

BOOK REVIEWS

Oodgeroo : A Tribute. A special issue of *Australian Literary Studies*. Volume 16, No. 4. Edited by Adam Shoemaker, Laurie Hergenhan and Irmtraud Petersson. University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1994. Pp xv + 190. \$19.95

Glancing down the page of Janine Little's useful checklist of material by and about Kath Walker/Oodgeroo included in this special issue of *ALS*, I note that the present publication represents the only book-length discussion of Oodgeroo's work, with the exception of a text by Al Grassby. So *Oodgeroo : A Tribute*, guest-edited by Shoemaker, with Hergenhan as associate editor and Petersson as editorial assistant, fills something of a gap and does so within a year of the death of a notable Australian. It should be said that one approaches any tribute, and its attendant pieties, with understandable reservations. This one, however, works well as a book introducing Oodgeroo's preoccupations to the general public, and without excess of good manners and p.c. — in no small part because of the influence of Oodgeroo herself, whose vital personality breaks through formal barriers, in quotations of her own lively and pointed utterances, in obviously heartfelt reminiscences of those who loved her, and (even) in the assessments of well-meaning academics.

Oodgeroo : A Tribute consists of eighteen articles of varying length by relatives, friends, work-associates, writers and critics. Of its three sections, the first, which is the most personal, is headed 'Reminiscence, Record, Travel'; the second, which is analytic, is headed 'Poetry'; and the third, which looks at the wider range of activities and achievement, 'Voices: Educationist, Activist, Performer'. Out of this a portrait of the artist emerges: Oodgeroo as sister, friend, mother, poet, sketcher, political stirrer, propagandist, lecturer, traveller, educator, encourager of other people's talents, yarn-spinner, ambassador-in-residence-at- Minjerriba and more. A few cameo-shots of this physically diminutive and astonishingly energetic woman in action : Oodgeroo nicely reminding Menzies who offers her a drink that 'providing spiritous liquor to an Aborigine' incurs a fine in Queensland ; Oodgeroo fielding Harold Holt's inevitable 'is it correct that there are Communists in your organization?'; Oodgeroo not knowing if it will help but feeling 'certainly ... better' after returning her MBE; Oodgeroo (logically) empathizing with her plane hijackers; Oodgeroo impishly and with real affection resting her head on Manning Clark's knee; Oodgeroo replying to her literary critics : 'it was propaganda. I deliberately did it'; Oodgeroo returning from referendum campaigning to find clothes and curtains slashed; Oodgeroo defending multiculturalism to police cadets who thought that 'if people came to Australia, they should be prepared to be Australians' with the retort: 'you came to my country and you didn't turn black'; Oodgeroo — unAboriginally — wanting her name shouted out when she dies.

The essays themselves include especially informative contributions by John Collins of Jacaranda (in connection with Oodgeroo's publishing history) and by Rhonda Craven, Alan Duncan and Eve Fesl (focussing on Oodgeroo as educationist). There are also statements by Roberta Sykes and Robert Tickner. All in all the book canvasses issues larger than the literary, though the literary looms large. Here the primary concern, one way or another, is with that old chestnut of quality: are the poems 'good', are they 'poetry'? I confess to even more impatience with the question than some of the contributors themselves. My memories of Oodgeroo include her addressing a student rally in the sixties and, on another occasion, reading poems to an amused and sympathetic largely Aboriginal audience. In each case 'art' did not figure. I'm not sure some of the contributors anxious to defend Oodgeroo

against the criticisms of people like Andrew Taylor do her such a service. Taylor, desperate to approve of Oodgeroo for sound political reasons, could not, in all New Critical conscience, think much of her verse. In the present publication, Mudrooroo tries to get around the problem by inventing a new word, 'poetemics' (poetry/polemics), which functions rather like Demidenko's 'faction' (fact/fiction). But doesn't this amount to saying what Taylor said, viz that Oodgeroo is not exactly a 'poet'? The real difficulty is the notion of something called 'poetry' defined as distinct from something else called 'politics'. That puts poetry under the rubric of the aesthetic. At which point Oodgeroo, not the slightest bit concerned with aesthetics, appears either as no poet at all or as a bad one. To argue for poetic ambiguities, or, using less New Critical, more contemporary jargon, for poetic tactics, strategies and the like, doesn't get around the difficulty, which is of wholly academic origin and bears no relation to Oodgeroo's practice. Perhaps Anne Brewster is closer to the truth when she simply tackles Oodgeroo's work as that of an oral historian. The point is that it is the category of 'poem' which is problematical, not Oodgeroo's verse. Once we grasp this, complicated apologias (Bob Hodge arguing that the verse is postmodern, for example) become unnecessary. The expression 'political poetry' or even "propaganda poetry" ceases to function as an oxymoron. It becomes a neutral business to describe Oodgeroo as a poet. And on the question of quality, now divorced from aesthetic preconceptions about the nature of the artefact, it suffices to pass the kind of judgement we might pass on any human activity.

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Brisbane: The Aboriginal Presence 1824-1860. Edited by Rod Fisher. Brisbane History Group Papers No. 11, 1992, pp.106. Black and white illustrations, map, reference list, index. \$26.95 p. b.

The Brisbane History Group is to be congratulated on this volume, their first using a new more professional format bringing together a number of articles on the same theme. The volume comprises six papers on race relations in the Brisbane region between 1824-1860. It covers the convict and early settlement periods until the separation of Queensland from New South Wales in 1859. Against this background it 'considers selected incidents and issues which offer insights into relations between Aborigines and Europeans'. Although the group consists largely of members of the general community, the articles in this volume have been written by academics and a post-graduate student'

Raymond Evans' opening article, 'The mogwi take mi-an jin', focuses on the period of the Moreton Bay penal settlement (1824-1842) and inter-action between the local Aborigines (approximately 5,000 in the Moreton Bay region with many more slightly more distant) and the newcomers of the penal settlement who were outnumbered approximately five to one. The 'white toe-holds of occupation', first at Redcliffe Point, then upon the Brisbane river, Stradbroke Island and Limestone are described as 'like migrant enclaves, surrounded by the societies of the "indigenous others"'. Evans examines the nature of the encounters of the two races as they move back and forth across the 'enclave' boundaries. It is a distinctive frontier, Evans argues: 'a sedentary, moderately increasing, then rapidly contracting frontier', which evoked 'quite distinct responses from the beleaguered Aborigines'. From early 1839 onwards convicts, soldiers and officials began

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leaving Moreton Bay with the penal era coming to an end in May 1842. As the first phase of inter-action came to end, the next began, and this time the newcomers, who included squatters and their employees, came to stay not only permanently occupying 'mi-an-jin' but using it 'as a staging ground for the occupation of lands soon to become Queensland'.

Rod Fisher ('From depredation to degradation') is concerned with the Aboriginal experience of the years that followed. His interest aroused by the story of Kipper Billy convicted in 1862 of raping a white woman, Fisher decided to explore the context of the Kipper Billy incident. 'How common were cases of Aboriginal rape of white women?', he asks. 'Were they a sporadic or concentrated phenomenon of early settlement?'. 'What were the causes?'. 'Were they 'cultural', 'learned', 'retaliatory', 'moral', 'social', 'racist' or 'simply personal'? Drawing extensively on newspaper accounts he found that three features characterised relations between the races: first, racial conflict on the frontier, second, social tension in Brisbane and third, involvement of Aborigines in the town activity and economy. It is the second, increasing tension in Brisbane, to which Fisher turns to explain the attacks on white women and with which he becomes pre-occupied almost to the exclusion of any detailed analysis of evidence that could provide answers to the specific questions he raised (listed above). He notes that in the 1850s the earlier Aboriginal offences of raids on crops and dwellings gave way increasingly to cases of 'drunkenness, disorderliness and interpersonal violence between Aborigines'. While Aboriginal numbers were relatively small he points out that the white population numbered little more than 6,000 in 1861 and the Aborigines formed a 'most conspicuous and concentrated minority which expanded at certain times and clustered at particular locations'. Increasingly the population demanded firmer handling of the Aborigines expecting those who committed crimes to be dealt with by the 'most severe and summary punishment'. Second, there was demand for the presence of military and police personnel to intimidate and deal with the Aborigines. He concludes that the conviction, death and grave robbing of Kipper Billy in 1862 exemplifies 'that stage of punishment and repression whereby Aborigines were removed from Separation society in Brisbane'. The raping of white women occurred when 'tribal structures were deteriorating, town blacks were becoming increasingly deviant and white repression was on the ascendant'. These aspects, Fisher argues, indicate that the Aboriginal men who raped white women were really 'victims of social, economic and cultural change which was beyond their determination'.

The other four articles are shorter. Libby Connors ('The theatre of justice') deals with the carrying out of Aboriginal death sentences at Moreton Bay between 1839 and 1859. Her focus is on the white intentions expressed in the ritual of hanging and the Aboriginal responses to the 1841, 1855 and 1859 executions which she argues epitomize three distinct phases of Aboriginal-European legal relations. Her conclusion is that the Aboriginal response suggests a 'pattern of initial accommodation followed by contestation and rejection and finally powerless submission'. John Mackenzie-Smith writes of the Kilcoy poisonings of February 1842 in which up to 60 Aborigines were poisoned at an out-station of the Kilcoy run held by Evan and Colin Mackenzie, sons of Sir Colin Mackenzie. He traces the details of how a 'conspiracy of silence' ensured that to this day it is impossible to know who was guilty of the crime. He defends the honour, however, of Evan Mackenzie who he believes has been wrongly blamed. In 'The snake in the grass' Denis Cryle examines the role of the local press in influencing public opinion and behaviour by using the press reaction to the murder by Aborigines of the squatter Andrew Gregor and his female servant on the 18 October 1846 at a North Pine property. The editor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*, 'a champion of the squatters', encouraged anti-Aboriginal feelings which led to attacks on the local clan camp at Yorks Hollow and some deaths. The 'snake in the grass'

is William Augustine Duncan who appalled by local behaviour exposes it in the Sydney newspapers using at first a pseudonym but later being openly critical of the goings on in Moreton Bay. Attacked by the *Courier* as someone who should be ostracised, he found friends in Sydney where the *Australian* commented that 'it betrays a bad spirit to call an anonymous correspondent who advocates the cause of the blacks "a snake in the grass"'.

Raymond Evans' 'Wanton outrage: Police and Aborigines at Breakfast Creek 1860' completes the volume. It is 'a contextual examination of an incident of conflict which occurred between civil police' and approximately a hundred 'relatively sedentary Aborigines in Brisbane in late 1860'. The handling of the remaining local Aborigines had reached the stage where there was demand that they should live as far as possible from the city centre but be available to work in town if needed. Evans points out that even in the late 1870s 'mounted troops would ride about Brisbane "after 4 pm. cracking stockwhips" as a signal for Aborigines to leave town'.

Familiar with the history of race relations in the Portland Bay District, the southern most extremity of the colony of New South Wales, I found this account of race relations in the Moreton Bay District, the northern fringe of the same colony, fascinating. Similarities and differences between events in the north and the south quickly became evident. In the south there weren't two distinct periods of settlement as in the north where the earlier convict phase was followed by the arrival of pastoralists and their employees. In the south the pastoralists followed early whalers and sealers along the coast and ex-convicts came in from the beginning as their employees. In February 1842, at the time of the Kilcoy poisonings, there was a similar case (Muston's Creek massacre) on the southern pastoral frontier. A number of Aborigines sleeping in a tea tree scrub were shot by men on horseback. Here, also, there was an attempt to make it impossible to establish who had perpetrated the crime. It was not this which interested me so much as the different reaction of Governor Gipps to the events. Whereas in the south, where only five people were killed, he threatened to close the whole District to pastoral settlement and to make it an Aboriginal Reserve if the murderers were not discovered, his reaction to the more serious situation in the north, according to Mackenzie Smith, was merely to express exasperation at what he saw as something concocted to annoy him. How can one account for such a different response? Then there was also mention of attacks by Aboriginal men on white women which appeared to have occurred in considerable numbers yet in the Portland Bay District such events were so rare that one could almost declare them non-existent. This is true not only of the frontier period but also of the later period of the 1850s and 60s when, as in the north around Brisbane, Aborigines were dispossessed, and 'drunkenness', and 'drunk and disorderly' were the main offences. Again there is no equivalent of the Breakfast Creek massacre in which the civil police attacked without provocation Aboriginal camps not far from the centre of Brisbane some 20 years after white squatters began arriving in the area.

Brisbane: the Aboriginal Presence 1824-1860 is a fine example of scholarship presented in a way that is most accessible to the interested general public. I have only one criticism: a very minor one. Occasionally the three dots used to indicate words omitted from quotations became four.

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Handbook of Western Australian Aboriginal languages south of the Kimberley region. By Nicholas Thieberger. Pacific Linguistics Series C-124, Canberra 1993. Pp 408. \$40.50

This work is a revised and updated version of the Handbook of WA languages produced as a draft in 1987 by the Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies, Mount Lawley campus of WACAE, now Edith Cowan University. It is a most important reference book for anyone seeking information in this area. It lists 64 languages and for each of them it gives a complete list of all work that has been done on the following topics:

1. details of location,
2. the different names of the language and the different spellings that have been used,
3. the classification of the language and what are its closest relatives,
4. the present day numbers and distribution of speakers,
5. people who have worked intensively to record the language,
6. practical spelling system,
7. wordlists,
8. texts,
9. grammars or sketch grammars,
10. language program,
11. language learning materials,
12. literature in the language,
13. material available.

There is also an overall bibliography. It is clear that no trouble has been spared to find and list all the materials, even those found only in the most obscure places, field notes of overseas scholars or unpublished theses. For anyone wishing to undertake a study or even wishing to refer to data from this area the present book is of prime importance: it is a most valuable resource.

Luise Hercus
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Our Heart is the Land: Aboriginal reminiscences from the western Lake Eyre Basin. By Bruce Shaw. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra 1995. Pp. 154. \$22.95.

The eastern Lake Eyre Basin has received much attention, largely on account of the great mission at Killalpaninna and because of the romantic image of the Birdsville Track. The western area, however, has been relatively little studied and this is therefore a very welcome book. We need a history of the area, one that takes into account the influence of the railway and the telegraph line on Aboriginal people, and one that is based on documentation. While the present work does not aim to fulfil this need, it aims to record the views of Aboriginal people on various aspects of life in the area.

The introductory chapter and the section on Dreamings are the weakest part of the book. The following are just a few comments on controversial statements. The remarks on p.3 on the movement of people 22000 years ago are pure surmise. The important compiler Edward Curr is called a linguist (p. 10), and his list is used (p.49) to make deductions about fauna: all this while brilliant information on the Aboriginal use of fauna in the Lake Eyre Basin is available from the works of T. Harvey Johnston. Similarly Howitt is quoted as a source of information on the matriline (p.23) rather than Elkin's important series of articles on kinship in the Lake Eyre Basin, not to mention the more recent work by Harold Scheffler.

As is the case with all Bruce Shaw's extensive works, this book is based on careful fieldwork, and through it we can hear the voices and the diverse views of the Aboriginal people who contributed. We would have a clearer perspective of these views if the speakers had been introduced: as it is, only their ancestry and date and place of birth are given. Had

we had further background we would be able to appreciate the differences in attitude and lifestyle reflected in the contribution of a person who has been a stockman all his working life and never had a chance to go to school, and that of a person who has not lived in the area for a long time and is a qualified electrician. It would explain why the latter would have views on the megafauna (p.88). One can see the author's reason for not including such background information on the Aboriginal people involved: he obviously wants them to speak for themselves; but with such short extracts on a varying series of topics they really do not have a chance to say much with any sense of continuity.

Many of the excellent black and white illustrations are close-up photos of the contributors. The work will be of greatest value and interest to two quite diverse sets of people; on the one hand to members of the Aboriginal community and people with a background knowledge of the area; and on the other hand to people who like to have a brief glimpse of the present day Aboriginal background to the Western Lake Eyre Basin.

