delicacy to the Chinese market, which closed at the outbreak of war in the Far East. Pearl shell, used mainly for ornaments and buttons, has had a worldwide market, which however has been controlled by a few big dealers, first in London and later in New York. Though organized in an association, the Torres Strait master pearlers have had no control over prices, and so have been subject to market manipulations as well as the vagaries of fashion. They have also been limited in their capacity to expand by the availability of shell: one year's overfishing resulting in shortage for several years after. Bach, the historian of the industry, wrote in its last phase, 'The economy of the industry is precarious, with a record of recurrent financial crises over the last forty years'.\(^12\) Pearling has had its prosperous times, but the reward for capital and labour has always been uncertain.

Enterprises ranged from small, locally based operators to well known metropolitan firms such as Burns Philp. Any tendency toward consolidation was offset by the excessive efficiency of large concerns — resulting in overfishing — and on the other hand the ease with which a small operator could start up. Just enough capital was needed to buy, fit out and provision a sail boat, usually a lugger or cutter, big enough to

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8 Taussig 1977:133. Taussig's brilliant analysis of the proletarianization of a group of Colombian peasants provides some basic insights into the Torres Strait situation which I hope to take up in a later publication.
9 MacGillivray 1852:308.
10 Captain Banner established a pearl shell station on Warrior Island in 1868 which seems to have been the first in the Strait.
11 Black lip mother-of-pearl and green snail shell have also been taken at times. Pearls provided a welcome bonus, but they occurred too irregularly and unpredictably to provide a basis for the industry.
A CASE OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM

The Torres Strait Islands.
accommodate ten to twenty men. Diving equipment was needed for
gold-lip, which was mostly below seven fathoms, beyond the reach of
skin divers. Trepang and trochus were found at lesser depths, and all
that one needed was a few dinghies to carry the divers from the lugger
to the reef. In short, pearling and trepanging were labour intensive in­
dustries, with wages the major cost and the critical factor in determin­
ing profit margins. The recruitment and organization of labour were
thus of paramount importance.

Veterans of the industry, white and black, all insist that the skipper's
ability was critical: 'Better a good skipper with a bad crew than a bad
skipper with a good crew'. He had to be familiar with tides, currents
and winds, and to know where the fish was most abundant and most
easily got. He needed also to be able to keep up the pace of work for
weeks at a stretch; to reduce tensions among polyglot crews living
under cramped noisome conditions; and to keep in check the resent­
ments of men who, particularly in the early days, had been subject to
gross abuse. 13

The owners of the boats rarely took charge themselves. They pre­
ferred to avoid the squalid conditions, the poor diet and the weeks of
monotony; still more the dangerous and debilitating deep water diving.
Fortunately the masters could find able and reliable skippers at rela­
tively low cost. In the 1870s, when the price of shell was still high,
whites were attracted to the work in which a skipper-diver could make
as much as £500 in a year. 14 But as shell became scarcer and prices
fell, employers looked to Asia and the Pacific Islands for workers ready
to accept less money. The skippers and divers of the 1880s were Rotu­
mans and New Caledonians, Malays and Manilamen until in the 1890s
the Japanese arrived, ready to undercut and outwork them all. In 1907,
in the wake of the White Australia legislation, a Royal Commission in­
vestigated the feasibility of replacing alien workers with Europeans, as
had been done in the sugar industry. 15 But it was clear that no white
man who could earn £8 a month as a coastal seaman would risk life and
health for £8.17, which was the going rate for a diver. 16 The masters in-

13 In the early years the Pacific Islanders had often been blackbodied, while Abori­
gines were shanghaied into the present century. For an account of labour abuse
in Torres Strait, see Evans 1972.
14 Somerset Magistrates' Letter Book, 3 April 1875.
16 1908: lxiv. A report of the Northern Australia Development Committee, pub­
lished in 1946, observed that:

For many years, pearl shell fishing was a most hazardous occupation. One of
the risks to which the whole crew was exposed was that of beri-beri, owing to
the necessity for using preserved food with no fresh fruit or vegetables;
another common hazard among the divers was that of divers' paralysis, a
result of too rapid changes of pressure. Many men died of these diseases. The
rough and ready life also took its toll. Living quarters were cramped and
uncomfortable, the life was utterly monotonous, there was little provision for
living while on shore. It was taken for granted that luggers' crews usually
sisted they could not pay more and the Queensland government did not take up the Commission's proposal for a subsidy.\textsuperscript{17} As a result, the Torres Strait pearlers and trepangers, along with their colleagues in Western Australia and Darwin, remained exempt from the provisions of the White Australia policy right up to the outbreak of war with Japan. They were not allowed to resume when the war ended; but the labour, though local, was still cheap and coloured. It was Islanders who now filled the gap, not white men.

The 1907 Commission recognized that if white men could not be got to work as skipper-divers, there was no way that they would work as deck hands and skin divers at the going rate of £1 to £2 per month. These jobs could be given to Islanders, Aborigines and Papuans who, it allowed, had 'natural rights to employment', as well as being tractable.\textsuperscript{18} The first boats to work in Torres Strait had come already manned by Pacific Islanders; other 'Kanakas' made their own way up from the Queensland cane fields, and even from Sydney.\textsuperscript{19} But an industry liable to sudden booms needed to be able to expand its labour force at short notice. The indigenous populations of the region could be made into a convenient labour reserve if they could be broken in. At first they proved unwilling to work for prolonged periods, and if kidnapped tended either to abscond or to succumb to exotic diseases. But with time they acquired immunity and became inured to remaining at sea for months on end. Moreover they could be paid less than the more sophisticated Asians and Pacific Islanders. From the beginning of the century up to the outbreak of war in 1941 they made up more than half of the industry's labour force, with the Islanders constituting around 20 per cent.

Whether foreign or local, the workers were supported only while they were working, and there was little for their wives and children, still less for the communities from which they were recruited. In other words, the reproduction of labour was left to the subsistence economies of Torres Strait and of the countries of Asia and the South Pacific, which thus became subordinated to the marine industry.

The Torres Strait marine industry did not become a basis for any kind of diversification. There being few other exploitable resources, profits were either ploughed back or invested in more promising fields

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\textsuperscript{17} 1908:lxiv.
\textsuperscript{18} 1908:lxix.
\textsuperscript{19} The Somerset Magistrates' Letter Book for 1872-1877 contains a number of references to crews recruited in various parts of the Pacific. From these sources and from the recollections of the descendants of Pacific Islanders born in Torres Strait, it seems that the majority came from Rotuma, Samoa and Niue, and from various islands in the Solomon and New Hebrides groups.
elsewhere. The industry may be said to have carried Torres Strait to
the threshold of the Australian economy and then left it there. After
the initial developments of the 1870s and 1880s it could neither
expand nor diversify. Even this stunted development depended on con­tinuing supplies of cheap labour. The labour supply itself depended on
the backup support of subsistence economies; and once foreign labour
was excluded the indigenous communities were largely responsible for
the organization of labour as well.

On the eve of colonization, around the middle of last century, there
were between three thousand and four thousand Islanders distributed
over twenty islands. They lived by hunting turtle and dugong, by fish­
ing, and either gathering or cultivating vegetable foods. The relative im­
portance of these activities varied from one zone to another. In the
western islands men busied themselves with hunting the great sea
mammals, while the women fished and gathered wild roots and berries;
there was little or no gardening. By contrast, the small, fertile, densely
populated eastern islands rarely saw dugong and got their turtle mostly
during one season. Both men and women devoted themselves to garden­
ing and some fishing. The tiny Central Islands provided little vegetable
food, either wild or cultivated; their inhabitants spent their time catch­
ing turtle and fish, part of which they traded with the cultivating
peoples to the east.

Social organization was broadly the same throughout the islands and
neighbouring New Guinea. Social relations were phrased in the idiom of
kinship, with a patrilineal emphasis in the recruitment of residential and
ritual groups. Economic activities dispersed and fragmented society. In
the eastern islands men gardened with their wives and unmarried
daughters, or alone. Elsewhere women gathered wild foods and caught
fish alone or in small groups. Some co-operation was required to handle
the big canoes that were used for hunting and trading, but the number
never exceeded ten. This tendency to dispersal was offset by a rich
ritual life that periodically brought together the people of one, and
sometimes several, communities.

Pearlers and trepangers were the first foreigners to gain a foothold in
the islands. They found the Islanders eager for trade goods such as iron
tools and cloth, and ready to work at least for short periods to get them.

20 During the early years of the century several coconut plantations were estab­
lished, but there seems to have been little or no copra production. For a few
years after the second world war wolfram was mined on Moa Island. Otherwise
the only resource has been fish, which to date has been exploited only on a small
scale. For an analysis of the Torres Strait economy and its prospects, see
Treadgold 1974.

21 This assessment, based on a number of sources, is discussed in Beckett 1972,
which summarises the available data on indigenous Torres Strait. The primary
source is the six-volume work edited by Haddon (1904-1935).
But if workers were unwilling they were sometimes kidnapped, as were women to serve as prostitutes on the boats. Attempts at resistance only served to demonstrate the foreigners' superiority, so that when the London Missionary Society arrived in 1871 it met little opposition, and may have been welcomed as a protection against the rest.\(^{22}\) Within a decade the Society had won the adherence of the majority of Islanders, and begun the work of turning them into black replicas of the Victorian 'respectable working class'.\(^{23}\) The Queensland government had completed its annexation of the islands by 1879, but lacking the means of administering them it was content to leave the missionaries to guide the 'chiefs' it had appointed.

The missionaries regarded most of the pearlers and trepangers as a 'bad influence', and would probably have preferred not to let their flocks stray out of their sight; but they could scarcely stifle the demand for trade goods, and indeed money was required to support the lifestyle they were introducing. Before long they were encouraging communities to compete in the generosity of their donations to the mission, and in church building. Most of this money came from the wages of the young, unmarried men, who were most in demand with employers and most easily spared from their communities, being otherwise unproductive and a potent threat to sexual morality. The young men had their own incentive. Foreign workers in search of local wives had introduced marriage payments in the form of cash and manufactured goods: Islanders had to match them or miss out.\(^{24}\)

It was, then, the young men who signed on for the boats, spending ten months of the year away from home, while their fathers stayed back to guard the morals of their wives and advance themselves in the mission hierarchy. Combining their traditional authority as parents with their new authority as church leaders, they effectively nullified the young men's economic importance and succeeded in controlling most of the money that they brought back. Having right of veto over marriage, they delayed the event so that they could enjoy the work of their sons a little longer and hold out for a good price for their daughters.

The older, married men continued in subsistence production, gardening and fishing in the company of their wives and daughters, and hunting with their age mates. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century they were buying small boats and working neighbouring reefs for shell or trepang. This seems to have reflected the growing demand for cash goods, including flour and rice, but did not amount to a complete abandonment of the subsistence production. Fish, dugong and turtle could still be caught on the way back from the working grounds. Not surprisingly, this arrangement proved more attractive to the hunt-

\(^{22}\) London Missionary Society, Reports, September 1876.
\(^{23}\) For an account of the L.M.S. in Torres Strait see Beckett n.d.
\(^{24}\) Haddon 1908:115.
ing peoples of western and central Torres Strait, than to the horticulturalists of the east.

The one difficulty with this arrangement was that it failed to provide for the ‘hungry time’ during the Nor’west monsoon. The climatic conditions that caused a dearth of wild and cultivated vegetable foods, and made hunting and fishing difficult, also brought commercial fishing to a standstill. Flour, rice and canned goods could tide the people over, but money often ran out before the end of the season. Per capita cash income was still low and there were other calls on it, to support the church, to finance ceremonial feasts and marriage payments. Clearly, then, more effort must be put into commercial production.

To meet the problem, two missionaries formed a non-profit making company, Papuan Industries, in 1904. Its beginnings are described as follows:

... Revd. F. W. Walker, preaching at one of their church services, had reproached the Islanders for their apparent indolence. He pointed out the great wealth of marine produce at their very doors, the proceeds of which, if collected, would provide for the seasonal “hungry times”. He was afterwards approached by a deputation of the people who explained that they had no money with which to buy fishing boats large enough to work profitably.

For the next twenty-five years Papuan Industries loaned Islanders the money to buy boats, selling their produce and marketing trade goods at fair prices. After a few years the Queensland government went into partnership, taking over the company when its founders retired in 1930. Long before this date, it had taken effective control of what came to be called the ‘company boats’.

The Queensland government’s intervention was on too small a scale to threaten the masters, but still served to consolidate its hold over the Islanders. It seems to have been prompted by bureaucratic considerations, and as part of a statewide program for ‘natives’. By 1890 the government had acquired the means for administering the islands, and began posting teacher-magistrates in the larger communities. This precipitated a struggle with the L.M.S. theocracy, which ended with the missionaries’ withdrawal in 1914. The virtual take-over of Papuan Industries may have been one more move to reduce mission influence, but it was also in keeping with statewide policy. An Aborigines Protection Act had been passed in 1897, but the Hon. John Douglas, who had been Government Resident since 1886, believed that the Islanders were

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25 The 1897 Queensland Parliamentary Commission report indicates that Walker was helping Islanders to buy before the establishment of Papuan Industries. However, the L.M.S. would not allow its missionaries to engage in trade. Walker was obliged to resign his position, but stayed on after the L.M.S. withdrew in 1915. L.M.S. Correspondence, 13 September 1896; see also Austin 1972.

superior to Aborigines and not in need of it. However, when he died in 1904, the incoming Chief Protector had them declared Aborigines for the purposes of the act.

The White Australia agitation was at its height during these years, and working class fear of cheap labour was being expressed in terms of virulent racism. The Aborigines were scarcely a labour threat, but they were included in the general opprobrium, as an offence to white sensibility and morality. They could not be deported, like the Kanakas and Chinese, but they could be kept out of the way, 'for their own good' as well as that of the white majority. From this emerged a policy of protective segregation, whereby Aborigines would be confined on settlements and have as little outside contact as possible. The practice might better be described as arrested segregation, for there was never enough money to institutionalize everyone. Nor could the settlements be made self sufficient, so that it was necessary to hire out the best workers to pastoralists who, in any case, needed their labour. Since the government would have to provide if the worker was not paid or if he squandered his earnings, it had its own reasons for supervising employment and holding Aboriginal earnings. Under the tight controls that emerged, the government did not so much teach the Aborigines thrift as practice it on their behalf.