Luise Hercus
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White Man's Dreaming: Killalpaninna Mission 1866-1915. By Christine Stevens. OUP Melbourne 1994.. Pp. 308. hb. \$39.95.

The great Killalpaninna Mission on the lower Cooper in South Australia had a tremendous influence on the Aboriginal population of the Lake Eyre Basin. It is mentioned in every major work connected with the area and diverse value judgements, ranging from the view that the missionaries enabled the Aboriginal people and particularly the Diyari to survive, to the view that the missionaries killed Diyari culture have always tended to be passed. A thorough study of Killalpaninna Mission had never been made and this makes this book particularly welcome.

Christine Stevens is no newcomer to the area. She is the author of an excellent work on Afghans, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns, a history of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia* (OUP 1989). The present work is thorough and professional, based on extensive research of Lutheran archives, Government documents and other historical sources as well as Aboriginal reminiscences. Through her years of working on this book the author clearly has a personal empathy with her subject. Throughout the work the reader can feel the harshness of the natural environment which made practically every day a struggle for survival. We also get a sense of the hostility of the majority of the pastoralists, the idealism and determination of most of the missionaries and the dignity and personal integrity of the Aboriginal people. Despite this empathy with her work Christine Stevens does not get carried away and we do not find any rash condemnations or any other extremes. To take two examples: there is no question that both Bogner and Reidel were in their own separate ways disaster areas as far as the mission was concerned, yet it is made clear that they were not evil men but thoroughly poor appointments. Bogner was simply keen on making the place into a viable cattle station and Reidel was a theologian who could not cope with practicalities; both of them were authoritarian to boot and neither of them had the slightest understanding of the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

In the chapter 'Reuther and the glorious 1890s' there is some justice done to the greatest and most dedicated of the missionaries, J.G. Reuther, to whom we owe so much in

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the way of knowledge of the languages and traditions of the area. The author follows up this aspect of the subject in a later chapter 'Linguists and Ethnographers'. In these two sections there are some minor points that one could take issue with: the author is not really clear about the great diversity of the languages of the Lake Eyre Basin. Yandruwantha and Wangkangurru are called 'dialects' (p.118). One asks 'dialects of what?'- as they are in fact languages belonging to different sub-groups. The discussion of the Reuther manuscript (p. 217 onwards) is appreciative of the value and extent of this great work, but does not actually tell us the type of information that is contained in this work, how it is an assemblage of data collected over years where volumes cover certain topics, eg. one deals with personal names, another with place-names, and one volume supplements but does not necessarily agree with the others, because the data may come from different people and certainly were collected at a different time. The former aspect is however well brought out on p. 218: 'His main informants had been old Diyari men, but by the turn of the century he had Wangkangurru men ensconced on the floor of his study.' In the discussion of the work of J.W. Gregory (p.222) it is not made clear that quite a lot of the 1901 expedition was in Arabana country and on the lower Diamantina: the visit to Killalpaninna was important, but not exclusively so. The trait that comes across most in Reuther's actual work is his persistence, his dedication to documenting Aboriginal traditions even in the most adverse circumstances. The term 'obsessive' may perhaps be justified in describing his activities (p.218), but the term 'frenetic' (p.118) is not, it implies a sudden burst of enthusiasm, rather than a continuous preoccupation. Reuther was not frenetic, and he never failed to carry out his other duties.

The book is beautifully illustrated, the illustrations themselves are important historical documents; the book is also well presented. Oxford University Press and the author are to be complimented on publishing a work that may not be an immediate best-seller, but which is of great historical significance and will be appreciated for many years to come by a wide variety of people, not only historians, but numerous others who are generally interested in Aboriginal traditions and in Australia's past.

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Paper and Talk: a manual for reconstituting materials in Australian indigenous languages from historical sources. Ed. Nicholas Thieberger. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra 1995. Pp 189. \$ 20.00

This book represents the proceedings from a workshop held in March 1993 at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies on Aboriginal languages no longer in common use.

The work begins with a fine poem by Mary Duroux, a lament for the loss of Dyirringan, once spoken on the south coast of NSW. In his welcoming address the late Bill Reid talks about Gamilaraay, the language of his ancestors, and he concludes: 'I hope that we can get a lot out of this workshop'. This book certainly shows that it was a great success.

Jeanie Bell submitted a paper on her work with a dictionary of her grandmother's language, and she strikes at the heart of the problem when she states (p.6) 'We are not idealistic about our languages becoming fully spoken languages again, or that they might

replace the role of English for us, but they certainly will fill an enormous vacuum in our lives'.

There are excellent practical contributions to the book by Geraldine Triffitt, who gives advice on how to find the written and recorded sources, and by Nick Thieberger who is not only the general editor but also gives a clear and comprehensive lesson in transcription and furthermore illustrates the importance of using computers for data storage. Jaki Troy discusses the problems of handwritten material. Rob Amery shows ways and means of trying to revive an Aboriginal language, specifically Kaurana, once spoken in the Adelaide area. The longest of the contributions, a paper which forms the core of the book is that by Peter Austin and Terry Crowley: this is a classic account of how older sources can be correctly interpreted by means of internal comparisons, by general information on the sound-systems of Aboriginal languages and by data from closely related languages when this is available. Jane Simpson's paper is of quite outstanding importance: it dispels a common fallacy by stating (p.22) that 'learning a language is more than just learning how the words sound, and what the words mean'. Language is a highly structured means of communication. She shows ingenious ways by which one can work out some of the grammar and structure of a language even with meagre data.

It is to be hoped that this book will be widely used in those Aboriginal communities where the original languages are no longer used. It is an excellent introduction to the kind of problems that are encountered and it should inspire an understanding of the difficulties involved in interpreting written sources from the past. It is hoped that the book will also lead to more language work being conducted within Aboriginal communities.

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First in their field: Women and Australian Anthropology. By Julie Marcus (ed). Melbourne University Press, 1993, pp. 189. Black and white plates, bibliography, index. \$24.95.

First in their field: Women and Australian Anthropology is the product of a conference held at the gulfside Adelaide suburb of Glenelg in 1990, plus a workshop in Canberra's Academy of the Humanities the following year. In it are brought together six biographical accounts of women who made significant contributions to Australian anthropology during the first half of this century. Some names may be relatively unfamiliar to readers, such as Mary Ellen Murray-Prior (1845-1924) of whom Isabel McBryde writes, and Jane Ada Fletcher (1870-1956) whose life story is told by Miranda Morris. Others are well known figures: Daisy Bates (1859-1951) in Isobel White's essay, Ursula McConnel (1888-1957) covered by Anne O'Gorman, Olive Pink (1889-1975) by Julie Marcus, and Phyllis Mary Kaberry (1910-1977) discussed by Christine Cheater.

As the title suggests, these are among the first women to work with Aboriginal people around the turn of the century, when anthropology was in its infancy and was the scarcely questioned prerogative of male researchers. Hence the collection has a feminist perspective, most evident in Marie de Lepervanche's introductory chapter and to a lesser degree in the Preface by Julie Marcus. The other scholars in their contributions emphasise feminist issues less explicitly, assessing instead the importance of their subjects to anthropology. A final chapter containing two 'letters from the field' written by Phyllis Kaberry to Elkin

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functions as an appendix. Thirty-five illustrations help to bring the text to life, especially photographic portraits of the women concerned. *First in Their Field*, though a comparatively short book, is a useful resource for the critical study of anthropology itself as well as for Aboriginal history because it breaks ground in a relatively new area. I draw upon a fraction only of the issues raised in this volume.

The dedication of *First in Their Field* to Isobel (Sally) White is written by her long-time friend Isabel McBryde. Isobel White along with others such as Catherine Berndt, Marie Reay and Diane Barwick belongs to the generation who followed Phyllis Kaberry, Ursula McConnel and Olive Pink. Their work received recognition during the 1960s and 1970s, two decades of far-reaching change when for example this journal *Aboriginal History* was founded (in 1977). Together with several other women researchers, they successfully brought forward (to this day) the debate on Aboriginal women's status through a number of symposia and publications, notably *Women's Role in Aboriginal Society* (Gale, ed. 1974) whose contributors included Isobel White, Diane Barwick and Catherine Berndt.

First in Their Field has two prime objectives, to bring together biographical data on early women researchers, and to discuss that data within the context of their individual relationships with male mentors, whether knowledgeable administrators or heads of departments like A.P. Elkin and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. This is a relatively novel approach in anthropological studies that shifts attention to European scholars rather than to the Aboriginal people who were their objects of study, although they too are of course mentioned. Each contribution follows what must be an editorial policy to address the same themes: a biographical sketch, relationships with male and female mentors, and the question whether these earlier researcher's ethnographic work justifies their acceptance into the ranks of anthropologists rather than those of gifted but non-professional amateurs.

Mary Ellen Murray-Prior, or Mary Bundock, had 'long-term direct contact with the people of one region, and ... their language' (p. 29) at a time when many other settler families of the Richmond District of the New England Tableland, NSW were embroiled in frontier violence. Her understanding and meticulous documentation of artefacts for the Australian Museum (see for instance her 'Notes on the Richmond Blacks' in McBryde, 1978:261-266) while working 'as an individual in her own right' (p. 37) was done at a businesslike level without direct contact with an individual male mentor. Isabel McBryde suggests that this was a disadvantage, for it meant that her work never had opportunity to develop along the academic lines of publication and recognition that it might have received. Murray-Prior was representative of her age in that it was usual for women of middle class background in Victorian society to pursue, often with great skill, interests in natural history and the collection of specimens (p. 35) in a social climate where women were pointedly excluded from scientific pursuits as the various disciplines became more formalised. She actively supported the inclusion of women students in Sydney University (p. 23). However, of greater importance, says McBryde, was her 'inheritance of concern' from a family background where Aboriginal attachment to land was respected.

The second nineteenth century woman discussed is Daisy Bates, a controversial figure whose field methods and ideas do not always find approval today. Isobel White treats her subject even-handedly and with compassion, pointing out that Bates was among the first enquirers to practice participant observation (p. 52), and that she recorded many details which might otherwise have been lost concerning Western Australian Aboriginal groups just beginning to feel the impact of European encroachment. She does not gloss over Bates's flaws however, for example that Bates sometimes posed as a supernatural being in order to be allowed access to secret knowledge, that she became prone to certain delusions (the most frequently cited being her claims for Aboriginal cannibalism, in my opinion a

fault of exaggeration since there are isolated mentions of the practice elsewhere in the literature, from Aboriginal sources), or that she did not sufficiently criticize the government of the day for its policy towards Aboriginal communities while being on the other hand 'a model of the independent and liberated woman' (p. 62). White's understanding of this 'negative side' acknowledges that Bates was a product of the values and beliefs current in her time (p. 65). We should not always judge an earlier period by the standards of our own. Behind this chapter lies a larger body of work, Isobel White's excellent treatment of the life and work of Daisy Bates (White, 1985). A reading of 'Daisy Bates: Legend and Reality' in *First in Their Field* should recommend students to the larger work.

The chapter contributed by Miranda Morris discusses Jane Ada Fletcher as another researcher into Aboriginal life who was a product of her era. The children's books Fletcher wrote helped to popularize some aspects of Aboriginal life while perpetuating several myths about it held at that time, for instance, that with the passing of Truganini Tasmanian Aboriginals not only became extinct but also that, as 'Stone Age' people, their extinction was inevitable. Such ideas were widely held, as in the authoritative texts of the day to which Fletcher would have referred as a schoolteacher.

Anne O'Gorman's chapter on Ursula McConnel is perhaps the most disturbing in the collection. She describes in some detail McConnel's contributions, well ahead of her time, and the personal despair that followed in later life when professional recognition was not forthcoming. McConnel set out to portray Aboriginal culture in its diversity and richness, taking special interest in the religious and symbolic life and observing and recording that life systematically. She sought to understand within a psychological framework how a people's system of knowledge might be constructed, looking especially at women's initiation ceremonies and emphasising in that way the great importance of subjectivity.

McConnel flew in the face of much that belonged to the accepted canon of anthropological thought. For example, '[H]uman sympathies and understanding' were factors criticised by Radcliffe-Brown because according to him they impaired the validity of one's work, which needed to be 'objective' (p. 101). She ran foul of Radcliffe-Brown in her disagreement with this structural-functional viewpoint and, by inference, with A.P. Elkin for arguing that the family unit was paramount. (Elkin, as one of the chief architects of the policy of assimilation in the 1930s, espoused mission policies that broke up many Aboriginal families). McConnel's achievement is even more remarkable when we note that she inherited from her parents and grandparents the usual 'legacy of mid-nineteenth-century colonial attitudes ... characteristic of the upper-class squattocracy to which she belonged' (p. 103). On the other hand she might well have known Mary Bundock and been influenced by her more tolerant perspective. While O'Gorman recognises '[t]he inherited racism of [McConnel's] early work' (p. 109), McConnel's change to a relativistic stance later on is especially noteworthy, linked as it is to a popularisation of Aboriginal culture. This would not have gone down well in anthropological circles either, with their values of secrecy and mystification. McConnel instead depicted the lives of Aboriginal women as essentially the 'same' as those of her women readers, arguing for the suspension of western beliefs and values and that Aboriginal values be appreciated in their own right, within their own social context (pp. 99-100). Cultural relativity, an American emphasis, might not have met with favour in Australian anthropological circles at the time because of the hegemony enjoyed by the British anthropological tradition.

Ursula McConnel paid dearly for her political incorrectness. Within her own lifetime she was snubbed by would-be mentors and peers. Around 1934 her Ph.D. degree was not conferred, ostensibly because she had insufficient publications. But she had criticised conditions on the Aurukun mission in 1927, displeasing Elkin, and though by 1929 her

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'intellectual claims' on the area were strong her fellow student Donald Thomson in McConnell's eyes took advantage of her exclusion from the mission to begin research in the area himself. The picture O'Gorman paints of contretemps between McConnell and her supervisors, and with at least one fellow student, are depressingly familiar. This lack of recognition, including the withholding of research funds, hurt her enormously. O'Gorman observes that the impossibility of intellectual fulfilment gave McConnell 'a sense of loss and non-achievement' leading to despair (p. 107). On her death she was accorded no proper obituary by the anthropological establishment.

Julie Marcus's account of Olive Pink is another tale of a woman researcher who sailed against the prevailing wind. Unlike Ursula McConnell however, Olive Pink dissociated herself from anthropologists after losing faith in their ability, and that of government administrators and missionaries, to be of assistance to Aboriginal people (p. 113). She recognised the importance in particular of Aboriginal secret religious life and could not condone it being revealed, for instance in one of Mountford's films (p. 114). Consequently she withdrew from academic life and withheld her research material for half a century, using Alice Springs as a base from which she kept surveillance as far as possible on the activities of welfare officials (pp. 114-5).

Olive Pink's ideas about Aboriginal affairs are still provocative. For example, 'she developed an analysis of the ways in which settler culture worked to take over Aboriginal culture in the very act of valuing it, a process which remains very much a problem for Aboriginal people today' (p. 116); she drew attention to the breakdown of Aboriginal health and the marriage system brought about by 'frontier sexual relations' (p. 118); she held that reserves should become places of respite offering Aboriginal communities 'protection and time to think' (p. 119), and that there was a precedent for the use indeed of 'women protectors' (p. 123); moreover, she 'developed the idea that Aboriginal landowners should be granted communal mining rights to any minerals on their property so that they could become economically self-sufficient' (p. 134). Not surprisingly, she made enemies among influential anthropologists, principally it seems E.P. Elkin and T.H. Strehlow, though interestingly C. P. Mountford was among the very few who deigned to speak to her at a conference; Ursula McConnell and an unidentified New Zealander were the other two. She ended her days as a semi-recluse near Alice Springs where the Olive Pink Flora Reserve has now been established.

The final biography in the collection is that of Phyllis Kaberry. In Christine Cheater's words Kaberry was, 'the only woman to reconcile successfully the demands of her mentor and her own ideas on what she wanted to do;' not least because to both Elkin and Radcliffe-Brown women *were* valuable as anthropological researchers, provided their work could be channelled in what the mentors regarded as an appropriate direction: 'The women did the donkey work, unearthing facts and cataloguing existing work, while the men built theories about the nature of human society' (p. 139). Paradoxically, Elkin is said to have valued women anthropologists similarly because of their 'humanising' influence on the discipline (p. 143), yet in male anthropological ranks there was an aversion to that very same subjectivity.

Anthropology's debt to Kaberry is well-known through her classic study *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane* (1939). In it she demolished one by one many commonly held myths about the sacred life of Aboriginal women, doing this by noting men's and women's interactions in the various spheres of their daily lives (p. 145). It was so difficult to shake male scepticism on that score that anthropological debate on Aboriginal women's status continued into the 1970s under the question *to what degree* were women more or less sacred in relation to men (my emphasis). Kaberry also experienced difficulty in receiving

professional recognition, but ultimately she had more success than the others. After her Australian field work in the late 1920s she went to New Guinea (1939) until the outbreak of war forced her to return to Sydney University's anthropology department. She gained a Fellowship at Yale University soon after and wrote up/edited her mentor Bronislaw Malinowski's *The Dynamics of Culture Change* (1945) after his death. Later she worked in West Africa. She ended her years as reader in Anthropology with the University of London. Christine Cheater observes that of her contemporaries Phyllis Kaberry emphasised most the importance of 'women's business;' but at the same time she reserved privately her more critical views of official attitudes because she believed that 'anyone who engaged in practical anthropology was a fool as it constantly tore at the emotions' (p. 148, Cheater's words).

The task of tying together the work of these six women into a theoretical framework falls to Marie de Lepervanche in her introductory paper 'Women, men and anthropology.' De Lepervanche recognises elements that might well have been active in the relationships between some of the six women of the collection and their male mentors, notably the marginalisation of their work and concern over academic privilege in a patriarchy for whom power, mystification and secrecy were at stake. To this day some studies run the risk of being dubbed 'not proper anthropology' if they do not fit the accepted mould, such as migrant studies and work on racism. These in my opinion are two highly visible and acceptable fields of anthropological study, though de Lepervanche remarks that studies of white racism continue to be avoided in anthropology. Other sources of friction include disagreement with senior male anthropologists' pet theories, or the vexed question of objectivity *vis-a-vis* the stereotyping of woman's approaches as 'too emotional' or compounded of gossip.

While agreeing in general with this line of argument, I must note that coming up against secretiveness and mystification is not confined to women researchers. As a postgraduate student I too met that barrier. It seems more likely to be part of the discipline's mystique for all students irrespective of gender. And while de Lepervanche finds that interruptions in career and work patterns are very familiar to women researchers today (p. 7), it also seems to me that many men in anthropology face similar obstacles, both immediately upon completing their postgraduate studies and when they enter middle age. Some highly competent scholars early in their careers held tutorships for years before receiving a lectureship, and in my own experience I know that if one relinquishes a university position for a time it is virtually impossible to get back in. There are structural problems within academia which may not have much to do with gender bias.

Patronising remarks about one's research because it does not fit the prevailing fashion, *vide* the jibe about Margaret McArthur's Papua New Guinea findings (p. 9), are experienced by both women and men. I remember a fellow postgraduate student in the early 1970s who was doing editorial work on one of the first Aboriginal life histories to come into print. A male student delighted in asking frequently 'How's work going on Lummy-Lummy? - pointedly mispronouncing the name of the Aboriginal man (Lami Lami) whose life story she was editing. And, 'Bruce, it isn't anthropology!' from a woman anthropologist concerning the first life history I edited. Can we claim that one example is more gender specific than the other?

Present-day feminist criticism is often anecdotal in this way. The approach may not be merely the swapping of gossip but the exploration instead of a new path for social enquiry. Hence gossip and "corridor talk" that never gets into the official accounts' (p. 3) has become part of the feminist arsenal. It has two forms of application. On the one hand when instances directed against women scholars are revealed, trivial though they may at first

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appear, they serve to lay bare individual stereotyping in the patriarchal 'old boy's club.' De Lepervanche emphasises the power of bringing this into the open, 'to undermine or question the mystique surrounding so much of the fieldwork experience' (ibid.), and by extension many other interpersonal matters between women and male researchers. There is room here for an element of ironic humour, for example 'malestream' instead of 'mainstream' in Julie Marcus's Preface, another characteristic of present-day feminist criticism. A second application of anecdotal reporting, and I think one which goes beyond the feminist debate, is to acknowledge and use subjectivity to greater advantage, to humanize the social sciences. It is what Phyllis Kaberry, Ursula McConnel and Olive Pink tried to do when they drew attention to the importance of emotions and subjectivity in religious matters especially, and for which they received criticism from their male mentors.

Herein lies a good potential postgraduate thesis topic: an appraisal of the emotional, of subjectivity and of humanization in the discipline

It is a double pleasure to review this book, first because there was opportunity to act in a small way as host and chauffeur for Isobel White and Marie Reay during the Glenelg conference in 1990; secondly because the book itself is dedicated to Sally for whom I have great respect and affection.

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Bruce Shaw
Adelaide Hills

The essence of singing and the substance of song: Recent responses to the Aboriginal performing arts and other essays in honour of Catherine Ellis. Edited by Linda Barwick, Allan Marett and Guy Tunstill. Oceania Monograph 46, University of Sydney, 1995. 269 pp. ISSN 1030 6412, ISBN 0 86758 994 9

Catherine Ellis (née Caughie, 1935-1996) was born in Victoria of Scottish Australian parents. She obtained her first degree in music from the University of Melbourne and began work as a research assistant to T.G.H. Strehlow at the University of Adelaide. She obtained her PhD at the University of Glasgow in 1961 and returned to continue work with Strehlow, after which she was a postdoctoral fellow in the same department in 1963, then worked at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide, attaining the rank of reader in 1984. In 1985 she became the inaugural Professor of Music at the University of New England, a position she held until her retirement in 1995 after being diagnosed with cancer, from which she died in late May 1996.

In 1991 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to music education and ethnomusicology, particularly Aboriginal music, and on her retirement from the University of New England was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters at that university for services to community music, the study of ethnomusicology, and research on Australian Aboriginal music. In Armidale both she and her husband Max played in local

orchestras and chamber music ensembles from time to time (she played both bassoon and piano, and he clarinet).

This collection of essays is a fitting tribute to her wide range of interests and sympathies. Always aware of the deep importance of music to individuals and society, even in mainstream society and educational institutions which did not consciously realise it, experience taught her that Aboriginal music and music making extended beyond the traditional into the present, with 'borrowed' music items from white Australia given their own significance and 'slant' by Aboriginal groups and individuals. Contributions in this volume reflect this wide range of interests. They range from those easily read by the non-expert in the field of ethnomusicology to ones presupposing more than a modicum of specialist knowledge in this field, linguistics, or dance ethnology.

The compilers, in inviting contributions to this volume from 'all scholars then working on Aboriginal music as well as a number of international colleagues of Ellis', commented:

Catherine Ellis's work on Aboriginal music ... has combined detailed analysis of notations with a sensitivity, as a trained performer and an experienced field worker, to the spiritual and social dimensions of music. ...

In this volume ..., we ask contributors to explore some of the ways in which songs and related cultural forms can be used as a departure point, or point of reference, for discussions of insight, creativity and power; of philosophy, politics and/or education. (p. 1)

In their own summary of the articles, they state:

All articles contributed focus on the specificity of particular performances: in some the discipline of primary orientation is linguistics (Tunstill, Donaldson), oral history (Somerville with Munro and Connors) or choreology (Morais) rather than musicology, while others combine musicological approaches with analysis of other performance modalities (Hercus and Koch, Marett and Page, Kaepler). The eleven articles dealing with Australian Aboriginal performing arts make significant new contributions to our understanding in the area of research most closely associated with Ellis, while the three articles dealing with non-Aboriginal traditions (Kaepler on Tongan music, Reeves Lawrence on Cook Islands music and McAllester on Native American music) give an international perspective on themes of performance analysis, ethics and cross-cultural understanding that have also been of major importance in Ellis's work. (p. 1-2)

Unlike many *Festschriften*, this one was produced with awareness of its compilation by the one honoured, and includes a contribution from her raising important questions and acknowledging how the contributors have contributed to her own understanding. It is particularly fitting that the book appeared when it did last year. While her death this year was a great loss, reading this collection gives one the confidence that there are solid groups of ethnomusicologists and others who will continue and build on the legacy she has left. It is also fitting to note the tribute to Ellis from urban Aboriginal women at her memorial service in Adelaide, giving evidence of how their sense of self-worth and their sense of pride in their own urban musical and other traditions were fostered in Ellis's work through the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM).

As noted above, most of the contributions pertain to Australian Aboriginal music and dance making, but two pertain to work in the Pacific (the Cook Islands and Tonga) and one to mainland American Navajo music. Missed opportunities to record and interact by the outsider who did not know the local culture are reported (Reeves Lawrence in the Cook Islands), and problems raised by the impact of newcomers on the Australian landscape are described (Gummow and Somerville). Dance movements are notated in contributions by Morais and Kaepler. Transcriptions of music and words occur in Anderson, Marett and

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Page, Keogh, Tunstill (words only), Barwick (music only), Hercus and Koch, Gummow, Donaldson (words only), Kaeppler, and McAllester. Richard Moyle finds a correlation of the relative length of beats in the double beat rhythm in Central Australia and its correlation with the *kerthump* of the heart beat rhythm. Issues of the status of men and women in song and dance come under scrutiny in Barwick's interesting chapter on performance of women's songs.

Contributors and their chapters are listed below:

Greg Anderson. Striking a Balance: Limited Variability in Performances of a Clan Song series from Central Arnhem Land

Allan Marett and JoAnne Page. Interrelationships between Music and Dance in a *Wangga* from Northwest Australia

Ray Keogh. Process Models for the Analysis of *Nurlu* Songs from the Western Kimberleys (Keogh died before the volume was completed)

Richard Moyle. Singing from the Heart?

Guy Tunstill. Learning Pitjantjatjara Songs

Megan Morais. Antikirinya Women's Ceremonial Dance Structures: Manifestations of the Dreaming

Linda Barwick. Unison and 'Disagreement' in a Mixed Women's and Men's Performance (Ellis collection, Oodnadatta 1966)

Luisse Hercus and Grace Koch. Song Styles from near Poeppel's Corner

Margaret Gummow. Songs and Sites/Moving Mountains: A Study of One Song from Northern NSW

Margaret Somerville, with Florrie Munro and Emily Connors. In Search of the Queen

Tamsin Donaldson. Mixes of English and Ancestral Language Words in Southeast Australian Aboriginal Songs of Traditional and Introduced Origin

Adrienne L. Kaeppler. The Paradise Theme in Modern Tongan Music

Helen Reeves Lawrence. Death of a Singer

David McAllester. Two Navajo Airplane Songs

Catherine Ellis. Whose Truth?

Linda Barwick. Catherine Ellis: Career History and List of Publications, Papers and Reports.

Linda Barwick and Allan Marett. Selected Audiography of Traditional Music

Compiled References

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Many of the chapters are built on earlier work, and the volume contains extensive compiled references in which such works may be found. References are not given after each chapter, a minor nuisance probably well offset by the saving of repetition. As a professional linguist but a mere amateur in the field of ethnomusicology, I find this volume a valuable addition, not only to my library, but in its widening of my awareness of the issues involved.

Margaret Sharpe
University of New England

Bridging Two Worlds: Aboriginal English and Crosscultural Understanding, By Jean Harkins, University of Queensland Press, 1994, pp xii, 228. ISBN 0 7022 2544 4. \$29.95

This book is a very welcome addition to the writings on Aboriginal-White communication and mis-communication. Harkins is an experienced teacher who worked for some years (1984-1986) on research in partnership with the Yipirinya School in Alice Springs, an independent, Aboriginal-run school serving Aboriginal camps in the Alice Springs area. As the note on the jacket of the book states:

Aboriginal English is a unique language that uses the resources of English to express Aboriginal conceptual distinctions.

and

'Using a linguistic analysis of Aboriginal English and the local traditional languages, ... Jean Harkins describes the interdependence of language forms and meanings in their cultural context. ... Aboriginal English with its distinctive Aboriginal world view offers a rich perspective.'

Harkins is not the first linguist (or educationist) to carry out research in Alice Springs on Aboriginal English. An initial study was done by Sharpe in 1976, a study that was not nearly as well informed on sociolinguistic and crosscultural issues as Harkins's. Within a few years of that research, Richard Walker and his research team did a further study, using Hallidayan categories which Harkins successfully shows to have been limiting in what could be found and analysed. Brian Grey built on Walker's work, but in practical application to teaching at the school, and his methods in some ways circumvented limitations inherent in Walker's research. Harkins has criticisms of much of this earlier work, while acknowledging her debt to it. As in other research, new and more insightful methods and findings arise from less adequate earlier work, some of which could at least rule out certain sources as the 'reasons' for much mis-communication between Aboriginal and White. In my opinion, Harkins has been fair in acknowledging the earlier positive contributions and in her criticisms of them. However, although she takes issue with previous research which has quite often described varieties of non-standard English (including Aboriginal usages of English) by stating what is 'missing', she once - in a fairly minor instance - resorted to the same device. As she points out, to describe a variety of English as 'omitting' something present in standard English can encourage the reader (I would say the undiscerning reader) to conclude that the omission is a 'fault', and therefore that the non-standard form under discussion is 'inferior' to the standard. As a writer who (as Harkins notes) has used this method of description at times in the past - but not with intention to denigrate - I would suggest that its positive feature is in describing the unknown in terms of the known, and by so doing saving a lot of lengthy description. It is clear, however, that anyone using this method needs to differentiate clearly between 'omission' of *forms* and any semantic omission.

The great contribution Harkins has made to linguistic knowledge is in her analysis of grammar and semantics of the Aboriginal English of Alice Springs, in which she shows there are a number of distinctions made in this dialect which standard English fails to allow for. The speakers have combined the strengths of English and of their traditional languages to introduce further modal distinctions, number distinctions and other meaning distinctions. While she has focussed her work on English, at about the same time or a little earlier, David Wilkins did a similar study, using the same people and social settings, of Arrernte and the way it is used, and the two researchers have been able to profit from each other's insights and findings. Both researchers were working in and with the Yipirinya School, and were subject to the wishes of the Aboriginal communities involved in that school. In fact

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the real advance that Harkins brings to study of Aboriginal English in Alice Springs is her placement which allowed real interaction and discussion with Aboriginal adults. She was not in the position of an outsider attempting to *guess* meanings of utterances just from situation and grammar, but was able to profit from the insights of the users of this form of English, much more than any predecessors (except Eades in Queensland) who worked mainly with children of an age where this type of awareness was rare.

The book contains a foreword by the Yipirinya School Council (to whom her research was subject), a Forward by Diana Eades (who did a major study of South East Queensland Aboriginal English, and has been involved in studies of Aboriginal English and the courts), followed by Acknowledgments, seven chapters, an Appendix, Texts, Bibliography and Index. Her chapters are: 'Why study Aboriginal English?', 'Aboriginal English in Alice Springs', 'Nouns and their Modifiers', 'Verbal Expressions', 'Textual cohesion', 'Distinctive semantics in a language variety', and 'Conclusions: Aboriginal English and Crosscultural Communication'. My only substantial disappointment is that it lacks a key to Arrernte (Aranda) pronunciation, especially as all readers are not likely to be familiar with the modern orthography for this language. (The Arrernte orthography involves extensive use of the vowel symbol *e*, to symbolise a neutral vowel that shifts its quality according to neighbouring semivowels such as *w* or *y* etc.).