Islanders came under this regime after 1904. The commercial and administrative settlement on Thursday Island could not be rid of the Japanese, but Islanders and Aborigines were to be kept out as much as possible, and the surviving Pacific Islanders to be settled elsewhere. The Torres Strait communities were to be made self-supporting, with the aid of the company boat system, but the masters were to be allowed to hire the best workers under government supervision.

It is hard to tell how far indigenous entrepreneurship would have gone if the government had not taken over. Communities or community segments, called tribes, now worked off the price of the boats and became nominal owners; but the protector, having legal rights of disposal over native property, could do with boats and produce as he saw fit. In reality, then, the means of production were in white hands, and if there was no master to skim away profits, there was the protector instead deducting large sums for various funds and contingencies.

The company boats became a continuing source of conflict between government and Islanders, who made the mistake of believing that, once paid off, the boats were theirs to use as they pleased; and when told otherwise gave up in disgust. Again, while it was understood that the boats could be used for hunting they did not always get enough

27 Douglas 1899; Chief Protector of Aborigines' Report for 1904.
28 Queensland Parliamentary Debates 1938:408.
29 The best account of this period is to be found in Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1975.
shell or trepang to cover running costs. The teacher-magistrates had to use stern sanctions before they could get the Islanders into line, and the Eastern Islanders, who had their fertile gardens to fall back on, remained refractory.30

The government nevertheless persisted with the scheme, expanding its fleet to take advantage of the post-war boom, and persuading the men to divert their efforts from trepang and mother-of-pearl to trochus shell, which currently commanded a good price. In 1924, twenty-eight boats earned more than £20,000; and with wages on the master's boat raised to between £3 and £4.10 a month, the communities were fully self supporting, if not well to do.³¹  The number at work also increased, from 358 in 1921, when the population was about three thousand, to 587 in 1923; and it continued upwards through the 1930s. This was partly due to population increase, but mainly due to the expansion of the company boat fleet, giving employment to the older married men and the less fit.

The relative prosperity of the 1920s, during which Islanders increased their dependence on store commodities, came to an abrupt end with the great depression of 1930. The masters retrenched; the company boats worked on, but average per capita earnings for the year totalled only £8. The resentment that this aroused was not soothed by improving prices, and in 1936 the Islanders went on strike for four months.³² The private sector of the industry was unaffected. The grievances seem to have been various. The Chief Protector of the time supposed that the men wanted to handle their own money.³³ Veterans of the strike cite the wretched pay, and the seeming lack of correspondence between effort and reward. Evidently officials did not bother to explain the complex system of deductions for debts incurred in earlier years, current running costs, and various community and contingency funds. Some workers simply supposed that they were being robbed.³⁴ On the masters' boats they were assured of a minimum wage, and earnings were generally higher. This was partly because the masters took only the best workers, but the unfavourable comparison remained.

The government was able to bring the Islanders into line with a show of force, but knew it would face trouble again before long if earnings did not improve. The only solution was to increase productivity, and the only way of doing this was to build up a cadre of skippers who

³¹ Aboriginals' Department, Reports for 1925 et seq.
³² Aboriginals' Department, Reports for 1935-36.
³³ Bleakley 1961:270.
³⁴ This was alleged in the Communist press, which took up the Islanders' cause (Workers Weekly, 21 January and 21 February 1936). The Brisbane Telegraph of 8 January 1936 reports a statement of the responsible Minister to the effect that the Islanders 'were contributing something towards the support of Aboriginals on the Mainland'. Just what they were contributing and how was never made clear.
A CASE OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM

could step up the old, easy-going pace of work.

The Islanders had produced little in the way of leadership up to this point. Authority had not been much developed in the traditional society, and what there was had disappeared during the missionary reconstruction. The church leaders confined themselves to parish matters, and the local government councillors, who had replaced the old chiefs, were overshadowed by the government teacher-magistrates. As in other parts of Melanesia, ambitious individuals strove to aggrandize themselves only to be cut down by an egalitarianism that had been reinforced by the Islanders' lowly position in the colonial order. The old style company boat skippers were at most *primus inter pares*, elected by community or crew, and regularly replaced, perhaps 'to give someone else a chance', perhaps because they had antagonized the men. Many chose not to take the slightly larger share of the boat's earnings to which the system entitled them. Discussing such matters in later years, Islanders all agree that a boat could not do well when 'everyone boss'. In that case, it worked at the pace of the slowest worker, arriving late at the working grounds and coming back early, on one pretext or another. To work boat and crew at full capacity, and to get ahead of running costs, a 'tough skipper' was needed.

During the 1920s a few 'tough skippers' had emerged, mainly from among the half-caste descendants of Pacific Island seamen, but their authority was personal. Only in Badu, in western Torres Strait, did the skipper's authority become institutionalized, largely due to the achievement of Tanu Nona.

Tanu Nona was born in Saibai Island in 1900, the son of a Saibai woman and a Samoan seaman. His parents settled on Badu soon after and there he was raised along with his seven brothers and three sisters. He began with no particular advantages. His father was evidently a stern man and ambitious for his sons, but without wealth or influence. Tanu had to make his own way and, according to his own account, lost no time in doing so.

I got my first boat from Mr Luffman [a master pearler] in 1918. Then when I was nineteen I got the *Coral Sea*. I was going up to New Guinea to work out from Samarai, but my mother wanted me to stop and I took over as skipper of the island cutter, I've been a skipper ever since. Later the Poid people [a neighbouring community] made me captain of their lugger, the *Manu*. The government set me to race [i.e., compete] with Douglas Pitt from Damley Island. In six weeks I got ten ton of trochus; Douglas Pitt only got five. That's how Badu got the *Wakaid*, the biggest lugger in Torres Strait. For six years we kept the cup [awarded by the government for the winning boat], until the competition was cancelled.

35 For a discussion of Torres Strait egalitarianism see Beckett 1972.
36 I conducted two long interviews with Mr Tanu Nona in 1959.
The *Wakaid*'s success was not easily won.

We stayed out sometimes for ten months on the coast, from Cape York to Gladstone [i.e., along the North Queensland coast]. You must have a strong captain to make those boys work. If they not get much shell I not let them into the dinghy to eat dinner, midday. They got to eat their piece of damper [bread] standing on the reef. Some skippers work only half day, six in the morning till dinner time, then sail onto the next reef. That way they lose half a day. But I keep them there till six in the evening. We cook the shell and sail on to the next reef night-time. Making the crew work is the main thing. Also knowing the tides. But you must make those boys finish the reef. Bad skippers leave some shell behind.

The government was quick to recognize Tanu's ability and to advance him. The competition, designed to take advantage of inter-island rivalries, probably strengthened his hold over the crew, and, when he won, enhanced his reputation. The *Wakaid* would have been an added source of pride and, because of its size, an asset in subsequent competitions. Nevertheless, the success was essentially Tanu's and he is the one credited with 'teaching Badu to work'. No doubt his forceful, not to say aggressive, personality was an important factor in transforming the old easy-going routine, but he was also able to take advantage of an unusual circumstance within the community. Towards the end of the 1920s the community resolved to replace its decaying wooden church with a cement building. Tanu, already elected a local government councillor, now became a church-warden and director of the project. He began by decreeing that every able-bodied man should work full-time on the boats, giving up a portion of his earnings for the project. He next overrode the rule that a man might only work on the boat belonging to his tribe, henceforth taking into his crew the best workers whatever their affiliation:

I thought it silly that a good man couldn't work with others because he didn't belong to their tribe, and might have to work with other men who were no good. That was how *Wakaid* got all the best men.

With the benefit of hindsight we can regard these minor innovations as the opening moves in a process that was to transform Badu and have important implications for other communities. However, it is unlikely that even Tanu could see so far ahead. In the meantime the innovations could be justified in terms of established community values, principally the erection of a handsome new church that rivalled the Thursday Island cathedral for size. If the young men came home with more money than ever before, their mothers and fathers and the church leaders were the main beneficiaries. Tanu, then, remained a community as well as an economic leader, with wide popular support.

As is often the case with innovators, Tanu's relationship to the com-
Top: Crew member, Nona pearling lugger, Badu, 1959.
Photographs by Jeremy Beckett.
Top: Opening up a turtle, Badu.
Bottom: Butchering a dugong, Badu.
Photographs by Jeremy Beckett.
munity was ambiguous. Though Badu bred he was not Badu born, and while he had acquired fictive kin and affines there he had no true kin. Again, as a 'South Sea half-caste', he could lay some claim to superiority over 'Torres Strait natives' in terms of the prevailing ethnic stratification. Finally, while nominally an appointee of the community, he was developing an unusually close relationship with the government, which was rumoured to pay him a secret retainer over and above his skipper's share. This relationship was strengthened by his refusal to join the 1936 strike, and his subsequent reward, the *Wakaid*, now to be worked as a family boat.

Normal life was interrupted in 1941 with the outbreak of war in the Pacific. Torres Strait became a field of military operations, though not of hostilities, and almost every able-bodied Islander served alongside white soldiers as members of a special volunteer contingent. Their contacts with the white troops were a radical departure from what they had known hitherto. At the outbreak of war they had been more cut off from the rest of Australia than they were at the turn of the century, their only contacts being with whites who were in authority over them. They now found themselves included in a new camaraderie and hearing ideas which challenged what they had learned in church and schoolroom. Having served 'King and country', they thought they would be entitled to the 'new deal' promised Australian servicemen when the war ended. The Islanders supposed this would mean 'freedom': the end of government supervision and segregation, and 'full pay'. As one veteran explained to me, years later, 'We all came out of the army with swelled heads'.

In the new climate, the Queensland government found it difficult to restore the pre-war regime. However, boom conditions in the pearling industry, following four years of inactivity, eased its task and enabled it to offer certain concessions without making any structural change. Taking advantage of the Australia-wide anti-Japanese feeling, the government insisted that the Islanders could and should provide the industry with all its manpower, including skippers and divers as well as crew. It also negotiated a new wage agreement which brought the basic rate to a little over 50 per cent of the national basic wage, with bonus incentives, and higher rates for divers and skippers. The latter could now hope to earn as much as white workers.

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37 See *Press* 1969.
38 Pacific Islanders married to local women were allowed to remain after their fellows had been deported. However, they were faced with the choice of becoming Aborigines under the terms of the Act, or removing to the St Pauls or Hammond Island missions where conditions were much the same as on the reserves. Their status nevertheless remained anomalous, and after 1945 their half-caste descendants were allowed to vote, take alcohol and travel as they pleased. These rights were still denied to half-castes living on the reserves.
39 Sub-Department of Native Affairs, Reports for 1946-47.
The government had been negotiating wage agreements with the masters since 1904, as part of its statutory control over native employment. In 1907 Protector Costin had suggested that the Islanders were 'worth' £2 a month, though 'of course they have very inflated ideas of their own value'. In fact, he was going along with established practice which rated Islanders below Asians and Kanakas, but above Papuans and Aborigines. His successors arranged increases from time to time, sometimes in response to shifts in living costs, sometimes in response to fluctuations in the industry. The employers, of course, insisted that increases were beyond their ability to pay, and more than the Islanders were 'worth'. But while these assertions can be taken with a grain of salt, it must also be recognized that the industry was predicated upon cheap labour, and had to compete with cheap labour producers such as the Philippines and the Cook Islands.

The gains made in the post-war boom years were soon swallowed up by inflation, and though the rates increased from time to time, there was a decline in real terms, and a widening gap between earnings in Torres Strait and those on the mainland. After two years of feverish activity, the markets were glutted and shell was once again hard to find. The number of boats and men at work declined, then picked up, reaching a post-war peak in 1950-51, slumping in the next year, partially recovering in 1956-57, then falling away, this time for good. In 1960 an economist observed that the industry seemed less viable every year, and within a few months competition from plastics had dealt it a mortal blow.

Trends within the government fleet were similar to those in the private sector. During the boom it acquired forty boats, which the Islanders were quickly able to pay off from their wartime savings and post-war gratuities. But increasing stringencies forced one enterprise after another out of the race. The Island boats were left far behind when the master pearlers mechanized their fleet with engines and compressors. The government had to follow suit, but this meant a rise in running costs, so that more boats fell into debt. The government now adopted the policy of reducing its overall commitment and concentrating its boats in the hands of those who could run them most efficiently. By 1957 the fleet had dwindled to twenty-two, and by 1961 to fifteen, eight of them run by Badu's Nona company, which left some islands with no boat at all. By the mid-1960s the six Nona boats were the only ones still working.

All these changes had important implications for the communities, both social and economic. The government boats had always worked out from their home islands; now the masters' boats often did so. This

40 Reports for 1946-47.  
41 Reports of the Royal Commission . . . 1908:60.  
meant supplies of dugong and turtle at the end of each working spell, which might be every four weeks if the work was mother-of-pearl. With 600-700 kg of meat to supplement the fish and crops produced by those who stayed ashore, the income from the subsistence sector was considerable. As Badu’s fleet grew so did its subsistence production, but at the expense of other islands which became increasingly hard up.

There were other changes in the organization of work. When Island skippers took over the masters’ boats they brought with them the traditional norms that had already been adapted to work on the government boats. Most of the latter were owned by family companies like the Nonas. If additional labour were needed, the skipper mobilized his own kinship and affinal connections. Master boat skippers recruited in the same way. Initially recruitment was mainly confined to the skipper’s community, but as some communities lost their boats while Badu, specifically the Nonas, acquired more, it became necessary to recruit outside and even outside the kinship circle.

As I noted earlier, the Nona company came into being after the 1936 strike, when the government made over to them the big lugger, Wakaid, which had previously belonged to one of the tribes. There were nine brothers, all but one of working age, and several already experienced in skippering boats. They initially joined forces to work the Wakaid under Tanu but it was not long before the company expanded and they had boats of their own. The boats were lost during the war, but the company resumed work in 1946 with two new ones. Once again the Nona family, which now included grown up sons of the older brothers, began by working together, hiving off as new boats became available. However, the expansion was too slow for some, who left to work for master pearlers. Most members of the family had the chance to prove themselves as skippers, either in the government or the private sectors, and while some failed, five of the brothers and four among the rising generation won solid reputations. However, Tanu continued to get the largest catch.

The company’s quick expansion may have aided its survival. Other family companies, on Badu and elsewhere, foundered on internal rivalries — ‘everyone wanted to be boss’; whereas ambitious Nonas found an outlet before tensions reached danger point. Only the younger members worked under Tanu for any length of time, and even they sustained the hope of eventual advancement.

As well as skippering his own boat, Tanu acted as company head. He interfered little in the day-to-day routines of the other skippers.