In her first chapter, Harkins discusses the principles informing her research, which include a strong component of consultation with, and learning from insights of, the Aboriginal people of the Yipirinya school and its communities. From these contexts six questions were posed, which she answers in the remainder of the study:

1. How much did adults and children use English, and for what purposes?
2. How much English were people exposed to, what kinds of English, and from what sources?
3. What were the characteristics of the English used by adults and children?
4. How different was their English from non-Aboriginal English? What was the exact nature and probable origin of such differences?
5. What sort of English teaching did people want, for children and for adults? What English language skills did they want to develop?
6. From the above, what would Yipirinya School need to take into account in developing an appropriate English curriculum for its students?

In Chapter 2 she discusses the sociolinguistic rules governing choice of language in any interaction involving Aboriginal people in the area. Languages are chosen according to language of speaker, language of interlocutors, and status of various participants. One of the rules is 'If all else fails, try English', and another 'Use code-switching to fine-tune the selected language, according to participants and topic'. Languages used include English, Arrernte (of various Arandic dialects, Luritja, Pitjatjantjara, and occasional others. Similar rules apply in multilingual communities anywhere in the world, although to monolingual English-speaking Australians this can be a new concept.

The chapters on Nouns and their Modifiers, Verbal Expressions, and Textual Cohesion are ones where Harkins's detailed work and analysis breaks valuable new ground, in that she has been able to analyse the options speakers have in their use of (what seems to the standard English speaker) random 'omissions' and variants on the patterns they are used to. These variants are in reality used to signal definiteness or indefiniteness of information in a way not always available in English. In addition, as Eades also found in Queensland, and some teacher awareness even in my time of work in Alice Springs in 1976 hinted at, Harkins found that so-called future forms like *gotta*, *gonna*, *wanna*, *will* do not necessarily

signal the same meanings as their White English counterparts, in part due to different cultural expectations, but in part due to different semantics.

Harkins analysis has also been informed by the work on semantic primitives by Anna Wierzbicka, and this method of analysis, while initially impressing those unfamiliar with it as over-pedantic, is a valuable tool in analysing subtle differences in the meaning of expressions both within one dialect or when comparing different dialects or languages.

The book does not cover phonological features except in passing, probably taking this as 'read' from earlier work. This is a minor disappointment to me; however to have done this would have added to the length of the book and probably added little to the overall findings.

The book should be read by all who are involved in crosscultural situations, especially between Australian Aboriginal and White. While written in a manner to satisfy linguists, general readers will not find it daunting; in fact they should find it very readable on the whole.

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Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors, Frances Karttunen, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1994. xiv, 364 pp. ISBN 0-8135-2030-4 (cloth)—ISBN 0-8135-2031-2 (pbk). Price \$24.95

Using sources on people whose lives were lived between 1500 and the present, Frances Karttunen tells stories of

'sixteen men and women who served as interpreters and guides to conquerors, missionaries, explorers, soldiers, and anthropologists. These interpreters acted as uncomfortable bridges between two worlds' (from the book jacket).

I found this a compelling book, hard to put down. Yet one has to eat, sleep and give one's eyes a break from reading. Many of the accounts, too, brought me to tears or anger at some of the horrifying things that were done to indigenous peoples in the name of Western civilisation and religion and anthropological studies. Introduced diseases also took their toll. However Karttunen also looks critically and realistically at the traditional cultures, and shows inbuilt injustices and cruelties were not absent there either.

After the Acknowledgements and an introductory chapter, Karttunen groups her subject matter into six parts:

1. Three Guides
 2. Three Civil Servants
 3. Three Native Informants
 4. More Lives, Familiar Stories
 5. What Was Won and What It Cost
- Epilogue: Their Children

The book also includes Notes (footnotes with sources of the information), a Bibliography, and an Index.

While to an Australian, the bulk of the content deals with people from the Americas (USA, Mexico and South American countries), the book includes a Finnish folk singer in Part 3, and in Part 4 two Dyrbal Aborigines from North Queensland, Africans, an Asian

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Goldi from the Pacific maritime province north of Korea and east of Manchuria, and a woman from the Azores who moved to the USA (as well as two others from the Americas.

Karttunen set out on her work with an avowed feminist perspective, and with the desire to write on the lives of women used as cultural intermediaries, but quite quickly realised that the problems they faced were not peculiar to their sex, but applied more generally to those in such positions, and she quickly widened her field. In Parts 1 and 3, those she studies are all women, in Part 2 all men. The two Australians had been promised to each other in marriage, but chose other spouses; overall the balance of genders is slightly in the favour of the women. Parts 1-3 end with a perceptive summary of the similarities and differences in the work and situations of the three people studied. She gives most detail on the first nine subjects, and each of these sections would stand as booklet-sized biographies of her subjects. In many cases, her subjects suffered from inadequate financial support, and finished their lives in poverty.

In all, Karttunen's analysis is a perceptive and critical, yet compassionate and empathetic analysis of her subjects and their situations, with many thought-provoking insights. Especially in the first six cases, it becomes clear that the individuals studied were of exceptional intelligence, and more obviously for the women, would have not fitted easily into their own cultures. Some were taken as children from their ancestral lands and their families by other tribes, and having been thus uprooted, were more likely to become misfits in their traditional cultures. Karttunen suggests many of them took the roles assigned to them as a matter of personal survival: lacking support from their traditional cultures, they obtained it from the powerful intruders in their traditional worlds. These powerful intruders were, especially in the accounts from earlier times, insensitive to the human feelings - and to the common humanity - of their helpers, and in one account there is astonishment at the emotion of their hitherto impassive guide when she met her brother and relatives; unfortunately after a short time the relatives were suspicious of her and in effect rejected her. Like a good historian, Karttunen portrays the careers and the choices of those she presents as to a large extent determined by their circumstances, which included attitudes of those around them, and their own drive to survive.

Her first subject is Doña Marina, interpreter for Cortés, the next is Sacajawea who acted as guide to American explorers in the early 1800s. The three civil servants include one from Mexico and one from Peru; both these claimed to be of noble descent from their indigenous ancestors. Gaspar Antonio Chi, the first, was considered a traitor to his people in many ways, and a collaborator with the Spanish conquerors. Karttunen, successfully in my opinion, argues for such 'traitors' being left with little choice, given their basic instinct to survive.

The three native informants Karttunen studies are a Finnish folk singer, Larin Paraske, a Mexican woman, Doña Luz who was photographed and painted as a model by artists as typically native, and María Sabina, a Wisewoman of this century from Mexico. Particularly in María's case, her work with foreigners brought on distrust and reprisals from her own community: her house was burnt, and other items of property damaged or stolen.

The fourth section contains much briefer accounts of lives and situations of a number of other representatives of indigenous peoples, including those mentioned above and the last survivor of a Californian tribe, and Dayuma, a woman from the rain forests of Ecuador. Bob Dixon gave Karttunen accounts of his work with Chloe Grant and George Watson, two Dyirbal people from different dialects of this language. Both had white fathers. Chloe was considered too sassy - even as a child she tested out prohibitions. George was such a good worker authorities kept him at Palm Island for that alone. However, compared to the difficulties and tragedies many others of Karttunen's subjects faced, their lives have to be

considered relatively happy. In fact after a broad view of what was done to indigenous peoples in the Americas, especially in Latin America, I would feel that badly treated as they were, Australian Aborigines fared better in the cultural clash and devastation than did South and Central Americans.

Part 5 on what was won and what it cost is relatively short, about 20 pages; however her summaries at the ends of Parts 1-3 must be considered as part of this evaluation. The Epilogue is of interest, and perhaps takes a woman's viewpoint for it to be written. Many of Karttunen's subjects became alienated from their children, not always from external causes - some of the subject would have been difficult people to live with, and some gained surrogate 'children' in the foreigners who became their friends and were prepared to learn from them. Karttunen summarised what became of (or what is known about) the offspring of her subjects; some held traditional ways firmly, and others eschewed them for the Western ways.

I would class this as a fine account and analysis, to which one could return frequently for reference and consideration of the issues. Recommended.

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Polly Farmer: A Biography. By Steve Hawke. Fremantle Arts Centre Press 1994. \$19.95.

This is a remarkable book about a remarkable man. As this book clearly demonstrates 'Polly' Graham Farmer was the 'Don Bradman' of Australian Rules football. While batting in cricket is a individual act in which it is easy for a star to stand out, Farmer's achievement is all the greater for he achieved it in a team game. Hawke shows in detail how in three separate phases of his career Farmer joined a team that was sitting around the middle of the competition and made it into a premiership team. As Hawke notes (p350) 'in each case he was universally recognised by his team mates as the reason for, and the critical factor behind this lift. He was a team maker'.

Farmer dominated club and interstate football for nearly two decades, from the early 1950s to his retirement in 1971. The impressive statistics of his career in Western Australia and Victoria include playing in ten grand finals, being his clubs best and fairest player in 10 of his 19 years of senior football and numerous awards for the best player in interstate football games and carnivals. But perhaps most significantly of all, as this book so thoroughly documents, he also revolutionised Australia's indigenous football code.

This highly readable book is the result of Hawke (a self confessed football fanatic) carrying out incredibly detailed research on Farmer. Farmer's football career is covered thoroughly, from the moment of his first senior football game in 1949 at the age of 14. Hawke's research has included detailed oral histories with Farmer, former team mates, opponents and coaches. A volume of written records that would make historians of less public figures green with envy exists on Farmer's football career. Hawke has made excellent use of reports from newspapers and the 'Football Budgets' that so thoroughly document every first grade game Farmer ever played. Hawke has also been able to dig up a number of historic gems like the 'faded, tattered exercise books' that his first coach has kept to record statistics and comments on every game.

As Hawke documents, Farmer revolutionised Australian Rules by being the first to start developing the fast flowing handball style now characteristic of game. Farmer has not

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been given due credit for this innovation. Credit is usually given to Ron Barrassi's for his famous 'handball, handball, handball' instructions as coach to his apparently down and out Carlton side at half time in the 1970 VFL Grand final. However, as Hawke documents, as early as 1955 the twenty year old Farmer had worked out a distinctive style which used his extraordinary athletic abilities and strength to grab the ball in ruck duels and to fire out handballs to quick small players on the move at high speed towards goal. Until then all ruckmen had attempted to (much less accurately) palm the ball down to stationary smaller team-mates.

Hawke also documents how Farmer was way ahead of his time in sports science. Farmer, for example, studied how high jumpers and long jumpers maximised their leaps and developed his own exercises to get maximum speed and power in his first few strides off the mark. While such specialised training is common place today it was unheard of in the mid 1950s. Hawke also makes an interesting comparison between the young Farmer and a much better known story about the young Don Bradman. While Farmer spent his youth jumping up at any high object he could see when he walked the streets to try and get an extra inch of lift - Bradman spent his endlessly throwing a golf ball against a fence to hit it on the rebound with a stick to hone his eye and reflexes.

Likewise Farmer was a pioneer of what would now be called sports psychology. He developed a set of self motivation and focussing exercises that as opponents recalled made him uniquely difficult to play against. Focussed on nothing but the ball it was virtually impossible to throw him off his game with the tried and tested techniques of niggling and physical harassment. While Farmer does not mention it in this context, racial insults were obviously a major ploy tried by opposing teams to unsettle him. Clearly such methods only inspired Farmer to literally greater heights. One of the most revealing passages of the book is Polly's description (p121) of how he used 'every rotten experience of my life' to transform himself before every game 'into a person who's got the body of a man fighting for his life, but has got an intelligent capacity to handle it'. As Hawke notes, while such motivational techniques are now common place they were virtually unheard of in the 1950s and still relatively few competitors are able to develop their own methods without recourse to professional coaches or motivators. Farmer was also a trend setter by being the first in Australian football to organise himself a legal contract when he transferred from East Perth in the Western Australian Football League to Geelong in the Victorian Football League

I should stress that this is much more than a book about football. The book provides a sensitive analysis of the struggles a gifted and determined Aboriginal man faced growing up in post war Australia. Hawke does a great job setting the historical and cultural context and touches on, for example, the racism that Farmer encountered in all aspects of his life. It should be stressed, however, that racism is clearly not something that Polly focussed on in his discussions with Hawke. Indeed the only in depth comments from Farmer on racism come when he is discussing the racial vilification his two sons encountered when they played football. As Hawke stresses Farmer never became embittered towards those who tried racial taunts as a way of trying to put him off his game and that he rationalised racist remarks as an inevitable almost normal, facet of society. Farmer's methods of dealing with racism in sport no doubt were an extension of how he dealt with such matters in the rest of his life. In a revealing discussion about the abuse he and other Aboriginal children experienced Farmer notes (p25) 'If you got into a fight about every stupid comment that was made you would have four or five fights a day ... it just wasn't worth it'.

For me one of the most interesting aspects of this book is the comparison it allows one to make between Polly's career and times with that of contemporary Aboriginal Australian Rules players. It offers some fascinating insights into what has and what has not

changed for current Aboriginal players. One thing that clearly has not changed is racial taunts being common place at games. Witness, for example, the well publicised events in the last few years involving Collingwood players, supporters, and the club's then president. A very interesting contrast, however, exists between now and Polly's time in terms of the portrayal of the Aboriginality players.

After an extensive search through a vast library of newspaper clippings held by the West Australian Newspapers Hawke discovered (p130) that the words 'Aboriginal' or 'native' do not appear in connection with a piece written on Farmer until 1987. Even references to his early institutional upbringing only refer to an orphanage and not an institution for Aboriginal children. It is not surprising then that many football fans in the 1960s were unaware of Farmer's Aboriginality. The contrast is certainly stark when comparisons are made with more recent Aboriginal players. In the 1980s, for example, the Victorian Football League featured full page football action shots of the Krakouer brothers in advertisements in Melbourne papers with a caption encouraging people to come and see some Aboriginal art.

It is interesting to note that the last public appearance of Farmer noted in the book was at the 1993 Grand Final in the International Year of Indigenous People. The entertainment at half time on that day for the hundred thousand crowd and for the millions of TV viewers around Australia and the world was a spectacular celebration of Aboriginal Australia. Considering the important role model Farmer has been for subsequent Aboriginal players it was fitting that at the end of the game he presented the medal to the best player on the field to the outstanding Aboriginal player, Michael Long.

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- *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* CD-ROM. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1994. \$2000.00.

The *Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* CD-ROM (hereafter, EAA) appeared soon after the award-winning two-volume book of the same name, and is the first CD-ROM published by Aboriginal Studies Press. We concentrate here on aspects of the CD-ROM that set it apart from the book version, rather than a general review of the content common to both. As the editors point out, each entry is necessarily a summary of the information available on the particular topic. The approach they have adopted to the range and structure of the encyclopaedia has shaped the way in which the CD-ROM version of EAA presents information. The EAA CD-ROM is derived from the book version, particularly its text, rather than designed from the outset for the newer interactive technology.

According to the publisher, EAA requires a Macintosh computer with at least 5 Mb of RAM and a 14 inch colour screen supporting at least 256 colours, running System 7.1, and with Sound Manager 3.0 and QuickTime 1.5 or later installed. The RAM indicated by 'Get Info' is Suggested 1050kb, Minimum 2500kb, Preferred 3000kb, and we found that the Macintosh should have at least 3.5 Mb of free RAM available to view the *Encyclopaedia* in thousands of colours. The EAA will not run on a Macintosh with a monochrome screen, nor on a Colour Classic (the program loads, but the user cannot then get past the completely black second screen). EAA is 'driven' by an application just over 1Mb in size

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which at installation is copied to the Desktop of the Macintosh which uses the CD-ROM. Except for problems with sound channels, the EAA worked reasonably well, if sluggishly, on a Power Macintosh 7200/75, but worked better with Virtual Memory On (as against the operating instruction to switch it off). The Interactive Technology Unit, established at AIATSIS in July 1994, is said to be translating EAA 'to other platforms'.

The CD-ROM files were assembled immediately following the launch of the book version, in the period April to July 1994. Some omissions noted at the book launch have been addressed here, e.g. Lois O'Donoghue, but there is very little later material. For example, the *Native Title Act* (Cth), passed in December 1993 is not included.

The main data files are Hypercard stacks, but manipulated by a custom application, not HyperCard. The text of the book is here, and a number of maps and graphics (up to 994 pictures). The map for each of the 18 regions of the country (each requiring two graphics files), together with the graphic for each of the 22 encyclopaedia Main Subjects (Ancient History, Art, Culture, Economy, Education, Food, Health, History, Issues, Language, Literature, Media, Music, Politics, Recent History, Religion, Social Organisation, Society, Sport, Technology, Land Ownership, Law) account for most of the 66 Main Pictures of around 250kb each.

What the CD-ROM EAA can offer that no book can are moving pictures, and sound. In fact, dwarfing the textual information in storage terms, the ten largest files on the CD-ROM are movies of over 7 Mb each, the largest file being a 16 Mb file showing TV footage from the time of the 'Wave Hill walk-off'. There are 44 movie clips, from the earliest Haddon ethnocinematography to Warumpi Band, and the modern Warlpiri version of Sesame Street. The complete list of movie topics is: Bilingual, Boomerang, Bush medicine, Canoe, Djambidj, Fire Haddon, Gathering, Haddon, Many-wana, Spear, Wave Hill, bush cooking, bush housing, stone tool; Bran Nue, Freedom Rides, Kuckles, NADOC, TV, Tent embassy, Treaty, Warumpi. Building on one of the strengths of the EAA text, the inclusion of individual Aborigines as people, there are as well movies showing these individuals: Bandler F, Bonner N, Bryant G, Burnum Burnum, Dingo E, Dodson P, Foley G, Gilbert K, Goolagong E, Mumbler P, Pemulwuy, Perkins C, Randall R, Rose L, Saunders R, Strehlow T, Tudawali R, Unaipon D, Whitlam E, Yirawala, Yunupingu G, Lingiari V. There are no animated graphics.

The availability of suitable material is presumably the reason this is biased to people nationally famous in recent times (Pemulwuy, Tudawali and Unaipon being the exceptions). Space restrictions would have been the main reason for using older (monochrome) TV footage in many cases where more recent colour video would have been available and presumably have more impact. The images could have been more carefully selected in some cases, such as the clip on bilingual education, which neglects to show any bilingual education.

Apart from the movie sound tracks, there are another 230 sound bites: from some early wax cylinder recordings of song and speech, to snatches of songs, mainly from Alice Moyle's already available ethnomusical recordings. Unfortunately, none of the linguistics or tribe/ language topic entries that we explored were linked to sound bites demonstrating Australian languages. A persistent error message ('Sound channel is empty') came up whenever we attempted to use the sound buttons on the Power Macintosh 7200/75 and while linking to new information screens.

The EAA CD-ROM can be positively compared to other products generally available on the CD-ROM educational market, for example *Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia* which has seven pictures and one article relating to Australian Aboriginal people, and one sound grab, being of a didgeridoo, next to a picture of something only vaguely resembling

a didgeridoo. *Compton's* makes no mention of Torres Strait Islanders. As an educational or general research product in this context, the EAA is an outstanding contribution to the field of Australian Studies and would make a useful purchase for home, for school or for a university library. As a browsing tool, it offers a visually attractive and comprehensive summary scan of the information that is available on indigenous Australia, and it is not surprising it has won, for instance, the Australian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association award for the best multimedia work (reference section).

Having established such a benchmark in the field of Australian Studies, it is now a challenge for Aboriginal Studies Press to ensure that future editions achieve best practice standards in audio-visual technology, and to ensure that future editions fully use the capacity of the medium. For example, it is possible to use such technology to engagingly and interactively present simultaneously spoken or signed and written Australian language, or a sequence of graphics mapping the spread or retreat of some feature through the decades. An example of how this can be done is in Nick Thieberger's set of HyperCard stacks 'Australia's languages 1.0.1*', which has been available from AIATSIS on a Macintosh diskette.

Missing from EAA are the features the consumer has come to expect of multimedia products, features where the CD-ROM has advantage over a book. And, to be sure, the book has advantages: the pictures and graphics are of a higher quality, it can be read while travelling, and doesn't require expensive machinery. In common with the earliest informational CD-ROMs, EAA has no hypertext links, so that to follow up a cross-reference the reader is no better off than with the printed book version. Searches may be made on entry headwords (supplemented, for the Tribal/Language index, by a good and much-needed Soundex-like close-guess capability), but there is no general text search capability. There is no facility for exporting text, or to allow text to be pasted into another document. Nor is there any use of animation for illustrating concepts (such as say, kinship or land use). These could be built into future editions to ensure that industry standards and market expectations are met, without a reliance on the specific content as the major selling point.

Some useful features assist a users search for relevant entries. One is a list of recently visited entries and a 'Go Back' command, which function rather like bookmarks. However the list is not under user control, and is cleared each time the application is quit. A more powerful feature, which may be called up at any point, is a list of entries with content related the one being viewed. This however sometimes stretches the notion of what is related. For instance, Arrernte Enterprises links to a Hobart hot potato business. Bold type is used to indicate a link which can be followed by a mouse click (but bibliographic references also present author's name in bold and these prove not to be links). A future edition should include an indexing facility equivalent to *Compton's* topic tree, which would enable the reader to locate themselves and their topic quest in the information structure of the encyclopaedia as a whole. Without such an aid, readers tend to get lost at a low level of information and find it difficult to 'climb a hill and get your bearings'. Such features would assist the reader in using the CD-ROM according to its strengths. The EAA Time Line attempts an organisation of varying detail, but its information is only accessed at the finest level, and the 'Go Back' returns only to the main Time Line menu.

A future edition might also incorporate a facility for integrating local information in with the material in EAA: a feature with appeal especially in the setting of a local Aboriginal community, but with broader potential using the emerging multimedia capacity of Internet. The localisation ability would allow the suppression of material inappropriate

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to the locality, such as images of the recently deceased and allow for more creative engagement with the information.

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and
Kevin Keefe

The Land Still Speaks: Review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Maintenance and Development Needs and Activities. Compiled by Dr Graham McKay. Commissioned Report No. 44, National Board of Employment, Education and Training, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, February 1996. xxvii + 290. ISBN 0 644 45945 X. Free on application to Deetyd.

This review was conducted during 1994 to obtain an overview of the types of activities which were being carried out at that time to maintain and develop the languages of the indigenous people of Australia. It was hoped that by examining successful activities in Australia and overseas, a picture could be obtained of what factors contributed to that success, so that future intervention activities could be targeted more effectively. (p. xix)

After introductory matters – acknowledgments, project team and executive summary etc. (pp. iii-xxvii), there are six sections:

1. Background to the Review, discussing the loss of indigenous languages, and the history of language contact in Australia, creoles and Aboriginal English, other reports and language maintenance intervention in Australia.
2. A Study of Language Maintenance in Four Communities, these being Borroloola and Barkly Tableland, Northern Territory; Gumbaynggir People and Language near Kempsey, New South Wales; Jaru at Yaruman (Ringers Soak), East Kimberley, Western Australia; and Saibai Island and Torres Strait, Far North Queensland.
3. A Survey of Language Maintenance Activities in Australia and Overseas, covering briefly a number of other areas in Australia, organisations involved in language maintenance or teaching, translating and interpreting, etc., and language programs in New Zealand, in Canada on Mohawk and other languages, in Mexico the Oaxaca Native Literacy Project, and vernacular literacy programs in Papua New Guinea.
4. Literature and Discussion, covering selected literature on language maintenance in Australia and elsewhere.
5. Principles and Recommendations Arising from the Review.
6. Appendices, References, Index, including a list of persons consulted and a list of respondents to survey and enquiries.

The prospect of reading a government report can be daunting, but the main text of this one is eminently readable. It is even, for those interested in particular areas of Australia or elsewhere, eminently easy to dip into. Content is solid, but not inaccessible, with a wealth of information included. The cynic might wonder if the government, having put out the money to commission this report, will ever take up and apply the recommendations (and of course changes of government create further hiatuses). It is to be hoped that the report will engender the right sort of listening, action and funding by governments. I say listening, because it is firmly stressed in a number of places that all work of maintenance or revival of Aboriginal languages must be organised in conjunction with the speakers of, or owners

of such languages, i.e. with full co-operation of Aboriginal communities. This is not always accomplished, nor is it easily accomplished, given the past history of white intervention in Aboriginal families and communities to suppress (directly or indirectly) the use of Aboriginal languages.

Although such a report is not basically a history, it summarises the main features of Aboriginal-White interaction as it pertains to language use, language recording, and language maintenance or loss, and has an excellent overview of these supported by extensive references. While it is possible that some details do not apply in 1996, the broad sweep of the picture drawn is correct and makes a solid basis for the principles given and recommendations made.

The report defines various types of language maintenance activities, focussing mostly on language maintenance and language revival sub-types 1 and 2, as defined on p. 19:

Language maintenance: all generations full speakers

Language revival:

1. Language revitalisation: generation of (older) speakers left – children likely good passive knowledge
2. Language renewal: oral tradition but no full speakers – children likely little or no passive knowledge
3. Language reclamation: no speakers or partial speakers – relying on historical sources to provide knowledge of the language

Language awareness: non-speakers learning about the languages where it is not possible to learn and use the language – vestiges only, documentation poor

Language learning: non-speakers learning as L2.

Section 2 describes language maintenance activities in four communities, and Section 3 surveys language maintenance and development activities in Australia and overseas. Together these sections give valuable information on a wide range of language maintenance activities, with a wealth of useful ideas which could be applied in specific circumstances. A number of these ideas are not so much dependent on funding as on community attitudes and activities. Very significant factors promoting language maintenance are relative cohesiveness and isolation of communities. A factor that weakens language maintenance is the common (but not quite universal) cultural trait in many Aboriginal communities of the use of the most widely understood language in a group with varied language background; this biases interaction towards either a creole or English, reducing the opportunities of using and promoting the traditional language of an area. Counteracting this in a few communities is a preference for the language belonging to the place; in some communities this has meant that Aborigines coming in from other areas abandon their original language in favour of the language that belongs to the particular country.

Section 4 on literature on language maintenance covers work by a dozen writers, equally divided between those with experience in Australia and those who have worked elsewhere, and raises a number of provocative issues. It is suggested that some factors applying in larger groups overseas are not those which may operate in Aboriginal groups. McKay draws the following conclusion (p. 219-220):

(A) language is not an object with independent existence. It exists as it is used in real contexts and situations by real speakers, who also speak or come in contact with other languages. A language 'dies' or 'is lost' when its speakers choose to abandon it for another language. Any consideration of language maintenance, then, must take into account the perceptions and needs of speakers, the situation they find themselves in, and the other languages they are using or in contact with, as well as their aims and intentions. ...

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A language is maintained in the truest sense, only when it is used on a regular basis in interaction between members of various generations in the community. ... It is important to recognise that different language varieties must be learned in their various specific settings, ... and that languages are dynamic, adapting to new situations and changing if they are really 'alive'.

A language is maintained only where it is seen by its speakers to have (future-oriented) function and purpose and value. The language may function as a communication channel or barrier, as means of expressing social identity, or as a vehicle for cultural content.

Principles and recommendations are given at appropriate places in the various chapters, and also are given in sequence in Section 5. Amongst the points made in the volume is the point that even when a language revival program appears to fail to revive use of a language, the spin-offs in self-esteem and pride in culture, which lead to far better coping with the world of today, are worth the expenditure of effort and money.

It is to be hoped that the Government authorities have studied and will study this important, weighty but eminently readable document and will act on the recommendations made.

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Herb Wharton, *Cattle Camp. Murrie Drovers and Their Stories*. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994, pb, pp. 196

Rita Huggins and Jackie Huggins, *Auntie Rita*, Aboriginal Studies Press 1994, pp. x, 157; b&w photos. \$19.95.

Herbie Wharton's *Cattle Camp* is a satisfying book of drovers' stories, not quite a history, more than a yarn, full of life, passion and adventure. Wharton writes in the terms of his achievements, an elder, an adventurer, a highly skilled worker, a mid century Aboriginal man bonded to the land, a fine yarn-spinner, a word craftsman.

Wharton interviewed (or yarned with) nine Queensland cattle people, - 'people' because three of the drovers are women. The narratives are sometimes in the first person, sometimes the third. Wharton's style is conversational but never trivial. He uses an apparently casual technique, one further refined by Jackie Huggins, of interpolating into the transcription, informative or reflective remarks of his own. His account of Alf Barton's story, for example, begins like a novel,

'What have you been doing all your life?', I asked Alfie Barton as we stood talking in the doorway of the Kalkadoon Tribal Museum...

A few lines later, Wharton assumes the role of narrator,

We watched the smoke rise from the huge smoke-stack at the rich copper and lead mines of the Isa, and as it drifted away I remarked how once there would have been only the smoke from cooking and hunting fires.

Then the microphone is handed to Alf Barton,

Since I've retired I've never stopped working, mapping and recording ancient Aboriginal sites, keeping our culture and history alive...

Later in the conversation Wharton adds an explanation,

It might be helpful to explain the differences between a drover and a stockman on the big and sheep and cattle stations...

The conversations, one to a chapter, turn on history, cultural revival, employment, racism, the cattle industry, the spiritual world. They never lose interest, Wharton's control of pace and direction is never less than sophisticated.

Evidently *Dreamtime Nightmares* was a model for the style of this book, although Wharton achieves a more relaxed integration of subject and author than did Rosser. Jackie Huggins in her biography of her mother, almost universally known as Auntie Rita, finds a less conventional and more innovatory solution to the problem of separating the voices in oral history transcriptions.

Huggins sets out to tell her mother's life from her own memories, in her own words. The narrative begins, in the first chapter,

I was only a a small child when we were taken from my born country.

and ends with the whimsical reflections of old age in the last,

When I think of my life now, although the lives of Aboriginal people have always been hard, I wouldn't change being Aboriginal for the world - except, as Ernie Dingo says, at four o'clock in the morning trying to hail a taxi in Brisbane.

This was the problem which Huggins faced as she spoke with her mother:

In our talking are reflected both the things we have in common and the differences that arise between two Aboriginal women a generation apart; one born in 1921 and raised on a mission, the other born 'free' in the 1950s.

The passage is in italics in the original because Huggins, pondering the problem of how to add her own reflections without detracting from her mother's narrative, hit upon the clever idea of italicising her own commentary about her mother's words. The idea is in essence simple, and has antecedents in other oral histories, but Huggins has made an important innovation in allowing herself to contribute, not extra editorial information addressed to the reader, but reflections addressed to her mother. She thus renders the printed oral history in a form acceptable to the speaker, while allowing herself a voice independent of the mere collector and editor. She writes in the introduction,

Now I am not speaking for my mother but to her, with her, and about her.

Huggins chooses the moments to step away from the taperecorder with care. Sometimes she is the pupil:

Returning to my mother's born country as she refers to it complemented my own sense of identity and belonging and my pride in this. ... I began to gain an insight into and understanding of her obvious attachment and relationship to her country...

Sometimes she she is the committed observer:

I will not force an entry but I have done my damndest to get inside her pain [of her mother's ill-treatment when a young woman at Cherbourg]

Sometimes Huggins' voice is of the middle generation. Referring to Auntie Rita's life as a single mother she reflects:

All I want to say to you is that it's okay. All your children and grandchildren love you, understand you and forgive you because being a single, Black and penniless pregnant woman in your time was your greatest test and punishment.

The innovatory methodology exactly suits Huggins' compassion for and understanding of her mother. It matches the narration of Rita's personal history, such as her return with her daughter to a station she worked on as a young woman. Through the 'double voice' Huggins can turn reminiscences about the One People of Australia League into a historical discussion; she can analyse, arguing with her mother, substantive issues like Aboriginal education. Probably the collaborative technique developed here will work best when the two

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people involved know each other well enough to speak plainly, but it should be a model for many a collaborative oral history of the future. *Auntie Rita* is an exciting, committed and loving book.

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Bruising the red earth: Ochre mining and ritual in Aboriginal Tasmania. edited by Antonio Sagona. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1994. Pp.xviii+194, Black and white plates, colour plates, bibliography, index. \$39.95 p.b.