Nietschmann (personal communication, 1977) found that a sample of forty-two dugong averaged 254.7 kg of butchered meat; a sample of fifty-four turtle averaged 131.1 kg. Badu luggers regularly brought back one or two dugong and several turtles each month, and would go out for more if there was a feast. With eight luggers working, Badu was well supplied with meat. For further data on hunting, see Nietschmann 1976.
but advised the government on how the money was to be allocated. The younger skippers, particularly, had little idea of how their earnings were computed. He also had a say in who should take charge of the boats. This was an area of considerable uncertainty, for the rights of company members remained undefined. In 1958 Tanu told me that he intended to divide the fleet among the branches of the family: one lugger to his most successful brother; one for two younger brothers; one to the family of a brother now dead. Three luggers belonged to him, but one of these should go to the family of his eldest brother, who had retired. This left out of account three brothers who were working for master pearlers, and who only benefited in the family’s collective expenditures on weddings and memorials to the dead. They might, perhaps, have been accommodated in further expansion, but in the event there was no further expansion. Moreover, the family of the deceased brother failed to make a success of their venture and lost the boat to another branch. The son of Tanu’s eldest brother resigned his command after some years, but was not replaced: the interest of this branch also lapsed. With the decline in pearling from the late 1960s, the number of Nona boats began to decline. After 1971 there were only two boats, skippered by two of Tanu’s sons.

The company could run on in this uncertain manner because legally it was the government, not the Nonas, who owned the boats. In earlier reports the government spoke of Islanders working off the price of their boats, becoming in some sense owners, though still under government supervision. Later reports make no such reference, and it would seem that the government was the real owner, although Tanu played an important part in management and was well paid for his services.

The Nonas trained skippers both for their own boats and the pearling companies. Masters and officials took Tanu’s recommendations seriously, and were not often disappointed. Badu skippers had a clear sense of authority, in sharp contrast to the indecisive leaders characteristic of other communities. Tanu’s harsh regime of the 1930s remained their legendary charter, but it was no longer a direct model since few now worked trochus. Mother-of-pearl fishing required tight discipline while the divers were down, but not long hours of gruelling work or prolonged absence from home. Diving could only be done for a few hours each day, and for about three weeks in the month. Nevertheless, the ‘hard work’ ethic persisted: skippers left for the working grounds before the water was clear and stayed out until it was too dirty for diving. They stayed neither for church service nor festival. Anyone who showed signs of lingering was said to be tied to his wife’s apron strings. These standards were ultimately sanctioned by financial incentives and the risk of losing one’s boat. But they were also maintained by the competitiveness among skippers, which ensured that any falling short would be noticed and commented upon. The Nonas were particularly jealous
of their family reputation and they all lived in fear of a rebuke from Tanu. The situation in Badu, with a dozen or more skippers at work, was quite different from that in other communities where there might only be one or two.

Throughout Torres Strait there was tension between skippers and their men, who always had some sense of being exploited. These feelings were not absent on the Badu boats, but were offset by other considerations. Divers, certainly, had something to gain by subscribing to the Nona regime. Skippers knew the value of a skilled man and showed appreciation in various ways. Although the Nonas generally preferred their own kinsmen, they did occasionally give other men recommendations that got them master boats. However, the divers’ commitment was tempered by the realization that it was the Nonas, and not the ordinary Baduans, who gained most from their labours.

Ordinary crew enjoyed the camaraderie of boat life, but got little in the way of prestige or money, and they bore the brunt of the senior workers’ tensions. Skippers had no hesitation in punching a youth who was disobedient, and occasionally threw someone overboard. It is worth noting that they were all big men! For these abuses there was no redress. The Island council was unsympathetic, being made up of Nonas; and the government referred complaints back to the council. Even parents might withhold support, for it was the custom for poorer families to ingratiate themselves with a skipper by sending a son to work under him. In return for this favour they could ask for a free passage to Thursday Island and expect generous shares of turtle and duguong caught by the boats on their way home from the working grounds. The old company boats had shared the meat out equally among the tribe; latterday skippers gave out meat or withheld it as they saw fit. A poor family, committed to a wedding or funerary feast, was wholly dependent on the generosity of a skipper for these festive foods.

The foregoing account is indicative of the changes taking place in Badu as a result of its commitment to pearling. The economic structure was also the power structure in a direct sense. An elected council would have found it hard to control the skippers, but in fact there had been no contest since 1947 when the government dismissed incumbents who were hostile to it and the Nonas. Thereafter, Tanu held office for life and secured the election of members of his family unopposed on his nomination.

The composition of the community, which now numbered about five hundred, had itself changed. There were relatively few people over forty, because many of the older generation had removed to Thursday Island, either to take up jobs ashore or get away from the Nonas, or because the Nonas had expelled them. But the skippers needed more young men than Badu could provide, and went recruiting around
neighbouring islands which no longer had boats of their own. The Nonas’ kin ties with Saibai proved useful here, as did their affinal connections with several other communities. Those who became their regular associates and protégés soon settled on Badu, swelling the ranks of their supporters. To accommodate them the council abolished traditional land tenure, taking upon itself the right to allocate house and garden plots.\textsuperscript{44}

The Nonas and their cronies became increasingly differentiated from the ‘village people’. Their control of subsistence as well as cash production was reflected in their life style. They occupied spacious modern houses on high land, back from the village; and maintained large households that included poor relations and hangers-on who helped around the place and ran errands. The largest share of dugong and turtle meat went to them, and they maintained large gardens, worked by their boat crews during ‘dirty water time’. With all these resources, their wedding and funerary feasts were the most lavish in Torres Strait.

Despite these changes, kinship remained the prevailing idiom of social relations. But people were also beginning to speak of ‘skipper class’ and ‘crew class’, and to regard the young Nonas as having better life chances. These young men were leaders among their peers and seemed to be able to get away with misdemeanours that would have landed the others in gaol. They married into the more important families in Torres Strait and showed a marked preference for wives with Pacific Island or Asian ancestry over ‘Torres Strait natives’.

As the ‘skipper class’ rose in wealth and power, traditional forms of inter-dependence among ordinary Baduans dwindled in importance. Young people abandoned their parental homes for the more convivial and abundant households of their skippers, looking to them as marriage sponsors rather than their impoverished kinsfolk. The church, which had once provided the main source of prestige for older men, was now left to the women to run, with Tanu and a brother taking occasional major decisions. Religious festivals were still celebrated in the traditional way, but they were not always well attended and the dancing was often perfunctory. The real conviviality went on up at the big houses above the village, where one went only by invitation.

While Badu was becoming fully committed to pearling, reducing subsistence production to a subsidiary activity, other communities were continuing in the old way. They sent their young men to work on the Nonas’ boats, or those of the white pearlers, and themselves stayed at home to make gardens and fish. Although now getting an additional income from Social Service benefits, their incomes were well below

\textsuperscript{44} It should be added that there was ample residential and gardening land. The change was made in order that those without hereditary rights should not be beholden to Baduan owners. See also Haddon 1904:284-291.
what they had come to regard as their right as a result of the wartime experience. Even if they were to go to sea themselves, their earnings would not bring them appreciably closer to their goal. One heard such mutterings even in Badu, but the Nonas had a quick way with malcontents; elsewhere, however, protest was overt. To add to the problem, population was increasing while industry remained stagnant. The government expanded its building and welfare programs, providing work for some four hundred, but it could not expand indefinitely.45

The burgeoning economy and favourable labour market of northern Australia offered a safety valve for Torres Strait unemployment, but also posed a threat to the regional wage structure. Up to the outbreak of war, the government had confined Islanders to their reserves. After the war it allowed them to settle and work on Thursday Island, but the few available jobs were soon taken up and the demand for employment was nowhere near satisfied. In 1947 a small party of Islanders went south to cut cane. The experiment was a success and was repeated in subsequent years. At the end of each season, some of the cane cutters found other jobs and stayed behind. Presently their numbers were augmented by young Islanders who had absconded from trochus boats at North Queensland ports.

Although by 1960 there were probably no more than five hundred Islanders living on the mainland, their presence there had a profound effect on the situation in Torres Strait. They were mainly concentrated in railway fettling, an occupation unattractive to whites, but which did not have discriminatory rates for coloured workers. With overtime payments, a man could earn five and six times what he got at home, and the money was his to spend as he pleased, for the government did not extend its controls to the mainland. Islanders were soon in demand as first class tropical workers (a marked change from Torres Strait where they were always told they were lazy). News of life on the mainland filtered back, increasing the restlessness of pearling workers, and of government employees whose wages were geared to those in the industry.

Further emigration was obviously a solution to unemployment, but if not controlled it could also deprive the pearling industry and the government of their labour supply. The government solution was to delegate the decision to Island councils. Tanu was able to block emigration not only from Badu but from all the islands supplying him with labour, on the ground that Islanders were not yet ready to live without government protection.

45 Reports of the Chief Protector and of the Aboriginals' Department indicate that the Islander population rose from 2,368 in 1913 to 3,765 in 1938. In 1948 the stated figure was 5,000 and in 1960 7,250. Estimates by Caldwell, Duncan and Tait (1975), based on the Commonwealth census, are considerably lower but record similar rates of growth.
In 1960, however, the industry suffered a permanent reverse. Plastics emerged as a cheaper competitor to shell in such fields as button manufacture. The trochus market collapsed and the demand for mother-of-pearl fell sharply. The industry was saved from extinction by the establishment of pearl culture stations, requiring supplies of live shell, but overall demand was still down and unlikely to expand. In 1960 eight government boats and five European-owned boats had worked out of Badu; in 1967 the numbers were six and two. With the population increasing, jobs declining, and mainland employers ready to fly Islanders to construction camps in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, it was no longer possible for councils to say no. Some Baduans settled on the mainland; others alternated spells home and away. But those at home could be more selective about whom they worked for. At the end of the year skippers could be seen treating their men to drinks in the hope of recruiting them again for the next season. It was said that one particularly rough skipper had been forced out because he could no longer get crew.

Now, in 1977, the demand for shell has fallen still further. There are three luggers still working, all commanded by Nonas, but employing New Guineans. Those Islanders who have not emigrated can find work in various State and Commonwealth government programs. A number of Baduans work on their own cray fishing, using Commonwealth-funded boats and freezers.

Nonas still control the Island council and they have a foothold in several government programs, but they are not the power that they were since they are no longer large-scale employers and no longer have much dugong or turtle to dispense. The people now go hunting in their own small boats. Most of the younger Nonas are working on the mainland, and among the surviving brothers there is discord over the undistributed assets of the family business. Tanu is the only one to have invested his savings (in Brisbane real estate), and it is assumed that he will pass this, along with whatever else remains, to his own sons. Now that he is getting old he is trying to secure his political office for a son, but the position is contested by a man of another family who has the backing of the village people and some of the Nonas as well.

In this paper I have analysed Torres Strait's relationship with Australia in terms of a model of internal colonialism, focussing on the articulation of subsistence and capitalistic modes of production. I have taken the marine industry as the dominant mode, supported by the subsistence sector, and I have represented the Queensland government as regulating the articulation. This is not to suggest that they were under unified control: each had its own institutional autonomy, but in the local setting the two meshed into one another. Government policy may not have been designed with the needs of the masters directly in view, but it
tended to their advantage in the long run. And when the government itself became an entrepreneur, with the aim of making the communities self-supporting, their immediate interests converged.

The industry’s primary need was for cheap labour, which it either imported or recruited locally. It could keep wages low because the populations from which it drew its labour could support themselves by subsistence activities. Queensland’s segregation policy not only kept Islanders away from whites, but anchored them to communities where they could support themselves without money.46 There remained the problem of getting the Islanders to work regularly and at the required level of productivity, that is to behave like ordinary workers without neglecting their subsistence base. This was relatively easy in Badu where pearling and hunting could be combined, but difficult in agricultural Murray Island. Controlling both meat and money, Badu’s skippers had a powerful base on which to consolidate their authority. Murray’s split economy separated the men from the boys in a literal sense, leaving the skipper in the anomalous situation of being a man without a garden.

As Islanders took over the organization of pearling, first on the company boats, then on the masters’ boats, the conflict between use and exchange values became blurred. Men worked to put their island ahead of the others, or to build churches. The skipper-crew relationship became a service between kin, masking the trend towards inequality. These conditions existed throughout the Strait, but the Nonas were particularly well placed to take advantage of them because of their ambiguous place in the community.

Around the turn of the century Islanders occupied an inferior position in the labour force, vis-a-vis Asians and Pacific Islanders as well as whites. With the elimination of foreign labour after 1945 they were able to become skippers and divers. However, almost all the top-notch skippers were part-Asian or Pacific Islanders, perhaps because the notion of foreigners being superior survived. This brought into existence a small elite who, like the Nonas, could earn as least as much as unskilled whites, and who enjoyed a much higher standard of living than other Islanders. Despite its class-like character, this elite was not an extension of mainland stratification but a colonial token, having no currency outside Torres Strait. Its control of capital was tenuous at law and effective only under the peculiar conditions prevailing within the region. Similarly, the control of labour, on which it was primarily dependent, was achieved through the manipulation of kinship and communal ties. It is significant that a sizeable part of the Nonas’ wealth went in lavish wedding and funerary celebrations which validated their status among their own people, but not among whites. In short, the elite was more firmly

46 The development of the island community in the colonial conditions suggests at least a loose parallel with the closed corporate communities of Meso-America and Java (see Wolf 1957).
tied to Torres Strait than humbler Islanders, and it quickly moved into alliance with the government when the colonial structure came under threat.

We have seen that the colonial regime came under severe strain after 1945, due to the rupturing of isolation, a revolutionary rise in expectations under conditions of stagnation, and a burgeoning population. The opening up of Thursday Island and of a new range of government jobs went only a short distance towards solving the problem; and boat companies, skippers and local government councils became increasingly subject to conflicting pressures. Cracks began to appear in the facade of kinship loyalty and communal solidarity.

The opening up of the mainland labour market provided a short term solution to the problems of unemployment, economic frustration and political disaffection, but at the cost of undermining the colonial system. Those who remained became increasingly unwilling to work for small wages, or to accept the discrimination between black and white workers. Once Torres Strait workers had made their name elsewhere, the colonial economy’s need for a labour monopoly came into direct contradiction with the mainstream economy’s need for a free labour flow.

Commonwealth Social Service benefits, such as child endowment and old age pensions, introduced a further complicating factor after 1943. In the agricultural eastern islands they relieved some men of the need to work on the boats. In the western islands they probably reduced the pressure for subsistence production. In the quasi-urban conditions on Thursday Island they complemented the inadequate wages of workers who could no longer grow crops, gather firewood or catch more than the occasional fish.