Just as a histologist's stain makes it possible to examine otherwise invisible structures of organic tissues under a microscope, so the movement of goods in antiquity reveals dimensions of prehistoric societies that are difficult to reconstruct from the day-to-day refuse on occupation sites that is the usual fare of archaeologists. The prospect of being able to examine prehistoric trade, customary exchange systems, social boundaries and regional inter-connections has attracted some notable studies of the distribution and petrology of ground-edge axes and grindstones (Binns and McBryde 1972; McBryde 1987) and of pearl shell and baler shell (Akerman and Stanton 1994; Mulvaney 1976) in Australia and of obsidian in the south-west Pacific (e.g.. Ambrose 1975; Kirch 1988; Specht 1981). Of all the materials which lend themselves to such approaches in Australia, red ochre has had the least sustained attention though its potential has long been recognized by prehistorians (Clark 1976; David et al. 1993; Mulvaney 1976). Like grindstones and stone axes, red ochre is amenable to geochemical or petrological sourcing. And unlike these materials it is frequently found in archaeological excavations in dated contexts offering the promise of a time dimension to any study of spatial distribution. There is a great dearth of information however about the process of ochre mining, its social context, and geochemical and petrological signatures of the major sources. This is what makes this study by Antonio Sagona and colleagues so interesting and so important.

Bruising the red earth deals with the celebrated Toolumbunner ochre mine in the Gog Ranges of central northern Tasmania. The mine was recorded in use by ethnographer G. A. Robinson in 1828, amid the disruption and dislocation of Aboriginal society brought on by European settlement, and details of its location were lost over the next hundred years. In a splendid piece of detective work Lloyd Robson and Brian Plomley relocated the mine in 1982 and a modest program of excavation was initiated by Bill Culican, but all three died as the project got underway. Fortunately, Sagona (Culican's successor at the University of Melbourne) carried the study forward, resulting in this attractive book containing a collection of essays by different authors, edited by Sagona. These give an account of the rediscovery of the Toolumbunner mine and details of its geological and botanical setting, report on a series of archaeological excavations carried out there, and present an analysis of stone artefacts recovered during those excavations and on the geochemistry of Toolumbunner ochre. Two wider ranging essays by Sagona and by Sagona and John Webb summarise ethnographic evidence relating to use of the Toolumbunner source (all of it from the journals of Robinson), attempt to set the use of red ochre into its ritual and cognitive context and provide a useful review of the use of red ochre elsewhere in Australia and in the Old World. Sagona attempts to supplement the rather meagre information on Tasmania with a discussion of colour perception amongst humans and the symbolism of colour in

various parts of the world. Structuralists will find much to their taste in this section. Many archaeologists will find an extended section on the metaphysics of red ochre out of place here.

Detailed geological mapping by Webb of the Department of Geology at LaTrobe University shows the ochre deposit at Toolumbunner to be a bed of strongly ferruginised sandstone. Aboriginal women dug a series of long trenches and tunnels across these beds to extract the ochre and this was then processed nearby using distinctive large disc-shaped 'Ballywinne' stones to 'bruise' and pulverise the ochre. The archaeological investigations carried out by Culican and by Sagona focussed on the most recent of these cuttings and on the large spoil heap created by the processing of this material. Artefacts of green bottle glass were common through this spoil and it appears that, despite the prominence of Toolumbunner in the nineteenth century ethnography, the major period of use of the site was in the contact period. This is supported by petrological studies which show that Toolumbunner ochre is not amongst the red ochres found on prehistoric occupation sites in Tasmania. The authors suggest that the structure of the ceremonial exchange cycle and the status of Toolumbunner ochre may have changed in the contact period (there are echoes of D. F. Thomson's conclusions about exchange in Arnhem Land here). Use of the site however extends well before this period. Here Sagona and colleagues had the sort of luck that field archaeologists dream of. Buried by spoil from the most recent mining activity, they uncovered the sealed entrance to an earlier mining tunnel. Four radiocarbon dates on charcoal from the fill show that ochre mining at Toolumbunner was underway by 330-480 years BP (Readers will have to turn to the notes on page 166 to find the laboratory sample codes for the radiocarbon determinations).

Webb's section on the petrology and geochemistry of the Toolumbunner ochres is a landmark study. He provides what as far as I am aware is the only overview of the diagenesis of red ochre deposits currently available. He distinguishes three types of red ochre in Tasmania: specular vein haematite, beds of ferruginised sandstone, and ochres that originate in laterite. He takes a conventional approach to this, beginning with petrology and then - at least for Toolumbunner - analysing the geochemical composition of the ochre¹. A petrological examination of ochres in the collections of the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, provides the basis for a first order statement on the distribution of ochre from the various Tasmanian sources, showing that specular haematite from the Mt Housetop/Penguin Creek source was exchanged over distances of 140-200 km into northeastern and central Tasmania. Unfortunately none of the specimens held in the QVM collections are identifiable as Toolumbunner ochre. The authors did not extend their analysis to include ochre excavated from sites such as Warragarra, on the upper Mersey, or sites in southwestern Tasmania. There is great unrealised potential here to add time depth to the distribution patterns outlined by Webb, and also to test the proposition that the major phase of use of Toolumbunner is in the contact period. It is also a pity to leave the Toolumbunner study in isolation from LaTrobe University's *Southern Forests Archaeological Project*, one of the most ambitious and coordinated programmes of archaeological investigation carried out anywhere in the country.

¹ Appendix 1 gives major and minor oxide composition and trace element data for the Toolumbunner ochre. It is not stated what analytical method was employed here, though the presentation of the results suggests that it was X-Ray fluorescence. Presumably these details are in the companion volume that we learn is to be published separately, at the request of MUP, as a *Research Monograph* of the Department of History, University of Melbourne. This was unavailable at the time this review was written. It does MUP no credit to divide a study in this fashion.

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The editing and production of this volume leave much to be desired, something one does not normally expect from a quality press such as MUP. The work is sprinkled with typographic and typesetting errors (e.g., flinders Island, flinders Ranges, Devenport) and some bibliographic entries are incomplete (e.g., year of publication is omitted for Stern). The stratigraphic plans could have been much clearer. Figure 29.2 is just about the worst artefact illustration I have ever seen. I must admit I am also puzzled at the lack of any reference to the work of G. Culican (1986) (Bill Culican's son) on the Toolumbunner material.

Notwithstanding this, *Bruising the Red Earth* is a very interesting book. Sagona and colleagues have made a good start in investigating the structure and chronology of a celebrated ethnographic ochre mine. Along the way they present a very useful review of the world literature on red ochre, an excellent study of the diagenesis and distribution of Tasmanian ochres, and as detailed an account of the operation of the Toolumbunner mine as we are likely to get unless more documentary evidence is hidden away in contemporary historical records somewhere. The monograph provides a solid basis for future research on Aboriginal trade and exchange in Tasmania and will be of value to anyone interested in prehistoric mining, exchange systems and the archaeology of red ochre.

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Language and culture in Aboriginal Australia, edited by Michael Walsh and Colin Yallop. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1993, pp.xvii, 226. References, \$24.95pb.

This book addresses a major resource gap in Australian Aboriginal studies: the urgent need for accessible, up-to-date information about Aboriginal languages and language issues for non-specialist readers, attractively and intelligently presented. The gap is too large for just one volume to fill, but this collection of fifteen well-chosen papers provides an excellent starting point.

A sad legacy of the relatively brief but extreme period of monolingual English dominance in Australia is the way many people feel intimidated both by the multiplicity and complexity of Aboriginal languages, and by the specialised knowledge and terminology of linguistics. Yet many speakers of Aboriginal languages and many linguists want to help a much wider range of people get to know and understand more about these important matters. All of the selections in this book are by language specialists, whose genuine desire to present their work in an open and non-intimidating way produces a refreshing clarity of style and organisation. Each selection is followed by discussion questions and suggestions for further reading; while these naturally reflect the particular interests of each author, they considerably enhance the book's usefulness as a teaching resource.

Chapter 1 (Walsh) gives a necessarily brief but comprehensive overview of the situation of Australian Aboriginal languages and current issues surrounding them, covering most of the initial questions and misconceptions that newcomers to this field often have. Chapter 2 (Yallop) introduces the structure and grammatical characteristics of these languages in a non-technical but illuminating way. These two chapters with their discussion questions should be useful across a wide range of educational applications in Aboriginal studies and language skills courses at tertiary and even upper secondary levels; they cover material without which no Australian's education should be considered complete.

The next three chapters appropriately deal with some of the harsh realities of language loss and its social and political contexts. Chapter 3 (Troy) portrays early communication between colonisers and indigenous people of the Sydney area, and Chapter 4 (Crowley) covers with commendable thoroughness what is known about Tasmanian languages in the past, and the language situation of Aboriginal Tasmanians now. Chapter 5 (Sharpe) discusses the survival of the Bundjalung language in New South Wales, and issues related to teaching and learning it.

Many Aboriginal communities are still actively using their traditional languages, in ways that express and promote distinctive aspects of their social and cultural life. Chapter 6 (Bavin) describes how young children learn about important parts of Warlpiri life through the Warlpiri language. Highly specialised forms of several languages, including 'respect' languages, initiation speech, and sign languages, are introduced in Chapter 7 (Alpher). Chapter 8 (Walsh) covers in an accessible way another intellectually challenging aspect of Aboriginal languages: how their grammatical systems classify things, and what this can tell us about how their speakers view the world.

An urgent concern of many Aboriginal language groups is the production of good dictionaries for their languages, and Chapter 9 (Simpson) is a thorough and well-organised coverage of different kinds of dictionaries and how they are put together. This chapter will

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interest many general readers and prospective linguistic fieldworkers, and may be a helpful resource in courses for Aboriginal language workers.

The multifarious and often violent impact of English and its speakers is an unavoidable part of the Aboriginal language situation today, and the next four chapters deal with several different aspects of this. Chapter 9 (Harris) provides a general introduction to pidgins and creoles that would be useful in a variety of educational settings. This necessarily simple account is complemented by Chapter 10 (Rhydwen), which articulates some of the complex political and ethical issues involved in creole literacy programs. Chapter 11 (Christie) explores the non-Aboriginal uses of English to support and promote racist violence; the importance of examining the use of language by dominant groups to vilify and oppress others is being recognised internationally, and has been highlighted in Australia by Fesl (1988, 1994).

Chapter 12 (Eades) takes the innovative form of a semi-fictional case study of crosscultural miscommunication resulting in an Aboriginal woman's being convicted and fined for a crime she did not commit. This case study, a useful educational tool for anyone teaching or studying intercultural communication, encourages readers to match specific examples of miscommunication in the story with ethnographic information about Aboriginal interaction patterns in the following section.

The final two chapters provide an appropriate conclusion to the volume. Chapter 14 (Rumsey) concisely explains the complex links between land, language, and group identity, and why these relationships have been so difficult for non-Aboriginal people to understand. Chapter 15 (Black) is a lively and positive account of language and cultural maintenance activities in changing times, with a thoughtful presentation of relevant issues; this chapter should also be widely used in teaching about Aboriginal languages today.

The editors' long experience in the Aboriginal languages field has enabled them to assemble an extensive and varied range of contributions from other leading specialists, none of whom avoid difficult issues. The result is a timely and thought-provoking collection that should be of interest to professionals in linguistics and Aboriginal studies as well as to students and general readers whose needs it seeks to address. Obviously, such a volume cannot include everything, and most readers will think of topics they would like to see included. At the top of this reviewer's wish list would be contributions from Aboriginal linguists and language workers, since non-specialists could read this book without realising how much important language work is being done by Aboriginal people themselves in all parts of the country. Its usefulness would also be enhanced by an index, too often considered unnecessary for collections of this kind.

The attractive format and careful presentation reflect well on the editors and Aboriginal Studies Press; the sturdiness and very reasonable price of the paperback should find favour with students and teachers. The book is highly recommended as an indispensable resource

for a wide range of people teaching or studying Aboriginal studies or introductory Australian linguistics; and as accessible and stimulating reading for anyone interested in language and culture in contemporary Australian life.

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Oodgeroo. By Kathie Cochrane, with a contribution by Judith Wright. UQP. Brisbane, 1994, pp.233. Drawings by Ron Hurley and black and white plates. \$16.95 p.b.

Kathie Cochrane's *Oodgeroo* has received considerable critical attention in the review columns. More often than not the point of view expressed told us more about the reviewer than the reviewed. Perhaps this is always to be expected but it seems to have been accentuated in this instance - the first telling of the story of a not inconsiderable person, Kath Walker who later became Oodgeroo of the Tribe Noonuccal, Custodian of the land Minjerribah. So, rather than make further comment I decided to talk to the author, Kathie Cochrane.

JC - Kathie, one of your reviewers described the work as a 'Testament of Friendship'. How do you react to that?

KC - Well, I think it is the only way it could be described. The book wouldn't have been written if it had been anything else. I wouldn't have undertaken it on any other terms.

JC - Does that mean then that it was to prove a limiting factor?

KC - I don't know what you mean by a 'limiting factor'.

JC - I simply mean that if you're friendly with someone you will treat only selected parts rather than the whole.

KC - I tried not to do that. I think I know what you mean, Did I deliberately leave things out? No, I did not do that. I did, however, try to be tactful. I tried not to say a lot about things that were painful to her.

JC - When Billy Marshall-Stoneking did that review in *Overland* was he correct when he says, in commenting on the lack of personal detail, drama and anger in your book, Perhaps this is another kind of world we are looking in on; a world where it would have been improper or impolite to pry too much beneath the surface of the poet's life.

Are we looking in on a very different world?

KC - I think that's being a bit hard on me. I did skate over a few things and I did omit the worst of Denis's behaviour out of a feeling of friendship. Remember, she was alive when I was writing.

JC - An important point which a lot of people have forgotten or chosen to forget.

KC - I suppose they have. She was reading it as I was writing and I think she was a little hurt at some of the things I put in.

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- JC - I was going to ask you what her comments were when she read the first complete draft.
- KC - There were one or two things where she said, 'Do you have to put this in?' 'Yes,' I said, 'I have to. You asked me to write it and I have to say these things.' Honestly, I do have to admit that I did not put in a lot of things that would have been very hurtful, but I didn't leave out anything that would distort the picture.
- JC - So the vital things were in but some of the elements were omitted.
- KC - For example, I told the readers how Denis joined the Black Panther movement and became violent. But, I didn't tell them how he broke a beer bottle on the back of his bike and went for somebody ... That's the sort of omission I confess to.
- JC - So, do you think it is this sort of omission that some of the reviewers have been looking for? They're saying, and I think Jim Griffin and perhaps Rodney Hall, both mentioned that the anger and drama surrounding Kath/Oodgeroo didn't seem to appear in your book. Are they really perhaps saying that you have provided us with a sanitised version?
- KC - I suppose it was a sanitised version. Rodney hasn't made any direct criticism of the book as far as I know. I'm a bit inclined to argue about the 'drama' bit because her whole life was a drama and I think that comes out in the book. Her life is a remarkable and very dramatic story and I think most people will realise that.
- JC - Let's go back to that bit in the Preface where you say that Oodgeroo pointed to Vivian's notes and said, 'These will help you write a biography.' Why do you think she wanted you to write it?
- KC - I don't think she particularly wanted me to write it. This came about because at that particular time in her life she was visiting us a lot. She was coming to Brisbane for ATSIC meetings and she stayed with us when she was on her way to Sydney working on materials for teachers at the University of New South Wales. She was with us more often than she had been for some time and one day she happened to say, 'I don't suppose anyone will write my biography now.'
- [The 'now' referred to Vivian's death. He had been a great collector of papers and he had taken over when others had given up the task in despair. Julie Anne Schwenke had done the spadework for a Ph.D but had become frustrated and most of the papers had been deposited in the Fryer Library.]
- She said this with a sort of sadness in her voice and rather foolishly I said, 'Perhaps, I could have a go.' That's all I said. She didn't respond at all but the next time we went down to Cleveland to pick her up from the Stadbrooke Water taxi she had this manilla folder full of Vivian's notes. She laid them on my lap and said, 'There you are. See what you can do with that lot!' This was quite something for me to think about. She really did want someone to have a go and my few foolish words had turned that someone into me. I knew I didn't have too much difficulty in putting pen to paper but I seriously wondered whether I could really serve her needs by telling her story. I knew that we (that is my husband Bob and I) had known her for a very long time and that we had worked closely together in the Civil Rights Movement but I didn't think I could do anything about the poetry so I decided to write to Judith to ask if she would be happy to write a chapter. That was the beginning of the affair. It didn't originate from my desire to do it. In fact, I was a very reluctant author.
- JC - You might have been reluctant but you could see point in doing it for more than reasons of friendship?
- KC - She wanted someone to do it. I simply wondered if I dare be the instrument.
- JC - How do you think it turned out in the end? Was it the sort of thing you wanted it to be?

- KC - Pretty much. She didn't want a long, scholarly treatise so she told me and I'm sure she meant it. Kath wanted a book to be readily available especially to young aboriginal people and to young white people.
- JC - I can remember her talking to me about it and saying, 'I want it at a reasonable price because the young buggers can't afford an expensive one!'
- KC - She certainly wanted that and I think it has turned out to be reasonable not only because of its size but because UQP got some grants which helped to subsidise it. Kath would have approved of the reasonable price and she would have approved of its length too.
- JC - How did you react to the editorial additions to the manuscript?
- KC - Margaret (Kennedy) worked very hard on the book. She asked and got many rewrites. She kept saying to me, very properly, 'It's your book', so I never felt she overdid things. What I appreciated most was the energy she put into the lay-out and appearance of the book. I was astonished that so many photos were used with such good design effect. It was Margaret who agreed to the use of Aboriginal motifs by Ron Hurley. I didn't dare to ask for the reproduction of Kath's poems throughout the text. I thought it would cost too much.
- JC - But remember that while it did cost a good deal, most of that cost went back to Oodgeroo's estate via other publishers. What about the collection of her prose?
- KC - You mean her speeches? That was entirely Margaret's idea and it involved a hell of a lot of extra work in chasing them down. We had a funny incident over the final one - the very last public speech Kath made - which was given at the Sydney Opera House on 6 June 93. I wrote and rang and beseeched the ABC for details; I even wrote to David Hill. Margaret chased them too but all we got was a runaround. Then Margaret had the bright idea of ringing the Opera House Trust. They responded straightaway, 'Yes. We can help. We've got a video but we're afraid it will cost you \$10!'
- JC - When did you first hear Kath's poetry? Did you hear it before it was published?
- KC - I heard some of it way back when she was struggling to be a poet and although I knew little, I recognised that she needed help because she was inclined to write in the style of Paterson or Lawson! She didn't seem to be getting much help from the Realist Writers. They might have been telling her the right sort of things but they weren't really making themselves understood. Once she got into contact with James Devaney there seemed to be a blossoming of her talent because he made her understand that she wasn't restricted by either content or style.
- JC - And how did she feel - can you remember the situation - when the first volumes, *We are going* and *the Dawn is at Hand*, appeared?
- KC - She never said this is going to change the world.
- JC - Well, do you think that she realised that words were going to be her strongest weapons?
- KC - She realised that long before the poems were ever published and I still think that was shy she had such a desperate desire to be a poet. I think she saw poetry as the one way she could use words to really get to people. She knew she could talk. She only had to get on a platform and away she went, never lost for a word. But that's a very different thing from getting to a wider community and she obviously saw poetry as a way to do this. That was a clear purpose of hers when we first met back in the fifties.
- JC - How about her relationship with Judith Wright?
- KC - That came much later. She met Judith after the publication of *We are going* in '64. As time went by her relationship with Judith became extremely warm. I'd describe it as a beautiful friendship.

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- JC - We were talking about Bobbi Sykes earlier. She wrote you a most appreciative note on behalf of her organisation when you handed over to her all your royalties from the book. Bobbi has said, 'Oodgeroo was very canny about knowing how far she was allowed to go, then drawing her bead on that line and waiting until the line slackened a bit so she could push for a little bit more.' Is this the way you saw Oodgeroo operating?
- KC - I wouldn't have thought she was quite as calculating as that. I would have said she was more impulse than plan. Over the years she learned how to be diplomatic. She was certainly impulsive when she was younger. Being diplomatic was a necessary part of her equipment. Perhaps that's what Bobbi meant. She would walk in here and say, 'I've got to ring that rotten bastard up. Do you mind if I use the phone?' She'd then pick up the phone and be as nice as could be. You couldn't be politic and stay irritated.
- JC - Your association with Kath and then Oodgeroo has been a long one. Has it been a steady one?
- KC - No. It has varied a good deal. We were very close when we were in the Civil Rights movement and when the Tribal Council was being established - when she had the bad experience of being told that she was no longer wanted. She was pretty sure this had started with Denis and she was very upset about it. After she retired to Moongalba that closeness disappeared. We kept in touch by phone. She had a way of ringing when she was troubled. She could also ring when it seemed that she had some important decision to make. I used to get quite annoyed at this. She would ring and say, 'I've got an invitation to go to America ... Do you think I ought to go?' I would say, 'It depends on you. Do you want to go? I can't tell you whether you should or shouldn't.'
- JC - Then after that period, did you get to know her again?
- KC - I wouldn't say I got to know her again. I simply got to see her more frequently. I never felt I had stopped knowing her and I don't think she ever felt as if she had stopped knowing me.
- JC - What would you say was her greatest contribution to the Aboriginal Freedom Movement?
- KC - I'd say it was her total involvement; her willingness to forgo her comfort, to give her time and energy, to fulfil all kinds of quite unreasonable demands that were placed on her. She seemed to have a compulsion to do things people asked her to do, almost as if every occasion was an opportunity she could not afford to miss. She'd go to outback schools and halls and very rarely get her proper expenses.
- JC - Was there a converse to all of this? I can remember her saying, 'Everyone seems to want a part of me'.
- KC - Everyone did want a part of her; I don't think that is an unrealistic perception at all. She was unsparing often to her own detriment. I spent many an hour trying to dissuade her from agreeing to the excessive demands but I never succeeded.
- JC - In the early days when the boys were young how did she manage?
- KC - I'll tell you. She managed much better than she made out in later years. She said things like, 'They grew up behind my back. I didn't do enough for them when they were kids.' But I was with her at the time and that's just not true. She was a bloody good mother and she did everything possible for those two sons. She and Denis were always at Loggerheads, right from the earliest days. Kath tried desperately to get him into the Merchant Navy, probably to protect them both. With Vivian there was never a problem. He was so easy to get on with. No, she did not neglect her children. I think that was one of her little fantasies in later years.

JC - After all this time how does someone like you who has been so involved in the Aboriginal movements compare the situation today, after Mabo, with the situation as you and Bob came to know it in the fifties?

KC - In the last years when Kathy was here, coming and going to ATSIC meetings and the University of New South Wales, she used to say to me, 'We never dreamt it would be like this, did we?' We would look back and think that we had come a long way. Once we looked back we could see how absolutely terrible it had been. There have been so many disappointments and there'll be plenty more to come. But it was the decade of the sixties that really pleased Kathy. In those early days she used to say, 'I have to walk away from my people'. Now this is the mark of how perceptive this woman was. She saw that then the only people who were able to do something positive for aboriginal rights were whites and she felt that she had to join them. She was all too conscious of the fact that she was being criticised and talked about by her people. 'What are you doing going with the whites?' they would say and although she felt hurt she remained resolute. By the end of that decade the way QCAATSI and more particularly FCAATSI, developed and more aboriginals moved into mainstream action, she became perceived as being at the apex of the movement. That was a source of enormous satisfaction to her in spite of all the divisiveness that went with it.

JC - At this stage Kathie what do you think of ATSIC?

KC - Not much.

JC - Is that the polite other generation talking?

KC - No. I'll elaborate. It's not what we hoped for when we were working for the treaty but as she said, 'It is something and we have to try everything. A half a loaf is better than none'.

Kath always had a seed of optimism that was indestructible. She believed that being organised in the groups represented by ATSIC - the regions - that there would be the chance of retaining some of the communal skills and developing them further. That was her hope but it wasn't the actual because ATSIC soon became dominated by white bureaucrats. I don't want you to think that people like Lois O'Donoughe and others like her aren't doing a good job but they are working under the same old handicaps. They have not got control of what is supposed to be their organisation.

So although disappointments continue and Black Australia is still given short change on opportunity and a lesser rung on the ladder than almost all other migrant groups, the optimism of Kath Walker/Oodgeroo remains and is now available to a much wider audience through an almost inadvertent Testament of Friendship.

John Collins

in conversation with author Kathie Cochrane, June 1995

Stars of Tagai: the Torres Strait Islanders. By Nonie Sharp. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1993, pp.xix + 321. Maps, line drawings, black and white plates, bibliography, glossary, index. \$24.95 p.b.

Stars of Tagai is a product of anthropologist Nonie Sharp's fifteen-year engagement with the cultural, political and spiritual life of Torres Strait. The book represents a continuation of her earlier research on cultural renewal among the indigenous peoples of our region, to

which Sharp has long been committed. She is a founding member of the journal, *Arena*, a forum for intellectuals seeking alternatives to the commodification of relationships within modern capitalism, perhaps in the reciprocal exchange relationships characteristic of indigenous societies.

Stars of Tagai, a revised and shortened version of Sharp's 1984 La Trobe Ph.D thesis, is a deeply thoughtful book and a controversial one. It is based on the oral life histories of selected Torres Strait Islander leaders (among them Eddie Koike Mabo) and on written sources, which provide a social and historical context for the life histories. Thus, the author's intellectual and political concerns and re-readings of the historical and ethnographic record situate the book among recent ethnohistories of the Pacific by Denning, Neumann and Thomas, and others.

The central theme is the 'creation and re-creation of a Torres Strait Islander identity and its expression in self-awareness as a unique sea culture' (p.5), for which the Tagai myth serves as metaphor. Implicit is the view that a society's medium of exchange creates its social relationships. In Torres Strait, acts of reciprocal exchange are identified as creating a 'unity' which continues to carry its complementary oppositions within it (p.6). Most Europeans (but not Pacific Islanders), who entered into early relationships with Torres Strait Islanders, failed to understand the nature of reciprocity, proving themselves truly 'other'.

Sharp argues for the post-contact continuity of Islander life-ways and meaning systems despite the surface appearance of change. The visual metaphor for this process of 'continuity-in-change' is the spiral, with its many manifestations in nature, which occur throughout the book. Sharp's 1984 thesis, which argued that the old had not died with the creation of the new, was a courageous academic (and political) act pre-Mabo, since it ran counter to the observations of earlier anthropologists, eager to salvage and record the cultural remnants of a virginal pre-contact period.

The introduction stresses the commonalities of traditional Torres Strait life - a primary relationship with the sea, for some a gardening culture, the seasonal voyaging, the myths, including that of Tagai, the constellation that 'usher[s] in seasonal changes and [is] a guide to voyaging and cultivating' (p.xi) and whose every appearance, like the 'serpentine' path of the sun, signals renewal. These shared categories of Islander life are crucial to Sharp's understanding and construction of the past, but to my mind they were less salient and emphasised than the cultural differences among island groups, alluded to briefly on p.31. There is little linguistic or ethnographic evidence for an environmentally-shaped pan-Islander consciousness: Eastern and Western Islanders originated from different regions and had largely different histories, traditions, religious beliefs and stories; they shared no common language nor did they intermarry; the former laid great emphasis on gardening skill, disparaging the fishing skill which provided most of the Western Islanders' food supply. Although there was curiosity and some knowledge about the inhabitants of distant islands, pre-contact Islanders in their daily lives, inasmuch as one can retrieve them, paid little heed to other Islanders with whom they were not at war and did not consider themselves the same people. A self-conscious, shared identity as Torres Strait Islanders developed only this century in response to the Queensland Government's increasingly paternalistic control and a common experience in the fisheries. On the other hand, the potential conditions for shaping a pan-Islander identity always existed and Sharp rightly claims that there were always 'persons with the special understanding and originality to act as mediating or bridging people' (p.5). In the past, these were traders in goods; today they are traders in ideas.

The book has ten chapters, including an introduction and epilogue, comprising four main parts:

Part 1 introduces the main themes of the nineteenth-century 'encounter' among competing world views and cultural norms, focussing on the experience of the Murray Islanders. Here Sharp establishes the fundamental importance of reciprocity, 'the key principle in the creation and re-creation of identities as diversities-in-unity' (p.xi);

Part elucidates the ordering of the Murray Islanders' world within cosmic cycles of movement: the repetitions of seasons, winds, stars, tides, planting and harvestings; and their social correlates in clan identities and exchange voyages. Here we learn how certain gifted individuals, 'persons of originality', 'liv[e] the old and the new' (p.79);

Part 3 discusses the major forces for change and renewal in Torres Strait: the arrival of Christianity; government schooling; the placing of Islanders 'under the [Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium] Act[s]'; increasing segregation; and work on the 'Company boats';

Part 4 re-examines five events as significant expressions in the quest for an autonomous contemporary Torres Strait Islander identity. Sharp has already published accounts of each of these, but here they assume a greater effect through cumulation: the maritime strike of 1936, which led to the legal recognition of Islanders as a separate group; World War II, in which over 700 Islanders joined the Australian army (at low rates of pay) and for the first time lived and worked alongside Europeans; the 1970s border dispute between Australia and Papua New Guinea, which was adroitly exploited by senior Islander politicians for their own and their people's benefit; the 1980s political sovereignty movement, (which has since reappeared in a number of different guises); and the extraordinary 1992 High Court Mabo decision, in which Sharp herself played an important advisory role for the Murray Island plaintiffs.

Sharp was particularly struck by the continuity of *Malora Celar* 'Malo's Law' within Murray Islanders' Christianity. The sacred Law of Malo-Bomai, the great Miriam culture heroes, laid down precepts for the regulation of Miriam social conduct but was thought to have disappeared. Descriptions of how this 'imperative of Meriam life' (p.49) became incorporated into Christian practice recur as Sharp's primary example of 'continuity-in-change'.

Sharp has deliberately focussed on selected aspects of Islander culture to display to a predominantly non-Islander audience. Here are recounted the life narratives of ten Torres Strait 'speculative philosophers' (p.11), spiritual and cultural leaders who successfully integrated the modern with the traditional and transmitted their vision to others. Uncovering and explaining to non-Islanders the spiritual nature of their vision demands a metaphorical and metaphysical vocabulary which has apparently made some anthropologists and sociologists uneasy. As Sharp admits, her study 'departs from the mainstream of cross-cultural studies in both its substance and its form' (p.xii).

I have a number of problems with the book. Clearly, many aspects of the old have continued, though under different guises, as the anthropologist Judith Fitzpatrick demonstrated with respect to mortuary practices in her 1980 Ph.D thesis, for example. Indeed, an analogue of the Islander's syncretic culture is their creolised *lingua franca*, which expresses an Islander worldview through lexicon borrowed mainly from English. I also applaud Sharp's decision to present the admirable and successful in Islander culture, although it is a partial view, as Sharp herself implicitly acknowledges. While a minority of gifted people have found 'an integrative balance between the old and the new under conditions of rapid and enforced culture change' (p.xvi) and serve as exemplars, they remain a small minority.

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Some claims appear to me to be unsubstantiated: for example, that *em* refers to 'the undivided power of the eye of the storm' (p.xxii) or 'the stored up energies of the "other side"' (p.6) or 'the singular, non-reciprocal, the wild, the "other condition"' (p. 301). *Em* is simply the Torres Strait Creole third person singular pronoun, which in the eastern dialect has only animate or pseudo-animate reference. It therefore appears out of place among the traditional language lexicon of the sacred (p.85-87). A comparison of the eastern and western variants of the myth of Tagai indicates that it probably originated in the west, as did most shared lexicon, legend and custom. The claim that the Giar Pit people of Dauar were the original owners of the myth (p.3) is therefore puzzling, unless we are to accept an entirely Miriam focus.