As in other parts of Australia, there was an increasing postwar inflow of special aid for indigenous people, in the form of housing, health and education facilities, and development projects. With the decline of the marine industry Torres Strait politics has increasingly focussed on the distribution of government funds, and the old pearling elite have been increasingly displaced by new men with better education and wider horizons. Anchored to their communities, the Nonas and others like them had little time for education or travel, and so are less well equipped to operate in the new conditions.

I do not think that the model of internal colonialism can be usefully applied to all indigenous people in Australia, but it would seem to be appropriate to the northern cattle industry which has long depended on cheap, seasonal Aboriginal labour. ‘Station blacks’ have continued to maintain themselves by hunting and gathering at certain seasons, and have retained much of their traditional way of life. One could expect the mustering camps and droving teams to offer parallels with the pearling boat crews. But the prevailing tendency, particularly in the Northern
A CASE OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM

 Territory, has been for the government to concentrate population in large settlements so that only a small proportion could either obtain employment or live off 'bush tucker'. With rising rural unemployment, in the south as well as the north, the obvious comparisons are with underdeveloped regions of Western Europe and North America, rather than with the internal colonies of South Africa or the Andean republics.

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ARCHIVES AND PUBLICATIONS

This section will feature articles relating to Aborigines commissioned from national, state and overseas archives. The section editor, Niel Gunson, will also consider descriptive listings of other Aboriginal source material, including photographic and film holdings, in public and private collections; previously unpublished material such as letters, diary extracts, brief regional and family histories, and reminiscences; and specialised bibliographies.

RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (I), 1901-1916, RELATING TO ABORIGINES

Australian Archives, Canberra

Until control of the Northern Territory passed from South Australia to the Commonwealth on 1 January 1911, Commonwealth involvement in Aboriginal administration was minimal. Section 51, sub-section XXVI of the Constitution proscribed the Commonwealth from legislating for Aborigines in any State, which in effect meant Aborigines within Australia. The Federal Capital Territory became an administrative fact only in 1911; the one settlement within its borders, at Wreck Bay, was not included in the F.C.T. until 1915 and in any case continued to be administered by the New South Wales Aborigines' Welfare Board. Transactions concerning Aborigines before 1911 were almost entirely confined to the Commonwealth's passing on of correspondence to the appropriate States. This negative involvement is reflected in the records of the period 1901 to 1911: material is scant and insubstantial. In 1911 the volume of records naturally increased with the acquisition of the Northern Territory, and the genesis of Commonwealth Aboriginal policies begins to emerge from the growing correspondence between the Northern Territory Administration, the Minister for External Affairs, and others within and outside the bureaucracy.

The Department of External Affairs was administratively responsible for the Northern Territory until 14 November 1916, when the new Department of Home and Territories was accorded the function. From 1911 to 1916 the Administrator of the Territory was accountable to the Minister for External Affairs, who in this period was often also Prime Minister. A separate Prime Minister's Department was formalised on 1 July 1911 but had been fore-shadowed since about June 1904, when a distinct record series (CRS A2) was created to deal with the correspondence of Prime Minister Watson, who relinquished the External Affairs portfolio but was also Treasurer. When the External Affairs and Prime Ministerial portfolios were again held by one person later in 1904, papers relating to the Minister's role as Prime Minister continued to be filed in CRS A2, while External Affairs papers continued to be maintained in CRS A1. The intimacy of the relationship between the two notional areas of the Department is apparent from the arrangement and content of the records, with, for example, much cross-referencing at the time of registration, and sometimes with papers initially registered in the External Affairs' series being ultimately filed with the Prime Minister's, or vice versa.

The series listed and briefly described here are the main file series of the Department relating to its External Affairs function, namely CRS A1, CRS A3, CRS A6 and CRS A8; and a lesser but important series, CRS A1640. However, additional series of both this and other departments will be valuable to researchers, and some further External Affairs series are listed without comment after the description of CRS A1640.

It must be emphasised that this is a select listing of record series and individual items of only one department for a limited period, and is intended only to suggest
the variety of material held by Australian Archives in Canberra. Files scanned for
this article were mainly those with titles which indicated a direct connection with
Aboriginal administration, and not all files examined are listed. Other branches
of Australian Archives in capital cities and in Townsville may also hold relevant
records created by branches of Commonwealth agencies in those states, or by State
government agencies which ceded their functions to the Commonwealth at some
time. The Northern Territory Branch in Darwin holds records of the Admini-
stration which are extremely valuable in the close study of local conditions in the
Northern Territory. For a broadly selective description of holdings relating to
Aborigines, researchers should write to, or call at, the branches of Australian
Archives in the States and the Northern Territory, clearly explaining their particular
interests. Any interested person is welcome to a search ticket after completion of
application forms which will be supplied on request.

Most files cited were registered between 1901 and 1916, but some which were
registered later have been included where they contain papers from the period
under review. (The incorporation of earlier papers into later files has been a feature
of Australian record-keeping practice, often leading to the obscuring of important
papers. For example, the principal documents arising from the negotiations for the
transfer of the Northern Territory, contained in a file 6.00cm thick with a date
range of 1901 to 1911, are now located in a 1954 Department of Territories file,
CRS A452, item No. 54/62.) Files contain inward and outward correspondence
and internal working papers, which may include published material and photo-
graphs, maps and plans.

As one would expect, more is reflected in these records than the administrative
structures of the time. The influence of the administrators' cultural assumptions
about themselves and others is, for example, clearly apparent in their statements
and actions, as by inference is the often-present gap between stated law and policy
and their actual application. The complexity of relationships in isolated areas or
settled communities like Darwin was not always the acknowledged subject of
official communications, but it may nonetheless emerge with great clarity from so
apparently mean a source as a page of accounts or a ration schedule. As well as
ethnographically useful material (fairly rare in this early period of Commonwealth
administration), details of land use and ecology may be significant to Aboriginal
studies. It is also possible that documentation of legal issues may be had from
records of, for instance, mining or pastoral transactions or the establishment of
missions. Documentation of individual people is much more easily located for
Europeans than for Aborigines; however, some Aborigines do emerge three-dimen-
sionally from, or despite, what Europeans had to say of them. Often they do so
through their own testimony in legal proceedings. Also, incidental information
about Aborigines in a certain area, even if slight, may fit into a more substantial
pattern derived from other sources.

Australian Archives documentation and finding aids, in either draft or final
form, exist for the series discussed and staff will help researchers to find material
in any series for which official finding aids are not yet complete. All files listed are
in the open access period and have been cleared for public access; they are there-
fore available for reference at any time. The contents date ranges of series are
shown in brackets where they differ from registration date ranges.

CRS* A6, Correspondence files, Annual Single Number Series
(Jan.) 1901-1902 (Feb.)

This was the Department's first general file series, the variety of its contents
reflecting both the nature of the Minister's two portfolios and the newness of the

*CRS = Commonwealth Record Series

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Commonwealth. Transactions include constitutional and domestic matters, trade, immigration and external affairs. The files listed relate essentially to the Commonwealth's negative role in Aboriginal affairs, and the desire of sections of the community for the Northern Territory to be taken over by the Commonwealth. A number register and index book to this series is extant, and an Australian Archives inventory of items also exists. The series occupies approximately 1.40 shelf metres:

01/232 [Aborigines Protection Society, London — Condition of Aborigines in the Australian Colonies] (1900-1901; 0.5cm)

01/1668 [Alleged ill-treatment of Aborigines in Western Australia and the question of Commonwealth power to legislate] (1901; 4f.)

CRS A8, Correspondence files, folio system (July) 1901-1902 (1895-1905, 1966)

CRS A8 replaced CRS A6 after a short period in which both were current. It contains papers concerning matters such as the development of the Northern Territory, tariffs, entry of non-Europeans into Australia and Commonwealth/State relations. Record books and a transmission book to this series exist and an Australian Archives inventory of items is available. The series occupies some 3.70 shelf metres. The file of most direct interest is:

02/836/1 Deputation to Prime Minister, on 24th April 1902, re Northern Territory (1902; 18f.)

CRS A1, Correspondence files, annual single number series 1903-1928 (c.1856-c.1939)

In 1903 CRS A1 was raised to be the general file series of the Department, replacing CRS A8, and continued as the principal general file series of the successive departments administering Aboriginal affairs until it was replaced at the beginning of 1939 by CRS A659. (Both CRS A659 and its successor CRS A431 contain papers originally belonging to A1). CRS A1 itself contains papers first created or filed in earlier or concurrent series including CRS A3, CRS A6, CRS A8 and CRS A1640. Its varied correspondence touches on all the Department's functions, for example, naturalisation, territories, electoral matters and external affairs. In addition to the files listed, papers in this series deal with matters including the authority of the Chief Protector to permit mixed marriages, and notifications of permissions granted; appointments (e.g. the appointment and resignation of Dr Basedow); proclamation of reserves; Northern Territory Annual Reports, with background papers; legislation; surveys; and the mining and pastoral industries. Some files (e.g. 12/2991) contain photographs. Others contain tracings, plans and published maps. A number of control records to the series and its successors are still extant, for example CRS A74, Subject Index Cards, NT Cabinet, 1911-1938, CRS A75, Name Index cards, NT Cabinet, 1911-1956, and CRS A69, Number register, 1911-1938. (When as complete as these, original departmental control records can often themselves provide an interesting insight into the preoccupations and values of their creators. They may also provide significant details from papers no longer in existence). As well as being depleted by top-numberings into other series, CRS A1 has been diminished by the past destruction of files which were judged as of ephemeral interest. Some of these destructions have been unfortunate for historians.

The series occupies 184.92 shelf metres. Some files of interest are:

11/11307 Payments made on behalf of Native Police. NT Statements
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11/14164 (1910-1911; 3f.)
[Proposed visit of Chief Protector to Alice Springs to arrange for extension of departmental control to the southern area] (1911; 0.5cm)

11/15310 [Inadequate supply of suitable medicines for Aboriginal depots in the south] (1911; 0.25cm)

11/18116 Correspondence from Mr W.A. Burton re Aborigines NT. (1910-1911; 3.00cm)

11/18824 Northern Territory. Aborigines. Establishment of Institution for adequate housing etc. of Halfcastes in. (1910-1911; 0.5cm)

12/2937 (1) Regulations under N.T. Aboriginals Act 1910, re licensing of persons to employ Aboriginals. Also (2) ‘Aboriginals Ordinance 1911’ (1910-1912; 2.5cm)

12/2991 Northern Territory: Preliminary Scientific Expedition 1911 Professor Spencer’s Report re Aborigines. (1911-1912; 1.00cm)

14/10504 Northern Territory. Appointment of Professor Spencer as Chief Commissioner of Aborigines. (1911-1912; 0.75cm)

30/979 Alligator River (Oenpelli) Abo. Reserve File No. 1 (1912-1927; 8.00cm)

35/9100 Kahlin Compound School Darwin (1913-1936; 0.25cm)

36/5356 Black prison labour employed on Gov’t work at Alice Springs (1912-1936; 0.5cm)

38/33126 Bathurst Island Reserve for Aborigines (1909-1939; 2.00cm)

CRS A3, Correspondence files, NT series, 1912-1925 (c. 1907-1925)

CRS A3 was raised in 1912 to deal with specifically Northern Territory matters. It contains papers from other series including CRS A1640, and some files have been top-numbered into A1. Records relate to such matters as the pastoral industry, mining, Chinese and Island labour, legislation, town leases, individuals, and administrative machinery. Subject index cards CRS A74 and name index cards CRS A75 control this series as well as CRS A1, and there is a separate register, CRS A81. Some files contain photographs (e.g. NT 13/5922), and tracings, sketch plans and maps, as well as manuscript and published reports, also appear. Relevant files in addition to those cited relate to a wide range of subjects including administrative machinery and appointments; the export of anthropological specimens; surveys; health; trials for murder; arrangements for counsel for Aboriginal defendants; custody of half-caste children and their removal to mission stations; and the discovery of Aboriginal remains. Some representative files are:

NT 12/1567 Paddy Bull convicted of Murder. Remission of Sentence (1911-1912; 0.5cm)

NT 12/10964 Northern Territory. Inspectors reports on the Aborigines (1911-1912; 1.00cm)

NT 13/5922 Finke River Mission (1894-1911; 2.5cm)

NT 13/8240 Koppio – N.T. Aboriginal Execution of. (1913; 1.5cm)

NT 14/5471 Protection of Aboriginals. N.T. Administrator’s proposals re. (1914; 1.00cm)

NT 14/7104 Aboriginal Reserve. Musgrave, Mann & Tomkinson Ranges. (1914-1919; 1.00cm)

NT 15/402 Finke River Lutheran Mission (1904-1912; 3.5cm)

NT 19/2897 Professor W. Baldwin Spencer’s Report on N.T. Natives (1913-1919; 3.00cm)

NT 23/4594 Missions to Aborigines in the N.T. (1914-1923; 2.5cm)

CRS A1640, Correspondence dockets, NT series, 1868-1910

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These dockets were originally created by South Australian Colonial and State Government agencies. In 1911 a number of South Australian records relating to the Northern Territory were transferred to the Department of External Affairs in Melbourne. In 1927 most were returned to South Australia and are now located in the South Australian State Archives. However, the Commonwealth retained as a discrete series some four hundred dockets which it was felt were still required for current administration. Others had already been incorporated into CRS A1 and CRS A3 files. The history of the dockets from 1927 to 1953 is somewhat obscure, but in 1953 they were discovered in the Northern Territory and transferred to Canberra. Documentation of this series is proceeding. Meanwhile a draft checklist is available on request in the A.C.T. Branch. Generally the series contains material concerning land transactions, mining, survey and exploration, individuals, agriculture and the pastoral industry. Manuscript reports, tracings, maps and plans appear on file. Some dockets containing references to Aborigines are:

1885/995 Report [of the Government Resident] on the Aborigines of the N.T. (1885; 0.5cm)
1885/1151 Report on coast from Roper River to Castlereagh Bay by Capt. Carrington (1885; 0.25cm)
1885/1251 Report on Land at South and East Alligators Rivers by Gover­nor Gardener. (1885; 0.5cm)
1886/225 Mr Cuthbertson's report on Borroloola and MacArthur River (1886; 0.25cm)
1906/223 Aborigines Reserve — Ord River District. N.T. Re proposed. (1906-1910; 1.00cm)
1910/570 [Reverend Father Gysell] asking I [that] Bathurst Island be reserved for Aboriginal purposes II Permission to establish Roman Catholic Mission on the Island. (1894-1910; 0.5cm)

Some other possibly relevant Department of External Affairs (I) records
CRS A66 Album of Northern Territory Views, c.1910 (c.1887-1900s)
CRS A80 Volume entitled 'Northern Territory: Appointments and Leave of Absence', 1892-1912.
CRS A89 Grazing licences, Northern Territory, 1914-1955.
A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ABORIGINAL HISTORY AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THESSES AND PUBLISHED RESEARCH TO 1976

Diane Barwick, James Urry, David Bennett

Introduction

1. Relevant published bibliographies

2. Stability and change in Aboriginal society: evidence and opinion (major modern publications in anthropology, archaeology, human biology, linguistics and psychology)

3. Writing Aboriginal history:
   a. biographies and studies of major writers; histories of scientific thought on Aborigines; review articles relevant to Aboriginal history; studies of Aborigines in Australian literature
   b. Aboriginal biographies and reminiscences

4. Reconstructing the past:
   document collections and general histories; archaeological and ethnohistorical studies; documentary studies of ‘frontier’ race relations and nineteenth century government and church policy

5. Recording social change:
   twentieth century policy and administration, race relations and urban migration: reports by Aborigines, administrators, anthropologists, architects, economists, educators, lawyers, politicians, political scientists and welfare workers

Time and space limitations precluded annotation of this bibliography. The compilers decided that a simple chronological classification (nineteenth century reconstruction and twentieth century recording) would best serve students of Aboriginal history.

This division between ‘paperwork’ and ‘fieldwork’ well represents the present state of Aboriginal historical studies. W.E.H. Stanner and C.D. Rowley have commented on the failure of historians and anthropologists to use each other’s skills, and this separation of activity can be demonstrated by comparing two major bibliographies. For his projected complete bibliography on Aborigines John Greenway had collected 22,638 items by 1957 (and we suspect an equal amount has been published since); yet Hogan, Yarwood and Ward’s index of 4,019 articles on Australian history in fifty-four historical and political journals, plus Oceania, to the end of 1973 lists only some 150 papers which mention Aborigines.

As we have focussed specifically on Aboriginal reaction to European contact and administration this bibliography does not indicate the prodigious amount of published research by anthropologists, nor the volume of reminiscences and general accounts of European exploration and settlement to be found in the various historical journals, now mostly well-indexed. We attempt only to update Greenway’s listing, and have concentrated upon recent research, much of it in unpublished theses.
Other manuscripts, government reports and newspaper clippings were necessarily omitted, but useful listings of recent material may be found in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Newsletter. From 1977, comprehensive annual bibliographies will be published by the Institute.

The library and bibliographical indexes of this Institute constitute an extraordinary — and sadly unknown — resource for the study of Aboriginal history. We would like to express our gratitude to the Senior Bibliographer, Miss B.J. Kirkpatrick, and to all members of the staff: their work has made this publication possible.

**SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

* indicates Aboriginal author
† indicates thesis not sighted

A.A. American Anthropologist
A.A.P.A. Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority (W.A.)
A.C.A.S. Aboriginal Child at School
A.D.B. Australian Dictionary of Biography
A.F. Anthropological Forum
A.G.P.S. Australian Government Publishing Service
A.H.R.N. Aboriginal Human Relations Newsletter
A.I.A.S. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
A. & I. Forum Aboriginal and Islander Forum
A. & I. Identity Aboriginal and Islander Identity (formerly Identity)
A.J.S. Australian Journal of Science
A.N.H. Australian Natural History
A.N.Z. Australia and New Zealand Book Company
A.N.Z.A.A.S. Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
A.P.A.O. Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania
A. Prot. Aborigines Protector
A.Q. Australian Quarterly
A.S.S.A., J. Anthropological Society of South Australia, Journal
A.T. Australian Territories
A.C.A.B. Current Affairs Bulletin
C.M.H.P. Church Missionary Historical Publications
C.R.A.A. Centre for Research into Aboriginal Affairs
I.C.U.A.E.R. Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand
A.F. Anthropological Forum
I. C. U. A. E. R. International Committee on Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research
M.J.A. Medical Journal of Australia
N.O.A.A. Newsletter on Aboriginal Affairs
N.U.A.U.S. National Union of Australian University Students
Q.H. Queensland Heritage
Q.H.R. Queensland Historical Review
Q.V.M., R. Queen Victoria Museum (Launceston), Records
R.A.I.J. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Brit-
A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

R.G.S.A., P. Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, South Australian Branch, Proceedings
R.H.S.Q., J. Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Journal
R.P.A., Journal of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney
R.S.N.S.W., J.P. Royal Society of New South Wales, Journal and Proceedings
R.S.Q., P. Royal Society of Queensland, Proceedings
R.S.S.A., T.P. Royal Society of South Australia, Transactions and Proceedings
R.S.T., P.P. Royal Society of Tasmania, Papers and Proceedings
R.S.V., P. Royal Society of Victoria, Proceedings
R.S.W.A.J. Royal Society of Western Australia, Journal

R.W.A.H.S., J.P. Royal Western Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings (Early Days)
S.A.M., R. South Australian Museum, Records
S.S. Smoke Signals (Aboriginals Advancement League, Victoria)
S.S. Bull. Special Schools Bulletin
S.W.J.A. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology
U.Q.A.M., O.P. University of Queensland, Anthropology Museum, Occasional Papers
U.S.H. University Studies in History (W.A.)
V.I.M. Victorian Historical Magazine
V.N. Victorian Naturalist
W.A.M., R. Western Australian Museum, Records

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Until late in the nineteenth century the history of contact between Aborigines and Europeans attracted the attention of many historians. G. W. Rusden's *History of Australia* devoted a major introductory chapter to 'Natural phenomena and the Australian tribes' and attempted to weave the contact experience into the general narrative." Historical interest was especially focussed on Tasmania, where the rapid and easily identifiable decline of the Aboriginal population aroused widespread curiosity, prompting attempts to chronicle developments from first contact. However, as the century drew to a close the dispossession of the Aborigines was excised from the historical consciousness, though there was an awakening of anthropological interest. The continued existence of Aboriginal communities faded from public attention. There was no place for Aborigines, regarded as a 'bygone people', in the twentieth century.

Contrary to expectations, it was being realised by the late 1920s that the Aborigines were not dying out. A. P. Elkin and others began to voice the radical notion that 'a major development of aboriginal economic, social and political life from its broken down state was a . . . possibility'. The 1930s were a time of conflicting trends. While state governments were tightening the provisions of their protectionist legislation a meeting of State and Commonwealth officials in 1937 set as a policy objective the assimilation of part-Aborigines. Daisy Bates' pessimistic *The passing of the Aborigines* (1938) was well received while novelists Katherine Pritchard and Xavier Herbert were playing a leading role in mediating the humanity of the Aboriginal through literature. The revival of general interest in Aborigines was reflected in the publication of the specialist historical studies of Foxcroft, Hasluck and Turnbull and the historical novels of Eleanor Dark. While serious historical studies had begun to appear, professional historians found it difficult to come to grips with the 'dark underside of the Australian mind', with the result that some of the major historical works, especially before the 1970s, have been produced by the anthropologists A. P. Elkin, C. H. and R. M. Berndt, W. E. H. Stanner, D. E. Barwick and the political scientist-historian, C. D. Rowley.

The fruits of the new interest in contact history have been most apparent in the last ten years. This period has witnessed the publication of the papers of Robinson, Threlkeld, Salvador and Gillen, at least six documentary collections, outstanding...
interpretative essays, nine two general histories, a brief comparative survey of Australia and New Zealand, and a large number of biographies, autobiographies and specialist historical works.

Perhaps the most important single work to emerge from this period is Rowley's *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society* (1970). At a time when serious historical study had not made much headway Rowley attempted to write a history of contact. To do this he not only synthesized the existing specialist work but conducted extensive research of his own to fill gaps in historical knowledge. His study has served to heighten general awareness of what was, at the time of its publication, a neglected aspect of Australian history, and it has opened the field for subsequent scholars. Yet the magnitude of Rowley's pioneering achievement should not be permitted to impede a critical appraisal of his work.

The structure of the book, with separate chapters for the major colonies, makes for a degree of repetition. A thematic approach, as adopted by E. G. Docker in his less ambitious *Simply Human Beings* (1964), would have facilitated the task of analysis. The emphasis on narrative and the restricted range of sources consulted leads in places to less than adequate explanations. For example, in accounting for the implementation of the crucial Queensland protectionist legislation in 1897, Rowley argues that 'the controlled institution ... was inevitable once a genuine concern with Aboriginal welfare developed'. Yet he fails to establish the existence of a 'genuine concern' in government circles. Scattered throughout the narrative there are the seeds of possible alternative explanations. By 1897 the last frontiers in Queensland had been breached. The Native Police had served its function. The remnants of Aboriginal society were creating a nuisance in the townships. Contrary to the rationale of the protectionist legislation, the labour requirements of the pastoralists were safeguarded. In the words of one reviewer, Rowley's book 'reveals an extensive knowledge of and penetrating insights into the subject, which have not been fashioned into an integrated whole'.

9 Stanner 1969; Hartwig.
10 Rowley 1970; Franklin.
11 Howe.
12 See especially Clark; Harrison; Holmes; Horner; Lamilami; Mathews; Perkins; Roughsey; Tucker. See also Berndt 1951b; Gordon; Stanner 1960.
13 See especially Biskup; Cato; Corris 1968; Durack; Evans, Saunders and Cronin; Bobbie Hardy; Long; Reece 1974.
15 Rowley 1970:175-185. Issue can be taken with Rowley on a number of factual points. To take one example, he writes that in Parry-Okeden's Report of 1897 'the Native Police Force was finally damned by its own most senior officer' (1970:181). I would suggest that the picture was not so clear-cut. Rowley fails to point out that Parry-Okeden recommended, in opposition to Meston, the retention of a 'reformed' Native Police system. Parry-Okeden believed, like his predecessors, that 'among savages demonstrations of strength of a character that they will respect are necessary'. He was only willing to concede that 'grave wrongs have occasionally been done in the past' and he stressed that 'it is not for a moment to be inferred that I in any way join in the wholesale implications against the force'. The use of a wider range of sources gives a truer insight into the colonial situation. For example, see leading articles in the *Brisbane Courier* for 29 October 1896 and 21 April 1897.
16 Curthoys 1971:41.
Considering the amount of energy expended in the last ten years, the quality of the yield has been disappointing. We still await a Judith Binney or a Dee Brown, to say nothing of a writer with a degree of theoretical sophistication, such as Stanley Elkins or Eugene Genovese. Within the confines of this brief article it will not be possible to review the huge output of recent years, a task which has been attempted by Corris and Reece. Rather, attention will be focussed primarily, though not exclusively, on articles published in the last five years in an attempt to piece together some disparate strands and to discern directions and problems for future work.

One clear focus for recent work has been the contact experience along the frontiers of settlement. Until the 1960s there was a widespread belief that Aboriginal society had quietly and rapidly disintegrated with the arrival of the European. In an article published in 1972 Reynolds observed:

White memories of racial violence have more often been expunged than preserved, while the decimating impact of disease and deprivation has often been accepted as a comprehensive explanation of a rapidly declining indigenous population. This belief partly reflected the historians' lack of interest in the contact experience, but the desire to 'draw the veil' over the brutalities of the past also played a part. Reynolds and others have directed attention to the guerilla warfare fought by Aborigines, which in areas favourable to this form of resistance 'significantly increase[d] the economic and human cost of settlement'. As a result of Aboriginal resistance flocks and herds were slaughtered, huts and head stations were burnt, stores looted, lines of communication threatened, labour rendered scarce and expensive and widespread anxiety created in colonial society. Reynolds and Noel Loos have estimated that Aborigines were responsible for the death of at least 800 to 850 Europeans, Melanesians, Chinese and 'civilised Aborigines' and at least 8,000 to 8,500 Aborigines were killed by Europeans in Queensland. While not wishing to underestimate the impact of resistance, Reynolds and Loos argued that in a broad context it had 'only a marginal effect on the overall pace of European expansion'. The 'tribesmen could harass but not repulse the invading settlers'.

Some of the most detailed studies of frontier conflict are still unpublished, as in the case of Lyndall Ryan's exhaustive research into the Tasmanian experience. But even in the published work the stage of declining returns is being reached. The latest publication of Reynolds and Loos partly duplicates the earlier work of Evans. There is evidence that the reawakened awareness of the bitter frontier conflict is filtering through to work designed for the general reader, as in Hector Holt-house's _Up rode the squatter_.

In future it will not be sufficient merely to demonstrate the existence of frontier conflict. Studies in this area are reaching the stage when questions of some sophistication can be tackled. In which circumstances did Aboriginal resistance pose a major threat to European settlers and in which circumstances was it easily overcome? In which circumstances was frontier conflict most bitter? Did the response of Europeans and Aborigines vary significantly in different regions? In a broader perspective, which factors influenced the development of relations between

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17 Corris 1973; Reece n.d. This survey does not attempt to deal with the rapidly expanding field of Aboriginal prehistory, in which scholars have been employing a wide range of interdisciplinary skills to penetrate the past.
18 Reynolds 1972b:471.
19 Reynolds 1972b:474.
21 See Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1975: part 1, chapters 1-3. This duplication may be a reflection of the lapse in time between acceptance of an article and its publication.
22 There are indications that such questioning is beginning. See Evans, Saunders and Cronin 1975: 51ff; Loos.
Aborigines and Europeans after Europeans had established a presence in the Aborigines' homeland? Was the Australian contact experience so uniform in character that variables in the contact situation can be ignored, as has been largely the case up to the present? A considerable amount of comparative work has been carried out on a broad scale, one focus being the contrast between the Australian and New Zealand experience, enabling the isolation of major variables. A discussion of variables involves a consideration of the peoples in contact and the physical environment in which contact took place. To date, historians have given very little attention to investigating possible variations amongst the Aboriginal population. These include population density, degree of preparedness (this factor being influenced by prior contact with alien people) and the impact of disease prior to contact. From the European side the inter-dependent variables include:

a) the effective location of power; the degree of control over Europeans in direct contact with Aborigines; the role of such Europeans in the formulation of government policy.
b) prevalent attitudes to Aborigines in England and the colonies; the prior experience of settlers.
c) the date of settlement — a key factor in determining the operation of the first two variables.
d) the speed of frontier movement and relative population ratios.
e) the economic basis of contact — pastoral, mining and maritime frontiers. Variables d) and e) played a key role in determining the degree of contact and the role of the Aborigines.
f) the physical environment. This factor played a key role in determining (i) the operation of variables d) and e), and (ii) the ability of Aborigines to resist European settlement.