A recurring question for me was the extent to which the Murray Island focus can be generalised to the rest of the Strait. The implication of the subtitle is that it can. Yet Sharp herself states that the Murray Islanders 'were an especially cohesive group in pre-contact times' (p.42), whereas there was no comparable locus of Western or Central Islander culture. Mer, the most remote eastern island, is not Torres Strait. In many ways, in fact, it is atypical and recognised as such by Islanders: the Miriam resisted outsiders, preserved and protected their language and *tonar* 'traditional custom' long after the Islanders of other eastern, central and near western islands. It was purely an accident of history that the latter became the sites of beche-de-mer and pearling fisheries, and locus of removal or transfer of other Islanders, and home to large immigrant populations; and that they were unable to rid themselves of the immigrants, as the Miriam managed to do in 1885. An analysis of the cultural practices and beliefs of the non-Miriam might yield a quite different perspective. Nonetheless, it is true that reciprocal exchange was a fundamental organising principle of Islander society.

Stars of Tagai is itself the sum of countless acts of reciprocal exchange. It is essential reading for anyone interested in Torres Strait Islander history, culture and religion; in the background to the Mabo decision; and in the writing of a foliated social history, reconciling oral and written narratives from indigenous and European perspectives.

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Knowledge and Secrecy in an Aboriginal Religion: Yolngu of North-East Arnhem Land. By Ian Keen. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, pp.347. Line drawings, maps, figures, tables, glossary, bibliography, index. \$85.

This regional ethnography, carefully crafted and of considerable refinement, offers a subtle texture of description and a degree of sophistication of analysis which are often lacking in this genre and which especially in the past of Aboriginal studies have rarely been found. The author unfolds a minute picture of the exercise of religious knowledge, its control, secrecy and dissemination from among the Yolngu. The description is constructed with an eye to subtle detail drawing on a host of minutiae someone else might easily have overlooked or put aside as redundant. Correspondingly, the author's extrapolations beyond the wealth of his own data are cautious and generalisations are virtually non-existent.

The book basically is structured into three major areas of analysis termed 'ambiguity', 'variation' and 'change'. The first section addresses some important issues: the constitution

of culture through shared meaning and how the recognition of the contestability of meaning puts this notion into jeopardy. The negotiability and indeterminacy of structure and doctrine, the shifting grounds of discursive strategies - weaving the webs of meaning in which some move adroitly and others are caught (to paraphrase Geertz and Stolte) - all that is dealt with clearly and plausibly. (One may wonder though how on this unstable and shifting basis control of religious substance and power is exercised and how successful it can be. This problem is not so clearly addressed by the book, although Keen is aware of its existence; see e.g. p.293). In the second section Keen discusses restrictions on access to religious knowledge according to age, gender etc. and the important question of secrecy. (With a bow towards political correctness, the reader is assured that no secret substance has been revealed). The third section deals with the development of universalistic forms to engender relationships involving wider social networks which transcend traditional formations.

Keen professes to be a follower of Foucault's (though, surprisingly, the bibliography refers only to two relevant works). It appears to have led him to see power as 'located in the social nexus' and in interactive modalities, a kind of amorphous power being exercised ubiquitously, continuously and multi-directionally, rather than as a clearly discernible thrust underpinned by ideological activity. He dismisses the concept of ideology as inappropriate since it presumes the existence of specific power relations and entails more or less clearly noticeable conditions of domination. He discards the question altogether whether an ideological component can be attributed to religion. However, then he goes on to see something analytically useful in 'ideology' and 'hegemony' after all (p.20) and subsequently refers to numerous incidents and conditions which rather support the (if only heuristic) validity of these concepts (e.g. p.85, 98, 99, 295, 301). This is no reflection on his analytical competence, but, I think, stems rather from the complexity of the issue and the difficulty of sticking to theoretical purity in the context of an ethnographic description as fine-grained as his.

The author is a minimalist. He keeps references to other, related works from other regions of Australia (on religious change, knowledge control, the politics of knowledge dissemination, etc.) and from overseas (e.g. Keesing's studies on the social uses of knowledge among the Kwaio) to the barest minimum. It is not clear whether this is so because of his 'isolationist' tendencies (i.e., a belief that all Aboriginal 'tribal societies' are quite distinct entities making generalisations suspect and rendering comparisons largely superfluous) or because of his reluctance to acknowledge the contributions of other anthropologists in this and related fields of study, thus avoiding the (imaginary) risk of appearing somewhat less unique or pioneering. He need not have worried as doing so would hardly have detracted from the obvious merit of the book.

Erich Kolig
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A Death in the Tiwi Islands: Conflict, ritual and social life in an Australian Aboriginal community. By Eric Venbrux. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp.xvii + 269. Maps, glossary, references, index. A\$29.95. p.b.

The book arose out of a traumatic field experience in the year 1988 in Pularumpi on Melville Island: a Tiwi man who had befriended the author was suddenly murdered, two

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months into the fieldwork, his battered body being found one fine morning lying in the dust of the settlement. Venbrux did not shrug off this event or try and escape it emotionally. He made it the point of entry to an understanding of Tiwi society. Turning this sad event to good use, he made it the tack to hang his ethnography on. Economy of enterprise, grasping a golden opportunity or a way of settling the ghost? Who knows. In any case, what came out of it is an absorbing story: a mixture of social drama, detective story and ethnography. Inspired by Geertz's idea of 'thick description' and processual anthropology Venbrux wove a tale which is not only eminently readable, but was successful enough as his Ph.D dissertation in the Katholieke Unviersiteit of Nijmegen (titled 'Under the Mango Trees: a case of homicide in an Australian Aboriginal Society', unpubl.diss. 1993).

The book is a fine example that culture can be accessed in the form of a living social drama, whose description renders a rich narrative tapestry which is both entertaining and illuminating. I found it refreshing also that Venbrux does not think much of attributing blame and guilt to the degradation of Aboriginal society due to the pernicious western impact. Violence and the homicidal settlement of grievances (over women, paybacks etc.) are given a different explanation in his inquiry. The cultural revival in today's Tiwi society, as the author notes (e.g. p.17), is going hand in hand with the re-emergence of killing by direct means. The Pax Australiana had previously been instrumental in suppressing traditional methods of settling grievances by violent means, and the long arm of the law, mission and government authorities rigorously enforced it. As the pride in the cultural heritage grows once again and cultural independence is asserted by the Tiwi, traditionally motivated and legitimated murder (the traditional 'sneak attack') crops up again - though the perpetrators do not declare themselves openly as was traditionally done and somewhat different methods are employed nowadays.

The author starts with the homicidal event, proceeds to explore the post-contact transformation of Tiwi society, then looks at the life stories of the victim and his father (the father's career as a 'murderman' may have been the reason for the killing), and then goes on to describe the various ritual occasions following the incident: the funerary ritual, ritual purification and others.

The book's descriptive factuality heavily outweighs wider interpretation and abstraction (there are, for instance, only scant references to Maurice Bloch's (p.146) and Durkheim's ideas (p.195) on ritual. The book is so very focussed on description as to be perhaps disappointing in some respects: it avoids embedding specific events in discussions of greater generality: for instance, ritual in Aboriginal society in relation to settling violence, notions of legality and ethics in homicide, or the impact of missionisation on such issues, etc., etc. These are missed opportunities. But perhaps that does not matter too much. There is a great deal that can still be gleaned from this interesting and well-written story. And, not least of all, it is a joy to read it.

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Eye of the Eagle. By Ron Bunney. Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1995. Paperback \$9.95.

A great little book. It is an easy read aimed at a younger audience and as such would be a welcome addition to any educational library shelves. The story is set in the early nineteenth century and revolves around a young Aboriginal boy and girl, highlighting the tragedy and terror they are forced to confront when they and their people come into contact with white colonists. The book gives examples and explanation of aspects of traditional Aboriginal life, highlighting Aboriginal belief and their connection and concern for their land. It gives insight into how they lived and the beauty of their lifestyle. As a basis for understanding what has taken place in this country over the last two centuries this book is a good starting point for young students it not only illustrates Aboriginal life but also highlights the tragic and terrifying realities of the impact of white intrusion. If there is any failing in this book it is probably that the author has tried to cram in too much knowledge and insight into Aboriginal lifestyle into such a small book. That however does not detract from the authors fine attempt at a disturbing subject.

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Aboriginal Autonomy: Issues and Strategies. By H.C. Coombs. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994. Pp xvi + 251, appendix, references, index, select bibliography of Coombs' publications on Aboriginal issues. pb \$25.00.

Aboriginal Autonomy can be read in a number of ways - as an incisive and reflective overview of the 'state of play' in indigenous affairs today, as a series of polemical and tendentious essays designed to buttress and reinforce indigenous interests and influence policy development into the medium term and beyond, or as the culmination of Coombs' considerable intellectual contribution to understanding the complex interplay of two worldviews in the development of the Australian nation.

Aboriginal Autonomy continues the broad themes Coombs explored in Coombs' 1978 book *Kulinma: Listening to Aboriginal Australians*, but with a sharper edge. The indigenous worldview, relationships with the land, indigenous lifestyles, health, education and work, issues relating to law and the role of the state, the impact of resource development on indigenous societies, and the implications of the Mabo decision are all addressed.

Cut down to its core elements, Coombs' broad argument can be expressed in the following propositions:

- . Personal autonomy, the responsibility to nurture others, and the ongoing negotiation of social relations are key determinants of the Aboriginal worldview. This worldview is as legitimate - and arguably more appropriate - than the dominant society's emphasis on acceding to the imperatives of the economic system.
- . Colonisation has substantially compromised the capacity of indigenous societies to exercise autonomy and their nurturing responsibilities, with serious consequences for indigenous social cohesion, health and economic status, and self-esteem.

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- The Australian nation has much to gain from encouraging indigenous initiatives to re-assert social, political and economic autonomy. Implicit in such a change in approach would be the recognition of indigenous rights in a range of realms (from health and education to land rights and resource development).
- Indigenous interests have been pro-active in asserting their autonomy through a variety of specific initiatives - the homelands movement, indigenous education, and the development of indigenous political organisations and a concomitant political agenda are instanced.

These arguments flow into a concluding chapter which is articulated as a plea for recognition by mainstream Australia of the Aboriginal desire for autonomy. Coombs suggests there is a need for a moratorium on legislation affecting Aborigines, a national 'pause for reflection', while key political and legal rights are clarified by the courts. These include the possible existence of a Crown fiduciary duty, the inherent rights embedded in the common law concept of native title including whether the Crown has an unfettered right to extinguish native title, and the allocation of Australian sovereignty between indigenous and non-indigenous institutions.

In the longer term, Coombs argues for a 'deeper act of recognition' by mainstream Australia of indigenous rights to autonomy and self-determination, reflected in an Act of Self-determination 'in a form recognised by the United Nations and [which is] binding on future Australian Commonwealth and State governments'. The process of arranging such an Act must be, in Coombs' view, an exercise in participatory democracy, based on 'bottom-up' processes which he sees as characteristic of Aboriginal political processes. Coombs has in mind regionally based negotiations which might in some cases lead to the adjustment of institutional frameworks to allow the creation of new jurisdictions within the Australian nation with sovereign powers and responsibilities. The recently negotiated arrangements in relation to the Malay residents of the territory of Cocos Island are specifically cited as one way forward.

This is indeed an ambitious agenda. Assessed in terms of its current political feasibility, it fails comprehensively (though Coombs, I suspect somewhat disingenuously, gives no hint of this). However, I would argue that the strength of Coombs' analysis and argument lies in his capacity to lay down a number of important and prescient conceptual benchmarks for both indigenous and mainstream Australia. The extent to which these concepts are utilised will determine the structure of the relationship between indigenous and other Australians over the next 20 to 50 years, and in a very real sense determine the type of nation we will become.

For indigenous Australians, Coombs points to the importance of the courts in developing the constitutional principles inherent in the belated recognition of native title, and suggests clearly that 'indigenous sovereignty' ought to be pursued through a re-allocation of the existing elements and sources of national sovereign power. Implicitly, he is rejecting any notion of separate sovereign status. For mainstream interests, he points to the importance of recognising the reality of the ongoing development of international human rights law, he emphasises the need for indigenous interests to be given space to develop their own positions in a constantly changing political and policy environment, and most importantly, he identifies the imperative of negotiation as the only way to progress toward mutually acceptable institutional arrangements (the reconciliation objective) within the Australian polity.

There is a deep wisdom in these ideas, and much else in this book. There is also much to disagree with. In acknowledging the manifest injustices suffered by indigenous people since colonisation, Coombs' analysis recalls Voltaire's Doctor Pangloss in its implicit

assumption that somehow 'right will ut'. Indigenous expectations may therefore be raised unduly. The reality is that Coombs has mapped out an agenda for the next two or three generations of Australians, but that the achievement of such a vision will require coherent and practical strategies, a great deal of hard work, the ability to withstand setbacks, and perhaps even a degree of luck.

Coombs' analysis does not really extend to the strategies which will be necessary. The suggestion that there should be a legislative moratorium in relation to indigenous issues is pie in the sky and ignores the reality that the ferment of interest group advocacy in our increasingly complex and pluralist society will not cease. Accordingly, indigenous strategies will need to combine both short and long term political realities and perspectives. Notwithstanding the book's sub-title, Coombs gives no real assistance to indigenous leaders and others on how to cope effectively with these exigencies.

Coombs gives little attention to the issues of increasing globalisation which will inevitably impact on the elements of national sovereignty which he and other indigenous interests appear to covet. The complex issue of indigenous identity receives no attention, yet is a crucial element in the indigenous affairs policy environment. Coombs tends to over-emphasise the scale and impact of indigenous initiatives, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of the massive change underway in virtually every part of Australian society. In terms of movement towards a new political framework for indigenous-mainstream relations, the indigenous initiatives Coombs points to have strong re-active as well as pro-active elements. Indeed, if a widely accepted and coherent pro-active strategy were in place, Coombs' book would be superfluous!

Overall, *Aboriginal Autonomy* has much to say to all Australians. It is imbued with the intelligence, the intellectual courage, the deep optimism, the respect for humanity, indigenous cultures and the environment which make Coombs the most extraordinary Australian of the 20th century. Like Coombs himself, his book poses more questions than it answers - but this is its great value and contribution.

M.C. Dillon

The Cover

Several copies of the Treaty of Waitangi were made apart from the major copy first signed at Waitangi on the 6th February 1840. Other copies were taken over the following months to all parts of Aotearoa and the signatures of the local chiefs obtained. One of these copies was carried by *HMS Herald* commanded by Captain Nias and carrying Major Thomas Bunbury of the 80th Regiment deputed by Hobson to seek signatures of chiefs to the south. A portion of this copy is shown on the front cover.

In a voyage to both islands from 28th April to 2 July 1840 Major Bunbury aboard the *Herald* obtained the signatures of chiefs in the Coromandel Peninsula, Mercury Bay, Akaroa, Foveaux Straits, Otago, Cloudy Bay, Kapiti Island and Hawkes Bay. The portion of the treaty shown carries the marks of Maori leaders from Cloudy Bay, Kapiti (Capiti) Island and Hawkes Bay. These marks were often the same as part of their *moko* or face tattoos. Notably, the sixth and seventh signatures obtained at Capiti (Kapiti) are those of Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaetea, two of the most famous warriors of Ngati Toa. The signature of Willian Hobson the Governor and the witnesses to the signatures of the chiefs - Major Bunbury, William Stewart (a sealer, whaler and trader who acted as pilot to *HMS Herald*) and Edward Williams (the interpreter) can be seen.

Cover design by Richard Barwick - the section of the treaty is reproduced from his copy of the photolithography facsimile *The Treaty of Waitangi* published by the New Zealand Government Printer in 1877.