There were marked differences, at least on a superficial level, between the colonies of Queensland and Western Australia in the period 1860-1890. From 1859 Queensland was a rapidly expanding self-governing colony, with pastoralists exercising a major role in the determination of policy, while Western Australia developed more slowly and was a Crown Colony till 1890. Western Australia suffered from a labour shortage, necessitating widespread employment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry, especially in the north, while the physical environment was generally less favourable than in Queensland to the waging of guerilla warfare. Did these differences significantly alter the contact experience in the two colonies? Such questions will only be answered when historians trace precisely the operation of significant variables in the Australian environment.

In contrast to the study of frontier conflict, the study of racial ideas is in its infancy. Reynolds has published two articles in the field, firstly demonstrating that racial concepts prevalent in Europe and the United States were present in the colonies prior to the gold-rushes. In a second, more general work, he devoted considerable attention to the impact of social Darwinism. Evans has attempted to delineate the stereotype of the Aboriginal and its impact in colonial Queensland.

Much of this work is of a preliminary nature and suggests more questions than it answers. Wolpe and others have urged the necessity of investigating 'the inter-relationship between race prejudice and political and economic structures'. Evans claims to do this, yet he is content to generalise for the whole of Queensland over a sixty year period, while Reynolds has not, to date, attempted to relate directly his work on dispossession with that on racial concepts. In my work I have tried to be

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23 Baker; Berghe; Geddes; Howe; Jacobs; Mason; Price; Rex; Rowley 1969; Sinclair.
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more specific, defining the 'ideology of the frontiersman' by concentrating on the statements of pastoralists, and attempting to trace the impact of social Darwinism by studying leading articles in the liberal press of Melbourne. Close study is required for the production of meaningful analyses. We need to study racial ideas in context; within areas where Aborigines were a vital part of the workforce and areas where they were simply 'rural pests', within urban and rural environments, and within various sections of the population. John Rex, a leading sociologist of race relations, has made a useful distinction between various levels of racial consciousness. He distinguishes between the systematic statements of intellectuals; an intermediary range, reflected in the leading articles of quality newspapers; and the views of the unsophisticated person who has little recourse to theories other than those reflected in folk wisdom, proverbs, jokes and popular newspapers. At present nearly all the work has been confined to the first two levels. We know very little of popular attitudes.

When specific case studies become available we may be able to achieve an understanding of the role of racial ideas in the Australian context, though for some this may be more of a conceptual question than one open to empirical investigation. Evans asserts that:

A detailed and denigrating racial stereotype of the tribalized Aborigine arose out of the direct experience of the violent frontier. Backed by ingrained ethnocentric conceptions, traditional as well as scientific beliefs and emotive second-hand evidence, this stereotype emerged as the major raison d'être for racially prejudiced attitudes and responses towards the libelled native.

In contrast, Reynolds is somewhat ambiguous. Some of his evidence points to the purely rationalising role of racial ideas, as a 'soothing' of consciences, though in places he seems to give an important causal role to racial ideas. Further research may show that the systematic statements of intellectuals, generally imported rather than developed locally, exercised a differential role, depending on factors such as an individual's economic position, level of education and extent of direct contact with Aborigines.

A further consideration to emerge from Reynolds' work on racial ideas centres on the question of the inter-relationship of attitudes to Aborigines and other non-Europeans. From the mid-1960s it became fashionable to argue for the existence of an inter-relationship and Reynolds, reflecting this trend, asserted that 'Chinese and later Melanesian migrants fitted into a well established pattern of race relations'. The first detailed investigation of this subject by Ann Curthoys has provided a warning against over-hasty generalisation.

My own work has led me to question the existence of an inter-relationship prior to the 1880s. Evidence on the first reactions to Chinese gold-diggers, as well as to Maori and Negro immigrants, does not reveal that attitudes held towards Aborigines were applicable to other non-Europeans. In the 1850s Aborigines were generally regarded as the most primitive of peoples; a people without the benefit of the technological advances of civilized man and without a conception of elevating ideals. Aborigines posed a physical threat to Europeans on the pastoral frontiers and were

28 For some preliminary work in this area see Docker 1964b; note also the speculation of Corris 1975:469-470.
30 Reynolds 1974a, 1974b; Reynolds and Loos.
33 For an elaboration of this argument see Markus n.d.

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overcome by the use of overt force. The remnant surviving the act of dispossession were despised and neglected. The situation with Chinese was different. Compared to the Aborigines, the Chinese were seen as a civilized people, though most believed that the civilization of China had atrophied. The Chinese posed a threat because of their ability to compete with Europeans on the gold-fields and, at a later stage, in a wide range of occupations. Unlike the Aborigines, who could be ignored once they had been subdued, the Chinese could not be ignored, for it was believed they would triumph if allowed to compete in a free market environment. One of the rare links between the two contact situations came at a time of rioting at Lambing Flat. The Sydney Empire declared:

Our philanthropists maintain that the Aborigines are justifiable in resisting the settlement that deprives them of their hunting grounds, and we are not disposed to dispute the proposition. It simply resolves itself into a question of power. We cannot see that the same principle is inapplicable to European miners in a British possession, unless it is mentioned that the Chinese have as much right there as themselves.34

This may be seen as an exception which proves the rule. Had society been able to deal with both peoples by the use of overt force, analogies could have been drawn. But the precedent of violence was of limited application. Colonial society distinguished between Chinese and Aborigines, and was not willing to deal with them in a similar manner. The problems posed by the presence of the two peoples were dissimilar: the solution called for dissimilar methods.

Historians of race relations in Australia have been reluctant to apply theoretical concepts in a systematic way. Exceptions are Hartwig's development of the ideas of van den Berghe and the attempt by Evans and his associates to apply Rex's formulations to colonial Queensland. Greater use could be made by other writers of what Stretton has termed 'artificial models . . . [and] . . . those selected from pasts or neighbours' to create awareness of a wider range of possibilities in a given historical situation and to prompt the posing of more penetrating questions.35 For example, in the analysis of the inter-relationship of attitudes to non-Europeans Leo Kuper's development of the notion of two-category and multi-category structures in social consciousness provides a valuable insight.36 Applied to Australia, these concepts clarify the existence of a multi-category structure in the 1850s, with distinctions being made between Aborigines, Chinese and Europeans. For the post gold-rush period some hypotheses can be advanced. Firstly, a distinction needs to be made between rural communities in which two or more racial minorities were present, and urban communities, in which only the Chinese minority was present in significant numbers. In such rural areas, found especially in the northern parts of the continent, the Europeans drew sharp distinctions between the social and economic position of themselves and non-Europeans, though distinctions were also drawn between the various non-European groups. In such an environment the formation of a two-category structure was facilitated and it seems likely that the Europeans' attitudes to Aborigines and other non-Europeans interacted. In the urban areas, on the other hand, multi-category structures persisted following the gold-rushes. There was no widespread generalisation of the experience with various non-European peoples till the 1880s, when the popularisation of social Darwinism provided the necessary bridge for the linking of attitudes.37

To date, the greatest difficulty has been experienced in the writing of history from the Aboriginal viewpoint. Part of the problem lies in the nature of the source

34 Empire, 26 February 1861.
material. In the United States rich sources are available for a study of the American Indian, notably in the voluminous treaty council records. In New Zealand there are the accounts of Europeans living with, or having close contact with, Maoris and the accounts of the Maoris themselves, largely literate by the 1840s. In Australia, partly reflecting the nature of the clash between Aborigines and Europeans, the records are much poorer. However, a meticulous sifting of conventional sources, including the accounts of explorers, pastoralists, escaped convicts, missionaries, ethnologists and government functionaries, together with material in Parliamentary inquiries and colonial newspapers, can yield rewarding results, including direct Aboriginal testimony.

While the source material presents problems, in the past the lack of interest on the part of historians has been the major obstacle. There are also problems of a different nature. Aborigines are only now beginning to write their own history, and most Australian historians lack the linguistic and interdisciplinary skills which would enable them to utilise the full range of source material. One notable exception is Campbell Macknight, whose protohistorical study of Macassan trepangers in northern Australia draws on archaeology, physical anthropology, ethnography, linguistics and history. Anthropologists using the historical method have been able to draw on a broad range of sources and they have brought a wider understanding to the subject. Unfortunately, in many cases their work has suffered from a failure to critically scrutinise the written record and to sustain the historical analysis.

The study of Aboriginal history is in its infancy, with much of the early work having been carried out by anthropologists. One aspect of this history centres on the Aboriginal response to alien contact. Works dealing with physical resistance to European expansion have already been noted. Other writers delving more deeply into 'the other side of the frontier' have produced evidence to demonstrate that 'Aboriginal society cannot be characterized as conservative and unable to adapt itself to new conditions'.

In eastern Arnhem Land the effect of Macassan contact has been important in some aspects of life. Thus a few items of material culture were permanently adopted by Aborigines, the most important being the dugout canoe. However, the fundamental bases of society remained unaltered. Fragmentary evidence from the pastoral frontier of northern New South Wales and Queensland indicates that some groups of Aborigines developed techniques to manage sheep, cattle and horses. For example, there is evidence of skilful cutting-out of sheep. A Wide Bay settler reported that he had followed a group of Aborigines who took a mob of between 400 and 500 sheep over two mountains, through a mile and a half of rain forest, and on to another mountain. On occasions Aborigines stole horses to assist in the driving of sheep and cattle and they developed techniques to prevent captured sheep from straying, including the construction of folds or stockyards from brushes and logs. In Tasmania, within a few years of first seeing dogs the Aborigines had incorporated them into their culture, adapting their hunting methods and making profound social and psychological adjustments to set up an affectionate relationship with the dog.

In describing the situation confronting Aborigines, David Turner has written:

39 For example see Jackson; Ward.
40 For example see Gilbert; Perkins; Roberts. See also Frank Hardy.
41 Macknight 1976. See also Corris 1968.
42 For example see Berndt 1951a: chapter 2, regarded by the anthropologist Marie Reay (1965:580) as 'good history'.
Face to face with Whites and their possessions and standards — radically different from those of Aborigines — these people were, in a sense, 'forced' to re-evaluate what was true, what was false; what was good, what was bad; what was right, what was wrong; and what was of value and what was not. Where they decided in favour of the alien point of view, or at least against the traditional one, the seeds of social change were sown.  

The range of responses varied, depending to a large extent on the pace of European settlement, with initial decisions being made in the economic sector under the stimulus of the desire to gain access to the abundant supplies of food and other useful items possessed by Europeans. 

In parts of the north frontier expansion was very slow, leaving Aborigines room to manoeuvre. Annette Hamilton has described the range of methods employed in an attempt to assimilate Europeans and to get them to behave 'morally, properly and generously'. These methods included the incorporation of Europeans into the kinship system through the provision of sexual services, the attempt to induce Europeans to look after the Aborigines as a group by the provision of economic services, and in recent times the attempts to involve Europeans in traditional ritual life to 'tie them to the country'. In resorting to these methods Aborigines were attempting to graft 'the external manifestations of European culture, in particular its material benefits, on to their own structural system'. 

The ability to cope with change varied amongst Aboriginal groups. Prior alien contact in eastern Arnhem Land conditioned the people so that 'they did not crumple in the face of it as many other groups ... have done'. For other groups the appearance of aliens was entirely outside the realm of their experience. Turner theorises that the 'more novel the experience in question and the more extreme the oppositions within it, the more quickly will aspects of the new be incorporated into existing patterns'. 

The contact experience in parts of Victoria and New South Wales presented some marked contrasts with the northern parts of the continent, revealing a rapid 'crumpling' of Aboriginal society and an equally rapid adaptation of Aborigines surviving the act of dispossession. Elkin has postulated a general model of Aboriginal reaction to European settlement in which Aborigines were unable to proceed to an 'intelligent appreciation' of European society unless 'the white man intends that they should, and helps them to do so'. This model does not appear to have universal applicability. By the end of the 1850s many Aborigines in Victoria had acquired farming skills and experience of the Europeans' world. Between 1858 and 1869 six reserves were established in Victoria, partly at the request of Aborigines. The most spectacular success occurred at Coranderrk. Aborigines cleared the land, fenced the property, cut a channel for irrigation and planted a wide range of crops. Visitors to the reserves in the 1870s and 1880s found the 'residents' dress, homes and furnishings equal to those of English working men and superior to those of many selectors'. The adaptation of Aborigines was not superficial. Their acculturation was 'swift and largely voluntary'. There was a rapid change in the status and roles of women and the Aborigines, both male and female, demonstrated an ability to successfully manipulate the British political system.

Studies of Coranderrk and other reserves prompt a number of questions. Why

47 R.M. Berndt 1962: Foreword, 94. 
49 Elkin 1951:57. 
50 Barwick 1972, 1974:51, 57; see also Massola; Mulvaney 1967.
were some reserves more successful than others? To what extent was success influenced by the location of reserves, the nature of economic activity pursued thereon and the management policies of administrators? From a different angle, there is considerable significance in the successful adaptation of at least some Aborigines before the end of the nineteenth century. It seems that this adaptation was checked not by failure on the part of Aborigines but by community pressure and government policy, though this did not prevent some part-Aborigines from 'passing' into the European community. To take some examples of the changing situation, during 1890-1891 the shearers' unions adopted rules to encourage Aboriginal membership. These rules were short-lived. Early in the twentieth century attempts began to restrict the pastoral industry to European workers and a provision in the rules of the Australian Workers' Union clarifying the right of Aborigines to membership was removed.51 In the same period moves were made to deny Aboriginal children access to public schools and government legislation reduced all Aborigines to a status in keeping with that of minors or lunatics.52

At present there are very few historical studies of the early twentieth century and all the contours of the picture are only starting to emerge.53 Future studies will need to clarify the extent of Aboriginal adaptation, the nature of oppressive measures and the factors accounting for changed European attitudes and policies. In accounting for these changes historians will need to take into consideration the changing role of Aborigines in the workforce, particularly in the pastoral industry, and the increasingly formalised racialism of Australian society, manifested in the treatment of all non-Europeans, not only Aborigines. As Aborigines place their experiences on record, at this stage mainly through the medium of autobiographies and biographies, an awareness of the brutality of twentieth century protectionist policies is being created; an awareness that a significant factor accounting for the status of Aborigines has been the Australian governments' racially motivated policies of repression.

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51 Amalgamated Shearers' Union, General Rules 1892, sec. 58; Australian Workers' Union, General Rules 1894, sec. 52, 56; 1898, sec. 3; 1903, sec. 5; Biskup 1973:78.
53 See especially Biskup; Barwick 1972. Also Fennell et al; Beckett.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Black and white Australians: an inter-racial history 1788-1975.

The main difficulty in evaluating this book is that we are nowhere told at whom it is aimed. Since it is published by the self-proclaimed educational section of Heinemann's, it is reasonable to rule out the general public as the intended audience. This is a pity because reading Franklin's book would do something to improve most Australians' understanding of themselves; though they might become rather bored in the process. Franklin's lifeless prose and the publisher's uninspired presentation do not make the book suitable for junior secondary school classes; the vocabulary is too advanced and the general approach too dreary for the book to appeal to third or fourth form students. This too is a pity since most of the available texts are racist, and we very much need a basic history of the relations between black and white Australians. The book is too elementary in its research and in its arguments to take its place in serious tertiary teaching, although it would be useful as a starting point, or better still, as one of a number of ready references. This too is a pity since most of the available texts are racist, and we very much need a basic history of the relations between black and white Australians. The book is too elementary in its research and in its arguments to take its place in serious tertiary teaching, although it would be useful as a starting point, or better still, as one of a number of ready references. As part of a wider reading list, Franklin's book could be helpful to slower students who don't know when they are reading uninteresting stuff; or in tutorials where one of the eight page chapters is abut as much as students will read by way of preparation. As there are twenty-seven chapters it would be possible to 'do' a chapter a week, with one to spare. Given the abysmal state of classroom teaching in tertiary institutions it is not too much to fear that this is happening already.

Presumably no one would consider that Franklin has made an original contribution to scholarship. The book attempts something of which we need a lot more, namely, bringing together, in one volume, the research results of other people. Such synoptic work is a specialised and difficult task, and is not to be attempted by everyone. People such as Geoffrey Blainey, Henry Mayer and Bill Mandle have mastered the trade. But success requires more than time and money. Certain literary attributes are essential, and it is these which Franklin lacks. Looked on as an introductory text, Black and white Australians is a failure because it lacks a vital spark, whether of imagination, ingenuity or indignation. It is neither hot enough to grip those parts of us which respond to a good story, well told; nor cold enough to rivet our intellects.

The careless, one might almost say slipshod, manner of presentation further detracts from the book's value. There are a host of factual errors, references to sources are inaccurate and occasionally distort the original meaning, some recent works have not been consulted and the coverage is unbalanced.

But these factors alone do not explain why the book has been unfavourably reviewed on more than one occasion. What has upset historians is something more fundamental: the style of social science. Because this journal will bring historians and social scientists into frequent proximity, there is a special point in exploring this matter in the context of a book review. Historians have been most upset by what they would call her ahistorical approach. Her book reads as if she finds all of Australia's past something of a surprise. Despite her integrative efforts, race relations remain detached from the general developments of black and white society. Her account lacks the resonance which even well-done 'tunnel history' can possess. There is more to the problem than this. After all, a great deal of well-trained academic writing also lacks resonance. Why single Franklin out for attack?

The answer is that her style makes obvious what the historian's style will usually conceal. Franklin was trained in the law, and then in social science. The law proceeds by quoting cases, often one after the other, in order to establish the validity
of the argument being put before a court. Social science often moves similarly, by giving a survey of the literature before adding the researcher's own material. This is how Franklin writes her historical narrative. The building materials are clearly laid out end to end. The discontinuities are marked by the end of paragraphs.

If this helps to explain why Franklin writes as she does, and why historians have found her writing so annoying, nothing of the above discussion explains why historians and social scientists, in general, write as they do. The question obviously requires more investigation than can be expected here, though the following is part of the answer.

About four years ago I had to read some scientific papers as background for an historical article. The thing that struck me was how poorly the papers were argued. The logical steps were either absent or perfunctorily established. Solecisms abounded. The evidence and ideas moved towards the conclusion, but there was no sense of obligation on the part of the scientific authors to spell out the linkages in their arguments. In contrast, historians are extraordinarily careful about getting their arguments in the proper order, and about being seen to marshal their evidence in ways which support their arguments.

The difference between the two styles is startlingly obvious. Yet, there is no evidence that scientists are wrong more often than historians. The scientific style cannot be as dysfunctional to science as it would inevitably be to history. How is it then that scientists can get away with their inadequately expressed aetologies? The answer has to do with the volume of evidence available to each. Scientists generally have thousands of experiments on which to fall back. Indeed, their papers are usually little more than a writing-up of these multitudinous instances. Historians, on the other hand, are often lucky to have one hard fact. Certainly they are never likely to have ten thousand examples with which to rebut contrary arguments. These relative abundancies and scarcities have influenced the style of writing of each group. Historians have to compensate for their paucity of data by constructing the toughest possible arguments. They develop stylistic tricks which enable them to cover up the gaps in their arguments. The historians' prose has to be a seamless web precisely because their nakedness would be exposed if they wrote as abruptly and as autarkically as scientists, even the so-called social scientists.

Social science stands somewhere between the life sciences and history in terms of the volume of evidence at its disposal. Social science has borrowed from both the life sciences, with their multitude of cases, and imitated the physical sciences by adopting mathematics as the criterion of correctness. Buttressed by both these supports, social scientists are less worried by the cracks in their arguments than historians would be. Faced by similar gaps, historians would adjust their adverbs and fiddle with their metaphors.

This is not to denigrate the historians' approach. Indeed, its literariness can often speak a great truth. For example, the principal fault in Franklin's chapter on 'Black Australia' is precisely this question of tone. Because her paragraphs are explicit paraphrases they are lifeless and leave the impression that Aborigines are less than human. Though there is almost nothing that one could quote as an instance of a racist attitude in Franklin's book, the cumulative effect of her writing is unfavourable to Aborigines because she never brings the bits and pieces together. It is not that she writes badly. She writes clearly and without pretension. Compared with much of the gobbledygook in the social sciences, she writes very well. The point at issue is not her personal writing facility. Rather, it is a matter of realising how historians traditionally treat the evidence available to them, and why each side can find the other utterly unconvincing.

Perhaps the one benefit from the otherwise unpromising prospects of any multidisciplinary enterprise will be a greater awareness of how and why the different disciplines write. Not surprisingly, intellectuals have not been anxious to scrutinise

This book represents pioneer archaeological research work of great interest to both prehistorians and historians concerned with Aboriginal culture of the recent past.

While the title epitomises the low-key approach, it is an exemplary, detailed and clear presentation of the results of an archaeological excavation. It details the features of the site, the problems it posed both in interpretation and digging technique as a field investigation, the methods adopted and the results. All are supported by a wide range of photographs, plans, section drawings and line illustrations of finds. This detail of presentation is a vital part of any excavation report. It enables the reader to reconstruct the site and the stages of its investigation, as well as to assess the excavator's interpretation of the finds. Excavation reports, for this reason, can be unwieldy things to produce; to the publisher they must seem over-loaded with awkward tables, too-numerous line drawings and photographs. Yet reports are meaningless to the serious reader otherwise. Queensland University Press is to be congratulated on publishing the report in this format, in a manner which makes it a useful primary source of data rather than a synthesising summary. The production process chosen, which allowed drawings and photographs to be set in the relevant text, adds to the usefulness of the book. However, some of the quality of the half-tone plates seems to have suffered in reproduction.

The book is an unusual venture also as the publication of archaeological investigation of an Aboriginal burial ground. Since the research reported here was completed such investigations have been subjects of debate and controversy, a delicate area in which tension easily escalates between the research commitment of the archaeologist or physical anthropologist and the sensibilities or the dictates of tradition for the Aboriginal community (either as a whole or of residents within a local region). For such reasons publication of this book was delayed and Dr Haglund feels obliged to defend its belated appearance in her introduction. Her defence is in terms of the information gained by both Aboriginal and prehistorian from such investigations and the further insights this information may give into the complexity of Aboriginal culture. Throughout the book the reporting of excavation of skeletal materials and its interpretation is respectful, subordinated to the aims of acquiring knowledge and the conservation of material remains from the past, artefactual or skeletal.

When the investigation began in 1965 it was a rare event — the first full scale excavation of its kind in Australia — but it was undertaken largely as a salvage project. As legislation to protect Aboriginal relics or archaeological deposits had not then been enacted in Queensland, an emergency excavation seemed the only answer to the problems posed by the Broadbeach burial site south of Surfers Paradise on Queensland's Gold Coast. These included whole-scale destruction of parts of the site in soil quarrying, damage to other parts by natural erosion exacerbated by the effects of heavy traffic on nearby access roads. In addition there was continual disturbance from the diggings of vandals, souvenir hunters and the merely curious.

Dr Haglund presents her report on the field investigations as an archaeological analysis, assessing the material recovered and exploring its interpretation in archaeological terms. The field work involved was exacting; historians as well as archaeolo-
gists will learn much from the exposition of the methods adopted to ensure the recovery of fragile material (especially the bones of vertical bundle burials) from friable, unstable sand deposits and the recording of its context. The approach and the presentation is strictly archaeological, working from the data in the ground and analysis of the features of the burials and their stratigraphic context, to their interpretation in terms of rites and rituals. The author suggests that four stages of activities and burial practices are represented in the burial ground whose use extended over some twelve hundred years. She bases this on careful analysis of the sequence of burial types as shown in the stratigraphic relationships of various burials, the general stratigraphy of the deposits, and of shell horizons found over parts of the site. Burial types include primary and secondary disposition, with extended and flexed primary inhumations, and disposal of bones after exposure as either bundle or parcel burials. There were two cremations. The form of the pit dug to contain these burials also varied. Yet these variations may be discerned within a context of continuity. In itself this is perhaps the most exciting discovery — the continuity of burial practices and use of the same locality for disposal of the dead and associated ceremonies by a group of hunter-gatherers for over a millennium. This has other significant implications for our understanding of Aboriginal culture and history.

From the features of the burials and their stratigraphic context, problems of dating and the technicalities of recovery, Dr Haglund moves on to discuss the population represented. It is one in which most age groups are found from infant to adult, though 38 per cent of the total of well over one hundred is under five years of age. Interestingly, 85 per cent of the total is male. A chapter is also devoted to analysis of the stone artefacts recovered. Here the definitions are clear and sound. Yet considering that the number of artefacts recovered was surprisingly large for a site of this kind, the analysis, especially in comparative discussion, did not have the depth of that devoted to other aspects of the site.

As the site belongs to the last millennium, the evidence of local ethnohistory is relevant to its interpretation. So this becomes a matter of historical as well as archaeological analysis. In chapter six Dr Haglund surveys the available historical evidence, comparing it with the archaeological. Here the data is fragmentary and elusive. So the depth of comparative analysis that could raise fascinating theoretical questions about the use of written as against material evidence for ritual practices, beliefs and ceremonial, was perhaps not possible. The issues raised by this section, however, could have been explored further.

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Historians of the Aboriginal people, by the nature of the subject, must become students of Australian ecology. Few peoples other than the Aborigines have adapted themselves so well to their environment and maintained their relationship with the land for so long without interference from less environment-conscious interlopers. When writing a local history in 1968 I used the term 'Aboriginal ecology' to account for the Aborigines' natural place in the life of the land, in particular the periodic summer burning of tea-tree scrub and the consequent conversion of swamp-land into grassy plain. I had read enough nineteenth century accounts to know that the tribal boundaries of the district followed natural boundaries. My reading of Aboriginal religion told me that the most meaningful of religions was that which related man to the land and the environment which gave him his living. Available work on trade routes and ceremonial exchange informed me that Aboriginal man's
history was predetermined to a large extent by that balance which characterises the biosphere.

Peterson's *Tribes and boundaries in Australia* is the first major symposium to deal with the whole question of tribes and territoriality in terms of ecology. It is a specialist's book of primary interest to the anthropologist. But it should also be regarded as basic reading for all ethnohistorians, whether prehistorians or historians of culture contact in Australia. Only by facing the problems which this book poses are we able to come nearer to understanding the subtle connections between Aboriginal man and the land which is at once a source of livelihood and religion.

The book is a collection of essays expanded from papers given at a symposium convened by Professor Derek Freeman at the Australian National University in 1973. The major theme is the controversy regarding the meaningfulness of the term 'tribe' and the extent to which 'tribe' can be defined politically, spatially and linguistically among Australian hunter-gatherers. The book is dedicated to two of the pioneers in the field of tribal delineation, Norman B. Tindale and Joseph B. Birdsell, both participants in the discussions. Other papers are contributed by Josephine Flood, Nicolas Peterson, D. J. Mulvaney, Aram A. Yengoyan, Ronald M. Berndt (the least convinced of the usefulness of the concept of tribe), Kenneth Maddock, D. H. Turner, F. G. G. Rose, R. M. W. Dixon and E. P. Milliken.

Apart from familiarising himself with the ecological determinants of Aboriginal history, the historian might gainfully learn from the methodology of historical anthropology in tackling problems of contact and pre-contact history. Josephine Flood uses an historical approach supplemented by archaeological work to unravel man's place in the ecology of the highlands of southeastern Australia, an area where Aborigines had disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century. Peterson's own paper gives a historical perspective to the tribal question by surveying the work of earlier writers as well as depending on work in other cultural areas to introduce and support his view of the importance of drainage divisions. Mulvaney's well documented paper on inter-tribal activities is by far the most useful for the historian and is an excellent reconstruction from written sources as well as field work, emphasising the ecological patterns of pre-European history. One hopes that other research workers will continue to sift hitherto unpublished material in missionary and government archives to further expand the work of Mulvaney, F. D. McCarthy, C. C. Macknight and others, perhaps throwing more light on individuals engaged in trade and exchange in immediate post-contact times. Most of the papers are more specifically based on anthropological or linguistic field work but Kenneth Maddock's on communication and change in mythology has important implications for people working in oral history.

The book is well presented with extensive diagrams and maps and maintains the high standard of editorial production which we have come to expect from the publications of the Institute.

NIEL GUNSON  
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY


Salvado, a Spanish Benedictine, was one of a group of Benedictine missionaries who came to Western Australia in 1846 to convert the Aborigines to civilization and Christianity. Four parties set off to different parts of the colony. Three of these enterprises were overcome by despair, starvation and disaster and were abandoned. Salvado's party survived and built the New Norcia mission about 80 miles north of Perth. Salvado's memoirs, now translated from the Italian, describe the early history of the mission, the 'habits and customs' of the Aborigines in the
locality, and, of less interest, the natural history and early colonisation of Australia.

The first Aborigines Salvado encountered in Perth and Fremantle greeted him with the cry 'maragna', which he was told meant simply 'food'. That the tribal remnants in the towns wanted food is not surprising, but Salvado's account makes clear that tribal Aborigines, living largely undisturbed beyond European settlement, were also very quickly attracted to European food. On their third day in the bush Salvado's party was visited by a crowd of Aborigines armed with spears. The missionaries offered them damper, tea and sugar: 'When they first tried the sugar they spat it out suspiciously, but seeing that we were quite happy about it, they tried some more, found they liked it, nodded their heads in signs of approval, and encouraged the others to eat. In a few minutes they had disposed of all we had to spare, and were quarrelling over the precious remnants'. It was food, and to a lesser extent medical services, which kept the Aborigines interested in the missionaries.

The Benedictines first travelled with the Aborigines in the bush. They helped to carry the children and to gather roots, lizards and grubs. This policy accorded with some of the best thinking of the day — it was recommended by the 1837 British Select Committee — and with the popular belief that it was difficult, if not impossible, to get an Aboriginal to settle in one place. Salvado soon saw the disadvantages of peregrination and was able eventually to demonstrate the falsity of the popular belief. While Aborigines were on a hunting expedition, Salvado discovered, they had no time or patience to listen to a missionary. The best time to find a receptive audience was when the Aborigines were gathered around their fires at night 'repeating their legends and stories, as the Arabs do'. Also, if the missionaries travelled with the Aborigines, they had less time to devote to agriculture at headquarters. And it was food that interested the Aborigines most. So Salvado stopped his excursions and devoted his efforts to establishing a mission station and farm. Aborigines who wanted food worked on the farm. This was a common approach, but Salvado extended it by paying wages and allotting individual plots to competent workers. He supervised the spending of wages and profits to prevent fraud or their dispersal through the operation of tribal obligations. By these means he turned Aborigines of the first-contact generation into farmers. His guiding principles mark him out as one of the most enlightened integrationists of the early colonial period: 'It is no use saying that the native cannot appreciate the value of money or take pride in possessions; he rapidly learns to do both, and then devotes all his energy to increasing his store of worldly goods and bettering his lot. But if he is made to feel only the burdens of civilised life, and not the benefits, and his wages are so low that he sees no point in working for other people's profit, then he prefers the freedom of his nomadic life to the limitations of our civilisation, and goes back to the bush'.

At the mission the Benedictines insisted that the Aborigines appear clothed, though Salvado realised that there was nothing 'unchaste or improper' in their nudity. They attempted to prohibit fights among the Aborigines but with little success. The children attended the mission school and a few entered orders in Perth and Europe. The missionaries learnt the Aboriginal language. Here, whatever the conversion rate — and it seems to have been, as usual, low — a useful accommodation between the races was being effected. It was endangered, though, by the spread of settlement; shepherds transmitted venereal disease, thrashed natives who wouldn't do their bidding, and ridiculed the Benedictines. Salvado's response was to acquire more land and to attempt to isolate the mission from the surrounding society. New Norcia survived and grew, but it became, perforce, an enclave rather than a gateway to the wider society.

Salvado begins his account of 'habits and customs' with a vigorous defence of Aboriginal intellect and capacity. He was a close and sympathetic observer of Aboriginal life, firm, of course, in his belief in the superiority of European civilisation, but tolerant and not easily shocked. His tone is similar to Tench's or to Bishop
Gsell's of Bathurst Island. Professor Ronald Berndt offers a critical commentary of Salvado's ethnography in an Appendix entitled 'Salvado: a man of and before his time'. This may be another way of saying that in the early colonial period, European views of the Aborigines and their relations with them were more varied than is sometimes imagined.

JOHN HIRST UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE


Daniel Matthews was the enthusiast, publicist and polemicist whilst his wife, Janet, provided the steadiness, practicality and determination. Together, between 1874 and 1888, they built an Aboriginal mission on the N.S.W. side of the Murray River to provide schooling, protection, religious instruction, and indeed a home and land, for the destitute and demoralised remnants of the central Murray Aboriginal peoples. To their work they brought a shared commitment to nonconformist Christianity, a genuine interest in and concern for Aborigines, and an unquestioning acceptance of the rightness of their middle-class, mid-Victorian values.

The task they had set themselves was not an easy one. The full-blood Aboriginal population had dwindled in Victoria from Curr’s estimated 15,000 in 1841 to fewer than 900. When Daniel and his brother William took out pastoral leases opposite Echuca on the New South Wales side of the river in 1865 and 1868, they found the local Aborigines homeless, powerless and confused. Their own lands given over to millions of sheep, they sat on the fringe of the white man’s world, hoping there might be a place for them, waiting to be shown but, for the most part, ignored.

In his ten years on the Murray prior to the opening of Maloga, Daniel moved freely among Aborigines. He and William ran a shipchandlers and general merchants store which took them on business up and down the river. Daniel quickly developed an interest in the Aborigines he met and they were soon calling him maranooka (friend). He visited the Victorian government Aboriginal mission at Coranderrk on many occasions and was impressed not only with the mission’s work but also by the spirit of the Aboriginal people. He determined to build just such a mission for the people around Echuca and after his marriage to Janet in 1872 they combined to make his dream a reality.

Land was available: his brothers had agreed to his using part of their lease to build a school and mission. Finance was more difficult to come by, for the N.S.W. government had no interest in protecting its Aboriginal people. Daniel had to rely on public subscriptions to help him get started, and continued to rely on them throughout his years of work for Aborigines until his death in 1902. Fund raising and publicising the mission became, in fact, his major role. Janet bore his children and ran the mission during his frequent absences.

The work progressed. By 1880 there were forty-five students enrolled at the school; Janet had a matron to assist her; an irrigated garden was producing excellent vegetables; and Daniel had the men helping him build wooden huts for the married couples. There was opposition, particularly from the squatters who saw his work as interfering with ‘their’ Aborigines. But there was also growing support and Daniel was delighted when, on a visit to Sydney in 1881, the Aborigines’ Protection Association of N.S.W. was formed with a promise of government aid.

This year marked a turning point in the N.S.W. government’s attitude towards Aborigines. In addition to its promise of support for the Aborigines’ Protection Association, it appointed a Protector of Aborigines and followed this up in 1883 by forming an Aborigines’ Protection Board. But the year also marked the beginning of
the end of Daniel's and Janet's work at Maloga. Once it appointed a Protector and began putting money into Maloga, the government wanted some control over the running of the mission. Policy expectations were that the Aborigines on the mission reserves would settle there, build homesteads, begin farming and eventually become self-sufficient. At Maloga this was not happening. For a start, the mission was built on private land and Daniel could not employ Aborigines in his irrigated gardens because of local criticism. The men and women were paid in ration cheques and obtained cash only for work they did off the mission. The buildings erected on the mission, though occupied and used by the Aborigines, were government property. As for becoming self-sufficient, Daniel did not have enough land to be a successful farmer and the mission was never in a position to support itself.

In 1887 Daniel was removed from his position as superintendent of the mission. He was appointed Religious Teacher and George Bellenger became secular manager responsible for all the work on the station. Eighteen hundred acres almost adjoining the Matthews' property had been set aside as a reserve for the Aborigines and the decision was taken to shift the mission there from Maloga. In 1888 Daniel and Janet resigned their positions and their long years of work and struggle at Maloga virtually ended.

This bare summary does little justice to Cato's well-written and interesting account of Maloga and of the lives of Daniel and Janet Matthews. As it stands it makes the Matthews' look like a pair of typical 'do-gooders' who couldn't quite cope and finally had to be bailed out by the government. Yet, despite the odds, Maloga succeeded in producing a generation of Aborigines to whom many of Melbourne's Aboriginal leaders of recent years can trace their ancestry.

How it did this is not clear from Cato's account and one would have hoped to have seen the daily regimen and the training programme at the mission more clearly spelled out. Daniel's and Janet's personalities must have played an important part in their success as teachers, together with their readiness to share their lives fully and lovingly with their people. Daniel was paternalistic and strict. But Janet compensated for this and, since she was the one most constantly with them, her contribution must have been of considerable importance. At the same time the quality, perceptiveness and desperation of the Aboriginal people who came to them has to be appreciated as equally contributing to Maloga's success. There were some, like George Keefe and Billy Russell (p. 182), who demonstrated an independence and an ability to make their own decisions which offended Daniel's paternalism.

Cato has made good use of primary sources: particularly Daniel's and Janet's diaries; annual reports Daniel wrote for supporters of the mission; family memoirs; newspaper clippings which Daniel assiduously collected; and records of the Aborigines' Protection Association of N.S.W. and of the Aborigines' Protection Boards of N.S.W. and Victoria. These are frequently cited in the text.

In all, Cato has made a useful contribution to our growing knowledge of the treatment of Aborigines in N.S.W. in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Perhaps she has not succeeded in fully elaborating the significance of Maloga as an Aboriginal mission — and this may have to wait till the history of other missions and of the people who ran them are written. Nonetheless it is a contribution to an area of Australian history which has been little studied until recently.

The book is excellently made, with a clear and readable type face and high quality illustrations. However, the proof-reading was totally inadequate and the author has gone on record as having protested to the publisher.

ALEX BARLOW
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL STUDIES

Mrs Bobbie Hardy ends her study of the Darling River Aborigines with two arresting pictures. In the first, two semi-trailers arrive at Tibooburra and the Protection Board officer in charge announces that the entire Aboriginal community of seventy is to leave in the morning for Brewarrina, 350 miles to the east. That was the people's first news of the shift. Unlike the members of many other Aboriginal communities, the Maliangapa of the Corner country had men in jobs, children in school and access to a hospital. With intense regret, but without hope of effective resistance, the Maliangapa submitted to the change that destroyed them as a coherent group linked to a particular place:

Lorna Ebsworth, herself forced to relinquish a job at the hospital, managed to get the message through to her father at Yandama Station. He was well placed there, but resigned immediately and joined his family late in the evening. Brother Alby was working on far-out Naryilco, and was among those who had to make their own way across to Brewarrina later.

After two days they were at Brewarrina, a hated place of prohibitions, unemployment, alcohol and bag humpies.

In the second picture, Aborigines join the procession at the 'Back to Wilcannia' celebrations under the sign 'Wilcannia's First People'. At the local school the Governor is presented with a carved shield. Concurrently, the Parents' and Citizens' Association is trying to stop Aboriginal children from attending the same school.

Lucid, and enlivened by carefully selected details that come from much reading and listening, these pictures are fair examples of Hardy's work and they indicate one of the strengths of the book. It is a regional history with a strong narrative line able to provide much particular information and move the reader through a variety of emotions without letting him escape for long from the pathos of communal fragmentation. The brevity of (and rare patches of repetition in) the section of the book covering the period 1910-1940 are to be regretted. Readers would have appreciated more about May Quale and others who battled on the edges of settlements and cultures. Jeremy Beckett has already given some insight into the lives of half-castes of western New South Wales. Meeting social obligations and looking for work, some half-castes acquired an extraordinary range of skills and a close knowledge of a territory stretching over thousands of square miles from the Murray to beyond the Queensland border. They deserve to be better known. Aborigines in sport could also have been given more than a few scattered references.

Some scholars will at times regret Hardy's lack of precision. The region that she deals with is not clearly defined, and while this is not generally important it leaves the meaning of some comments unclear. She says that apart from one Aboriginal child being educated privately in Broken Hill in 1913, 'not a single one was attending any of the dozen or more State schools that were scattered at wide intervals throughout the country'. It is not immediately clear what is meant by 'the country'.

The reader is also left uncertain about the amount of violence among the Barkindji before contact with Europeans. On page one Hardy says:

The fixed boundaries of the tribal lands were marked by trees or rocks, and none disputed them, so that there was no call for cataclysmic war of territorial aggression, nor need for an arms race or secret weapons . . . .

Yet on page twelve she speaks of 'feuds' both between different groups of Barkindji and between Barkindji and their neighbours. Tribal legend, she explains, 'confirms how indeterminate were the divisions between the Barkindji and the aliens beyond their borders'. On page twenty-three she concedes that 'much blood was spilt' by parties obliged to kill in retribution for the death of a relative, whether that death was due to natural causes or violence. And on the next page she asserts that 'there were occasions when battle casualties were considerable'. The harmony of page one
has disappeared and the chances of Barkindji dying violently has apparently increased sharply. The thoughtful Barkindji, rather than not engaging in any arms races, were probably desperately concerned about belonging to a fighting force that was as numerous, efficient and well-equipped as possible.

Sometimes Hardy’s lack of precision is a fair reflection of the available evidence. She is able to write of the Aborigines’ ‘dim memory’ of poisoning (p. 91), and other ‘guarded references’ to poisoning (p. 121), but is unable to cite any particular case. Knowing of whites ‘souveniring’ Aboriginal children elsewhere, she asserts that ‘doubtless’ instances occurred among the Barkindji (p. 145); but again can point to no particular case. Yet there are also points where she may have been able to exploit her sources further and extract more explicit information. She writes of the violence on the Paroo in the 1860s: ‘McCullough and Curlewis were only two of the many who were killed’ (pp.114-115). What is ‘many’ here? Another five, fifteen or more? While Hardy discusses the various factors that led to a decline in Barkindji population, she does not attempt to say which were the most lethal. Hardy is in a better position than most (perhaps all) of her readers to offer an intelligent guess about whether bullets killed more than certain introduced diseases. But she makes no comparisons.

This, then, is a regional history with great merit. We need more such studies. Yet, while Hardy conveys much information with skill, others will have to sift the evidence finer for answers to questions that worry students of Aboriginal history.

The photographs are excellent; another map is needed; and the notes on sources are helpful but sparse.

HANK NELSON

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**INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS**

Manuscripts must be typewritten, double-spaced and with ample margins to allow for editorial marking. Submit ribbon copy but keep a carbon. Footnotes should be as brief as possible, typed on a separate sheet and numbered consecutively throughout the paper. A short form of citation should be used for references to literature (for examples see current issue). The bibliography, on a separate page, should show author's name and full publication details as given on the title page of the work, listed alphabetically by author and chronologically for each author. Tables and maps should be submitted in final form (except for size), on separate sheets, numbered consecutively and given headings. Photographs for illustrations should be 6 x 4 glossy prints, numbered on the back, and accompanied by a list of captions and photographic credits.

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